

London's fly-tipping problem

Key information

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Introduction

The London Assembly Environment Committee is investigating the issue of fly-tipping in London.

Fly-tipping is defined as the “illegal disposal of household, industrial, commercial or other ‘controlled’ waste”. London has the highest rates of fly-tipping in the country – 53 incidents per 1,000 people - more than double that of any other region. 481,088 incidents were recorded in London in 2024/25.

Terms of Reference

The Committee will investigate the nature, scale and impacts of fly-tipping and illegal waste dumping in London, with particular regard to:

- The environmental impacts of fly-tipped waste.
- The underlying causes of the increase in fly-tipping in recent years.
- Measures that could strengthen prevention, increase accountability and reduce fly-tipping across London, including examples of effective enforcement practice and the extent to which boroughs share learning, data and approaches.
- How fly-tipping differs between Inner and Outer London, and how boroughs are impacted differently.
- The roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies, including the Environment Agency, Defra, London boroughs, the police and other enforcement bodies tackling large-scale illegal dumping.

- Progress in clearing significant illegal dumping sites across London

Key issues

- Fly-tipping cases continue to increase year on year and have reached record levels.
- Over the past 15 years, many Councils made changes to household waste collection services to try to reduce costs, including efficiency measures such as the frequency of collections and in some cases introducing charging for bulky waste collections.
- 40 per cent of fly-tipping incidents across the country are reported to have been caused by illegal operators who collect waste only to dump it elsewhere.
- Most incidents that are reported happen on roads or footpaths and involve household waste. London boroughs are responsible for street cleaning the majority of these roads, including the Transport for London Road Network.
- While most fly-tipping incidents are less than a van load of waste, there are some sites that are far bigger. The Environment Agency becomes involved in sites that are ‘large scale, illegal dumping’, including a lorryload (20 tonnes) worth of rubbish, hazardous waste, or organised criminal waste operations. Of 117 ‘high priority sites’ identified by the Environment Agency in England, three are in London.

Key questions

- Why are rates of fly-tipping in London higher than the rest of the country, and what is being done about it?
- Is there a link between changes to local authority budgets, the services offered, and increases in fly-tipping?
- How do the frequency and nature of fly-tipping differ between Inner and Outer London?
- What interventions are most effective in London for reducing fly-tipping on local streets, and how can these be replicated?
- Is the Government’s Waste Crime Action Plan making a difference to efforts to address rogue traders, large-scale fly-tipping and illegal dumping in London?
- What role could the Mayor of London play in supporting and coordinating efforts to reduce fly-tipping?
- What progress is there on remediating large-scale fly-tipping sites in London?

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