

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

# Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Tuesday 19 November 2024

## **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Nicole Trehy (Chair), Stala Antoniadou and Jose Afonso

### **Other Councillors:**

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology)  
Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)

**Officers:** Hinesh Mehta (Assistant Director Climate Change), Bram Kainth (Executive Director of Place), Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead), Annie Baker (AD Street Environment Services) and Charles Francis (Committee Coordinator)

### **External Witnesses:**

Sarah Jane Widdowson (WRWA)  
Amy Casey (ReLondon)

## 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ross Melton and Laura Janes

## 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 3. **MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **4. CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT.**

Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead) provided a presentation on Circular Economy and Sustainable Procurement. She showed slides that covered the following key aspects:

- Context within the Climate Emergency – enabling and motivating sustainable choices through policy and procurement.
- Approach and focus areas, including built environment and consumer goods.
- The Council's commitment and role
- Opportunities to lead in resource efficiency including:
  - Carbon management approach for highways
  - Material reuse hubs
  - Launch a repair voucher schemes
  - Refresh the Council's procurement plastic free policies and implement an ethical advertising and sponsorship policy.

Sarah Jane Widdowson, Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), gave an overview of the communications and education programme carried out for waste prevention. It was noted that 95 class visits at Smugglers Way and 2 in school workshops had taken place. She provided a summary of the ReWork facility reuse project. Staff were employed as apprentices in electrical engineering and maintenance, helping them to gain the experience and skills necessary to embark on a new career. WRWA processes co-mingled and separated recyclables at its two waste transfer stations. WRWA's circular economy specific actions included increasing reuse and supporting skills and social value for reuse and repair, education around waste presentation and recycling. And exploring options for a reuse hub. It was noted that WRWA officers supported wider government interest in the circular economy.

Amy Casey (ReLondon) gave a presentation on the circular neighbourhood's scheme and provided an overview of the following key aspects that could be delivered in Hammersmith & Fulham:

- This initiative would help the community to waste less and reuse, repair, share and recycle more.
- This created greater community cohesion and boosting the local economy.
- The project took place in an area called Heston (London Borough of Hounslow) with a population of approx. 25,000.
- Over a 1-year delivery period, ReLondon worked with 20 different delivery partners.
- 45 volunteers and 3 part-time advisors were hired for the project.
- Key stakeholder feedback and activity performance.

The Chair thanked everyone for their presentations and requested further clarification on how the circular neighbourhood project would continue to support behaviour change in the future. In response, Amy Casey (ReLondon) explained that 65% of the interventions implemented during the project had been sustained post completion. This included the monthly repair café, which had successfully transitioned into a community interest group. Additionally, primary schools were still

running their initiatives, and the local council continued to support community based electric repair workshops.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis noted that it was encouraging to see collaborative working across various sectors within the circular economy. She explained her background in the buildings and construction Industry, and she commended the building materials reuse initiative. She asked if the reuse of materials had increased over the last few years and how officers saw this developing in the future, especially as space was at a premium to store materials. In response, Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead), explained the reuse of materials was still at the concept stage and highlighted that the storage of materials was a significant issue. She highlighted that one of the challenges was where the materials were located. To address this, officers were looking at ways of harnessing the digital marketplace to communicate with stakeholders cross London and further afield.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis asked if an App could be developed for local builders to use. This could help to mitigate the storage (of materials) issue. So that when materials became available, resources could be used locally which would reduce transportation impacts and help to lessen the overall carbon footprint. In response, Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead), explained the platform allowed access to Council officers (Development and Planning Team, Housing and Capital Works) as well as local suppliers and businesses, so as many partners as possible could participate in the conversation about the reuse of materials. Councillor Stala Antoniadis asked if this message could be sent to all members of the building industry. In response, Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead), explained that a launch event for the platform was held only yesterday (Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November), and Architects, Surveyors and Structural Engineers attended the event.

The Chair enquired if there were any levers that could be used to measure how much was being recycled and levers to encourage fines. She asked what the monitoring process was for buildings if they were not under direct Council control and if there was any compulsory element? In response, Laura Humphreys (Alliance Climate and Sustainability Lead), explained there a pre-demolition audits and circular economy statements from planning applications can be used to create a materials' passport stemming. Gathering this information would help the Council gain an understanding of what assets already existing and whether there was any value in reusing materials from them. So, at this stage, there was a real data gap, but officers were working to fill this by auditing what was already on site and what could be used before procuring further materials.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis thanked Sarah Jane Widdowson (WRWA) for her presentation and the excellent work they did including the reuse of white goods. Sarah Jane Widdowson provided details of how the WRWA worked with the Chairty Rework and how the WRWA used a network of other charities to supply residents with these goods.

The Chair enquired about the possibility implementing measures to make recycling mandatory for large businesses rather than relying on voluntary participation. She commented that larger businesses could use a private recycler, and if they did, how was the Council meant to measure and monitor recycling rates if they were not using

WRWA as the Council 's preferred partner. In response, Sarah Jane Widdowson (WRWA) explained that starting next year, new recycling regulations would be introduced – The Simpler Recycling Regulations. These regulations would require all businesses to recycle more and to collect food waste. WRWA worked with its partners such as Hammersmith and Fulham , and the Council worked with businesses to collect their recycling and bring it to WRWA. It was anticipated that these changes would significantly increase recycling rates.

Councillor Jose Afonso thanked Sarah Jane Widdowson (WRWA) and Amy Casey (ReLondon) for their excellent presentations and asked for details to be provided on the projected cost for the Repair Voucher Scheme. In response, Laura Humphreys confirmed there was no allocated funds, but there were projected costs at this stage. Laura explained that officers were working with the North London Waste Alliance which had secured funding for set up costs and were hoping to expand this scheme across London.

In relation to the Heston project, Councillor Jose Afonso asked what the most popular circular service was. In response, Amy Casey (ReLondon) provided details on the uptake of various projects, and it was noted that the in-person events, workshops and pop-ups were well attended. These included the repair café, the community growing session and various textile upcycling workshops. There was also a pop-up with a partner for Circular Threads which was a rental service and pre-loved service for Southeast Asian wear. Amy Casey (ReLondon) explained there was less anecdotal evidence on the uptake of digital services, but these were also popular.

Councillor Jose Afonso requested further clarification on the cost's associated with the Heston circular neighbourhood project (in the London of Hounslow). Amy Casey (ReLondon) explained that the project was part funded by ReLondon, with the local council providing matched funding. She outlined the total project costs of £200k, noting that a portion of the budget was allocated to hiring a behaviour change specialist to design the initial project framework and its branding, as well as an evaluation consultancy to assess its performance .

The Chair enquired about the cost of the cleaning up advertising and whether or not the Council could afford it. In response, Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead), explained that it was unclear how much funding the Council received from various sectors, but having spoken to boroughs across the country that had implemented similar policies, they had not seen any significant revenue loss from it and had seen revenue generation. The findings from Sheffield Council showed that by promoting advertising space for sustainable businesses and low carbon businesses they had generated revenue.

The Chair then invited those residents in the public gallery to ask questions.

A resident expressed her concerns about the recycling bins at Ravenscourt Park, as she had been informed by park workers that the contents of the bins would not be recycled as it was contaminated by dog waste. Bram Kainth (Executive Director of Place) explained he was really disappointed to hear this and would investigate the matter further.

**Action: That officers investigate the issues related to the use of the recycling bins in Ravenscourt Park.**

A resident commented on the food products she had found in a kitchen adjacent to the meeting room and remarked it would be good if the Council could suggest to residents that Hammersmith and Fulham became a plant-based Council. Having highlighted the advantages of a plant-based approach, she remarked that establishing a plant-based Council, similar to initiative adopted by other councils would be dynamic and exciting opportunity to address the climate crisis. In response, Bram Kainth (Executive Director of Place), explained that the Council had committed to improving access to healthy and sustainable food, and reduce food waste in our Climate & Ecology Strategy and that a response to the question would be made outside the meeting.

**Action: That officers provide a response to this question outside the meeting.**

A resident asked Western Riverside Waste Authority whether it would be possible for them to create an exchange hub which was not just restricted to the Charity sector. In response, Sarah Jane Widdowson (WRWA) explained that at the Household Waste Recycling Centre, there was a reuse section. Unfortunately, other residents could not pick up and collect these items, but this was an idea that could potentially be explored in the future. Sarah Jane highlighted that there were number of digital platforms, marketplaces, What's App Groups etc that currently existed to facilitate community led exchanges. Amy Casey added that ReLondon also worked with a number of London Boroughs to promote digital exchange platforms.

A resident commented that he had visited the Western Riverside Waste Authority facility, had seen what it did, and he praised its work. In relation to the circular economy, he highlighted that reuse, repair and education were guiding principles that everyone needed to follow to reduce waste.

A resident highlighted the issue of fly tipping and her work on her estate to ensure this waste was collected by the Council. However, she noted that when bulky waste was collected everything simply got crushed rather than some of it being recycled. In response, Annie Baker, (AD Street Environment Services) explained that the Council was very keen to ensure that as much of this waste was reused and refurbished but when bulky waste was generally collected most of the materials had perished beyond the point of reuse. She provided details of Charities and digital platforms that could be used to facilitate the collection and recycling of bulky waste.

A resident enquired about the possibility of implementing a heat network to provide low carbon heating options, similar to the initiative adopted by Kensington and Chelsea. Bram Kainth (Executive Director of Place), responded, noting that such network would be developed alongside the Civic Campus project and would also serve some residential properties.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) commented that he sat on the ODPC, and a number of data centres were being developed in the Borough. He explained the intention was to connect data centres to

future heat networks. He also encouraged residents to visit Western Riverside Waste Authority to see the recycling (and education) work it did.

The Chair commented on the new division of waste and how this related to what the Council was able to recycle (including food waste). In response, Annie Baker provided details on how the food waste collection service operated in conjunction with the household waste collection service.

A resident raised question in relation to storage, asking how the Council would ensure that there was adequate space for recycling. Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead), noting that officers were working closely with stakeholders to identify space options and use the space that was already available. The resident also asked if there was a greener alternative to concrete. In response Laura Humphreys explained there were lower carbon green alternatives that were being currently tested, but for structures, timber should be prioritised as a low carbon alternative.

#### **RESOLVED -**

That the Committee note and comment on the presentation.

### **5. H&F GREEN INVESTMENT UPDATE**

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) provided an overview of the new Hammersmith and Fulham Green investment scheme. On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet approved the launch of this scheme: an innovative community investment scheme primarily aimed at engaging local residents and businesses in H&F's climate change objectives. The Council was ambitious in its climate and ecological aims and was therefore targeting £5m of funding in total – the largest ever green investment scheme of its kind. It was noted that the H&F Green Investment provided residents with a low-risk investment opportunity with attractive, fixed interest rates compared to high street alternatives and a chance to see the impact of their investment in their local community.

The first tranche of the H&F investment launched on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at a rate of 4.85% and reached £1m of investment 6 days ahead of the scheduled closing date. The second tranche launched promptly after that on 26 February 2024, raising a further £755,000 in three months. Plans were now progressing to launch a third tranche of investment. Additionally, a summary from the first two tranches (including the green initiatives progressed to date), and the plans for future tranches was provided.

The Chair enquired whether the Council would be required to repay the borrowed funds used to support the scheme. Councillor Rowan Ree explained that currently the Council financed capital projects by borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board. The Council sets the rate of interest payable to investors, which was benchmarked to be below that of the Public Works Loan Board, therefore representing a cheaper form of external borrowing for the Council.

In response to a resident's questions, Councillor Rowan Ree clarified that participation in the scheme was not limited to H&F residents; it was also open to

individuals from outside the borough. Additionally, the scheme welcomed involvement from businesses and community groups.

A resident asked how the local projects were planned. Councillor Rowan Ree explained that for the next tranche, the Council intended to finalise which projects to invest in before opening it. He encouraged residents to share any ideas or suggestions with the Council, emphasising that now would be an ideal time to get involved.

**RESOLVED -**

That the Committee note and comment on the presentation.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) provided an update on the Climate Connect Newsletter and provided details of how to sign up for the mailing list.

The Chair noted that the 2024 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would be presented at the January 2025 PAC meeting. Other items suggested were:

- City Cycling
- Ocean Conservation Trust

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting is due to take place 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Meeting started: 7:00pm  
Meeting ended: 8:31pm

Chair .....

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