

Appendix B - Actions and Implementation

Our plan on a page sets out the high-level activities that will be implemented under each of the four strategic objectives set out in this Interim Waste Plan. The following sections set out in more detail the specific actions that we will undertake against each objective.

1. To develop and deliver innovative and inclusive services that reflect local challenges such as population growth, diversity, demographic changes and housing stock we will:

a. Work with districts to implement collection services that meet the requirements of Simpler Recycling

The current 4 stream collection system operated by the 9 waste collection authorities is stated by Defra to be the standard collection model that should be operated. To demonstrate full compliance with Simpler Recycling we will need to collect food and drink cartons ('Tetrapak') with plastics and we will need to introduce soft and flexible plastics into our dry recyclables collections from 2027. GMCA is currently investing in a new build Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) that will have the necessary equipment to separate out these additional material streams. Full compliance with Simpler Recycling will therefore be delivered from 2027.

b. Investigate the use of new technologies such as AI in the operation of waste processing facilities

The new MRF has been specified to enable the inclusion of AI and robotics within the design of the facility. These sorting technologies can operate at faster rates than human picking and sorting and reduce the operating costs of the facility in the long term. The final design of the facility will be known by end of quarter 2 2026.

c. Use data and the latest research to continually improve and develop services and infrastructure

Data analysis lies at the heart of what we do to inform and adapt our service delivery model. This enables us to track trends in tonnage data and waste arisings, changes in waste composition and to model the impact on our facilities and services. We used data from other countries that operate Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) to model the potential changes to our commingled dry recyclable waste stream and the subsequent sizing of our new MRF. This kind of approach will continue to be utilised as the various elements of the Resources and Waste Strategy are implemented and the effects are realised. This will enable us to continue to adapt our services as the quantity and composition of the waste stream changes in response to the RaWS and to mitigate future costs that may arise due to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

d. Ensure our facilities are designed with flexibility to accommodate future changes in waste tonnage and composition

Waste arisings are subject to many factors that affect quantity and composition – population growth, housing growth, changes in housing type, economic activity, waste policies and intervention to name but a few. Our services must therefore be responsive to these changes and flexible enough to accommodate increases in waste arisings and composition changes. We will continue to use data to model potential changes when designing new facilities to ensure that our infrastructure is fit for purpose for the long term.

e. Increase the range of materials accepted for recycling whenever new market demand is created and technology allows

From 2027, we will be fully compliant with the requirements of Simpler Recycling. However, we are mindful of the longer-term 65% target for the recycling of municipal waste from 2035. To meet this requirement, we will need to harvest more materials from our waste streams for recycling and reduce contamination within those materials as well as reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste generated. Waste composition analysis shows that textiles are present in the residual waste stream in significant quantities. We will work with textile reuse and recycling providers to develop systems to increase the reuse and recycling of textiles across Greater Manchester.

f. Develop systems for the separation of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and batteries for reuse and recycling across Greater Manchester

Disposal of WEEE and batteries is becoming a critical issue due to the loss of rare earth metals such as lithium and the fire risk from their incorrect disposal. Fires at waste facilities are becoming increasingly common and result in significant environmental impacts, disruption to waste collection activities and significant business interruption and rebuild costs as well as threatening life. All of these impacts can be avoided through the establishment of correct recycling and disposal routes. We will:

- Continue to run education and communication campaigns to educate and inform our residents on the proper disposal routes for WEEE and batteries;
- Research options for the kerbside collection of WEEE and batteries;
- Continue to promote the reuse and repair of unwanted electrical items; and
- Lobby for the strengthening of regulations on single use and non-reusable electrical items.

g. Work with districts, the EA and Defra to promote and enable households and businesses to dispose and recycle their waste via legitimate routes to reduce occurrences of fly-tipping

Fly tipping is a significant issue and an environmental crime. Whilst GMCA does not have any statutory powers over fly tipping, we will support districts by:

- Running campaigns to raise awareness with residents of their responsibility to ensure they use legal disposal routes and responsible and appropriately accredited waste management operators for any waste removals undertaken from their premises;
- Promoting the availability of Council bulky waste collection services to residents as a means of disposing of large items; and
- Highlight responsible disposal routes for challenging wastes such as WEEE (including vapes) and batteries.

h. Ensure our services are accessible to all sectors of the community

This Interim Waste Plan has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that we are not adversely impacting any sectors of the community. Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the forefront of the design and delivery of our services and we will:

- Continue to issue our communications and educational information in a range of languages and formats that are representative of the Greater Manchester community;
- Continue to engage with faith leaders and networks to deliver our recycling messages;
- Ensure that applications for the Renew Community Fund are received from organisations that represent the diversity of the Greater Manchester community and engage with any underrepresented groups to raise awareness of the Fund; and
- Increase access to HWRCs by non-car owners delivering small quantities of household waste on foot or by bicycle through improved access arrangements as our sites are redeveloped in the future.

i. Help deliver the Live Well and Economic Growth Mayoral ambitions

To support the delivery of these Mayoral priorities we will:

- Continue to fund the voluntary community faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector through our community fund.
- Working with SUEZ, continue support keeping our recycling and waste as locally as possible to support businesses, jobs and the development of green skills.
- Promote training in green skills and provide apprenticeship and trainee opportunities;
- Provide high quality recovered materials for recycling as feed stock in manufacturing processes;
- Support the delivery of the GMCA Sustainable Consumption and Production Plan;
- Support businesses in managing their waste more sustainably; and

- Be the knowledge hub for waste management in Greater Manchester.

2. To deliver social, environmental and economic value through the use of our services we will:

a. Expand our Renew shop network

We currently operate 3 Renew shops located in Oldham, Trafford and Salford. In 2026 we will open a fourth Renew shop located at the Reliance Street Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in Newton Heath, Manchester. In addition, we will work with Suez to increase the number of pop-up shops and events that are run each year to increase access for residents to buy preloved Renew items.

b. Continue to support community projects through the Renew Community Fund

The sale of items through the Renew initiative is supporting guaranteed annual donations of £100k to the Mayor's Charity and £200k to the Renew Community Fund. Since 2022, over 100 community projects have been funded through the Renew Community Fund focusing on repair, upcycling, waste prevention, waste education and mental health. The annual funding for the Mayors Charity donation and the Renew Community Fund will continue throughout the term of the contracts with Suez until 2034.

c. Introduce measures to increase biodiversity across our sites

In 2025, a trial has been underway at 5 sites to introduce measures to increase biodiversity. These measures include installation of bug hotels, bird boxes and feeders, reduced mowing and wildflower seeding and use of eco-friendly, natural methods of weed control. The results from this trial will then be reviewed with the intention of rolling out these measures at all sites in 2026/27.

d. Increase opportunities for apprenticeships across our operational sites

Since 2019, Suez has employed 49 apprentices on the GMCA contracts. Suez are committing to 7 apprenticeships each year for the remainder of the term of the contracts until 2034.

e. Continue to supply charities with furniture and items for resale from the Renew Hub

Charities are able to access the Renew Hub to collect items free of charge for resale in their own outlets. GMCA will work with Suez to encourage other charities to access this resource.

f. Explore opportunities to increase reuse eg from household bulky waste collections

Our mission is to increase reuse of items and normalise this so that residents always think reuse and repair before replace and dispose. Our communications and engagement programme will continue to deliver this message seeking to change behaviour. We also need to look at opportunities to change operational practices to increase the capture of materials for reuse. One such example could be to capture materials for reuse from bulky household waste collections undertaken by the districts. This would require changes to current collection practices to identify suitable materials and potentially collect them separately. This will have resource implications for districts and the costs and benefits need to be reviewed. We will work with districts in 2026 to review bulky household waste collection opportunities for reuse to determine if a business case can be developed.

g. Assess whether a second Renew Hub is viable

The requirement for a second Renew Hub will be largely dependent upon the supply of materials for reuse/repair and whether this increases. The current Renew Hub is feeding charity donations as well as the Renew shops and on-line sales platforms and Suez believe that there is capacity in the facility to deal with more materials. The case for a second Renew Hub will therefore be informed by the actions at point 6 above to identify other viable sources of materials for reuse and whether the tonnage available will exceed the capacity of the current facility. If that were to be the case, then a business case could be

developed to assess the running costs and financial and social value benefits that could be derived from a second Hub. This work will be undertaken in 2027.

In advance of considering a second Renew Hub, there is potential to commercialise any spare capacity on the current facility to generate more revenue that can then be used to support social value activities and outcomes. For example, local authorities and other public sector providers are now letting contracts to have their existing furniture reupholstered as this is cheaper and more sustainable than replacing with new furniture. The furniture repair pod operator in the Hub could bid for these contracts and use the Hub space for the furniture renovations with revenue then supporting the running costs and social value activities. The potential for this will be reviewed with Suez in 2026.

h. Continue to show leadership in leveraging social value through waste management services

In 23/24, the Suez contracts contributed over 73% of the total social value generated through GMCA activities. We are extremely pleased with this outcome, however we want to generate more social value for the residents and communities of Greater Manchester. We are reviewing the Suez social value offering and will be presenting options for development to the GMCA Waste and Resources Committee in 2026.

i. Generate high quality recyclate through collection and sorting processes to maximise their value

Generating quality recyclable material is critical for accessing markets and commanding higher prices. To reduce contamination and drive up tonnage and quality we will:

- Continue our communication and engagement programmes set out in our annual Communications and Behavioural change plan. We will continue to advise residents how to reduce their waste, reuse and repair more and how to recycle right and to get the right materials into the right bin and how to;
 - Support national campaigns to promote waste initiatives such as the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS); and

- Invest in the new MRF that will utilise advanced separation and sorting equipment to improve segregation and quality of end products.

3. To decarbonise household waste, services and infrastructure we will:

a. Invest in a new, purpose-built materials recovery facility (MRF) that will capture additional types of plastic for recycling

Key to reducing the carbon impact of waste is the need to remove as much plastic as possible from the waste stream for recycling rather than disposal via energy from waste (EfW). We are investing in a purpose built MRF that will be able to separate plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays as well as soft plastics, films and flexibles. This facility will be operational from 2027.

b. Work with textile reuse and recycling providers to develop systems for the separation of textiles for reuse and recycling across Greater Manchester

The manufacture, export, use and disposal of textiles have a huge environmental footprint. Many items of clothing can have their lives extended by reuse, repair, upcycling, donating and selling yet huge quantities of textiles can be found in GM's residual waste bins.

In 2026 we will explore the network of textile and clothing stakeholders across GM and start to work with them to reduce the quantity of textiles put in bins so that they can live again.

c. Decarbonise GMCA's services

We will work with Suez to develop plans to utilise non-fossil fuelled plant, equipment and vehicles used to handle, process and move GM's household waste. We will investigate opportunities to exploit solar to displace energy purchased from the grid to power our processes and will commence installations of roof mounted solar PV arrays in the 27/28 financial year.

d. *Support districts in the decarbonisation of their services through, for example, moving to electric and/or hydrogen-fuelled collection vehicles*

We will research and share findings on performance of alternate fuelled vehicles with the districts to inform their fleet decisions. We will also work with Suez to replace diesel powered fleet and mobile plant with alternate fuelled options over the remainder of the contract term.

e. *Lobby for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to be extended to other high carbon waste streams such as textiles and absorbent hygiene products*

EPR for packaging has been successfully introduced in the UK. However, there are many other high carbon content products that are not currently subject to EPR meaning that local authorities could be exposed to significant carbon costs when the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is extended to cover energy from waste (EfW) facilities from 2028. GMCA believes that the polluter pays principle should apply to these material streams such as textiles and nappies, and the manufacturer of the product should be liable for the carbon costs. GMCA will therefore continue to lobby Government for EPR to be extended beyond packaging to other high carbon content products and for the polluter to pay.

f. *Explore opportunities to reduce the fossil carbon content of emissions to atmosphere from energy from waste facilities through carbon capture and/or increased plastics recycling*

GMCA is investing in a new MRF that will have the ability to recover the full range of plastics packaging including soft plastics and films. This plant will be operational in 2027 and will assist in reducing the fossil carbon content of our residual waste that is sent for energy recovery.

We will continue to discuss the potential for carbon capture equipment to be installed at the third party energy from waste facility that we are contracted to until 2034.

4. To ensure Greater Manchester's voice on waste matter is heard we will:

a. Continue to co-ordinate the response to Government waste consultations with the districts

Working with district waste officers, GMCA has co-ordinated the response to Government consultation exercises to ensure that there is a consistent Greater Manchester response. We will continue to do to ensure that all views are incorporated and reflected back to Government.

b. Continue to represent GMCA on national waste forums

Officers from GMCA Waste and Resources team are members of several national waste forums including the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) and the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO).

c. Continue to engage directly with Defra, DESNZ and MHCLG on waste policy and reforms

GMCA has been an active participant over the last 5 years on DEFRA waste reform forums, focus groups and implementation working groups. In addition, GMCA has made direct representations to DESNZ and MHCLG on areas of policy that have had an impact on waste management. These activities will continue throughout the plan period.

d. Show leadership in the sector representing GM's interests regionally, nationally and internationally

GMCA Waste and Resources team officers regularly speak at conferences and exhibitions, representing Greater Manchester's interests and promoting the great work that is being delivered in waste management for Greater Manchester.

e. Support districts to work with planners to ensure the adequate accommodation of waste storage in new developments

Housing growth will be a key factor issue affecting our waste arisings and recycling performance in future years. It is essential that apartment blocks have appropriate and adequate waste management facilities built into the design. We will support districts in their discussions with their planning departments to address this issue.

f. *Ensure all services are developed inclusively giving equal access to all residents*

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