

Waste and Resources Recycling Committee

Date: 17 July 2024

Subject: Sustainable Consumption and Production: Avoidable Single-Use Plastics

Report of: Michelle Lynch, Lead Programmes Manager, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Environment Directorate

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the progress of the Single-Use Plastic Work Programme undertaken as part of the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Priorities 1, 2 and 4 - Moving to a Circular Economy, Managing Waste Sustainably, and Moving to Sustainable Lifestyles.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the progress of the key areas of activities currently being undertaken as part of the Single-Use Plastic Work Programme.

Contact Officers





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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impacts Questionnaire		
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	The Plan looks to raise awareness through community engagement and involvement
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation		
Housing		
Economy	G	Moving to a circular economy can have a positive social, economic and environmental effect on the conurbation By creating a circular economy it should identify gaps and skills and stimulate economic growth in those areas Innovation is key to developing solutions and end markets for difficult materials Inward investment could potentially through innovation
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	The SCP Plan looks to reduce carbon emission through its 4 key priority areas
Consumption and Production	G	The SCP Plan focuses on key priority areas, as set out in the report, to reduce the level of waste produced A number of projects are currently in place to look at minimising construction waste Managing waste sustainability as possible is a key priority within the plan Moving to a circular economy is a priority with the SCP Plan PlasticFreeGM continues to be a priority within the SCP work programme
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The SCP Plan and work programme are a critical element to the delivery on GM achieving Carbon Neutral by 2038. As SCP covers a wide range of areas, ensuring that the work programme is sufficiently resourced would improve the contribution to delivery of the overall plan.
Further Assessment(s):	N/A	
		
Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		
		Negative impacts overall.

Risk Management

All risks regarding the delivery of the 5YEP and SCP theme are set out in the GM Environment Team's Risk Register. There is nothing identified within the SCP section of the register which is currently identified as 'red' status.

Legal Considerations

There are no legal implications of the recommendations set out within the report.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The SCP Work Plan sets out expenditure that is within the budget forecasts (2023/24 and 2024/25) for certain areas of work. Actions for future years may require additional funds. If so, these would be subject to a separate detailed business case being approved.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital consequences within the report. Actions for future years may require additional funds. If so, these would be subject to a separate detailed business case being approved.

Number of attachments to the report:

1 - SingleUsePlastics_WorkProg_AppendixA_SCPReport_20240717

Background Papers

[The Greater Manchester 5 Year Environment Plan SCP Plan](#)

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 SCP Theme of the Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan focuses on valuing resources and reducing waste. It also supports our carbon neutral ambitions by identifying actions which will reduce our Scope 3 emissions. The SCP plan covers 4 key priority areas:

- Moving to a Circular Economy;
- Managing Waste Sustainably;
- Reducing Food Waste; and
- Moving to Sustainable Lifestyles.

This covering report provides an update on the Single-Use Plastic Work Programme undertaken as part of Priorities 1, 2 and 4 - Moving to a Circular Economy, Managing Waste Sustainably, and Moving to Sustainable Lifestyles. Any further updates on more recent events will be provided at the meeting.

2. Background

2.1. The Greater Manchester Plastic Pact

The Greater Manchester Plastic Pact was one of the first and boldest Pacts to commit to eradicating single-use plastics from the public estate by the end of 2024. The Pact was signed in 2019 by members of the Greater Manchester family including our 10 Local Authorities, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and the NHS Foundation Trust. The Pact has six commitments:

1. Demonstrate personal leadership;
2. Share knowledge, data, insights, and best practice;
3. Review procurement processes and provide carbon literacy training to all staff;
4. Embed environmental sustainability criteria in social value procurement mechanisms;
5. Support new initiatives to reduce single-use plastics and increase recycling and re-use; and
6. Raise awareness amongst staff, suppliers, and the wider community to influence and change behaviour.

2.2. Reducing Avoidable Single-use Plastics

Since the launch of the Pact in 2019, and despite the work programme being paused due to the pandemic, we have made a great deal of progress towards reducing single-use plastics in Greater Manchester including:

- PlasticFreeGM campaign established asking individuals and businesses to commit to reducing single-use plastics at home and work;
- Water fountain pilot introduced to increase access to free water;
- Greater Manchester Green Carrier Bag launched;
- Iconic Paper Bee Straw launched to help reduce and raise awareness of single-use plastic waste;
- Grab Your Cup campaign launched helping to save 1.2 million disposable cups from going to waste by encouraging people to switch to reusable cups;
- Recommendations published to reduce single-use plastics on the public estate in catering;
- Social value framework reviewed and adopted by GMCA to promote environmental sustainability;
- Climate Change employee e-module launched with 97% completion rate across the GMCA, and content shared with Local Authorities and partners;
- Commitment made by the GMCA and Manchester City Council to make Greater Manchester a leading Refill Destination; and
- Launch of a School Eco-Refill pilot to promote refill and re-use in the local community.

2.3. Single-Use Plastic Working Group

To continue to drive engagement and support action in reducing avoidable single-use in Greater Manchester a Single-Use Plastic Working Group was established in December 2022. The Group's work programme for 2023/2024 is set out at Appendix A. An overview of current work being undertaken is set out below.

3. Reducing Avoidable Single-use Plastics

The following actions are currently being delivered through the Single-Use Plastic Working Group:

3.1. Refill Greater Manchester - Communications

A communications plan has been developed to support the expansion of Refill across Greater Manchester. Key objectives are:

1. Raise awareness and increase downloads and usage of the Refill app in Greater Manchester; and
2. Increase accessibility of refill and reuse options by growing the number of new refill stations in the city-region.

Communications commenced in February 2024 with the launch of a [Greater Manchester Refill Destination Toolkit](#) (circulated to all Districts and Partners). As of end April 2024, this has resulted in:

- 49 Toolkit downloads;
- 17 GMCA / Green City social posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter / X, LinkedIn);
- 47 engagements, 381 click throughs;
- Two GMCA / Green City newsletter articles published – 814 click throughs; and
- 50+ partner social posts.

In addition, new pages have been created on the GM Green City website pages to sign post to:

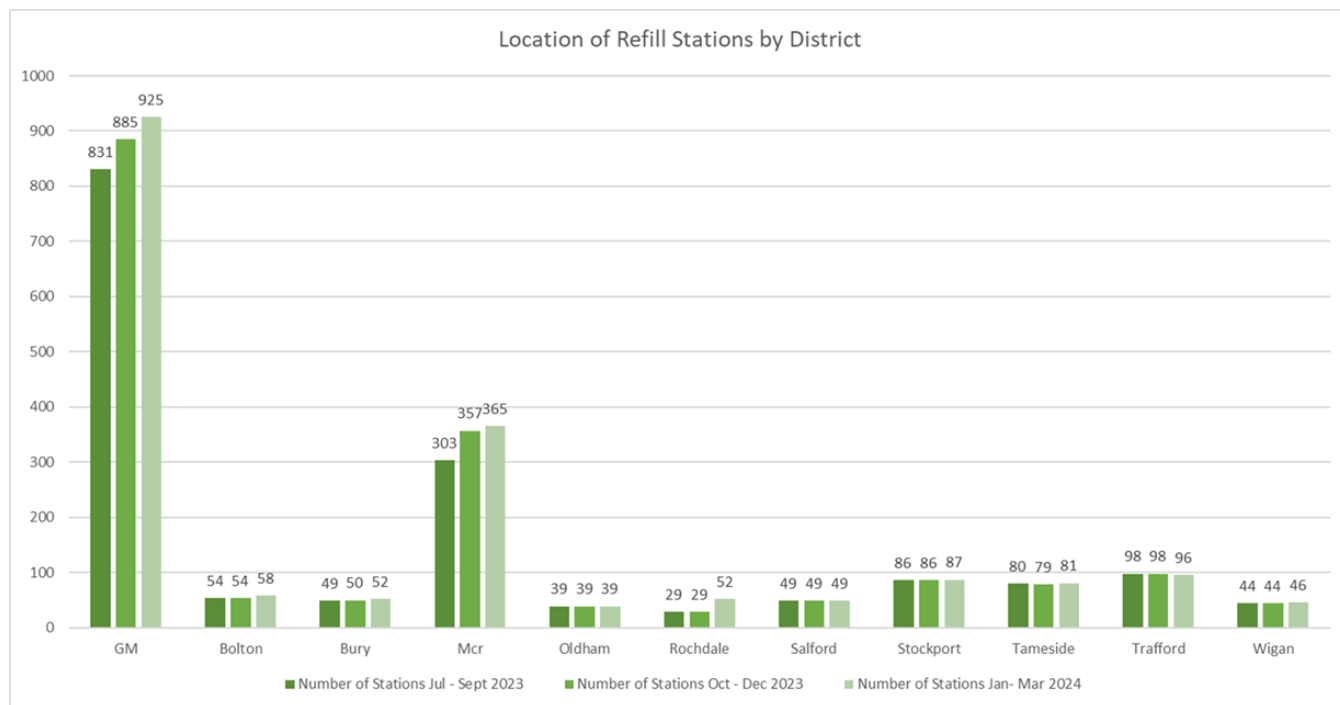
- For businesses: <https://gmgreencity.com/refill-station-guidance/> – 364 visitors to date;
- For residents <https://gmgreencity.com/projects-and-campaigns/refill-greater-manchester/> – 216 visitors to date; and
- For community groups: <https://gmgreencity.com/refill-communities/> – new page as of 10th June 2024.

Further campaign activity for Refill and reducing single-use plastics for 2024/25 is currently being developed, this will include case study development and further content and social media activity for all GMCA-owned channels, including a separate content package developed specifically for World Refill Day on 16th June 2024.

3.2. Refill Greater Manchester - Data

As a Refill Destination, GMCA has access to the City to Sea public sector hub, which includes quarterly reporting and data insights to measure the growth of refill in Greater Manchester.

As of end March 2024, Refill Greater Manchester has increased the number of Refill stations by 10% across the whole of Greater Manchester, with Manchester, signing up 100 new stations in the last year (since April 2023), and Rochdale seeing the largest % growth in Refill Stations from 29 to 52 (79% increase).



3.3. Refill Greater Manchester – Onboarding Communities

To support the growth of Refill Communities in Greater Manchester an online information webinar was held with City to Sea on Wednesday 15th May 2024 (13 organisations participated). A Refill Communities briefing note has been distributed to all Districts outlining the scheme for circulation to Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups.

3.4. School’s Eco Refill Pilot

Work continues with Pupil’s Profit to deliver an [Eco Refill Pilot in Greater Manchester](#). The project aims to reduce single-use plastics by driving awareness and increasing refill and reuse in the community, whilst giving young people the skills and tools to play a part in tackling climate change.

- Number of school shops launched: 9;
- (Seeking alternative high school in Stockport.)
- Number of 500 ml bottles refilled in Term 1 (6 schools reporting figures*): 270;
- *All schools shops have been requested to submit their Term 1 figures with 4 shops responses outstanding.

- 2nd Blog posted on Green City Region website;
- Press coverage secured in Rochdale and Bury via the schools; and
- Two Eco-Refill Schools are participating in 'Running out of Time' climate action relay. The baton starts in Ben Nevis and runs to Brighton finishing in Parliament Square. The relay will pass through Greater Manchester on Friday 14th June 2024 visiting St Margaret Mary Primary School, Manchester in the morning and St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Trafford in the afternoon.

3.5. Single-Use Plastic E-learning Module

A new Single-Use Plastics and Reducing Plastic Waste employee e-module is in development with the first draft expected mid July 2024. The course will cover:

- Why we need to reduce avoidable single-use plastics;
- What action the Government is taking;
- What action we are taking in Greater Manchester; and
- What action you can take at home and work.

3.6. Spend Analysis Public Estate – Catering

All Local Authorities committed to act on reducing avoidable single-use plastics on the public estate by signing the GM Plastic Pact in 2019. To support GM public sector organisations to take appropriate and informed steps in the reduction of problematic and avoidable single-use plastics, GMCA commissioned Eunomia to review catering consumables and disposables purchased for use across the public sector estate (typically where most avoidable single-use plastics are used). The findings including recommended actions on single-use plastic items to be avoided, reduced, substituted, or replaced for more sustainable alternatives (including reusables) were published in 2021.

To build on this baseline study and assess progress a follow-on analysis (phase 1) is currently underway across the following product categories:

- Bags and boxes;
- Paper, films and wraps;
- Cups, lids and straws;
- Cutlery;
- Napkins;
- Bowls, plates and trays;
- Soup cups and lids; and Other/misc.

The analysis will compare spend and unit data to the 2021 baseline including:

- Which items have seen the biggest decrease/increase in procurement;
- District and Partner comparison highlighting good progress made; and
- Direction of travel for level of spend and units procured for each catering consumable in scope.

Following completion of phase 1 (expected September 2024), a proposed phase 2 will look at additional areas where avoidable single-use plastics can be reduced on the public estate.

3.7. Research

We are currently supporting two research projects led by the University of Manchester:

- Plastic Packaging Recycling – The project will explore the challenges and opportunities concerning UK plastic packaging recycling; and
- Impact of Plastic Policies on small and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) in Northwest (Research England) – The project builds on the recent ‘One Bin to Rule Them All’ policy work and will explore how the new and upcoming legislation on plastics (such as Extended Producer Responsibility, Plastic Tax and Deposit Return Scheme, and the recently proposed ‘Simpler recycling in England’) might affect SMEs in the Northwest region.

4. Recommendation

The Committee is requested to note the progress of the key areas of activity currently being undertaken as part of the Single-Use Plastic Work Programme.