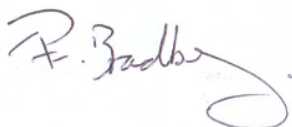


| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN | WARDS: ALL |
| REPORT TITLE Update on July's Response to the Circular Economy Panel report | |
| REPORT OF Director of Environment and Sustainability | |
| FOR SUBMISSION TO Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee | DATE 13 January 2025 |
| <p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report provides an update to work across the Council contributing to a circular economy and follows up July 2024's report to the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee, which responded to the Committee's Circular Economy Panel report.</p> <p>A special scrutiny panel was established by the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee (C&E) to investigate the 'application of the circular economy in the work of Camden Council and support for the principles of circularity in the public and private sectors in the Borough'. This report provides a further update on the continuing work of the Council in this area of work.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No further documents have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability Telephone: 020 7974 3725 Email: richard.bradbury@camden.gov.uk</p> | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the Committee note the contents of the report.</p> | |

Signed:



Date: 30 December 2024

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a further update on the Council's response to the report of the Circular Economy Scrutiny Panel, "*The application of the circular economy in the work of Camden Council and support for the principles of circularity in the public and private sectors in the Borough*" (November 2023).
- 1.2. As a reminder, the responses from July's report back are provided in appendix 1 and this report provides some further updates on the Panel's 5 specific focus areas of, Food; Repair; Textiles; Transport, and; Buildings.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. "A circular economy is one in which stuff is kept in use for as long as possible, delivering the highest value it can, for as long as it can. So rather than making, using and then throwing stuff away (a linear system), a circular economy means looking at each of those stages for new ways of cycling materials and value back into the system – using materials and products again and again, in many different forms." ReLondon 2021.
- 2.2. In 2023 the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee established a Circular Economy Panel to "*work to develop a changing narrative and practice within Camden on the use of materials, away from just waste and recycling collection services, to a more progressive ambition of lower resource usage and reduction in 'consumption emissions'.*"
- 2.3. The Panel *scrutinised the applicability of concepts related to the circular economy in the work of Camden Council and considered any appropriate recommendations for circularity within the Council and more broadly in support for circularity in the public and private sectors within the Borough.*
- 2.4. The Panel recognised the breadth of the circular economy, but practically focussed on 5 areas – Food; Repair; Textiles; Transport, and; Buildings. The Council's response to the Panel's recommendations is attached in appendix 1 and this report provides further updates on July 2024's initial reporting, with ongoing workstreams across the Council that includes the operation of the Food Mission, the refreshed Local Plan, the Climate Action Plan, Future Neighbourhoods programme, Camden Climate Change Alliance, North London Waste Authority (NLWA). Updated public information about practical ways to reduce and re-use materials is available through Camden's website and promoted at events [here](#), which was a recommendation from the Panel.
- 2.5. A range of work delivering a more circular economy at a local level is taking place through the Somers Town [Future Neighbourhood](#) programme, which brings together residents, local businesses and organisations to work together on activities that are "*good for the environment, our pockets and our quality of life*". Continuing work across the Panel's themes, particularly Food, Textiles and Repair, illustrate the triple benefit of a more circular use of materials for the environment, personal finance and well-being.

- 2.6. Camden is also an active member of the London Environment Programme's [One World Living](#) project, which works across London with a wide range of partners to provide practical approaches for Londoners to reduce consumption, through reduction practices, re-use and repair. This project is aligned with the previous work of the Circular Economy Panel with its focus on key areas, which comprise; food; textiles; electricals, and; plastics.
- 2.7. Following initial reporting on the Council's work in July 2024, section 3 below provides further information on how the Council is continuing to develop its work to support the circular economy within the organisation and across the wider community.

3. Focus area updates

3.1. Food

- 3.1.1. The food mission and colleagues from vacant spaces are working together to assess the viability of a Food Hub site to be the catalyst for food redistribution. Also, to complement this the food mission is working with organisations such as 'Too Good To Go' and 'Neighbourly' to facilitate the local surplus food collection and redistribution system.
- 3.1.2. Our partners and food network are already working receiving surplus food from the Felix project and a representative of Felix project is sitting on the Camden Food Partnership steering group. The main three themes the partnership prioritise are money first approach, sustainability and food waste, and healthy eating and nutritious food. Camden is exploring the ways to measure food waste and set a baseline to work towards reducing food waste in line with Re-London.
- 3.1.3. Sustainable food and food waste is a key objective of the Camden Food mission. The food mission is working with partners such as Lifeafterhummus to trial new ways to measure food waste in Camden and a model to work with businesses to reduce their food waste and to redistribute any surplus food. Currently we are building partnerships to support this agenda, linking up Camden Market with Too Good To Go, supporting Lifeafterhummus with their idea of using the 5 Pancras Square ground floor café to serve food cooked from surplus food collection.
- 3.1.4. Working with community partners, Veolia and the NLWA there continues to be a focus on increasing food waste recycling. Alongside this runs education and promotion about food waste reduction and re-use as part of Veolia's quarterly Environmental Educational newsletter and resources / information at 18 events in 2024. Focussed community 'Bin Less, Save More' workshops work with residents to improve their understanding of how to reduce household food waste and are supplemented by our multi-channel work with the 'Eat Like a Londoner' and 'Together We Recycle' (food waste) campaigns throughout 2024 and 2025.
- 3.1.5. The procurement of the new school meals contract is ongoing, with the contract due to start on 1st April 2025. The award will be for a duration of 3 years with two extensions of one year each. As discussed in July, over the

medium term the Council is looking to develop an in-house school meals service.

- 3.1.6. The Panel was keen for the new school catering contract to 'embed principles of the circular economy'. The contract includes provisions and partnerships to manage any surplus food. Any surplus food at end of the week that would be out of date on Monday will be transferred to voluntary sector food providers, food banks and food cooperatives on a Friday. Also, there will be a roll out of the Olio Food Waste Heroes scheme to each school. Olio will coordinate a network of volunteers to pair excess food with those most in need locally, promoting the service to parents and the local community.
- 3.1.7. The contract will also reduce food waste through a series of actions developed through Caterlink's 'Small Change Big Difference' scheme. This action will include measurement of daily food waste at every Camden school kitchen with performance monitored and future targets set for improvement. To accompany this work there will also be a suite of training tools delivered across kitchens.
- 3.1.8. The biggest area of waste, however, now being recorded is 'customer plate' waste. Therefore, there are plans to focus on customer engagement activities, including new daily reporting of food waste dining rooms using display boards, plus regular sessions with Eco-Councils and other student focus groups to identify practical local solutions.

3.2. **Repair**

- 3.2.1. Camden continues to work with partners across the borough on delivering training and services on repair. As reported in July 2025 Veolia, Think & Do & Camden Fixing Factory, continue to deliver Fix and Do repair events across the borough, with the last of the year taking place in December at Doreen Bazell TRA Hall, Somers Town. Around 100 residents attended the 5 workshops in 2024 with nearly 50 electrical items repaired and kept in circulation. We are always looking to deliver more events in new locations across the borough, with support and promotion of existing and new repair groups where possible. We will focus work and promotion on London Repair Week in early March. We also promote wide range of repair resources - including existing repair 'map' available through our web-pages highlighted in section 2.4.
- 3.2.2. The 2024 round of Veolia's Sustainability fund supported 12 social and environmental projects across the borough, including 'Laptops for Refugees' which aims to repair, refurbish and provide laptops to refugees across Camden.
- 3.2.3. Repair activity in Kilburn is funded by the NLWA Community Fund, with the 'Kilburn Repairers' holding general repair cafes throughout the year alongside more focused workshops on textiles upcycling and electrical waste prevention through their Restart Parties (project information available [here](#)). This work weaves into the developing community repair network taking place across the

borough ensuring that items have longer lives and so reducing the demand for virgin materials.

- 3.2.4. The Panel focussed in on how the 'housing voids' system could enhance re-use in their processes. A new void manager is now in place and with processes refreshed, it is now policy that items can be left in situ and "gifted" to the next tenancy (subject to appropriate compliance checks). This is alongside the framework contract requirements for disrepair contractors needing to ensure how any "*material or product (that) can be eliminated, reused, recycled or reclaimed*" within their work practices.

3.3. **Textiles**

- 3.3.1. The July 2024 update relating to the Panel's Textiles recommendations are still relevant and work continues to take place across the borough on education and service delivery relating to textile recycling, re-use and repair. Events and campaigns continue across the borough with community partners, Veolia and NLWA alongside information to support residents hold their own 'clothes swaps' and 'school uniform exchanges' with the "*Share, lend and borrow*" section of our updated web-pages.
- 3.3.2. The Panel recommended holding a roundtable event with fast-fashion companies, which we are partnering with London's One World Living programme on track to deliver in spring 2025.

3.4. **Transport**

- 3.4.1. The Panel's recommendations relating to 'transport' continue to be delivered as set out in July 2024, through the delivery of the Local Plan (and upcoming Plan update) and the Freight Services Action Plan. The Council will continue to work with partners on opportunities for local deliveries, 'last mile' deliveries and enhanced cycle parking options.

3.5. **Buildings**

- 3.5.1. The Panel's recommendations relating to 'buildings' continue to be addressed by July 2024's responses, with a significant focus on planning policy and development in the upcoming revised Local Plan. Consultation on the draft Local Plan will now take place in spring/early summer 2025 for submission to the Secretary of State in autumn 2025.
- 3.5.2. Officers continue to be actively engaged across London with boroughs and partners pursuing circular economy building strategies such as material flow platforms and reviewing approaches to circular economy metrics. In particular, looking into the Romulus initiative, which is a public/private initiative designed to accelerate circular economy in London's built environment. The project will bring together the key contractors, clients, architects and consultants working in Greater London to share building audit data and encourage circular economy. Project data will be shared on an exchange format provided by Upcyclea that is accessible to all members, and patterns of reuse and recovery will be traced. Over the coming year a pilot project of the approach will learn more about how circular economy processes work

across the sector and identify how these can be supported with targeted policy and guidance.

3.6. Other

3.6.1. Other areas noted by the Panel with associated recommendations continue work as set out in July 2024's update in appendix 1. Work with the Camden Climate Alliance and partners continue to support and advocate for circular material practices across Camden's business community. This work includes the recent NLWA [Bring It](#) campaign, which advocates the use of re-usable items across the local catering sector.

3.6.2. Since July 2024's Scrutiny report the draft Deposit Return Scheme regulations were laid in Parliament (November 2024). The draft Regulations implement a Deposit Return Scheme(DRS) for England and Northern Ireland commencing on 1 October 2027. They set out the:

- Scope of the DRS, the role of in-scope retailers, drinks producers and suppliers, and the functions of the **deposit** management organisation (DMO), which will be a non-profit private sector body, and;
- Monitoring, compliance and enforcement measures, including the roles of the Defra Secretary of State, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland (DAERA) ministers and the regulators (the Environment Agency and DAERA). The regulators can use the civil sanctions of fixed monetary penalties, variable monetary penalties, compliance notices and enforcement undertakings. There are offences for failing to comply with a civil sanction or obstructing an authorised person. Company directors can also be guilty of offences committed with a director's consent or connivance or due to their neglect.

3.6.3. national action will further drive the circular use of materials in the drinks packaging sector and act as a significant mechanism in the re-shaping of this sector away from a linear economy model.

4. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

4.1. The principles of a circular economy are well aligned with the Council's aim of financial resilience. In the most part this work should be delivered through Council services' existing budgets, its planning and other powers, and its relationships with contractors and local partners. This reflects the whole organisation approach to the circular economy described in section 2. The Food section of the recommendations and ongoing work does in some cases refer to additional investment which is funded from the reserves allocated to the We Make Camden missions.

5. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

5.1. The Borough Solicitor's comments have been included in this report and there are no further comments to add.

6. Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The application of circular economy principles to Council services and the operation of the Council reduces resource use and material use, therefore, reducing the environmental impact of service delivery. As stated in section 2, these principles are in line with the Council's ambition in We Make Camden, with the circular economy being as much about social and economic benefits as environmental.
- 6.2 The environmental implications, in a general form, are contained within the main body of the report with more detail in the attached appendix.

REPORT ENDS

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Circular Economy Panel – Recommendations Response June 2024 FV