

Illegal waste activities targeted in Essex

Environment Agency staff joined forces with officers from Essex Police, Essex County Council Planning Enforcement and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service to enter onto a suspected illegal waste site in Essex.

The visit, which took place on 30 June under the name Operation Nutmeg and with strict adherence to social distancing measures, followed on from an earlier visit to the site in the Bradwell Wick area carried out at the start of June.

The aim behind the planned action was to work with enforcement partners to gather intelligence and evidence and disrupt those believed to be involved in illegal waste activities.

Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said:

Waste crime undermines legitimate business, can cause harm to the environment and misery for local people.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, we are continuing to work with our enforcement partners to disrupt illegal waste activities and remain committed to the closure of illegal waste sites, whilst always adhering to social distancing measures.

We urge anyone with information about waste crime to contact our hotline 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or on [their website](#).

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, said:

Illegal waste disposal is damaging to the environment, but also has significant social and economic impacts.

It is not acceptable and we are working hard in Essex to tackle offending and stop it happening in the first place. We welcome activity, such as Operation Nutmeg, which helps to tackle this activity and send a clear message to offenders.

We encourage all residents and businesses in Essex to be vigilant when disposing of waste; to make sure they understand their duty of care and to always check for a waste carrier license when someone is disposing of things on their behalf.

Sergeant Paul Brady from the Essex Police Rural Engagement Team said:

We treat the illegal depositing of waste extremely seriously and work with our partners to bring offenders to justice. Disposing of waste illegally will not be tolerated in Essex and you will risk a prison sentence or a hefty fine from the courts.

Cllr Tony Ball, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Growth said:

As the Waste Planning Authority we will not hesitate to take enforcement action against those who breach planning regulations. The success of this operation shows what effective partnership working between ourselves and the Environment Agency can achieve.

Illegal waste sites can cause serious pollution incidents, bad smells, chemical spills, blight on the landscape, and misery for surrounding communities.

Sites that store or treat hazardous waste and chemicals without safeguards are breaking the law and risk causing serious pollution incidents that damage rivers, habitats and pose a risk to human health.