

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE BRIEFING NOTE: IMPACT OF WASTE MANAGEMENT SITES ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Westminster Hall, Lorraine Beavers MP

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- **While all varieties of waste site can negatively impact local communities, the worst impacts are caused by those operating illegally – either because they were illegal from the outset or because they came to operate as such over time.**
- **Even an environmentally compliant local authority waste site can drive fly-tipping if access restrictions and costs are made too onerous by administrative decisions made by the local authority controlling them.**
- **In June 2026, Future Countryside and the National Rural Crime Network published a policy paper/report authored by the Countryside Alliance. The paper addresses the impact of waste sites of all varieties on communities and offers recommendations to prevent and reduce the harms they can cause.**
- **Recommendations from the report outlined in this briefing focus on minimising harms to communities from the management of waste sites. Taken as a whole, the 18 recommendations aim to provide a roadmap to a radical reduction in waste crime and its associated impacts on communities.**

Background

- In June 2026, Future Countryside and the National Rural Crime Network published a policy paper/report authored by the Countryside Alliance, *Breaking the Cycle: Tackling Fly-Tipping and Waste Crime – A Roadmap for Reform*. The paper includes a total of 18 policy recommendations, several of which address impacts of waste management sites – legal, illegal and, as the report terms them, ‘marginally legitimate’ – on local communities.¹
- The report found that local communities suffer from an increased risk of fly-tipping when legitimate municipal waste crimes are rendered inconvenient or costly to access as a result of decisions made by the controlling local authority.
- Major illegal waste sites (fly-tips) tend to arise in more isolated areas but can be devastating to the local environment and negatively impact its users, including local farmers, anglers and walkers.
- Marginally legitimate waste sites are those that begin operating legitimately, have an environmental permit, etc., but whose operation becomes illegitimate over time as they come to exceed capacity restrictions, store non-approved waste types (e.g. harmful or noxious waste) or otherwise breach permit conditions.

¹ NRCN / Future Countryside, [Breaking the Cycle: Tackling Fly-Tipping and Waste Crime – A Roadmap for Reform](#), 02.06.26

- The report identifies five broad classes of victim from waste crime: the environment, communities, landowners, the public purse and the broader economy. Individual members of communities can be impacted across multiple or all these domains. As to the impact on communities specifically, the report finds:

“Fly-tipping harms communities by reducing quality of life and contributing to perceptions of neglect and decline. As a form of anti-social behaviour, it causes frustration among residents and degrades local environments through unpleasant sights, smells and the attraction of vermin. It can also create safety hazards, for example when dumped items obstruct roads or public spaces. Commonly reported concerns include pollution, reduced recycling rates and public funds being diverted from other services to clean up waste. Fly-tipping may also deter people from moving into affected areas and lower property values. In some cases, access to community spaces is restricted due to hazardous waste, further limiting public enjoyment of local environments.”

Marginally legitimate waste sites

- The NRCN/Future Countryside report identifies ‘marginally legitimate waste processors’ as a distinct category of waste offender. It states of them:

“This category includes waste management companies whose business includes some legitimate and some illegitimate practices, the most famous fictional example (heavily inspired by true events in parts of the USA) being the Sopranos. It may account for some of the cases of waste being transferred to a registered operator but nevertheless fly-tipped; it also accounts for ostensibly legitimate, registered dumps whose operators flout site conditions relating to environmental impacts or the types of waste that may be deposited.”

- The report goes on to cite a case study of Walleys Quarry in Silverdale, Warwickshire:

“This landfill site was closed by the Environment Agency (EA) in November 2024 following years of complaints from local residents about hydrogen sulphide odours, which some said had affected their health. The operator, Walleys Quarry Ltd., went into liquidation in February 2025, three months after the closure notice. It owed more than £3 million including legal fees, unpaid business rates and a £132,097 settlement owed to Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council following an abatement notice.² Walleys Quarry Ltd. had operated as a subsidiary of Red Industries Holdings Ltd., a multi-site waste management company that continues to operate across the country.³ Companies House data indicate that at the time of its liquidation Walleys Quarry Ltd. had two named directors,⁴ each of whom remains listed as an active director of Red Industries Ltd.⁵”

- Because, as the case of Walleys Quarry indicated, there is a risk of companies evading fines and other costs associated with operating a waste site illegitimately through liquidation, the report recommended exploring the potential for reform of company law to prevent such evasion. Recommendation 7 suggests:

² BBC News, [Closed landfill owner 'still owes council £132k'](#), 13.03.26

³ [Red Industries](#)

⁴ Companies House, WALLEYS QUARRY LTD, [People](#)

⁵ Companies House, RED INDUSTRIES HOLDINGS LTD, [People](#)

“Review companies law to determine whether limited liability protections are being abused by rogue operators to form subsidiaries of otherwise legitimate companies that act unlawfully, are penalised and then enter liquidation without any attachment of penalties to the parent company or its directors. Consider reforming companies law so that debts arising from penalties levied against firms for waste violations cannot be limited by law and/or are attached automatically to any parent company.”

- Furthermore, Recommendation 11 calls for direct action against those responsible for waste sites found to have seriously breached conditions:

“Ensure that registered waste carriers that do go on to commit serious violations are de-registered and that the directors of such companies are, as individuals and in addition to criminal penalties, barred from being persons of significant control over any other registered waste carrier for a period measured in multiples of years.”

Illegal waste sites

- Illegal waste sites are those where waste is stored or deposited without any pretence of legality, lacking any relevant permits or permissions. The report notes:

“These range from individuals dumping personal household waste (most seen in urban areas) to rogue ‘man and van’ operators and tradespeople dumping waste generated through home or business renovations. The likeliest deterrents to use of legitimate waste disposal facilities are their cost and availability, which fall under the responsibility of local authorities. These factors also affect small scale business offenders, who may additionally be seeking to avoid landfill taxes, other fees and the requirement for a waste carrier licence.”

- One high-profile example of these illegal waste sites occurred near Kidlington, Oxfordshire:

“This highly publicised case involved a 150-meter-long abutting the River Cherwell and the A34 near Kidlington. The Environmental Agency stated that it first attended the site on 2 July 2025; it then issued a cease-and-desist order against the landowner and sought a court order to close the field. According to the constituency MP, Calum Miller, speaking in a subsequent parliamentary debate on 6 January 2026, initial reports had been made to the Environmental Agency by local anglers, farmers and residents - not by the landowner - and dumping still continued throughout the summer. He said that the Environmental Agency had spent most of the time between the 2 of July and 15 October trying to establish who the landowner was, and this work subsequently led to the first arrest of the case.⁶”

- Incidents on this scale must necessarily involve a degree of organisation and those responsible normally constitute organised criminal gangs. The report says of them:

“They include a variety of offenders operating in a range of capacities, from the controllers of the enterprises to the drivers of the tipper lorries that dump waste. Waste offences can also be linked to other crimes, such as the theft of vehicles used in illegal dumping.”

⁶ HC Deb, 06.01.26, [c232-235](#)

- There is no doubt that the laws already exist to bring the controllers of such gangs to justice if an effective investigation can be made. In recommendation 6, the report suggests further action that could be taken in relation to the use of vehicles to facilitate waste crime, including against lower-level drivers:

“In addition to new measures under the Crime and Policing Act 2026 to add penalty points to fly tippers’ driving licences... introduce strict liability offences of being the registered owner of any vehicle proven to be associated with a fly-tipping incident or for being the driver of a vehicle apprehended in the act. This will prevent such owners and drivers from benefitting from excuses that they had no knowledge of the offence, they were ignorant about the legality of their activities or they were simply following instructions.”

Access to municipal waste facilities

- Access to municipal waste facilities is not only an important community amenity: it is essential to the prevention of waste crime. Restrictions such as booking, short opening hours and requirements for photo ID, as well as restrictions on certain vehicles such as company vans and heavy goods vehicles lead to people not being able to access these facilities conveniently, making it more likely that waste will instead be fly-tipped.
- There is a governance component to this issue. As the report notes:

“[I]n areas of England with a two-tier council system, district councils are usually the principal litter authority for the purposes of clear-up and enforcement whereas county councils are responsible for providing community waste and recycling facilities, which... can influence rates of fly-tipping if the provision is too costly or restrictive. Their priorities may conflict.”

- Recommendation 5 of the report therefore suggests:

“Introduce a national policy framework for local authority waste disposal sites, establishing minimum standards of accessibility and pricing aimed at raising those of the worse-performing councils. Require annual reporting of identified accessibility metrics and impose funding penalties for compliance failures.”

Countryside Alliance position

- While all varieties of waste site can negatively impact local communities, the worst impacts are caused by those operating illegally – either because they were illegal from the outset or because they came to operate as such over time.
- Even an environmentally compliant local authority waste site can drive fly-tipping if access restrictions and costs are made too onerous by administrative decisions made by the local authority controlling them.
- The above-mentioned recommendations from the recent NRCN/Future Countryside report on fly-tipping and waste crime focus on minimising harms to communities from the management of waste sites. Taken as a whole, the 18 recommendations aim to provide a roadmap to a radical reduction in waste crime and its associated impacts on communities.

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