

LONDON ASSEMBLY

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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,

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 London⁵, 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leonie Cooper".

Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee