

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Waste and Recycling Committee

Date: 12 March 2025

Subject: SUEZ Social Value and Renew Programme Update

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

Purpose of Report

To update members on the delivery of the social value programme including the Renew Hub and shops.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the update and significant contribution the waste contracts are making to GMCA's overall social value delivery.

Contact Officers

Michelle Whitfield, Head of Communications & Behavioural Change

Michelle.whitfield@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

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 social value programme and the Renew Hub and shops aim to increase repair and reuse and thereby reducing waste disposal. The social value programme has already demonstrated significant social, economic and environmental benefits for Greater Manchester.

Legal Considerations

The requirements for SUEZ to deliver the social value commitments and Renew programme 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 social value programme are an increase in waste disposal costs. The latest GMCA's social value report for 2023 to 2024 shows that SUEZ have delivered £23.3 million of social value benefits in Greater Manchester.

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:

N/A

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

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

As part of the Greater Manchester waste management contracts, SUEZ developed 54 social value commitments with annual targets. These commitments aim to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits across Greater Manchester. The commitments include creating apprenticeships, work placements and training opportunities, supporting schools by attending careers events and supporting universities with research projects.

SUEZ have also committed to paying their staff the real living wage and are members of the good employment charter. They also offer staff a range of accredited training and professional development opportunities as well as volunteering opportunities in the local community.

SUEZ commit to planting 200 trees every year with the City of Trees and are developing a biodiversity plan to enhance biodiversity at the waste treatment sites and household waste recycling centres.

SUEZ have also developed the Renew Hub in Trafford Park, the largest reuse operation in the UK. It focusses on reclaiming the value of household waste through repair and upcycling. Residents can donate pre-loved household items such as furniture, toys, bikes and electrical goods at any of the 20 household waste recycling centres across Greater Manchester. The items are refurbished at the hub and then sold at affordable prices in the Renew Shops or eBay and online Renew store. The money raised supports local charities and community projects with SUEZ committing to donate £100,000 to the Greater Manchester's Mayors Charity and £220,000 to the R4GM Community Fund each year.

2. Key Successes

To put into context the value of SUEZ's social value contribution, the GMCAs Social Value Annual Report states that in 2023 to 2024, a total of £32.015 million was generated by GMCA's suppliers. Nearly 73% of this, a total of £23.3 million was delivered by SUEZ through the waste management contracts.

Since 2021, over £1.75 million has been raised through the Renew Hub and Shops and donated to good causes. As reported in the previous waste committee report, the Recycle for Greater Manchester Community Fund has supported 89 projects since 2021, these range from bike and computer repair projects, school uniform redistribution, and our first library of things in Manchester where for a small fee, residents can borrow tools and equipment such

as drills, sewing machines or pizza ovens to reduce the need for every resident to buy their own and therefore reducing consumption and waste.

SUEZ have recruited 45 apprentices to date across the waste sites. The roles include vehicle technicians, welders, electrical and electronics engineers, HWRC operatives and furniture restoration apprentices.

11 research projects with local universities and colleges have been supported including interior design projects where students designed one of the pods in the Renew Hub, engineering students who were given a tour of the Energy from Waste facility in Bolton and photography students who worked on a project to photograph waste electronic and electrical equipment to raise awareness of the growing issue of 'fast tech'.

2.1. Renew Shops

Three Renew Shops officially opened in July 2021, located at household waste recycling centres in Trafford, Oldham and Salford. In 2022, the Renew eBay shop was established to sell larger items of furniture and more unusual or bespoke upcycled items. An online Renew shop has also been established to sell cheaper items like white goods, bikes, toys and furniture that may be too large to sell from the physical shops. Items purchased from eBay and the online store are available to click and collect from the Renew Hub in Trafford Park.

The Renew Hub houses several repair pods run by skilled and qualified engineers and specialists who can repair bikes, electrical appliances, white goods and furniture. A specialist upholsterer can re-upholster chairs and footstools, and a woodwork specialist upcycles and repairs wooden furniture.

20 new jobs have been created at the Hub including 2 apprentice furniture restorers. The jobs are not the usual waste management roles but include retail, warehouse, stock management and interior design.

Annual sales have been increasing year on year. The average monthly sales figure in 2023 was £46,990, in 2024 this has increased to £57,302.

The table below shows the cumulative sales figures and number of units sold from 2021 to December 2024.

Site	£ sales	Units Sold	Weight in Kg
Renew Hub	175,583.64	15406	103,658
Woodhouse Lane, Altrincham	495,007.68	108475	738,403
Arkwright St, Oldham	423,048.27	91801	644,454
Boysnope Wharf, Salford	429,410.89	95198	563,971
Online sales	210,520.40	4731	61,172
Total to date	1,733,570.88	315,611	2,111,657

Income per tonne was recorded at £660 in October 2021 and has increased to an average of £950-£1,000 per month, with a peak of £1,084.59. This reflects that fact that larger items of household furniture can now be repaired and upcycled, that more and more residents are now going to the recycling centres to donate to Renew and that sales are increasing.

3. Future Development

In December 2024, SUEZ introduced a new scheme where residents are able to donate tins of water-based paint at 10 of the 20 recycling centres. The paint is taken to the Renew Hub, checked and labelled and then available to buy at the Arkwright Street shop in Oldham. Each pot of paint is at least half full and can be purchased by donating £3.

In 2026, a fourth Renew Shop will open at Reliance Street, recycling centre in Newton Heath, Manchester once the redevelopment of the site has been completed. The site is due to close in June 2025 for a major redevelopment to improve the layout of the site to increase recycling and reuse.

The waste management contracts with SUEZ have been extended to 2034. SUEZ and GMCA are reviewing the social value commitments and will update them to include new commitments that align with the priorities of the GMCA and the 9 councils. GMCA will continue to work with SUEZ on the development and evolution of the Renew Hub ensuring that we take account of national initiatives or policy changes. Any new proposals will be reported to waste committee for comment and consideration.