

**Minutes of the Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee held on  
Wednesday 16 October 2024**

**Present:**

Bolton Council	Councillor Richard Silvester
Bury Council	Councillor Alan Quinn (in the Chair)
Bury Council	Councillor Gareth Staples-Jones
Manchester CC	Councillor Lee-Ann Igbon
Oldham Council	Councillor Pam Byrne
Oldham Council	Councillor Ken Rustidge
Rochdale Council	Councillor Aasim Rashid
Salford CC	Councillor David Lancaster
Salford CC	Councillor Barbara Bentham
Salford CC	Councillor Paul Heilbron
Stockport Council	Councillor Mark Roberts
Trafford Council	Councillor Stephen Adshead
Trafford Council	Councillor Dylan Butt

**Officers in Attendance:**

GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer	Sarah Bennett
GMCA Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Waste & Resources	David Taylor
GMCA Waste & Resources	Michelle Whitfield
GMCA Waste & Resources	Justin Lomax
GMCA Environment	Sarah Mellor
GMCA Governance & Scrutiny	Kerry Bond
GMCA	Inayah Hussain

**District Officers in Attendance:**

Bury Council	Daniela Dixon
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Tameside Council

Jo Oliver

Trafford Council

Helen Ashcroft

## **WRC 24/21 Apologies**

### **Resolved/-**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Shaukat Ali (Manchester) and Denise Ward (Tameside).

Apologies were also received and noted from Paul Morgan (GMCA).

## **WRC 24/22 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business**

Members raised the recent BBC coverage stating that burning household rubbish in waste incinerators to generate electricity is now the most polluting form of power regeneration in the UK, producing the same amount of greenhouse gases per unit of energy as coal power and suggested that the overall amount of residual waste should be reduced and disposed of in a responsible way.

Members acknowledged that Greater Manchester (GM) have a history of dealing with waste in a responsible way and requested assurance as to whether the current approach is correct and that the way waste is dealt with brings social value to GM.

Officers commented on the journalist BBC report advising that a number of points within the report are factually incorrect:

- The report relates to fossil-based carbon, comparing emissions from energy from waste to any other kind of power station. 3.1% of UK energy output is from waste plants, energy from waste facilities is more tightly regulated, have lower emission rates and are cleaner.
- Over time the composition of residual waste has changed, now containing more fossil-based items due mainly to increase in plastics. Food waste is reduced due to local capture through local authorities.

- Energy from waste emissions data shows that for every tonne of residual waste to landfill c.430kgCO<sub>2</sub>e of carbon is released, energy from waste is c.50% lower than that figure.
- The incoming legislation and policies which are designed to reduce the amount of plastic going into the residual waste stream isn't included in the BBC report.
- Some items such as absorbent hygiene products and some textiles don't have a recycling alternative with energy from waste being the better option due to the ability to capture the heat to generate electricity and steam.
- Fossil carbon content through the supply chain needs to be addressed to reduce the amount of fossil-based carbon in the waste stream which would reduce the carbon emissions generated from waste.
- GM recycle over 50% of waste compared to the national figure of 44%, less than 1% of this is sent to landfill. The waste heat generates electricity and steam which support the local economy.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the update be noted.

**WRC 24/23 Declarations of Interest**

**Resolved/-**

1. There were no Declarations of Interest reported.

**WRC24/24 Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 July 2024**

**Resolved/-**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

## **WRC 24/25 Membership of the GM Waste & Recycling Committee 2024/25**

### **Resolved/-**

To note members appointed to the Committee for 2024/5 at the GMCA meeting held on 27 September 2024:

Member: Councillor Paul Heilbron (Salford) (Lib Dem)

Substitute: Councillor Jonathan Moore (Salford) (Lib Dem)

## **WRC 24/26 Contracts Update**

Justin Lomax, Head of Contract Services, GMCA Waste and Resources Team introduced a report which provided an overview on performance of the Waste and Resource Management Services and Household Waste Recycling Centre Management Services Contracts that commenced on 1 June 2019 as well as an update on latest position on the English Resources and Waste Strategy.

The report presented cumulative annual data, for the period up to the end of June 2024 (Quarter 1) of the financial year 2024/25 (contract year 6), for the two contracts held by Suez. An overview of the cumulative data, total waste arisings, contamination levels, landfill diversion, HWRC recycling rate, overall recycling rate and HWRC visit levels and statistics were also provided.

A member advised during a recent Household Waste Recycling Centre visit that crates of books were left open to the elements and asked why this would be. Officers confirmed that they were made aware of this, they contacted the recycling centre and the books were moved to a sheltered area until collection could be made,

contact was also made with the contractor who advised that the supply chain issue is being addressed.

Officers confirmed that there are some differences in Waste Collection Authority trade waste collections (these collections do not involve the HWRCs at all), those collections with a mix of domestic and commercial waste are segregated into domestic and commercial at district level.

Members welcomed the 70% reduction in contamination levels and were advised that improved learning and behaviours around kerbside recycling have contributed to this reduction along with meet and greet and advice from staff at household recycling centres, and some third-party end market clean up.

The impact of neighbouring authority's household recycling sites closures is being managed by increased permit scheme and postcode checks across Greater Manchester household waste recycling sites, figures are being closely monitored that would give an indication of cross border site visitors.

Officers agreed to investigate whether the positive recycling figures are impacted through school projects.

Members congratulated Suez on the increase in recycling rates.

#### **Resolved/-**

1. That the report be noted.

#### **WRC 24/27 Communications & Engagement Behavioural Change Plan 2024/25**

Michelle Whitfield, Head of Communications and Behavioural Change, GMCA Waste and Resources Team talked to a report and presentation updating Members on the Communications Plan and priority areas for 2025/26, including:

- Cotton On Campaign
- Pots, Tubs and Trays Recycling
- Fly Tipping Campaign – Your Waste Your Responsibility
- Top Tips for your Trips to the Tip Campaign
- Battery Safety and Recycling
- Food Waste Recycling
- Reducing Waste, Reuse, Repair

Officers agreed to speak with Keep Britain Tidy and the GMCA Safer and Stronger Communities Team to determine whether any research is being carried out on cross boundary fly tipping.

Officers confirmed that residents must apply for and receive a permit to access Household Waste Recycling Centres in vans with domestic waste, this enables staff to ascertain that the person is a GM resident and not a tradesperson.

Members praised the shopping centre Cotton On Campaign and encouraged other members to run the campaign in their districts, it was suggested that the Arndale and Trafford Centres would be good places for future campaigns due to heavy footfall.

Members gave feedback that residents have welcomed the Pots, Tubs and Trays Campaign.

Members requested that the Committee write to Defra again regarding the disposal of vapes and the challenges they cause if placed in residual waste.

It was suggested that recycling and the impact on health and well-being be included in future advertising and that more information be communicated to residents on recycling of damaged clothing and textiles.

Due to language barriers pictorial learning campaigns are being investigated for future campaigns.

It was suggested that good practise fly tipping campaigns be shared across local authorities.

Recycle It, a social enterprise initiative in Bolton, teach students from Bolton and Bury college how to dismantle and recycle components from used computers and laptops for recycling. It was suggested that these types of initiative be supported by the GMCA by advertising and sharing contacts of organisations that could work with. Officers confirmed that a directory of recycle and repair organisations is being worked on that can be shared with these types of initiatives, business and residents.

Officers confirmed that batteries and vapes can be recycled at supermarkets and various recycling centres across the conurbation.

#### **Resolved/-**

1. That the Communications & Engagement Plan, the progress updates and the key priorities for the next financial year be noted.
2. That the Committee write to Defra regarding the disposal of vapes and the challenges they cause if placed in residual waste be agreed.

#### **WRC 24/28 2024/25 Budget Update and Budget and Levy Setting Process for 2025/26**

Steve Wilson, GMCA Treasurer presented a report updating members on the forecast 2024/25 budget position and the timeline for setting the budget and levy for 2025/26.

The report highlighted the forecast revenue outturn for 2024/25 as of month 5 detailing a c.£5m underspend driven by continuing trends in particular lower tonnages and higher income from recyclables. A further return of £20m of reserves has been made to the nine local authorities. The forecast capital outturn for 2024/25

at month 5 and the medium-term financial plan to 2025/26 and the budget consultation and timeline.

The CPI linked Suez contract September figure of 1.7% will improve the projected levy for 2025/26 with the full details of the budget and levy being brought to the January meeting of this Committee.

Members were advised that the budget is set against the tonnage forecasts received from districts and that low tonnage and changes to the makeup of waste has impacted the £4.5m variance on operational costs.

Landfill Tax increases by Retail Price Index (RPI) yearly and it is uncertain whether this has an impact on fly tipping.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That an update report be brought to the January 2025 meeting be agreed.

**WRC 24/29 Waste Strategy and Policy Update**

David Taylor, GMCA Executive Director for Waste presented the report updating Members on the latest announcements by government on Simpler Recycling and other associated policy areas, including:

Confirmation has been received by government that the Deposit Return Scheme is on track for implementation in 2027, the scheme includes recycling of aluminium and plastic of certain sizes and not glass. This scheme could result in reduced tonnages for districts that could affect contract and income levels with a potential change in law claim on contracts due to lower tonnages impacting income share levels.



The GMCA and the nine districts will receive their 2025/26 indicative payment figures for the packaging extended producer responsibility (EPR) as part of the Simpler Recycling Scheme in November, district receive the cost of collection and handling of packaging materials and the GMCA receive costs for the handling and disposal of those materials.

The statutory and non-statutory guidance for simpler recycling collection timescales and the position of co-collection of garden and food waste and associated charges hasn't yet been received.

The responses to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) consultation documents published in August are currently being reviewed by government with an expected initial response by December 2024 which should show how expected ETS's are intended to work for local authorities. A letter has been sent to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero highlighting the additional costs imposed on districts for additional carbon in residual waste which should be reflected to the producers of goods. Carbon permits for this scheme will be bought and sold on a two-weekly basis by government, with prices fluctuating according to demand.

The GMCA has written to the Secretary of State inviting them to meet with members of the Committee to discuss the costs to be imposed on districts for additional carbon in residual waste.

#### **Resolved/-**

1. That the update provided on strategic and policy matters be noted.
2. That an update report be brought to the January 2025 meeting be agreed.

#### **WRC 24/30 Draft Five Year Environment Plan 2025-2030**

Sarah Mellor, Head of Sustainable Consumption and Production, GMCA presented the first draft of the next Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan (2025-30)

and provided an overview of the process undertaken to develop the draft to date and the next steps prior to its final approval in November 2024, the update included:

- The structure of the Plan
- Aims to deliver on the vision
- Aims and objectives – the addition of air quality and economy to the objectives and their actions
- Next steps:
  - Final feedback from districts and external partners
  - Development and finalising targets
  - Approval and final comment from this committee, the Green City Region Partnership and Green City Region Board
  - Final amends to the plan through October
  - Approval at the GMCA in November
  - Launch publicly at the Green Summit on the 9 December 2024.

Members agreed that public engagement is a key priority for the plan and reducing waste.

It was suggested that conversations between GMCA and the government take place on standards of construction materials used across the conurbation around embedded and carbon extraction. Officers confirmed that discussions have been taking place with Defra on this subject.

Officers highlighted the finance section on becoming carbon neutral within the plan and noted the discussions to take place and models to be agreed to achieve carbon neutrality.

Members suggested that the majority of food waste is avoidable, and proposed the mandating of free food waste collections, including high rise buildings and apartments across Greater Manchester. Officers confirmed that various schemes and pilots have been carried out across apartment buildings to encourage food recycling and agreed that a solution needs to be reached.

It was confirmed that following the launch of the plan, executive summaries will be produced to assist in communication with residents and businesses.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the development process, next steps and that a sustainability and equality assessment will be conducted on the final draft document be noted.
3. To agree that the current Plan be circulated to Members.

**WRC 24/31 Biowaste Management Strategy Update**

David Taylor, GMCA Executive Director for Waste provide an update on the progress on the implementation of the Biowaste Management Strategy when the current contracts come to an end mid-2026.

Following marketing engagement event in August, a testing exercise on a dry anaerobic facility resulting in twelve written submissions which provided appetite in the market and highlighted some key issues, resulting in two key points coming to light:

- the lack of the availability of sites may become a challenge to deliverability; and
- uncertainty over the future of the government's Green Gas Support Scheme which throws doubt over the financial model of delivery.

If the GMCA decided to develop a plant, time constraints would be a risk to delivery by 2028 leaving the GMCA liable if green gas support is not available for c.£7-8m per year.

Analysis of the responses is taking place with a view to deciding the way forward prior to this committee in January 2025.

Clarity from the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero has been requested on whether it is intended that there will be a successor to the Green Gas Support Scheme to enable business cases to be ran.

Resolved/-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That an update report be brought to the January 2025 meeting be agreed.

### **WRC 24/32 Raikes Lane Thermal Recovery Facility and Implications of the Best Available Techniques Reference Document**

David Taylor, GMCA Executive Director for Waste updated members on the work required at GMCA's thermal recovery facility at Raikes Lane in Bolton to meet updated legislation requirements which will result in the need for capital investment with ongoing revenue implications to ensure the facilities are operating using the best techniques available.

The changes required are a Qualified Change in Law which is contractual, and as such leaves the GMCA obliged to meet the costs. There are some costs to cover arising from facilitating the introduction of the required changes, costs from increased consumption of process materials and from increased testing requirements. The financial impact on GMCA is estimated at c.£105k with other costs which are to be confirmed.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the report detailing the work required be noted.
2. That the expenditure associated with achieving compliance with the regulatory changes be noted.

3. That an update report be brought to a future meeting.

### **WRC 24/33 Future Meeting Dates**

#### **Resolved/-**

To note the future meeting dates for the Committee:

22 January 2025, 10am-12noon

12 March 2025, 10am-12noon

### **WRC 24/34 Exclusion of Press and Public**

#### **Resolved/-**

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

### **WRC 24/35 Contracts Update**

#### **Resolved/-**

1. That the contract updates and key risks detailed in the report be noted.