



# **NORWICH** City Council

**Committee Name:** Scrutiny

**Committee Date:** 14/07/2022

**Report Title:** Report from the communal bins and fly-tipping task and finish group

**Portfolio:** Councillor Oliver, Cabinet member for environmental services

**Report from:** Head of environment services

**Wards:** All Wards

## **OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

The Scrutiny Committee on 24 June 2021 decided that a Task and Finish Group would be formed to investigate the Council's approach to managing Fly-tipping, particularly within its own housing estates

Subsequently, an online survey was published on the Council's website to gather residents' opinions on the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

The purpose of this report is to provide the outcome of the Task and Finish Group's work, and the high-level outcomes of the online survey.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1) Notes the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group investigations
- 2) Notes the outcomes of the online survey, and
- 3) Agrees to recommend to Cabinet that the following proposals arising from the Task and Finish Group be adopted:
  - a. That the Council decision in February 2007 to discontinue Waste Amnesty collections in areas of highest fly-tipping incidence is reviewed
  - b. The number, locations and types of bins in communal areas are reviewed in the fly-tipping hotspots identified, as well as developing designs for storage areas that prevent and deter fly-tipping
  - c. Pre Covid enforcement arrangements for fly-tipping are re-established, and expanded to include the use of CCTV
  - d. Arrangements for engaging with residents with regards to fly-tipping are reviewed and improved, including consultation on proposed actions arising from this report. This should include improved partnership working between Citywide Services and Housing Estate Management in the design of services and facilities to reduce fly-tipping in our Housing Estates

- e. Local facilities for upcycling and reuse of unwanted items are considered in partnership with the County Council as Waste Disposal Authority
- f. The workflow and processes for managing fly-tipping between NCSL, Biffa and the Council are reviewed and streamlined to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- g. The charging structure for the Bulky Uplift service is reviewed to make accessing the service easier for residents on low incomes and Universal Credit
- h. The service considers the use of an app for reporting fly-tipping
- i. The manner in which the Council records and analyses Environmental Anti-Social Behaviour is reviewed
- j. The service continues to review best practice elsewhere
- k. That the Council reviews current enforcement arrangements to ensure that the full range of sanctions available to the Council are used more effectively

### **Policy Framework**

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the Sustainable and Healthy City, and the Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city corporate priorities

This report addresses **Making it easier for residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more and dispose of their waste efficiently; and keep the city's streets clean** strategic action in the Corporate Plan

This report helps to meet **Climate change and the green economy** objective of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan

## Report Details

1. The issue of fly-tipping, primarily in our Council estates, has been a source of concern amongst our communities and elected Members for some time. These concerns primarily relate to fly-tipping around communal bin areas and are borne out by the fact that the Council received approximately 10,000 reports of fly-tipping between September 2019 and August 2021.
2. It is acknowledged that co-ordination between scheduled refuse and recycling collection and fly-tipping removal has been an issue. Citywide Services have been working hard to resolve these. Challenges include:
  - a. Multiple channels for reporting fly-tipping to the Council. Residents are encouraged to use the online form on the Council's website, but contact can also be made via email and phone call via the Council's Customer Contact Team
    - i. The Council's environmental maintenance contractor, Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL), are responsible for the removal of fly-tipping. They receive notifications directly from the Council, and via Biffa, the Council's waste collection contractor.
  - b. The lack of a suitable, automated, interface between the Council, Biffa and NCSL can result in service failure at certain locations. This was highlighted following the insourcing of frontline Environmental Services to NCSL on 1 April 2021. However, workarounds have been developed to address this
  - c. Changes to Citywide Service's working practices in 2020 introduced to mitigate the risk to staff investigating fly-tipping posed by the Covid 19 pandemic
3. These challenges were such that the [24 June 2021](#) meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was dedicated to considering this issue. As a result, a Task and Finish Group was established to investigate
  - a. The reasons for high incidence of fly-tipping, for example collection methods, waste storage arrangements, number and type of bins
  - b. Hot spot locations
  - c. Cost
  - d. Opportunities for improvement
4. The outcome of this work is detailed below.

## Analysis of fly-tipping data

5. As mentioned in paragraph 2a, there are a number of channels available to stakeholders to report fly-tipping. Whilst this can be challenging to manage and ensure successful service delivery, it does provide a rich amount of data to analyse and identify priorities for service improvement. In consultation with the Task and Finish Group, the service has developed a suite of performance information that identifies:
  - a. fly-tipping hotspots by street, Polling District, and Ward
  - b. the type and quantity of material being fly tipped
  - c. the cost of fly-tipping removal to the city
  - d. the type of land that most suffers from fly-tipping
  - e. the seasonality of fly-tipping incidents, including what impact, if any, that

various lockdowns have had

6. What this data indicates is that:
  - a. Approximately 5000 incidents of fly-tipping are reported to the Council every year (based on data from September 2019)
  - b. The vast majority of these (92%) are on Council land, primarily in our Housing Estates
  - c. The vast majority (again, 92%) of the material fly-tipped is household waste
  - d. The direct cost of clearing fly-tipping to the City Council is approximately £180,000
  - e. The tonnage of fly-tipped material collected in 2020/21 was 1263 tonnes
  - f. Only approximately 14.2% was recycled
  - g. There is no obvious link between the various lockdowns between March 2020 and July 2021, and the amount of fly-tipping in the city
7. It is therefore proposed that the Council's revised approach to managing fly-tipping is piloted in the hotspot areas identified, and that performance improvement is monitored before, during and after the pilot period
8. Environment Services have reviewed operational arrangements with the Council's principal environmental contractors, Biffa and NCSL. Regular operational review meetings take place with them to consider performance, and fly-tipping is one of the top priorities for review. There is improved information sharing between the 3 organisations regarding fly-tipping, and NCSL now have access to live data to allow them to deploy resources more effectively. They now achieve a completion rate of 95% within 24 hours, and in many cases this work is carried out on the same day as reporting
9. We are also reviewing our customer contact data to help us engage with residents who regularly report fly-tipping. This will allow us to understand the impact that fly-tipping has on individuals and communities.

## **Consultation**

10. In June 2022, an online survey was conducted to gather residents' opinions on the Task and Finish Group's recommendations. The survey closed on 30 June 2022 and received 1325 responses. The high-level results are provided below:
  - a. 40% of respondents had reported fly tipping in the last 3 years
  - b. Of those who reported fly tipping, 55% reported that fly tipping was removed within 2 days
  - c. 61% of respondents believed that the Council's decision in 2007 to stop the Waste Amnesty Collections in 2007 should be reviewed for fly tipping hotspots in Norwich
  - d. 70% of respondents believed that the Council should consider making its bulky waste collection service cheaper, and more affordable for residents on low incomes and Universal Credit
  - e. 62% of respondents believed that the council should consider increasing the number, locations and changing types of bins in communal areas where there is a fly-tipping problem.

- f. 44% of respondents believed that the council should develop new designs and layouts for communal bin storage areas to prevent and deter fly-tipping.
- g. 62% of respondents support the possibility of the Council introducing its own facilities for reuse and upcycling of items or working in partnership with schemes such as Freegle, all in addition to the provision already made by Norfolk County Council through its reuse shops at recycling centres
- h. 69% of respondents believed that the council should look at how it could improve existing collection services to reduce fly-tipping and respond more quickly and efficiently when it does happen.
- i. 58% of respondents believed that the council should explore introducing its own app for faster and easier reporting of fly tipping in addition to the existing reporting methods.
- j. 68% agreed that the council should start using CCTV in fly tipping hotspots to act as a deterrent to fly tipping and aid investigation
- k. 77% of respondents agreed that the council should use more of its enforcement powers around fly-tipping – such as fining / prosecuting offenders and targeting repeat and / or commercial fly-tipping.
- l. The main barriers that prevent residents from disposing of bulky items are as follows:
  - i. I don't have access to a car/van to travel to the recycling centres (50%)
  - ii. Collection services are too expensive (46%)
  - iii. I don't know who offers a collection service (35%)
  - iv. I am worried about paying for my waste to be taken away by someone because I don't know where it will end up (34%)
  - v. I think I will have to pay at the recycling centres (24%)

11. A graphical representation of responses is provided in Appendix 1, and further analysis of responses will be provided as a supplementary document at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 14 July 2022.

## **Implications**

### **Financial and Resources**

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and Budget.

12. Implications will be costed to understand the impacts on budgets. As is demonstrated in paragraph 13 below, there are potentially significant resource implications associated with reviewing existing policies and approaches to managing fly tipped waste.

13. The potential impact of these reviews should be borne in mind, as they could reverse previous budgetary decisions as follows:

- a. The service currently has an income target of £54,000 per annum for the Bulky Waste Service, and any reduction would need to be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- b. The decision to stop the Waste Amnesty collections in 2007 delivered a saving of £24,000 at that time.
- c. In addition, there is no ring-fenced budget for managing fly-tipping. The indicative expenditure on the collection of fly-tipping by NCSL on behalf of the Council is approximately £180,000. This is an extremely high-level analysis, and does not include Council Officer time. The cost of disposing of fly-tipped material is borne by the County Council as Waste Disposal Authority.
- d. Any increase in the number of bins provided, or improvements to waste storage facilities, would be a Capital cost to the Council.

## **Legal**

14. The Council is a Waste Collection Authority, and as such has a duty to collect household waste (S.45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). Under S.46 of this Act, the Council can also specify;

- a. the types and number of containers
- b. the size, construction and maintenance of the receptacles
- c. the placing of the receptacles for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them, and access to the receptacles for that purpose
- d. the placing of the receptacles for the purpose of avoiding nuisance or detriment to the amenities of the area
- e. the placing of the receptacles for that purpose on highways
- f. the substances or articles which may or may not be put into the receptacles or compartments of receptacles of any description and the precautions to be taken where particular substances or articles are put into them
- g. the steps to be taken by occupiers of premises to facilitate the collection of waste from the receptacles

15. The Council also has powers under section 46A of the EPA 1990, to issue written warnings and penalties for failure to comply with requirements relating to household waste receptacles. A written warning must first be served on the individual before any fixed penalty notice is issued. The individual must be given a period of time (28 days) to make representations back to the council.

16. With regards to fly-tipping, under Sections 33, 34 and 59 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council is responsible for investigating, clearing and taking appropriate enforcement action in relation to small scale fly-tipping on public land. The Environment Agency is responsible for dealing with larger-scale fly-tipping (more than a lorry load), hazardous waste and fly-tipping by organised gangs.

## **Statutory Considerations**

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Equality and Diversity	The equality impact of the recommendations contained within this report are currently under consideration and will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee as required.
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	The Council has a duty to consider the impact of its activities on crime and disorder. The recommendations in this report will support the Council in reducing the potential incidence of environmental crime.
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	<p>The proposed review of policy, procedures and operations could result in the following environmental benefits to the council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increase of re-use or recycling of materials</li> <li>• The reduction in material sent to landfill</li> <li>• Reduced fuel consumption by council and contractor operations</li> </ul>

### **Risk Management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls Required</b>
Reputational risk through poor perceptions of waste management arrangements	<p>Reduced customer satisfaction</p> <p>Adverse media coverage</p> <p>Increased representations to elected Members</p>	This risk can be managed through the review of existing arrangements and effective engagement with stakeholders.
Financial	<p>Current arrangements may not be the most efficient or effective in dealing with fly tipping</p> <p>There may be insufficient emphasis on prevention, which may result in increased clean up and removal costs</p>	Detailed review and understanding of all costs, and how these can be reduced through improved business processes, improved prevention through engagement, enforcement and design of facilities and services

### **Other Options Considered**

17. The proposed reviews will allow the council to identify the most appropriate environmental and financial options.
18. The option of doing nothing was considered. However, the extent of the challenge, the reputational and financial risk to the Council, and the corporate

priorities associated with improving recycling and the natural and built environment meant that this was not a viable option.

**Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

19. The recommendations have been made to allow for improvements to existing arrangements for waste collection and removal of fly-tipping

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:** Appendix 1, graphical representation of responses

**Contact Officer:** Head of environment services

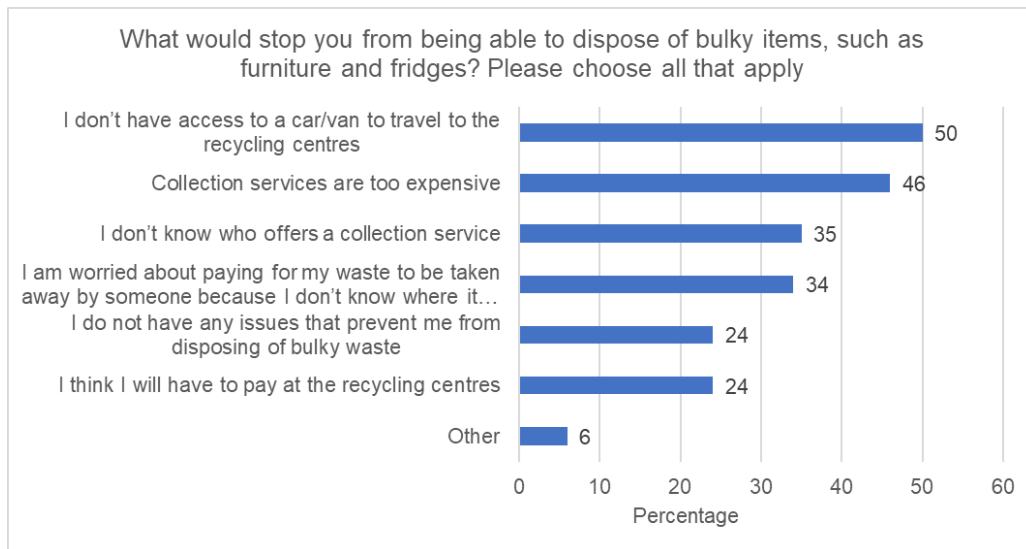
**Name:** Andy Summers

Telephone number: 01603 987841

Email address: [andrewsummers@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:andrewsummers@norwich.gov.uk)



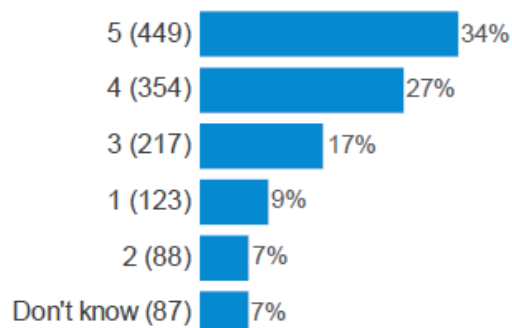
## Appendix 1 – Summary responses to online survey



**The Council discontinued its Waste Amnesty collections in 2007. These were communal skips that people could use to dispose of bulky items, which were then collected by the council. The collected waste was mostly taken to landfill due to cross-contamination caused by mixing recyclables with non-recyclables.**

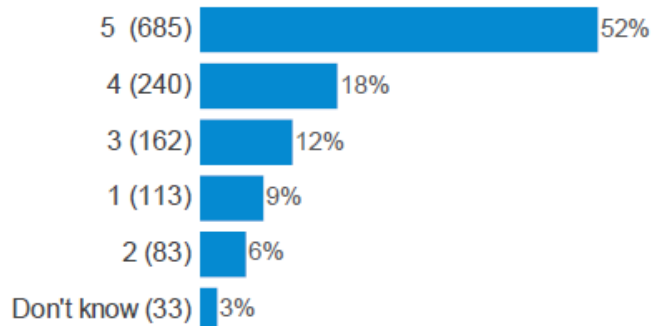
**This decision should be reviewed in fly-tipping hot spots in Norwich.**

**How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?**



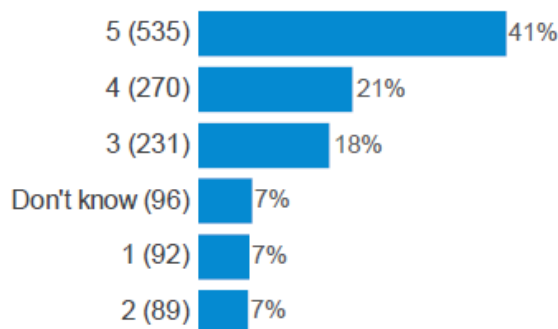
**The council should consider making its bulky waste collection service cheaper, and more affordable for residents on low incomes and Universal Credit.**

**How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?**



**The council should consider increasing the number, locations and changing types of bins in communal areas where there is a fly-tipping problem.**

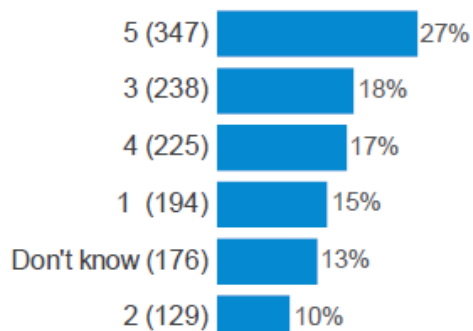
**How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?**



#### Fly-tipping

**The council should develop new designs and layouts for communal bin storage areas that will help prevent and deter fly-tipping.**

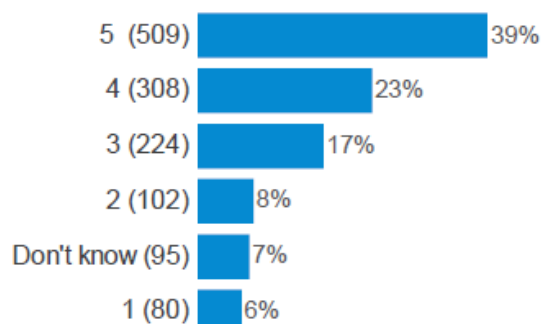
**How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?**



#### Fly-tipping

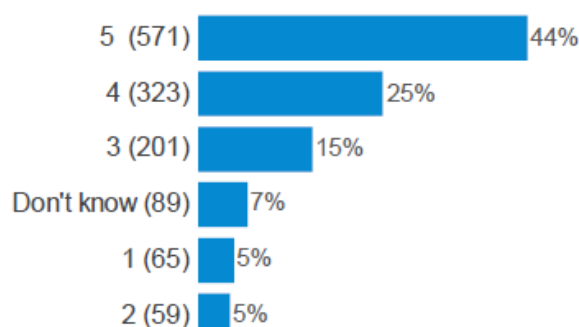
The council should look at introducing its own facilities for reuse and upcycling of items or work in partnership with schemes such as Freegle. (This would be in addition to the provision already made by Norfolk County Council through its reuse shops at recycling centres).

How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?



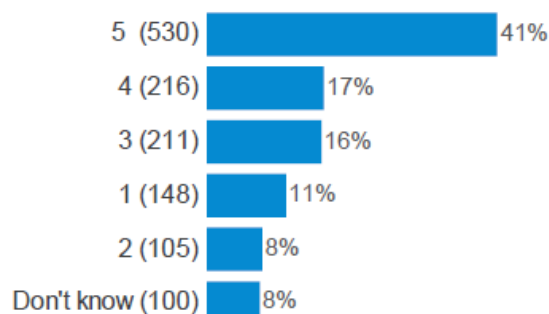
The council should look at how it could improve existing collection services to reduce fly-tipping and respond more quickly and efficiently when it does happen.

How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?



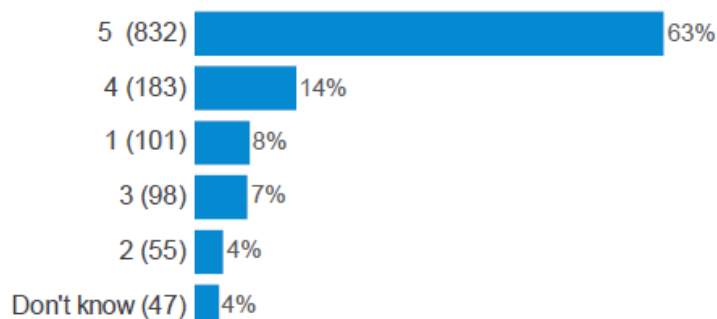
The council should explore introducing its own app for faster and easier reporting of fly-tipping – in addition to the existing reporting methods.

How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?



**The council should use more of its enforcement powers around fly-tipping – such as fining/prosecuting offenders and targeting repeat and/or commercial fly-tipping.**

**How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?**



**The council should start using CCTV in fly-tipping hot spots.**

**How effective do you think this will be on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective?**

