

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Review of fly tipping, litter and waste management across the borough

Date: 29th September 2025

Author: Assistant Director of Environmental Services (Operations)

Purpose:

To advise members of the current situation in terms of fly tipping, litter management and waste management across the borough.

To suggest the committee forms a working group to review the approach to litter and waste management operations.

Recommendation(s)

That the Overview and Scrutiny committee:

- a) Notes the current situation in terms of fly tipping, litter and management across the borough.
- b) Form a working group to complete a more thorough review of fly tipping, litter and waste management.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Committee had included in the work programme for 2025/26 a review of fly-tipping and litter management and had proposed some specific questions to be addressed. Due to changes in staffing there has been a delay in progressing this matter. At the last meeting of Committee following discussion on performance of waste services it was suggested that this review be widened to look at litter and waste more holistically through this work strand. This report sets out the current position in terms of waste and litter management and what the Council is currently doing to improve overall service levels.
- 1.2 Currently Public Protection Services are responsible for the Council's fly tipping enforcement response and Parks and Street Cleansing Services the collection of fly tipping and litter management. This report focuses on the role the Parks and Street Cleansing teams play in the collection of fly-tipping rather than the investigation into individual fly-tipping incidents. The report also covers the wider street cleansing litter

collection role and an update on the current position of waste services in the collection of trade and residential waste.

2

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

2.1

In early 2025 the new Director of Operations took post at the Council and a restructure of management and supervisory roles was undertaken across environmental operations. This restructure was focused on putting the appropriate tiers of management in place to improve operational services. The restructure took time to implement and for all posts to be filled. In August, all posts in the new structure were filled and the Council now has a new Assistant Director of Environmental Services (Operations) and three operational managers covering waste and street care, parks and fleet supported by 3 supervisors in waste and street care and one supervisor in the parks team. The new structure envisaged a movement of street care from parks to waste services. This part of the structure has yet to embed.

2.2

It is recognised that this change in structure has had some impacts on operational services particularly in respect of waste services as new posts stood vacant and previous post holders left the establishment. It is also recognised that some of the new postholders will require development support in their new roles but having strong management and supervision in place is essential to ensure service improvement.

2.3

Now that the appointment to all posts in the new management structure has been completed a detailed review of current working practices, policy and service delivery is underway to ensure environmental operations are streamlined to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness. Significant changes are underway within Waste Services where additional posts have been added into the structure in relation to drivers and loaders following an assessment of need against current domestic collection rates. This follows a period of no growth in staffing against growth in housing numbers. In addition, a review of resource need within the fleet service has been completed with new posts and vacancies recruited to.

2.4

In Parks and Street care, the review of operations and process has begun with an expected completion of December 2025. This work will include reviewing current frontline staffing structures, training, rotas, schedules, weekend cover and review of KPI monitoring and methodology.

2.5

In addition to localised operational changes, the introduction of the Simpler Recycling regime has had an impact on service delivery in 2025/26 and will continue to impact operations as changes to collections are implemented in line with legislation. From March 2026, changes to trade waste collections began including the requirement to collect food waste from businesses with more than 10 employees and the requirement for trade recycling collections. The Council had to amend and expand trade waste services to support this. From March 2026 small businesses will also require food collection with food collection rolled out to domestic properties by November 2027. The Council have received

some additional funding through the Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations 2024 to support Simpler Recycling. This funding is collected by the Government from packaging companies and allocated to waste collection authorities. The Council continues to work with other waste collection authorities to prepare for Simpler Recycling along with Veolia who hold the Countywide contract for waste disposal.

2.6

There is a programme of work underway to look at facilities within the depot. The demolition of the large shed in the depot is in trend with a wider review of space to ensure the depot is fit for purpose. All this work including the further work outlined below forms part of the Council's Depot Modernisation programme which is part of the Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26.

3

WHITESPACE

3.1

In addition to review of practices and staffing structures in Environmental operations, in January 2025, implementation of a new Waste and Parks Software Management system - Whitespace began. This system is now fully implemented for domestic waste collections with all drivers being provided with in cab devices and crews trained on use of the system. Whitespace is an essential tool in ensuring effective data capture on round activity providing live, up to date data on the progress of rounds and any issues experienced. It enables crews to import data on any bins not presented, contaminated bins or inaccessible bins so that staff in our customer services centre can see easily why bins may have been missed or indeed when bins were not put out for collection. The system enables assisted collections to be flagged so crews can easily identify where assistance is needed and the location of those bins. Once this system integrates with our Customer relationship management System Netcall, customers will be able to receive data on their collections directly and directly raise issues which can be logged with crews.

3.2 This is a huge change to the way waste services operates and has taken some time to bed in and for staff to get use to. In addition to providing up to date information on rounds, Whitespace has a mapping function which enables the service to look at round size and identify more efficient collection routes and rounds. Further work is needed on this to ensure route optimisation but Whitespace has provided some valuable data needed to improve round efficiency. Whitespace will be rolled out in trade waste and other service including bin deliveries.

3.3 It is intended that Whitespace will be extended to Street Cleansing and Parks in 2026 and all work that is carried out in the interim will align with the methodology required for inputting into the system. The implementation of Whitespace will enable more efficient scheduling of street cleansing and parks maintenance, in addition it will enable all litter bins to be plotted and will provide analytical data regarding fill levels of litter bins to determine need, size and frequency of emptying required in each area.

- 3.4 All scheduled work routes, ad-hoc requests etc. will be managed through this system and will supply robust management data. The system will also integrate with the new CRM system, reducing manual input and providing live updates to customer queries etc.

CHALLENGES

4

Whilst there is positive steps being undertaken to improve services, change takes time. In relation to waste services there are still challenges in relation to sickness levels which is putting pressure on agency spend. The constant churn of agency staff means that familiarity with systems and rounds can be a challenge. There has been a particular impact on performance in quarter one where the council has experienced a higher than average complaint rate in relation to missed bins. Staffing absence has contributed to this along with impacts of new systems and structure reviews. In particular, there were challenges in relation to garden waste this year including an increase in customer demand, issues with stickers not staying on bins which led to bins not being collected and inefficiencies in rounds. This issue is currently being addressed with changes to garden rounds planned for next year to improve efficiency.

4.1

In parks and street cleansing, lack of data is a challenge. Initial scoping has identified that there is a lack of robust data to determine direction of travel. Data capture will be reviewed and updated to ensure accurate recording mechanisms are implemented to drive service improvements. This will be necessary to ensure accurate data is imported into Whitespace. Seasonal demands need to be considered with a review of current schedules and working practices to align service delivery to seasonal demands, i.e. leaf season, flooding risks, traffic islands etc.

4.2

Training – a programme of training is required to ensure the staff have the correct training to carry out their duties safely and comply with all regulations. Opportunities for staff to upskill to improve resilience of the service during peak demand / holiday periods, is needed i.e. additional trained small sweeper drivers.

4.3

Communication – officers need to work with colleagues to improve communication channels for residents and elected members regarding service delivery i.e. prior notification of planned mechanical sweeping, resource issues, changes to service delivery, celebration of good news stories.

4.4

New build properties – improvements in communication is needed to ensure data from planning colleagues in relation to new build developments across the borough is captured pro-actively to enable robust resource and service delivery planning, as well as route optimisation.

4.5

Highway issues – the significant amount and severity of potholes across the borough is causing issues with street cleansing and waste services. There is an increased level of

- 4.6 detritus arising from the holes increasing weights and frequency of tipping for street cleansing, resulting in less time sweeping.

Weed growth is also a major concern across the borough due to the spraying only being carried out twice per year, resulting in expedient weed growth, affecting sweeping effectiveness, surface damage and increased detritus levels.

4.7

FLEET UPDATE

5

- 5.1 The Fleet Capital replacement fund has supplied Street Cleansing with two new medium sized town centre/ pavement sweeping Schmidt Swingo's in 2024/25, and two new large mechanical sweepers.

- 5.2 In respect of waste a food truck was procured in late 2024/25 in readiness for trade food collections. We also have 4 new RCV's and 2 box vans on order to support bin delivery and WEEE.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CAMPAIGNS

6

- 6.1 Street Cleansing teams actively supported and engaged in the "Big Gedling Spring Clean" programme, as part of the national Keep Britain Tidy campaign. The street and parks cleansing initiative was held from 21 March - 6 April 2025. During the campaign an army of amazing #LitterHeroes collected over 130 bags of litter and fly tipped items. The council would like to thank the amazing support these community groups and individuals provide to supporting the authority to improve our communities.

- 6.2 Although the weather on the scheduled week was poor, over twenty volunteer groups and individuals were supported in local litter picks that week and adjacent weekends.

- 6.3 In addition to this campaign there are over 100 community litter picking individuals and groups that volunteer regularly to litter pick around their own area[s] and support this annual campaign.

- 6.4 Whilst there is a significant amount of work underway to improve environmental services, any support and engagement from members is valued. There is a close working relationship between services and Portfolio Holders and more widely Councillors are update on performance through quarterly reporting. Audit Committee have also been advised of any risks arising from performance issues across the service. Further work with overview and Scrutiny is welcomed.

Fly – tipping and litter management

- 7 In relation to the collection and clearing of reported fly tips the Council has a key

- 7.1 performance indicator in respect of clearance of fly-tips which sets a performance target of 98% of fly-tips cleared within 10 working days of reporting. In 2025/26 at the end of quarter 1 this target was missed slightly with collection rates of 94.54%.
- 7.2 Since 2023/24 the rate has not fallen below 96%. The volume and cost of reported fly-tips and clearance is set out in Appendix 1.
- 7.3 Fly-tipping is enforced and investigated through public protection. Fly-tipping is incredibly difficult to investigate as deposits are made in locations with limited surveillance and unless the incident is witnessed or evidence is found within the litter which identifies an individual, often investigation will not progress. Any further investigation specifically into enforcement and prevention of fly-tipping could form a separate work item for this Committee.

Answers to Specific Additional Questions raised by Committee:

- 7.4 What percentage of litter collected is currently recycled, burned, landfill?
- Nottinghamshire County Council and their contractor Veolia are responsible for the disposal of all street litter. It is impossible to separate the material types at source due to the high levels of contamination in the arisings and the risk of sorting through the waste for the operative.

Its content is such that it is automatically rejected at the Materials Recycling Facility Centres and is therefore direct delivered to the Nottingham City Council incinerator at Eastcroft Depot where the waste is processed, reduced to ash and recovered as ferrous metals. The incinerator is linked to an energy recovery scheme used to provide district heating. No litter collected within the borough is sent to landfill.

- 7.5 What steps are available to increase recycling rates?
- Gedling Borough Council provides litter bins which offer recycling opportunities in our Green Flag parks and in some town centres, enabling visitors to recycle paper, plastics, glass and cans.
- Despite offering separate compartments within the same bin, contamination remains a major issue and often results in the waste being disposed of with non-recycled litter.
- Simpler Recycling may offer funding opportunities to enable authorities to trial source segregation, education and alternative working practices to increased quality of materials enabling the waste to be recycled.

What steps can be taken to increase the number of litter bins and increase collection rates?

Work will be undertaken as part of service review to gather data on bin volume and

location to ensure effective distribution.

Do we sort collected litter?

See point 7.4

Can we have biodegradable bags for suitable matter?

Currently heavy 300-gauge litter bin liner sacks are manufactured from recycled materials in the UK.

Biodegradable bags are being developed but are not currently available in sufficient quantity and gauge strength on the commercial/industrial market.

8. Proposal

It is proposed that the committee note the details of the report and agrees to form a working group to complete a thorough review of fly tipping, litter and waste management.

9. Alternative Options

The Committee could determine not to do any further investigation into this area and leave it to officers to review; however, this would go against the committees wish to review and improve this and wider engagement with members on these key functions is seen as a positive way forward.

10. Financial Implications

There are no additional costs for the Council arising from the report. The costs of Council officers and staff assisting with this work is met from existing revenue and capital resources.

11. Legal Implications

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes duties under section 89(1) and (2) on certain landowners and occupiers to keep specified land clear of litter and refuse, and on local authorities and the Secretary of State to keep clean public highways for which they are responsible. The Litter & Refuse Code of Practice and Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 provides guidance and timescales on acceptable cleanliness levels and response times to improve areas that fall below that standard.

12. Equalities Implications

None specifically identified

13. Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

Further consideration of carbon reduction should form part of the review in this area. The Council have taken initiatives to improve carbon footprint in Environmental services with the introduction of HVO and government initiatives in relation to Simpler Recycling will improve impacts.

14. Appendices

Appendix 1: Fly tipping data 2022/23 – 2024/25

15. Background Papers

None

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer