

Merseyside Recycling
& Waste Authority

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING & WASTE AUTHORITY

Hello and welcome to our latest Annual Report, a key statement of what the Authority has achieved and the challenges it has addressed over the last year.

The period in question saw us still contending with the COVID-19 pandemic, especially at our network of 16 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) where we wanted to deliver a crucial service for householders, whilst keeping them and site staff safe. The HWRCs are our public facing service and are managed by our contractor Veolia Merseyside. Last year saw the HWRCs achieve a 70% recycling rate, accepting almost 170,000 tonnes of household waste and recyclable materials through their doors. We also saw 88,797 tonnes of recycling go through our two Materials Recovery Facilities – material from household kerbside recycling bins going on to be processed into new items. All of this has combined for a 36% recycling rate for the region.

During the pandemic one of our big changes was to move away from the paper-based Permit Scheme to a more efficient online van booking system, which has now been fully established at the HWRCs. We hope residents have welcomed this evolution.

Meanwhile, our contract with Merseyside Energy Recovery Ltd. handled 483,248 tonnes of non-recycled waste, the majority of which was sent to produce energy at the Energy from Waste (EfW) plant at Wilton International on Teesside.

One of the major pieces of work we undertook was the Waste Composition Analysis 2021/22 which helps us to better understand the types of waste that are being recycled and thrown away by local residents. The project involved the analysis of the contents of recycling, residual and green and food waste from kerbside collections and waste and recycling received at Household Waste Recycling Centres across the Liverpool City Region in 2021/2022. The results can enable us to help improve performance and increase recycling rates. For further detail please visit our website.

Our work with the public through community groups and education programmes went from strength to strength. The Community Fund provided £165,000 to 17 local projects which helped them to deliver reuse and recycling schemes through the city region. Further educational engagement was made at the Recycling Discovery Centre at Gillmoss and the Southport Eco Centre, who together engaged with over 5000 people, old and young.

Over the last year we've done more work than ever before on strategy and climate change in an effort to improve people's wellbeing, community wealth and the sustainability of the region. We have prioritised four of the United Nations Strategic Development Goals, helped put together a strategic waste framework for the LCR Waste Partnership, and launched our own Zero Waste brand. The need to combat the climate emergency and change how we use, reuse and save resources has never been more important.

Finally, this year we said goodbye to our former Chief Executive Carl Beer, who retired after 21 years at the Authority and achieved a huge amount. A new era has begun with the appointment of Lesley Worswick as Chief Executive. Lesley has joined us from the Environment Agency so is bringing a wealth of experience in the sector, as well as new ideas and a fresh viewpoint.

I hope you enjoy taking a look through our Annual Report and find it interesting and useful.

Cllr Tony Concepcion
Chairperson



Looking ahead

It's an exciting time for the Authority with significant changes in the industry coming up over the next year or so, and we are ready and raring to go.

There will be big changes in recycling soon and we're anticipating new government legislation mandating the collection of a consistent set of materials at the kerbside which we expect to include a wider range of plastics, such as pots, tubs & trays.

Food waste is taking on ever more importance both in terms as a contributor to climate change and an everyday increased grocery cost. For several years we have promoted the Love Food Hate Waste campaign and its messages of using what you have and not buying too much, and we will continue this push throughout the year ahead, alongside messages encouraging people to compost their food waste at home.

We will also see government legislation bringing in a country-wide, mandatory kerbside food waste collection service, so watch this space.

We will continue to inform and encourage local residents about reuse and recycling as we build up the Zero Waste LCR brand, carry on promoting our Recycle Right campaign and teach people at our education centres all about waste management. Our local partnerships will continue as we work on the Zero Waste Strategy for the City Region, as well as continuing our existing relationships with the district councils.

It's going to be a busy year for everyone and by working together we can ensure we reduce the impact of our actions on climate change and improve the sustainable management of resources in the region.

Our Corporate Aims

To ensure that we reduce the impact of our actions on climate change and improve the sustainable management of waste and resources

Corporate Aim 1

Improve the sustainable management of waste and resources

Corporate Aim 2

We will deliver effective waste services

Corporate Aim 3

Co-operate to improve working arrangements

Corporate Aim 4

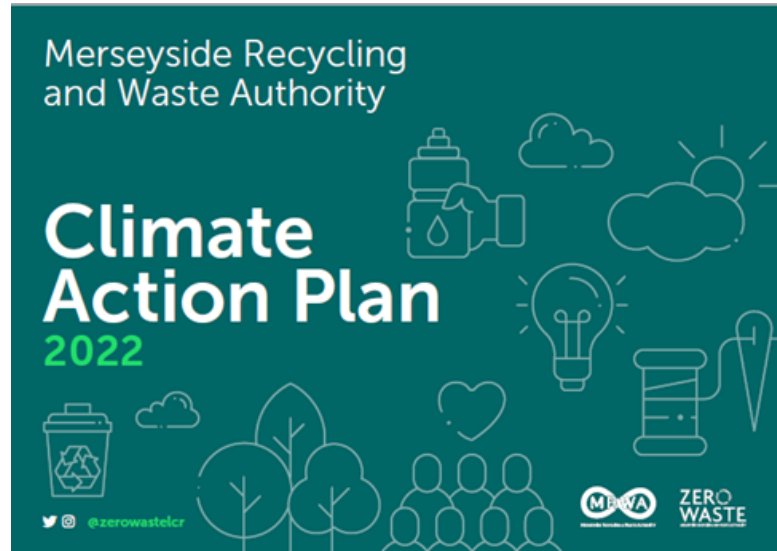
Measure and report on climate change impacts and sustainability improvements

Our Corporate Plan, Budget and Service Delivery Plans are approved by our Members annually and report back to Members to confirm the success of outcomes for the year. The following pages of this Annual Report summarise how effective the Authority has been in achieving its planned outcomes.



Action on climate

On Friday 18th October 2019, Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority Members declared a climate emergency whilst simultaneously agreeing to develop a new Zero Waste 2040 Strategy and an Action Plan for Resource and Waste Management at the earliest opportunity. In response to this we developed a Climate Action Plan 2020 and committed to reducing the climate change impacts associated with our activities. This document was due for review every two years and we have now launched our Climate Action Plan 2022.



The Plan focuses on three key areas - People, Planet and Economy - linking behavioural change, resource consumption, biodiversity and the circular economy. The Action Plan demonstrates the changes and improvements we will make to meet our dual goals of net zero carbon and zero waste by 2040.

You can read the Climate Action Plan at www.zerowastelcr.com/climate-action-plan/

Our Climate Action Plan is accompanied by a detailed action plan which will be reviewed yearly and drives forward our climate action.

Waste Policy

Our resources and waste policies are increasingly focused on following the waste hierarchy, reducing carbon emissions from the use of material resources, tackling climate change and moving to a zero waste, circular economy. We have reviewed our Climate Action Plan to seek new opportunities to minimise the environmental impact of waste management and resource use. Working with our partners we continue to share our thinking on how the region can achieve its twin zero waste/net zero carbon 2040 goals. We have collaborated with our Combined Authority colleagues to support development of Liverpool City Region strategies, including the Pathway to Net Zero and Plan for Prosperity.

We have engaged in several Government consultations on implementation of the national Resources and Waste Strategy. Our responses aim to influence the development of new policies and sustainable services, helping our residents and communities prevent waste and to reuse, repair and recycle more resources. We highlighted the benefits for people, planet and economy of zero waste action in our response to Government's Net Zero Review and have worked closely with national organisations, including the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO), to amplify our core zero waste, net zero carbon message. We also continue to publish regular Resources and Waste Policy Updates to highlight the changes ahead and the opportunities for reducing waste by rethinking resource use.

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prosperity of everyone, everywhere. What we do as an Authority is important in helping society reuse and recycle resources, reduce waste and tackle climate change.

We have assessed 'what we do' (aspects) and their 'effects' (impacts) and prioritised which of the 17 goals we can influence most. Our drivers to support the SDGs are based on equal respect for people, the planet and the economy which are interconnected and dependent upon each other. We have identified our priority SDGs as:



We will change the way we interact with stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions. Change consumer behaviour by enabling the reuse and recycling of products that are no longer wanted and in doing so, reduce carbon emissions.



Help reduce product consumption and prevent waste by keeping household products in use for longer and help retain the embodied energy within products to avoid carbon emissions. Support resource conservation.



Contribute to a low carbon circular economy by maximising product reuse and recycling and the inherent value of unwanted household resources.



Demonstrate care for the physical and mental well-being of our staff. Use unwanted resources to support social value in the community and nurture small businesses. Help the region to become greener.

You can read our full SDG Baseline report at:

zerowastelcr.com/sustainable-development-goals



Counting Carbon

Over the last two years we have made good progress against our climate commitments including completion of a carbon emissions baseline study and created a tool to measure our emissions.

Across our estate we have assessed opportunities to increase renewable energy generation and reduce our energy usage and working with nature where we can to minimise and better mitigate emissions from our closed landfill sites.

To read our Annual Carbon Report, please visit www.merseysidewda.gov.uk/waste-strategy-2/mrwa-annual-carbon-report-2020-21/



Data and Performance

Over this reporting period we have focussed on our RRC and WMRC contracts to provide continuous data verification, sharing and reporting internally and with our external partners. We have also used the evidence of the Waste Composition Analysis to develop many of the policies and strategies named above.

We have endeavoured to increase our knowledge regarding Carbon Counting and are following developments in digital waste tracking and forthcoming requirements of packaging Extended Producer Responsibility. Working with our contractors we have overcome the difficulties that arose due to compatibility of new software and complex contractual interfaces.



Analysing Waste

One of the major pieces of work undertaken over the last year was the Waste Composition Analysis 2021/22. The Analysis helps us to better understand the types of waste that are being recycled and thrown away by local residents and involves analysing the contents of recycling, residual and green and food waste from kerbside collections and waste and recycling received at Household Waste Recycling Centres across the Liverpool City Region. The results can enable us to help improve performance and increase recycling rates.

Key findings:

- At 33.5%, food waste in kerbside bins remains the largest fraction of residual waste by a significant margin.
- 18.7% of collected residual waste could have been placed into LCR recycling collections.
- Overall, 27% of kerbside collected recycling was classed as contamination
- 32.5% of all HWRC residual waste had some reuse potential.

Typical residual bin



- Food Waste ■ Combustables ■ Paper
- Plastics ■ Green Waste ■ Textiles
- Card & Cardboard ■ Noncombustables
- Glass ■ Metals

Typical recycling bin



- Glass ■ Card and Cardboard ■ Paper
- Dense Plastics ■ Organic Catering
- Ferrous Metals ■ Ferrous Metals
- Misc. Combustables ■ Textiles ■ Plastic Film
- Non-combustable Inserts ■ Other

For further detail please visit www.zerowastelcr.com/liverpool-city-region-waste-composition-analysis-2021/

Education

The Education Centres went through a time of temporary closures as the pandemic continued to affect day-to-day operations. The Recycling Discovery Centre in Gillmoss offered virtual *Recycling Live* sessions as well as digital resources which covered a range of topics including recycling, home composting, journey of waste and eco choices. Information boards in the classroom were updated to give a fresh look with new messaging including zero waste, composting and recycling facts. The virtual sessions, digital downloads and face to face visits were all tracked throughout the year to capture engagement across the Liverpool City Region, totalling 3,829 visits to the classroom and 740 digital resource downloads.



The Southport Eco Centre also had to retain their digital focus but still managed to run three campaigns, starting with A History of Waste. This educated students on how differently we treat our waste today than we have in the past and highlighted historical instances of reuse and recycling. The second campaign was in support of the Recycle Right campaign, Recycling isn't Rubbish. An electronic resource and presentation were created to support teachers' reinforcing key recycling messages. Finally, the Christmas Waste Campaign saw the Eco Centre team up with the cast of Cinderella at The Atkinson, sharing key messages on how to have an eco-friendly Christmas.

Throughout the year the Eco Centre saw just under 1500 visitors. Their campaigns had a reach of over 4,800 views and their digital resources saw 9,024 engagements.



A million get the message to Recycle Right

We estimated that a campaign designed to help boost recycling across the Liverpool City Region was seen over a million times.

Launched in October 2021 and run through into March 2022, Recycle Right adverts reminding people of what they can and should recycle appeared throughout the Liverpool City Region on buses, local radio and newspapers, outdoor telephone kiosks and digital outdoor displays, ASDA supermarkets and social media. The advertising was part of our Recycle Right campaign which was launched in 2018 to help increase awareness of recycling issues. This includes letting people know what can be recycled where, preventing bagged waste and unwanted materials being put into recycling bins, and highlighting what options people have when it comes to recycling and managing their household waste.

These campaigns were followed up later in 2022 with further advertising and social media messaging reminding people of why recycling matters and how it links to climate change and sustainability issues.



Zero Waste LCR

In January 2022 we launched the Zero Waste Liverpool City Region (Zero Waste LCR) initiative, including Zero Waste LCR branding, a website (zerowastelcr.com) and two social media channels (Twitter & Instagram ZeroWasteLCR) in a bid to push the zero waste message to local residents.

The website is our main point of reference for householders and businesses and highlights the work happening in the area of zero waste. It includes information on what zero waste is, how reducing waste can help tackle climate change, tips and resources to help residents on their own zero waste journey, the Circular Economy and the latest zero waste news and initiatives. Included on the website are resource packs for Home Composting and Clothes Swishing, both engagement opportunities to encourage householders to reduce and reuse their waste. We have also developed a Zero Waste Map which identifies local businesses, organisations and projects that run reuse, upcycling, repair or prevention services for residents to access.

The launch of the Zero Waste Liverpool City Region brand was a significant moment for MRWA as it signposted our commitment to zero waste and not just recycling and recovery.



Managing 7 former landfill sites

Looking after landfill

We manage seven former landfill sites to ensure compliance with environmental standards and obligations. At each of the sites there is a range of equipment designed to monitor and mitigate the impacts of landfill emissions (landfill gas and leachate). All of the sites are monitored regularly by our environmental officers, and an annual service and maintenance plan ensures that all apparatus and equipment operate effectively. The sites, no longer operational, are now used for a variety of purposes, including woodland, wildlife reserve, and arable farmland.

In October 2021, the Authority adopted Biological Methane Oxidation (a process in which Bacteria in the restoration material absorbs landfill gases) as a means of controlling landfill gas emissions at its Bidston Moss former landfill site. With the age of the site, and depleting gas levels, a flare was no longer a viable option, and Biological Methane Oxidation was adopted. The change in gas field management system from a flare to biological methane oxidation has resulted in reduced electricity consumption, and equivalent CO₂e production, and well as a saving in the associated electricity costs.

Bidston Fire Suppression System

Following a large fire at the Bidston Integrated Waste Management Facility in June 2020, The Authority and its contractor Veolia jointly funded the installation of an upgraded fire suppression system, which comprised the installation of a sprinkler tank, sprinkler heads and pipework across the operational facility.



ISO 14001: Environmental Management System

The Authority's Environmental Management System was subject to a surveillance visit in January and February 2022 to ensure compliance with the standard. The Management System was found to be suitable and sufficient for the operations undertaken by the Authority as defined by the scope of its Certification, and accreditation was retained.

Community projects funded to the tune of £165,000

Seventeen community groups from across the Liverpool City Region received funding to help boost recycling, reuse and waste prevention.

The £165,000 was from the MRWA and Veolia Community Fund 2021/22, which has been running annually since 2006. Programmes include cookery clubs to reduce food waste, community recycling hubs, sewing classes and craft clubs, upcycling and restoration of unwanted furniture, clothes recycling and a cloth nappy lending library.

Project applications had to tackle one or more of the four priority household waste materials which have been identified by MRWA as key, namely Food, Plastics, Textiles and Furniture.

Merseyside community groups come together to help reduce waste

23/09/2021



GOOD NEWS LIVERPOOL

Community groups awarded cash to help prevent waste

Community & Schools June 21, 2021



Turning textiles into treasure!

A Birkenhead-based community group is making Christmas decorations to help stop clothing and other textiles from going to waste.

Market Street-based Make It Happen Birkenhead has been using the festive season to give their Textiles as Treasure project a

boost, as well as providing local people with the opportunity to meet up and swap recycling and reuse ideas.

The project has received nearly £8,000 from Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority and Veolia Community Fund.



Contracts



36.6% **Liverpool City Region
household waste recycled**

483,248 **total tonnes of residual
waste managed via RRC**

70% **materials recycled at
Household Waste Recycling
Centres**

The network of 16 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), two Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), and four Waste Transfer Stations is operated for the Authority by Veolia under the Waste Management and Recycling Contract (WMRC).

In 2021/22, 88,797 tonnes of recycling went through our two Materials Recovery Facilities (Gillmoss and Bidston), with the vast majority of the recyclable material sorted remaining within the UK and reprocessed into quality recycled products – a great achievement.

Members of the public brought 169,911 tonnes of household waste to the HWRCs in 2021/22, which had a recycling performance of 70%. The HWRCs are operating at a high level and are something we can be proud of.

Further improvement occurred in March 2022, when the Authority and Veolia jointly funded the provision and installation of defibrillators across all of the HWRCs - vital equipment that can be accessed by staff quickly in an emergency.

The performance of the HWRCs makes a strong contribution towards the City Region's overall recycling rate which (including waste collected at the kerbside) is 36.6% for the year 2021/22. This is an increase on the previous year's 35%. We also recycled more tonnes of material than we did in 2020/21 - an increase in total recycling from 167,219 in 20/21 to 172,558 in 2021/22.



Creating energy from waste



The amount of total household waste in the region has fallen - decreasing from 784,534 tonnes in 2020/21 to 764,946 tonnes in 2021/22. District Councils delivered 389,194 tonnes of non-recyclable waste directly to the Authority through their residual household waste collection services - another decrease from 398,379 in 2020/21.

The Resource Recovery Contract (RRC) is operated by Merseyside Energy Recovery Ltd and provides the Authority with a Rail Transfer Loading Station (RTLS) in Kirkby (pictured below) and an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant at Wilton International on Teesside (pictured above). The majority of the Authority's residual household waste (i.e. waste which is not able to be recycled) is now managed through EfW, with 427,222 tonnes going to EfW in 2021/22.

The household waste is being put to good use – powering the local economy and avoiding more than 127,000 tonnes of carbon emissions each year (compared with landfilling). It is capable of generating up to 50 megawatts of electricity – sufficient to power more than 63,000 homes.



Governance

The Authority's governance arrangements are reviewed on an ongoing basis through the Primary Assurance Group (PAG) each year. PAG determine whether there are any areas of concern and plan for improvements through a set of defined actions for the forthcoming year. The review of governance was set out in an Annual Governance Statement approved by Members at the April 2021 meeting. No significant issues were identified through the 2020/21 yearly review.

Financial Management

The Authority's net expenditure was over £78M in 2021/2, 86% of which was on contracts to manage waste and statutory services. The Authority's income from the Levy in the same period was £77.6M, and the Authority required a contribution from its General Fund balances (£0.6M) as part of a medium term financial strategy to ensure that the Levy and the Authority's expenditure are in balance.

As a part of the financial strategy for 2021/22 District Councils made one-off contributions to the Authority to enable it to keep additional costs arising from Covid-19 under control. These one-off contributions in respect of additional tonnages delivered during the pandemic and additional costs of highways management where queues outside Household Waste Recycling Centres were managed have been netted off the figures above – but amounted to one off support of over £2.2M, without which the Authority would have been likely to be significantly overspent.

A gap between expenditure and funding continues into 2022/23 as waste tonnages have remained at the increased levels even as the response to the pandemic becomes more normalised. If the waste continues to be delivered at these levels a further Levy increase is inevitable over the medium term to enable funding to be at sustainable levels.

Business Services

The Business Services section continues to provide the Authority with effective and efficient administrative support including finance, human resources and I.T. During the past year, the team has continued to deliver excellent customer service to Merseyside residents using our HWRC Booking system helping over the phone as well as online.

Since the introduction of agile working, Business Services have continued to support staff with the provision of IT equipment and regular health and safety risk assessments for their working areas both in the office and at home and promptly providing any necessary equipment required. Staff Development interviews and reviews took place during 2022 with all employees receiving with the training and support identified as part of the process.

Towards the end of 2022 Business Services played a vital role in the recruitment of a new Chief Executive. The team has continued to support our Executive Management Team during this transition.



This Annual Report is only a snapshot of what we do. For more information about MRWA go to: www.merseysidewda.gov.uk

To find out what you can recycle locally go to: www.recycleright.org.uk

To learn more about reuse and reduction go to: www.zerowastelcr.com

All information was correct at the time of publishing (April 2023).

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