

[Notice: Goshall Stream \(north\), Stour Marshes: proposal for designation change](#)

The Environment Agency consults the public about proposals to change whether a river or stream is designated as a main river.

This notice will tell you:

- what changes the Environment Agency is proposing
- why the Environment Agency is proposing the changes
- how you can comment on the proposals

[Press release: New steps to tackle illegal waste and fly-tipping announced](#)

New powers to tackle the serious problem of waste crime will be granted, and further action opened for consultation in a crack-down on illegal sites, Environment Minister Therese Coffey announced today following the recent launch of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Waste crime cost the English economy more than £600m in 2015, including lost landfill tax revenues and clean-up costs, and creates severe problems for people who live or work nearby with odour, dust, litter, vermin, fly infestations, pollution and fires blighting lives. Waste criminals also undercut genuine businesses who dispose of waste responsibly.

New powers will therefore be introduced for the Environment Agency (EA) to lock the gates or block access to problem waste sites to prevent thousands of tonnes of waste illegally building up. The powers will also enable the EA to force operators to clear all the waste at a problem waste site, not just the illegal waste.

The government has also launched [a new consultation to tackle crime and poor performance in the waste sector](#). Proposals include raising the bar required to hold EA waste permits, and putting a stop to criminals hiding their illegal activities by requiring them to register low-risk waste operations which are currently exempt from the need to hold a permit.

The consultation proposes improving awareness amongst householders, so people

can check on the EA website to see if the recipient of their waste is licensed to take their waste, or their duty to pass waste to legitimate carriers.

It also suggests providing local authorities with the option of fining those whose waste ends up fly-tipped or illegally dumped rather than having to pursue them through the courts. Latest statistics show that some of the worst hit areas include London which saw over 360,000 fly-tipping incidents last year and the North West of England which saw 128,000 incidents in 2016/17.

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

Waste crime and fly-tipping blight our communities and spoil our countryside, and we need determined action to tackle it.

These new powers for the Environment Agency will curb the rise of waste sites that continue to operate outside the law.

But we must all take responsibility for our waste to make sure it does not end up in the hands of criminals who will wilfully dump it. Our new consultation looks more widely at the waste sector and we are keen to hear from industry and the public how we can improve performance, tackle illegality and protect our precious environment.

More than 850 new illegal waste sites were discovered by the EA in 2016-17. While an average of two illegal waste sites are shut down every day, they continue to create severe problems for local communities and business as well as posing a risk to key national infrastructure.

In 2013, for example, a fire at a waste site in Stockport resulted in the closure of the M60 motorway and three weeks of disruption to traffic, residents and businesses. By empowering the EA further, these measures will help prevent such disruption.

Household waste is also a problem and makes up nearly two thirds of fly-tipped waste. Currently local authorities can only prosecute householders in court but a new fixed penalty notice would be less costly to enforce for local authorities, and more proportionate for householders.

The government is clear however that new fixed penalty notices should not be abused simply as a means of raising money. Guidance on how the fines should be applied will therefore be issued to councils.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

We take tough action against anyone involved in illegal waste

activity and last year, the Environment Agency >closed down two illegal waste sites every day. We welcome these new powers, which will enable our teams to block access to problem sites, preventing illegal waste building up and becoming even more serious.

This will allow us to take faster action against criminals and will make a real difference to communities, but >everyone has a role to play. We all need to check our waste is going to the right place and is handled by the right people.

The new powers for the EA to tackle problem waste sites will be introduced by spring 2018, subject to parliamentary approval. This follows a public consultation in which an overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents were in favour of allowing regulators to take physical steps, such as locking the gates to an illegal waste site, to prevent operators from accepting more illegally dumped waste and enabling the EA to require all the waste to be removed.

Notes:

- [The responses to the 2015 public consultation on increasing EAs powers is available online](#)
- Current rules are already clear that action against those who litter the streets and cause harm to their local communities must be fair and proportionate. We do not expect anti-social behaviour legislation, for example, to be used as a backdoor fine to penalise a householder for not closing a bin lid nor for putting a bin out for collection a few hours too early. In addition, the Government will work with WRAP and local authorities to review current guidance to make clear what can and cannot be charged for waste at HWRCs (including in respect of DIY waste) and the Government believes it should be free for residents to dispose of DIY household at a civil amenity site.
- The cost of waste crime to the English economy being over £600m in 2015 is from the Environmental Services Association 2017 report 'Rethinking waste crime'
- Householders can check on the EA website that a waste carrier is licensed to take their waste.
- [The government's 25 Year Environment Plan is available to read online](#)

Open consultation: Reducing crime at sites handling waste, and introducing fixed penalties for waste duty of care

We want to know what you think about our proposals to reduce crime and poor performance in the waste sector. We are looking to do this by enforcing more appropriate competence standards for permitted waste site operators. We're also proposing to make changes to waste exemptions to prevent them being used to hide illegal activity.

We are also asking your views on best ways to improve householder awareness of their waste duty of care. As part of this, we are proposing the introduction of a fixed penalty for householders failing to pass their waste to authorised waste carriers. This fixed penalty will provide local authorities with a more proportionate and less costly enforcement tool than prosecuting in court.

Consultation outcome: Reducing crime at sites handling waste, and introducing fixed penalties for waste duty of care

Updated: Summary of responses added.

We want to know what you think about our proposals to reduce crime and poor performance in the waste sector. We are looking to do this by enforcing more appropriate competence standards for permitted waste site operators. We're also proposing to make changes to waste exemptions to prevent them being used to hide illegal activity.

We are also asking your views on best ways to improve householder awareness of their waste duty of care. As part of this, we are proposing the introduction of a fixed penalty for householders failing to pass their waste to authorised waste carriers. This fixed penalty will provide local authorities with a more proportionate and less costly enforcement tool than prosecuting in court.

[News story: New Countryside Stewardship Offers open for applications](#)

The Countryside Stewardship scheme has opened for farmers and land managers to request 2018 application packs today (15 January).

[Four simpler, and quicker to apply for, offers](#) are being introduced this year to complement the existing Higher Tier and Mid Tier offers and open up the scheme to even more farmers and land managers. Unlike existing offers, all landowners who make a valid application for any of the four new packages will be guaranteed funding through the scheme.

This application window is an opportunity for farmers new to Countryside Stewardship (CS), or those coming out of previous stewardship agreements, to sign up for an agreement that will be guaranteed for its lifetime, to protect wildlife, boost biodiversity and deliver environmental benefits for their local communities.

Earlier this month, Environment Secretary Michael Gove outlined government plans to replace existing farm subsidies outside the EU with a new system of public money for public goods. Ahead of this, the new CS offers are an opportunity for even more farmers to establish positive environmental practices on their land and prepare for the future.

The RPA and Natural England have been tasked with simplifying the scheme, to save farmers time and cut down on paperwork. As part of this, farmers applying for the new CS Offers who meet the eligibility requirements will be able to get an agreement to deliver as few as 3 options, or as many as 7 up to 14, depending on the offer applied for. The new CS Offers are a chance for those who've been put off the scheme in the past to look again at what's on offer and what they might be able to achieve on their land.

The government has made clear its intention to go on supporting farmers for many years to come to deliver public goods, in terms of producing high quality food, boosting biodiversity and making our countryside a safe haven for our iconic wildlife.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

We've seen farmland birds recover in numbers and biodiversity boosted on farms signed up to Countryside Stewardship agreements, however we have listened to those who said the schemes had become too complicated. The new Countryside Stewardship offers available this year are much simpler to apply for and cover a full range of

different farm types, so farmers can deliver environmental benefits wherever and whatever they farm.

My message to farmers who've been put off Countryside Stewardship in the last few rounds is to take another look and see what's on offer this year. We've listened to farmers and we've simplified the offering to create a universal scheme to appeal to farmers new to stewardship and those coming out of ELS so they can continue the good work on their farms.

Farmers and land managers have until 31 May to request a paper application pack. Farmers intending to apply online this year will be able to create their Online Arable Offer application pack from 20 February. See further details of the new [Offers for Wildlife](#).

Applicants can request more information on all the Offers available from Natural England Enquiries Team by telephone: 0208 026 1089; email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk; or writing to:

Enquiries,
Natural England,
County Hall, Spetchley Road,
Worcester,
WR5 2NP