

Waste and Recycling Committee Meeting

Date: 11 October 2023

Subject: Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change Plan 2024/25

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

Purpose of Report

To seek feedback on the Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change plan 2024/25.

Recommendations:

Members of the Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the progress made on developing the Communications Plan and provide feedback.

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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 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: None

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 overview of the draft Recycle for Greater Manchester (R4GM) Communications and Engagement Behaviour Change Plan 2024-25 and seeks feedback from members before the plan is finalised in January 2024. The plan is part of the GMCA's Communications and Engagement Strategy which builds on the planning, delivery and learnings of the GMCA's communications and engagement service.

It maintains the key focus of the service's previous strategy – building awareness, involvement, and trust.

1.1 Development of the R4GM Communications Plan

The R4GM Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change plan 2024-25 (attached in Appendix A) is being developed by the R4GM team by reviewing the current campaigns and communications, analysing the impact, and adjusting or changing the tactics accordingly. The council officers from the nine local authorities are also consulted to ensure the plan aligns with their operational objectives as well as the objectives outlined in the GMCA's Waste and Resources team business plan 2024/25. The plan must also support the delivery of the Waste contracts providing communications support on the Renew Hub, shops, household waste recycling centres and access policy including the van and twin axel permit.

1.2 National Landscape

The Resources and Waste Strategy for England has been subject to several delays with the new policy not expected to be fully introduced until at least 2025, however the communications plan will be updated once more details become available.

The plan also needs to respond to new and emerging waste streams such as e-cigarettes and vapes and respond to operational issues such as battery fires. In response to an increase in the number of battery fires seen in bin wagons and at the waste treatment plants, a battery safety campaign has been launched with the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS). This campaign advises residents not to put batteries in any of their bins at home. We are also supporting the national Recycle Your Electricals campaign which provides advice on where to recycle electricals and batteries. We will continue to develop and deliver the battery safety campaign into next year.

2. Campaigns

2.1 In the Loop

In the Loop is a new campaign which aims to increase recycling by explaining the link between recycling and the Circular Economy in which we demonstrate the value of waste and how everyday household items are recycled into new products. Recycling is one the most tangible ways that residents can make a positive impact on the environment. The campaign launched on 15 May for an initial 6 weeks of advertising. The next phase of the campaign will coincide with national Recycle Week in October. New videos are being developed to show the journey of everyday household items including aluminum cans and plastic bottles to demonstrate how they are recycled and how this reduces the impact on our natural resources. The campaign will be reviewed and adapted as needed to ensure it stays relevant to the audience and will continue to run into next year.

2.2 Textiles

Later this year a new campaign is being launched that will focus on reducing the amount of damaged clothing being disposed of in the general waste bin. All clothing even ripped, threadbare or holey clothing has a value and can be recycled. So, the campaign will provide advice and guidance on what to do with damaged clothing. This campaign will continue to be developed into next year as solutions for recycling non-clothing textiles such as duvets and blankets are found. SUEZ are currently looking for end markets for these types of textiles that are historically very difficult to recycle.

2.3 Food Waste Contamination

Contamination in the food and garden waste bin is a common problem but one that has a direct impact on the resulting compost that is made from the food and garden waste collected from the nine local councils. The primary source of plastic contamination is from plastic packaging such as salad bags, potato bags, plastic punnets etc, that are not removed before recycling the food. The campaign will provide advice on the need to remove all packaging before recycling food waste.

3. Education and Visitor Centres

The education team continue to deliver engaging sessions at the three visitor centres at the Materials Recovery Facility, (MRF), the Renew Hub and the Solar Farm as well as outreach sessions in the community and virtual/online sessions to groups who are not able to travel to the visitor centres. The R4GM team work closely together to ensure campaign messages are linked up with the visitor sessions so that for example the education officers deliver the battery safety message as part of a tour around the MRF. They continue to review and report on visitor numbers and target promotion of the centres and the outreach sessions to areas where engagement is low.

The education team has recently visited Gilmoor Recycling Discovery Centre in Merseyside to share best practice to enable the team to bring new ideas to the way our service is delivered.

4. Next Steps

Following feedback from members of the Waste and Recycling Committee and from the Council officers, the R4GM team will start to develop individual communications plans for each campaign or activity within the overarching plan using insight, evaluation and feedback so that they are relevant to the audience.