

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Waste and Recycling Committee

Date: 11 March 2026

Subject: Update on delivery of the Communications and Behavioural Change Plan

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

Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update on communications campaigns and educational activities delivered and a look ahead to the main priorities for the next financial year.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the content of the report.

Contact Officers

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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		
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	
Consumption and Production	G	
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target	The resultant waste strategy adopted later in 2025 will set a route map for the sustainable management of household waste for nine of the ten GM districts. For example, it will detail how plastics recovery will be further increased to remove them from residual waste (subject to markets) and assess methods to prevent the emission of CO2 to atmosphere.	
Further Assessment(s):	N/A	
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.

Risk Management

No risks arise from the report.

Legal Considerations

There are no legal considerations within this report.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Financial consequences for revenue budgets are set out in the report.

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.

Bee Network Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Big Recycling Survey

In July and August 2025, the Recycle for Greater Manchester team ran the Big Recycling Survey to understand how residents recycle at home, to examine their motivations for recycling, their knowledge and to explore other behaviours such as reuse, repair, donating and using the household waste recycling centres. The research has been used to shape the focus of the GMCA Interim Recycling and Waste Plan 2026 to 2030 and will also be used to help inform ongoing communication campaigns.

In total, 8,852 interviews were conducted across the nine council areas. These are a representative sample based on age, gender, ethnicity and borough. The final report will be shared with Committee members and council officers, headline results are summarised below:

- 9 out of 10 residents reported they always recycle at home, only 1% said they never recycle;
- Residents in Manchester are significantly less likely to say they always recycle at home, 78% said they always recycle at home;
- 16–34-year-olds are less likely to say they always recycle at home compared to other age groups;
- 80% of residents chose to recycle because it's good for the environment, over half say they do it for their community and one third recycle to save space in their general waste bin and two out of 10 people do it to follow the council guidelines;
- 30% of residents say they are not sure what goes in each bin; and
- 55% of residents say they check the information the councils send them to check what can be recycled, whilst 44% search online, 41% check the packaging label.

2. GM Repair Week 2nd to 8th March

At the time of writing the report, 15 events are taking place in GM Repair Week 2nd to 8th March. Greater Manchester, along with Merseyside, London, Cardiff and Durham, use this week to highlight the range of repair projects run by community groups and businesses to enable residents to get household items repaired rather than throw them away and buy new.

The week-long celebration culminates in the largest repair café being held at Gorton Monastery on Sunday 8th March where community groups and volunteers who run local repair cafes are coming together to network, demonstrate their repair skills and fix household items. An open day is also being held at the Renew Hub where visitors will be given a tour

of the Hub to find out how bikes, electricals and furniture are repaired and upcycled before being sold in the Renew Shops.

3. ESOL Resources

The Recycle for Greater Manchester education team have been developing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) resources to help those residents who don't speak English learn the correct words to help them understand their recycling collection service.

During the session, attendees are shown how to find the information on the council website, understand the colour of the bins and the English words for the items that can go in each bin. The team have developed a worksheet to aid the session and tested it with a group from Manchester, called Project CHA. This is a South Asian women's group that meet in Burnage. The session was attended by 16 women who completed the worksheet which they could take home as a guide and reference. The session will now be rolled out to other groups across Greater Manchester.

4. Forward Plan

The Interim Recycling and Waste plan 2026 to 2030 was approved at the GMCA meeting on 30th January. Waste and resource management is moving into uncharted territory with significant changes in policy due to be implemented over the next 5 years. These changes are intended to bring about the transition to a circular economy where the consumption of natural resources is reduced, products are designed for repair and reuse, recycling increases and waste is reduced.

This Interim Recycling and Waste Plan serves as a blueprint for adapting to meet new policy requirements. The plan will also shape the communications plan for the next 4 years. The focus for 2026/27 is summarised below:

- How to correctly dispose of batteries and prevent waste fires;
- Expansion of SUEZ social value offering building on what is already being delivered. A report will be brought to the next committee meeting in July to provide an update on this;
- Reliance St household waste recycling centre is undergoing a major redevelopment and will be opening in late 2026. It will feature a new Renew Shop. GMCA will work with Manchester City Council on joint communications to open the new centre;

- GMCA will continue to support councils with communications aimed to reduce contamination and increase recycling, initially this will focus on a food recycling campaign to align with the Simpler Recycling policy that outlines that all councils in England must provide a food waste collection service by 31 March 2026; and
- Fly tipping remains an ongoing issue for all councils. GMCA have developed a set of resources that can be tailored to each council and is aimed at reducing fly tipping by raising awareness of the dangers of using 'man and van services' to remove household waste. Often these services are not licenced or registered with the Environment Agency to carry waste and can lead to waste being fly tipped.