Minutes of the Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee held on Wednesday 8 October 2025

Present:

Bolton Council	Councillor Richard Silvester
Bury Council	Councillor Alan Quinn (in the Chair)
Manchester CC	Councillor Shaukat Ali
Oldham Council	Councillor Pam Byrne
Oldham Council	Councillor Ken Rustidge
Rochdale Council	Councillor Aasim Rashid
Salford CC	Councillor Barbara Bentham
Trafford Council	Councillor Stephen Adshead
Trafford Council	Councillor Dylan Butt

Officers in Attendance:

GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer	Sarah Bennett
GMCA Waste & Resources	David Taylor
GMCA Waste & Resources	Michelle Whitfield
GMCA Waste & Resources	Justin Lomax
GMCA Waste & Resources	Paul Morgan
GMCA Waste & Resources	Michael Kelly
GMCA Finance	Lindsey Keech
GMCA Governance & Scrutiny	Kerry Bond

DISTRICT OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bury Council	Cameron Goggins
Rochdale Council	Anthony Johns

WRC 25/45 Apologies

Resolved/-

To note the apologies for absence received from Councillors Lee Ann Igbon (Manchester), Jake Austin (Stockport) and Tom Ross (Trafford)

Apologies were also noted from David Robinson (Salford)

WRC 25/46 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

Resolved/-

1. There were no announcements or items of urgent business reported.

WRC 25/47 Declarations of Interest

Resolved/-

1. There were no declarations of interest reported.

WRC 25/48 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 July 2025

Resolved/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 be approved as a correct record.

WRC 25/49 Contracts Update

Justin Lomax, Head of Contract Services and Paul Morgan, Head of Commercial Services, GMCA Waste and Resources Team introduced a report which provided an overview of the performance of the Waste and Resources Management Services (WRMS) and the Household Waste Recycling Centre Management Services (HWRCMS) contracts and updated members on the outcome of the Biowaste Treatment Framework and Call-Off contracts.

The report presented cumulative annual data, for the period up to the end of June 2025 (Quarter 1) of the financial year 2025/26 (Contract year 7), for the two Contracts held by Suez. An overview of the cumulative data, total waste arisings, contamination levels, landfill diversions, HWRC recycling rates, overall recycling rates and HWRC visit levels were also provided.

The report outlined an event that had occurred since the previous report in July 2025 that is reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Officers confirmed that local authorities are not penalised for collecting less garden waste than originally forecast unless there is a failure to deliver the guaranteed minimum tonnages in the biowaste call off contracts.
Officers agreed to circulate the waste stream rate information with members of the committee.

Members noted that two districts currently apply charges for green waste collections and queried whether this has had an impact on the tonnages collected. They also asked whether additional districts are likely to introduce similar charges in the future. Officers confirmed that current data and the impact on local HWRCs are being assessed against seasonal trends from previous years to determine whether there has been any effect on tonnages collected. An update will be provided to a future meeting.

Officers confirmed the no trends or impacts have been identified in relation to the reduction in kerbside collections in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25 and advised that individual districts should investigate this reduction at a local level.

Officers acknowledged that district collections of public waste, on-the-go waste, and commercial waste are on the rise, and recognised that there remains scope for further improvement in these areas, highlighting that the introduction of the deposit return scheme in 2027 is expected to help reduce waste in these areas.

Members asked whether there is potential to further increase national kerbside recycling rates. Officers responded that kerbside recycling levels of 60% or above have met contractual targets, noting that Suez remains committed and incentivised to continue maximising recycling from both kerbside collections and Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). The current rate of 64% represents the highest level achieved since the contract commenced.

Garden waste permit applications in Trafford have exceeded expectations, which may indicate the corresponding lack of change in kerbside recycling rates.

The national target for recycling is 65% by 2035. Members noted that ongoing public engagement, both at district level and by the Combined Authority, continues to have a positive influence on recycling performance.

The GMCA are responsible for managing 60% of the regions biowaste capacity, equating to approximately 14 tonnage packages. The Biowaste Treatment Framework began in Spring 2025 with six providers identified to be included in the framework. During the summer, contractors submitted pricing proposals for eight sites identified, haulage costs were also factored in to ensure the GMCA secured the lowest combined cost for the transfer and treatment of Biowaste.

Resolved/-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the update on the outcome of the Biowaste Treatment Framework and Call-Off contracts be noted.
3. That the waste stream rate information be shared with members of the committee be agreed.

WRC 25/50 2025/26 Budget Update and Budget and Levy Setting Process for 2026/27

Lindsey Keech, Head of Finance, Capital and Treasury Management, GMCA presented a report updating members on the forecast 2025/26 budget position and the timeline for setting the budget and levy for 2026/27.

The report highlighted the forecast revenue outturn for 2025/26 detailing a c.£4.4m underspend driven by forecast income from the sale of electricity, forecast increased income from the sale of recyclates and other smaller variances.

The operational financing elements of the budget are forecast to underspend by £0.3m due to in year savings on interest payable, due to later than anticipated delivery of capital programme works.

A £20m one-off payment funded from reserves has been paid to districts, along with c.£17.7m, which has been included in the figures within the report.

The forecast levy for 2026/27 of £192.2m represents a 7.3% increase, options are being investigated to mitigate the increase to c4.3%

Officers confirmed that the payment back to districts was made in April 2025 and that the inflation forecast for 2026/27 at 2.5% was set in October 2024.

Resolved/-

1. That the report be noted.

WRC 25/51 GM Interim Waste Plan Update

Paul Morgan, Head of Commercial Services, GMCA Waste and Resources Team provided an update on the programme for developing the Greater Manchester Interim Waste Plan 2026-30.
The interim plan is built around four strategic objectives and have been identified to:

- Develop and deliver innovative and inclusive services that reflect local challenges such as population growth, demographic changes and housing stock;

- Decarbonise household waste, services and infrastructure;

- Use our services and the waste collected to deliver social, environmental and economic value; and
- Ensure Greater Manchester's voice continues to be heard and to influence the development of waste policy.

A concise summary document has been created to outline the key actions required to achieve the strategic objectives. This is supported by a detailed delivery plan that maps out specific actions aligned to each of the four objectives. The plan includes a timeline spanning the four-year period, showing how each action contributes to the priority workstreams of the Greater Manchester Strategy. Progress will be continuously monitored, evaluated, reported, and updated throughout the duration of the Interim Waste Plan.

To support the development of the Interim Waste Plan, public engagement was carried out over the summer with 7,825 responses received through the Big Recycling Survey, this provided insights into residents' recycling attitudes and identified perceived barriers.

Compilation of the remaining sections of the Interim Waste Plan is underway, with the plan scheduled to be presented for approval at the January 2026 GMCA meeting prior to publication with draft versions shared with members of this committee.

Officers confirmed that feedback from residents who do not actively recycle is being gathered through an external company, they will analyse the responses and focus on engaging underrepresented groups. This feedback will be incorporated into the overall survey results. Additionally, individual district-level summaries will be compiled to reflect local resident responses.
The Chair informed members that letters had been sent to DEFRA, DESNZ, and MHCLG requesting clarification on the charges related to the Emissions Trading Scheme, emphasising the principle that the polluter should pay. It was noted that further correspondence on this matter will be issued in November.

Greater Manchester's response to the 2024 Emissions Trading Scheme consultation highlighted the associated financial implications. An initial reply from the government confirmed that they are reviewing these impacts, with a further response expected in due course.

Officers advised that battery segregation is undertaken at Household Waste Recycling Centres, and that continued communication with residents is vital to improving recycling rates for batteries, vapes, and small electrical items, along with encouraging residents to make use of the take back schemes.

It was noted that SUEZ is contractually required to deal with end markets to extract lithium from relevant products, with any revenue generated from this process is reflected through the payment mechanism between Suez and the GMCA.

Work continues with districts to promote alternative disposal outlets and support communications around fly tipping.

Members agreed that ongoing communications are essential, particularly in communities where recycling rates remain low.

Members requested information on approaches being taken in other areas outside Greater Manchester to improve recycling rates, particularly in high-rise buildings, multi-occupancy dwellings, and terraced properties. Officers advised that under Simpler Recycling regulations, waste collection authorities have an obligation to provide a consistent collection service for core materials to all households, if there are reasons why this cannot be achieved, authorities submit a Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable (TEEP) exemption to register why compliance cannot be achieved. It was noted that communal bins are included in the scope of these exemptions.
Officers advised that they are working with districts to ensure that when planning applications are submitted for high-rise or multi-occupancy buildings, appropriate waste management provision is incorporated at the design stage.

Resolved/-

1. That the progress to date on the development of the Interim Waste Plan be noted.

WRC 25/52 Review of the Household Waste Recycling Centre Van Permit Scheme and the use of Adswood Household Waste Recycling Centre

Paul Morgan, Head of Commercial Services, GMCA Waste and Resources Team presented a report seeking approval of two amendments to the terms and conditions of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Van Permit System; the impact of increased cross-border usage of GMCA HWRC's and, the short-term measures implemented and potential long-term solutions under consideration to relieve congestion problems at Hurstwood Court HWRC.

Van Permit Scheme Amendments:

1. **HMRC Reclassification of Pick-up Trucks as Cars**

Following the reclassification of double cab and extended-cab pick-up trucks as cars rather than commercial vehicles by the HMRC for tax purposes in April 2025, the GMCA have received requests from some residents who drive these vehicles asking that they be removed from the permit system. GMCA has refused these requests as pick-ups (and other vehicles) being included within the permit scheme or excluded altogether is related to their ability to carry greater amounts of waste than the average car. To address this GMCA is seeking to add a new condition to the scheme to make it clear there is no link between HMRC's classification and GMCA's inclusion of such vehicles in the Van Permit Scheme. The following update to the terms and conditions of the permit system is proposed to include a new clause worded:

"GMCA will make the decision on the inclusion of a vehicle or vehicle type within the terms of the van permit system (or the exclusion of a vehicle from the

HWRC network) and its decision is final. Any taxation or usage classification assigned to vehicle types by third party organisations (such as His Majesty's Revenue and Customs or the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) will not influence GMCA's decision."

2. **Pro-rating of Visits for Part Year Applications**

The Van Permit System allocates 18 visits to a permit holder per year irrespective of when they receive the permit, the permit year currently runs from April to March. Following analysis of site usage, visits increase in the last 3 months of the permit year, the GMCA propose a modification to the system where any mid-year applications will receive site visits on a pro-rata basis, with any half allocations rounded up to a whole visit.

It is therefore proposed that the terms and conditions of the permit system are updated to include a new clause worded:

"Any application made part way through the Permit Scheme year will be pro-rated so that applicants receive an allocation of 1.5 visits per calendar month (including the month the application was accepted). Where remaining visits include a half visit (for example, if the application was accepted in January, 4.5 visits would be allocated) this will be round up to the nearest whole visit."

Cross-border use of GMCA HWRC's

Following the permanent closure of four Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in Cheshire East, usage of Adswood HWRC has increased, despite monitoring and additional checks implemented by Suez. Data indicates a 27% rise in visitor numbers; however, the volume of waste has remained largely consistent. As a result, GMCA recommends maintaining a watching brief, continuing address verification and data collection, with a further update to be provided to the Committee should there be any significant changes.

Congestion Issues at Hurstwood Court HWRC

Hurstwood Court HWRC in Bolton, experiences congestion due to limited parking and visitors to surrounding businesses parking on both sides of the road which restricts access to the HWRC. Engagement has taken place with local businesses to overcome the HWRC site access and congestion issues, with two actions taken to reduce the blocking of the highway - the addition of a yellow box junction at the site access to prevent cars stopping at key points and the prevention of parking close to access points to enhance traffic flow. These measures are being assessed and other long-term solutions being considered, including the implementation of a booking system to ensure usage is spread evenly across opening hours of the site.

Members suggested that permits should run 12 months from the date of issue rather than aligning with the tax year, if administratively feasible.

Officers confirmed that discussions have taken place and will continue with Cheshire East regarding the closure of their HWRCs and the impact of those closures on GM sites. While GMCA has previously closed six HWRCs, it cannot be definitively stated that the Cheshire East closures have directly affected visitor numbers to GM sites. Additionally, the introduction of garden waste charges by Stockport may also influence usage patterns across the GM network. SUEZ will continue to monitor site activity and conduct additional checks to support data analysis, with any necessary adjustments to be made based on the findings.

Members were advised that information regarding van classifications and site access is available online. Vehicles exceeding 5.3 metres in length are restricted from certain sites and redirected to ten designated GM locations. Long wheelbase vans are excluded from the permit scheme due to their higher load capacity, ensuring fair access for households and preventing commercial misuse. Households may apply for hire van permits to dispose of bulky waste. Since the introduction of the scheme, visits to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) have decreased by approximately one million per annum.

Members suggested that the “top tips for your trip” leaflets used at Raikes Lane to advise users of quieter times be rolled out across all sites, supported by signage.

Officers advised that site-specific data would need to be analysed before implementing this approach. Work is underway to display live CCTV feeds of site entrances on websites, enabling residents to check waiting times. Officers are also exploring options to integrate live traffic maps around HWRC sites.
Members suggested using data to RAG rate HWRC sites across the conurbation to highlight busier locations and help residents access quieter alternatives.

Members queried the current allocation of 18 van visits per year under the permit scheme, suggesting that this number may be excessive and should be reviewed. They also proposed that driving licences be used to verify the address of individuals accessing the sites.

Resolved/-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the addition of two new terms and conditions governing the Van Permit system detailed at section 2 of the report be approved.
3. That the approach to managing increases in cross-border visitor numbers at Adswood HWRC at section 3 of the report be approved.
4. That the traffic congestion issues identified at Hurstwood Court HWRC at section 4 of the report be noted and that an update to a future meeting be agreed.

WRC 25/53 Options to Expand Social Value delivered through Waste Contracts

David Taylor, Executive Director, GMCA Waste and Resources Team presented a report detailing assessment of options to expand the delivery of social value through the waste contracts.

SUEZ has developed and continues to deliver 54 individual social value commitments which aim to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits across Greater Manchester, delivering £23.3m of the £32m generated by the GMCA in 2023/24.

Following the extension of the SUEZ contract through to 2034, a review of its social value activities has identified opportunities to broaden the scope of its contributions. Seven new initiatives have been proposed to enhance the social value delivered, alongside plans to establish a commercial reuse operation at the Renew Hub aimed at generating additional income and achieving financial sustainability.

SUEZ has requested that £20,000 of the current annual £220,000 community fund be allocated to support the Graham McKenna-Mayes Scholarship (GMMS), which aims to improve access for underrepresented groups in Greater Manchester to pursue degree-level studies in Law and Environmental Science. If approved, this contribution would reduce the number of community groups receiving funding from 21 to 19 annually, starting from April 2026.

Members were asked to consider the approval of the following approach to develop and deliver further social value from the waste contracts:

1. Increase the commercial operations undertaken in the Hub to raise additional revenues.
2. Carry out further research into option 2 (reuse accreditation) to quantify the cost and to determine whether a Greater Manchester accreditation scheme is viable.
3. Explore funding routes eg Material Focus for option 3 (Fixy van) and implement if external funding is available.
4. Carry out research into option 4 (community action groups) to understand the current community network in Greater Manchester to determine if this is a viable option to develop.
5. Implement option 6 at zero cost.
6. Subject to the Library of Things network receiving funding from the Business Investment Fund managed by the GMCA Core Investment team, option 7 could be implemented, and
7. Review progress on a yearly basis.

Officers confirmed that SUEZ remains committed to supporting apprenticeships, having facilitated over fifty placements since the start of the contract, with a pledge to provide seven additional apprenticeships annually. The potential to support T-Level placements is currently under review.

Members were informed that the Graham McKenna-Mayes Scholarship (GMMS) offers separate degree programmes in Law and Environmental Sciences, with each scholarship valued at approximately £2,000 per student. Up to ten students could benefit from the three-year programme each year. The funding is administered by the University of Manchester, which will allocate the scholarships. Discussions are planned with the university to explore whether the funding can be distributed across the Greater Manchester area.

Resolved/-

1. That the allocation of the £20k Innovation Fund to support the University of Manchester scholarship as set out in section 5 of the report be approved.
2. That the proposed approach to expanding social value delivery set out at section 6 of the report be approved.

WRC 25/54 Capital Programme and Asset Management Update

Michael Kelly, Head of Engineering and Asset Management, GMCA Waste and Resources Team provided members with an update on five key capital projects and lifecycle projects during quarter 2 of 2025-26.

Operational Waste Facilities:

Reliance Street Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)
Work began on the 8 September to redevelop Reliance Street HWRC to provide a larger facility giving more capacity to receive, manage and recycle commodities by providing 16 individual containers to segregate materials like other HWRC's across the region with the project expected to complete by June 2026.

Over Hulton – Mechanical Recovery Facility (MRF)

The decision to build a new materials recovery facility (MRF) facility at the former in-vessel composter (IVC) site in Over Hulton, Bolton was agreed by the committee in January 2024. The plant will process dry mixed recyclables (DMR) including pots, tubs, trays (PTT's), flexible films, and tetra cartons, in line with the National Resources and Waste Strategy (RaWS).

The plant specification and tender package have been finalised and issued on Friday, 4th September. The tender process is defined by three key stages designed to select between two final design bids, with the successful supplier being appointed in April 2026.

Fire System Review – Critical Assets

Following the installation of thermal cameras at ten locations in 2023/24, the fire risk assessment review has continued at the MTR facilities to evaluate current fire detection and suppression systems, with substantial system upgrades anticipated. Reviews of Bredbury, Cobden Street, and Longley Lane by consultants appointed by Suez have been completed, with final reports issued in August which highlighted consistent risks and recommendations at all three sites. Preliminary cost estimates from suppliers indicates a projected expenditure of £2.9m; excluding any enabling or civil engineering works required and upgrades to the MRF at Longley Lane. Additional reviews will be carried out to establish a more comprehensive understanding of potential costs, along with a site review of Nash Road Thermal Lysis System (TLS) to be undertaken due to the introduction of the re-use Hub.

Suez has requested match funding of £2 million for fire safety enhancements at GMCA assets which would enable commencement of the works within this financial year and into 2026–2027.

Cobden Street – Welfare Building Upgrades

The existing welfare building at the Cobden Street facility requires a significant upgrade to ensure it meets current workplace health and safety requirements.

The proposed upgrade includes an internal upgrade and a small extension to the front of the existing building to provide additional office space.

Works began in August following a delay due to building control approvals taking longer than expected, this was subsequently halted after poor ground conditions were discovered with a structural engineer engaged it is anticipated that work will resume by the end of September, with an additional costs of £14k for micro-piling over the initial budget was used to remedy the ground conditions.

Closed Landfill Sites:

Waithlands Access Road

The project, initially scheduled for 2024/25 to construct a new ramped access road was delayed due ecology and habitat risks studies being undertaken on the embankment area. A contractor was appointed in 2025 with work commencing in August expected to be complete by mid-October. It is expected that stabilisation work may be required to the slope embankment with a review scheduled for 2026.

Officers confirmed that contingency funding is available to support fire safety upgrades if required. These systems are essential due to fires being a daily occurrence, for safeguarding staff, infrastructure, and the wider asset portfolio, for example, the replacement cost of a TLS is approximately £10.12 million.

Members were informed that SUEZ staff determine the appropriate fire response based on the type of incident. Depending on the severity, they may either address the fire directly or activate the full fire suppression system.

Resolved/-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the capital budget for fire safety upgrades at key waste reception sites be approved.

WRC 25/55 Future Meeting Dates

Resolved/-

1. That the future meeting dates be noted.

WRC 25/56 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved/-

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business because this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

WRC 25/57 Contracts Update

Resolved/-

1. That the contract updates and key risks set out in the report be noted.
2. That the financial details outlined from the Biowaste treatment Call-Off contracts submissions be noted.

WRC 25/58 Social Value

Resolved/-

1. That the proposed options be noted.
2. That the recommended approach set out in section 3 of the report be approved.