

MDA No.: 1573

Title: Waste and Recycling

1. Executive Summary

1.1 At the Environment Committee meeting on 15 November 2023 the Committee resolved that:

That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to any output arising from the discussion.

1.2 Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair is asked to agree the Committee's letters on waste and recycling, as attached at **Appendices 1-6**.

2. Decision

2.1 **That the Environment Committee's letters on waste and recycling be agreed.**

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Printed Name: Leonie Cooper, Chair of the Environment Committee

Date: 8 February 2024

3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The exercise of delegated authority agreeing the Committee's letters will be formally noted at the Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services):



Printed Name: Jack Booth, Committee Officer

Date: 8 February 2024

Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance): Not Required

Legal Implications:

The Chair of the Environment Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal):



Printed Name: Rory Mckenna, Monitoring Officer

Date: 8 February 2024

Email: rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- Zack Polanski AM, Deputy Chair;
- Tony Devenish AM; and
- Hina Bokhari AM.

4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.
- 4.3 **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, until what date:

Part 2 – Sensitive Information:

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

Lead Officer / Author

Signature: Richard Clarke

Printed Name: Richard Clarke

Job Title: Senior Policy Adviser

Date: 8 February 2024

Countersigned by Executive Director:

Signature: 

Printed Name: Helen Ewen, Executive Director of Assembly Secretariat

Date: 8 February 2024

LONDON ASSEMBLY

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Appendix 1



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

(Sent by email)

8 February 2024

Dear Sadiq,

I am writing as Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee, which has recently conducted an investigation into waste and recycling in London. The Committee held a meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023, including guests from the Greater London Authority (GLA), ReLondon, Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM), Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), Biocollectors, and the London Borough of Islington.

The Committee discussed a range of issues in the meeting, including the implications of the new 'Simpler Recycling' approach introduced by the Government. One of the challenges identified in the meeting is that increases in food waste collections may mean that there is not sufficient capacity in Anaerobic Digestors to process the food waste that may be collected.

Phil Roche, Commercial Director at Biocollectors, told the Committee that the current capacity of Anaerobic Digestors in London is 500,000 tonnes, but it is expected that capacity for 1 million tonnes will be needed by 2026 when the new national regulations come in. It may therefore take some time for the additional capacity to be constructed.¹

¹ London Assembly Environment Committee, [Minutes](#), 15 November 2023, p.30

The Committee of course recognises that the most important thing is to prevent food waste in the first place, and to continue to educate and engage Londoners about ways to ensure edible food is not wasted. However, beyond this, it is likely that additional capacity is still needed. I am therefore writing to ask what work is being undertaken in London to prepare for this additional capacity required over the shorter term. I would be grateful for your responses to the following questions:

Are you, or your Deputy Mayor responsible for Planning, aware of any plans to introduce new Anaerobic Digestors (beyond the Cory Riverside site) or expand current ones in London?

Has there been any recent assessment in London (by the GLA or any of its partners) of the Anaerobic Digester capacity that may be needed? If so, could you share this assessment with the Committee?

Has there been any recent assessment of strategies that could be put in place to phase out Anaerobic Diegestor capacity if, and when, overall food waste declines?

I would be grateful if you could send this information by 8 March 2024. We would expect to publish your reply.

Please see attached a draft transcript of the Committee meeting.

Please contact Jack Booth, Committee Officer, jack.booth@london.gov.uk, if you have any questions about the meeting.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Yours,



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

(Sent by email)

8 February 2024

Dear Steve,

Congratulations on being appointed Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in November.

I am writing on behalf of the London Assembly Environment Committee. We recently held an investigation into waste and recycling in London, including a meeting on 15 November 2023 that featured a range of guests from the Greater London Authority (GLA), ReLondon, Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM), Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), Biocollectors, and the London Borough of Islington.

I am writing to you to highlight three key conclusions that came out of the discussions which are relevant to your work:

- The ability to enforce recycling would support local authorities to increase recycling rates.
- Appropriate 'new burden funding' is needed to help local authorities in urban areas adapt to new waste and recycling rules.
- The need for additional capacity in Anaerobic Digestors (AD) to meet new food waste collections.

The ability for Councils to encourage household recycling

In the meeting, the Committee heard from Matthew Homer, Waste and Strategy Manager at Islington Council who said that efforts to improve recycling rates are limited by current legislation. He told us:

“a real barrier for us as local authorities is about enforcement...we cannot take enforcement action where people willingly are not using the very, good, reliable and convenient recycling services that we provide them.”¹

The Committee asks the Government to consider what steps it can take to substantially increase the level of recycling – this could include reinstating enforcement powers for local authorities. In addition, making the diversion of recyclables away from incineration or landfill should be made as convenient as possible for households, including measures the Government could introduce to improve awareness of what can be recycled.

‘New burden’ funding

The Committee also discussed the implications of the Government’s recent announcements on waste and recycling in October 2023, known as ‘Simpler Recycling’. The Committee heard that delays in making the announcements had led to uncertainty. The new announcements on simplifying recycling rules and limiting the number of bins households need to use are therefore welcome, but it is important that there is appropriate funding to support the changes.

Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive of ReLondon told the Committee on the issue of uncertainty that:

“the Government have talked about providing funds under new burdens to provide for things like additional food waste collections, for example. No authority is going to implement new recycling collections unless it gets that new burden funding.”²

Similarly, Matthew Homer from the London Borough of Islington said:

“As an authority, we are committed to providing our residents food waste recycling services and most of them already have it, but there are a number of questions and a number of issues around the announcement. Funding is an issue. It is a new burden, and the Government is committed to provide New Burden Funding, but we do not know the level of that funding and we do not know how it will be applied.”³

There are also specific challenges in London, including a high proportion of flats, which mean that increasing recycling rates requires additional measures. The Committee heard of the positive impact of the ‘Flats Recycling Package’, developed by ReLondon, in increasing recycling rates but highlighted that Councils lack sufficient resource to implement best practice measures endorsed in the package.

The Committee believe that it is essential that sufficient “new burden” funding is allocated to London’s local authorities, Waste Authorities and ReLondon, including recognising the additional challenges faced in urban areas, to allow cities such as London to properly implement these new requirements.

Capacity in Anaerobic Digestors

¹ London Assembly Environment Committee, [Minutes](#), 15 November 2023, pp. 21-22

² Ibid, p.2

³ Ibid, p.31

While increasing food waste collection is welcome, the Committee also heard concerns about whether there will be sufficient capacity in Anaerobic Digestors to process this additional material.

Phil Roche from Bio Collectors told the Committee that the current capacity of Anaerobic Digestors to process food waste in London is around 500,000 tonnes, but it is expected that capacity for 1 million tonnes of food waste may be needed. It may take some significant time for the additional capacity to be constructed.⁴ The Committee of course recognises that the most important thing is to prevent food waste in the first place, and to continue to educate and engage Londoners about ways to ensure edible food is not wasted. Additional capacity will be required to cope with additional food waste collection.

The Government should examine carefully what actions it can take to ensure that this additional capacity is in place in time for when new regulations come into force in 2026.

I would be grateful if you can consider these points, and let me know your response, please. We would expect to publish your response. Please send this information by 8 March 2024.

Please see attached a draft transcript of the relevant Committee Meeting. The transcript will be published on the GLA's website as a draft, until it is confirmed by the Committee at its next appropriate meeting.

Please contact Jack Booth, Committee Officer, jack.booth@london.gov.uk, if you have any questions about the meeting.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Yours,

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Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

⁴ London Assembly Environment Committee, [Minutes](#), 15 November 2023, p.30

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Appendix 3



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah
Chair, East London Waste Authority

(Sent by email)

8 February 2024

Dear Dorothy,

I am writing as Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee. We recently held a meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023, as part of our investigation into waste and recycling in London. This included a range of guests from the Greater London Authority (GLA), ReLondon, Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM), Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), Biocollectors, and the London Borough of Islington.

In the meeting, the Committee heard from Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive of ReLondon, who said that despite being a statutory body, it no longer receives any funding from central Government. He said that ReLondon is currently able to plan for around 3 years at a time, but it is limited as to the number of staff it is able to take on and services it is able to offer, as it lacks long-term certainty and financial resources.¹ ReLondon is a statutory body that provides support and resources to local authorities and the Mayor, in order to inform policy on waste and recycling. In recent years it has provided models to increase recycling rates, such as the Flats Recycling Package (a series of interventions to standardise the environment of bin areas) in January 2020,²

¹ London Assembly Environment Committee, [Minutes](#), 15 November 2023, p.8

² Resource London, [Making recycling work for people in flats](#), January 2020

addressing the motivations of young people to recycle in October 2020³ and ethnographic research in 2019 into recycling in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).⁴ As ReLondon is a partnership of all 32 London Boroughs and the City of London,⁵ it is well-placed to provide more support to local authorities on recycling moving forward.

The Committee heard how it would be more efficient if ReLondon was able to provide Councils with more guidance and bespoke support in taking forward policies to increase recycling rates. At present, ReLondon's funding situation means it has to charge councils for these services, and the need for payment creates additional barriers in terms of procurement rules, time, and financial cost for Councils.

Some of the work of ReLondon is funded by the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund⁶ and the Mayor's London Green New Deal Fund.⁷ However, Wayne Hubbard commented at the Committee meeting that "I would say that we could do with more funding and then we could provide one-to-one support to all London boroughs who needed it free of charge. At the moment, the boroughs have to pay for that if they want one-to-ones. But we cannot do that, we do not have the funding to be able to do that."⁸

Matthew Homer, Waste and Strategy Manager at Islington Council gave the example of how it is currently reviewing its planning guidance for new developments, and while it had been able to access some 'pro bono' advice from a colleague at ReLondon, further help in redrafting the guidance would need to be paid for.⁹

The current funding model for ReLondon does not allow it to maximise opportunities to increase recycling rates in London. One potential way of addressing this would be for London's Waste Authorities to provide regular payments to ReLondon to support its work. This could be in the form of an agreed levy or an annual contribution. This investment would potentially produce financial returns by reducing amounts of residual waste and improving recycling and reducing waste overall.

I am writing to ask that you consider making a long-term contribution to the funding of ReLondon to ensure that it is able to effectively support the achievement of London's waste and recycling goals.

Is this something you would consider? I would be grateful if you would write to me with your response. We would expect to publish your reply. Please send this information by 8 March 2024.

Please see attached a draft transcript of the question-and-answer session. The transcript will be published on the GLA's website as a draft, until it is confirmed by the Committee at its next appropriate meeting.

³ London Waste and Recycling Board (former name for ReLondon), [Motivating young Londoners to recycle](#), 19 October 2020

⁴ London Waste and Recycling Board (former name for ReLondon), [Sharing a House, Sharing Responsibility - Recycling in London's HMOs](#), 2019

⁵ ReLondon, [Local authority support](#)

⁶ ReLondon, [Supporting Circular Economy Businesses](#)

⁷ Mayor of London, [MQ2022/3366](#), 21 September 2022

⁸ London Assembly Environment Committee, [Minutes](#), 15 November 2023, pp. 7-8

⁹ Ibid, p.9

Please contact Jack Booth, Committee Officer, jack.booth@london.gov.uk, if you have any questions about the Committee meeting.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Yours,

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Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

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Appendix 4



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Cllr Clyde Loakes
Chair, North London Waste Authority

(Sent by email)

8 February 2024

Dear Clyde,

I am writing as Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee. We recently held a meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023, as part of our investigation into waste and recycling in London. This included a range of guests from the Greater London Authority (GLA), ReLondon, Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM), Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), Biocollectors, and the London Borough of Islington.

In the meeting, the Committee heard from Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive of ReLondon, who said that despite being a statutory body, it no longer receives any funding from central Government. He said that ReLondon is currently able to plan for around 3 years at a time, but it is limited as to the number of staff it is able to take on and services it is able to offer, as it lacks long-term certainty and financial resources.¹ ReLondon is a statutory body that provides support and resources to local authorities and the Mayor, in order to inform policy on waste and recycling. In recent years it has provided models to increase recycling rates, such as the Flats Recycling Package (a series of interventions to standardise the environment of bin areas) in January 2020²,

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Matthew Homer, Waste and Strategy Manager at Islington Council gave the example of how it is currently reviewing its planning guidance for new developments, and while it had been able to access some 'pro bono' advice from a colleague at ReLondon, further help in redrafting the guidance would need to be paid for.⁹

The current funding model for ReLondon does not allow it to maximise opportunities to increase recycling rates in London. One potential way of addressing this would be for London's Waste Authorities to provide regular payments to ReLondon to support its work. This could be in the form of an agreed levy or an annual contribution. This investment would potentially produce financial returns by reducing amounts of residual waste and improving recycling and reducing waste overall.

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⁶ ReLondon, [Supporting Circular Economy Businesses](#)

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⁸ London Assembly Environment Committee, [Minutes](#), 15 November 2023, pp. 7-8

⁹ Ibid, p.9

Please contact Jack Booth, Committee Officer, jack.booth@london.gov.uk, if you have any questions about the Committee meeting.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Yours,

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Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

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Appendix 5



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Cllr Deirdre Costigan
Chair, West London Waste Authority

(Sent by email)

8 February 2024

Dear Deirdre,

I am writing as Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee. We recently held a meeting on Wednesday 15 November 2023, as part of our investigation into waste and recycling in London. This included a range of guests from the Greater London Authority (GLA), ReLondon, Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM), Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), Biocollectors, and the London Borough of Islington.

In the meeting, the Committee heard from Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive of ReLondon, who said that despite being a statutory body, it no longer receives any funding from central Government. He said that ReLondon is currently able to plan for around 3 years at a time, but it is limited as to the number of staff it is able to take on and services it is able to offer, as it lacks long-term certainty and financial resources.¹ ReLondon is a statutory body that provides support and resources to local authorities and the Mayor, in order to inform policy on waste and recycling. In recent years it has provided models to increase recycling rates, such as the Flats Recycling Package (a series of interventions to standardise the environment of bin areas) in January 2020,²

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The Committee heard how it would be more efficient if ReLondon was able to provide Councils with more guidance and bespoke support in taking forward policies to increase recycling rates. At present, ReLondon's funding situation means it has to charge councils for these services, and the need for payment creates additional barriers in terms of procurement rules, time, and financial cost for Councils.

Some of the work of ReLondon is funded by the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund⁶ and the Mayor's London Green New Deal Fund.⁷ However, Wayne Hubbard commented at the Committee meeting that "I would say that we could do with more funding and then we could provide one-to-one support to all London boroughs who needed it free of charge. At the moment, the boroughs have to pay for that if they want one-to-ones. But we cannot do that, we do not have the funding to be able to do that."⁸

Matthew Homer, Waste and Strategy Manager at Islington Council gave the example of how it is currently reviewing its planning guidance for new developments, and while it had been able to access some 'pro bono' advice from a colleague at ReLondon, further help in redrafting the guidance would need to be paid for.⁹

The current funding model for ReLondon does not allow it to maximise opportunities to increase recycling rates in London. One potential way of addressing this would be for London's Waste Authorities to provide regular payments to ReLondon to support its work. This could be in the form of an agreed levy or an annual contribution. This investment would potentially produce financial returns by reducing amounts of residual waste and improving recycling and reducing waste overall.

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Please contact Jack Booth, Committee Officer, jack.booth@london.gov.uk, if you have any questions about the Committee meeting.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Yours,

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Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

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Appendix 6



Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Cllr Rezina Chowdhury
Chair, Western Riverside Waste Authority

(Sent by email)

8 February 2024

Dear Rezina,

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In the meeting, the Committee heard from Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive of ReLondon, who said that despite being a statutory body, it no longer receives any funding from central Government. He said that ReLondon is currently able to plan for around 3 years at a time, but it is limited as to the number of staff it is able to take on and services it is able to offer, as it lacks long-term certainty and financial resources.¹ ReLondon is a statutory body that provides support and resources to local authorities and the Mayor, in order to inform policy on waste and recycling. In recent years it has provided models to increase recycling rates, such as the Flats Recycling Package (a series of interventions to standardise the environment of bin areas) in January 2020,²

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Once again, thank you for your time.

Yours,

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Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee