


LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Update on themed debate – Becoming a Circular Economy Borough	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Full Council	DATE 17 th November 2025
SUMMARY OF REPORT This report provides an overview of the full Council themed debate on 25 th September 2025. The report summarises the key points made by the speakers, the debate and the subsequent Motion passed. Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in preparation of this report Contact Officer: Rachel Bailey, Head of Environment Services rachel.bailey@camden.gov.uk 020 7974 3791 5 Pancras Square N1C 4AG	
RECOMMENDATIONS The Council is asked to note contents of the report.	



Signed:

Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability

Date: 6th November 2025

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2019, Camden declared a climate and ecological emergency. This recognised the threat of climate change and the irreversible damage it may cause. A key We Make Camden ambition is that Camden should be a green, clean, vibrant, accessible, and sustainable place with everyone empowered to contribute to tackling the climate emergency.
- 1.2 The report to full Council in September on how Camden can become a circular economy borough provided an overview of the circular economy, the local activity in Camden to date and looking ahead through the national policy approach and Camden's approach through Camden's [Reduction and Recycling Plan 2023-26](#) and new [draft Climate Action Plan 2026-30](#).
- 1.3 The Council was grateful to have six speakers from community groups, local partners and industry experts who were invited to present their views on what Camden should be doing to support transition to a circular economy:
 - Pauline Metivier, ReLondon
 - Fiona Dear, The Restart Project
 - Sarah Howden, Camden Fixing Factory/ Possible
 - Debbie Bourne and Ned Collier, Think and Do
 - Jamie Quinn, Related Argent
- 1.4 The following provides a summary of the full Council debate held on 25th September, the motion passed and next steps.

2. SUMMARY OF FULL COUNCIL DEBATE

- 2.1 The debate was introduced by Councillor Adam Harrison, Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden. Councillor Harrison opened the Debate by emphasising that tackling the climate crisis as one of the key challenges of our time and the need to shift from a linear to circular economy, keeping materials in use and extracting their maximum value rather than throwing them away. Councillor Harrison highlighted how Camden has led on climate action, with ambitious targets and was the first borough to hold a citizens assembly on climate and acknowledged the work of Camden's Culture and Environment Committee Circular Economy Panel.
- 2.2 Pauline Metivier, Head of Business and Sector Support for ReLondon outlined how ReLondon supports boroughs in implementing circular economy strategies. Pauline proposed strengthening existing initiatives with communities, businesses and construction to boost reuse and repair, and exploring economic opportunities from reducing waste sharing examples of small businesses ReLondon have worked with. Pauline advocated for using procurement, planning and communication powers to drive change and emphasised the ripple effect of supporting local businesses in waste reduction.

- 2.3 Fiona Dear, Co-Director UK Strategy and Operations at the Restart Project highlighted the issue of electrical waste, where their research found 36% of items disposed in electrical waste bins were still working and a further 10% were repairable, which would be preferable to being shredded for recycling. Fiona called on Camden to introduce a local reuse target and to promote repair businesses, training and incentives, and also for Camden to sign the national Repair and Reuse Declaration.
- 2.4 Sarah Howden, Head of Sustainable Consumption at Possible and coordinator, shared stories from Camden residents that included: the benefits of using repair services; highlighted how around 200 people in Camden have been trained in repair and reuse; and that approximately 35 volunteers provided support to fixing items locally. Sarah called for electronic waste to be prioritised in Camden's new Climate Action Plan and encouraged the Council to provide low-rent spaces and funding for community repair projects. Sarah also proposed banning promotion of high carbon products on council owned billboards.
- 2.5 Debbie Bourne and Ned Collier from Think and Do highlighted their work in the community, with success stories about sharing spaces, such as toy and street swaps. Debbie and Ned proposed setting up swaps in libraries, streets and on estates. They also suggested making the Council's internal Environmental Stewardship learning module mandatory for all staff to complete and emphasised the importance of circular communities and funding for community projects and initiatives.
- 2.6 Jamie Quinn, Sustainability Director at Related Argent, advocated for designing buildings for sustainable deconstruction and reuse and suggested logistical solutions such as materials reuse warehouses. Jamie highlighted digital platforms for tracking materials and waste and called for stronger planning and procurement policies to embed circularity.
- 2.7 During the debate, Councillors raised the following suggestions:
- Use empty high street shops for community repair services
 - Raise awareness of clothes repair and sustainable fashion
 - Raise awareness of the current repair vouchers available to residents
 - Increase clothes (e.g. clothes rails) and toy swaps, especially in schools
 - More targeted projects on estates to increase reuse and recycling
 - Work with voluntary sector partners to increase fixing volunteering
 - Set a local reuse target to encourage local action
 - Ensure retrofit is used wherever possible in construction
 - Join with other boroughs to store and recirculate materials
 - Digitise planning applications so data can be matched between construction donor and recipient

- Sign the One World Living 'Food Procurement' and 'Single-Use Plastic Reduction' pledges
 - Look nationally for best practice for good working examples
 - Ban advertising of high carbon products on council-owned spaces
 - Partner local businesses with reuse projects
- 2.8 Councillors also praised the work of council officers, community groups and partner organisations such as Library of Things and Fixing Factory to highlight the circular work already happening across the borough.
- 2.9 Councillor Harrison's closing statement summarised the debate, reiterating the importance of waste reduction and reuse. Councillor Harrison also highlighted the drawbacks of measuring success via recycling rates due to being weight based, which does not reflect the reality of what is happening, and the impact the upcoming Deposit Return Scheme in 2027 will have on recycling rates.
- 2.10 The Council then agreed a motion that included the following points:
- A circular economy keeps materials and products in use at their highest value for as long as possible, cutting waste, emissions and costs. This approach is aligned with Camden's Climate Action Plan, which flows from the UK's first local Citizens' Assembly on the climate crisis and commits the borough to a 2030 net-zero target.
 - The Council had convened a Circular Economy Scrutiny Panel, whose [report](#) examined how circularity can be embedded across the Council and borough, which received a formal response from The Cabinet Member.
 - The Draft New Local Plan Policy CC3 (Circular economy and reduction of waste) requires major developments to submit Circular Economy Statements (including material inventories and an overall material circularity calculation), and to design for maintenance, adaptability and future disassembly - prioritising reuse over demolition.
 - Repair, reuse and sharing schemes have been expanded. The Queen's Crescent Fixing Factory helps residents repair small appliances, whilst the Library of Things at Kentish Town (with a new site in Swiss Cottage) has saved residents tens of thousands of pounds and prevented many tonnes of waste and was evidence that practical circular services can cut costs as well as carbon.
 - Circular economy action is central to tackling the climate and cost-of-living crises - supporting local jobs and skills while reducing waste and emissions. With a Labour government now in office, national reforms can accelerate borough-level progress.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Within the Motion passed, the Council resolved:

- To continue leading locally, by seeking to embed circularity into development management and pre-application engagement as part of the new Local Plan.
- To continue to support and, where appropriate, extend local schemes like Fixing Factory and the Library of Things to reduce costs and waste.

3.2 The Council further resolved to call on the relevant Cabinet Member to write to Government to push for the following measures:

- Replace weight-based recycling-rate targets with residual waste per head as a headline metric and support local authorities to contribute to national goals.
- Undertake a new burdens assessment for local authority income at risk from the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), set out mitigation, and revise targets to reflect DRS material shifts.
- Expand the UK “right to repair” to all consumer electronics (including laptops, smartphones and tablets), require minimum 5-year warranties, and guarantee security/software updates for 5 years after products leave the market.
- Fund a national repair-voucher scheme (building on the North London Waste Authority model) via extended producer responsibility payments.
- Publish a national indicators framework for the Circular Economy Strategy, tracking prevention, reuse, repair and product lifetimes alongside recycling.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal comments are incorporated into the report.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The ‘polluter pays’ principle launched in January 2025 has resulted in an annual payment to Camden through the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (EPR) which has reduced the cost of packaging recycling to the local taxpayer. Whilst the Deposit Return Scheme may have a positive impact in street cleanliness the full impact on Camden is unknown due to the complexities of waste modelling and behaviour change.

5.2 Most of the circular economy activities in Camden have been funded by Camden, except for the Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods Funding. More central government funding is required to support communities in the transition to a circular economy as well as adapting local service to new materials flows created by a changing economy.

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, which are in line with the Council's ambitions in We Make Camden.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 There are no appendices to the report.

REPORT ENDS