

ALIGNMENT TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
WDA/17/21

Recommendation

That:

1. Note the current degree of alignment to the SDG's.
2. Agree to the undertake a Voluntary Local Review of Progress against the SDG's in 2021/22.
3. Carry out an appraisal of the future contractual needs and standards of the Authority in terms of the potential to improve SDG outcomes.
4. Agree that collaborative work to assist the LCRCA on the development of a City Region Zero Waste Strategy be given the highest priority.

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ALIGNMENT TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG's) **WDA/17/21**

Report of The Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out MRWA's alignment with the SDG's as a yardstick against which we can start to assess our sustainability impacts. Perhaps the biggest value in the exercise, is to also use the SDG's to challenge ourselves in terms of what and how we do things, and where we can make improvements.

2. Background

- 2.1 In the MRWA Corporate Plan 2021-22, we committed to reporting against the SDG's as a way of demonstrating the wider impact of our actions in addressing Sustainable Development, including, but not limited to, climate change, carbon reduction and various other environmental, economic and social value measures, (the 'Triple Bottom Line').
- 2.2 The SDG's were conceived originally to challenge national action around the globe and the SDG targets and indicators are written at the 'national' level. However, an increasing number of organisations are 'localising' the targets and indicators to measure their alignment and performance, recognising that the themes and holistic nature of the goals provides a good, 'whole effect', performance management framework.

3. Approach

- 3.1 Appendix 1 provides an analysis of the links between the MRWA Corporate Plan and the SDG's and we have assessed the degree of alignment against the SDG's, including by using local (Liverpool City Region or internal MRWA) targets and indicators and have accounted for our outcomes using a 'best-fit' against the SDG's.
- 3.2 Many of our outcomes impact a number of different SDG's, but we have accounted for our alignment or performance only against the 'best-fit' SDG to avoid repetition and confusion.
- 3.3 Some SDG's are more relevant to our organisational purpose than others. For instance, the majority of what we do can be covered under SDG 12 – Sustainable Consumption and Production, since we exist to bring about the sustainable management of waste, whereas other SDG's may be less obviously relevant, e.g. Life Below Water. Nevertheless, it is surprising, when you analyse what we do, just how many, and to what degree, we do in fact, impact other SDG's.
- 3.4 Using the SDG's can help us address important questions like; How are we doing when it comes to the overall sustainability of what we do? How do we contribute to wider LCR performance, and: How can we improve our sustainability? In the case of Climate Emergency, Zero Net Carbon 2040 and Zero Waste – How much more do we need to do and how much faster?

4. Summary of Assessment - Where are we now?

- 4.1 A full analysis is provided at Appendix 1.

It is fair to say that the assessment is trying to look at two dimensions of our impact. The quality and the quantity. By way of example, we deliver high quality education on waste through our education programme. However, it could be argued strongly that the numbers (quantity) going through that education programme are relatively small, when one considers the entire population of the City Region. Therefore, we have assessed the overall degree of alignment as position as 'moderate' – that is to say, there is nothing wrong with the quality, but there is much more that could be done.

4.2 The illustrations below provide a visual summary of the assessment of where our current MRWA activities are most closely aligned or most impact the SDG's.

4.3 Table 1. Summary of degree of alignment with SDG's

SDG		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
1	No poverty			
2	No hunger			
3	Good health			
4	Quality education			
5	Gender equality			
6	Clean water and sanitation			
7	Renewable Energy			
8	Good jobs and economic growth			
9	Innovation and infrastructure			
10	Reduced inequalities			
11	Sustainable cities and communities			
12	Responsible Consumption			
13	Climate Action			
14	Life below water			
15	Life on land			
16	Peace and Justice			
17	Partnership for the Goals			



SDG priority pyramid

4.4 The main area of impact we have is SDG 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production.

In particular, we are strongly aligned with and can impact strongly on:

- Sustainable Management and efficient use of natural resources.
- Food waste
- Waste reduction, reuse, and recycling
- Encouraging sustainable business practices (Circular Economy)
- Sustainable procurement
- Information and awareness

4.5 Looking beyond the MRWA, it is worth mentioning that there is, as yet, no overarching strategy for waste (of all types) in the city region. However, the LCR Combined Authority has recently set the aspiration to develop a Zero Waste Strategy (in the Climate Action Plan). We must not fall into the trap of complacency, congratulating ourselves for the satisfactory management of the household waste which comes our way, on which we have a good track record. To reach a much higher degree of sustainable resource and waste management there is a need to 'up our game' significantly across the city region.

4.6 It is also worth noting that, in SDG terms, the waste collected by the Councils and recycled or used for Energy Recovery by MRWA is only a small fraction of the waste in the LCR. Commercial, industrial and construction wastes are very likely to be far larger in quantity than household waste. Work by MRWA to help develop of a Zero Waste Strategy for the LCR is of the highest strategic priority.

4.7 We have strong alignment/impact in relation to SDG 13 Action on Climate Change, especially through our Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the wider LCR CAP and Zero Waste Strategy. Therefore, anything we can do to improve collaboration and joint-working with the LCR Combined Authority is most important.

5. What do we need to do next?

5.1 Firstly, it is apparent from the assessment of the degree of alignment with the SDG's that this is the easy bit. What is much more difficult, is to assess actual performance levels against the SDG's. We have moderately good data on the recycling of household waste, residual waste energy recovery, Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Performance, etc. We have good information on the impact of our Community Fund Projects. However, data on energy, water use and particularly, other social value indicators is poor.

5.2 We have begun to assess our carbon footprint more rigorously, but there remain some holes in the data we need to close.

5.3 We know that we need to think about the future needs, both in terms of the next generation of contracts, the waste infrastructure and the management processes that will be needed, to maintain the highest standards of sustainable waste management.

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

25th June 2021

5.4 The need to improve the data should not be used as an excuse to stand still. We know that the development of a Zero Waste Strategy, with commensurate actions, is desperately needed to contribute to climate action and the wider sustainable management of resources.

5.5

6. Risk implications

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Failure to define and target wider sustainability outcomes in the context of Zero Waste in the LCR	2	4	8	Collaboration with LCRCA on Zero Waste Strategy and Climate Action Plan
Failure to design next generation of contracts to be fit for net zero carbon future	3	4	12	Review of contracts to assess potential for expanding SDG outcomes
Failure to maximise sustainability outcomes from current operations	3	3	9	Review of Service Delivery Plans, Contractual changes, infrastructure and assets for improvements in Sustainability outcomes.

7. HR Implications

7.1 None associated with this report

8. Environmental Implications

8.1 The development of a Zero Waste Strategy in concert with the Combined Authority, as part of their Climate Action Plan is of vital importance to the Authority in taking

sustainable waste management to the next level and in preparing our services and contracts for a zero net carbon future.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 None directly associated with his report.

10. Legal Implications

10.1 None directly associated with this report.

11. Conclusion

11.1 The Authority is most closely aligned with SDG 12 – Sustainable consumption, but it is also aligned with many others which do not immediately come to mind. Many of the social value outcomes we achieve as a ‘side benefit’ of our core activities are capable of improvement and delivering more impact. Questioning how to deliver more and better SDG outcomes is a valuable tool we can use to rethink waste strategy and our main contracts and activities. The SDG’s are not the only factors to take into account in designing future service provision, but they can help frame priorities and performance measures.

It is recommended, therefore, that the Authority:

- Note the current degree of alignment to the SDG’s
- Undertake a Voluntary Local Review of Progress against the SDG’s. This is a more rigorous assessment of performance, and benchmarking against other waste authority areas, where possible, not just the degree of alignment.
- Carry out an appraisal of the future contractual needs and standards of the Authority, in terms of the need to either bring contractual performance standards up, or to develop the suite of contractual performance standards, especially social value outcomes, for any future contract(s) – so called ‘future-proofing’. One example of looking ahead is the need to take into account the likelihood of higher Government reuse and recycling targets, together with the need to collect and sort a wider range of materials for recycling.
- Agree that collaborative work to assist the LCRCA on the development of a City Region Zero Waste Strategy be given the highest priority.

Report of the Chief Executive Carl Beer
7th Floor
No 1 Mann Island
Liverpool L3 1BP

Email: carlbeer@merseysidewda.gov.uk
Tel: 0151 255 1444

The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.