



City of Westminster

## Committee Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality
<b>Date:</b>	13/09/2022
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Enhancing our approach to tackling fly tipping and street waste
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Addresses the administration's priority of street cleanliness and fly tipping
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Raj Mistry

## **1. Executive Summary**

Achieving the ambition of clean and pleasant streets across the city will require us to enhance our efforts to tackle the constant challenge of dumped rubbish and littering. In response, we are proposing to roll out a targeted engagement approach to identifying and finding effective solutions to addressing dumping 'hotspots' across Westminster. This will bring together a range of officers, including from our Waste and Cleansing Service and City Inspectors, and be underpinned by stronger resident engagement and communications, to support partnership working on waste at a local level.

## **2. Recommendations**

That proposals for targeted local action on fly tipping and street waste are supported by Members.

## **3. Reasons for Decision**

Traditional approaches to dealing with dumped waste via reporting, enforcement and cleaning often has short-term results. Therefore, we believe a more holistic project-based approach should be adopted in addition to our standard practice, for us to better understand the drivers in specific locations, deliver bespoke action in response and to achieve long term sustained outcomes for our residents. There are also possible additional benefits from this approach, for example, in terms of providing residents advice on waste collections and recycling via our engagement.

## **4. Background, including Policy Context**

Street cleanliness and tackling fly tipping is a priority for the council - the manifesto commits us to crack down on fly tipping and ensure clean streets and this is a key concern for residents. Residents have long seen this as a priority, with 31% identifying rubbish and litter as a problem in the most recent City Survey (an increase of six points on the previous survey).

For context, the waste collection operation in Westminster and corresponding enforcement is substantial with our waste collection and cleansing services around twice the size of any other borough. The enforcement response is similarly significant with approximately 20,000 reports of fly tipping or dumped waste per year. We issue between 5,000 to 6,000 fixed penalty notices a year along with 1700 warnings (since 2018/19). In addition, our officers proactively report around 6000 items of waste for clearance by our contractor Veolia.

Legislation and guidance tend to be more supportive of enforcement action against commercial businesses than residents, with the result that enforcement by way of fixed penalty notices is predominantly against commercial premises with warnings mostly for residential waste.

The drivers of fly tipping and poor waste disposal are hyper-local, for example, in areas with high densities of short-term lets, areas with a residential/commercial mix or around street bins and mixed recycling centres. We know that whilst our 140 or so communal big black bin sites are popular, they are also a magnet for dumping, with bulky items such as fridges and mattresses routinely being left at these sites. We also have a perennial problem with rubbish

being left next to the bins rather than put inside them, often when there is space inside the bin.

Changing behaviour involves a detailed conversation with residents and businesses, to support them to dispose of their waste in the right way and being clear on the consequences of not doing so. Educating residents on how to dispose of their waste appropriately both through on street facilities and through on street collections remains a priority. The turnover of residents in Westminster and the number of short-term lets and multiple occupancy homes, amplifies the need for continuous education.

Alongside this we need to consider opportunities to drive the right behaviours through the services we provide, including targeted removal of bin sites, the enforcement approach, or opportunities to design-out dumping behaviour, through for example, planting or other street changes. This requires a holistic approach that considers local drivers and works together with local communities and their representatives to find solutions to address them.

### ***The response***

From a council perspective delivering clean streets involves a range of services, including City Inspectors, waste removal and street cleaning teams working alongside area-dependant teams such as our short-term lets service, housing teams or anti-social behaviour professionals. Currently, our City Inspectors dedicated to individual Wards, undertake education and enforcement and work with Veolia to identify solutions in problem areas.

Enforcement (and to some extent education) is dictated by our waste enforcement policy - [Westminster waste enforcement policy](#). This was last reviewed in 2020. The policy covers the context and legislation that supports enforcement.

Whilst this has been successful in specific cases and enforcement levels have increased, this success has often been time limited and concentrated in more heavily commercial areas. In addition, whilst the approach to dumped rubbish has been managed locally it has not always been coordinated, and with a focus on outputs (e.g. FPNs) rather than outcomes.

We are proposing to enhance this with a coordinated approach that will enable us to focus officer resources at key dumping hotspots in each ward (prioritised according to hotspot areas) and enhance local visibility and engagement. Officers will be present for a week to speak with residents, Ward Councillors and other local representatives to better understand and deter localised drivers for dumping through enhanced community engagement and greater on-street presence (further details are provided in 4.3). The overall outcome we are seeking is a reduction in the dumping of waste and littering through education, and solutions developed in partnership with the community that better reflect the problems presented.

## **4.1. Identifying hotspots (100 hotspots)**

In order to inform our waste enforcement activity, we have consolidated our existing data (both enforcement data and reported dumping incidents reported to us by Veolia) to identify a list of key dumping hotspots across the city. In addition, we have engaged across all Wards to ask residents, councillors (and officers) to feedback on known problem areas, enabling us to cross-reference these with the data held.

This list is a live document, and we will continue to refine it in light of locations highlighted by residents and councillors through our engagement. Work has begun (or continued) on

focusing on these hotspots to identify the drivers for the issues being experienced, speaking to residents, and taking enforcement action where possible. We have started reporting back work on these hotspots to councillors in their fortnightly updates.

We will also be using this list to inform the local targeted action proposed here, including as a basis for prioritising our efforts and as a basis for feedback and monitoring.

We increasingly want to use a more intelligence led approach to our work tackling hotspots and will be looking at opportunities for improving data and monitoring, and the ways we can share information and updates with our residents.

## 4.2. Examples

Though it is early days, City Inspectors are targeting newly identified hotspots as well as existing hotspots and updating on this work via their regular briefing to councillors. Please find some examples of the ongoing work below -

*On Saturday 20th of August 2022 at 10:00 on Brewer Street, Central City Inspectors found a commercial fly tip of four boxes from a local business, an FPN was issued for commercial waste fly tipping to the local business and a request sent for the fly tip to be removed. Just after the FPN was issued on the street at 10:10, a Veolia operative with a cycle cart cleared the fly tip. Please see before and after pictures below.*



*Cambridge Street/Charlwood Street – officers on patrol observed fly tipped waste at the micro recycling centre bins. An FPN and WTN notice were issued to one business and a residential warning was also issued.*



*Eaton Terrace -The City Inspector has arranged for the litter bin to be relocated on a temporary basis to West Eaton Place junction Eaton Place. The officer has not had any issues in the last week.*



*Tavistock Road - The main issue here is the bins that attract waste. There has been improvement here of late after Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to several residents and a large programme of education took place. There was also a new development on the corner, and the developers would also clear the area around the bins in order to promote the new build to attract tenants.*



#### **4.3. Proposed local targeted action model**

Reflecting the need to tackle this issue holistically, the need for enhanced community engagement and drawing on previous experience, we are developing proposals for a ward-focused education and enforcement programme. The operation aims to bring together key council services to focus on engaging with residents and the community for a dedicated week in individual wards – informed by priority streets from the hotspot list for that area. The aims include:

- To provide a highly visible operation, to signal to the community that this is an area of focus and that we are acting against persistent problems.
- To engage residents in a meaningful conversation about waste problems in their neighbourhood and gather insight into how they think these could be tackled together. We will also have conversations with residents on the best ways of disposing of their waste to keep their streets clean and tidy.
- To collaborate with other services within the council which may be underlining causes of waste issues, for example, promoting recycling, anti- dog fouling

campaigns, increased awareness of climate emergency actions and greening initiatives.

- As part of this new approach, we will create a toolkit of options to draw upon to tackle these issues. Options currently being scoped are as follows; planters able to be deployed to hotspot areas, a small collection of CCTV cameras, “don’t dump” signs.

### **Dedicated ward week**

We recommend the operation will be led by a team leader from the City Inspector service and operate Monday to Friday, bringing together a core group of officers including;

- Between 2-4 City Inspectors (depending on the geographical size of the ward and the number of hotspot areas to be tackled).
- A dedicated officer from the waste team, alongside a representative from our waste partner Veolia.
- An offer to local community groups, such as our green champions, recycling champions and ward councillors to join the on-street conversations.
- Additional officers from other council team’s dependant on the issues identified in wards, for example Short Term Letting Officers, Housing Estate Teams, Highways colleagues.

The engagement, education and enforcement programme will depend on the concerns identified in the ward and will include:

- Officers highly visible on the street asking members of the public for “waste hotspots” or “how we can improve current waste enforcement and cleanliness”.
- Targeted education focused on improving understanding of how residents and businesses dispose of their waste and what to recycle and how.
- Directed and visible enforcement and cleansing activities on areas that have been highlighted by residents. We are reviewing our waste enforcement approach to see where this can be strengthened.

At the end of the week the manager and team will be responsible for drafting an action plan which sets out the activity to tackle the issues highlighted by the community. This will focus on the top three areas identified by the community and document how we propose to resolve these concerns.

We are investigating the opportunity to create a live document or web-based site, that can keep the community informed about the activities being undertaken.

### **Communications**

Each week of activity will be bookended by communications to the community. This will include highlighting what we are doing and notifying them of where we will be for residents to come and talk to us about any concerns they have. This will also include an offer to interested groups to come and join us with on street engagement. At the end of each week, we will collate a roundup of activity and engagement, and publish an action plan for the local teams to work towards resolving. The aim of the engagement is to create a clear feedback loop between what residents are telling us, what we are going to do and what we have done.

#### **4.4. Next steps/inviting suggestions for making success.**

We are currently refining resourcing and delivery plans for this as well as the look and feel of the activity (to ensure this is underpinned with a clear, recognisable brand and effective messaging). We would welcome feedback on the approach to help ensure this has impact in the community, with strong resident buy in as well as clear results in terms of deterring dumping behaviours in priority areas across the city.

Alongside this proposal we are also looking to enhance our monitoring approach to dumped rubbish as well as developing impact indicators to highlight progress to residents and councillors.

### **5. Financial Implications**

There are currently no financial implications as the proposed approach will draw from existing resources.

### **6. Legal Implications**

There are no changes proposed that relate to use of existing or new legislation.

### **7. Carbon Impact**

It is now mandatory to include the carbon impact of the decision proposed in all reports as part of the Council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 and a carbon neutral City by 2040. Report authors are required to independently assess the carbon impact of their decision and use this section to explain that impact, make a declaration that the decision will have no carbon impact or set out why a carbon assessment is not possible.

### **8. Equalities Impact**

Requires an analysis of how many people with protected characteristics will be impacted by a proposed decision.

### **9. Consultation**

This is a proposed pan-Westminster approach and not targeted at specific wards. Therefore, apart from ongoing consultation with councillors on hotspots and the approach further consultation is not required.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:**

Alex Juon - [ajuon@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ajuon@westminster.gov.uk)

## Background data

### Waste collection/cleansing

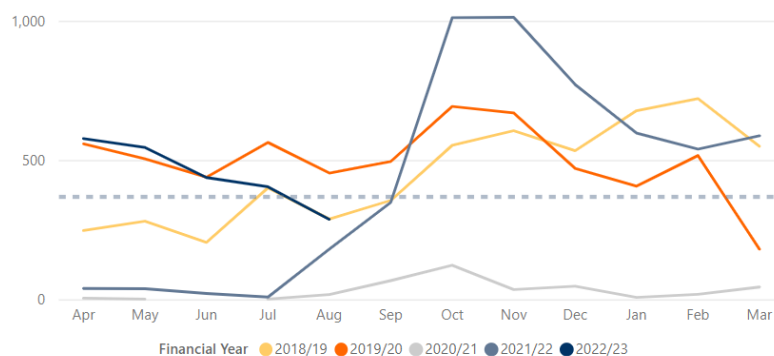
- 180,000 tonnes of waste collected per year - 50% commercial, 40% residents, 10% litter
- One million waste and recycling collections per week.
- CW income - £15m.
- Veolia – 700 staff incl. 450 street cleaners. Service operates 24/7.
- 1250km swept per day (London – Madrid). 1200 litter bins emptied up to 25 times/day during summer.

### Enforcement

We receive approximately 20,000 service requests around fly tipping (dumped rubbish) per year (Veolia)

In response we issue between 5000, and 6000 fixed penalty notices per year and issue around 1700 warnings.

FPNs by Month and Financial Year



Officers also report around 6000 items of dumped waste for collection/clearance a year, not including that cleared directly by Veolia in response to reported flytipping.

### Westminster Enforcement Policy

[Westminster waste enforcement policy](#)

### Residential Waste enforcement

Government guidance on residential waste specifies when and how councils may issue fixed penalty notices [Household waste bins: when and how councils may issue fixed penalties - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



The guidance explains councils may issue fixed penalties to people who do not follow their waste collection rules if this is likely to cause a nuisance or have a negative effect on local amenities.

The guidance explains councils cannot issue fixed penalties for minor problems. These include accidentally putting items in the wrong receptacle, forgetting to close bin lids, and leaving bins out for a few hours before a collection. There is no differentiation between council areas with weekly collections and urban locations where residents have multiple collections per day/week.