



Freegle Focus Case study

London Borough of Sutton & Freegle

**Office furniture
Reuse best practice
Supporting the community**





Summary

Ahead of a major office refurbishment project in early 2022, London Borough of Sutton worked with Freegle to successfully re-home over 100 surplus pieces of large office furniture, as well as many smaller items.

Individuals, local groups and charities from the local area came forward to claim these useful items direct from the council, at no cost.

Read on to find out why this reuse project was initiated, how it was organised, the key successes and lessons learnt.

Climate Emergency: Sutton's ambitious targets

In 2019 Sutton Council declared a Climate Emergency which was incorporated into the borough's ambitious [Environment Strategy 2019 - 2025](#). The aims include achieving net zero carbon emissions and becoming London's most sustainable borough.

Office refurbishment creates reuse opportunity

In late 2021, ahead of a major refurbishment project involving one of the council's buildings, London Borough of Sutton contacted Freegle to discuss how the Freegle platform could be used to help re-home a large collection of soon-to-be surplus office furniture and equipment.

Officers from Sutton discussed the options together with Freegle central and the local Freegle community volunteer moderator and put together a plan.



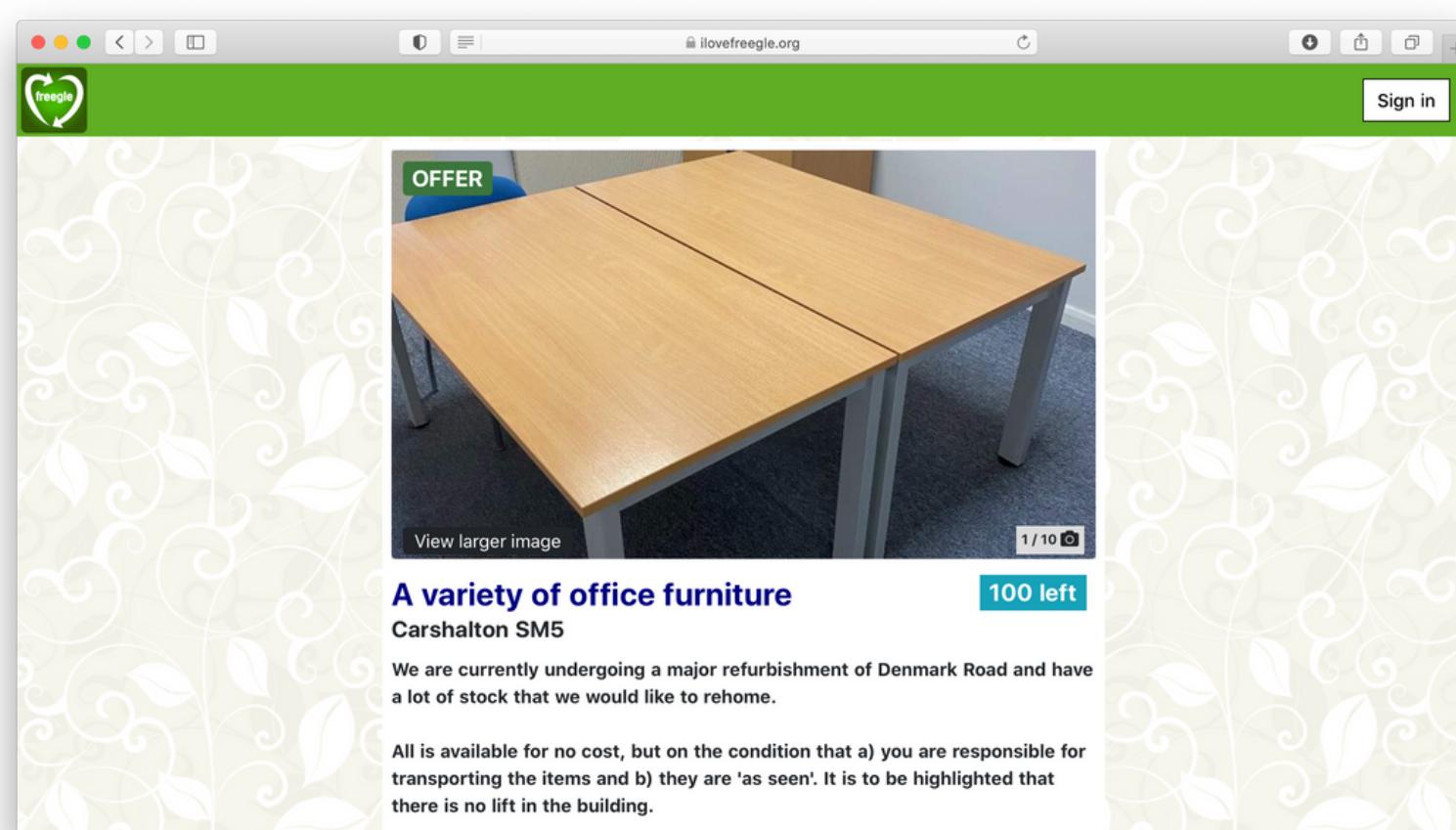
An OFFER posted on Freegle

An OFFER posted on [Sutton Freegle](#) invited local residents, groups and organisations to visit the council building and pick up items they wished to re-home.

Items on offer included desks, meeting room tables, chairs, storage units, cupboards, bookcases and coat stands. Smaller items of office equipment were also available, including in-trays, staplers, hole punches, stationery, folders, monitor stands and foot rests.

Initially one 'open day' was arranged, followed by some additional promotion including some internal publicity within the organisation. To allow ample time for viewing, selecting and collection of items, two additional open days were held.

All items were offered free of charge however Sutton made clear in the OFFER that transportation and removal of items had to be arranged by the individual 'takers'.



Around twenty individuals attended including representatives from a local church, a children's charity and four of the borough's local schools. Sutton council provided staff on three floors to help and direct visitors.

Sutton Freegle Quick Facts:

Founded in 2018, Sutton Freegle has 6, 561 current freeglers.

Over the past 12 months this community has facilitated 156 tonnes of reuse, saved 79.7 tonnes of GHG emissions. The reuse equates to £111, 102 worth of financial savings.



Impacts of reuse

Councillor Barry Lewis, Chair of Environment & Sustainable Transport Committee said:

'We want Sutton to become London's most sustainable borough and a key part of this is creating a circular economy. I'm therefore delighted that over 200 items of surplus furniture have gone to new homes through Freegle instead of being sent to landfill.'

"This partnership has helped us reduce waste, increase reuse and help to support local people and organisations."

Coady Johnston , Project Officer, Policy & Transformation commented:

'It was really lovely to give another life to our surplus furniture - redirecting it from landfill. We saw a variety of reuse, from helping people perfect their home offices, to charities and even schools.'

"It was a win-win for the council and the community!"

Dee - volunteer from Sutton Freegle community added:

"I am delighted that the Freegle platform has been able to help Sutton to reuse these surplus items. I took a chair myself which in the end, was not needed so I swiftly passed it on - through Freegle of course!"



What is Freecycle?

Freecycle is the UK's biggest and friendliest FREE online reuse network. Freecycle has over 3.6 million members in more than 460 local communities.

- FREE to join
- FREE to use
- Everything on it is FREE



Why reuse?

Freecycle helps people give and get useful things for free in their local community. Some people have stuff they don't want any more. Other people would like things they don't have. Freecycle matches them up. Reuse has countless environmental, social and financial benefits and helps to create a more circular economy.

How to get started.

You can freecycle items from the comfort of your own home. Visit www.ilovefreecycle.org to find your local community. You can also download the app: <https://www.ilovefreecycle.org/mobile>.

Don't throw it away, give it away! If it's free and legal then it can be Freecycled.



Freegle - Saving fffs.

Local authorities can save significant amounts in disposal costs when they successfully facilitate the diversion of bulky waste and other items away from the waste stream and into reuse. Here's what one local authority had to say:

"Wandsworth Freegle and Richmond-upon-Thames Freegle are two extremely active groups operating across these boroughs. Every tonne of bulky waste diverted from disposal by this freegling activity saves between £120–160 in disposal costs. Local residents initiated the groups, Freegle set them up and all we had to do was link to them on the bulky waste pages of the Councils' web sites. The local group memberships snowballed from there. The tonnages reused over the last 12 months by these two communities combined is 149 tonnes with associated disposal cost savings of between £17,880 & £23,840."

Michael Singham
Waste Strategy Manager
Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

Get involved, support reuse.

- [Sign up to our newsletter for councils: Freegle Bites.](#)
- Get in touch at: councils@ilovefreegle.org to find out how you can support more reuse in your community.
- Visit our [Toolkit for local authorities](#) where you will find information, advice and resources.