



FLY TIPPING AND ILLEGAL WASTE DUMPING TASK AND FINISH GROUP RESPONSE

The Essex Task and Finish Group was initiated by the Essex Rural Partnership in September 2016, and was endorsed by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex, Roger Hirst, in October 2016. The Group is chaired by Essex County Councillor Simon Walsh, and is now taking a lead on this issue in Essex; it brings together key partners to maximise effectiveness in addressing the issue by working together. These partners include the Environment Agency, Essex Police, Essex County Council and 11 of the second tier local authorities. Other members include NFU, CLA, Trading Standards, Keep Britain Tidy and Rural Community Council of Essex.

To date, partner action has included:

- A dedicated police operation where a number of vehicles were stopped and searched
- Clarity on the reporting processes from all partners with a statutory duty
- Changes to partner websites to clarify reporting processes
- Awareness raising of how to deal with incidents
- Awareness raising of householder duty of care
- Facilitation of new intelligence-sharing mechanisms. These include all enforcement agencies who have potential to contribute information and to help address the problem.

Official advice is:

If the waste constitutes a lorry-load or more, or contains hazardous waste of any kind, or if you see illegal tipping in progress, you should contact the Environment Agency or Crimestoppers. The Environment Agency can be contacted via a National Incident Control Centre on 0800 80 70 60. Crimestoppers can be contacted on 0800 555 111 – reports can be made anonymously to Crimestoppers.

Anything that constitutes a van-load or less, and does not contain hazardous material should be reported to the relevant local authority.

If you see any scale of fly tipping 'in progress' this can be reported to Essex Police, who will treat the incident as criminal activity and prioritise according to standard procedures.

The areas of statutory responsibility are not well known and can be summarised as follows:

- The statutory duty for dealing with large-scale fly tipping (known as illegal waste dumping) sits with the Environment Agency, as this is an environmental crime. The Environment Agency have a 24/7 hotline number for all environmental incidents.
- The Police do not have a statutory duty to deal with fly-tipping. If the Environment Agency feels that there is a criminal element that requires Police intervention, they will involve the Police at the appropriate time. The Police only have a statutory duty to respond to public reports of fly tipping if there is an immediate risk to safety.
- All crimes, including environmental crimes, can be reported to Crimestoppers who can, and do, pass information to the relevant agencies.

- For small-scale fly tipping, local authorities have the statutory responsibility to deal with incidents. (In Essex we have collated the direct contact numbers and e-mails via which incidents can be reported and these are published on both ERP and Essex Police websites).

Essex Police have played a significant proactive role in assisting to address this issue – despite the fact that they have no statutory duty to get involved. The Essex Police control centre is receiving reports and we have evidence of calls that have been appropriately handled and where the response has been over and above what is required. There have been no instances of calls being mishandled since before the Task and Finish Group was formed. The Police do not have a statutory duty to respond to fly tipping incidents, unless there is a danger to people's safety but Essex Police continue to support rural communities and are working in partnership with other agencies on this issue. Where reports identify a safety risk, this is assessed and the call prioritised according to standard procedures.

Quite rightly, members of the public are advised not to deliberately put themselves at risk.

The Environment Agency are fully engaged in intelligence-sharing meetings and networks, and have a number of officers dedicated to investigating the criminal acts which have occurred over recent months. Criminal investigations take time, and with limited resources the responsible agencies are working together to combat the issue.

Members of the public should be reminded:

- To report to the relevant agency – as shown above
- To provide as much information as possible – including photographs and vehicle details where these can be safely obtained
- NOT to interfere with evidence – despite an understandable temptation to look for information about the culprit
- To understand their own duty of care when disposing of waste – check for a waste carrier licence and ask for a receipt – illegal waste carriers cannot operate if waste isn't handed over to them

Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) is managed by Rural Community Council of Essex, RCCE, Threshelfords Business Park, Inworth Road, Feering, CO5 9SE

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Notes:

The Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) was formed in 2002, the result of a merger between the Essex Rural Renewal Forum and the Essex Rural Strategy Steering Group. Since 2012 ERP has been a member of Defra's Rural and Farming Network.

The Partnership, managed by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), and chaired by Cllr Simon Walsh, brings together a wide range of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, all with a responsibility for the future of the county's rural areas. The ERP's Vice Chairs are Canon John Brown and Mr Roger Hirst (Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex).

Essex Rural Partnership launched a new [Rural Strategy for Essex](#) in July 2016.

Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) is an independent registered charity, established in 1929, helping people and communities throughout rural Essex build a sustainable future.