

FEEDBACK FROM BRIGHTON & HOVE

Your query:

“I'm hoping to discover whether milestones are being met, what difficulties have been encountered, and what lessons are being learnt along the way. Is this a model other local authorities can follow, and how can they improve on what's been created already?”

Milestones:

The council and its partners have achieved a number of milestones, which have been shared with the Circular Economy Oversight Board via six-monthly progress reports. We are planning to produce communications around these achievements in the new year, but this will not be published in time for the South East Climate Alliance event on 01 February. If you'd like, I could seek approval to share a few slides with you for your event, with concrete examples of progress / actions taken over the last two years.

Difficulties encountered and lessons learned

● **Monitoring and reporting** – Although we report progress against individual actions found in the CE Action Plan, linking these to city-wide outcomes / objectives has been a greater challenge than we originally anticipated. As we wrote in the CE Routemap: *“At present we cannot track progress against this more detailed vision due to missing data. We welcome innovations in local-level data collection from research partners and industry representatives.”* Based on subsequent conversations with our local government counterparts in the UK Circular Cities and the Ellen MacArthur Cities Stand-up networks, we have learned that this challenge is shared by cities across the globe. Some barriers will be lifted in due course (e.g. we'll be in a better position to track food waste once domestic food waste collections are introduced in Brighton & Hove). However, monitoring the size and turnover of the circular economy will not be possible until national government introduces new corporate reporting standards. For example, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, which the Ellen MacArthur Foundation fed into, have standardized circular economy measurement and ensure transparent reporting. The newly established national Circular Economy Task Force will be looking to develop national metrics, which we hope will improve the situation: [Government announces Circular Economy Taskforce members](#). In the interim, we have started developing a list of proxy performance indicators, but these are a work in progress.

● **Lack of resource** – It is very rare for local governments to have dedicated staff carrying out strategic circular economy work, as the work is largely voluntary (i.e. not tied to statutory duties of local government). It's even rarer for these posts to sit outside local authority waste departments, which can narrow the scope of CE programmes. I noticed the situation is slowly improving in other councils, but this progress is limited by budget pressures faced by LAs up and down the country. Our own CE programme has been affected by budget cuts and staff redundancies, slowing the pace of delivery. We continue to apply for external funding and work more closely with local partners to address resource constraints.

● **Internal culture shift** – The Circular Economy is still a new concept for many, including key decision-makers. We have invested resource in upskilling staff, including senior managers, and in engaging with councillors, ensuring they understand the relationship between circular economy aims and objectives and other political priorities such as carbon

reduction, waste minimisation, improved public health and a fair and inclusive economy. Due to a significant churn in staff and elected members following restructures and local elections, there is a renewed need for investment in internal education and engagement.

Should other LAs follow our model?

I think so, yes. We have been approached by several local authorities asking how the programme was established and what our lessons were for replication. This is more or less what we've shared. The programme has significantly benefited from its placement in the council's Economic Development Team (as opposed to waste management), and from the development of a strategic vision and action plan and integration with other policies and strategies, such as the City Plan, Brighton & Hove Economic Plan (2024-27), 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme, New Build Housing Sustainability Policy, Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy, and forthcoming city-wide Food Strategy. The CE Action Plan was developed together with officers across the council through a number of internal consultation events, increasing awareness and ownership and expanding the programme's scope. The internal culture shift programme has increased support from key decision-makers and has funded tailored training for buyers and commissioners in the council's Housing and Regen departments (i.e. those commissioning construction-related works and services). We are now looking to grow our partnership working with external stakeholders to help leverage in grant funding and attract investment in the city's circular economy. We welcome lessons learned from other local authorities, especially in this area.

Best wishes,

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Pronouns: She/Her/Hers/They/Their/Theirs