

Response to Welsh Government Litter and Fly-tipping Prevention Plan for Wales

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. Our purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, used and enhanced, now and in the future.

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the consultation. We give our views from our perspective as a regulator and advisor on waste management in Wales and as a landowner. In addition, we have received funding from WG to support delivery of our Tackling Waste Crime action plan. This initiative complements our regulatory and enforcement roles and seeks to disrupt serious and organised waste crime. We also coordinate the Fly-tipping Action Wales initiative, staff working on the initiative have fed into this response and will also respond on behalf of their partners separately.

1. Do you agree that litter and fly-tipping should be covered under one plan? If not, please provide a reason for your answer.

We understand the reasons for combining the litter and fly-tipping plans but recommend that consideration should be given to the following;

Scale of Offences

Litter and fly-tipping both result in the degradation of our local communities but the reasons for the offences and the profiles of the offenders maybe very different. This means that the approach to tackle the offences and offenders could be very different too.

In addition, we consider that there is a difference between a householder who is fly-tipping their own waste and someone who is making money offering a waste disposal service and then fly-tipping. Although financial motivation can often be one of the key drivers for both offences, it is the scale of the offence that will differentiate the approach for dealing with fly-tipping.

Large scale and organised fly-tipping may be a more likely indication of an organised waste crime activity and may be dealt better with a separate more focused action plan that could potentially still sit under this plan. We would welcome the chance to discuss these issues further.

Litter, fly-tipping an organised waste crime

As there are different challenges and different solutions when tackling littering, fly-tipping and organised waste crime the plan should include definitions of each and

recognise the different roles and responsibilities of organisations in dealing with these issues.

We have recently published [The Second State of Natural Resources Report \(SoNaRR2020\) Assessment of the achievement of sustainable management of natural resources: Waste](#). This contains a chapter on waste crime which you may find useful.

The Plan states that it “has been developed to deliver, enhance and complement a number of existing Welsh Government aims and strategies”, including the Marine Litter Action Plan (MLAP) for Wales. It then suggests that some of the MLAP actions could be integrated into the Litter and Fly-tipping Prevention Plan. From a marine perspective, we urge against the MLAP being subsumed in any way given that this second iteration of the MLAP is the product of four years of WG-led multi-stakeholder collaboration, shaped by international commitments (e.g. OSPAR) and initiatives (e.g. UNEP Clean Seas). Links could be established to learn from the work of the Wales Clean Seas Partnership and its members without diluting its impact.

2. Do you agree with themes we have chosen? Do you think they will help us achieve our ambitions? If not, what other themes do you think need to be included?

The chosen themes will help to achieve the ambitions for littering and small scale fly-tipping. However, for larger scale financially motivated fly-tipping then we would recommend including a theme that looks at disrupting waste crime. Disruption would look at ways to make this crime more difficult for people to carry out and would ultimately prevent fly-tipping.

3. Do you agree with the suggested actions in the waste reduction theme? If not, please provide reasons.

Yes, preventing waste and valuing waste as a resource are key to ensuring our society lives more sustainably.

4. Do you think other actions should be included under the waste reduction theme to achieve the aims of the Plan? If yes, please provide relevant information and evidence.

The focus on single use plastic items is welcomed. Targeted actions should also be considered to deal with commonly fly-tipped materials such as green waste, white goods and tyres this could also be applied to commonly littered items too. Such items would benefit from specific plans to understand the reasons for fly-tipping and littering and to implement preventative actions.

5. Do you agree with the suggested actions in the waste evidence, monitoring and evaluation theme? If not, please provide reasons.

Yes. Good evidence is key to being able to effectively tackle an issue. In relation to fly-tipping the evidence that we have is patchy and as identified in the plan often relates just to incidents on public land. Addressing this evidence gap is not easy but we welcome the opportunity for our colleagues in Fly-tipping Action Wales to continue to work with you to address the inconsistencies and gaps in the evidence.

We will continue to work to address evidence gaps on our own land and would like to be included as a partner in action EME (3).

6. Do you think other actions should be included under the waste evidence, monitoring and evaluation theme to achieve the aims of the Plan? If yes, please provide relevant information and evidence.

Understanding the reasons why people litter and fly-tip is key to preventing this behaviour. We recommend that WG considers including action that looks at working with offenders and others to understand the attitudes and behaviours that lead to littering and fly-tipping. Working with behavioural scientists to do this would help to get a better understanding of offender profiles and the interventions that could be put in place to tackle the issues of litter and fly-tipping.

Requiring local councils and others to record fly-tipping data with spatial information would help to monitor levels of fly-tipping more accurately and monitor the effect of local policy or operational changes.

7. Do you agree with the suggested actions in the education and behaviour change theme? If not, please provide reasons.

Yes.

8. Do you think other actions should be included under the education and behaviour change theme to achieve the aims of the Plan? If yes, please provide relevant information and evidence.

We support the ambition for Wales wide campaigns but would welcome the ability for these to be complemented by a more targeted approach whether that be related to a type of litter or fly-tipped material or a community of type or interest. Understanding the offender profiles for littering and fly-tipping as outlined above could help to identify gaps in the education and behaviour change provision and enable resources to be targeted at those who are more likely to offend. Wales wide messaging should consider enabling people to understand and accept the true cost of waste disposal.

We recommend that Welsh Government consider any lessons learnt from the 2017 Litter Strategy for England which contained a major section on behaviour change.

Our education team has produced a suite of bilingual material on litter and fly-tipping, this is available for educators and learners [here](#). We would be happy to discuss how this could be used to achieve the aims of action EBC (13).

Education for younger learners is well addressed through programmes like eco schools but to achieve the ambition of the plan we need this education to continue throughout our learners journey's and into the adult population. Education for adults is just as important as education for children as our children will learn from the behaviours they see from trusted adults.

We would be happy to offer our educational resources and experience to help deliver a number of the actions under this theme namely, EBC,11,13,14 and 15. For example we could explore working with colleges to influence the next generation of our tradespeople to understand how to reduce and dispose of their waste correctly.

9. Do you agree with the suggested actions in the effective enforcement theme? If not, please provide reasons.

We agree with the suggested actions in this theme. Appropriate resources and tools must be in place to identify, stop and take enforcement against offenders. This must include using new and available tools including multi-agency task forces, vehicle seizure, intelligence systems and enforcement actions such as prosecution, forfeiture and civil sanctions.

Natural Resources Wales manages a significant proportion of all land in Wales. The Fly tipping protocol, in its current form, does leave some uncertainty around whether NRW or local authorities should be investigating fly tipping incidents on Natural Resources Wales managed land. We believe that it would be beneficial to allow authorised officers from Natural Resources Wales to issue FPN's in certain situations for small-scale fly tipping, particularly in instances of fly tipping on NRW controlled land.

10. Do you think other actions should be included under the effective enforcement theme to achieve the aims of the Plan? If yes, please provide relevant information and evidence.

Proactive surveillance is mentioned as a way of investigating fly-tipping. We recommend that an action supporting other ways of local authorities and NRW being proactive is included under this theme. For example: Duty of Care checks on businesses, test purchase operations and regular waste carrier stop check operations. This action could fall under the theme of disruption.

The UK Digital Waste Tracking Project is currently progressing with full implementation expected in 2023. This system will make it mandatory for all waste movements to be recorded and enable waste to be tracked from production to its end fate. This will be a significant tool to help tackle fly-tipping and waste crime. The system will enable householders to check if their waste has been managed properly and transferred to an authorised site. It may be useful to have an action under this theme that supports this project and raises awareness about digital waste tracking when the system comes online.

11. Do you agree with the suggested actions in the efficient operational delivery theme? If not, please provide reasons.

Yes.

12. Do you think other actions should be included under the efficient operational delivery theme to achieve the aims of the Plan? If yes, please provide relevant information and evidence.

No.

13. Our Litter & Fly-tipping Prevention Plan includes a number of actions. Which ones do you think should be a priority? Please give reasons.

As highlighted at the beginning of the consultation litter and fly-tipping need to be tackled using a holistic approach. Concentrating on any of the themes alone will not prevent the problem. To tackle this issue in the long term, every one of us needs to value and respect our communities and value waste as a resource. To reach this point it is important to understand why a minority of people do not value and respect their communities, and then to put in place interventions that make it easy for people to do the right thing whilst also encouraging people to reduce waste. We recommend that this action plan is linked to, and clearly promotes the aims of the Welsh Government Beyond Recycling Strategy. It is also important that the evidence base is improved, and the opportunity is taken to learn through open and honest discussions with people that commit these offences. For these reasons we would recommend prioritising, in the short term, the Evidence, Monitoring and Evaluation theme of the plan.