

## **GMCA Waste and Recycling Committee**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Subject: Waste and Resources Communications and Behavioural Change Plan  
2021/22 – Part A

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

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### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To gain member feedback on the proposed Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Behavioural Communications Plan 2021/22.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the contents of the report and appended Action Plan from April 2021 – March 2022; and
- ii. To provide comments on the Communications & Behavioural Change Delivery Plan 2021/22 to enable a final version to be costed and included in the budget setting process for 2021/22.

### **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

**Michelle Whitfield**  
[michelle.whitfield@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.whitfield@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Risk Management – see paragraph 6.1

Legal Considerations – considered in the body of the report

Financial Consequences – Revenue – see paragraph 4.1

Financial Consequences – Capital – see paragraph 4.1

Number of attachments included in the report: 1  
Appendix A - Action Plan April 2021 to March 2022

**BACKGROUND PAPERS: None**

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		Yes / No
<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
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?		
TfGMC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	N/A	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report outlines the draft Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Behavioural Change Delivery Plan 2021/22 and seeks Member's feedback on the proposals so that a final plan can be costed and included in the budget setting process for 2021/22. The Communications and Behavioural Change Action Plan which details planned activities from April 2021 to March 2022 is set out in Appendix A.

## **2. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

2.1 The impact of COVID-19 has been felt across the economy, the waste and recycling industry and is still a threat to the health and well-being of the public and economic recovery. As such the media is still dominated by COVID-19 and local authority communications are focused on advising residents of the latest measures and ensuring support is provided to the most vulnerable. This presents us with a challenge in how to communicate clear recycling messages to residents that cuts through the COVID-19 communications to reach the audience. The R4GM Communications team are exploring new ways of communicating and engaging with the public and have had to adapt the communications plan accordingly. For example, during the lockdown some newspapers were not being printed, libraries and community centres were closed and the team were mainly relying on social media and council websites to get messages out to the public. The team have been looking at using new networks and channels of communication such as digital display advertising (targeted data driven graphic advertising) which appears on most frequented websites.

2.2 One of the biggest changes the team has had to make is in delivering the education service. Visits to the education centre at Longley Lane in South Manchester had to be suspended due to COVID-19 but the team have developed a new range of virtual online education sessions which are being successfully delivered to community groups and schools. The first live virtual school assembly was delivered to a primary school in Oldham on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Four year groups (Years 8, 9, 10 and 11) took part from separate classrooms with a link up to TV screens in each classroom. The team has also set up a new R4GM Facebook group specifically aimed at teachers and community leaders to promote the new resources.

## **3. COMMUNICATIONS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE PLAN 2021/22**

3.1 The main focus of this year's delivery plan is reducing contamination in household paper and card recycling bins. This will continue to be the focus of next year's plan. The communications plan is split over 5 aims and these will continue to be central to the 2021/22 Plan:

- Reduce contamination and improve the quality and quantity of recycling;
- Encourage waste prevention;
- Raise awareness of recycling across Greater Manchester;
- Develop and promote the education service; and
- Increase recycling at the HWRCs.

## **3.2 Reduce Contamination and increase recycling**

3.2.1 The focus of these campaigns will continue to be on improving paper and card contamination. With paper and card prices depressed and increasing quality requirements being imposed by reprocessors, this has had a severe impact on council's collections leading to more wagon loads of recycling being rejected.

3.2.3 The R4GM Communications team is currently discussing the best approach to this situation with the 9 councils. It is proposed that we allocate the underspend from the current budget (£300,000) to develop a sustainable approach to changing residents behaviour. Through research and visual inspections residents fall broadly into two groups of contaminators, those who are doing it knowingly (willfully contaminating) hiding waste such as bin bags under the paper and card recycling in their bin and those who want to recycle right but are getting a few things wrong. From experience, engaging residents on the doorstep is the most effective way of changing behaviour. Clear and consistent communications should also be used in conjunction with other interventions such as rejecting contaminated bins at the kerbside, using bin tags, letters and leaflets to inform residents of why their bin has not been collected and door knocking to speak to residents directly. This should be supported by wider communications to explain the problem in more detail including what happens to the paper and card once it has been collected and sent for recycling.

3.2.4 For many councils, who are facing difficult choices regarding budgets, the main issue is not having the officers required to resource this kind of direct face to face approach, and being able to follow up issues with individual households. A business case is being developed to explore funding a team of recycling officers to deliver the engagement at the doorstep and the follow up needed to tackle this problem. If approved, it is proposed to run a 12 month intensive programme of direct resident engagement to reduce rejected loads and improve the quality of paper and card contamination.

### **3.2.5 Increase Food Waste Recycling**

3.2.6 The Government are consulting on the National Waste and Resources strategy which includes the introduction of separate weekly food waste collections. A recent waste compositional analysis study showed that 28.4% of the general waste bin contains food. Removing food waste from the general waste will create more capacity in residents' bins and may also help to improve contamination rates in the recycling bins where food has been left in packaging and placed in the recycling bin. This campaign will focus on reminding the public of how to use their food and garden waste service in order to capture all food waste.

## **3.3 Encourage Waste Prevention**

### **3.3.1 Reuse Shops**

3.3.2 By the end of March 2021, there will be 3 reuse shops located on household waste recycling centres in Trafford, Oldham and Salford. SUEZ and R4GM's communications teams are working together to develop the required branding, communications and marketing activity to promote the reuse shops. In 2021/22, the reuse hub will open, this will be a larger facility that will process and improve re-use items (possibilities include repairing bikes, testing and refurbishing electrical equipment and upcycling furniture) in order to stock the reuse shops and make additional items available for the third sector. The hub will be located at Nash Road in Trafford Park. The operational plans for the hub are still to be fully developed, but the communications and engagement plan to support this will be twofold. Firstly we will need to focus on encouraging residents to donate items at the household waste recycling centres that might have otherwise gone on the general waste container. Secondly, the communications will focus on the benefits of the shops and the hub to the community, the third sector and on seeing the value in waste.

### 3.4 **Raise Awareness of Recycling Across Greater Manchester Using On and Offline Channels**

#### 3.4.1 **Website Improvements**

Improvements are currently being made to the R4GM website to simplify the information and site rules provided about the 20 household waste recycling centres and make it clear that these are for residents to dispose of household waste only. Improvements will continue next year and will focus on waste prevention pages including information about the new reuse shops and reuse hub.

#### 3.4.2 **General Messages about Recycling, Waste Prevention and Reuse**

3.4.3 New videos will be developed to explain what happens to paper and card once it's been collected to raise awareness of the contamination issue. A new suite of photography will be procured to promote the new reuse shops and support a wider waste prevention campaign.

3.4.4 In addition a consistent messaging regarding recycling will continue to be drip fed throughout the year and resources and assets will be developed for the council communications team to use.

### 3.5 **Education**

3.5.1 The education service will continue to support the main key messages. For example contamination campaigns are supported by delivering the e-learning module, which has been shortlisted for the Learning Awards 2020 to bin crew and contact centre staff ensuring they fully understand what is collected in each bin and the impact of putting the wrong items in.

3.5.2 Tours will resume at Longley Lane education centre as soon as it's safe to do so and in line with guidance regarding COVID-19. The education centre is currently being refitted with up to date interactive displays. The team will pay for coaches to encourage schools to start visiting the education centre. They will also offer outreach to schools and community groups

prioritising those who are located too far away from the education centre to commute during the school day.

- 3.5.3 Tours are no longer being offered at the Energy from Waste plant at Bolton and the Hurstwood Court building which houses the education centre and classroom is being leased to SUEZ to make use of the empty office space.
- 3.5.4 In 2021/22, the education team will identify what opportunities exist to develop an educational service at the reuse hub. For example providing a classroom at the reuse hub will enable us to showcase the repair and reuse of household waste again emphasising the importance of waste reduction and it provides the opportunity to show visitors what happens to the waste they deposit at a household waste recycling centre.
- 3.5.5 The new virtual online education sessions and resources will continue to be used to reach audiences that aren't able to visit the education centres and a blended service will be developed. The team will continue to promote the new Facebook group and increase the number of followers.
- 3.5.6 Visits to the solar farm in Bolton will continue to be provided when requested. These visits last for approximately 1hour as there is no educational facility at the site.

### 3.6 Increase Recycling at HWRCs

- 3.6.1 The contractual recycling rates targets at the HWRCs for year 3 (2021-22) are 62.3% for Lot 1 and 61.2% for Lot 2. To achieve these SUEZ will need to continue to implement the trade waste policy to deter traders from using the recycling centres unlawfully to dispose of trade waste and continue to encourage residents to separate their waste correctly and place it in the correct container. In addition the 3 reuse shops are due to open by the end of March 2021 and the reuse hub in contract year 3. This will mean more waste is prevented from going to Energy from Waste or landfill pushing up the recycling rate.
- 3.6.2 Communications will therefore focus on communicating the trade waste policy to traders and on deterring fly tipping, promoting new materials that can be recycled such as mattresses and carpets and on encouraging residents to donate household items for reuse.

## 4. BUDGET

- 4.1 The budget breakdown for delivering the Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications for 2021/22 is detailed below.

Summary 21/22	£
Salaries	480,216
Waste prevention	42,000
Digital support	120,000
Education	55,000
Reduce contamination	110,000
Increase recycling at HWRC	30,000

SUEZ joint comms	20,000
General	60,000
Total	917,216

**5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- 5.1 In developing a new approach to tackling paper and card contamination, a robust monitoring and evaluation process will be agreed.
- 5.2 In addition the team track the number of rejected loads, recycling rates and tonnage collected throughout the year.
- 5.3 Additional analytics are monitored for the R4GM website and social media channels, these are used to improve content and develop new assets.

**6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 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 2021/22 given the tightening of the export market for paper and card and the additional processing costs associated with removing contamination update.