

Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

Foreword

The Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) has committed itself to achieving world class environmental credentials and this document sets out, together with supplementary detailed plans, our strategy for doing that.

This Strategy outlines how we will through our actions and behaviours help protect the environment in a sustainable way so that we move towards a clean, green and sustainable future, not just for today's generations but also for many more to come.

Sustainable development is defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as 'development which meets the needs of the present generation without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Waste Management plays a central role in the protection of the Earth's resource.

We have already started to make a real difference. In March 2010 the Authority won the prestigious national Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for 'Sustainable Environment' and was highly commended in the 'Innovation' category. At the heart of our environmental efforts sits our Recycling and Waste Management Contract (the Contract). This is based on a clear hierarchy of minimising waste, reusing, recycling/composting and recovering energy. Landfill is our final option and our aim is to minimise that as much as possible. The Contract uses world class sustainable technologies that will achieve 'our aim is zero waste' and therefore reduce the CO₂ we produce; and provide green energy to power homes and businesses helping Greater Manchester to become a greener place to be.

A key element of our Waste Management Strategy (WMS) is providing a sustainable and environmental solution and making the best use of the Authority's assets. To this end the revised WMS integrates resource efficiency and climate change into a single plan, following widespread consultation with key stakeholders, District Councils and partner Authorities and Members.

We will drive to improve our own sustainability through the Green Office Action Plan and Asset Management Plan, so that Greater Manchester's citizens reciprocate with the good will to participate in prevention, reuse and recycling.

We will also work in close partnership with all our key stakeholders. We recognise that we cannot do this alone and that it is only through the collective effort of our citizens, the Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs), businesses, the voluntary and community sectors that we will make a real difference.

I believe that this Environmental Strategy reinforces the Authority's commitment to the environment and provides a further stepping stone to contribute substantially to the principles of sustainable development. It also recognises the role that the Authority must play - not only as a leader in the community, but also in moving itself forward and setting an example for others to follow.

Councillor Neil Swannick: Chair of the Authority

Our Commitment

The Corporate Plan 2012/15 commits the Authority to bring together work on:

- a) implementing the Greater Manchester Climate Change Action Plan and the Green Office Action Plan;
- b) recovering energy from waste once waste has firstly been reduced, re-used and recycled;
- c) preventing pollution and minimising environmental risks from the Authority's closed landfill sites; and
- d) influencing national policy to reduce packaging so that waste is minimised.

To meet this commitment the Authority will:

- adopt the principles of the environmental management system (International Organisation for Standardisation [ISO] 14001), without adopting the bureaucracy of the accreditation regime;
- lead by example and use our influence to actively encourage responsible environmental practice and raise awareness and understanding of environmental issues among our staff, suppliers, contractors, partners and the public;
- set formal objectives for all staff and provide the necessary resources, training and performance review to ensure continuous improvement of overall environmental performance across the Authority;
- make efficient use of natural resources including water, heat and electricity and promote the use and development of appropriate sources of renewable energy and recycled products;
- take action to prevent pollution and minimise environmental risks;
- implement the WMS and the Contract to reduce the amount of waste entering the waste stream and increase recycling, while ensuring that all waste generated is dealt with in a way that reduces its impact on the environment;
- respond to the challenges posed by climate change by significantly reducing carbon emissions from our activities and acting, where possible, to address and mitigate wider potential impacts;
- protect natural habitats and species to maintain and improve the wealth of biodiversity in Greater Manchester;
- make this Strategy available to all staff, suppliers, contractors, partners, and the public; and
- maximise our contribution by always working in partnership with our key stakeholders.

National and Global Accords

Greater Manchester Strategy
Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – low carbon topic (draft)
Regional Economic Strategy
Greater Manchester Climate Change Strategy
Greater Manchester Energy Plan (in development)
Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document
Low Carbon Economic Area Plan
Green Infrastructure Framework Document (in development)
Sustainable Consumption and Production Plan (to be developed)

Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)
Environment Commission
Greater Manchester Energy Group
Green Infrastructure and biodiversity Group

Revised Waste Management Strategy

Green Office Action Plan

Asset Management Plan

Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority

In implementing this Strategy we will work closely with all key stakeholders in Greater Manchester to support the development of the Low Carbon Economic Area through supporting the program of work that lead to more sustainable consumption of resources.

The Greater Manchester Strategy sets out the agreed priorities for Greater Manchester over the next ten years, which recognises that to have a successful economy we must reduce our environmental impact. This will be delivered by seven new commissions - one of which is the Environment Commission, which recently published the Climate Change Strategy. The key themes and priorities of the Climate Change Strategy - sustainable consumption, energy, transport dovetail neatly with our revised WMS. While we will contribute to the remaining themes - building and green space through our Green Office and Asset Management Plans.

Our key plans for reducing our environmental impact are detailed below:

Revised WMS

The revised Waste Management Strategy was approved at the 16th March 2012 Authority meeting. The WMS redefines what is meant by 'our aim is zero waste' and has eight policy objectives under four themes. These are detailed below.

Overall Aim

'Our Aim is Zero Waste'. This means we will do everything we can to save resources (by preventing waste at source and recycling more) and to produce green energy. We will not landfill anything we can use.

Policy Objectives

Saving Resources

- a) Reduce residual household waste to 400kg per household by 2025 (equivalent to a 50% reduction across Greater Manchester against a 2008/09 baseline) through waste prevention, reuse and recycling;
- b) To meet the 50% recycling target across Greater Manchester by 2015, stretching to 60% by 2025, focusing on providing quality materials for closed loop recycling, thus promoting resource efficiency and supporting the economy by providing access to secondary raw materials; and
- c) To reduce the amount of residual waste landfilled to the minimum that can be technically and economically achieved using a combination of prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery with a target to achieve 90% diversion from landfill by 2015.

Connecting with the Community

- d) To increase understanding of the actions that individuals can take to prevent, reuse, recycle and recover wastes through education leading to a sense of community ownership;
- e) To support behavioural change through a combination of measures that increase the opportunity and motivation to prevent, reuse and recycle wastes, and reduce the opportunity to throw away wastes that have not been separated; and
- f) To utilise the wider community sector to communicate with residents and businesses, and to financially back the best community sector innovations to deliver services that will reduce, reuse and recycle wastes

Protecting the Environment

- g) To improve the environmental management of waste by using the waste hierarchy (supported by life cycle assessment) to identify the most appropriate way to treat wastes, thus saving material resources or replacing fossil fuels; and

Supporting Business

- h) To support businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle or recover energy from waste, and increase understanding of the actions government and businesses can take to develop increased producer responsibility

Green Office Action Plan

The Green Office Action Plan was launched in August 2009. The key aims were to:

- i) reduce energy, fuel, water and raw materials;
- ii) reduce travel where possible, promote green travel and vehicles;
- iii) procure goods and services that are environmentally friendly and energy efficient from third party suppliers that have green, environmental and sustainable policies in place; and
- iv) minimise waste and recycle where possible.

The majority of the actions in the plan have been completed.

The Green Office Action Plan is regularly monitored at sectional level and annually at Management Team level.

Asset Management Plan

The Asset Management Plan was revised in September 2008. Asset Management is defined as that activity that seeks to align the asset base with the organisations corporate goals and objectives (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors [RICS 2008]).

The plan provides an over-arching framework within which to the Authority will plan, co-ordinate, manage and monitor its estate management activities in a manner designed to ensure optimum support for the attainment of the Authority's wider business goals. Relevant key objectives in the plan are to:

- i) deliver modern facilities aimed at maximising recycling, composting and recovering energy from waste materials;
- ii) fulfil our statutory obligations in accordance with the principles of sustainability and best value; and
- iii) ensure that completed landfill sites do not cause harm to human health or pollution of the environment.

Landfill sites in particular produce harmful methane gas. Where possible this is used to generate electricity and the Authority is actively pursuing making the best use of its assets, reducing liabilities and improving the environment. A proposal to build a wind farm at one of our closed landfill sites is also being developed.

Summary

This Environmental Strategy outlines our commitment to helping protect the planet in a sustainable way and how we will, through our actions, do this. Ultimately it is about changing attitudes and behaviour but hopefully by providing a framework, vision and focus within which to operate, collectively we can all make a real difference.