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Earls Court Development Company secures SBTi approval for net zero targets

Amber Rolt
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EXCLUSIVE: London developer reveals plans to reduce carbon emissions and impact on the environment through development of 44-acre Earls Court site

The Earls Court Development Company (ECDC) has had its net zero targets for the high profile re-development of the 44-acre site of the former Earls Court Exhibition Centre site validated by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).


The developer said it has created a pathway to reduce emissions in conjunction with the SBTi and has committed to targets to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions from the site by 50 per cent by 2032, before then reaching net zero by 2050.

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The London developer confirmed it has been working with sustainability consultants Hoare Lea to gather data on energy consumption and emissions relating to its plans for Earls Court which have allowed it to establish a carbon emissions baseline.

The developer submitted plans last month to convert the former Earls Court Exhibition Centre site into a mixed-use urban development comprising 4,000 new homes, 20 acres of public green and open space, three new anchor cultural venues, and 2.9 million square feet of workspace which it aims to lease to clean and climate tech innovation companies and start-ups.

"Embedding sustainability throughout all stages of decision-making at Earls Court is, quite simply, the right thing to do, and its impact can be traced from a macro, planetary scale down to the air being breathed by our neighbours around site," said Peter Runacres, head of Urban Futures for ECDC. "We are pleased that our targets have now been officially validated by the SBTi, and look forward to the next stages of implementing our plans."

ECDC said an all-electric approach will be "central" to its strategy for the site and will allow it to slash carbon emissions and reduce air pollution.

The residential buildings within the development will also be designed using net zero Passivhaus principles, which reduce the need for space heating and cooling within buildings.

Working to high sustainable standards, including BREEAM and Nabers, the site will use an energy sharing network - a low-temperature network that can exchange energy with other connected consumers - and further support the delivery of a net zero energy system for the site.

Elsewhere in the development, 20 acres of green and public open space are set to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain of 85 per cent, forming a defence against air pollutants, the developer said.

The development will also make use of what ECDC describes as a 'water neutral' management system involving the capture, storage, and re-use of water which it says will minimise runoff and help provide atmospheric cooling.

Greg Jones, director at Hoare Lea, said the project's adoption of "both short and long-term validated science-based targets establishes [ECDC] to be a climate leader".

"ECDC is a progressive client; it has been very rewarding to work in collaboration with them to develop their Principles for Future Living, Earls Court masterplan sustainability strategy and Race to Zero plan," he added.

Construction on the first phase of the development is planned to begin in 2026.

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