

Report – Port Health and Environmental Services Committee

Circular Economy Framework for the City of London Corporation

To be presented on 9th January 2025

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

Your Port Health and Environmental Services Committee recommends the approval of the implementation of a Circular Economy Framework and the associated Action Plan ('the Framework'), and in doing so meet one of the key objectives of the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan 2024-29, as well as aligning with the City Corporation's Net Zero targets. The aim of a 'Circular Economy' is to keep materials in circulation and avoid them becoming waste, and through focusing on the City Corporation's own operations, and by leveraging the influence on the Square Mile, the Framework seeks to ensure the City Corporation exemplifies, drives and innovates circular economy practices, leading the Square Mile to become a circular city by 2040.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Court of Common Council:-

- Approve the implementation of the Circular Economy Framework and the associated Action Plan 2024-2027.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. The Circular Economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated, and products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting.
2. All Waste Disposal Authorities in England, under the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, must have a strategy for managing municipal waste. Long-term strategic planning is crucial for ensuring sustainable waste management and securing necessary infrastructure and service developments. It is a key action of the 'Leading Sustainable Environment' outcome of the Corporate Plan 2024-2027 – 'the implementation of a Circular Economy Strategy and embedding circular economy principles into building projects'. This further aligns with the Climate Action Strategy's Net Zero target for the City Corporation and supporting the Square Mile achieve Net Zero by 2040.

3. For the purposes of this report the City Corporation defines a circular organisation as an organisation that has embedded circular practices into all areas of operation and supply chain, makes decisions with circularity as a key focus, and continues to find new and innovative ways of working to drive greater circularity. Further, the City Corporation defines a circular city as a city that has made a systemic shift to prioritise the sharing of materials and resources for the greater benefit of society through more circular education, collaboration, and investment.
4. The Circular Economy Framework's vision is to ensure the City of London Corporation exemplifies, drives and innovates circular economy practices, leading the Square Mile to become a circular city by 2040. It is intended to support and educate everyone who lives, works, learns and visits here to adopt circularity.

Current Position

5. The City of London consumes a significant number of resources and materials each year. From residents and workers to construction and demolition, there is significant potential for the circular economy to shift how the City of London operates for the better in its approach to resource use and waste.
6. Extensive internal engagement has been conducted to ensure the deliverability of this framework. As well as the Climate Action Team, officers have held comprehensive discussions with key departments including Planning, City Surveyors, and other relevant internal stakeholders. These discussions have been crucial in ensuring that the vision outlined in this framework is both practical and achievable and have helped shape a robust and deliverable framework that aligns with the City's broader objectives.
7. There is already a large amount of work being carried out within the Corporation across a number of departments to drive towards circularity, such as the Embodied Carbon Action Plan and Sustainable Procurement. The emerging City Plan 2040 and recent Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document outline a "retrofit first" approach to development in the city; the Climate Action Strategy is in the process of creating an embodied carbon action plan; and procurement are actively working with suppliers to ensure the products the City Corporation buys reduce waste and are moving up the waste hierarchy. There is significant opportunity, both environmentally and economically, to be realised by having a clear and defined framework to benchmark, measure and monitor these disparate work streams.

Proposals

8. Your Committee now propose that this Honourable Court approve the implementation of the Circular Economy Framework, to commence the delivery of the actions outlined in the Action Plan 2024-2027. The transition to a circular economy comes with many benefits;

- a) For our residents it means greater support to repair and reuse items and greater access to recycling.
 - b) For our staff it provides a work environment that puts sustainable practices first and cuts waste from our operations.
 - c) For construction in the City of London it allows for creative, cutting-edge reuse techniques to be put in practice providing first class facilities.
 - d) For businesses in the City of London, it means office space will be sustainably designed, with better capacity for retrofit or built with material passports documenting material details to enable future reuse.
 - e) For our visitors it keeps the City of London as a thought leading place to be and visit.
9. This will be achieved by focusing firstly on the City Corporation's own operations and changes it can make to be more circular, and secondly by leveraging the influence the City Corporation has on the Square Mile to make this transition. The framework sets out an action plan to 2027 covering the key topics of: waste and resources; portfolio and capital projects; procurement; built environment; food and beverage; and training, communication and engagement.
10. The circular economy plays an integral part in the transition to a Net Zero future and in turn helps deliver the City Corporations Climate Action Strategy and its commitments to be net zero by 2040. Creating a circular economy in the Square Mile will help support existing businesses on their own sustainability journeys, whilst also creating space for new sustainable businesses to emerge.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. Strategic Implications

The Circular Economy Framework directly contributes to achieving an action of the Corporation Plan 2024-2029 ('Implement a Circular Economy Strategy and embed further circular economy principles into our building projects'), along with supporting the ambitions of the Climate Action Strategy.

12. Financial Implications

There is a small dedicated local risk budget assigned to the delivery of the framework. Officers will look to identify opportunities for external and internal funding to support the delivery of specific elements and projects, working with other departments and stakeholders on Climate Actions Strategy projects that have aligned priorities. It is envisaged that some of the work streams will identify potential savings and efficiencies.

13. Resource Implications

There is an existing post in place to manage the delivery of the framework, with sufficient officer support within the Gardens and Cleansing Team. Because of the proposed delivery methodology this will not be onerous on other teams or departments. There will be actions to complete, and some time commitment

required from across the organisation to deliver but also long-term benefits to realise.

14. **Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications at this stage and recommendations are compliant with the legislation, including the City Corporation's obligations under the UK Climate Change Act (revised 2019), which has enshrined in law both a target for net zero emissions by 2050 and requirements for measures for climate adaptation (improve resilience). There is also a number of legislative changes that are coming into force such as Simpler Recycling, Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Schemes and Emission Trading Scheme, which have an impact on how we manage waste and support a transition to a Circular Economy.

15. **Risk Implications**

On implementation of the framework, a Risks, Assumptions, Issues and Dependencies (RAID) exercise will be completed to track and mitigate risks throughout delivery.

16. **Equalities Implications**

Tests of Relevance and, if necessary, Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out for all projects associated with the Circular Economy Framework.

17. **Climate Implications**

The climate implications of the Circular Economy Framework are positive in that the actions will help reduce carbon emissions (particularly within Scope 3) for both the City Corporation and the Square Mile.

18. **Security Implications** – None identified.

Conclusion

19. This proposal presents a significant opportunity for the City of London to achieve its environmental and economic goals. The Circular Economy Framework serves as a comprehensive guide to this transition, outlining strategic actions and mechanisms to support the Square Mile in becoming a leader in this area. By creating an environment conducive to innovation and collaboration, the framework not only aids in reducing waste but also promotes the growth of new, sustainable businesses and enhances the city's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and visit. We therefore **recommend** that this Honourable Court approve the implementation of the Circular Economy Framework and the associated Action Plan 2024-2027.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Circular Economy Framework.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 19th day of November 2024.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Mary Durcan
Chairman, Port Health and Environmental Services Committee