

LoCO₂Co PLUS

Low Carbon Communities
Performance Lab for Urban Sustainability



Our objective is the widespread transformation of localities to be low carbon, climate resilient places where people can live sustainable lives. We use evidence as the basis for our guidance and actions.



The LoCO₂Co team seeks evidence and case studies that demonstrate what makes a successful low carbon and wholly sustainable place that is adapted for climate change and 2050 ready. Forming an **interdisciplinary action-learning team**, we will work with exemplary sites, both new build and existing places, to test and demonstrate our learning. Through a learning network and events programme, we will disseminate our findings and share our experience.

In order to create a meaningful **evidence base**, we have formed **LoCO₂Co PLUS, the Performance Lab for Urban Sustainability**. We invite you to join us in **this exciting project**.

Starting in spring 2011, as a team we will:

- work collaboratively to create a set of performance measurement criteria for wholly sustainable places
- examine best practice benchmarking systems such as 'What Makes an Eco Town' (Bio-Regional, CABE 2008), the 'Integrated Sustainability Assessment Toolkit' (ISAT) (SUE-MoT Consortium), Design Quality Indicator system (CIC)
- draw on cross-sector experience and research
- form a useable, accessible industry standard that can be held up to masterplans, and new and existing places.

The performance measurement will be used to:

- set standards and test visions
- promote collaborative learning and knowledge management
- measure outcomes
- improve performance

By joining LoCO₂Co PLUS you will:

- begin benchmarking your achievements immediately
- develop a set of meaningful, measurable metrics for wholly sustainable neighbourhoods
- meet every two months to chart progress with your peers
- identify the requirements of transformation plans for your place



Depending on membership, LoCO₂Co aspires to offer a **programme of public events** to explore particular topics, based on the needs and interests to **LoCO₂Co PLUS** members. This is likely to include innovative finance for sustainability, transport, occupant health and well-being. Each event would bring together a group of experts, academics, and experienced practitioners to share knowledge and learning. Members would have free access to these events as well as chance to shape the programme.

Context: Global scientific consensus identifies the requirement for an 80% reduction in annual CO₂ emissions in order to stall climate change at a level within which human life can continue to thrive, shown to be a 2°C rise in temperature; in the UK, we have set in law that this reduction should be reached by 2050. Furthermore, even achieving these targets means that there will still be a significant change in the climatic conditions in the UK, and a corresponding impact on the natural and built environments, to which we will have to adapt.¹



A successful response to these challenges will require a radical transformation of both our built environment and how we use it. In particular, there will need to be a significant shift in the shape and use of our neighbourhoods and communities, as this is the scale at which most of our routines occur. In order to transform our existing, or build new, neighbourhoods and communities into sustainable, low carbon places, **we need visions of what might be possible, examples of what has (or hasn't) worked in the past, and guidelines or frameworks for how we might get to a sustainable future.**

There are a few examples of sustainable low carbon communities / neighbourhoods that have been built and more work is currently underway to plan the transformation of a number of existing places, particularly through the Transition Towns Network². However, there is not yet widespread application of the changes required. **The purpose of the LoCO₂Co** is to catalyse change on the ground by bringing together developers, local authorities, utility providers, community leaders, researchers and thinkers to study exemplar projects and places and create a national and international hub of leading practice and learning about low carbon, resource efficient communities.

LoCO₂Co PLUS is the first step towards this goal. We know from building-scale testing and monitoring that the difference between design and in-use performance is significant, with, in some instances 100% more energy being used than was planned³. Still less is known about performance at the urban scale. We cannot hope to reach our 2050 goals without being able to measure and chart our progress, identify our successes and shortfalls to improve the quality and performance of what we do. In tandem with this work, we will produce guidance and develop transformation plans.

During 2011 and 2012 LoCO₂Co PLUS Programme will partner up to ten organisations. Partners will be drawn from at least one of each of the following:

- developer
- academic institution
- masterplanning and engineering consultants
- local leaders
- service utility
- social housing provider
- think tank
- investor
- 'green accountancy' practitioner

As a contribution to our costs, the LoCO₂Co PLUS membership fee is £5,000 per organisation per year.

Members' benefits

- Benchmark your own progress
- Share experience with other leading organisations from various sectors
- Input to programme of public, networking events
- Understand the risks presented by climate change and our response.
- Identify opportunities for holistic sustainability
- Promote low carbon, resource efficient communities
- Find out about proven interventions for achieving sustainable places
- Associate Membership of the GHA⁴, providing access to events and building monitoring expertise.

Contact the LoCO₂Co team by e mailing Laura Morgan, laura@sdfoundation.org.uk, call us on 020 7841 8909 or visit us, with prior notice, at Ground Floor, 1 Baldwin Terrace, London N1 7RU.

¹ Please see our Position Paper, on our website, for the citations for this paragraph.

² www.transitiontowns.org

³ Please see the work of Sustainable Development Foundation partner, the Good Homes Alliance at www.goodhomes.org.uk

⁴ The Good Homes Alliance, www.goodhomes.org.uk