

## Waste and Recycling Committee Meeting

Date: 15 March 2023

Subject: Communications & Behavioural Change Plan Update

Report of: Michelle Whitfield, Head of Communications & Behavioural Change,  
GMCA Waste and Resources Team.

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update members on the Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Behavioural Change Plan.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members of the Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the progress made on the paper and card contamination campaign and the R4GM Community Fund; and
2. Note the more detailed update on the R4GM Community Fund as outlined in Appendix A.

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## **Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:**

GMCA along with its partners are working together to have a genuine commitment and practical approach to reducing inequality through communication and engagement. We are working to agree a common set of standards for communications, defining minimum requirements and expectations on accessible information, enabling a consistent approach to translation, easy-read, sign-language, publication and social media. As a minimum, this means evidencing 'due regard' to the needs of all communities of Greater Manchester (as per the Public Sector Equality Duty).

The team are assessing what documents could be translated into other languages taking into account the diverse communities of Greater Manchester. An ESOL (English for Speakers of other languages) training package has also been created with Bolton College. The resources which are available on the website introduces words commonly associated with recycling at home.

The Recycle for Greater Manchester and GMCA websites have both been updated to meet accessibility requirements.

The accessibility regulations build on existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland). These say that all UK service providers must consider 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people.

At least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long term illness, impairment or disability. Many more have a temporary disability.

Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

Any communication materials produced will be produced on recycled paper or paper that meets the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) standard. The very nature of the communications and engagement aims to promote the waste hierarchy by encouraging

residents of Greater Manchester to reduce their own carbon impact by minimizing the waste they produce, reusing what they can and recycling the right items in the right bin

## **Risk Management**

Successful and effective delivery of the communications and behavioural change plan will result in increased capture of recyclable materials and assist in driving down contamination. Contamination and access to recycle markets remains a critical risk in 2022/23 given the additional processing costs associated with removing contamination update.

## **Legal Considerations**

The requirements for SUEZ to support GMCA communications and engagement activities that relate to waste and resources are set out in the Waste and Resources Management Services (WRMS) contract and the Household Waste Recycling Management Services (HWRCMS) contract.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The financial consequences of not delivering the communications and behavioural change plan is an increase in waste disposal costs as a result of high contamination rates in the recycling bin.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

There are no implications on the capital budget that arise from the activities set out in this report.

## **Number of attachments to the report:**

R4GM Community fund update on projects delivered over 2021 to 2022 – Appendix A

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**N/A**

## **Background Papers - None**

### **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**

N/A

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **1. Introduction/Background**

This report provides an update on specific projects being delivered as part of the Recycle for Greater Manchester (R4GM) Communications & Behavioural Change Plan and will cover the progress made on the paper and card contamination campaign and the R4GM Community Fund projects delivered to date.

## **2. R4GM Community Fund**

This year is the third year that the Community Fund will open offering £220,000 of funding for projects which aim to reduce, repair, reuse or recycle household waste. The money is raised through the sales of goods at the 3 Renew shops and the eBay shop which sell pre-loved household items which have been donated at the household waste recycling centres (HWRCs). The fund was launched in 2021 and in the first year 21 projects were funded. A further 26 projects are being funded from the second round and are due to complete later this year. Appendix A details the 21 funded projects which have completed. Examples include a new Community RePaint scheme in Moss Side set up using donated paint, so far 300 homes have benefitted from the shop. The Girl Guides in Stockport created a new Get Recycling badge and purchased indoor recycling bins for 12 guiding properties; 2,000 badges have been distributed to date. There are several textile reuse and food redistribution projects which are helping to tackle homelessness, isolation and provide support for those in need in the community.

### **2.1 R4GM Community Fund 2023/24**

The fund opens again for the third year on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April until Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May. The application form will be available on the Greater Manchester Environment Fund website which is managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust who administer the scheme on behalf of GMCA and SUEZ UK.

## **3. Paper and Card Contamination Campaign**

In May 2022, 4 fixed term officers were recruited to work on a targeted behavioural change campaign aimed to reduce contamination in the paper and card recycling bin. The team work alongside council officers, targeting rounds where contamination is more persistent causing wagon loads to be rejected due to high levels of contamination. They follow a tried and tested method of feeding back to residents using bin tags which are attached to the handles of the paper and card bins over 3 consecutive collections and doorstep surveys.

The team have focused their efforts in Bury, Rochdale, Trafford and Manchester and have also recently started work in Salford.

### **3.1 Campaign Progress**

In Bury, 3,806 properties on 2 collection rounds were targeted, in Rochdale a round of 1,873 properties was selected, in Trafford, 1,630 properties were chosen and in Manchester, the team focused on 1,992 households on one collection round. Collection frequencies vary across the council areas with Manchester collecting every 2 weeks, Bury and Rochdale on 3 weekly collection cycles, and Trafford on a 4 weekly collection service. All paper and card recycling bins are the standard 240 litre size.

Before the bin checking began, a letter was delivered to each household advising them that recycling officers would be monitoring the paper and card recycling bins, a leaflet was also delivered outlining the items that can be recycled in the bin. During the bin checking, red and amber bin tags were used in all areas apart from Trafford who opted to use only red tags. Where red tags were attached to bins, these bins were not emptied by the bin crew. Residents were advised to remove the items contaminating the bin and place the bin out on the next collection.

### **3.2 Campaign Results**

Early results indicate that the number of households that contaminated their bin reduced over the 3 collections in all districts. However, the team did identify a small group (100-200 properties) in each council area who consistently received a red tag on their paper and card recycling bin. Most of these households did not open the door to speak to officers during the doorstep survey. In Manchester, a cluster of 177 households who consistently contaminate their bins with bin bags of general waste, take-away rubbish and other plastic packaging have been identified and the team are now working with council officers to follow up using a series of focus groups and events as an opportunity to find out how the council can help the residents to use their bins correctly.

The data collected has also provided detailed insight on the types of contamination present in the bin and can be roughly broken down into 4 segments. Some households used their bin as a second general waste bin and the team found bin bags of rubbish hidden in the bottom of the paper and card recycling bin. Another type of contamination present was take-away rubbish where residents had disposed

of pizza boxes with pizzas, kebabs etc. still inside the boxes and take away bags containing drinks containers, food, sachets of sauces as well as the cardboard packaging with no attempt to separate out the cardboard. The third type of contamination seen was where cereal boxes were thrown in the recycling bin with the plastic bag still in the box, or eggshells that had been left in cardboard egg boxes. Finally, the fourth type of contamination was low level contamination such as tissues and kitchen roll.

This information is extremely useful in helping the team to target recycling campaigns and develop specific communication to help residents recycle correctly.

## **4. Looking Ahead**

During March, the R4GM team will be supporting several national campaigns.

### **4.1 Food Waste Awareness Week (6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March)**

The Food Waste Awareness week takes place in the first week of March (6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>) and raises awareness of the link between food waste and climate change.

### **4.2 Compost Awareness Week (13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March)**

This campaign provides an opportunity to promote the subsidized compost bin scheme that is funded through the Get Composting website. Residents of Greater Manchester can take advantage of £10 off a compost bin and free postage and packaging.

### **4.3 London Repair Week (20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March)**

For the first year the team is supporting London Repair Week which has been running in London for the last 3 years. This year will see the launch of Greater Manchester repair week (20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March), which will aim to encourage residents to consider repair and reuse before items are thrown away and replaced by new ones. The focus will be on simple repairs that can be done at home, and it will also be an opportunity to promote the Renew Hub where household items are repaired and sold in the three Renew shops and online eBay store. The education team have also now established a new education pod in the Renew Hub that aims to raise awareness of the importance of repairing and reusing household items. Participants also receive a tour of the Hub to see repairs taking place on the household items donated at the HWRCs.