

FLY-TIPPING

**House of Commons, Westminster Hall Debate
“Tackling fly-tipping and illegal dumping” (Saqib Bhatti, Con, Meriden)**

Tuesday 20 April, 2.30pm

Background

- The UK has a fly-tipping and litter problem. Last year there were 1.13 million incidents of fly-tipping in England, the equivalent of nearly 129 every hour. This represents a 16% increase from the previous year.
- Both the problem and the costs to local authorities are growing. In 2020/21, 39,000 or 4% of total incidents were of ‘tipper lorry load’ size or larger, which is an increase of 16% from 33,000 in 2019/20. The Government only publishes costs relating to these large fly-tipping incidents, but the cost of clearance to local authorities in England in 2020/21 was £11.6 million, compared with £10.9 million in 2019/20. Clearance costs to public and private landowners from other incidents, which represent the vast majority, will inevitably be higher by orders of magnitude.
- Enforcement, by contrast, seems to be getting worse. The issuance of both fixed-penalty notices and fines imposed by courts fell in 2020/21 compared with the previous year, by 24% and 51% respectively in spite of the rise in incidence. If we are to send a clear message that this crime is unacceptable and make it cease to be worthwhile, it is essential that these trends be reversed.
- The Countryside Alliance has long campaigned on the problem of fly-tipping in the countryside. Fly-tipping is not a victimless crime and government figures on fly-tipping only tell part of the story as official figures on the number of incidents on private land and the associated clear up costs are patchy. Evidence suggests that private landowners spend upwards of £47 million a year clearing up fly-tipped waste, but this figure is widely accepted to be on the low side.
- Private landowners are liable for any waste dumped on their land and are responsible for clearing it away and paying for the cost of disposal. If they do not act or inform the local authorities about the fly-tipped waste, they risk prosecution for illegal storage of waste in a “double jeopardy” situation which is simply not fair.
- Countryside Alliance members, including farmers and rural businesses, frequently face having to clear up fly-tipped waste from their land and are having to resort to drastic measures to deter the crime such, as blockading gates and field entrances with machinery and other items. Often it is more expensive for the victim to remove the fly-tipped waste from private land than to pay the cost of the fixed penalty notice.

- Local authorities should fulfil their legal obligation to clamp down on fly-tipping and make it easier for people to dispose of their waste legally. While preventative measures play a part in reducing fly-tipping it is clear that more needs to be done to bring those who perpetrate it to justice. Many local authorities find it easier to dispose of the waste rather than find the culprit, but this sends out the wrong message to fly-tippers.
- Crime is a key issue for rural communities yet those communities feel that policing is often focussed on their urban neighbours. Residents and businesses in the countryside pay as much, and often more, per head of population for policing and deserve equal treatment to their urban counterparts. Rural crime, including fly-tipping, must be taken seriously by the police and local authorisation.
- The Countryside Alliance's last Rural Crime Survey, published in November, saw fly-tipping rise to become respondents' top priority for the police to tackle. It found that 43% of respondents had suffered from fly-tipping, an increase of 4% over the previous year's result. This comes against a backdrop of 95% of those surveyed thinking rural crime was a problem in their community and 70% thinking crime had increased in the past 12 months.

Countryside Alliance Position:

- Improved access to Civic Amenity sites: extension of opening hours; locations; and overhaul and standardisation of admission policies, to encourage lawful disposal of waste. This has been brought into especially sharp focus after Covid-19 prevention measures saw many councils implement closures and appointment systems. Any remaining restrictions should be removed.
- Greater support for landowners: anti-fly-tipping measures; utilisation of compensation orders; and closer working relationships with local authorities in recognition to particular problems caused by waste fly-tipped on private land.
- Increased investment in education: raise awareness of responsibility amongst individuals and businesses.
- Tougher penalties on perpetrators: imposing and enforcing penalties which better reflect the seriousness of the crime, such as seizing vehicles used to fly-tip, is vital.

Latest Statistics:

- [Fly-tipping statistics for England 2020/21](#), compiled by Defra, show the following information:
 - For the 2020/21 year, 1.13 million fly-tipping incidents, an increase of 16% from the 980,000 reported in 2019/20.
 - Just under two thirds (65%) of fly-tips involved household waste. Total incidents involving household waste were 737,000 in 2020/21, an increase of 16% from 635,000 incidents in 2019/20.
 - The most common place for fly-tipping to occur was on highways (pavements and roads), which accounted for over two fifths (43%) of total incidents in 2020/21, the same as in 2019/20. In 2020/21, the number of highway incidents was 485,000, which was an increase of 16% from 419,000 in 2019/20.

- Local authorities carried out 456,000 enforcement actions in 2020/21, a decrease of 18,000 actions (4%) from 474,000 in 2019/20. 57,600 fixed penalty notices were issued, a decline of 24% from 75,400 in 2019/20.
- The number of court fines issued decreased by 51% from 2,672 to 1,313 in 2020/21, with the value of total fines decreasing to £440,000 (a decrease of 62% on the £1,170,000 total value of fines in 2019/20).
- These statistics are based on fly-tipping incidents reported by local authorities in England, and exclude the majority of private-land incidents.

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