

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 12 July 2024

Subject: GMCA Sustainability Strategy – Annual Report

Report of: Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region and Sue Johnson
Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Green City Region

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the GMCA Sustainability Strategy 2022 – 2026 and outlines activity undertaken during 2023/2024 that has contributed towards current progress. The report also outlines actions set to be delivered in 2024/2025.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the progress made against the priority areas of the GMCA Sustainability Strategy 2022 – 2026
2. Note the contents of the report including actions proposed for 2024/25
3. Note the implications of the Biodiversity Duty on GMCA and the proposed response.

The sustainability assessment evaluation shows a positive impact for carbon, environment, nature and adaptation/resilience.

Contact Officers

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Report authors must identify which paragraph relating to the following issues:

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Insert text

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation	G	Includes a paper focused on the GMCA response to the Biodiversity Duty which will contribute to GMCA, as an organisation, being more resilient to climate change
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Includes a paper focused on the GMCA response to the Biodiversity Duty which will contribute to GMCA, as an organisation, delivering more actions linked to biodiversity enhancement Includes a paper focused on the GMCA response to the Biodiversity Duty which will contribute to GMCA, as an organisation, delivering more actions linked to biodiversity enhancement which could include greenspace for communities Outline actions being taken and proposed to progress GMCA towards carbon neutrality by 2038
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The paper outlines the GMCA, as an organisation, response to the climate emergency including progress against the 2038 carbon neutrality target. The paper also outlines the strategy and how it contributes towards 2038 as well as other areas on sustainability and details projects planned for 2024/25.
Further Assessment(s):	Carbon Assessment	
	G Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.
	R Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	RR Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment

Overall Score	#####
Buildings	Result
New Build residential	N/A
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A
Transport	
Active travel and public transport	N/A
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A
Access to amenities	N/A
Vehicle procurement	N/A
Land Use	
Land use	##### Paper is an update paper rather than a specific project
No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.
Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.
Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.	

Risk Management

None applicable.

Legal Considerations

None applicable.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

3.1.7 – Details the grant funding acquired to support delivery of feasibility surveys as part of Low Carbon Skills Fund.

4.4 – Details the sustainability metrics used within procurement activity.

Financial Consequences – Capital

4.4 – Details the sustainability metrics used within procurement activity.

Number of attachments to the report: None

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not yet considered

Background Papers

- None applicable

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

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 The GMCA Sustainability Strategy 2022 – 2026 was launched in August 2022 to drive improvements in sustainability performance from the GMCA's internal operations. The strategy covers the core activity of GMCA and GMFRS and all sustainability impacts associated with this activity including:

- Activities delivered, and associated sustainability impacts, from our Head Offices
- Sustainability impacts arising from the assets operated by and the activities delivered by GMFRS
- Sustainability impacts arising from activities undertaken and the assets directly operated by GMCA Waste & Resources Team, including closed landfill sites and other land assets.

1.2 The strategy is built around five priorities where effort is focused during the strategy delivery period:

- Rapidly reducing our carbon footprint
- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Using our resources efficiently and responsibly
- Adapting to a changing climate
- Being sustainability leaders

2. Sustainability Strategy Targets and Progress

2.1 Each priority area of the strategy has a specific target for 2026 as well as annual milestone targets as outlined in the table below along with progress to March 2024:

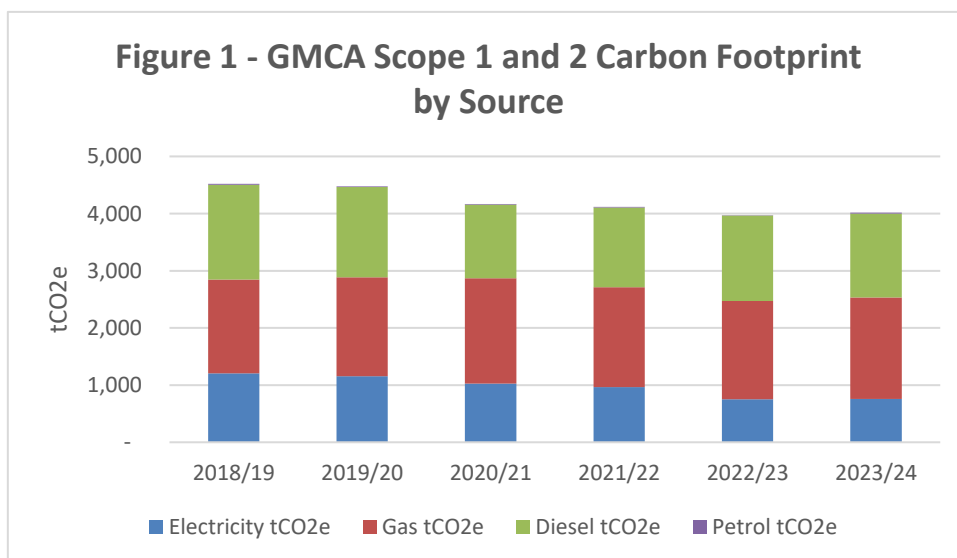
Priority	2026 Target	2023/24 Target	March 2024 Update	Rating
Rapidly reducing our carbon footprint	Reduce emissions from buildings and vehicles by 50% (from 18/19 baseline)	Reduce emissions from buildings and vehicles by 25% (from 18/19 baseline)	Carbon emissions from buildings and vehicles are 11% lower than the 18/19 baseline	
Protecting and restoring the environment	Fully embed environmental protection into our emergency response activities	Deliver collaborative Environment Agency led training to Hazardous Materials Environmental Protection Officers	Environment Agency provided bespoke training to Environmental Protection Unit and Hazardous Materials Environmental Protection Officers.	
Using our resources efficiently and responsibly	80% of our supply chain committed to supporting our carbon neutral target	30% of our supply committed to supporting our carbon neutrality target	16% of suppliers have a carbon neutral plan (% of cumulative spend as of Q3 23/24)	
Adapting to a changing climate	Develop a climate change adaptation strategy based on future risks and opportunities	Climate change adaptation strategy delivered	Format and themes for climate change adaptation strategy established. Further development work planned for 2024/25	
Being sustainability leaders	Train all our staff in understanding the climate emergency and their role in tackling it	Established a climate change and sustainability training framework	Draft framework established. Further work planned for 2024/25 to finalise	

3. Sustainability Performance

3.1. Carbon Emissions

3.1.1. Scope 1 emissions (emissions associated with fossil fuel consumption) and scope 2 emissions (emissions associated with purchased electricity) are measured on a monthly basis via key performance indicators (KPI's) and tracked against the strategy targets.

3.1.2. By March 2024, scope 1 and 2 emissions were 11% lower than the 2018/19 baseline. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of scope 1 and 2 emissions by sources which, for GMCA, are gas, diesel, petrol (scope 1) and electricity (scope 2).



3.1.3. Emissions associated with the consumption of fossil fuels, namely gas, diesel and petrol, accounted for 81% of the scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint. This emphasises the importance of decarbonising heating of buildings and fuelling of fleet which, at this stage, relies on a transition towards electrified heating systems and vehicles.

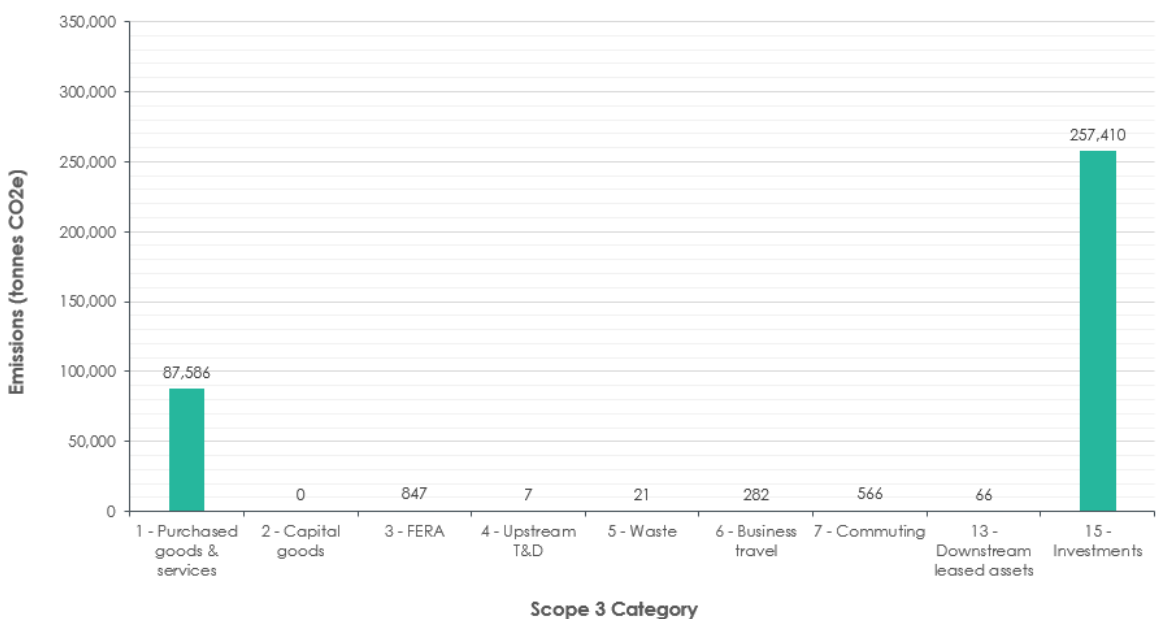
3.1.4. Estates transformation is a key activity required to support a reduction in the scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint. Construction activity has commenced at Blackley Community Fire Station with the new build fire station set to be net-zero for regulated energy and the building will no longer consume fossil fuels.

3.1.5. During 2023/24, refurbishment of Littleborough Community Fire Station was also completed with the building having a number of sustainability measures installed including air source heat pump, meaning the building no longer consumes fossil fuels for heating, as well as solar PV.

- 3.1.6. Carbon reduction feasibility surveys have been conducted for 6 sites within phase 1 of the GMFRS Estates Programme, with 4 sites progressing to procurement in Q1 2024/25. The 4 sites outlined for low carbon investment are Rochdale Community Fire Station, Ashton Community Fire Station, Wigan Community Fire and Ambulance Station and Bury Community Fire Station. The works will involve various carbon reduction measures with the key measure being the transition from gas heating to electrical heating via air source heat pump.
- 3.1.7. To support future estates retrofit, a further 6 feasibility surveys have been conducted across the GMFRS with the works fully funded to £99,000 via the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF). An application has also been made to LCSF Phase 5 with the ambition to deliver 5 additional low carbon feasibility surveys.
- 3.1.8. Fleet decarbonisation is planned for 2024/25 with electric vehicles and petrol-electric hybrids being introduced to the fleet. To facilitate this transition, as well as future fleet investment activity, investment in electric vehicle charging points across the GMFRS estate is also planned for 2024/25.
- 3.1.9. Internal reporting on energy consumption and carbon emissions will be amended during 2024/25 to separate electricity consumption from buildings from electricity consumption associated with the charging of vehicles and ensure the carbon impact of this is also tracked.
- 3.1.10. A full carbon footprint inventory was undertaken in 2023/24 to measure emissions across scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3. Scope 3 emissions are emissions that take place within the value chain of the organisation. They can be upstream or downstream and are separated into distinct categories.

3.1.11. In total, scope 3 emissions amounted to 346,784 tonnes CO₂e which is equivalent to 99% of the GMCA’s total carbon footprint. This footprint did not include emissions associated with Firefighter Pensions or the emissions from the GMCA contract with Suez, although the figures from the Suez contract were included within the final report document. Figure 2 outlines the scope 3 carbon footprint itemised into the scope 3 categories.

Figure 2: Emissions by Scope 3 Category



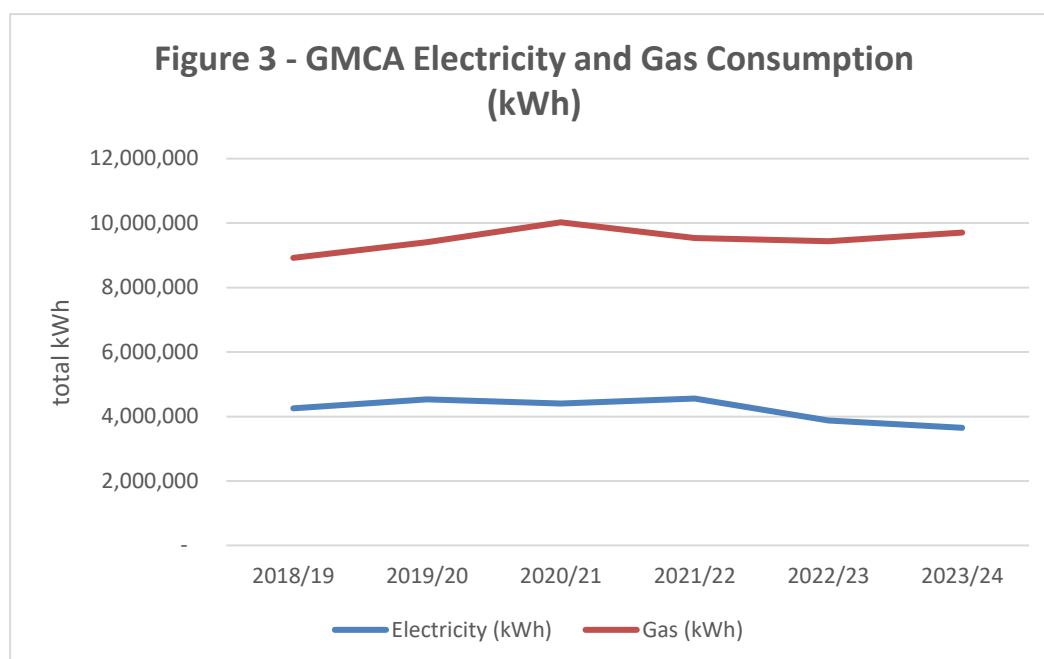
3.1.12. As shown by the chart, emissions from procured goods and services, as well as investment, account for 97% of scope 3 emissions.

3.1.13. The methodology largely used for scope 3 emissions calculation relied upon spend data. To acquire more accurate figures, acquiring more detailed data, such as product specific emissions data, would improve inputs into the calculation process and enable a more detailed output.

3.2 Utilities Consumption

3.2.1 Utilities monitoring involves the monitoring of the consumption of gas, electricity and water across the GMCA estate, namely the GMFRS estate and Tootal Buildings. Data is acquired for electricity and gas via automated meter readers (AMR) that provide data on a half-hourly basis, whilst water consumption is acquired direct from

the water retailer who undertake meter readings on a less frequent basis. Figure 3 charts the historic change in the consumption of gas and electricity.



- 3.2.2 Gas consumption is monitored against weather conditions to ensure any seasonality impacts are factored into analysis. Gas consumption has increased since the 2018/19 baseline with the likely driver of this being ageing heating systems being highly inefficient and the recent shutdown of the building management system (BMS) leading to less capability to control and identify issues without physical attendance to site. Activity is currently underway to procure a new ‘head-end’ for the BMS to enable remote access to BMS on site and facilitate greater identification of issues at source and, where feasible, remote manipulation of controls to reduce energy.
- 3.2.3 Electricity consumption is now 14% lower than the 2018/19 baseline. The significant attributing factor to this reduction is significant investment in LED lighting at 18 fire stations as well as 2 solar PV systems installed at fire stations. These projects were fully funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).
- 3.2.4 As the organisation continues to make efforts to decarbonise, it is likely that gas consumption will decrease as buildings transition to electrical heating via air source heat pumps. When combined with a shift from diesel vehicles to electric vehicles, this is likely to lead to an increase in the consumption of electricity.
- 3.2.5 GMCA also have 25 solar PV systems installed across the GMFRS estate that generated 941,097 kWh of electricity in 2023/24, the equivalent of 25% of the total electricity consumption of the organisation. Whilst most sites do not have electricity export meters installed, those that do demonstrate that around 50% of generated

electricity is not consumed and exported to the grid. The amount of electricity exported is likely to reduce as a transition to electric heating and electric vehicles takes place whilst battery storage could also further harness the electricity currently being exported.

- 3.2.6 Due to the infrequency of readings, water data can be classed as less accurate than energy data. However, based on readings undertaken by the water supplier, the organisation consumed 36,022m³ of water in 2023/24.
- 3.2.7 A procurement exercise was recently conducted to identify a new water retail services contract provider. The contract with the new water retail services provider is currently in the mobilisation phase and the ambition is that this contract will enable a greater level of detail in relation to water consumption.

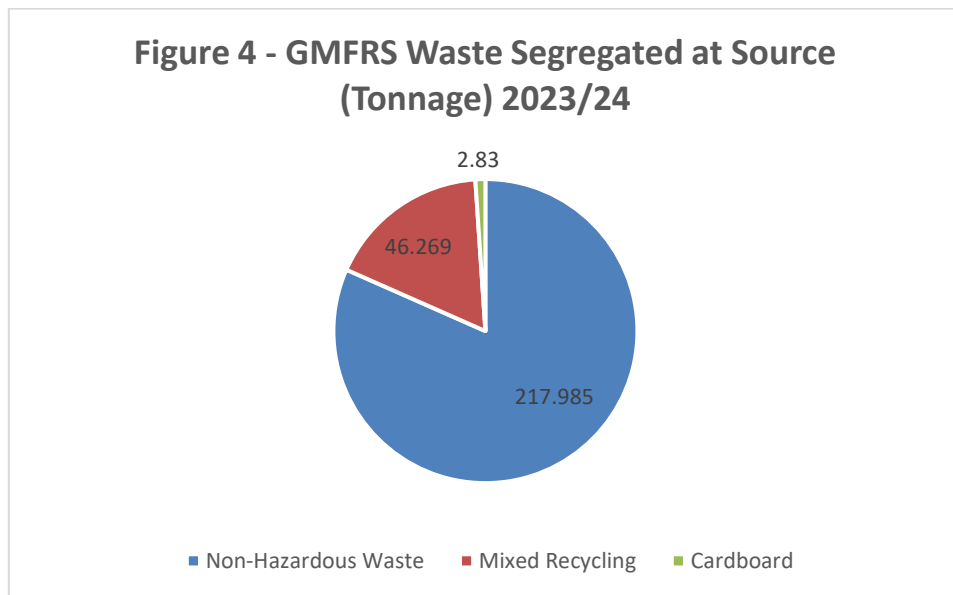
3.3 Biodiversity

- 3.3.1 GMCA fall under the requirements of the Biodiversity Duty which is new legislation that requires public sector bodies to consider their biodiversity impacts and take action to improve biodiversity outcomes from their operations.
- 3.3.2 GMCA have taken initial steps to consider how they intend to comply with the Biodiversity Duty. A biodiversity action plan is currently under development and is set for completion by Q2 2024/25. To support development of the biodiversity action plan, a cross-directorate planning workshop has been undertaken with findings now being analysed.

3.4 Waste Management

- 3.4.1 GMCA produce a range of domestic general and recyclable waste as well as a range of hazardous wastes. At Tootal Buildings, waste data is limited due to disposal facilities being shared with all other tenants across the building as well as the limited weighing capabilities of the waste contractor used by the landlord.
- 3.4.2 GMFRS have a waste collection and recycling services contract for general and recyclable waste. Wastes are segregated internally and separate collections are made for each waste stream. Figure 4 outlines the weights of each waste type

segregated at source across the organisation. In summary, GMFRS currently segregate 18% of domestic waste types at source.



3.4.3 Waste collected via the waste collection and recycling services contract for GMFRS is taken to a Greater Manchester based depot where further recyclable material is recovered from mixed non-hazardous waste. All recyclable waste is then taken to specific plants for recycling whilst all non-recyclable residual waste is baled and taken to an energy-from-waste (EfW) plant based in Leeds with all energy being exported to the National Grid.

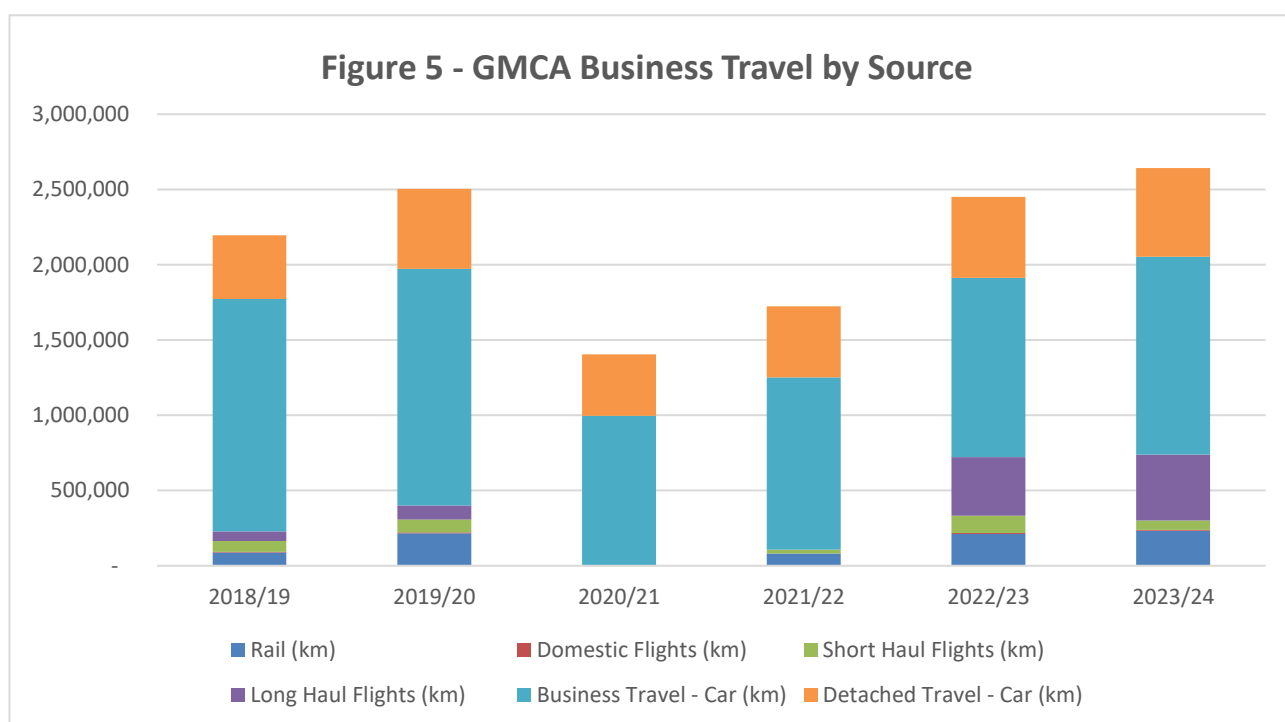
3.4.4 Hazardous wastes from GMCA arise from a range of sources with GMFRS workshops being the most significant source. Waste data for these varies in quality and mainly can be found on hazardous waste consignment notes. As part of the scope 3 calculation project, it was found that all waste types, including hazardous waste, contributed 10.89 tonnes CO₂e to the total GMCA carbon footprint.

3.5 Travel

3.5.1 Travel by GMCA employees can be considered in two forms – business travel and commuting. Business travel data is acquired mainly via the corporate contract with a travel booking partner as well as via expenses claims. Figure 5 provides an overview of the business travel data monitored via monthly KPI reporting. For

clarity, data from bus travel, London Underground, Metrolink and taxi travel is not included within monthly KPI reporting due to a lag in the receipt of data.

3.5.2 Grey fleet travel is defined as travel undertaken by an employee in their own private vehicle for business purposes. These are included within the data shown in figure 5 but broken down into two specific sources – business travel (car) and detached travel (car). Both are classed as grey fleet travel but, due to the significance of the figures, detached travel is depicted as an individual category and can be defined as travel undertaken by firefighters from their base station to another GMFRS station to provide operational cover as required.



3.5.3 Analysis undertaken to calculate the total GMCA carbon footprint included looking at business travel as it is a specific category within scope 3. When all modes of transport and hotel stay were considered, the total carbon footprint of GMCA business travel totalled 281.5 tonnes CO₂e during 2023/24 with the largest contributor to this being grey fleet travel which accounted for 65% of these emissions. The next biggest contributor was long haul flights which accounted for 16% of emissions.

3.5.4 Staff commuting is classed as a specific category within scope 3 emissions calculation. Currently, no robust data is collected by GMCA in regard to staff commuting, so calculations were made using secondary data from the Department for Transport (DfT) which was then applied to the GMCA staff headcount. Based on

this data, it is estimated that staff commuting accounted for 144 tonnes CO₂e during 2023/24.

3.5.5 Following the Covid-19 pandemic, hybrid working has been adopted by GMCA meaning value chain emissions from homeworking can also be accounted for in scope 3 calculations. Again, average data was utilised based on GMCA staff headcount who work within a role that can facilitate homeworking with the total emissions estimated to be 421 tonnes CO₂e during 2023/24.

3.5.6 GMCA have implemented a number of measures to support staff to make more sustainable travel choices for business travel and commuting. The measures include a salary sacrifice scheme for electric vehicles and bicycles, public transport season ticket schemes in partnership with travel providers and specific rules around travel choices allowed via expenses and travel booking. These measures have been embedded into an organisational benefits and expenses policy.

3.5.7 In 2023/24, the uptake of schemes related to sustainable and active travel is detailed below. It is to be noted that these figures do not include staff who started participation in these schemes prior to 2023/24.

Scheme	Staff Uptake 2023/24
Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice	47
Cycle Scheme	62
Corporate Transport Loan	3

4.0 Social Value and Procurement

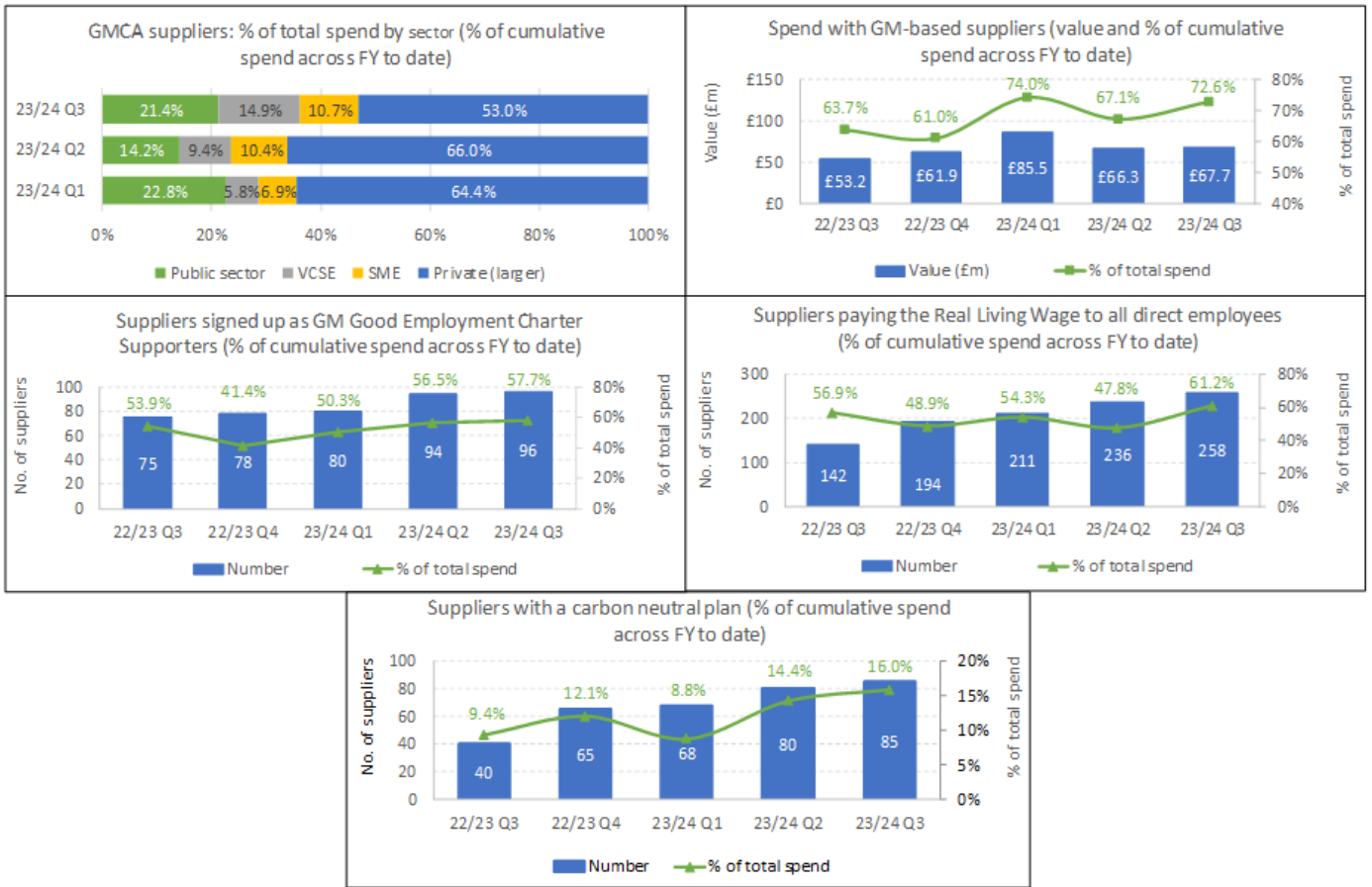
4.1 GMCA aim to embed sustainability and social value into procurement activity as a means of leveraging wider benefits from public procurement activity. GMCA acquire

key social value insights from three sources: internal procurement team insights, Social Value Portal (SVP) and Suez & Loop.

- 4.2 GMCA utilised the SVP for 24 projects throughout 2022/23 and, via the SVP, a total of £59 million of social value has been tracked as a result of this activity.
- 4.3 The contract GMCA have with Suez utilised `Loop' to track social value outcomes as a direct result of the contract covering the household waste contract. During 2022/23, Loop tracked a total of £240,659,235 of social value outcomes as a result of the contract between GMCA and Suez.
- 4.4 A number of sustainability and social value metrics are tracked within the GMCA Corporate KPI's. This information is acquired from suppliers and is tracked against the percentage of cumulative spend across the financial year to date. Due to the

complexity of the data, there is a lag in analysing data but the latest data is for quarter 3 2023/24 and is outlined in Figure 6.

Figure 6 – GMCA Corporate Metrics - Procurement



- 4.5 The metrics intend to measure procurement activity against a number of supplier metrics including: procurement spend by sector, spend with Greater Manchester based suppliers, spend with suppliers signed up as supporters of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, spend with suppliers paying the Real Living Wage (RLW) to all direct employees and suppliers with a carbon neutral plan. These metrics were first introduced in March 2022 and came into effect in 2023.
- 4.6 Further work is planned to enhance the embedding of sustainability into procurement practice. A cross-directorate working group has been established to facilitate these improvements and a planning workshop was delivered in Q4 2023/24 to begin this process.
- 4.7 Specific projects are also targeted for social value outcomes. The Greater Manchester One Network, the creation of a single active network infrastructure across a large proportion of public sector organisations, is an example of this with key outcomes from the procurement activity including:
- Commitment from private sector partners including employment of 28 new apprentices across the city-region
 - Delivery of 2,225 volunteering hours into the communities of Greater Manchester in schemes such as IntoUniversity workshops and work with FareShare
 - T-Level industrial placements within the technology industry
 - Donation of connectivity and technology equipment to 4 community sites across the region
- 4.8 Further information on the social value outputs from the GM One Network can be found [here](#).

5.0 Other Sustainability Initiatives

- 5.1 GMCA continue to operate an environmental management system (EMS) that is certified to ISO 14001. The EMS was externally audited in Q2 2023/24 and was recommended for continued certification with positive observations made during the

audit focused on the organisations communications internally around sustainability but also the governance structure at GMFRS around sustainability.

- 5.2 GMFRS approach to delivering sustainability and projects delivered over recent years has been recognised within the recent inspection undertaken by His Majesties Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspectorate found the organisation were delivering an 'effective sustainability strategy' and progress in this area was defined as a promising practice within the report.
- 5.3 GMFRS hosted the North West regional Women in the Fire Service event in March 2024 with staff from across the organisation hosting various workshops and activities. As part of this, the Sustainability Officer hosted a focused session on climate change and the impacts of this on the Fire and Rescue Service as well as covering the disproportionate impacts climate change has on women.
- 5.4 GMFRS ran an energy saving competition in Q3-Q4 2023-24 to encourage GMFRS stations to reduce energy consumption and consider other environmentally friendly measures to implement. Across the organisation, the average saving was around 4% per site with a significant number of stations also showing engagement in the competition. The competition was awarded a Green Apple Award in the Emergency Services category.
- 5.5 GMCA also setup a staff network, Earth Forum, in 2023/24 to support staff engagement in sustainability issues. Three meetings have been held to date with guest speakers attending one session whilst a specific meeting focused on Earth Day and the topic of single use plastics. Further events are planned for 2024/25 to support staff engagement in sustainability issues.
- 5.6 Internal communications will continue to focus on the climate emergency and sustainability to support our staff in contributing to our ambitions and a staff network will be launched to enable staff to contribute to our wider ambitions in this area.