

Press release: Government steps up the fight against waste criminals

Waste criminals act illegally to evade landfill tax, undercut responsible waste disposal businesses, operate illegal waste sites, export waste illegally and fly-tip – blighting communities with bad smells, fly infestations and fires.

Their activity cost the English economy more than £600 million in 2015 and the review announced by the Environment Secretary today is the next step in the government's ongoing work to tackle the crime – which is already a serious offence with tough penalties.

A [Call for Evidence](#) launched today (10 June) will enable a wide group of people to have their say on ways to crack-down further on Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), who profit from waste crime.

The review will be chaired by [Lizzie Noel](#), a Non-Executive Director at Defra.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, said:

Organised criminals running illegal waste dumps and fly-tipping are blighting local communities. They cost our economy vast amounts of money, pollute our environment and harm our wildlife.

We must crack-down on these criminals who have no regard for the impact they have on peoples' lives. The time is right for us to look at how we can best tackle these antisocial and inexcusable crimes.

The review will:

- Consider the types of crimes being committed and organised crime groups involved;
- Consider the environmental, community and economic impacts of serious and organised waste crime;
- Consider how the Environment Agency, other organisations, and the law enforcement system can work together to tackle the threat;
- Make recommendations for a strategic approach to serious and organised waste crime.

Minister of State for Security and Economic Crime, Ben Wallace, said:

Organised crime groups exploit any opportunity to make money. Our local communities are being scarred by the illegal dumping of waste, while at the same time people are being conned into placing contracts with dodgy waste firms.

We are committed to ending this scourge and I look forward to exploring what more Defra, local authorities, the private sector and police can do on this issue.

More than 850 new illegal waste sites were discovered by the Environment Agency 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, particularly in rural areas, as well as posing a risk to key national infrastructure.

A [study](#) by the Home Office suggests that criminals may also use waste management activities such as operating illegal waste sites as a cover for crimes such as theft, human trafficking, fraud, drugs supply, firearms supply and money laundering.

Review chair Lizzie Noel has more than 20 years' experience of senior roles in both the private and public sectors. She will engage with a wide range of stakeholders, and the Call for Evidence will enable a wider group of people to have their say.

Lizzie Noel said:

The health of our communities, environment, and economy is being harmed by organised groups committing serious waste crimes.

This review is an opportunity to properly understand the extent of this criminal activity, and I look forward to working with a range of partners to ensure our response is robust and effective.

Since 2014, the Government has given the Environment Agency an extra £60million towards enforcement work to tackle waste crime. This extra investment has shown a return of about £5 for every £1 extra spent.

Today's announcement builds on a range of new measures from the government to tackle waste crime, including [new powers](#) for the Environment Agency to lock the gates to problem waste sites to prevent waste illegally building up and powers to force operators to clear all the waste at problem sites, and [extending landfill tax](#) to include material disposed of at illegal waste sites with effect from April 2018.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Last year, we closed down two illegal wastes sites a day and were granted new powers to complement our existing enforcement efforts. Our officers are also out in communities, preventing and disrupting criminals through our intelligence led investigations, and also dealing with the consequences of illegally dumped waste to the environment and the wider community.

We welcome the opportunity to review how best we deploy our resources and strengthen ties across government and with the police to target organised criminal rings behind illegal waste operations, and bring perpetrators to justice.

The Government has also [recently given councils powers](#) to hand out on-the-spot fines to fly-tippers, made it easier for vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping to be stopped, searched and seized, and later this year [will introduce new fixed penalty notices](#) for householders who pass their waste to a fly-tipper, subject to Parliamentary approval.

The review is due to be completed by September 2018.

Further information:

- Serious organised crime is the planning, coordinating and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks
- Lizzie Noel will be supported by an advisory panel bringing a wide range of experience in serious organised crime, security, and waste. The panel comprises Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire, Colin Church, Chief Executive Officer at Chartered Institute of Waste Management, and Craig Naylor, Deputy Chief Constable in Lincolnshire Police.
- Householders can check if a waste carrier is an approved carrier on the Environment Agency [website](#).
- The cost of waste crime to the English economy being over £600m in 2015 is from [Rethinking waste crime](#), Environmental Services Association Educational Trust, 2017.
- The figure of the extra investment in the EA having shown a return of about £5 for every £1 extra spent on tackling waste crime is from [Waste crime interventions and evaluation project report](#).
- The Home Office study referred to is [Understanding organised crime: estimating the scale and the social and economic costs](#), October 2013.
- For further information please contact Defra press office on 020 8225 7317 or out of hours on 0345 051 8486

Terms of Reference

- The Serious and Organised Waste Crime review is initiated by, and will report to, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Purpose

- To consider, in depth, serious and organised waste crime – including our response to it – so that we can make actionable recommendations for a strategic approach to waste crime.

- This review will directly inform a strategic approach to waste crime, which will be published in the new resources and waste strategy. This strategy is part of the Government's environmental policy following the 25-year plan and the Clean Growth strategy. The review will also help shape future direction of work in this area.

Objectives

The review will:

- consider the extent and nature of crimes being committed, and the types of organised crime groups involved
- consider the environmental, community and economic impacts of serious and organised waste crime
- consider how the Environment Agency is responding to the threat
- consider the ability of the Environment Agency, other organisations, and the law enforcement system as a whole, to work together to tackle the threat
- make recommendations for a strategic approach to serious and organised waste crime
- make recommendations for the future direction of work

In implementing the review, the review team should also take account of:

- the enforcement landscape and the multiple organisations involved
- the sustainability, scalability, deliverability and cost-benefit trade-offs of responses to serious and organised waste crime
- wider work underway in Defra, the Home Office and the Environment Agency
- lessons learnt and examples of best practice from a wide range of stakeholders

Scope

- The review will take a broad approach, to understand the scale, nature and impact of serious and organised crime and current and potential response to it. The focus will be on England only.
- The review will concentrate on organised criminal involvement in waste crime, characteristics of criminal enterprises, intelligence gathering and enforcement effectiveness. It will consider fly-tipping and smaller waste crime incidents only in connection to the review's understanding of organised criminality.

Roles and responsibilities

- The review will be chaired by Defra Non-Executive Director Lizzie Noel. The review will report to the Defra Secretary of State and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State.

Ways of working

- The Chair will be responsible for overseeing the strategic direction and progress of the review and delivery of the final report. The Chair will

work closely with the Head of Waste and Recycling, who will oversee the review within Defra. Progress reviews will be conducted monthly.

- The Chair, with advice taken from the core working group, may seek to access wider expertise dependent on need.
- The review will be supported by a Secretariat within Defra, and by staff within Defra and the Environment Agency throughout.
- A communications strategy and stakeholder engagement plan will be developed. All communication with the media will be undertaken through Defra Communications Team or the Environment Agency Communications team.

Timing

- The review will commence in June 2018 and is due to be completed by September 2018.

Reporting

- An evidence-based report will be submitted to Defra Ministers for consideration, detailing the findings of the review.

Guidance: UK national standard for marine oil spill response organisations

Updated: Added info re. delay in implementation of the UK national standard.

The Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention(OPRC)) Regulations 1998 (SI 1988 No.1056) (as amended) state that certain UK ports, harbours and oil-handling facilities and all offshore installations on the UK Continental Shelf must submit OPRC Plans to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) (in the case of ports, harbours and oil handling facilities) or the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (in the case of offshore installations, as defined in the Regulation) for approval.

As part of the approvals process for ports, harbours and oil handling facilities to which the Regulations apply, the MCA require contingency plans to detail the contract they hold with an accredited third-party Tier 2 Oil Spill Response Organisation (OSRO).

BEIS similarly require responsible persons of offshore installations to detail in Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (OPEPs) any arrangements in place with an OSRO.

Following a consultation with industry on the creation of a UK National Standard for OSROs, carried out between January and March 2018, a final

version has been published. The Standard will remain a living document, evolving with the requirements of industry and new best practice guidance, but any new amendments will be based on further dialogue and consultation between the appropriate government departments and agencies, approved Accrediting Bodies and the OSRO industry.

The date of implementation for the UK national standard has been postponed by two weeks. The delay is to allow time for the accrediting bodies approved to deliver the standard to co-ordinate on key areas of their schemes (not including price) to ensure that they are consistent in their assessments of OSROs.

The amendment to the OPRC guidelines for ports and the guidance notes for preparing oil pollution emergency plans, to state that only oil spill response organisations accredited under the UK national standard will be recognised for the purpose of fulfilling their specified Tier 2 response service requirements, will now be published on 24th September 2018. From this date, a one-year grace period will be in effect. During this time OSROs will still be recognised by the MCA and BEIS in their review of OPRC plans and OPEPS (respectively) for the purpose of Tier 2 service provision. Before the end of the grace period OSROs are expected to seek re-accreditation in accordance with the UK standard from an accrediting body which has been approved by the MCA and BEIS to deliver this service. From the 23rd September 2019, OSROs which have not been re-accredited in accordance with the UK standard will no longer be recognised by the MCA and BEIS as fulfilling Tier 2 service requirements in their reviews of OPRC plans and OPEPs.

The MCA and BEIS will now be accepting applications from Accrediting Bodies wishing to be approved to deliver the UK Standard. Details on the requirements for provision can be found in the final UK Standard document. Proposed schemes of accreditation, detailing how the requirements have been fulfilled should be submitted by email to ukresponderstandard@mcga.gov.uk or by post to:

Counter Pollution and Salvage Branch

Spring Place

105 Commercial Road

Southampton

S015 1EG

Follow up meetings will be held after review of the proposed scheme by the MCA, at which point a Memorandum of Agreement for the delivery of this accreditation service on behalf of the MCA and BEIS will be signed. The version of the UK Standard published here is Version 1.

Any questions can be submitted to: ukresponderstandard@mcga.gov.uk

For details on which ports and harbours the OPRC Regulations apply to, see: [The Merchant Shipping \(Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention\) Regulations 1998, Regulation 3: Application](#)

Corporate report: Customer Notice 2018-008: Stakeholder Engagement/Transport Services

LLW Repository Ltd publishes Customer Notices which provide key information and updates to Customers.

Research and analysis: Third Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones (Defra): RPC opinion

This is the RPC's opinion on Defra's consultation stage impact assessment relating to designation of the third tranche of Marine Conservation Zones.

Research and analysis: Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2018

Updated: Methodology paper added

We provide 3 sets of conversion factors:

Condensed set: Most frequently requested by users. An abridged version of the full set of factors, designed to reduce the volume of information users have to navigate through to find the factors they want. Recommended for most, and new, users of conversion factors

Full set: This set of factors contains all of the available factors for the selected year, and is recommended for advanced users only due to the volume of information presented.

Flat file set: contains same information as the full set, but arranged for automated processes – available from 2014 onwards. Not recommended for most users.

The methodology paper explains how the conversion factors are derived.

For new users of the conversion factors, we recommend you download the condensed set of conversion factors from the latest available year and read the guidance in the document's introductory sheet. Then follow the informative text at the top of each conversion factor tab in the output files.

For repeat users of the conversion factors we suggest that you download your preferred factor set and read the 'what's new' sheet before using the conversion factors. This sheet highlights the most significant changes to the conversion factors made in this update. Following the 'what's new' guidance will ensure that reporting is consistent and comparable year-on-year.