

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
GMCA WASTE AND RECYCLING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Adele Warren	Bolton
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury
Councillor Rabnawaz Akbar	Manchester
Councillor Yasmin Toor	Oldham
Councillor Tom Besford	Rochdale
Councillor David Lancaster	Salford
Councillor Robin Garrido	Salford
Councillor Helen Foster Grime	Stockport
Councillor Alison Gwynne (Chair)	Tameside
Councillor Steve Adshead	Trafford

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

David Taylor	GMCA – Executive Director, Waste & Resources
Paul Morgan	GMCA – Waste & Resources
Justin Lomax	GMCA – Waste & Resources
Lindsey Keech	GMCA – Waste & Resources
Michelle Whitfield	GMCA – Waste & Resources
Michael Kelly	GMCA – Waste & Resources
Gwynne Williams	GMCA – Deputy Monitoring Officer
Nicola Ward	GMCA – Governance & Scrutiny

**WRC 21/01            APOLOGIES**

1. Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillors Susan Emmott (Rochdale) and Atteque Ur-Rehman (Oldham). Apologies were also received from Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer GMCA & TfGM.
2. That it be noted that Councillor Roy Driver (Stockport) was unable to join the meeting due to technical reasons.

**WRC 21/02            CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no announcements or items of urgent business reported.

**WRC 21/03            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported by any Member in respect of any item on the agenda.

**WRC 21/04            MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2020**

**RESOLVED/-**

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 14 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

**WRC 21/05**

**GREATER MANCHESTER WASTE AND RECYCLING  
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

In relation to the headlines from the English National Waste Strategy, Members raised a series of concerns relating to the proposal for weekly separate food waste collections. Specifically, the added cost to residents for new vehicles, extra staff, new equipment at treatment plants and additional general resourcing if this was not covered by the New Burdens Regime. It was confirmed that the 9 GM Local Authorities in the GMCA waste disposal arrangements already re-cycle food waste and this is collected on a fortnightly or weekly basis mixed with general garden waste. It was anticipated that these proposals would expect food to still be collected in the current caddies used in the majority of GM boroughs. Defra's proposals reference the potential capture of additional tonnage if collected separately, and also the ability for electricity generation or bio-fuel production from anaerobic digestion of the food waste. However, this must be weighed up against the cost of setting up, and the potential locations for the digestate to be spread and stored for the remainder of the year.

Members noted the recent pilot in Salford to increase the collection of food waste through the provision of extra caddies, however, were not convinced that keeping this separate from garden waste would result in extra food waste being recycled. Officers confirmed that these proposals were based on analysis from WRAP, whereby their comparison of mixed or separate food waste did not take into account the loss of moisture and other factors, and that this would be included in Greater Manchester's response to the consultation.

There was further concern expressed from Members in that an additional food waste collection would result in less regular garden waste collections across GM which would not be welcomed by residents. It was felt that this was an additional pressure and cost to Greater Manchester that was not necessary as the current system was fit for purpose and it could actually be detrimental to our current footprint. Officers

confirmed that Technical, Economic, Environmentally Practical Assessment (TEEP) may potentially justify that no changes were needed due to the success of the current arrangements and that further details on guidance for TEEP was anticipated to be included in the next round of consultations on the Strategy due to be released in March.

In relation to a potential charge for the collection of garden waste, officers reported that the current consultation made limited reference to this, and further details may be included in the March consultations.

Members queried as to whether there were any updates on the deposit return scheme, or extended producer responsibility. Officers confirmed that both items would be included within the March consultation, and that conversations were already underway in relation to the potential impact of a deposit return scheme in GM. Funds raised through the extended producer responsibility system would also be used to fund any changes to collection of packaging materials and extra recycling costs.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

That a breakdown of which GM Local Authorities currently use food waste caddies be shared with the Committee.

### **WRC 21/06 WASTE AND RESOURCES COMMUNICATIONS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE PLAN**

Michelle Whitfield, Head of Communications and Behavioural Change, GMCA Waste and Resources Team took Members through a report on communications and behavioural change between October – December 2020.

In relation to waste prevention, due to the time of year there was little activity on home composting during this period, however there was an ongoing home composting campaign that would go into 2021 to advise residents as to how they can compost their own waste. It was recognised that further advice was required to stop people putting inappropriate items in their green waste bins, and also their food waste in general waste bins. A survey had been undertaken in Oldham which would help determine the key messages of the forthcoming communications campaign.

The R4GM Waste website had recently been reviewed and updated, offering further advice to residents, especially in relation to covid restrictions at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). This would be further reorganised in line with recent questions received from visitors.

Over the Christmas period, there had been a specific campaign focussed on paper and card recycling that had been well received, although there remained some concerns that contamination in paper collections was still recurring and therefore a campaign to remind people as to what could be included in this collection was underway. Members were specifically concerned about nappies continually being put in the paper waste collection and suggested that specific targeted campaigns be delivered to maternity hospitals and requests made to manufacturers to be more explicit on the product's packaging.

At the start of 2021, there would also be a further communications campaign to encourage further recycling at HWRCs, within the guidelines of the current covid restrictions.

Regarding waste prevention, Members questioned whether there were any pilots being undertaken in relation to food waste being collected within flat properties. Officers confirmed that there had been a trial undertaken in Salford in 2019 in low rise flat accommodation with a shared lockable food waste container with a small aperture.

This work had highlighted the need for bespoke solutions depending on the accommodation arrangements.

Members highlighted the usefulness of virtual visits to GM's Material Recovery Facility as detailed within the report and asked whether there could be other ways in which these could be promoted more widely. Officers welcomed the offer of elected Members' to share these details with their own constituents through their contacts and social media channels.

The appendix to the report highlighted a peak in hits to the R4GM website during November 2020, this was mainly attributed to the changing position of lockdown restrictions, and residents seeking clarity as to whether there would be further closures of centres. In response to these repeated questions, the front page of the website was updated to make this information as accessible as possible.

As the use of social media increases, Members asked how the Waste Team were planning to use their Instagram account to reach a further cohort of residents, and what the cost per social media interaction equated to. Officers explained how the predominant social media platforms were Facebook and Twitter, however the new Instagram page would allow for a different style of messaging to be shared, with the use of styled photographs. The team had also recently purchased a new social media management tool, Falcon, which would further strengthen their social media presence, and support their ambitions to use these avenues to specifically promote the Re-Use shops. Members were interested to see the impact of this new tool, as it was hoped to further streamline the GM Waste Team's social media presence.

Members reported new apps available on the market which highlight to the user how their waste gets processed and where it ends up, which seemed to be growing in popularity and were linked to the smart waste streams agenda. Officers agreed that

people seemed to want to know more about where their waste goes, and they would investigate these apps further.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the progress against the communications and behavioural change plan be noted.
2. That the progress on the joint SUEZ and R4GM communications and engagement plan be noted.
3. That the outcomes of the food waste collection trial for flat properties be shared directly with Councillor Lancaster.
4. That details of the virtual MRF visits be shared with Members of the GM Waste and Recycling Committee for wider promotion.
5. That further data on the cost per social media interaction be included in a future report to the Committee.
6. That further information on the smart waste stream apps be brought to the next meeting.

#### **WRC 21/07 CONTRACTS UPDATE**

Justin Lomax, Head of Contract Services, GMCA Waste and Resources Team presented a report which provided an update on performance of each of the waste contracts between April-September 2020. In comparison to this same period in 2019, there had been 50,000 less tonnes collected as a direct impact of the Covid pandemic.

The report further detailed the kerbside recycling rates, site recycling tonnage, landfill diversion rates, contamination rates, and the amount of tonnage rejected.

In relation to Household Waste Recycling Centres, on 24 March 2020 they were closed in line with the 'stay at home' Government messaging, and then re-opened on a phased approach from the 2 May 2020 in order to minimise queues, congestion and other impacts. Visits to the HWRCs peaked in July 2020, and since then had plateaued, with significant impact seen as a result of lockdown 1, but no impact seen as a result of lockdown 2.

Members reported visiting HWRC sites over the Christmas period and although they were busy, they were well managed. Officers confirmed that there had been minimal complaints regarding breaches of social distancing, and that all frontline staff had been trained on the current regulations and how to communicate these to site visitors. There was also signage across centres reminding visitors to behave as if they were in any other form of public space, wear a face mask and keep 2 metres social distance, Members urged that this messaging be given the most prominent position possible.

In relation to contaminated pulpables separated from the recycling streams, Members asked whether these would go to landfill or be incinerated. It was confirmed that they would go into solid recovered fuel production for energy generation.

Work had been undertaken to scope the principles of the new permit scheme for trade waste, whereby van owners would only be permitted to register one vehicle per household, and those hiring a van for personal use could register for a free daily permit. The process for registration had been designed to be as easy as possible so that it could be undertaken at the kerbside (with only a proof of address necessary) if anyone had approached the HWRC without the required permit. Members suggested that van hire companies could offer advice to people taking out a hire agreement that they would be required to register for a permit if they were planning to dispose of any



waste from the vehicle. Officers confirmed that there were to be advice leaflets produced that could be shared with hire companies, and that those who were unaware of the permit would be able to use their van hire permit as proof of their address.

Members were aware of the continued issues with illegal trade waste, including those who were charging for collection from other properties. The trade waste prevention scheme was still underway, and any trade waste (through a paid transaction) was required to go through the weigh bridge and would be subject to a charge. Members were reminded that each GM Local Authority also offered a bulky waste removal service available to its residents.

In relation to walk-ins at HWRCs, Members reported that some residents had wished to walk in with their local waste but had not been permitted access. Officers were aware of the issue, and the necessity for walk in provision, however this had become increasingly challenging during Covid. Residents were being advised to only use the option if there were no other options available to them, to wait at the entrance and notify a member of staff so that the contents of their waste could be confirmed and they would have no reason to put themselves at danger walking onto the site.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That messaging about covid-safe visits to the HWRCs be given the most prominent positions.
3. That further consideration be given as to how best to inform people who are hiring a vehicle for home improvements of their requirement to obtain a permit for accessing the HWRC.

**WRC 21/08**

**BUDGET AND LEVY 2021/22 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL  
PLAN TO 2024/25**

Steve Wilson, Treasurer to the GMCA and Lindsey Keech, Head of Finance, Waste and Resources Team introduced the GM waste budget forecast position for 2020/21 and proposed budget for 2021/22. Subject to the Committee's comments, the proposed budget would be shared with the GMCA at their meeting in February. This year's budget has seen £4.8m returned to GM Local Authorities and £32m remaining in reserves. Members requested a further breakdown of the levy adjustment for each Local Authority.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That the forecast outturn for 2020/21 be noted.
2. That the proposed 2021/22 trade waste rate of £102.30 and £114.83 in 2022/23 to allow forward planning by Local Authorities be noted.
3. That the capital programme for 2021/22 be noted.
4. That the budget and levy for 2021/22 of £162.4m (2.9% decrease) be noted.
5. That the risk position set out in the Balances Strategy and Reserves be noted.
6. That a breakdown of levy adjustments for each Local Authority be shared with Members.

**WRC 21/09**

**BIOWASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Paul Morgan, Head of Commercial Services, GMCA Waste and Resources Team introduced the proposals for a biowaste management strategy that would form part of the National Waste Strategy, and contribute towards GM's overall recycling service.

**RESOLVED/-**

That the report, and proposed Biowaste Strategy be noted.

**WRC 21/10 DATE AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED/-**

That the following programme of meetings for the Committee for 2020/21 be agreed,

- 14 April 2021, 10am, via Microsoft Teams

**WRC 21/11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED/-**

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, member of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that this involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in paragraphs 3 & 5, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **WRC 21/12 CONTRACTS UPDATE**

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the contract updates and key risks set out in the report be noted.
2. That the guidance document for the Community Fund be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director in consultation with the Chair to conclude the contractual processes for additional clean up of contaminated fibre materials.
4. That the commencement of the technical advisor procurements be approved and authority delegated to the Executive Director to make the appointment in consultation with the Chair.

## **WRC 21/13 BIOWASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the commencement of the approvals and procurement of the biowaste contracts be noted.
3. That officers would report back to the Committee on the budget details in relation to the current biowaste contracts.