

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Tuesday 21 November 2023

PRESENT

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

Other Councillors: Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology)

Officers

Bram Kainth (Strategic Director of Environment)
Jim Cunningham (Climate Change Strategy and Policy Lead)
Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead)
Annie Baker (Assistant Director Street Environment Services)
Amrita White (Committee Coordinator)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence has been received from Councillors Ross Melton

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. **CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGY OUTLINE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF FOOD WASTE RECYCLING AND WHEELED BINS.**

Laura Humphreys (Climate Alliance and Sustainability Lead) provided a presentation on the Council's circular economy strategy. This covered the approaches which aimed to keep materials in use through improved product design, repair, reuse, sharing and recycling, to reduce the borough's reliance on extraction of new materials. She outlined the Council's ambitious plan and objectives to scale-up what was already being delivered to create conditions for low-carbon living in the borough and improve the way the Council managed its own procurement, purchasing and resource use. She also updated members on how the Council was already embedding circularity as an organisation and delivering it within the borough. This included examples of future projects and initiatives that could be implemented within the Council to embed circular economy principles.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis thanked Laura Humphreys for her presentation. She asked what measures were in place to effectively convey this message across to residents. In response Laura Humphreys noted that Officers would continue to promote what the Council was already offering, including the monthly repair events held within the borough. In addition, residents would be encouraged to participate in workshops and survey, providing feedback in the overall design of the circular economy strategy and how its delivered.

In relation to construction and the amount of carbon emissions emitted, Councillor Stala Antoniadis enquired in Planning terms, if there was any scope to condition the materials which could be used by developers on new builds. In response Jim Cunningham (Climate Change Strategy and Policy Lead) noted that currently under the London Plan, only operational carbon emissions were regulated, although embodied emissions were now being reported for major developments referable to the mayor, building an evidence base on embodied emissions had an impact. In the longer-term, he expected that the intention would be to move towards regulating embodied carbon within the construction phase.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis asked if there was any opportunity to select cork and dry materials to eliminate environmental issues such a damp and mould within the social housing sector. Jim Cunningham explained that whilst there was some opportunity to use lower carbon materials across the borough, this was currently not regulated under the London plan, but Officers expected to see some progress on this in the future.

Relating to community engagement, Councillor Laura Janes enquired what work was currently being carried out to enable residents to support the objectives of the circular economy initiatives. In response Laura Humphreys noted that one of the key elements of the strategy was to reduce the borough's consumption of new materials and lead a more sustainable life by repair, reuse, and recycling. This could be achieved through initiatives already in place such as the 'library of things' and monthly electrical repair events.

In relation to the built environment settings, Councillor Jose Afonso asked if there was any opportunity to use porous asphalt as a suitable material in the parks within the borough. Bram Kainth (Strategic Director of Environment) explained that the Council was already actively exploring these options across highways and parks and

a more detailed update would be brought to the next meeting alongside the floods and sustainable urban drainage systems report.

Action: Bram Kainth

The Chair enquired if the Council had any plans to offer physical, more centralised recycling hubs across the borough where residents were able to drop their electricals or have them repaired. Laura Humphreys confirmed that currently the Council used Livat Hammersmith as its main circular economy hub which offered many opportunities for circularity. Residents also had access to the 'library of things' allowing them to rent out useful items. In addition, Officers were in the process of exploring a more permanent space within the borough 5 days a week.

The Chair felt that the repair events were a fantastic opportunity for residents and asked if there were any learning opportunities available as part of the offering at these events. In response Laura Humphreys noted that these were very informative and engaging events. Training sessions were available for residents to ask any questions and learn the skills to repair their own electrical goods.

The Chair referred to a study which highlighted that the highest 10% income earners of the UK emitted the most amount of carbon. She enquired how the Council planned to reach out to the bigger consumers within London. Jim Cunningham explained that this was not an area that the Council had a huge amount of influence over but that an important thing we could do was help to make visible and desirable new cultural norms relating to less emitting behaviours. This meant holding events such as repair cafes in high footfall areas where people could see their neighbours taking sustainable action. Using communication and engagement to spotlight residents taking action and seeking help from residents to embed these norms through their networks.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) thanked officers for their comprehensive presentation. He provided a summary of the important work that was currently being carried out by the Planning department. This included the Climate Change Supplementary Planning document which offered guidance only and was not a compulsory document. However, the completion of the local plan could take up to 3 years to implement. He also noted that a more holistic approach was being adopted where possible for the selection of building materials across the borough.

Annie Baker (Assistant Director Street Environment Services) provided a presentation on the Council's food waste recycling and wheeled bins service. The Council would introduce new food waste collections for more than 50,000 local households in the coming months. In addition, more than 16,000 local households would receive new wheeled bins. Bins would only be given for those with suitable and accessible space and an assisted collection service was available for residents that needed additional support. She showed slides that covered the following aspects:

- A background on recycling within the borough.

- An outline of the prototype service and its outcomes.
- Survey results and outcomes
- Borough wide roll-out plan

Councillor Laura Janes thanked Annie Baker for her presentation, noting that she was pleased to hear about the Council's plans to extend the prototype service. She asked what options were available to the residents who chose to opt out of the scheme. In response Annie Baker explained that this would be managed on a case-by-case basis and work with residents would be undertaken to resolve any apprehension to the roll-out. Officers were exploring alternative solutions such as a smaller sized bins as an option for certain residents.

In relation to batteries and medical blister packs, a resident enquired what the Council's plan was for recycling these types of products. Annie Baker noted that there were battery recycling points across the borough, including libraries and shops. Medical blister packs could also be taken back to pharmacies and certain shops. However, she would need to confirm the current process in place and circulate an update to the Committee. It was noted that Officers were working in collaboration with the colleagues in the Communications department to raise greater awareness on the importance of correctly recycling batteries and separating these from general waste.

The Chair requested that a follow up be provided on whether TerraCycle were still collecting medical blister packs from Hammersmith Superdrug.

Action: Annie Baker

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) enquired if residents were aware of where to dispose their lithium iron batteries, to separate them from general waste. Annie Baker noted that she would confirm the details and circulate an update to the Committee.

Action: Annie Baker

Councillor Stala Antoniadis noted that whilst thin plastic film could be recycled at certain shops within the borough, it was important to discourage the use of this material. She enquired what the Council's plans were for recycling this going forward. In response, Annie Baker explained that this was a challenging issue to manage as thin plastic was a difficult material to recycle. The Government was looking at putting requirements in place for plastic films to be recycled. This would enable co-collection of this material alongside the general waste collection. However currently there was no technology in place for collection.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis enquired how the Council was planning on incentivising residents to refill bottles across the borough. Annie Baker explained that there was an increasing number of drink fountains across London. Many Cafes also sold reusable coffee cups to discourage the use of single plastic. In terms of cosmetic and cleaning products it was challenging for shops to have a refill option at this stage. However, this was an area that would be explored within the circular economy strategy.

In relation to water fountains, the Chair asked what the Council could do to encourage more water fountains in the Council's tube stations. Annie Baker noted that the Greater London Authority was looking at introducing water fountains to public spaces within London.

Councillor Jose Afonso asked for further clarification to be provided on the total cost of the food waste recycling and wheeled bins service roll-out. Annie Baker noted that she didn't have the exact figures to hand, however would circulate this information after the Committee.

Action: Annie Baker

In addition, Councillor Jose Afonso enquired if there would be an extra charge for the collection of garden waste. Annie Baker noted that currently Officers were exploring ways to introduce the garden waste scheme. A detailed analysis would need to be carried out on the whole system to ascertain what would be viable for the future.

Councillor Stala Antoniadis enquired where all the dog fouling was disposed. In response Annie Baker noted that this went into waste disposal and energy recovery.

The Chair asked for further clarification to be provided on the support offered to residents in relation to assisted collection. Annie Baker explained that the Council had relatively low levels of assisted collections within the borough. This was mainly due to the smaller layout and the design of the properties. The assisted collection service was available for those that required support. This would be closely monitored by Officers. The Council would also contact residents who used the assisted collection service to ensure that it was still working for them.

The Chair enquired how Officers would ensure that the Council was efficient across all the different collection services offered to residents. In response Annie Baker explained that although the Council was offering different options of waste collection within the borough, a standard vehicle would be used to enable collecting different types of waste and recycling at the same time.

The Chair enquired if there was any scope to have a bigger collection day to minimise smaller car journeys to the waste and recycling centres. Annie Baker noted that the Council currently offered a bulky waste collection service for the disposal of larger items. Other options were also being explored to help reduce the number of journeys made that were not necessary.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation and provided a brief summary of the key points discussed. It was noted that further updates would be provided around the disposal of medical blister packs and lithium iron batteries. The Committee was also keen to learn more about the garden waste scheme going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

1. Noted and commented on the presentation.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will take place on 6th Feb 2023

The Chair noted that at the next meeting an update would be provided on the Council's budget and flood mitigation and sustainable drainage systems.

Meeting started: 7:05pm
Meeting ended: 8:50pm

Chair

Contact officer: Amrita White
Committee Co-ordinator
Governance and Scrutiny
E-mail: Amrita.White@lbhf.gov.uk