



# Lancaster City Council

## Five Year Fly-tipping Strategy

### 2026 to 2031

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# 1. Foreword

## 1.1. Foreword from Lancaster City Council

Fly-tipping is a constant battle for local authorities. Whether it is in back streets or out in our beautiful countryside, **dumping rubbish is an environmental crime that blights our communities.**

The city council is delighted to have been able to work with Keep Britain Tidy on this new strategy to tackle fly-tipping in all its forms.

As one of the UK's leading environmental charities, their insights and evidence-based approach has been critical in developing lasting solutions that make a real difference.

By using a range of tactics to tackle the problem, the overall goal is to significantly **reduce the number of fly-tips taking place, to create better, cleaner environments for our communities.**

Much progress has already been made and this strategy marks the beginning of a further concerted effort to address the problem, but the responsibility for combating fly-tipping lies with all of us.

Only by working together will we be able we can make a real difference.

### **Councillor Paul Hart**

Cabinet member with responsibility for environmental services

Lancaster City Council



## 1.2. Foreword from Keep Britain Tidy

Sadly, fly-tipping in this country has reached epidemic proportions. Local authorities are reporting **more than one million incidents of this environmental crime every year** and that is only on land for which they are responsible.

Private landowners, including thousands of farmers, are also having to deal with fly-tips that are polluting our environment in every corner of the country, and picking up the bill for clearing them, which can run into **tens of thousands of pounds**.

In addition to the significant harm fly-tipping can do to the environment, so much of the 'stuff' that is being discarded could be recycled or reused and is a scandalous waste of precious and scarce resources.

For years, environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy has been investigating fly-tipping. Why do people do it? What are the things that stop them disposing of their unwanted things correctly? How do we change behaviour?

The work we have done has led to us develop a suite of strategies and interventions that can significantly reduce fly-tipping in our communities. We have developed a strategic approach to the problem and **we are delighted to have been working with Lancaster City Council to help them tackle fly-tipping in the city.**

**Allison Ogden-Newton MBE**

CEO

Keep Britain Tidy

## 2. Introduction

## 2.1. What is fly-tipping?

**Fly-tipping is rubbish left on the street or other land without arrangements for its collection and without agreement from the local council or landowner.**

Fly-tipping can be anything from a single bag of rubbish to a whole van load of items, and can be liquid as well as solid. Fly-tipping of any scale is illegal and is therefore a criminal offence under section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 [1].

“Fly-tipping is a crime, a significant blight on local communities and a source of environmental harm. It also undermines legitimate waste businesses where unscrupulous operators undercut those operating within the law.” - Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) [2].

Fly-tipped household waste also causes issues with litter by attracting foxes, seagulls and other vermin, who rip bags open and spread the contents. Fly-tipping and the further issues it creates negatively impacts on communities, and dealing with it is at significant cost to council budgets and resources, that could be better spent elsewhere.

[1]  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/section/33>

[2]  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england>



Everyone that produces waste has a responsibility to make sure it is disposed of responsibly - even if they have asked someone else to do this on their behalf. Those whose waste ends up being fly-tipped or are caught fly-tipping themselves in the District face a fixed penalty notice (FPN) fine of up to £400. The size of the FPN is set by local authorities and can be as high as £1000. Local authorities also have powers to stop, search and seize vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping.

Incorrect presentation of waste is similar to fly-tipping as it is also a waste offence and creates many of the same issues. This is when households present their domestic waste incorrectly for collection, such as leaving excess bags of rubbish next to their on collection day - also known as side waste. As well as fly-tipping, this strategy therefore aims to address incidents of side waste in the District. Where fly-tipping is referenced in the strategy, this therefore also encapsulates incorrect presentation of waste.

There are some instances when residents or businesses are asked to leave their waste on the street for collection, for example if they have arranged for the collection of a bulky waste item. It is important to recognise that this is not fly-tipping, unless it is placed out on the street outside of the agreed times.



## 2.2. What is the fly-tipping problem?

**Fly-tipping is a significant problem for communities and local authorities across the country.** Local authorities in England dealt with 1.08 million fly-tips in the year 2022-2023 [3], 60% of which involved waste from households. Of this, 16% involved black bags and 44% involved other household waste, such as old furniture, DIY materials, or items from house or shed clearances.

**Lancaster City Council deals with an average of 3,600 incidents of fly-tipping every year [4].** In 2022-23, bags of household rubbish and other household items made up 75% these fly-tips. In contrast, builders waste made up a further 5% of fly-tips. We know that the bulk of fly-tipping originates from just four wards within the District, and half of all fly-tipping in 2022-23 can be attributed to just 34 individual streets. The majority of fly-tipping in the District is therefore the direct result of a minority of specific pockets of households not managing their waste correctly and it ultimately ending up on the street.

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england/local-authority-fly-tipping-enforcement-league-tables-for-england-202122>

[4] Figures based on the three year period from 2020-2023



## 2.3. Why are people fly-tipping?

**The causes of fly-tipping are many and varied.** Keep Britain Tidy research[5] shows a number of factors that appear to be driving fly-tipping behaviour across England. These include:

- **Fly-tipping is often seen as the easier and quicker option** compared with alternative, correct disposal methods which can be viewed as costly and/or slow or a 'hassle'.
- **Many fly-tippers see fly-tipping as having little or no wider impact** and do not understand the many negative consequences of fly-tipping on their local community, and the cost to taxpayers to clean it up.
- **Fly-tips are often quickly removed without feedback** to the perpetrator that their action has been classed as fly-tipping and that it may even be under investigation.
- **The perceived threat of enforcement among fly-tippers is low;** they believe they are unlikely to be caught or receive a penalty or are not aware that this could happen.
- **Some people are not aware that they are doing the wrong thing** and that their behaviour is classed as fly-tipping. Some believe that fly-tipping only relates to larger items, rather than the dumping of smaller items and household waste.
- **Many households are not managing their waste effectively,** and struggle to deal with the large amounts of waste produced by their household. They may be unaware of the services that are in place to support them dispose of their waste correctly, such as household waste and recycling centres (HWRCs) and bulky waste collections, or lack access to them (e.g. lacking vehicle access to take waste items to a HWRC).

In the District specifically, it is a combination of these factors that is driving fly-tipping behaviour. **With the causes of fly-tipping being so complex, we require a range of varied approaches to successfully address it.**

[5] <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/beyond-tipping-point>

## 2.4. What has Lancaster City Council done so far?

### Data

To better understand patterns of fly-tipping across the District, we have utilised geographical intelligence systems and business intelligence software. Continual monitoring of fly-tipping and usage of these systems has allowed us to identify and map fly-tipping hotspots, track the rise and fall of fly-tipping rates and the reasons behind this, and compare data sets to give us a better understanding of the problem.

### Initiatives

In 2022, Lancaster City Council partnered with Keep Britain Tidy to roll out a series of tried and tested interventions to discourage fly-tipping in known hotspots. Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Tape intervention is a feedback loop designed to break the expectation that fly-tips will be collected quickly and without repercussion, highlighting investigation and enforcement activity on street. The intervention involved leaving fly-tips in situ for five days, wrapped in CSI tape with an A4 sticker highlighting investigation/enforcement activity. Fly-tipping reduced by 59% within the 15 targets streets where it was tested, during the course of the intervention.

At the same time, we rolled out the social impact stencil (SIS) intervention, designed to tackle the perception of fly-tipping as low-impact by highlighting the social and financial impacts of fly-tipping through chalk paint stencil messages left behind where fly-tips have been cleared. In the 10 target streets where it was tested, fly-tipping dropped by 89% during the intervention period.





In 2024, we worked with Keep Britain Tidy to test new hyper-local communications aimed at further highlighting the social and financial impacts of fly-tipping. Posters installed in fly-tipping hotspots in two wards in the District communicated the cost of fly-tipping to that particular ward area in the last year, against what this money could be better spent on to benefit the community. This initiative is ongoing, with results due to be published in early 2025.

### **Development of the strategy**

In 2023, we partnered with Keep Britain Tidy again to bring together their expertise and our local knowledge to work in partnership on the development of our five-year Fly-tipping Strategy. The strategy has been developed through engagement with relevant teams and individuals at all levels of the council, including:

- Ward Councillors
- Waste & Recycling Operatives
- Cleansing & Waste Management Officers
- Public Protection & Enforcement
- Legal Services
- Communications
- Customer Services
- Planning & Housing Strategy
- Housing Standards
- Council Housing

Representatives from across the council formed a working group that has inputted on the development of the strategy every stage. The group have approved the activity outlined in the strategy and are committed to playing their role in seeing it successfully implemented.

## 2.5. Who are our stakeholders?

To effectively address fly-tipping across the District and deliver this strategy, we cannot act in isolation. Fly-tipping must be tackled in partnership with multiple stakeholders, who we will continue to work collaboratively with to address the issue. These include:

- Residents
- Local businesses
- Private-rented landlords
- Student housing providers
- Local housing associations
- Lancashire County Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lancaster University and Students Union
- Environment Agency
- DEFRA
- Third sector / charities



# 3. Lancaster City Council's five-year strategy

### 3.1. What is our vision?

Our vision is for a future where fly-tipping no longer blights communities and local environments across the District, and all waste is dealt with responsibly and treated as a resource wherever possible. We want to see that:

- Fly-tipping is significantly reduced on our streets, alleyways and other public land
- We are building a more circular system when it comes to waste, ensuring items are reused where possible, and waste is treated as a valuable resource
- Residents are supported to better manage and correctly present their waste
- Residents take responsibility for the correct disposal of their waste and have pride in their local area
- Fly-tippers are aware that they will face firm enforcement action if they fail to engage with council requirements
- Ultimately, the District is a better place to live, work and visit

This strategy is the first step to achieving our vision. Lancaster City Council is committed to delivering the plans within the strategy over the next five years. Each year we will develop an action plan which will support the strategy, detailing the specific actions we will undertake to implement it. The action plan will outline how we will make progress on the previous year and lay the ground for further developments over the years ahead. It will be reviewed annually to incorporate learnings, successes and emerging insights gained through delivery of the strategy to date. Reviewing and improving our communications around fly-tipping is a central thread that runs through all activity in the strategy. Alongside the strategy, we will therefore produce a communications strategy in year one to outline how this will be delivered.



## 3.2. How will we achieve it?

All activity taking place within the five year strategy fits under one of seven strands of work, each of which are outlined in detail below. In addition, work to improve our communications around fly-tipping features within each strand of the strategy and will continue throughout all our planned activity.

The strategy and the activity within it is primarily applicable to areas where fly-tipping is problematic, and will therefore not be enacted uniformly across the District. While work under each of the strands will largely take place simultaneously, they appear in the order in which Lancaster City Council consider them to be a priority in effectively tackling fly-tipping - i.e. education, engagement, and a review of policies and procedures should be the first steps to tackling fly-tipping, before enforcement action is considered.



Figure 1: Seven activity strands of the fly-tipping strategy

## Strand 1. Ensure all households have the means of disposing of their waste correctly

**We will first ensure that residents are provided with the correct containers at their property for disposing of domestic waste and recycling.** This includes assessing both the provision and capacity of containers. If households have the right containers, and use them effectively, this gives residents the best opportunity and starting point to dispose of waste correctly, separate their recycling, and prevent fly-tipping.

To do this we will:

- a. Conduct an audit of bin capacity and provision to identify properties in target areas with missing bins, or bins with inadequate capacity for the number of people living in the household. Audits will involve visual inspections, engaging with residents and engaging with landlords.
- b. Correct missing bin provision by supplying replacement containers to properties where deemed necessary (e.g. the property is within a fly-tipping hotspot).
- c. Roll out bin labelling with all containers (general waste, recycling and garden waste) stickered with their corresponding property number to ensure that the right containers remain at the right properties long-term.
- d. Review, improve and increase communications to residents to highlight correct disposal methods, such as the council's bulky waste collection service, nearby Household Waste and Recycling Centres, and how to recycle correctly.

## Strand 2. Education first approach with households

**We will take an education and engagement first approach to tackling fly-tipping, ensuring that residents are aware of how they should be managing and disposing of their waste and are warned of the consequences of fly-tipping**

before any enforcement action is considered. This element of the strategy aims to increase awareness of correct disposal, supporting households to adapt their behaviour long-term, before further action is necessary. Education will also have a focus on waste prevention, aiming to ultimately reduce the amount of waste that residents are needing to dispose of. Reviewing and improving our communications around fly-tipping is central to this strand of work.

Our education and engagement programme will involve:

- a. Providing feedback to properties where domestic waste has been presented incorrectly (e.g. where side waste is presented next to a wheeled bin) to communicate that
  - a) their waste has been presented and/or sorted incorrectly; and
  - b) how they must correct this for future collections. Feedback may include tags or stickers on bins and could be accompanied by a postcard or similar notice delivered

through the door. Our crews or officers will identify properties and leave feedback on collection days.

- b. Letters sent to residents at properties where any one of the following has occurred:
  - Waste has been presented incorrectly for collection on at least two occasions and has not been corrected following bin tagging. In persistent cases, this will include warning the resident of the potential issuing of a Section 46 notice.
  - Evidence has been recovered from a fly-tip to suggest that the waste originated from a particular property
  - Fly-tips within a prevalent hotspot area cannot be traced back to one particular property, so a group of properties within the immediate vicinity are engaged

Letters aim to quickly inform the resident, or group of residents, that the incident has been classed as fly-tipping, the council are monitoring this, what the consequences of this repeated behaviour are, and how waste should be disposed of correctly.

c. Lancaster City Council officers supplementing letter communications through door-knocking at properties (when it is deemed appropriate and where resource is being focused at any one time) where any one of the following has occurred:

- Evidence has been recovered from a fly-tip to suggest that the waste originated from a particular property
- A resident has had repeated warnings of incorrect presentation of their waste but failed to change their behaviour
- A letter has been sent to a property requesting the removal of fly-tipped waste, but the fly-tipping has remained in place
- A group of properties within the immediate vicinity of a fly-tipping hotspot have been engaged via letters but no information has come forward and the fly-tipping problem continues

Door-knocking aims to engage the resident responsible for the fly-tip, providing them with information on correct waste disposal options and potential consequences for fly-tipping and incorrect presentation of waste. For instance, they may be provided with printed materials and directing them to further online information and services. Door-knocking may also provide opportunity to gain evidence relating to a fly-tip, such as a witness statement.

- d. Include a stronger focus on waste prevention messaging in communications and community engagement, to help residents better understand the options they have to reduce waste. This will include a focus on minimising resource use, reusing and repair, and promotion of the Keep Britain Tidy hierarchy of 'have a buy less mindset, swap the way you shop, use it again and again and again, rehome it, put it in the recycling, and bin it.
- e. Conduct targeted pro-active engagement with specific audiences including landlords and the transient student population across the District. This includes continuing and broadening work around the following:
- Action to engage student landlords at key points in the academic year to support correct disposal of waste from exiting and incoming tenants (e.g. ordering replacement bins, distribution of collection calendars, charged for additional collections).
  - Use of landlord forums to engage landlords
  - Supporting and encouraging reuse of usable items left by students living off campus
  - Joined-up working across the council to identify and better support the needs of specific communities e.g. council housing tenants, residents with additional health or social needs.

## Strand 3. Introduce a firmer no side-waste policy

### **We will review and update our policy on side-waste (excess waste left next to or on top of a wheeled bin for collection).**

Our current approach to dealing with side-waste is not always implemented consistently, meaning it can be difficult for residents to know what is acceptable or not. Reviewing and updating our approach to how we deal with side-waste aims to encourage residents to use their recycling bins effectively in order to create room in their general waste bins, eliminating the need to present excess bags of waste on collection day. Communications around the updated policy will be carefully designed to increase awareness and understanding.

To do this we will:

- a. Implement and enforce a policy requiring households to place all waste and recycling inside their bins, with lids closed. Any waste presented outside of containers will not be collected. This will include crew training, requiring consistency across crews.
- b. Write to properties to inform residents about the updated no side waste policy including why this has been put in place, consequences for not adhering to it, and tips for managing waste and recycling more effectively (e.g. correct recycling, compressing items to create space in bins). This communication will take place once activity within the first two strands has been undertaken.
- c. Issue a Section 46 notice for continued incorrect presentation of waste. Residents will receive a warning letter in the first instance.

## Strand 4. Improving our process for recording fly-tips and incorrect presentation waste

While we already know a great deal about the fly-tipping that takes place across the District, **we will put new processes in place to better identify repeat offenders and households who persistently present their domestic waste incorrectly**, and improve consistency in our reporting across the council. This will provide us with greater insight into where our resources should be focused, and where action should be escalated – improving our internal communication on the issue.

To do this we will:

- a. Make recording of fly-tipping consistent across crews to ensure all recorded incidents of fly-tips include the same essential information, are using the same definitions of fly-tipping and side waste, and are logging where a property has received an initial level of engagement (e.g. at what stage of the education and engagement ladder they are at).
- b. Have our officers present on collection days to record incorrect presentation of waste and fly-tipping, prior to collection. Where the issue cannot be logged against any individual property, officers will record streets/alleyways for targeting with further engagement.

## Strand 5. Improved process for reporting fly-tipping

**We will continue to make improvements to the process for residents to report fly-tips to the council**, to ensure the correct information gets to the right team quickly, and the fly-tip and fly-tipper can be dealt with appropriately. We will work with our wider stakeholders to ensure that they are also aware of and using this reporting method.

For this strand of work we will:

- a. Introduce a simplified process for residents and elected members to report fly-tips, with improved user experience, collecting more detailed information on each reported fly-tip, helping our crews to respond appropriately and swiftly. This will include ensuring each report is submitted with a photograph and way for officers to identify the likelihood of there being evidence present.
- b. To assist with improvements to reporting mechanisms, we will explore the purchase of platform and apps for this purpose.
- c. When a report is made, we will provide information to the resident on our process for dealing with and removing fly-tipping, and what they can expect, highlighting that work is often happening even if they cannot see it, and sometimes we are unable to communicate about it until it is complete (e.g. legal action). We will also highlight the types of land where the Council cannot take action on fly-tipping (e.g. private and unadopted land) and what the resident can do in this instance. Where the resident has left their contact details, we will also provide feedback when a fly-tip that they have reported has been cleared, with a photograph of the cleared area where possible.
- d. Review and improve our communications around reporting of fly-tips to residents, businesses and other stakeholders to increase awareness and usage of the updated correct reporting mechanism.

## Strand 6. Targeted and coordinated action in fly-tipping hotspots

**When a fly-tipping incident or hotspot has been identified, we will prioritise and address these in a strategic way in order to maximise the impact of our resource.**

We will consult our 'toolbox' of potential approaches to select and carry out the most appropriate ways to address and change fly-tipping behaviour, acknowledging that different forms of fly-tipping may require different solutions. Many of the potential approaches we will consider are focused on implementing new and innovative communications, targeted in fly-tipping hotspots, aimed at reframing how fly-tippers view their actions.

For this strand of work we will:

- a. Apply the resource of waste and recycling and enforcement officers in a targeted and coordinated way including rotating through hotspots, focusing on an agreed number per month or year.
- b. Making our responses to incidents of fly-tipping more strategic, such as through targeting repeatedly fly-tipped locations and prioritising incidents where there's likely to be evidence.
- c. Applying the resource available on a continual rotation e.g. focusing on specific areas before moving on.
- d. Each targeted and coordinated response will involve a combination of the following activity:
  - In-situ interventions to provide feedback (e.g. CSI Tape and Social Impact Stencils)
  - Door-knocking to engage residents
  - Letter to all residents on a street (e.g. after a continual fly-tipping)
  - Other through the door communications (e.g. leafleting)
  - Explore how we can utilise any other means of communication in the location

## Strand 7. Increased enforcement activity and presence

### **Our activity on enforcement is focused on increasing the presence and threat of enforcement, as well as improving our processes for collating and handling evidence for supporting legal action.**

We believe that the outcome of this strategy should be a reduction in fly-tipping, not necessarily an increase in fines. This is why we consider enforcement on fly-tipping to be the last resort, to be used where our education and engagement efforts have failed.

To ensure fly-tippers are aware they could face firm enforcement action, and where escalation to enforcement is required, we will undertake pre-planned periodic interventions to:

- a. Increase the visible presence of our officers on collection days, conducting inspections (e.g. recording fly-tipping and incorrect presentation of waste) and ensuring they are easily identifiable, to highlight who they are and the reason they are present in the area.
- b. Conduct door-knocking for gathering evidence, through our enforcement officers.
- c. Roll out the CSI tape intervention that demonstrates that a fly-tip is under investigation and has shown to successfully reduce fly-tipping in hotspots.
- d. Retrain our crews to collect evidence where appropriate and alert officers to the presence of evidence.
- e. Review, improve and increase our communications with residents across the District that raise awareness that enforcement for fly-tipping is happening.

### 3.3. What does success look like and how will progress be measured?

Following implementation of this strategy, by the end of 2031, we want to see:

- A significant **reduction in fly-tipping** (including instances of incorrect presentation of waste)
- A significant **increase in resident satisfaction** with the council's response to fly-tipping

For each year of the strategy, progress will be tracked against these objectives to identify the impact of the activity on fly-tipping rates and resident satisfaction, and to set ambitious targets for the year(s) ahead. The five-year strategy we will monitor the scale of fly-tipping across the District and track progress against our objectives through the following measures:

- **Number of fly-tips** (including instances of incorrect presentation of waste) recorded across the District, including within targeted hotspots and hotspots that have not yet been targeted, for means of comparison.
- **Number of fly-tips reported by residents**, acknowledging that this is likely to increase with activity to improve and raise awareness of the reporting process.
- **Number of enforcement actions**, recognising that where this figure is low, but fly-tipping rates are falling, this indicates success.
- Satisfaction and **perceptions of residents** around fly-tipping and Lancaster City Council's response
- Specific **monitoring and evaluation** of targeted interventions in hotspots



## 4. Next steps

**Lancaster City Council's five-year fly-tipping strategy allows opportunity for the Council to move forward with our ambitious plans to tackle this vital issue.** By adopting this strategy, we are committing to delivering activity that will have significant and long lasting impact on fly-tipping and communities. Accompanying annual action plans will identify key actions over the next five years that put the strategy into motion and document progress against our key measures of success.



