

Fly Tipping Webinar 01/06/21 by Public Policy Exchange

Context-sharp rise in fly-tipping since advent of pandemic which has unfortunately maintained as restrictions have eased. Is of huge cost for public authorities.

Kevin Hollinrake MP – APPG

- People need to take ownership of this problem. No 1 issue for LAs in terms of time and cost.
- Massive issue for pollution and our health and wildlife health. Affects tourism.
- At a 10 year high – result of pandemic. Caused by:
 - Recycling centres being closed.
 - Bringing the wrong things to ‘bring sites’ (like supermarkets).
 - Huge increase in deliveries and associated waste.
 - More people have done DIY.
- A multi-faceted problem that needs a multi-faceted approach. Needs a comprehensive action plan.
- Needs a national, consistent message about recycling and waste disposal.
- Changing shopping habits will help. Make people feel they are part of the solution to change the culture.
- Need to reform licensing and tackle rogue traders. Too easy to get licence and operate without them. Make it that no one unlicensed can advertise their services.
- Make it easier for households to recycle, especially from lower income areas without access to transport
- Would like to see stiffer penalties and more enforcement. Beef up sanctions – use FPNs and courts to apply penalties to send a clear message.
- Only 50% people know that they are legally responsible that a waste carrier they employ is legal.
- UK Govt has promised to clamp down.

Sam Corp, Head of regulation Environmental Services Association – Progress on Tackling Waste Crime

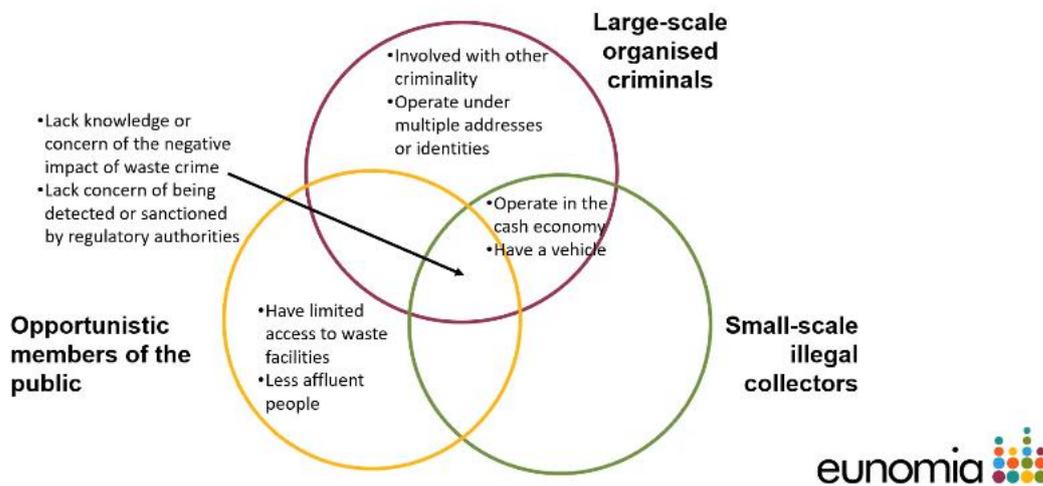
- Fly-tipping is the biggest form of environmental crime, followed by illegal waste.
- Before pandemic, ESA had already put forward recommendations around modernising regulations, improving enforcement, securing funding and awareness raising (see http://www.esauk.org/application/files/4515/3589/6453/ESAET_Waste_Crime_Tackling_Britains_Dirty_Secret_LIVE.pdf)
- Strong recommendations for individuals and businesses on their duty of care.
- Cost of waste crime costs in 2018/19 had increased to £929 million in England alone, and this is probably an underestimate and does not take into account increase since pandemic.
- Most of these costs fall on the public and private land owners (hard to get data on this).
- Household waste is the vast majority of fly-tipped waste, followed by white goods then tyres.
- Illegal waste sites costing £190 million to public sector.
- Lots of lost revenue for the public sector in unmet/given fines and taxes.

Summary of Recommendations

- Faster progress on reform of regulations
- More stringent Duty of Care enforcement:
- Increasing resources
- Fines to fit the crime.
- An improved reporting framework

Iona Horton - Eunomia - Research into who is fly-tipping

- Fly tipping is the biggest part of waste crime.
- Many partake in the illegal activity: from opportunist members of public to the man in van to Serious and Organised Crime. Huge range of actors. Each actors need different approach
- However, there are common characteristics.



- DEFRA are conducting a study with NatCen, UCL. Will look at perps etc. Looking forward to these results. Is a missing piece of information.
- Recycling centres put barriers in which have made it more expensive to dispose of bulky waste. These new policies can have the best intentions but are creating more fly-tipping.
- Illegal 'man with a van' collectors can advertise on social media without ability for provider to stop this as collectors just set up a new page. Needs awareness raising on social media
- The SCRAP acronym for awareness raising from Suffolk fly-tipping action group – worth looking at <https://suffolkrecycling.org.uk/fly-tipping>
- Awareness raising campaigns for the public are still needed
- Most importantly, reform requirements for waste carriers.
- Serious and Organised Crime – joint working and cross-agency collaboration to tackle dangerous individuals and groups. The Kent raid was a shocking example and shows need for cross sector working.
- Budget given for waste crime is only 3% of what is needed, FPN fines are not funnelled back in.

Keep Britain Tidy - Lizzie Kenyon - Householder Fly-tipping behavioural insights and interventions

- KBT have done intensive research with fly-tippers themselves

- Most people don't think of themselves as fly-tippers and think of the term as commercial and industrial waste.
- Better to use terms such as 'illegal dumping' and 'dumping of rubbish' to engage people.
- Use more appropriate imagery – like a fridge on the street.
- Widely held perception that fly tipping gets picked up quickly and no idea it is regarded as fly-tipping and that this behaviour is incorrect.
- Evidence that quick clearance is making it seem more acceptable.

Example of intervention

- Crime scene tape – causes embarrassment. Created a 64% reduction. 60% said it made them realise it was wrong to do this.

- Implement feedback loops:

“Well mine [fly-tip] got a cordon [crime scene tape] around it and I walked past it really embarrassed and then it was gone when I came back... I'll never do it again.”

“It was after the letter – after the letter I would never do it again. But people still do it, so I received another letter and I get scared that they think it's me.”

Focus Group Participants

- Generally people perceive fly-tipping as low impact. Not hurting anyone.
- However – people are receptive to the costs being highlighted. Need to build new narratives.
- Highlighting the social and environmental impacts works well. Social impact stencils worked well – evidence it had a preventative effect.
- Again evidence that some council policies are unintentionally driving fly-tipping behaviour.
- What LA's can do:
 - Have separate strategies for dealing with black bag and bulky waste fly-tipping
 - Highlight responsible ways of dealing with waste which can be reused
 - Address the perceived 'social acceptability' issue for example, by highlighting the costs of all fly-tipping to the community
 - Directly call out the excuse of 'helping someone out' e.g. through communications

Phillippa Arnold – National Farmers Union

- Affect rural communities hugely as private land must clear dumped material themselves which is costly, time consuming and impacts business
- Waste is harmful to farming livestock and environment
- Different LAs have different approaches
- Many Farmers have to deal with intimidation, violence and threats from fly-tippers
- Lack of data about private land. We need to address this data gap when 2/3rds farmers are affected by this.
- Fly-tipping is the most prolific type of rural crime.

NFU asks..

- Development of a single reporting mechanism
- Encourage the public and private land owners to report incidents
- Government and the waste sector to raise awareness about the Householder Duty of Care.
- It should not be the sole responsibility of the land owner to deal with this crime. All parties to work together, with land owners, and assist each other on the prevention, reporting, clean up and prosecution.
- The NFU is calling on the Magistrates' Association to ensure its members receive training on offences which affect rural communities.

Q and A Panel Session

Q1 – *Landfill tax - has it exacerbated fly-tipping?*

Yes anecdotally. It does have unintended consequences. People use this as an opportunity so we need to close down these opportunities.

Q2 – *Is the UK Government's Resource and waste strategy sufficient?*

Fantastic to see this shift towards addressing fly-tipping but we need further steps. Hopefully in combination with other steps will be a really positive move.

Q3 – *How much of this is cultural? What else can be done about the fact people think this is ok?*

Like dog fouling – needs to become societally unacceptable. Needs to come from leadership.

Littering and waste behaviours are complex. Influenced by context, item, area. People who would be socially-minded have been involved in this. Need to focus in specific types of behaviour. Education is crucial – have we lost some of this messaging in schools? Countryside code message has been lost a lot. Bring back these national Keep Britain Tidy messages strongly again.

Q4 – *Local authorities have a duty to clear quickly, what can we do if this is undermining the message?*

Agree that quick collection is unintentionally influencing behaviour. The crime scene tape and social impact stencil interventions have helped with this.

Elected members in councils need to be persuaded on this, especially at 'hot spot' areas.

Awareness raising is key and more resources need to be put into this.

Need a high profile, long term, national campaign like drink drive for example.

Q5 - *What more can LAs do?*

Hertfordshire fly-tipping group have been very effective.

Engage with police as is a criminal and not civic issue.

Joint working with police and departments is essential. Often a well-known perpetrators will be known to other departments in LAs - this has been shown to be helpful and effective.

Working collaboratively is absolutely key – police, environmental, national parks, local action groups.

Keep Britain Tidy toolkit – make use

https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/sites/default/files/resource/21670_KBT_LA%20Services%20booklet_Ir_0.pdf

Easing restrictions at HWRCs.

Stop omitting data on privately owned land will let us understand the scale of the issue better.

Stop treating as a trivial issue – council leaders need to prioritise this. Look at New York – broken windows approach.