

Waste and Recycling Committee

Date: 21st April 2021

Subject: Contracts Update – Part A

Report of: Justin Lomax, Head of Contract Services,
Waste and Resources Team

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on performance of the Waste and Resource Management Services and Household Waste Recycling Centre Management Services Contracts that commenced on 1st June 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members of the Committee are recommended to:

1. Note and comment on the matters set out in the report.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Justin Lomax
Head of Contract Services
Waste and Resources Team
Justin.lomax@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Equalities Implications:

There are no equalities impacts arising from the matters set out in this report.

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

A fundamental principle of the WRMS and HWRCMS contracts is the sustainable management of waste in order to reduce carbon emissions from landfill disposal. The carbon impacts of the contracts are monitored and provided annually by the contractor.

Risk Management:

Performance of the contracts and associated risks are captured in the GMCA corporate risk register.

Legal Considerations:

Activities set out in this report are in accordance with the terms of the WRMS and HWRCMS contracts.

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

Activities set out in this report are in accordance with the Waste revenue budget.

Financial Consequences – Capital:

Activities set out in this report are in accordance with the Waste capital budget.

Number of attachments to the report: N/A

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A

TRACKING/PROCESS		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?		No
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		N/A
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	19/1/2019 Corporate Issues and Reform Committee	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the Waste and Recycling Committee with an overview of performance of the Waste and Resources Management Services (WRMS) and the Household Waste Recycling Centre Management Services (HWRCMS) Contracts, with updates on key issues currently affecting the waste management services during this period.

2. CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 This report uses verified data, which at the time of writing was available for the period from April to December 2020, which is up to the end of Quarter 3 of year 2, for the two Contracts held by Suez.
- 2.2 Data is also provided for comparison with the same period of the previous year, 2019/20:

Year to Date Performance – Qtr 1 to 3 - Cumulative (April to December)	2020 / 2021	2019 / 2020
OVERALL performance		
Total arisings (t)	852,494	849,134
Recycling Rate (%)	46.41%	46.38%
Diversion Rate (%)	98.39%	92.12%
HWRC performance		
Recycling Rate (Household Waste) %	46.48%	41.17%
Diversion (Household Waste) %	97.82%	90.92%
Longley Lane MRF		
Rejection of Kerbside Recycling Collections (t)	6,563	653
MRF Contamination Rate (Commingled) %	18.1%	18.2%

- 2.3 Total waste arisings were over 850k tonnes (t), which is c.3kt higher than for the same period of last year. Covid-19 restrictions have had impacts on waste flows, with a change to household waste stream levels and HWRC closures, over Quarter 1. Since then, levels of arisings and recycling rates have increased, bringing the overall waste total slightly higher, with the overall recycling rate at over 46% - the same level as at Quarter 3 of last year.
- 2.4 Overall, landfill diversion figures continue to progress in the right direction, remaining over 6% higher than last year, achieving a total rate of over 98% of material diverted away from landfill disposal. When considered as a tonnage, this means over 50kt less material went to landfill disposal than last year.

- 2.5 At the HWRCs (combined for both Contracts = 20 sites - 9 sites in WRMS plus 11 in HWRCMS) the combined recycling rate is now over 46%, which is over 5% higher than for the same period of 2019/20, whilst overall diversion levels reached almost 98%, which is nearly 7% higher than last year.
- 2.6 In summary, during the nine-month period from April to December (Quarters 1 to 3 of 2020/21, inclusive) the overall performance across both contracts achieved a recycling rate of over 46%, resulting in a diversion from landfill rate above 98%.
- 2.7 Contamination levels of kerbside collected recyclate, from unacceptable materials extracted by the MRF process, are c.18% (similar to last year's level). The tonnage of collected WCA loads rejected at the reception points remains very high, reaching over 6.5kt, with the majority of this tonnage deriving from the Mixed Paper and Card (MPC) collection stream. Previous Committee reports have made Members' aware of the impact Covid -19 has had on contamination of the recyclable material streams, with increased levels of material collected being negated by the increase in contamination. Communications and collection scheme measures continue to target the issues causing contamination.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY

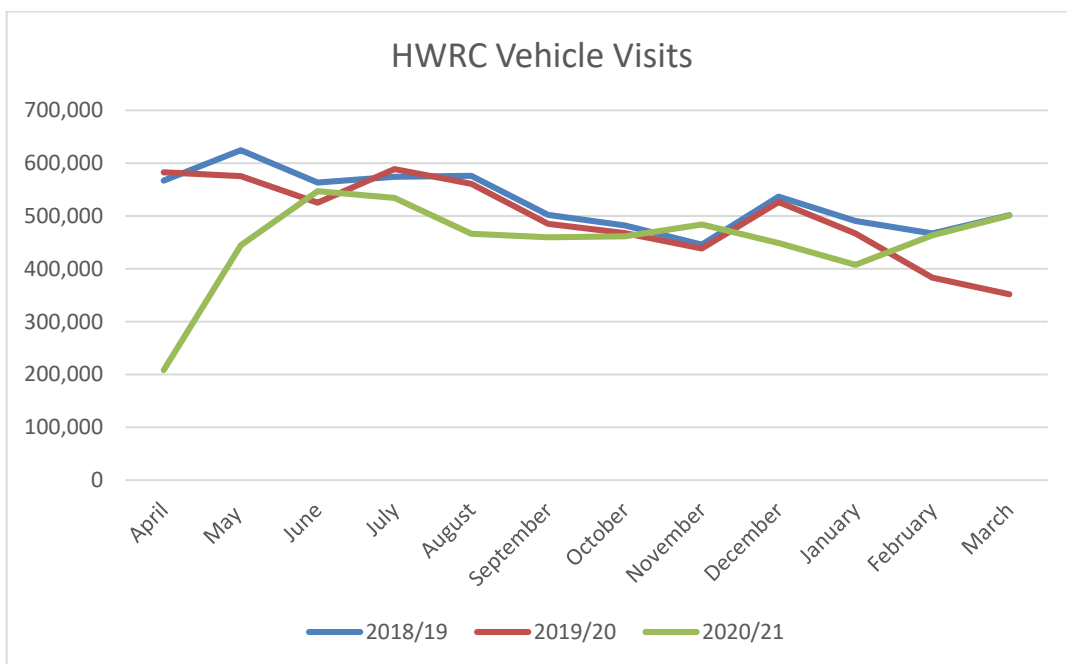
- 3.1 Health and Safety statistics are provided monthly in the Contractor Monthly Services Reports for each Contract and are considered at the monthly Suez Contract Management meeting.
- 3.2 Health and Safety data is reported in key categories, separating incidents involving the Contractor staff and operations, from those involving members of the public (MoP), plus a Near Miss category. Near miss, Incident and Notifiable Incident data is collected centrally and analysed to feed into local, regional and national lessons learned across the Contractor organisation and communicated to all staff.
- 3.3 Since the last Committee report, there have been 2 RIDDOR incidents. In November there was a Dangerous Occurrence, reported to the HSE, as a result of failure of loading equipment. Whilst loading a bulk haul vehicle, the loading shovel failed as the operator attempted to lift the bucket. The loading shovel was isolated until this incident was investigated, following which the shovel bucket has been replaced. Further to this, in December, a lost time accident was reported (where an employee is absent from work for more than seven consecutive days as a result). This was a consequence of a HWRC operative being injured after they and another employee lifted and moved a 50 litre waste container filled with rubble, that had been left by a site visitor, after which it was reported that the employee experienced back pain. Rehabilitation support was provided, and the employee has since returned to normal duties, following retraining on the principles of manual handling.

4. HWRC CLOSURES / REOPENING OVERVIEW

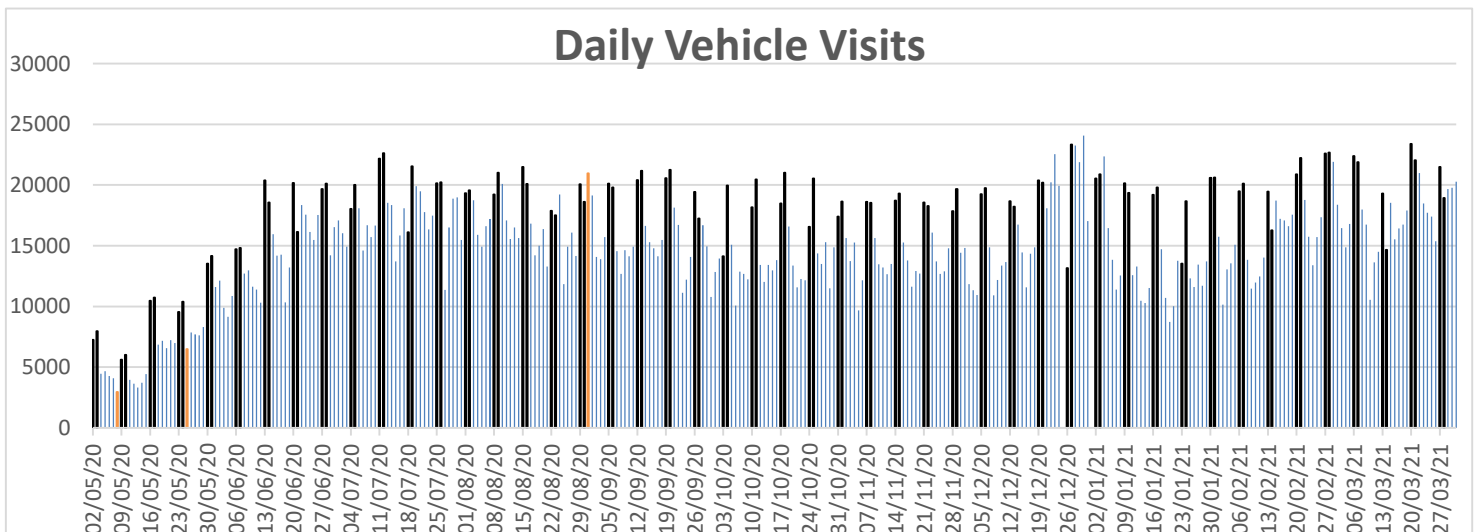
- 4.1 All GMCA Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) closed on 24th March in order to comply with Government guidance on essential reasons to leave the house

during the initial 3 week lock down period. Sites reopened on a phased basis from 2nd May with full service being reintroduced from 30th June.

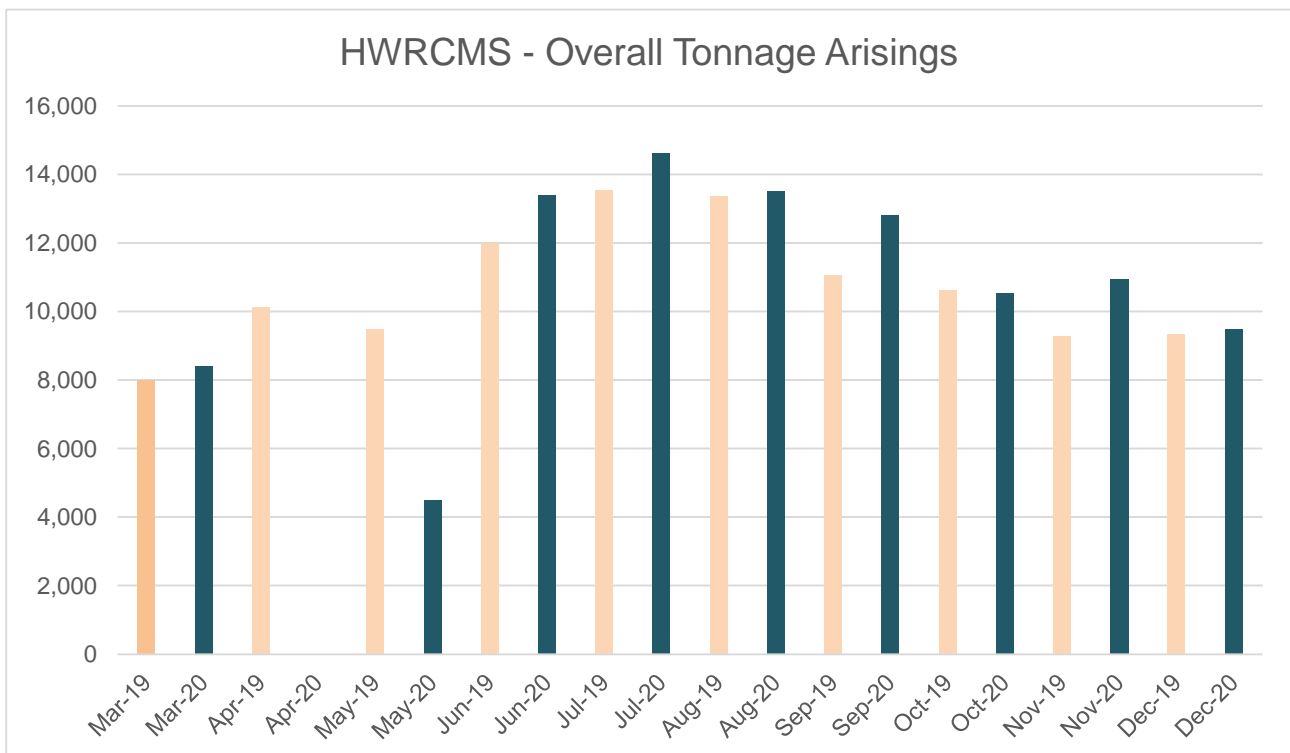
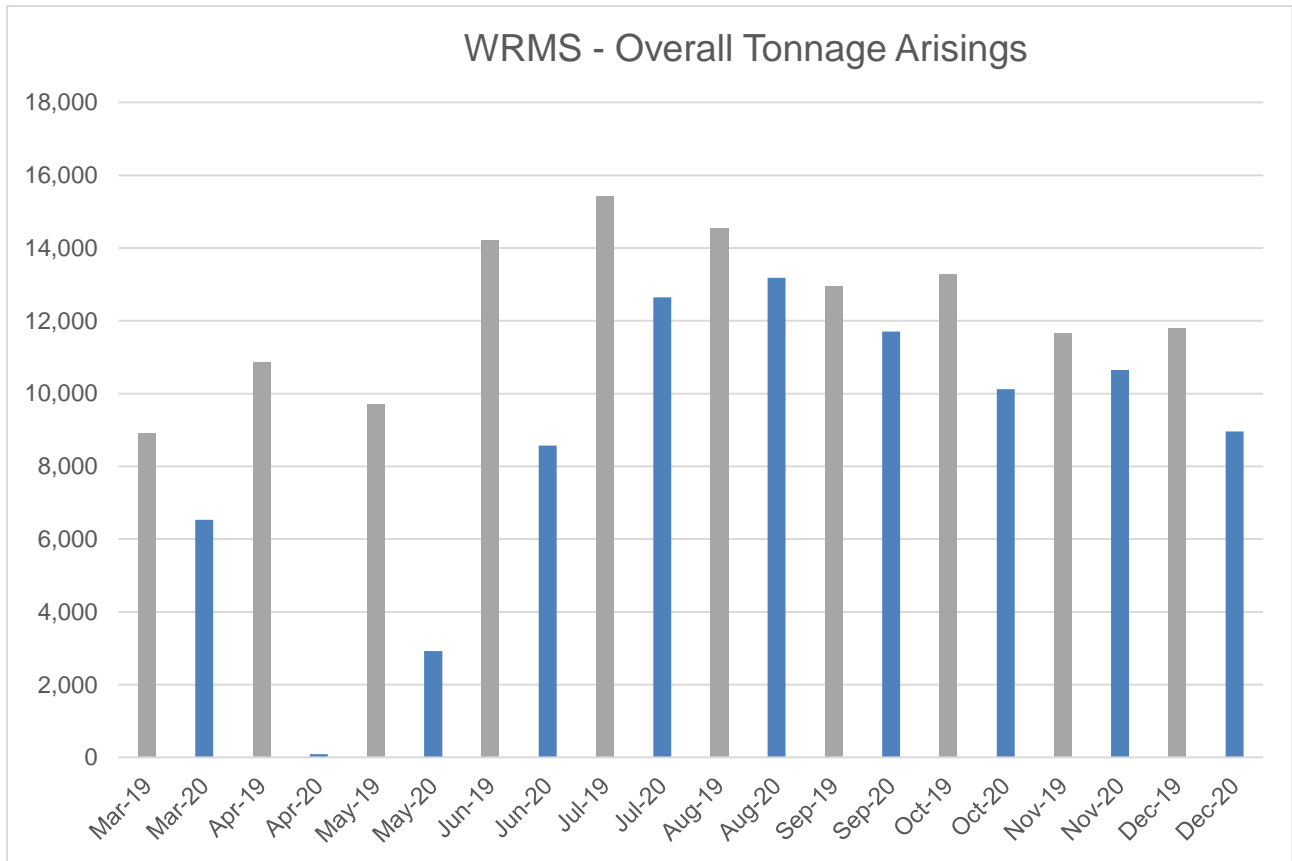
4.2 The graph below shows monthly visits to the HWRCs for the last 3 years. In 20/21 following the reopening of the sites, visitor numbers peaked in July 20 at 547,000. Levels then declined and remained below the previous 2 years. The higher visitor numbers in February 21 and March 21 coincided with periods of warmer weather whereas the decline in numbers in 2019/20 in these 2 months reflects the introduction of the vehicle thresholds and limits on annual visits. Overall, the data is showing that throughout the period of the pandemic, HWRC visitor numbers have stayed below levels seen in the previous 2 years. The upturn in numbers at the end of 20/21 may start to reduce as further lockdown restrictions are lifted.



4.3 The daily vehicle visits are set out in the graph below for the period 2nd May 2020 to 31st March 2021 (graph axis indicates weekend start dates). This shows a steady increase in use as more commodities have been introduced and more sites opened. The trend line for the period indicates that the level of use peaked in July followed by a further spike in December that coincided with Christmas.



4.4 The impact on site tonnages resulting from the closure of the HWRCs and then the phased reopening is shown in the graphs below. The data in the tables compares the overall tonnages received at the sites between March and December 20 and compares them to the same months in 2019 for the WRMS and HWRCMS contracts.



4.5 The WRMS sites consistently show a lower tonnage throughput for each month during the pandemic when compared to the previous year. The HWRCMS contract shows a mixed picture with some months showing increased throughputs. The overall tonnages received at all sites combined continues to run at a lower rate than 2019/20. Current forecasting is suggesting a reduction in overall throughput at the sites of c.50kt when compared to 2019/20 levels.

5. HWRC VAN PERMIT PROPOSAL UPDATE

5.1 Progress

5.1.1 As previously reported the permit scheme to control the usage of our HWRCs by van owners wishing to bring their own household waste is being developed. The system will require van owners to register their vehicles (linking them to their home addresses) on an online system to generate an electronic permit which will need to be shown to the site operative at the HWRC to gain entry. The images below show mock-ups of the resident application screens and the site operative device screen for permit recording.



5.2 System Development

- 5.2.1 Development of the system continues with scheme launch programmed in May. From mid-May there will be a period of testing before having a 'soft launch' in June which will form part of the testing process. During this period information will be provided to van owners visiting sites pointing them towards registration on the system. From July the permit system will be live forming the 'hard launch' whereby the permit system will be implemented in full and entry refused without a valid permit. In the run up to this period there will be wider communications on social media etc.
- 5.2.3 Updates between now and launch will be provided via the Members Briefing.

6. CHANGES TO BIOWASTE PAS100 QUALITY STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Members may be aware that there is a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) for composted materials (known as PAS100). This Specification dictates whether a compost can be certified as being a product and no longer waste and therefore is no longer subject to regulation.
- 6.1.2 To address quality issues particularly in relation to plastics which has long been a worry for the sector, the Environment Agency (EA) consulted on, amongst other things, a significant reduction in the threshold for plastics within compost. In its report on the outcome of the consultation the EA confirmed its position and would be introducing a 0.5% weight per weight contamination limit on non-biodegradable plastic in the incoming waste – this compares to 5% previously. To put this in more recognisable terms the previous plastic limit equated to allowing 150 plastic bags per tonne of compost but now reducing to just 15.
- 6.1.3 The changes will be phased in over the next five years (to 2026) but in that time the EA will:
- require all organic waste treatment facilities to implement pre-acceptance and acceptance procedures that demonstrate waste contamination levels are minimised; and
 - aim for a year-on-year reduction on incidental plastic contamination in waste received from kerbside collection, starting with non-compostable plastic at 5% w/w input.

6.2 Current Arrangements

- 6.2.1 Currently the GMCA sends around 200,000 tonnes of mixed biowaste for treatment via in-vessel composting (IVC). Our contracts with those treatment facilities have a threshold of 10% for all/any contamination before a load is rejected. Rejections are infrequent but analysis shows our biowaste contains levels of plastics that exceed the proposed 0.5% limit.

6.3 Proposed Action

- 6.3.1 At the time of writing, we are preparing to return to our biowaste treatment framework to secure treatment capacity to 2026. Clearly the consequences of the EA's position will have implications for our collections and subsequent acceptance of biowaste. On current performance it is likely we will potentially experience a significant increase in biowaste rejections at our transfer loading stations or at the receiving treatment facilities. As a result managing rejections and the subsequent disposal of material as residual waste will increase costs markedly.
- 6.3.1 To address this we will need to take action to address contamination at source (for example increased and focused communications to address the placement of carrier bags in the biowaste and the use of 'compostable' plastics). Alongside this, no doubt, our treatment contractors will be considering the implementation of pre-sorting of material received further increasing costs. Communications on food waste are planned for this year and this messaging will include contamination.
- 6.3.2 We will keep the Committee informed as the changes are introduced and we become aware of impacts.

7. CHANGE TO RULES ON CARPET RECYCLING

- 7.1 As part of Suez's bid for the operation of HWRCs it proposed the introduction of carpet recycling. In recent months Suez has installed collection points at the majority of HWRCs where the materials are collected and sent to make products for the equestrian market. This was considered a low risk waste activity by the EA so was regulated accordingly and considered as a recycling activity.
- 7.2 In December 2020 the EA announced it was withdrawing its regulatory position (from mid-June 2021) on carpet recycling so any use as, for example, equestrian surfacing would require an environmental permit. This would effectively close this market and mean it no longer classes as recycling.
- 7.3 In its bid submission Suez estimated that 12,000 tonnes per annum of carpets could be recycled and during the COVID-impacted period from April to December 2021 3,723 tonnes of carpets were collected across our HWRC network. Suez is seeking alternative markets but it is likely that the recycling benefit we currently obtain from carpets will reduce significantly and those alternative markets will be recovery rather than recycling.

8. CONSTRUCTION AND WORKS UPDATE

8.1 Reliance Street MTR plant, Newton Heath

8.1.1 Progress

- 8.1.2 Good progress on the site works at Reliance St has continued throughout February and March. The following progress has been made:

8.1.3 Building Steelwork

- Primary and secondary steelwork to roller shutter doors completed.

8.1.4 Cladding Works

- Closing up of cladding around wall repairs completed; and
- Cladding to Roller Shutter Doors completed.

8.1.5 Odour Control

- All internal ductwork installed;
- External works completed with exception of connection of stack to system; and
- Wet scrubber filled with “snowflakes”.

8.1.5 Fire Systems

- New Fire Water tank installation completed;
- Connection pipework, fire brigade breaching connection completed; and
- Fire suppression pipework completed and air testing completed.

8.1.6 Electrical Systems

- First fix trunking completed and lights installed into compactor building; and
- New Transformer installed.

8.2 Key Milestones for Next Month

8.2.1 I&H Brown Reliance Street

Key activities taking place at the end of March and early April 2021 are:

- Lower yard works commencement;
- Turning circle to upper part of site;
- Foundations for Welfare unit and service ducts;
- Continuation of fire system (detection systems and CO monitoring system);
- Continuation of electrical works with lighting and pulling cables into the building;
- Continuation of odour control installation of external equipment;
- The installation of compactors;
- Under sheets installation to conveyors and handrailing;
- Shredder hydraulic power pack to be connected to shredder; and
- Continuation of mechanical installation including steel structures to compactor building.