

1 Introduction

Our fly-tipping and duty of care charter aims to set out how we identify, investigate and deal with the behaviour of those individuals or businesses who feel it is acceptable not to dispose of their waste responsibly, or in accordance with legal requirements. Fly-tipping and other environmental crime within our area is unsightly and has a negative effect on the perception of the area, is hazardous to the environment and wildlife and is socially unacceptable.

Tackling fly-tipping is a wider issue than just clearing it up, education programmes in communities are required along with close working with our partners on strategic plans for infrastructure, regular monitoring on usage and bin emptying schedules to be reviewed seasonally.

Dealing with fly-tipping and duty of care offences, places a significant financial and resource burden on local authorities and other landowners, as well as having a negative impact on communities and the locality, suppressing property prices and damaging local economic growth.

The Council has a robust enforcement policy and where appropriate, sanctions will be taken against offenders in line with that policy. Fly-tipping is an unacceptable blight on our communities and a robust approach towards this unlawful behaviour will be taken in line with our enforcement policy.

2 Objectives

This fly-tipping and duty of care charter has been developed to ensure that West Northamptonshire has a co-ordinated approach to tackle issues across the whole council area. The fly-tipping and duty of care charter and the littering charter should be considered together to support a common approach to littering and fly-tipping.

The objectives of the charter are to:

- improve the local environment

- reduce the amount of fly-tipping, bringing a sense of pride to communities and reducing clean-up costs to the authority
- work with communities and partners to support them when they report environmental crime offences
- support witnesses to ensure robust evidence is available to enforcing officers
- ensure consistent application of the enforcement policy and associated sanctions across the whole of the west, including both rural and urban areas
- educate the public about the detrimental effect of fly-tipping and the consequences of fly-tipping
- ensure that duty of care requirements are understood by all sectors of the community, including businesses and householders.

This charter provides a detailed plan of action which is regularly carried out to tackle fly-tipping in West Northamptonshire.

We have developed a charter for the following reasons:

- To identify and consider specific local issues
- Define problems and possible solutions
- Understand opportunities
- Set direction
- Learn from best practice elsewhere
- Get feedback and support from stakeholders
- To adopt a co-ordinated approach across the whole of the West Northamptonshire Council area
- To provide a clear and transparent way of communicating our aspirations and methods of dealing with fly-tipping, education and enforcement

Our approach to tackling fly-tipping and duty of care offences falls under the following themes:

1. Communicate and educate
2. Work with partners (Internal and external) and communities
3. Enforcement
4. Review

3 Approaches to Fly-tipping and Duty of Care Offences

3.1 Communicate and Educate

When tackling fly-tipping and duty of care offences, our main aim is to discourage unlawful waste disposal and encourage responsible disposal (e.g using the Council bulky waste collection service, the Household Waste Recycling Centres , commercial waste contracts, household waste bins (where appropriate) and litter bins. A range of communication and education actions are undertaken:

- Visible presence of neighbourhood wardens supporting the council objectives in the local area and providing information to residents
- Using social media to highlight activities which are considered to be fly-tipping to educate the public
- Ensure that enforcement action in line with our policy is taken in a robust and consistent fashion, and that results are published in the community
- Where possible, attending local neighbourhood meetings or community groups to talk about litter, fly-tipping and wider environmental crime
- Installing clear signage to discourage fly-tipping
- Working with local members to communicate with residents and businesses
- Deploying cameras in fly-tipping hotspots to gather evidence
- Encouraging members of the public to come forward with evidence or intelligence
- Promoting national campaigns through social media and our websites
- Ensuring businesses and householders are aware of legislative requirements around duty of care for their waste disposal and how they can comply
- Ensure landowners, landlords, businesses and the wider community are educated on their responsibilities and penalties for unlawful waste disposal and fly tipping.

3.2 Work with Partners (Internal and External) and Communities

Our fly-tipping and duty of care charter will support the wider community providing positive good working relationships. That will mean consulting with community groups, businesses, schools, environmental agencies, charities, and others.

We will continue to work closely with our waste collection teams to ensure that information which allows enforcement action to be carried out is always shared.

We commit to ensuring that businesses in West Northants understand the legal requirements for waste disposal and that they comply with those requirements.

We will work closely with our colleagues in neighbouring authorities, Registered Social Landlords, the Environment Agency, Northamptonshire Police and other partners to ensure sharing of good practise and appropriate information to allow us to carry out our and their regulatory duties effectively.

We will always investigate and seek out funding opportunities (from internal and external sources). We will continually review and monitor action taken and consider additional resource to support the work of the team.

3.3 Enforcement

We are committed to taking robust enforcement action in relation to environmental crime, including fly tipping, dog fouling and littering in accordance with our enforcement policy.

Teams work closely with partners and the public to identify hotspots and aim to reduce fly-tipping through actions such as:

- Targeted patrols
- Using intelligence gathered to focus enforcement activities
- Timely investigation of environmental crime to maximise the possibility of obtaining robust evidence
- Issuing of appropriate fixed penalty notices and rigorously pursuing those payments. We may utilise partner organisations to carry out this enforcement on our behalf.
- CCTV in various locations to assist with gathering of evidence

- Working with local residents, town and parish councils, to better understand local issues and gather intelligence
- Working with local businesses and other partners to gather intelligence
- Prosecution in the most serious cases or those where there are repeat offences
- Committing to sharing information across various media channels around successful enforcement action taken. Appeals for information will also be published from time to time.

It must be recognised that where there is insufficient evidence to allow a case to proceed then the Council cannot take enforcement action. This may be due to lack of useable evidence or reluctance of witnesses to provide statements amongst other reasons. The Council will act in an open and transparent manner in respect of environmental crimes, and where it is unable to take further action it will clearly communicate the closure of the case and the reason why.

3.4 Reviews

Annual reviews of the above aspects are carried out to ensure that the fly-tipping and enforcement policies are still appropriate and relevant to current issues.

3.5 Next Steps

An Action plan which outlines the next steps required to support the charter is set out in Appendix 1, along with timescales for completion of those actions. We will update the Action Plan on an annual basis.

4 Conclusion

This fly-tipping charter documents the approach taken to tackling fly-tipping in West Northamptonshire and details the actions we are using to do this.

Our aim is to improve the local environment for residents and visitors to the areas, making them want to live and return to the area, as well as valuing their local communities and feeling a sense of wellbeing.

We will work with our communities and strive to ensure that all residents of West Northamptonshire are aware of the penalties of committing duty of care and fly-tipping offences.