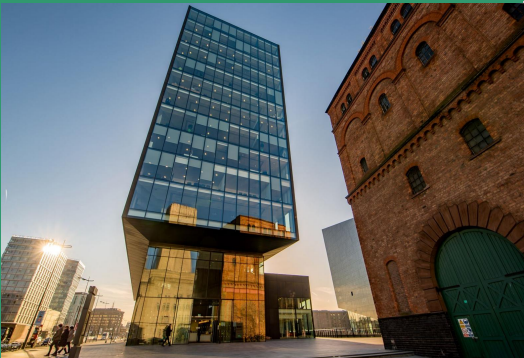


ANNUAL REPORT
2022/23

Merseyside Recycling
& Waste Authority



A Year of Progress, Challenges, and Shared Purpose

As we turn the page on another year, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on our journey together. The time covered by this Report was a time of both strides and hurdles.

Let's start with the positive. We've seen a decline in residual household waste levels. This is a testament to the collective effort of our communities, embracing a culture of mindful consumption and responsible disposal. This decrease in waste generation is a victory for all of us, hopefully signifying a shift towards a more sustainable future.

However, we can't ignore the fact that our recycling rate has dipped slightly from 36% to 34%. While a small decline, it's still not heading in the right direction. We understand the frustration this may cause, but we must all face this challenge head-on.

The reasons for this dip are complex, influenced by external factors like the cost of living and evolving consumer behaviour. Nonetheless, we are committed to working diligently with our partners and stakeholders to identify and implement solutions.

Transparency and collaboration are key. We are always open to your input to help us understand the challenges you're facing when it comes to recycling. Open communication is a cornerstone to developing our strategies.

The landscape of waste management is constantly evolving. The once-familiar systems are undergoing significant transformations. New technologies are emerging, and consumer habits are constantly shifting. To navigate these changes effectively, we need to be agile and adaptable. The introduction of Simpler Recycling across the country will bring challenges but more importantly it will let us recycle more things.

This is why partnerships are more critical than ever. We're working closely with district councils, industry leaders, environmental groups, and government agencies to explore innovative solutions, optimise our infrastructure, and ensure responsible and sustainable practices across the entire waste management chain, including the development of an LCR Zero Waste Strategy.

There will of course be hurdles to overcome and adjustments to make. But through it all, our core purpose remains unwavering: to create a cleaner, healthier environment for the communities we serve.

This commitment extends beyond waste management. We take our social responsibility seriously, actively engaging in initiatives that benefit the public good. Whether it's supporting local sustainability projects through our £165,000 Zero Waste Community Fund or promoting education programmes, we're dedicated to making a positive impact in the Liverpool City Region.

As we embark on this next chapter, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our dedicated team. Their unwavering commitment, resilience, and innovative spirit are the driving force behind our progress. I also extend my deepest appreciation to all of you, our valued stakeholders. Your unwavering support and constructive feedback are the fuel that propels us forward.

Together, we can build a more sustainable future. By working collaboratively, embracing innovation, and remaining true to our core values, we can navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you.

CIlr Catie Page - Chairperson



Looking ahead

The future of waste management is bright. Here at the Authority, we're gearing up for some exciting changes happening in recycling and waste prevention.

More recycling: The government is looking to introduce new legislation that will unify and increase household recycling options across the country. This should reduce confusion and expand the number of materials that we can process, such as plastic tubs and trays.

Food waste matters: Food waste is a big contributor to climate change and increasing costs can strain householders' wallets. We'll continue promoting the Love Food Hate Waste messaging, encouraging residents to buy smart and utilise what they have. Additionally, government plans for mandatory kerbside food waste collection across the country are on the horizon, and we're talking to all the district councils to make sure we get it right.

Empowering residents: We're committed to keeping you informed about waste reduction and recycling. Our Recycle Right and Zero Waste LCR campaigns and our Recycling Discovery Centre will continue to equip residents with the knowledge to recycle and reduce waste effectively. Our Community Fund projects also help us to spread positive messages and practical advice into communities.

Collaboration is key: Partnerships with local councils are crucial as we help develop the Zero Waste Strategy for the City Region. By working together, we can minimise our environmental impact and ensure sustainable resource management in our region.

It's going to be a busy year, but by working hand-in-hand, we can make a real difference.

Lesley Worswick - Chief Executive

Our Corporate Aims

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: 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

We deliver efficient and effective services

Corporate Aim 2

We continuously improve our services to meet changing demands

Corporate Aim 3

We collaborate with partners to develop and deliver strategies and services

Corporate Aim 4

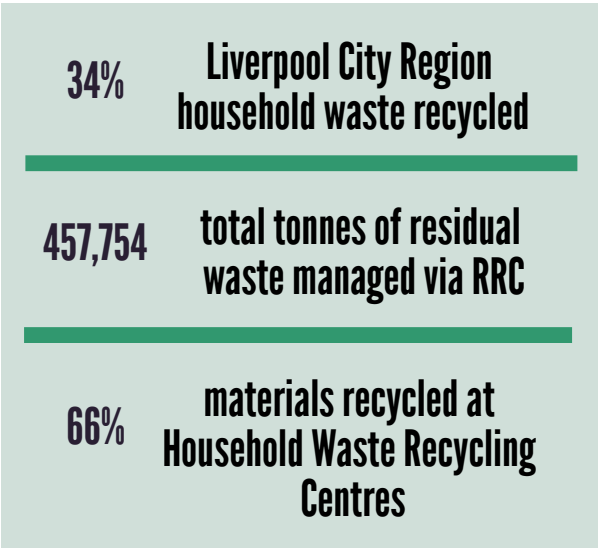
We develop a framework for environmental performance and social value

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.



Contracts



The team

MRWA has two major waste contracts, the WMRC (Waste Management and Recycling Contract) and the RRC (Resource Recovery Contract), which are both overseen by the Authority’s contracts team. This involves managing contractor performance, including KPI’s, to ensure the contracts are performing to the expected standard. The team also undertake a comprehensive facilities compliance monitoring programme which involves visits to all MRWA facilities to ensure contractual standards are met.

MRWA manages a network of 16 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), two Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), and four Waste Transfer Stations which are operated by Veolia under the WMRC. The contracts team liaise with all the Merseyside District Councils to ensure a smooth interface between District collection services and disposal of waste at the network of facilities which MRWA operate.



Waste Management and Recycling Contract

In 2022/23, the City Region received a total of 155,165 tonnes of recycling, 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 157,156 tonnes of household waste to the HWRCs in 2022/23, which had a recycling performance of 66%. This is both a fall in the amount of waste brought to the HWRCs (compared to 169,911 tonnes in 2021/22) and the amount recycled (compared to 70% in 2021/22).

The performance of the HWRCs makes a contribution towards the City Region's overall recycling rate which (including waste collected at the kerbside) is 34.7% for the year 2022/23. This is a slight decrease on the previous year's 36%.

The amount of material recycled at HWRCs also fell by 15,230 tonnes to 113,508 tonnes (compared to 128,738 tonnes in 2021/22).

There is good news in that the total amount of household waste in the region has fallen; decreasing from 764,946 tonnes in 2021/22 to 699,882 tonnes for 2022/23 - a decrease in waste of 65,064 tonnes.

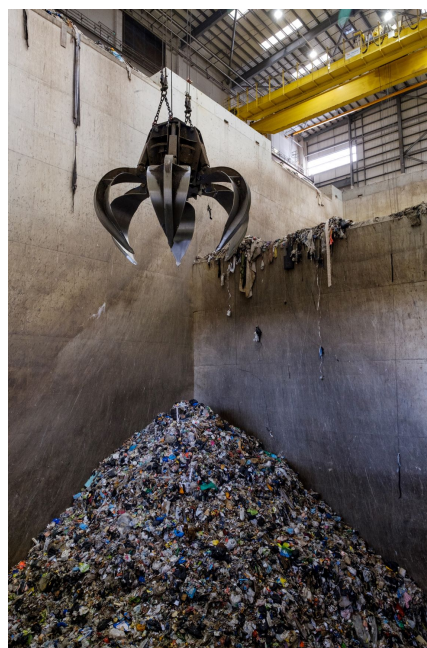
District Councils delivered 363,534 tonnes of non-recyclable waste directly to the Authority through their residual household waste collection services. This is a 25,600 tonnes decrease from 389,194 tonnes in 2021/22.

Other good news shows that the amount of household waste per household has gone down - from 669kg per household in 2021/22 to 622kg per household in 2022/23.

Resource Recovery Contract

Our Resource Recovery Contract (RRC) is operated by Merseyside Energy Recovery Ltd and provides the Authority with a Rail Transfer Loading Station (RTLS) in Kirkby and an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant at Wilton International on Teesside. The majority of residual household waste (i.e. waste which is not able to be recycled) is now managed through EfW, with 337,754 tonnes going to EfW in 2022/23.

The household waste is being put to good use with the capability of generating up to 50 megawatts of electricity – sufficient to power approximately 63,000 homes.



Strategy and Development

The team

Strategy and Development includes a wide range of activities:

Internal and external communications -

- managing and maintaining our MRWA, Recycle Right and Zero Waste LCR websites and social media.
- Internal staff newsletter Inside Out
- Press releases, media enquiries

Behaviour change -

- Campaigns
- Education
- Community Fund

Policy

Sustainability -

- Monitoring and reporting on Sustainable Development Goals, Carbon and Climate Action

Strategy -

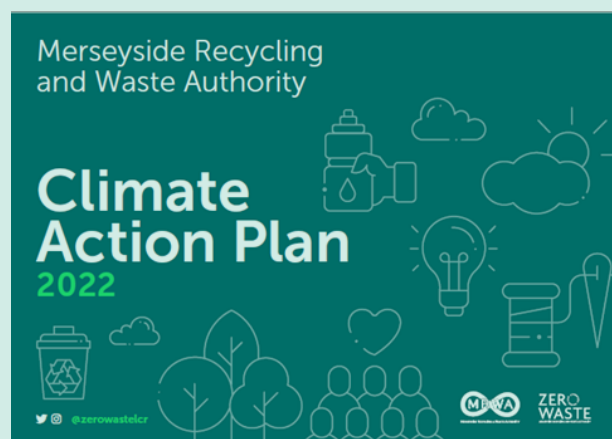
- Developing the Authority's strategic direction

Action on climate

Following the Climate Action Plan review 2022, MRWA has a climate action group consisting of relevant MRWA staff that meet quarterly. Successes of the climate action group in 2022/23 include:

- Setting up the Climate Champions - this is a group of MRWA staff who volunteers to run carbon reduction initiatives.
- Launching the sustainable education programme - this is a series of training sessions covering topics such as introduction to sustainability, carbon literacy training and waste and the circular economy.

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



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.

Our baseline Sustainability Report 2020/21 outlined our priority SDGs, this is reviewed yearly. 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:



Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



Responsible consumption and production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Sustainable cities and communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, reliant and sustainable.



Quality education: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages.

You can read our SDG reports at:

zerowastelcr.com/sustainable-development-goals



Education

The MRWA Climate Action Plan 2022 and LCR Zero Waste Strategic Framework both included education as a key topic, with actions directly related to delivering education across LCR. In order to ensure that we provide the best value and most effective programme we undertook an Education Review during 2022/2023.

The first stage of the review evaluated the contractual area of our education offer operated by Suez and Veolia. The review found that we had a successful coverage of topics such as recycling, the journey of waste and energy-from-waste, and our current programme had high engagement with primary school students from Wirral, Liverpool and Sefton.

The second stage involved a scoping exercise, where we looked at what topics we needed to cover to further expand our programme, as well as the availability of skills/knowledge in these areas to help us provide education resources and sessions to residents across the region.

This review enabled us to begin building a more comprehensive and wide reaching education programme that incorporates all aspects of the waste hierarchy, in order of importance, to a wider range of people across the City Region.



While this review was being undertaken, our regular contractual education programme continued. The Recycling Discovery Centre engaged with 9,172 visitors, as well as developing online resources, attending events, hosting open days, and updating the education room.

Suez continued 2023/23 reintroducing their visits to the local community, following their sites closing to visitors during Covid-19. They offer visits to their rail transfer loading station in Kirkby, Knowsley, and their energy-from-waste facility in Teesside. They recorded a total of 147 site visits between these two sites.

The Southport Eco Centre continued to embed a waste element throughout their education programme, and they recorded 1,877 visits to their centre during 2022/23. The centre also further developed their bespoke waste digital resources and reported a total of 229 teachers accessing these resources. They ran two campaigns, their annual Christmas Advent Calendar, which saw a direct engagement with 3,232 individuals, and a campaign supporting WRAP's annual Food Waste Action Week.

Campaigns for change

Recycling and achieving zero waste are environmental goals we all share, but sometimes, translating intention into action requires a nudge. This is where behavioural change communication campaigns come in. These campaigns can shift mindsets and everyday habits, making sustainable practices the norm. Over the last year we have run several campaigns to communicate with local householders to make them think twice before throwing something away.

Our Recycle Right platform is about getting people to recycle more of the right things in the right places. Adverts and messages have run frequently on local radio, buses, trains, outdoor billboards and social media. We hope that by continuing with these messages that recycling right will become the norm for everyone.

Zero Waste LCR is our other brand which is key in reducing waste in the first place, and to this end we've run campaigns for home composting, food waste reduction, reuse and clothes swapping and repair.

Communication campaigns can turn recycling and zero waste into a badge of honour. When people see themselves as part of a collective effort towards a greener future, they are more likely to embrace sustainable practices in their daily lives.



Data and Performance

Our Data and Performance team continued to provide data verification of our Waste Management Contracts, and shared the required data with our District Partners - this has ensured that we have maintained timely reporting to Waste Data Flow and supported contractual negotiations.

The team have focused on ensuring our processes were as streamlined and efficient as possible and supported other sections by introducing automation of large administrative tasks where opportunities arose. They have continued to maintain a watch on changes in waste legislation and what this means in terms of data collection, analysis and reporting to plan ahead for potential implications.

The Authority's service level agreement for ICT provision was nearing an end and so we commissioned an independent review of the existing system and options for future service provision.



Managing 7 former landfill sites

Estates Management

The Authority manages 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 landfill, are now used for a variety of purposes, including woodland, wildlife reserve, and arable farmland.

During this period, we undertook a review of scope of the environmental monitoring, taking into account the efficacy of the monitoring in response to the age and changing nature of the sites. This resulted in a reduction in the scope of the required monitoring while maintaining legal compliance and appropriate duty of care.

Ongoing review of the efficiency of the apparatus lead to the installation of replacement jetting nozzles - used to aerate the leachate prior to discharge to sewer. The yielded an average 19% reduction in electricity consumption per m³ of leachate discharged to sewer.

SITE	21/22 Q4 - kWh/m ³	22/23 Q4 - kWh/m ³
Billinge Hill	0.63	0.58
Foul Lane	0.06	0.04
Sefton Meadows	0.85	0.63

ISO 14001: Environmental Management System

The Authority's Environmental Management System was subject to an external surveillance visit in November 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.

Habitat Studies / Biodiversity Assessments

An objective on the Authority’s Climate Action Plan is to support biodiversity and nature recovery. To provide a framework for future decision making in support of biodiversity objectives, it is necessary for the Authority to understand, and to have a record, of the wildlife habitat that is currently on the sites and at facilities.

In this period we commenced a programme of Habitat Surveys across the entire estate. The surveys consider all the habitats, flora, and fauna, and can be seen as a snapshot of the landscape and surrounding area. The surveys record the various habitats, flora and fauna that exist on the estate.

Once the biodiversity of the estate is realised, we can then look to improve biodiversity and increase biological carbon sequestration, while ensuring biodiversity remains appropriate to the local environment.

As part of the study, wildlife cameras were installed at some of the sites to identify wildlife that may not be evident. Apart from the wildlife that might be expected, typically foxes and hares etc, the cameras recorded a few unexpected animals at the Foul Lane site:

Muntjac Deer



Woodcock



Common Buzzard



Community projects funded to the tune of £165,000

Sixteen community champions across Liverpool City Region received a £165,000 boost in 2022/23 thanks to the long-running Zero Waste Community Fund (established in 2006). This funding from MRWA and Veolia and supports innovative projects that tackle waste head-on.

Communities and residents were involved in exciting initiatives like tool lending libraries, food-waste-busting cookery classes, clothes repair clubs, and programmes that have helped breathe new life into unwanted furniture. Community composting and food growing projects were also delivered as part of the Fund.

The focus was on tackling key household waste materials: Food, Textiles, Electricals and Furniture. By supporting these creative approaches, MRWA aims to significantly reduce waste in the Liverpool City Region.



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 2022 meeting. No significant issues were identified through the yearly review.

Financial Management

The Authority's net expenditure was over £77M in 2022/23, 87.3% of which was on contracts to manage waste and statutory services. The Authority's income from the Levy in the same period was £78.9M, and the Authority was able to make a contribution to its General Fund balances (£1.76M) 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 2022/23 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 – were the balances from previous years but amounted to one off support of over £0.4M which have contributed to the Authority's financial position, without which the Authority would have been likely to be significantly overspent.

A gap between expenditure and funding continues into 2023/24 as waste tonnages have remained at the increased levels. 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 team provide the Authority with support including financial administration, human resources, recruitment, and assistance to the general public with a range of enquiries. The team also administrate the HWRCs van booking system, taking approximately 6000 bookings a month, or 72,000 per year.

As part of the Authority's Staff Development Process a range of training courses were offered and undertaken by staff which included Equality & Diversity, Business Continuity along with Data Protection; this was in addition to individual training plans provided for each employee.

As part of the Authority's ongoing Agile Working Policy the team ensured that VDU assessments for all employees were carried out for both home and office working environments and that all essential equipment was provided. The team has also led on the recruitment for replacement roles within both the Contracts and Strategy sections with new employees fully inducted and settled into their new positions.

Finally, the wellbeing of all employees remained a high priority during 2022/23 with the Authority's Health & Wellbeing initiative offering all staff access to an Employee Assistance Programme, resources covering mental health, health eating and physical exercise.



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 (November 2024).

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