

Waste and Recycling Committee

Date: 13 March 2024

Subject: Communications & Engagement Behavioural Change Plan 2024/25

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

Purpose of Report

To update members on the Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change Plan 2024/25.

Recommendations:

Members of the Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the Communications & Engagement Plan and provide feedback.

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:

1 – Appendix A - The Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Engagement Behavioural Change Plan 2024/25

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?

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 attached in Appendix A. The plan provides an outline of our main priorities and will be reviewed regularly to take account of emerging issues or requests to support the district councils with communications relating to specific issues such as contamination. The plan builds on the main campaigns and communications already being delivered and summarises how we use insight and research to develop our communications and campaigns, so they reach the intended audience through the right channels.

2. Campaigns

2.1. Batteries and Electricals

A significant amount of vapes and e-cigarettes are being disposed of in household recycling bins causing a fire hazard and contamination issues. Due to a lack of national recycling infrastructure and confusion over how to recycle vapes, many residents are not aware of the fact that these are electrical items and should be disposed of in an electrical recycling container either at a retailer or household waste recycling centre. A vapes survey is currently being run to collect data on disposal habits which will be used to develop communications to help the public understand how and where to dispose of vapes and e-cigarettes.

The Battery Safety campaign will continue to run in partnership with the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to highlight the dangers of disposing of batteries incorrectly. We will also continue to support the Recycle Your Electricals campaign; a national scheme that directs users to a postcode locator to find their nearest electrical recycling point which could be a local supermarket, retailer, or household waste recycling centre.

2.2. Household Waste Recycling Centres

A new campaign to raise awareness of the household waste recycling centres is due to be launched in March. The campaign aims to highlight how easy it is to use the recycling centres, by providing useful top tips delivered in a fun and accessible way. Our research shows that many residents are motivated to recycle more when they see how their donated furniture is used to raise money for good causes in their local area. So, communications will focus on which local projects have been supported in each local

area, helping to show the importance of the recycling centres as a community asset. They are not only providing a free service for residents to recycle their household waste but also by collecting items for reuse via the Renew Hub, they upcycle and repurpose waste to raise money for good causes. Initial messaging will focus on the basics such as opening times, ensuring those who need a free van permit have applied before they visit and encouraging residents to pre-sort their recycling before they visit. New layout maps will be developed and hosted on the website showing where all the containers are located making it easier to plan a visit.

2.3. Textiles, Food Waste and In the Loop Recycling Campaign

As detailed in the Communications Plan, the In the Loop recycling campaign will continue this year, the campaign aims to increase recycling by explaining how items are kept 'In the Loop' by recycling them to reduce the impact on natural resources.

A textiles campaign is being launched in April that focusses on reducing the amount of textiles that are disposed of in the general waste bin by raising awareness of the fact that even if clothing is holey or ripped, it still has a value and can still be recycled in the textiles containers at the recycling centres.

A food waste campaign will also be launched later this year that aims to reduce the contamination of plastic packaging in the food and garden waste bin.

3. Education Service

The education team will continue to deliver tours and classroom based learning at the three visitor centres at the Materials Recovery Facility, Longley Lane, Manchester, the Renew Hub in Trafford Park and the GMCA solar farm in Bolton. The focus of this year is to review and develop the tour and learning activity at the Hub using the latest waste prevention research from the Keep Britain Tidy project. This research shows us that waste prevention messages are not well understood by the public who believe that recycling is the best way to protect the environment. We will use the learning activity and tour to help explain how reducing waste by buying less and reusing and repairing what you have can have a greater impact on the environment than just by simply recycling.

4. Renew and Social Value Communications

4.1. R4GM Community Fund

This year is the fourth year of the fund, it will open for applications on 8 April and close on 31 May. £220,000 is available for community groups and schools to run recycling, repair or reuse projects. So far 67 groups have been supported, including repair cafes, composting projects, bike repair schemes and a project to redistribute baby clothes to families in need.

4.2. Renew Hub

SUEZ are continuing to develop the Renew Hub; a paint spray booth has now been installed which means that more furniture can be upcycled and resold. They have also recruited two apprentice furniture restorers on a 2-year placement with North Lancashire College to work towards a Level 2 Furniture Restoration Apprenticeship where they will be introduced to the techniques of restoring and preserving antique and contemporary furniture pieces.

SUEZ are also looking at how best to use the event space for community groups, workshops, corporate events and monthly Renew markets. They will create a diary of events to raise awareness of the Renew hub.

Several charities also collect furniture and other household goods to distribute to those in need, these include Mustard Tree, Bolton Community Furniture Store, The River Manchester and Big Life.

SUEZ have run Renew pop up shops at Longley Lane and Cobden St recycling centres and at an empty shop unit in Bolton and are exploring other opportunities in other districts.

A communications plan has been developed to support and promote the activity in the Hub and the Renew shops, it also highlights the social value opportunities such as the links with the community fund, charities and apprentices and training opportunities being provided.

5. National Campaigns

5.1. Using national campaigns helps us to amplify the work we do in Greater Manchester. From 11 to 17 March, we are working in partnership with ReLondon on GM Repair Week to highlight the businesses and community groups that offer repair services to encourage residents to think about repairing items before throwing them away. Workshops, tours and a Repair Fair are also being run at the Renew Hub during that week. Newspaper adverts, a press release and social media communications will promote all of the events happening in districts across Greater Manchester during that week.

5.2. Food Waste Awareness Week also in March provides an opportunity to talk to residents about how to reduce their food waste, providing top tips on storing food to make it last longer.

5.3. National Recycle Week is held every year in October and again we will support the campaign with local advertising to raise awareness of recycling in Greater Manchester.