

London Energy Partnership Annual Forum
3rd July 2008

Low Carbon Zones Workshop

Background

One of the three workshops held at this year's London Energy Partnership Annual Forum was an interactive session, run by Rachael Mills of SE², to explore what looked at what new Low Carbon Zones might look like in London.

A Low Carbon Zone is a self defined geographical area where over a set period of time a range of co-ordinated activities take place, involving a breadth of stakeholders, with the express purpose of reducing carbon emissions, increasing energy efficiency and alleviating fuel poverty. They have grown out of and are a development of Energy Action Areas, of which there are already four in London (Barking Town Centre, Elephant and Castle, New Wembley and Mitcham Town Centre).¹

Over lunch at the Forum, Mayor Johnson addressed delegates and announced that a further six Low Carbon Zones would be developed and be in place by 2012. With this in mind, delegates at the workshop were invited to design their own Low Carbon Zone and make a 'pitch' to the judges in our own version of the 'Dragon's Den'.

The Dragon's Den

Delegates organised themselves into four groups and were then given just thirty minutes to come up with ideas for a Low Carbon Zone. This was a fun, interactive way to help delegates think about what a Low Carbon Zone might look like, in particular:

- Where in London will your Low Carbon Zone be?
- What is the Low Carbon Zone focus? (e.g. fuel poverty, urban design)
- What do you want to achieve?
- Which partners will you work with?
- How will LEP add value?

Each group then had 3 minutes to pitch their idea to the panel of eminent judges: Tony Day (London South Bank University), Michael King (Associate of the Combined Heat and Power Association) and Ute Collier (London Energy Partnership). The judges were looking for:

- **INNOVATION:** How fresh are your ideas? Are you trying something new? Or perhaps applying proven techniques in a different way?
- **MEMORABLE:** To what extent will your ideas make a real difference to the people living and working within your Low Carbon Zone? How much of an impact will you make on reducing carbon emissions?
- **FLARE:** Give your pitch with style and panache!

After much deliberation, the winners were announced and each member of the winning team received a small prize.

¹ See <http://www.lep.org.uk/projects/energy-action-zero-carbon.htm> for further information.

Low Carbon Zone Concepts

Group 1: Reclaim the Streets



Group 1 developed a Low Carbon Zones idea that could be applied to any part of London. It embraces all residents, businesses and buildings in a holistic approach to reducing carbon within a neighbourhood.

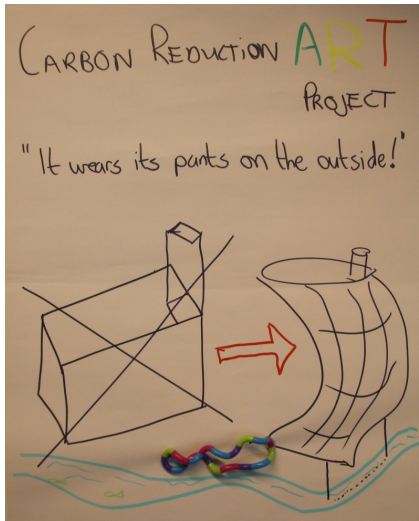
Aspects of the Low Carbon Zone include:

- Inclusion of all housing and tenure types, with special efforts to tackle hard to treat homes
- Engagement with businesses and an 'energy competition' for local shops
- Public sector involvement, with 'eco-bling' installed on all public buildings
- Investment in renewable energy street lighting and zero-carbon street furniture
- Cycle banks and a free bus / home delivery service
- Energy generating public art, or an interactive facility such as energy generating swings in the park
- Wide spread civic engagement



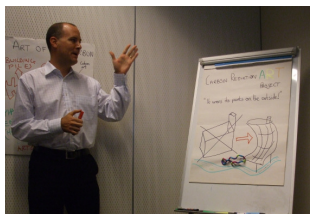
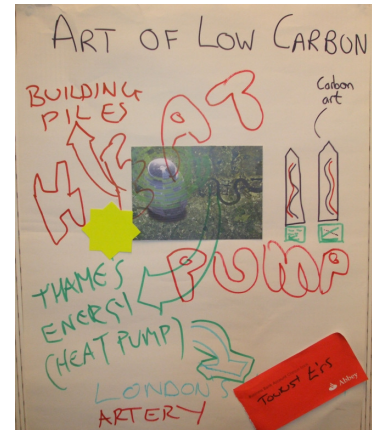
The central theme running across the whole Low Carbon Zone would be Energy Display Certificates for all buildings. The goal would be for all buildings to be brought up to at least a C rating through the project.

Group 2: Carbon Reduction Art Project



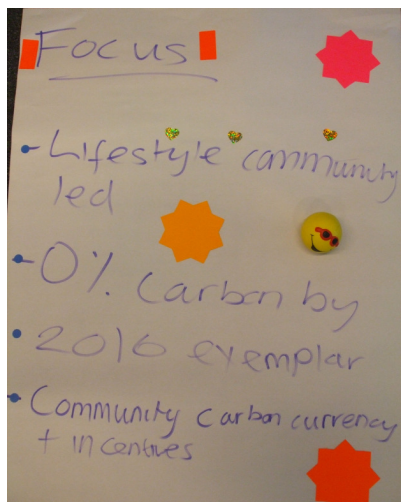
The Carbon Reduction Art Project is based on the South Bank and comprises two parts.

The first part of the project would see the development of a new energy centre on the South Bank built to an innovative and inspiring design. Public engagement is central to the project, and this would be reflected in all the pipes for the energy centre being above ground and colour coded. So pipes carrying hot water for heating would be red, pipes carrying cold water for cooling would be blue, etc. Hence the strapline 'it wears its pants on the outside'!



The second part of the project is an interactive art project, taking advantage of the growing number of Banksy artworks on the South Bank, which in turn have led to other street artists exhibiting in the area. Carbon installations, such as those used in Stockholm, would provide centre pieces to engage with the public and would become 'eco attractions' for tourists.

Group 3: Low Carbonville



The third group also adopted a Low Carbon Zones ‘approach’, rather than a specific area of London. Their proposal was to run a reality-TV competition to find a community willing to change their whole lifestyle to be low carbon. In fact, the winning community would be so engaged with the process they would be willing to rename their part of London ‘Low Carbonville’.

This Low Carbon Zone celebrates low carbon living within a city, rather than in a rural area where most of the innovative eco-town work seems to have been done to date. It would incorporate housing, business, schools, the health sector and transport. The goal would be for the community to be a Zero Carbon exemplar by 2016.



Group 4: New Covent Garden Waste



Group 4 developed an innovative solution to the food waste generated every day at New Covent Garden market, as well as from restaurants and cafes in the local area. Their proposal involved reinstating a power station at Battersea - but one that would convert waste food into heat and power.

The group envisaged that new and existing public and private sector housing, as well as local businesses, would benefit from the scheme, which would also create 20,000 new jobs.

Power from the plant would also be used to operate electric vehicles, which would collect the waste from local outlets and the market. Tidal lagoons would also be employed.



Community involvement would see residents, businesses and schools deeply engaged with the project. Battersea Park would also have a role to play as a central focus point for the public. The end result of the project would be total energy management.

The Winner

After lengthy and considered deliberations...



... the judges decided to award the prize to Group 4.



Key Messages

The workshop allowed delegates from a broad cross-section of the energy industry in London to have an early input into the new Low Carbon Zones. Although the Dragon's Den was a bit of fun, some genuine points came out of the four ideas for Low Carbon Zones and the discussions around them:

- The Zones should incorporate the whole community: residents, businesses, schools and the health and public sectors.
- A holistic view to carbon reduction should be adopted, taking the concept beyond energy to include for example waste and transport.
- Civic engagement is vital. Public installations to inspire involvement were popular.
- The projects need to be visible - in whatever form that may take - to residents, visitors and the rest of London.