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| <b>Subject:</b>           | Fly Tipping   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 7th October 2025  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | David Sales, CNS Strategic Director   |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Siobhan Toland (CNS Director), Stephen Leonard (CNS Director), and Caroline McGeown (Senior Performance and Improvement Officer). |

### Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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### Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>  |
| 1.1        | At P&C Committee on the 5 August, it was agreed that a report is to be submitted to a future meeting which would provide data and information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement activity, prosecution information and a geographical breakdown of problem areas, fly tipping and house clearances.</li> </ul>   |
| 1.2        | This report provides an overview of fly tipping as of August 2025, focusing on the following key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and data</li> <li>• Enforcement</li> <li>• Open Spaces and Street Scene</li> <li>• Waste Management</li> <li>• Communication, Education and Awareness</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>  |
| 2.1        | Committee is recommended to note this report.  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main Report</b>   |
| 3.1        | <b>Context</b><br>Fly-tipping is the illegal disposal of waste. This can range from small-scale dumping, such as black bin bags left in alleyways, to large-scale tipping of building materials, white goods, or commercial waste. It also includes excess waste left beside household and commercial bins, which is the Council's policy not to collect.  |
| 3.2        | Fly-tipping is an increasing problem across the UK, blighting communities, damaging the environment, and costing local councils millions of pounds in cleanup efforts. From abandoned furniture and household waste to hazardous materials, illegally dumped rubbish poses serious risks to public health and wildlife.  |
| 3.3        | The responsibility for fly-tipping enforcement is shared between Local Councils and Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (NIEA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Councils have responsibility for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) all non-hazardous waste deposits under 20 cubic metres in volume or accumulations of several small-scale fly tipping incidents.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> |

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| 3.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ii) all hazardous waste of a type and volume that could be accepted at an appropriately authorised Council operated civic amenity or waste recycling centre.</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) have responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) all waste deposits over 20 cubic metres in volume regardless of the waste classification. In summary, 20 cubic metres generally relates to less than a single small lorry load.</li> <li>(ii) all other hazardous waste of a type and volume which would not be accepted at a Council operated Recycling Centre.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| 3.5 | <p>Householders are responsible for ensuring that the waste produced on their property is only transferred to an authorised person known as Duty of Care, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District council waste collectors or their contracted collectors</li> <li>• a registered waste carrier or</li> <li>• a waste site that is appropriately licensed with NIEA.</li> </ul>   |
| 3.6 | <p>Littering is an offence under the Litter (NI) order 1994. While fly tipping is an offence under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 2017 and, where the Council can impose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of £80 for 'littering'. There is a reduced fee of £60 paid in 10 days.</li> <li>• FPNs of £400 for larger scale fly tipping, with no early payment discount.</li> <li>• FPNs of £300 for failing to comply with the duty of care requirements regarding production, collection, carrying, treating and disposing of controlled waste.</li> <li>• Court Fines: can reach up to £50,000 depending on the offence.</li> </ul>                   |
| 3.7 | <p>For larger-scale incidents and those involving organised crime, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) takes this very seriously. This can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy fines of up to £50,000 and sentences of six months imprisonment per charge.</li> <li>• At Crown Court level, the fines are unlimited, and criminals can be sentenced to up to five years imprisonment per charge - and made to pay back their profits.</li> </ul> <p>Understanding the causes of fly-tipping and exploring effective solutions is essential in tackling this growing issue. Several factors can contribute to the increasing problem of fly-tipping in the UK:</p> |

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| 3.8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of Awareness</b> – Some people may not realise that leaving waste beside public bins is illegal dumping. Others may not be fully aware of the services and facilities provided by the Council such as the bulky household waste collection service. This requires continued outreach and communication programmes.</li> <li>• <b>Rogue Waste Collectors</b> – Unlicensed waste removal services often take payment for disposal but dump the waste illegally instead of using registered facilities.</li> <li>• <b>Enforcement</b> – While enforcement powers exist, the challenge lies in gathering sufficient evidence to issue penalties/ prosecute those responsible.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of personal responsibility and accountability</b> - By thinking 'It's only a bag' or 'someone else will clean it up'.</li> <li>• <b>Mobility &amp; Transport Options</b> - Some people may lack their own transport needed to get their additional or bulky waste to disposal facilities. Again, for bulky waste they should avail of the Council's bulky waste collection scheme.</li> <li>• <b>Time and Location:</b> People are more likely to undertake the act of fly tipping at night or where they are not seen or observed (such as alley ways). Certain location such as high-density housing areas and those with transient communities e.g. rented accommodation are more likely to have fly tipping through house clearances.</li> <li>• <b>Seasonal Trends:</b> There are trends in seasonal dumping during change of tenancies, which is a recurring issue. There can also be seasonal dumping/ clear outs pre- and post-Christmas in some residential areas. Customer Hub data, also shows a trend in more fly tipping being reported during summer months, this could be because it is more visible to residents while they are out and about.</li> <li>• <b>Psychology of fly tipping:</b> Perceived cleanliness of the surrounding environment can influence behaviour. Peer behaviour is another powerful force in shaping habits. If we see others doing it without consequences, it can normalise the behaviour and make it more acceptable.</li> </ul> <p><b>A behavioural science approach to reducing fly-tipping</b></p> <p>As a local authority, tackling fly-tipping often feels like a lose-lose situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we leave dumped waste in place, the “broken window” effect kicks in—people see rubbish and add more to it.</li> <li>• If we remove it quickly, residents assume it is bulky waste collection service and stop using official disposal services.</li> <li>• Rapid removals can also hinder enforcement, limiting your ability to gather evidence for prosecutions. Although our OSS colleagues and our Environmental Enforcement Team work closely to ensure all possible evidence is gathered before it is removed.</li> </ul> |
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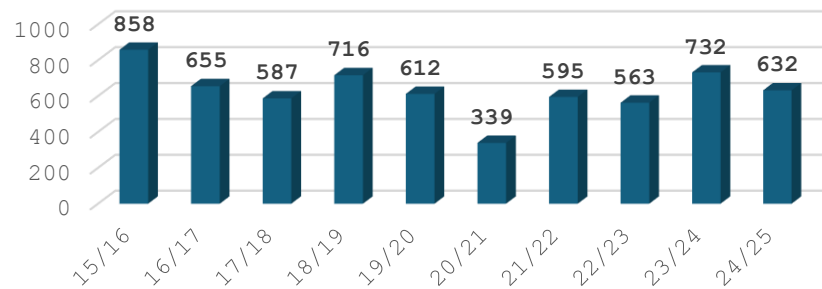
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| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Data and Intelligence</b>   |
| 4.1        | The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has reported that fly tipping is a significant environmental concern in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report, May 2025. Pollution of air, water and soil and illegal dumping of waste and litter were the greatest environmental concerns for households in Northern Ireland in 2024/25. |
| 4.2        | It is a complex issue that all councils across the United Kingdom are constantly tackling and are spending significant sums of rates payers' money on yearly through cleansing, enforcement, communication and education messaging.  |
| 4.3        | Both population and number of households in Northern Ireland show increasing trends, which in turns will increase the amount of waste produced. Belfast also has high density residential areas, with alleyways and transient residents/ communities that can cause high levels of fly tipping.  |
| 4.4        | Data from the Customer Hub in terms of complaints between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2025, reported that there were 15,923 customer complaints for fly tipping, which equates to approximately 245 complaints per month. Open spaces and street scene and the Environmental Enforcement Team also receive complaints directly and deal with incidents of                 |

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|            | <p>fly tipping while on the street that go unreported, therefore these figures could be significantly higher than this. For detail on the Customer Hub data sets on fly tipping, see Appendix 1.</p>  |
| 4.5        | <p>The data shows that complaints reported to the customer Hub are higher during the months where there is light in the evening, this is likely to be because the fly tipping is more visible, and more people are out and about.</p>   |
| 4.6        | <p>Fly tipping is a UK wide problem, the NIEA does not collect benchmarking data across other councils on fly tipping, and each council could record their data differently using different methodology. The profile of the area within each council is different which could also be a factor in either more or less fly tipping. Therefore, it is not possible to use other councils' data to compare because you could be comparing two different data sets and giving a wrong interpretation of the data.</p>   |
| 4.7        | <p>The Customer Hubs data for Belfast shows that fly tipping is a city-wide problem. For data on the top 20 reported customer complaints by street for fly tipping to the Customer Hub by area, see Appendix 2. This does not include direct requests and the on-street incidents that both OSS and the Environmental Enforcement Team deal with, which could change this data on the top 20 streets for fly tipping.</p>   |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Tackling Fly Tipping</b>   |
| 5.1        | <p><b>Council's current approach and proposals to tackling Fly Tipping</b></p> <p>As outlined within this report, there are several factors that can contribute to the causes of fly tipping. Therefore, there is no silver bullet answer to solving this problem, however, having a strong partnership across services is important to tackling this problem. Within City and Neighbourhood there is a strong partnership approach to this issue. The Customer Hub sends daily reports to the Environmental Enforcement Team (EET) and Open Spaces and Street Scene (OSS) on fly tipping including the location. The EET and OSS then work closely to ensure that all possible evidence is gathered to take enforcement action where possible before it is removed by OSS. Within EET and OSS there are clear operational processes in place to ensure these incidents of fly tipping are dealt with correctly and safely.</p> |
| 5.2        | <p>Waste management is carried out by Resources and Fleet and they provide residents and businesses with several options in which to dispose of their waste responsibly. Educational and awareness support is also provided by Corporate Communication and the</p>  |

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|     | <p>Environmental Education and Outreach Team. However, it is important to recognise this issue is ‘everyone’s responsibility’ and everyone has a responsibility under the duty of care to dispose of waste responsibly.</p>  |
| 5.3 | <p><b>Enforcement Team</b></p> <p>We have 8 Enforcement Officers, and 2 city centre litter wardens who investigate littering and fly-tipping incidents. The Enforcement Officers work on an area basis each patrolling reactively and proactively within dedicated areas across the city, which helps to strengthen relationships with OSS and other relevant stakeholders.</p>  |
| 5.4 | <p>The Enforcement Officers are responsible for enforcing the legislation under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 2017 and the Litter NI Order 1994. If they observe someone fly tipping or littering and obtain the relevant information, they can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80, or in instances of large-scale waste being fly tipped a £400 FPN. However, in most cases it is not possible to directly identify the person dumping, and we will examine the waste to determine if there is evidence within the waste that could identify the source.</p>  |
| 5.5 | <p>Where an individual has been identified, an Article 20 or an Article 44 Notice (as appropriate) is sent to them to obtain further information as part of our investigation. Over the last 10 years, a total of 25,804 Article 20 Notices to obtain further information have been issued. If we have sufficient evidence, they have committed an offence we may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. If they choose not to pay the fine the case may proceed to court. There is an additional offence of failing to comply with the Notice which may result in court proceedings. In instances where we are unable to take formal enforcement action, we will always seek to educate individuals regarding the proper methods by which to dispose of their waste.</p> |
| 5.6 | <p>Over the last 10 years, Belfast City Council has issued 6,289 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and fly tipping. Graph 1 below, shows the number of Fixed Penalty Notice per year. The figures fluctuate per year, with the lowest being during covid, due to reduced services during this period.</p> <p><b>Graph 1</b></p>  |

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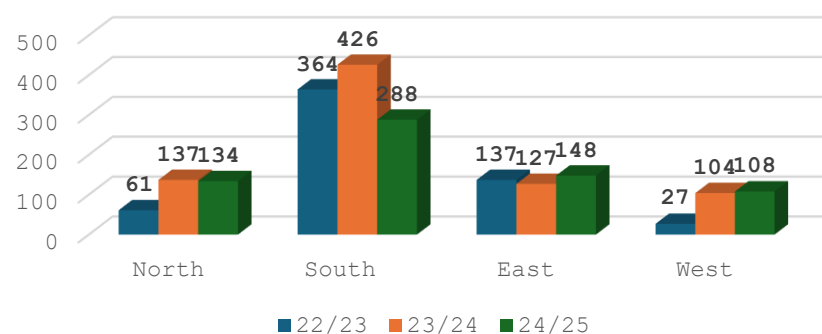
### Fixed Penalty Notices - Littering and Fly Tipping - April 2015 - March 2025



Graph 2 below, shows the number of Fixed Penalty Notices per year for littering and fly tipping, over the last 3 financial years. All areas are similar except for South, which has higher levels of Fixed Penalty Notice issues. Higher Fixed Penalty Notices/ enforcement action in this area reflects the dense population and transient nature of properties in the South. We may deploy more Enforcement Officers to this area when the seasonal demand increases.

**Graph 2**

### Fixed Penalty Notices by Area for Littering and Fly Tipping, Failure to respond to Article 20 April 2022 - March 2025



Over the last 5 years, a total of 854 court cases have been heard, relating to littering, fly tipping and failing to respond to Article 20 Notice.

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| 5.9  | <p>The Enforcement Officers are also responsible for dealing with Commercial waste. The Enforcement Officers have a good working relationship with businesses across the city which involves proactive engagement with businesses to ensure that they deal with waste responsibly. If they either receive reports or identify a business has undertaken fly tipping, they will speak with them. However, if the business does not comply with the initial request we will issue a warning letter under Article 22 for infringements of their waste presentation requirements and if needed a Fixed Penalty Notice. Over the last 10 years there were 14 Article 22 Notices served and 15 Article 22 Fixed Penalty Notices served to businesses.</p> |
| 5.10 | <p><b>Open Spaces and Street Scenes</b></p> <p>Belfast City Council Open Space and Street scene operates a street cleansing service in each area of the city. There are approximately 17,100 street cleansing planned programmes per week. In addition, OSS also deal with reactive requests in relation to fly tipping, dog fouling, graffiti and sharps/ needles daily.</p>   |
| 5.11 | <p>The OSS cleansing programme was not set up or resourced to provide a reactive programme across the city, each area is having to manage this additional work on top of an already extensive planned cleansing programme across the city. This can have an impact on the planned cleansing programme. As noted earlier there are on average approximately 245 service requests reported from customer per month for fly tipping, this doesn't include reports directly to OSS and the Environmental Enforcement Team, which means there will be significantly higher number of incidents of fly tipping to be dealt daily across the city.</p>   |
| 5.12 | <p>Operationally for OSS this can involve taking several officers off planned routes for several hours to support with the cleansing. Depending on the volume of fly tipping and types of rubbish such as bulky items, this can involve having to arrange mechanical sweepers and vans to clear the rubbish. Again, this means taking resources away from planned cleansing routes.</p>   |
| 5.13 | <p>At a recent P&amp;C Committee meeting in June 2025, a report was presented on a review on dog fouling. Like fly tipping, dog fouling is a continuous and significant issue on our streets and evidence is showing that the problems are increasing and are also having an impact on our street cleansing programme. Additional planned investment within the OSS service to tackle dog fouling would also assist our OSS service in meeting the increasing challenges and demands with dealing with fly tipping across the city.</p>   |

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| 5.14 | <p><b>Waste Management</b></p> <p>As regulators, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) sets the framework for waste management within Northern Ireland through the Waste Management Strategy. They are currently working on a new Northern Ireland Management Strategy, with a draft expected for consultation in October 2025. This new strategy aims to enhance resource efficiency, reduce waste and transition towards a circular economy. The upcoming strategy is expected to set new targets and actions to enhance waste management practices across the region.</p>         |
| 5.15 | <p>Within Belfast City Council website, there is a range of information available to residents and businesses to support them to dispose of their waste responsibly and to ensure that their waste is not dumped illegally by others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bins in Belfast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recycling in Belfast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bulky waste collections   Belfast City Council</a></li> </ul> <p>There are also contact details so that residents and businesses can contact the relevant services to receive further information.</p>                    |
| 5.16 | <p><b>Communication, Education and Awareness</b></p> <p>The Environmental Education and Outreach (EEO) team was formed in 2021 by merging two existing environmental education teams; Community Awareness which had a focus on litter, dog fouling and environmental crime, and Waste and Resources which focused on waste minimisation and recycling. The EEO team's work plan continues to reflect these themes supporting national waste campaigns, facilitating the council's reusable period product and nappy schemes and developing community programmes to divert textile and food waste from landfill.</p> |
| 5.17 | <p>Within their planned programme of outreach work, the EEO team include fly tipping as a topic on their education programme to schools where the impact of improperly disposed of litter and waste on the local environment is discussed. In addition, they promote the bulky household collection during information sessions with helpful leaflets.</p>  |
| 6.0  | <p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>   |
| 6.1  | <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>  |

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| 6.2        | <p>There are no financial and resource implications with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no known equality or good relations / rural needs assessment associated with this report at this time. However, any proposed changes will be screened in accordance with councils' equality scheme.</p> |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>Appendices</b>  |
| 7.1        | <p><b>Appendix 1</b> – Customer Hub Data on Fly Tipping</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Customer Hub Data Top 20 Streets By Area</p>  |