

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

### Waste and Resources Committee

Date: 11 March 2026

Subject: The Introduction of Measures to Prevent Cross-Border Usage of GMCA Household Waste and Recycling Centres

Report of: Paul Morgan, Head of Commercial Services, Waste and Resources Team

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#### Purpose of Report

This report details the pressure GMCA Household Waste and Recycling Centres are under from their use by residents outside of the nine districts that make up the GMCA Waste disposal arrangements.

The report proposes a two-stage approach for which the Committee is requested to approve. The options for the development of the second phase will be reported to a future Committee for further discussion and approval.

#### Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the pressure GMCA Household Waste and Recycling Centres are under from usage by residents coming from outside the nine GMCA Waste Disposal Authority districts;
2. Approve the implementation of a 'soft' approach to informing residents of restrictions in usage of the Household Waste and Recycling Centres if they are from outside one of the nine GMCA Waste Disposal Authority districts and to introduce spot checks on residency at the Meet & Greet point; and
3. Approve the research into the development of a potentially more technologically based system to check residency.

#### Contact Officers

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BOLTON  
BURY

MANCHESTER  
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE  
SALFORD

STOCKPORT  
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD  
WIGAN

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

## Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers		
<p><i>It is recommended the Committee approves the approach to addressing cross-border usage of GMCA Household Waste and Recycling Centres commencing with a 'soft' launch to advise visitors that they cannot use GMCA sites if they are not a resident in one of the nine GMCA Waste Disposal Authority districts. This would be followed by the introduction of a system of more formal checks if identified as suitable by subsequent research. Further details on this will be presented to the Committee.</i></p>		
Impacts Questionnaire		
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	RR	If a digital system is devised, it may impact on those who have difficulty to use digital devices. Alternative arrangements will be put in place to accommodate these residents. See above.
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation		
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity	G	If a digital system for resident registration is devised, it will increase resident access to waste services digitally. The checks should reduce usage of our Household Waste and Recycling Centres by those not entitled to use them as they live outside GM, removing those vehicles from GM roads.
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Potential reduction of traffic as out-of-area users are prevented from accessing sites. Reduced vehicle movements and a reduction in wastes that have the highest carbon footprints.
Consumption and Production	G	Reduced waste inputs to facilities.
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The decision and subsequent actions will reduce CO2 emissions from site users as numbers will decrease.
<b>Further Assessment(s):</b>	Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

## Carbon Assessment

Overall Score		
<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Justification/Mitigation</b>
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
<b>Transport</b>		
Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		Removal of vehicles from areas not entitled to use GMCA HWRCs will free up capacity.
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
<b>Land Use</b>		
Land use	N/A	
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

Any change to access arrangements at the HWRCs is likely to result in complaints and potentially media coverage. As previously experienced, a proportion of complaints received came from people who were not residents in GM. Complaints can and will be countered with the argument that the facilities are for the use of those eligible to use them, so the checks result in less congestion and reduce costs.

## Legal Considerations

At this stage there are no legal implications. Waste Disposal Authorities are required to provide places for residents in their areas to deposit their household waste (the Household Waste Recycling Centres) and informing users that the facilities should only be used by the relevant residents is one way to manage their operation.

## Financial Consequences – Revenue

The costs of the first stage of the process will be managed within existing budgets.

## Financial Consequences – Capital

There are not envisaged to be any capital costs at this stage.

**Number of attachments to the report:** None

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **Background Papers**

- [Household Waste Recycling Centre \(HWRC\) Guide | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#) – section 6 discusses cross-border policies.
- [Report to the Waste & Recycling Committee dated 8th October 2025.](#)
- [car-availability-gmca-census-2021-briefing-final.pdf](#)

## **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. Introduction/Background**

As previously reported, with both actual and proposed closures of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in neighbouring local authority areas (e.g. Cheshire East impacting HWRCs in south Manchester, and Lancashire impacting HWRCs in north Manchester) GMCA has been experiencing an uplift in usage at a number of our facilities. This puts pressure on visitor numbers, traffic flows and infrastructure as well as adding cost to the delivery of the services which is ultimately born by the nine constituent districts in the GMCA waste disposal arrangements.

With the news that Derbyshire County Council (DCC) is considering the closure of its HWRC in Glossop, the possibility of a HWRC closure in Warrington to the west, closures in Lancashire and with usage data from our sites in the south of GM neighbouring Cheshire East, measures are required to ensure that GMCA sites are only used by those residents eligible to use them.

## **2. The impact on GMCA HWRCs from the closure of sites in Cheshire East**

In the 2025 calendar year GMCA's HWRCs received a total of 4,792,274 visits from 1,072,409 unique vehicle registrations (this excludes vehicles covered by the 'van permit scheme'), each registration therefore visiting on average 4.5 times during the year. Analysis of 2021 Census GM car availability information suggests that GM residents have access to around 1.114 million cars and vans (some of these would not be permitted access to the HWRC network by virtue of their size or usage).

In the spring of 2024, Cheshire East Council (CEC) announced its intention to close three of its HWRCs on an emergency and temporary basis from August 2024 (the temporary nature of the closures was later made permanent). The three HWRCs in question were Middlewich, Poynton and Bollington (around 2004, Wilmslow HWRC closed). Two of these (and historically Wilmslow) – Poynton and Bollington - are fairly close to HWRCs in the south of Greater Manchester so could be seen as the next nearest facilities for residents in the north of Cheshire East.

From the announcement of the closure GMCA experienced an uplift of visitor numbers at Adswold HWRC in Stockport but three other sites could be considered to be within the catchment of the north part of Cheshire East – Bredbury Parkway, Longley Lane in Sharston, and Rosehill in Marple. GMCA instructed Suez to start more closely monitoring usage and

try to ascertain whether users were from outside the GMCA waste catchment area. Figure 1 below provides the usage statistics for the four selected GMCA HWRCs potentially impacted by HWRC closures in Cheshire East.

**Figure 1: Usage data for the four selected HWRCs potentially impacted by service changes in Cheshire East**

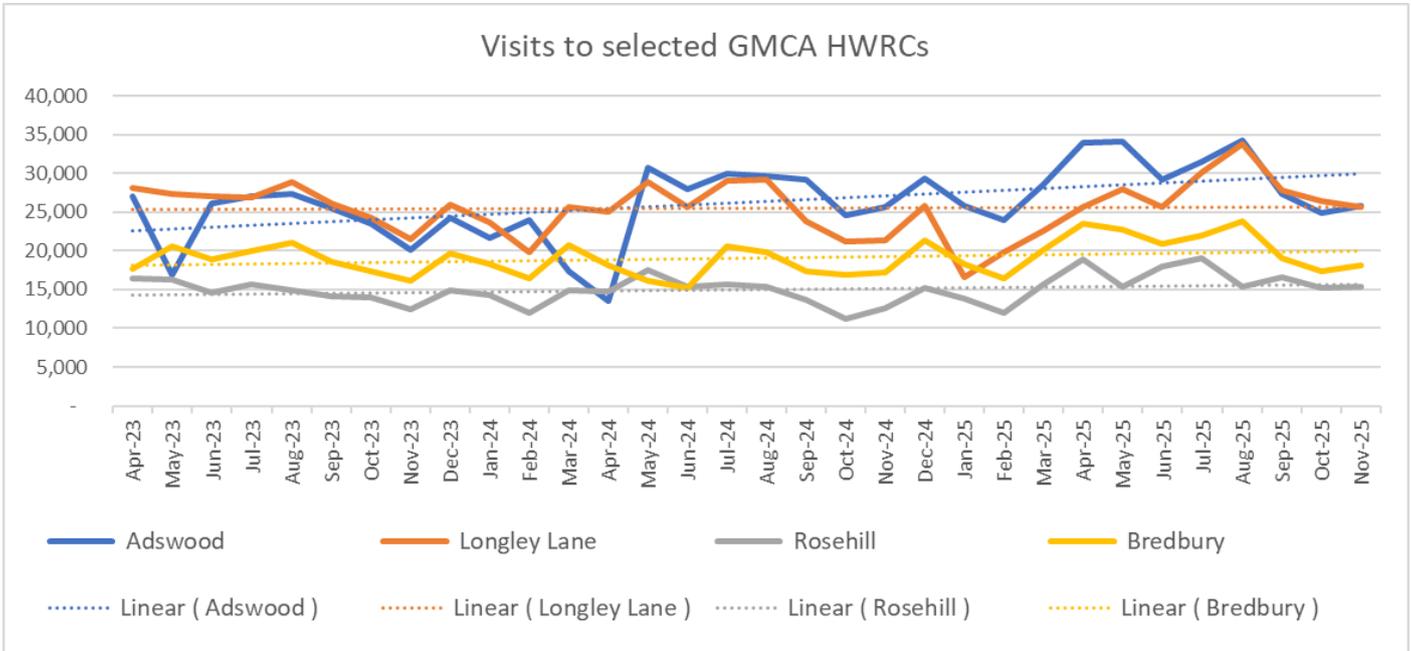
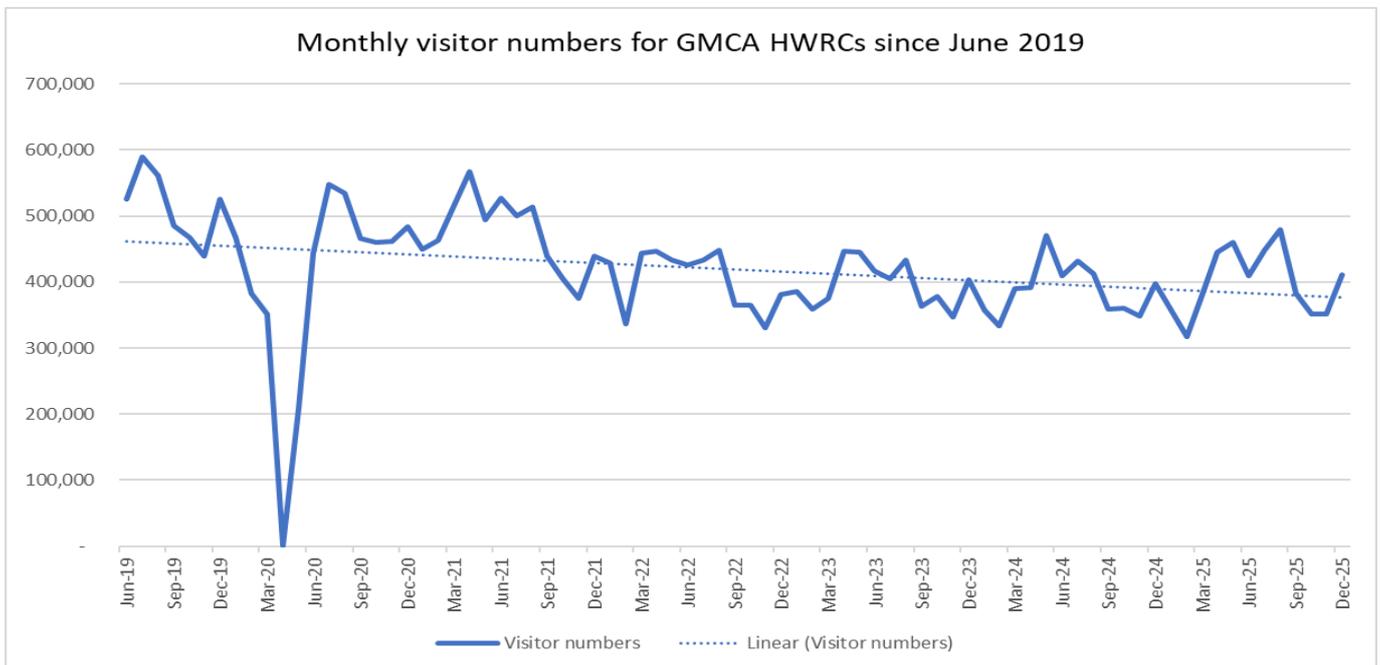


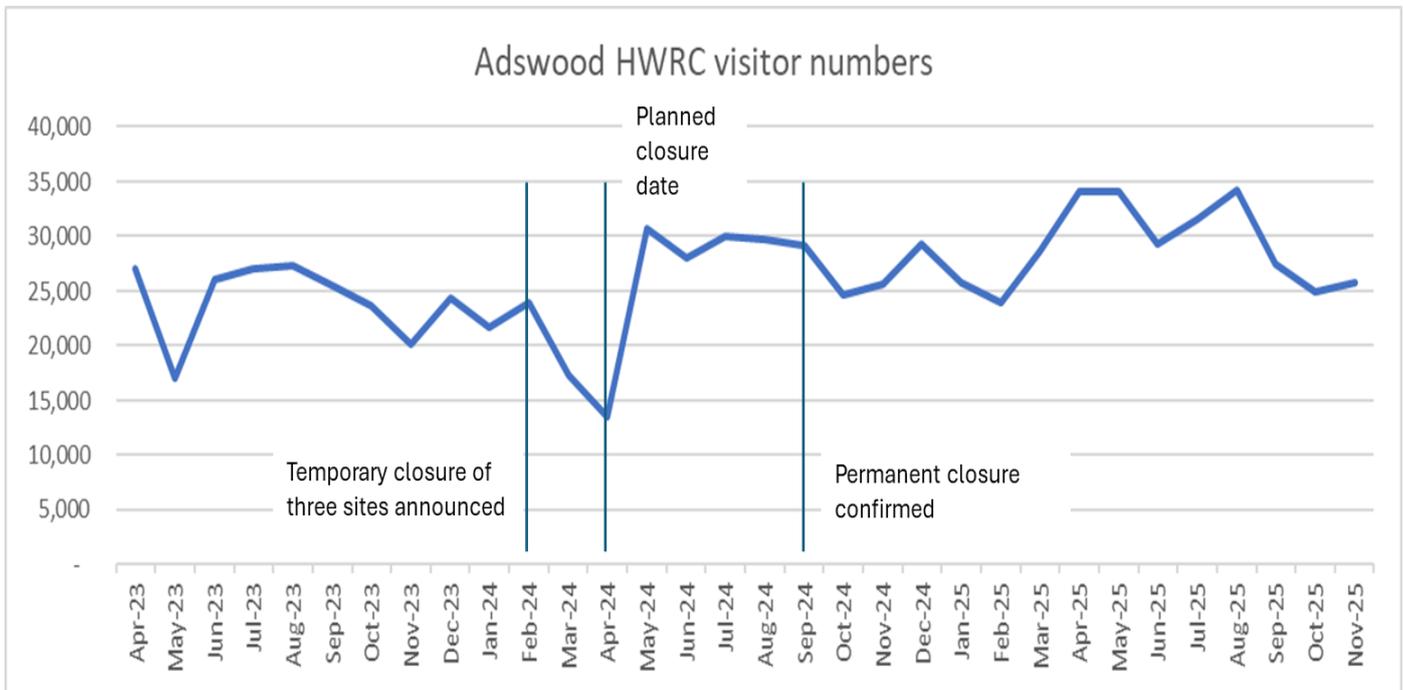
Figure 1 shows that the trends in usage since April 2023 are all upward. The increase is very small at Longley Lane and Rosehill (Marple) particularly. The trend is a little stronger at Bredbury and noticeably stronger at Adswood HWRC. This is at a time where across the HWRC portfolio usage numbers have been on the whole decreasing as shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: GMCA HWRC visitor numbers since June 2019**



As is demonstrated by Figure 3 there is a direct correlation between the closure of the three Cheshire East HWRCs and the increase in usage at Adswood HWRC.

**Figure 3: the usage of Adswood HWRC in relation to actions taken by Cheshire East Council to close three of its HWRCs**



In the thirteen months prior to the Cheshire East closures the average number of monthly visitors to Adswood was 23,023. This increased to an average of 28,408 visits per month – 23% growth.

Waste arisings at Adswood have not grown, but the site hasn't experienced the reduction in tonnage the wider network has experienced. The recycling rate at the site has remained stable.

### 3. Measures taken to date to address cross-border usage

Since becoming aware of the CEC closures GMCA asked Suez to monitor usage at the four sites more closely to gather any anecdotal or actual evidence of use by non-GMCA residents. Some users were turned away after they gave a Cheshire East address when challenged (and this resulted in a number of formal complaints which were not upheld). However, thanks to social media, methods to evade cross-border detection were publicised (and these were found online by Suez staff) making it more difficult to identify individuals.

Through the existing automatic number plate recognition system (ANPR) user numbers have been closely scrutinised.

With the threat of possible HWRC closures to the east and west it is prudent to take further steps to try to eliminate cross-border use of GMCA HWRCs. This, if successful, should see visitor numbers, in due course, return to pre-April 2024 levels (if not lower) at Adswold HWRC particularly. The consequence of this should be a reduction in tonnages through the facility and an associated reduction in costs without adversely impacting on recycling performance.

#### **4. The suggested steps for addressing cross-border use**

It is believed DCC is taking its proposals for HWRCs to Council in the summer. This may include closures or the introduction of its own residency checks at sites. DCC has suggested (but without providing any data to support the suggestion) that its Glossop HWRC has heavy usage by GMCA residents. If this is the case any controls introduced at Glossop will impact those GMCA residents. However, the same could be said in reverse for the use by DCC residents of, for example, Bayley Street HWRC in Stalybridge.

There are several methods WDAs can adopt to ensure their HWRC networks are only used by those who are entitled to do so. Some of these methods are systems and technology based (for example through the use of ANPR infrastructure) and can have additional processes built in such as booking systems.

The steer the Service has been given is that the introduction of a booking system is not favoured at this time (as discussed at the October 25 meeting of GMCA Scrutiny) so the focus has been to start to consider how residency checks can be undertaken. Such research will take time as we will need to take into account resource requirements to develop, introduce and maintain such systems and how they might, if at all, integrate with district systems. A two-stage approach to this is therefore suggested.

##### **4.1. Stage One – a soft introduction to checks**

As we are currently in a pre-election period followed by a further pre-election period no measures will be introduced until after elections have concluded. This gives time to fully develop the approach which may include:

- Meet and Greet operatives informing visitors that residency checks will be introduced and that they will need to bring suitable proof of address to access the site;

- Updating site signage to reflect the proof of address requirement;
- Existing contact networks such as mailing lists; and
- A mix of printed, broadcast and social media campaigns.

After an initial period of informing, checks will be introduced across the network on a random basis and designed to minimise disruption at site entrances.

The forms of acceptable proof of address will include driver's license or council tax bill although the former will be favoured as it has photo ID and should always have the driver's current home address.

## **4.2. Stage Two – a systematic approach**

There are a number of options to explore for the design and introduction of a systems based approach and each needs detailed analysis. The options likely to be reviewed include (but are not limited to):

- Whether a system is needed following the operation of Stage One;
- What systems are used by other WDAs;
- Whether the van permit system can be adapted for the purpose;
- Whether systems within the individual districts can be utilised in part; and
- How, if at all, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's database can be utilised.

A further report will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee providing recommendations on Stage 2.

## **5. Anticipated Outcomes**

A successful introduction of residency checks should certainly result in a reduction of site visits at the HWRCs close to the Cheshire East border (particularly Adswold) with a commensurate reduction in the tonnages managed at the sites (but not a reduction in attributable recycling performance). This will reduce costs (which will be very difficult to quantify) and it should be noted that actions outside of this, such as the diversion of garden waste from kerbside collections to the HWRCs as a consequence of the introduction of charges for collecting that waste stream, may mask any reductions from cross-border usage.

It should be noted that if DCC introduces similar checks at its Glossop HWRC, GMCA may experience an increase of usage at, for example, Bayley Street HWRC as Tameside residents who may use the Derbyshire facility are refused entry.

## **6. Next Steps**

Subject to approval of the recommendations, the Service will commence work to introduce Stage 1 of this approach, including the creation of the communications plan to maximise coverage so that residents are aware of the potential need to provide proof of address and an equalities impact assessment. In parallel, research into systems that may form Stage 2 will continue and be developed into recommendations for this Committee at a later date.