



Gareth Roberts AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Emma Hardy MP,
Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

(Sent by email)

17 September 2026

Fly-tipping and illegal dumping: Funding for clearing up contaminated land

Dear Emma,

The London Assembly Environment Committee is undertaking an investigation into fly-tipping in London.¹ The Committee held its first meeting on 15 July 2026 in which we heard from representatives of community groups, waste experts and the Environment Agency.

In that meeting, we heard about the challenges around remediation of illegal waste dumping sites and the support needed across the sector. Guests from the Environment Agency made it clear to us that while they monitor the environmental impacts of illegal dumping and provide advice to local authorities, they have “no resources to remediate the sites”, except where Defra gives them direction to do so.²

Funding for remediation of contaminated land

National support can make a real difference in accelerating action to address the most harmful environmental impacts of illegal dumping. Already this year, the Government has made welcome announcements around waste crime. These included the Environment Agency stepping in to remediate several illegal dumping sites.³ However, these have so far been one-off announcements, and it is unclear whether further resources will be available. None of the sites selected for remediation so far are in London.

¹ London Assembly Environment Committee [London's fly-tipping problem](#)

² Barry Russell (Regulated Industry Environment Manager, Environment Agency) London Assembly, [Environment Committee 15.07.2026 - Panel Two](#) p15

³ The Government announced three sites at the launch of the [Waste Crime Action Plan in March 2026](#). Subsequently, in August 2026, the Government [announced further support](#) for clearing up three more of the country's most serious illegal waste sites

Illegal dumping causes significant environmental issues, including visual blight and poor air quality. These can have significant impacts on local communities. In London, for example, there is a long-running issue at Launders Lane in Havering where fires on a site blighted by illegal dumping have been causing significant environmental and health impacts.⁴

In the past, funding was available from Government to help with these costs. As you will be aware, until 2017 Defra previously operated the Contaminated Land Capital Grants scheme which helped local authorities remediate contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.⁵ Since this was abolished, the burden of clearing sites has fallen entirely to local Councils where the landowner cannot be identified or fails to take action.

We note the Waste Crime Action Plan, launched in March 2026, includes other work on remediation measures, such as work on a landfill tax rebate scheme and work with the insurance industry.⁶ We also agree that a key priority must be stopping illegal waste sites early before damage is done and prosecuting those responsible. However, for existing cases, it is important that further Government funding is available to support the urgent remediation of the most serious sites, with costs to be recouped from those responsible for causing it wherever possible.

We therefore request that in addition to the actions listed in the Waste Crime Action Plan an ongoing programme of funding – which could be allocated to local authorities or the Environment Agency - is available to support the clear up of contaminated land caused by illegal dumping.

The Committee would welcome a response to this letter by Friday 30 October 2026. Please send your response by email to the Committee's Clerk, Hannah Barlow (Hannah.Barlow@london.gov.uk).

Yours,



Gareth Roberts AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

⁴ MQ 2025/1070 [Launders' Lane](#)

⁵ National Data Library [Contaminated Land Grants issued to Local Authorities](#)

⁶ UK Government [Waste Crime Action Plan](#) March 2026