

## Waste and Recycling Committee

Date: 17 July 2024

Subject: Communications & Engagement Behavioural Change Plan 2024/25

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 & Engagement Behaviour Change Plan 2024/25.

### Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the Communications & Engagement Plan and comment on the progress updates provided.

### Contact Officers

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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.

## **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 2024/25 given the additional processing costs associated with removing contamination.

## **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: None**

### **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?

No

### **GM Transport Committee**

N/A

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## 1. Introduction/Background

The Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Engagement Behavioural Change Plan 2024/25 is reviewed annually and focuses on delivering communications and engagement on the main priorities highlighted by the 9 local authorities, the GMCA's Waste and Resources team and our contractor, SUEZ. This report will cover activities undertaken in the first quarter of 2024/25.

## 2. Fly Tipping Campaign

A Greater Manchester wide fly tipping campaign was launched in May. The campaign was developed using research from Keep Britain Tidy's report "Beyond the Tipping Point" which focuses on understanding the behaviour and attitudes towards fly tipping to understand why and how it happens. The campaign addresses the specific issue of using rogue traders often found on social media who offer to remove household waste for a low price and then subsequently often fly tip the waste. In this instance, the householder is still responsible for the rubbish and could face a fine.

The campaign, called "Your Waste, Your Responsibility" aims to raise awareness of this issue by using adverts featuring residents in their own local area highlighting their responsibility for disposing of their waste responsibly by using licenced waste removal companies registered with the Environment Agency. The campaign is led by each local authority, allowing the councils to add their own logo to the adverts and display them in fly tipping hotspots. A range of out of home adverts will run for 2 weeks on static 6 sheet billboards, phone kiosks and digital 6 sheet ad-shells. This is supported by digital adverts running on selected websites for 4 weeks as well as social media from district council channels. A video has also been produced to explain the consequences of using unlicensed waste carriers which provides advice on what to look for when booking a licenced waste removal company. It also provides the options available for disposing of household waste such as hiring a skip or using a district council's bulky waste collection service. An example of the outdoor advertising is show below:



### 3. Education Service

The education team deliver tours and classroom-based learning at three visitor centres at the Materials Recovery Centre (MRF), Longley Lane, Manchester, the Renew Hub in Trafford Park and the GMCA solar farm in Bolton. The team have reviewed the visitor numbers from the previous year (March 2023 to April 2024) and 7,372 people either visited one of the visitor centres or attended an outreach session. This has increased by 33% from 5,524 in the previous year. The number of full day visits (typically from 10am to 2:30pm) has fallen with schools preferring to attend a half day visit. The education team are speaking to schools and coach companies to understand how to work with them to overcome barriers they have in attending a tour and session at the MRF. For example, this might mean amending the times of the session or to continue to offer discounted coach travel.

### 4. R4GM Community Fund

This year is the fourth year of the fund, it opened on 8th April and closed on 31st May. £220,000 is available for community groups and schools to run recycling, repair, or reuse projects. The money is generated from sales of household items through the Renew shops and online sales via the eBay and Shopify platforms. Items are donated by the public at the 20 household waste recycling centres (HWRCs), taken to the Renew Hub in Trafford Park where a team of experts' repair and, upcycle the items before they are sold.

In the first 3 years, 67 groups have been funded, including repair cafes, composting projects, bike repair schemes and a project to redistribute baby clothes to families in need. This year, 69 applications were received in the fourth round of funding, which are being scored by officers from the GMCA, SUEZ and Lancashire Wildlife Trust who administer the scheme. At the next Waste and Recycling Committee meeting, an update will be provided on the groups who have been awarded funding.

## **5. Biodiversity and City of Trees**

### **5.1. Tree Planting**

At the January 24 Waste and Recycling Committee meeting, the Head of Engineering and Asset Management, Michael Kelly presented a report outlining a proposal to work with City of Trees to plant approximately 800 trees across 2 former landfill sites owned and maintained by the GMCA Waste and Resources team. The proposal was agreed, and the tree planting took place in April and May on the 2 sites at Bredbury Parkway in Stockport and Chichester Street in Rochdale. 297 trees were planted at the Bredbury site which covers an area of 0.27 hectares. The types of trees planted included oak, birch, rowan, holly, hawthorn, and hazel as well as alder, willow, and downy birch which were planted in the boggy parts of the site. The trees are protected from deer using 1.2m tree shelters (non-plastic and biodegradable), mulch mats have also been provided around the trees to help keep vegetation down that would compete with the trees for water. At the Chichester Street former landfill site, 473 trees were planted in an area of 0.43 hectares. Similar tree species most suited to the area were chosen with alder and willow as the main tree species with shrubs in the very wet areas while pedunculate oak, downy birch, holly, hawthorn and guelder rose in the drier areas.

### **5.2. Biodiversity Duty**

GMCA is developing a Biodiversity Action Plan which includes the GM Fire and Rescue Service estate and the GMCA waste estate. The Biodiversity Duty is part of the Environment Act (2021) and outlines that Public Authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity on land owned by the public authority. The GMCA waste estate consists of 39 operational assets across 22 locations throughout GM. These mainly consist of waste reception and transfer stations, including 20 HWRCs. The waste facilities are typically hard landscaped areas with concrete yards and portal frame buildings, designed for waste reception, storage, handling, and treatment. The majority of the sites have limited

opportunities for biodiversity on a large scale however there may be some scope for small scale improvements to site boundaries at these locations. The 2 former landfill sites in Bredbury, Stockport and Chichester Street in Rochdale presented the most suitable locations for large scale tree planting.

### **5.3. Communications**

The tree planting with City of Trees has been developed into a case study to demonstrate how the GMCA is meeting its Biodiversity Duty.

At the Bredbury site, the mix of large trees like oak and smaller shrubs including hawthorn will join up with existing woodland to the east of the site, creating a nature corridor that will boost local nature recovery and biodiversity.

The young forest is already starting to absorb carbon dioxide, helping us realise our ambition of decarbonising waste sites, and meeting the 5 Year Environment Plan target of a carbon neutral city region by 2038.

The GMCA's Biodiversity Action Plan enables us to share the range of activities being undertaken to improve biodiversity at the waste sites. Over the coming months, stories will be shared to highlight the variety of wildlife at the closed landfill sites, the beehives installed at 2 of our sites and birdboxes at key locations and what makes these unique habitats so vital in increasing biodiversity in Greater Manchester.

We will also highlight other projects being undertaken by partners. For example, we work with the influencer, the Cloud Gardener, who is well known for developing a small container garden on his balcony on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor of his apartment in Manchester city centre. He's an advocate for small urban gardening and works with us to encourage food waste recycling and home composting. There are also several R4GM Community fund projects focussed on composting and improving biodiversity in their local community. We will highlight these stories in a variety of ways including blogs, videos and social media content.

## **6. Textiles Campaign**

Next month, a textiles campaign will be launched aimed at reducing the number of textiles thrown away in the general waste bin. The campaign called "Cotton On" will advise residents how to recycle damaged or torn clothing and shoes. These items still have a value and can be recycled in textiles banks.