

Committee(s): Planning & Transportation Committee	Date(s): 12/12/19
Subject: Definition of Net Zero Carbon	Public
Report of: Carolyn Dwyer, Director of the Built Environment	For Information
Report author: Janet Laban, Department of the Built Environment	

Summary

This report provides definitions of zero carbon that are in use in planning, demonstrates how these are applied in practice and highlights the weight given to the draft London Plan targets since publication of the draft London Plan Panel Report in October 2019.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the meeting on 22 Oct 2019 the Committee requested a definition of zero carbon building in current planning policy, London Plan and draft Local Plan policies, how we apply them and what weight can be given to draft plans.
2. The issue of climate change has risen up the agenda in recent months resulting in a raft of competing terms to denote the objective of a reduction in carbon emissions. This paper summarises the terms that are in current use in the London Plan, emerging City Plan 2036 and other sources along with information on how they are applied in practice.

Current Position

3. The concept of reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2050 is now enshrined in UK law through the Climate Change Act and its 2019 amendment.
4. It has been integrated into planning policy at several levels:
 - The National Planning Policy Framework requires that planning should play a key role in the transition to a low carbon economy.
 - The adopted 2016 London Plan requires all major residential development to be zero carbon and all major non-residential development to achieve a 35% reduction in carbon emissions compared with the Building Regulations requirements

- The draft London Plan (due to be adopted in early 2020) requires all major development (residential and non-residential) to be zero carbon.
 - The City Corporation's adopted Local Plan applies the 2016 London Plan requirements at a local level
 - The City Corporation's emerging City Plan 2036 will align with the draft London Plan in requiring all major development to be zero carbon.
5. The draft London Plan Panel Report was published on 21st October 2019 and supports in principle the requirement for all major development to be zero carbon, giving additional weight to the draft Plan's carbon policies and their implementation.

Carbon Definitions

6. Table 1 provides a range of definitions in relation to carbon reduction from several different sources. The draft London Plan definition is the most recent and therefore the most appropriate to apply to development proposals.

Source	Term	Definition
draft London Plan	Zero-Carbon	Activity that causes no net release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.
draft London Plan	Zero-emission	Activity that causes no release of air pollutants and carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases.
Adopted London Plan 2016	Zero Carbon	A zero carbon development is one whose net carbon dioxide emissions, taking account of emissions associated with all energy use, is equal to zero or negative across the year. The definition of "energy use" will cover both energy uses currently regulated by the Building Regulations and other energy used in the home.
City of London draft City Plan 2036	Zero carbon	Development whose net carbon dioxide emissions, taking account of emissions associated with energy use, is equal to zero or negative across the year. The definition of "energy use" will cover both energy uses currently regulated by the Building Regulations and other energy use in the home

7. The adopted London Plan and City of London Local Plan requirements are implemented through energy strategies which are required to be submitted with each planning application. The energy strategy should identify how the London Plan carbon targets will be met on site. Where the required 35% improvement over Building Regulations (non-residential) or zero carbon (residential) targets cannot be met on site a carbon offsetting contribution is secured through an S106 agreement. The City Corporation adopted a Carbon Offsetting Scheme in 2018, details of how this is applied are set out in the Planning & Transportation Committee report *City Corporation's proposed approach to carbon offsetting* which was approved on 20/11/18.

8. The draft London Plan has been the subject of public examination and the Panel's report endorses the draft London Plan's approach to zero carbon concluding that *"Subject to our recommendations the policies relating to a zero-carbon city, air quality and water infrastructure would assist in creating a healthy city and provide an effective strategic context for the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The policies and their detailed criteria are justified and necessary and would provide an effective basis for development management"* The Panel report was published on October 21st 2019. Although not yet adopted, the draft London Plan carries considerable planning weight and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Development proposals should therefore now be considered against the requirement to deliver zero carbon buildings. The draft London Plan is likely to be adopted in February or March 2020.
9. Once adopted, the London Plan will become formally part of the Development Plan for the City.

Proposals

10. Members are invited to note the changes in London Plan carbon targets that apply to major development in the Square Mile.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The move to zero carbon development is in line with the City Corporation's Corporate Strategy aspiration to positively impact people and the environment by championing responsible practices to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes.
12. The City of London Responsible Business Strategy commits the City to reduce our environmental impact across all our operations while increasing our positive impact through cleaning, greening, advocacy and influencing and to influence developers to prioritise green construction through planning policies.

Implications

13. This policy approach applies to all major development in the City. Therefore, the need for development to be zero carbon must be incorporated into development designs from the outset.

Conclusion

14. This report provides the zero-carbon definition that applies to major development in the City, outlines how it is applied in practice and highlights the fact that all major development should now be zero carbon in line with the recommendations of the draft London Plan Panel Report.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

Report to Planning & Transportation Committee, 20 November 2018, *City Corporation's proposed approach to carbon offsetting*

Janet Laban

Senior Sustainability Officer
Department of the Built Environment

T: 020 7332 1148

E: janet.laban@cityoflondon.gov.uk