

NOW SCHOOLS GET 2016 ZERO CARBON DEADLINE

Schools secretary Ed Balls launched his Children's Plan just before the break, and with it a new government 'ambition' that all new school buildings should be carbon neutral by 2016, in line with new homes. He also announced that a taskforce will be set up shortly to advise on the how the target should be achieved, raising the question of whether schools should get their own regulatory ladder for energy performance along the lines of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The first step will be a carbon reduction of around 60% if some 200 pipeline school projects are anything to go by. Within a few days of launching the Children's Plan, Balls named these projects as beneficiaries of a £110m carbon reduction fund to be spent over the next three years, with the majority being drawn from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

Balls said that the programme will add around £50/m² to these major renewal projects, providing the average secondary school project with an additional £500,000 to be spent on a combination of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy installations.

What Balls' DCSF department has done is assemble all new school projects (at least 75% new build) from BSF waves 1-4 plus the academies, unless they have already reached detailed design stage. Note that the 60% target is based on emission savings on a comparable school built to 2002 Building Regulations standards.

Architects can find more information about the carbon reduction programme at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/schoolbuildings/sustainability/renewableenergy/carbontargets/> where there are also links to a carbon calculator for school design options and new guidance on the use of renewables in schools and evaluation of biomass for heating. The list of proposed school projects is provided in the letter from Sally Brooks, Head of Schools Capital Division (17 December).

Schools not on the list can console themselves with energy minister Malcolm Wicks reminder in December that £44m still remains unclaimed from the original £50m set aside for schools and other public sector organisations under Phase 2 of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. More at www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk

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