



**Local Authority Research Project on the Implementation of Planning Policy for Zero Carbon
Development**

Questionnaire Survey Results

Welsh Assembly Government
09-03-2009

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Development

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Introduction

1 Introduction



Survey Results

2 Survey Results

2.1 Section A: Questionnaire response

18 completed questionnaires were returned out of a total of 115 issued, representing a 16% response rate from individual local authority officers. However, based on the number of questionnaires issued to the Local Planning Authorities and National Park Authorities [hereafter referred to as 'Planning Authorities'] we received 17 completed returns representing a planning authority response rate of 68%.

Analysis of questionnaire responses excludes the eight planning authorities that did not respond.

2.2 Section B: The Local planning framework

2.2.1 Section B1: Personnel

It was confirmed that there were a total of 487 full time employees working within planning departments across the 17 planning authorities. This equates to an average of circa 29 full time employees per planning department.

Figure 1 demonstrates the proportion of personnel as a function of role within planning departments. The greatest proportion of personnel are classified as development control/management staff at 44%; administration and support staff account for 28%; planning policy officers account for 23%. The remaining 5% are categorised as 'other' which represents officers involved in, among other things, sustainable development.

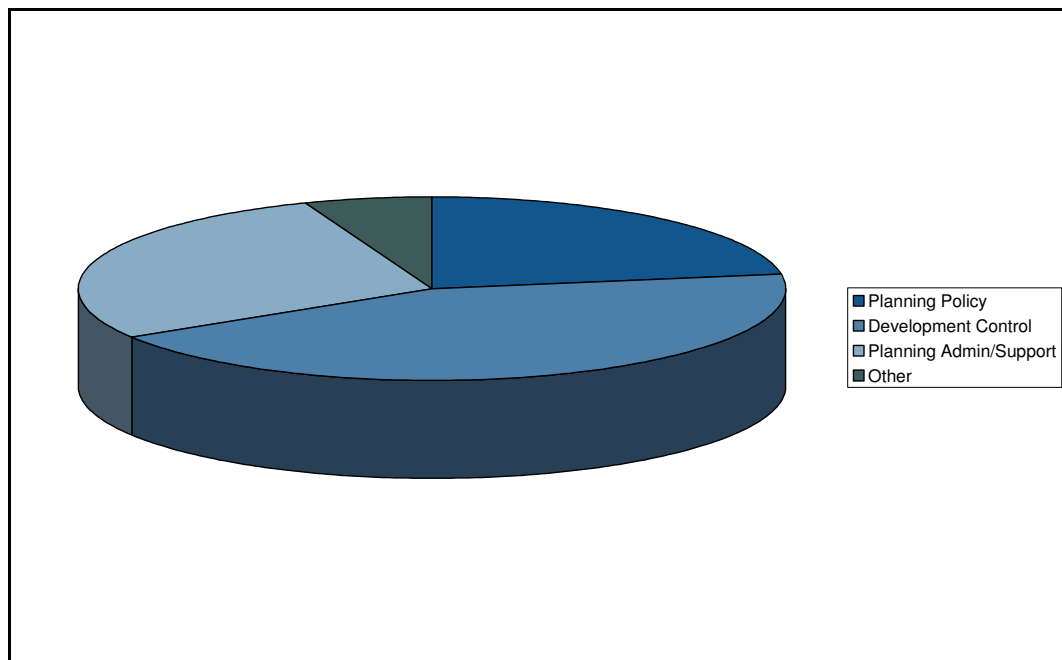


Figure 1: Proportion personnel as a function of role within planning departments.

2.2.2

Section B2: Adopted planning policy or policy guidance

11 planning authorities [65%] confirmed that they had adopted planning policy and/or policy guidance that relates specifically to the implementation of low and zero carbon development. Three planning authorities had specific targets in place, including two with a 20% renewable energy requirement on all new developments, and one with a 10% reduction in carbon dioxide over Part L. One planning authority required the 'support of renewable technologies' as identified in TAN 8; one had generic energy requirements; and one required that an energy design advice report accompany any non-residential development over 1,000 m². Five planning authorities did not have any specific targets in place.

2.2.3

Section B3: Implementation of low and zero carbon policies

Seven planning authorities [41%] required evidence on how low and zero carbon policies have been considered/incorporated into design for each planning application. The remaining ten planning authorities [59%] confirmed that they have no formal process in place to implement low and zero carbon policies.

Four planning authorities that did require evidence based their assessment on design and access statements and/or sustainability statements; with the remaining three planning authorities basing their assessments on sustainability checklists.

One of the planning authorities that used a sustainability checklist to assess low and zero carbon policies also used an energy design advice report, developed by the Carbon Trust for non-domestic developments over 1,000 m².

Of the seven planning authorities that required evidence six indicated that a development control officer/manager was responsible for checking for policy compliance. The remaining planning authority confirmed that an officer responsible for grant regimes checked for compliance, although this was only in regard to refurbishment projects [no department was currently responsible for checking new development compliance].

Regarding a post construction review of developments, three planning authorities [18%] confirmed that they undertake limited post construction reviews. Two of these planning authorities indicated that they would only undertake a post construction review should it become apparent that enforcement is necessary.

2.2.4

Section B5: Preparation of new policy on low and zero carbon development

Ten planning authorities [59%] confirmed that they preparing new policy on low and zero carbon development as part of the new Local Development Plan. Of these ten, three confirmed that they are basing their low and zero carbon development policies on Technical Advice Note 8: Planning for Renewable Energy [TAN 8]; and/or the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement [MIPPS] on Climate Change.

Two planning authorities indicated that they are waiting for further national guidance prior developing policy as part of the new Local Development Plan.

Two planning authorities stated they were still developing their Unitary Development Plans, one of which will incorporate low and zero carbon development policies in the plan.

The remaining three planning authorities confirmed they were not currently preparing new policy on low and zero carbon development.

2.2.5

Section B5: Planning Applications relating to renewable or low carbon energy technologies

Ten planning authorities confirmed that they had received at least one planning application for renewable energy or low carbon energy [LZC] technologies. However, one of these planning authorities could not confirm the exact number of planning applications for each LZC technology between 2005 and 2007. The data provided by this planning authority has been excluded from this assessment for accuracy. The following summary is therefore based on the remaining nine planning authorities.

Between 2005 and 2007 there were a total of 49 planning applications for LZC technologies throughout the nine planning authorities. Four were received in 2005; 18 were received in 2006; and 27 were received in 2007.

The proportion of LZC technologies between 2005 and 2007 is confirmed in Figure 3 below. Wind turbines were the greatest number of LZC technology applications [51%]; followed by Photovoltaic cells [22%]; biomass heating systems [8%]; 'other' [8%]; combined heat and power systems [6%]; with the lowest number of applications for solar hot water heating systems and heat pumps [2% respectively].

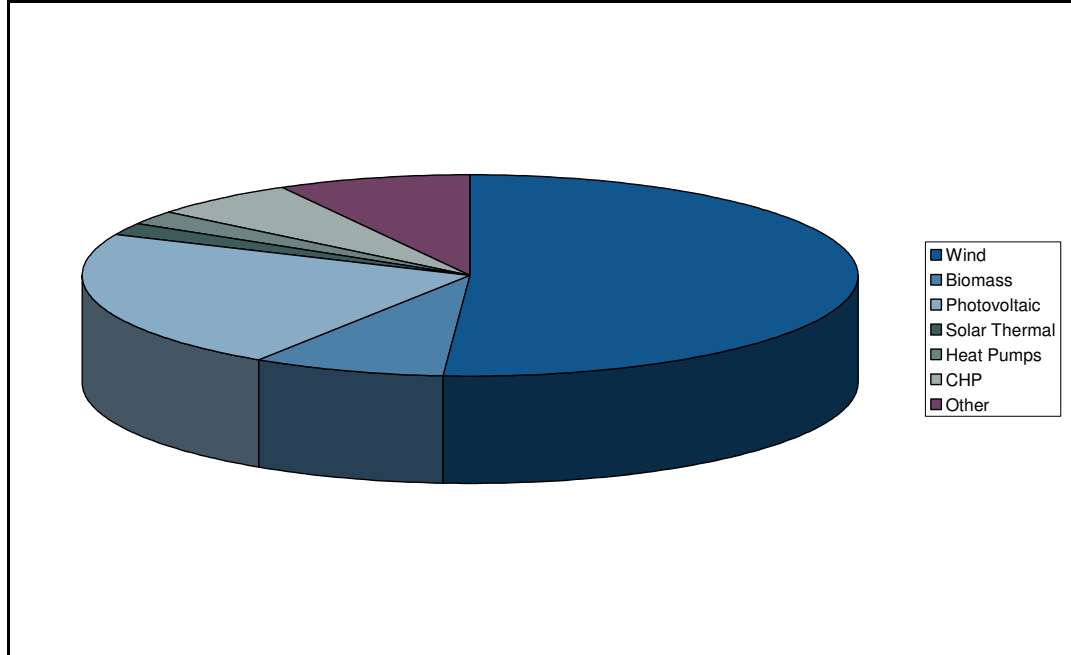


Figure 2: Proportion of LZC technologies applications between 2005 and 2007.

The temporal range in the number and type of LZC technology application is given in Figure 3 below.

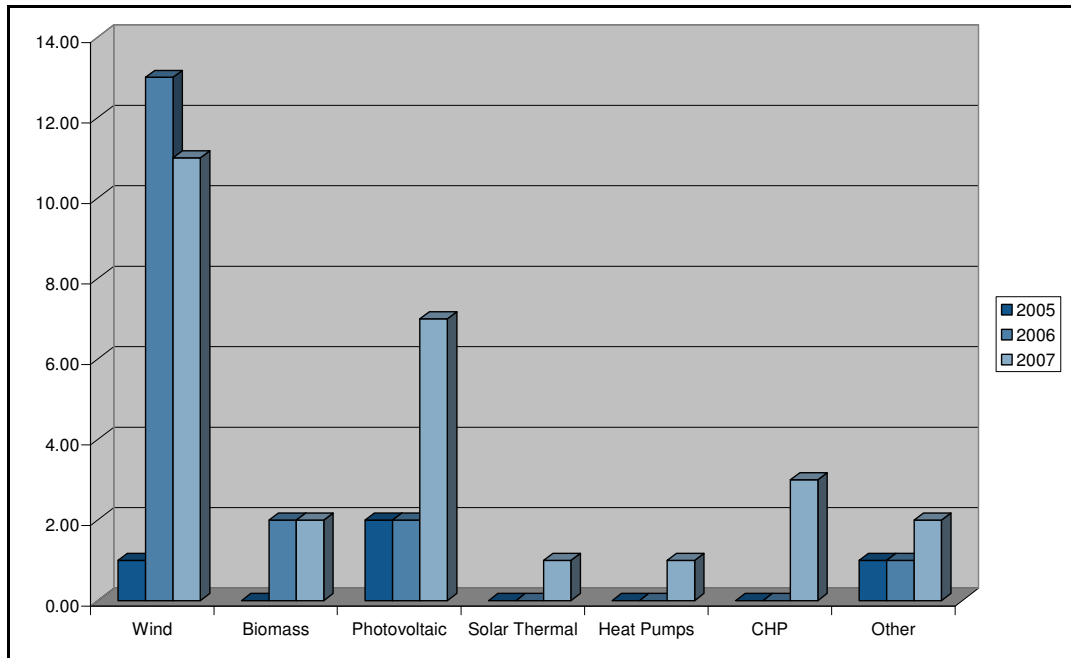


Figure 3: The temporal range of LZC technology applications

The proportion of LZC technology applications during 2005, 2006 and 2007 is given in Figure 4 below.

During 2005, photovoltaic cells represented the greatest number of applications at 50% with wind turbines and 'other' LZC representing the additional applications [25% respectively].

During 2006, wind turbines represented the greatest number of applications [72%]; with biomass heating systems [11%]; photovoltaic cells [11%]; and 'other' LZC technologies.

During 2007 the proportion of LZC technology applications included wind turbines [41%]; photovoltaic cells [26%]; biomass heating systems [7%]; 'other' [7%]; solar thermal [4%] and heat pumps [4%].

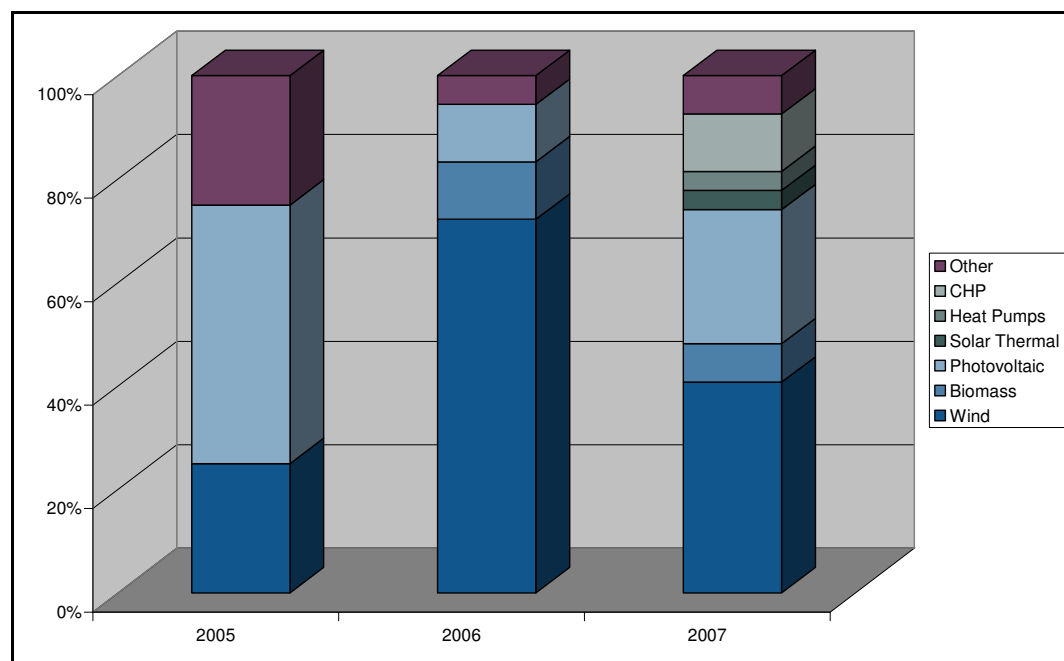


Figure 4: The proportion of LZC technology applications during 2005, 2006 and 2007.

2.3

Section C: Low and zero carbon development experience

2.3.1

Section C1: Existing low or zero carbon developments

Seven planning authorities indicated that they had either at least one existing or proposed low or zero carbon development.

The total number of low or zero carbon developments throughout the seven planning authorities was 20. This included 15 existing buildings and five approved developments.

Of the 20 existing and proposed low and zero carbon developments four developments had been designed to a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent', and one had been designed to an EcoHomes rating of 'Good'.

Eight of the proposed and existing low and zero carbon developments incorporated LZC technologies.

2.3.2

Section C2: Low and zero carbon development involvement

Of the 20 existing and proposed low and zero carbon developments, four had received personal involvement from a planning authority respondent. All four of these developments involved officers from the same planning authority.

One planning authority indicated that they had been directly involved in all previous planning applications for proposed wind farms throughout that authority though they could not identify officers with personal experience of individual developments.

One planning authority confirmed that they had assessed one proposed low and zero carbon development. The application was later refused at planning committee.

2.3.3

Section C3: Effective policy and guidance in implementing low and zero carbon developments

One planning authority confirmed that they used effective policy from their UDP and SPG to secure low and zero carbon developments. This planning authority and a further two planning

authorities indicated they recommended other principles/methods in securing low and zero carbon developments. These included:

- Early discussions with the developers to agree principles for development of the site;
- BREEAM requirements
- Welsh Assembly Government policy requirements on public buildings
- Incorporating 'sustainability' into the contract specification

2.4 Section D: Views on barriers and opportunities

2.4.1 Section D1: Do current policies allow for the successful implementation of low and zero Carbon developments?

Four planning authorities confirmed that they considered that their current policies allowed for the successful implementation of low and zero carbon development.

Eight planning authorities indicated that the forthcoming LDP and/or SPG (including the Sustainable Design Guidance for three National Parks in Wales) will allow for successful implementation in the future.

Suggested changes to improve this process include:

"Policies need to be developed which encourage renewable energy generation or higher than average sustainable energy standards. Targets need to be set, and staffs need to be trained to promote, support and monitor its implementation."

"Firm policy lead from WAG will be vital to driving performance."

"Further emphasis on public awareness, building, and development industry training will be necessary."

"We need more specific policies to encourage it e.g. introducing the Merton 10% rule etc..."

2.4.2 Section D2: Additional mechanisms that are influential in delivering low and zero carbon developments

Planning authorities were asked to comment on the effectiveness of mechanisms outside of local planning policy that are considered influential in delivering low and zero carbon developments. Mechanisms included:

- National policy and/or guidance
- Corporate policy
- Financial incentives
- Specific requirements of delivering public sector funded development
- Developer initiative
- Working with support/partner organisations
- Local planning officers
- Members of planning committee/local councillors
- Other

Figure 5 indicates the number of planning authorities that indicated additional mechanisms that were positively influential in delivering low and zero carbon developments.

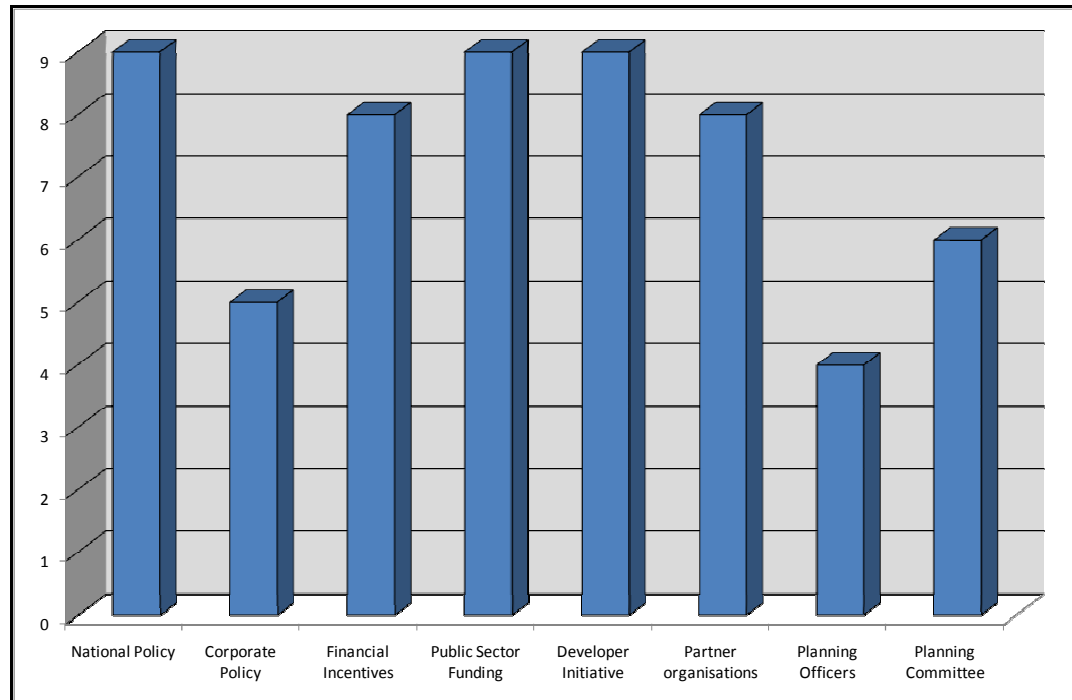


Figure 5: Additional mechanisms that are influential in delivering low and zero carbon developments.

National policy and/or guidance:

It was indicated that national policy and/or guidance contributed (or would contribute) positively to delivering LZC development by nine planning authorities [53%]. Comments include:

“Very effective and provide national policy framework in which to work up detailed local policies.”

“A useful incentive, but which awaits changes in legislation to be more effective.”

Corporate policy

Five planning authorities reported that corporate policy contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments. One of the planning authorities indicated that a ‘Green Dragon’ programme has had particular success in achieving more energy efficient development throughout the authority.

Two planning authorities indicated that corporate policy had not been effective with one authority stating that this was a particular “weakness.”

Financial incentives

Eight planning authorities [47%] confirmed that financial initiatives contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments. Comments included:

“Potentially a very effective tool which could provide large-scale compliance if sufficiently resourced from a national perspective.”

“Very effective as makes innovative schemes viable and set benchmarks for new development.”

“Increased fuel costs are driving new projects.”

Specific requirements of delivering public sector funded development

Nine planning authorities [53%] confirmed that specific requirements of delivering public sector funded development contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments.

Two planning authorities stated that developments must achieve particular BREEAM ratings; and a further two planning authorities referred to specific housing association / social housing requirements.

Additional comments include:

“Any requirements would need to be matched by sufficient resources made available from national to local government for this purpose.”

Developer initiative

Nine planning authorities [53%] confirmed that developer initiatives contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments, with one planning authority stating that leaving the process to developer initiative was not an effective process.

One planning authority stated that organisations' existing corporate environmental management initiatives play a part in steering the design of the development to incorporate some form of low and zero carbon development.

Additional comments include:

“Currently, [it is] the best way of pursuing such development, but [it is] also in need of incentive funding.”

“Effective in setting benchmarks for new development and setting best practice.”

Working with support/partner organisations

Eight planning authorities [47%] confirmed that working with support/partner organisations contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments. Planning authorities confirmed support/partnership organisations provided support in sharing best practice and skills in order to deliver benchmarking schemes and to help develop sustainable development checklists.

Support/partner organisations that were confirmed include: Energy Savings Trust; and the Sustainable Development Fund.

Local planning officers

Four planning authorities [24%] confirmed that local planning officers contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments, including one planning authority that stated it was 'vital'. However, there were some concerns regarding resourcing and skill levels, with one planning authority stating that [planning officers securing LZC development] was ineffective. Comments included:

“[Officers are] very supportive in principle, but presently lack sufficient resources to offer an improved service in support of developers.”

“Effective if skills are in place to deliver aspirations set out in national and local policy.”

Members of planning committee/local councillors

Six planning authorities [35%] confirmed that planning committee members and/or local councillors contributed positively to the delivery of low and zero carbon developments, including one planning authority that stated it was 'vital'.

Three planning authorities were concerned that some planning committee members and/or local councillors are not aware of positive sustainable design practices/issues.

One planning authority stated that committee members and local councillors were 'ineffective' in relation to this agenda.

Other

Four planning authorities provided comments on additional mechanisms that influence the delivery of low and zero carbon developments. Comments include:

- Economic - the need and desire for cheap electricity
- The use of building control officers to help deliver low and zero carbon developments
- Building Regulations
- The need to develop general awareness within the community and development industry.

2.4.3

Section D3: Current barriers to implementation of low and zero carbon development

Planning authorities responded on what they perceived to be the current barriers to implementing more low and zero carbon development. A summary of comments is given below and demonstrated in Figure 7 below.

14 planning authorities [82%] indicated that there needs to be further guidance and/or stronger legislation in place. This included guidance and national policy/legislation from the Welsh Assembly Government and revisions/updates to Building Regulations

Eight authorities [47%] stated that they felt a lack of awareness regarding how to advise on and implement low and zero carbon developments;

Four planning authorities [24%] stated that there was a lack of leadership either from the Welsh Assembly Government or their own planning authority.

Four planning authorities [24%] indicated that the lack of available grants and/or the cost of developing low and zero carbon projects had been a barrier to implementation.

Two planning authorities confirmed that a lack of existing resources within the authority were a significant barrier to implementation.

Other comments included:

- 'NIMBYism'
- BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Home not actually qualifying for the term 'zero carbon'
- Supply chain limitations
- Skills gap

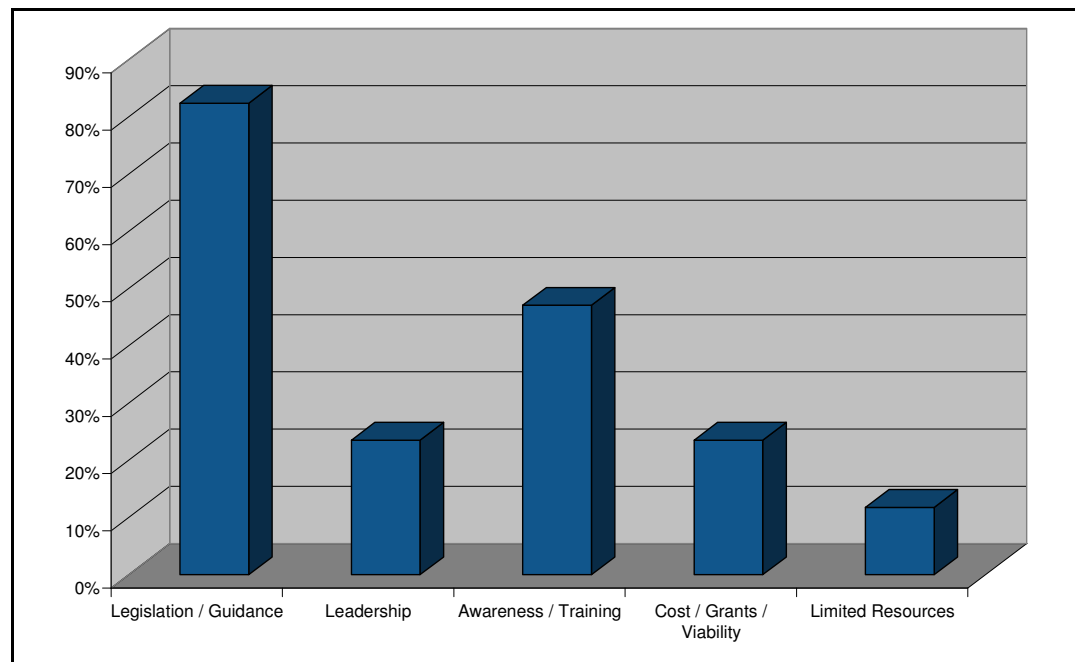


Figure 6: Current barriers to implementation of low and zero carbon developments

2.4.4

Section D4: Options to improve the implementation of low and zero carbon development

The following comments were made with regards to improving the implementation of low and zero carbon developments:

- Fiscal incentives
- National requirements, not targets - building regulation
- Firstly a need to implement strict regulatory requirements on carbon monitoring of developments and a legal obligation to reject all development that produces carbon above agreed levels.
- Have carbon and climate change and fossil fuel dependency as the three central themes of all national, local, and community policies.
- Fiscal incentives have proved too many 'false dawns' the cost of implementation still exceeds all of a business as usual approach.
- Trial of a radical alternative in a local authority, with strong regulatory and financial backing to ensure all local developments and policies are sustainable on the strictest possible criteria.
- Set higher standards.
- Police i.e. enforcement of Part L by the private sector.
- Provision of clear national planning guidance, which includes minimum targets.
- Training for members and officers
- Information on current best practice and funding for further examples of best practice.
- Officer training and member training.
- Clear guidance and support from the top
- Nationally set targets.
- Assistance with implementation (offering advice to applicants).
- 0% interest loans to purchase boiler, solar hot water, insulation etc.
- Training / information for developers and staff.
- Financial incentives, especially for smaller developers.
- More easily understandable guidance on what technologies etc are appropriate in which locations.
- Council is about to start using a new system for logging planning applications which will provide national and local indicators of performance. One locally set indicator will relate to sustainable development measures though the exact wording is not yet decided.

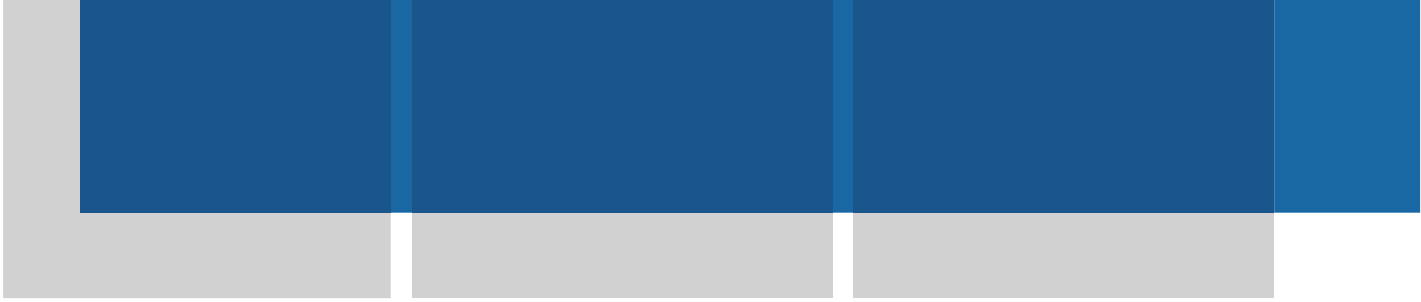
2.4.5

Section D5: Additional comments

The following additional comments were made:

- The key element to be addressed is to ensure that all development must be able to sustain at the very minimum all of its electrical and heating requirements either onsite or as part of a wider community initiative.
- Redefine zero carbon development so that it is just that.
- Strive for, define and then prove that carbon negative (inc. all associated carbon) developments can be achieved within a maximum timescale of 10 years.
- Is it reasonable to ask this question before the necessary changes in legislation and which offer real financial incentives to promote such developments are in place? Probably not.
- Operating systems will need to become much more sophisticated and then standardised nationally and within local authorities, before proper monitoring and performance levels can be set, and this will require a major national injection of resources to support incentives locally.

- The planning system is capable of setting a framework for assessing applications for low and zero carbon development but the detailed assessment and post construction monitoring of development to ensure compliance is beyond the current skills base of the planning system and in this respect the role of the building control system needs to be clarified given their skills base.
- Stringer guidance and targets should be set.
- We are currently exploring a policy similar to Uttlesford District Council, to improve the dwellings in the County. There is a question over how much time the Building Regulations team have to offer applicants advice on energy efficient savings. Your assistance would be appreciated to offer advice whilst planning officers gain confidence.
- Needs to be more prescriptive and informative. 'Guidance' isn't enough to persuade developers, especially where there are cost implications.
- More accessible information & opportunity to discuss with planning professionals about the local stance.
- There is an impression that there is a lot of talking about the issues & lots of plans and strategies but not much action on the ground.
- Need planning inspectors to back up LPA's if refusals for permission are based on low carbon / environmental grounds.
- Minimum building standards need to be improved and set nationally through planning policy Wales and/or building regulations.
- Initiative should be taken by local planning authorities to secure development which exceeds minimum standards through positive local policies and SPG.
- More innovative and imaginative ways of securing more LZC development will be required in area where the market is relatively weak.
- The main ways in which the planning system can deliver more zero and low carbon developments must be through requirements and targets embodied in planning policy, either at national or local level and implemented through design requirements at the application stage, and legal obligations.
- Building shortly arising from the planning system being expected to deliver.
- Substantial contributions to meeting affordable housing needs.
- A step-change in sustainability of new buildings.
- A substantial contribution to infrastructure costs.
- Require carbon zero development in guidance.
- Welsh Assembly Government set carbon reduction targets at a local authority level.
- Where carbon production is unavoidable in development e.g. power stations, guidance allowing Authorities to require s106 payments to reduce carbon reduction elsewhere e.g. fund for grants to households to install solar heating, double & secondary glazing etc.
- Guidance with a presumption that development that generates heat and/or energy will capture and use that energy wherever feasible e.g. through CHP district heating schemes etc. or risk applications being refused.
- The use of development management to consider the approach of individual proposals rather than national sustainable building standards (minimum).
- Development should be seen as good enough to achieve planning permission (consider each app on its merits), rather than poor enough to refuse, (national sustainable building standards do not encourage development to aim to be as good as it possibly can).
- Need to provide strict targets for implementation of zero/low carbon targets and apply them consistently.



Appendix A



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Low and Zero Carbon Developments and the Planning System Welsh Assembly Government Research on understanding the practical implications for local authorities

OFFICER SURVEY

Summer 2008

Introduction

The Welsh Assembly has commissioned consultants, Faber Maunsell and Baker Associates to undertake a survey of the issues, ideas, opportunities and barriers in the use of planning policy to encourage low and zero carbon development.

The first stage of this research is a short survey about your current experience and the issues, opportunities and barriers you face. We are looking to receive a range of views on these issues from within each authority across planning policy, development management, building control, energy management, corporate policy or other relevant sectors. The survey is voluntary but we are happy to receive responses from a number of different perspectives from within the same authority, and would encourage you to send this questionnaire to a wide array of officers in your local planning authority.

The second stage of the research involves working more closely with two case-study authorities to explore the issues further and identify ways that the barriers could be overcome through an analysis of existing and planned policy, and a series of interviews, peer review and workshops. This questionnaire also seeks authorities to consider their willingness and ability to become a potential case-study. Those authorities interested in partnering but not selected will be kept up-to-date and involved in the research by way of a summary of findings and opportunities to participate in peer review and workshops.

The information you provide will make a direct contribution to shaping Welsh Assembly Government policy and technical guidance on facilitating sustainable buildings and low and zero carbon developments.

It is also envisaged that there would be direct benefits for the case-study authorities in achieving CPD credits for staff members taking part in the workshops and in offering tailored advice from the research team on overcoming barriers to delivering low and zero carbon development in their local authority area.

Representatives of all Local Planning Authorities in Wales are being surveyed and all the answers provided will be treated in strict confidence, and only used for research purposes. No individual responses will be identified in the analysis, and your contact details will not be passed to any third parties.

Enclosed are questionnaires in both the English & Welsh Language. Try and answer all the questions you can, basing your answers on your understanding. If you are not involved in a relevant area of work, and you know someone else in your organisation that you feel would be more appropriate to complete this questionnaire, please pass it on to them.

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

Should you wish to receive an electronic copy of the questionnaire for completion, please liaise with Mark Morant using the contact details given below.

Once you have completed the questionnaire please return it to us by **Monday 8th September 2008** by either:

- using the pre-paid envelope enclosed,
- faxing to 029 2035 3499, or
- e mail to mark.morant@fabermaunsell.com

If you have any queries about this questionnaire or would like further information about the research please contact Mark Morant on 029 2035 3483 or mark.morant@fabermaunsell.com

I look forward to receiving your response and would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Note : For each LPA this will be sent to the respective head of the planning department, an LDP/policy lead officer and a development control lead officer. Therefore Section B and E will only require one co-ordinated response from each LPA.

Questionnaire contents			
Section A	Your details	p.2	All
Section B	The local planning framework	p.3	Planning officer only
Section C	Low and Zero Carbon development experience	p.5	All
Section D	Views on barriers and opportunities	p.6	All
Section E	Local planning authority case study proposal	p.8	LPA representative

A Your details

A1	Name	
	Local Planning Authority	
	Address	
	Post Code	
	Telephone	
	Email	

A2	Which department do you work in?	
	Your role	
	Does/or would your role include any responsibilities in facilitating renewable energy and/or energy efficiency in new buildings/developments? (if so please explain)	

A3	Would you like a summary of the survey results?	
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Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
B	The local planning framework

B1	<i>In your planning department how many Full Time equivalent employees work in</i>	
	<i>Planning Policy</i>	
	<i>Development Management (Control)</i>	
	<i>Planning administration / support</i>	
	<i>Other key staff with a current/potential input to low and zero carbon development</i>	

B2	<p>Do you have any <u>adopted</u> planning policy or policy guidance relating to the implementation of low and zero carbon development? (e.g. requiring energy efficiency, on-site renewable energy generation, or similar issues incorporated into sustainable design policies). Please list these and their source</p> <p><i>Could you please send us copies of these? – by email or to the address above</i></p>
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B3	(a) How do you seek the implementation of these low and zero carbon policies? (e.g. a checklist, quantified analysis, energy audit, design statement)
	(b) Who is responsible for checking these for policy compliance? e.g. energy officer, development management team.
	(c) Are these requirements only at the design stage or does it include post construction review?

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

B4	Is your local authority currently preparing new policy on low and zero carbon development as part of the new Local Development Plan?
	Please include references
Could you please send us copies of these? – by email or to the address above	

B5	To the best of your knowledge how many applications have you received for renewable energy or low carbon energy technologies (i.e. Biomass, Wind, Solar Thermal, Photovoltaic, Combined Heat and Power)							
		Wind	Woodfuel /Biomass	Photovoltaic	Solar Thermal	Heat Pumps	Combined Heat and Power	Other (Hydro/Bio-gas)
	2005							
	2006							
	2007							
Names of developments (approved, being constructed, completed)								

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

C Low and Zero Carbon Development Experience

C1	To the best of your knowledge how many new developments/buildings in your local planning authority area could be defined as 'low or zero carbon developments'? (i.e. are there buildings which are noted for improved energy efficiency (above Building Regulations) or incorporation of renewable energy technologies in their design)	
	If possible, could you list these	

C2	How many of these 'low and zero carbon developments' or projects have you been involved in?	
	If possible, could you list these	

C3	In implementing or facilitating these developments do you have any examples of effective policy and guidance or local planning authority action to secure low and zero carbon developments?

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

D Views on barriers and opportunities

D1 Do you consider that your authority's current policies allow for the successful implementation of low and zero carbon development in your local area? If not, what changes would you make to improve this?

--	--

D2 Apart from local planning policy what mechanisms are (or have been) influential in delivering low and zero carbon developments? Please give details of all that apply, how effective these are and how you use them in implementation:

	National policy and/or guidance	
	Corporate policy	
	Financial incentives	
	Specific requirements of delivering public sector funded development	
	Developer initiative	
	Working with Support / Partner Organisations	
	Local planning officers	
	Members of Planning Committee/ Local Councillors	
	Other	

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

D3 What do you think are the current barriers to your local authority implementing more low and zero carbon development? (leadership, clear guidance etc)

What do you think the reasons are for this? (e.g. lack or the wrong type of national policy and/or guidance, lack of local policy and/or guidance, skills gaps, lack of corporate commitment etc)

D4 What do you think could be done to help improve the implementation of low and zero carbon development in your local authority area? (e.g. nationally set targets, training, fiscal incentives)

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.

D5	Please use this space to write in any comments you may relating to this project and how the planning system can help to implement more low and zero carbon development

E	Local Authority Involvement
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E1	Would your local authority like to partner with Welsh Assembly Government for this research and participate in the following activities:
	Being a case study local authority (i.e. involvement in interviews and workshops) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ No <input type="checkbox"/> ₂
	Participate in peer workshop Yes <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ No <input type="checkbox"/> ₂
	<i>Response to this question would preferably be from the most senior officer representing the planning department within the local planning authority.</i>

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Please return it by Monday 8th September 2008.**

Please return this questionnaire by Monday 8th September 2008.