

Press release: A crushing end for seized waste crime vehicle

The vehicle was detained by officers last year after months of surveillance and intelligence gathering as part of Operation Poppy, a joint operation between the Environment Agency and local police into 28 incidents of large scale illegal dumping of commercial waste in North Staffordshire, Shropshire, South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire. The DVLA also issued a prohibition notice and immediately removed the vehicle off the road after the vehicle was found to be using trade plates illegally and deemed unsafe to drive.

The driver and passenger were questioned by the police and remain a line of enquiry.

The vehicle was used to transport and dump large quantities of shredded household commercial waste, varying between 30 and 500 tonnes, on farmland, private wooded estates, secluded public footpath areas and business compounds. Secured areas were broken into and locks replaced by the offenders.

Environment Agency officers working on the case have since reported a reduction in illegal waste activity in the area since the lorry was seized.

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

We are determined to make life hard for waste criminals by preventing and disrupting illegal activity. Today's vehicle crushing highlights the lengths we will go to make criminals pay for their unlawful deeds.

Thanks to the recent £30 million funding from the government and new powers to tackle problematic sites including authority to lock up sites and force rogue operators out of business, we are in a better position to safeguard the environment, local communities and the economy from the effects of waste crime.

In the financial year 16/17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2m in fines.

As the fight against waste crime ramps up, the Environment Agency has recently introduced body worn cameras for waste enforcement officers. The move follows a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

Environment Agency, West Midlands Area Director, Mike Grimes said:

This is the second vehicle destroyed this week, that has been taken as part of Environment Agency enforcement action. The seizure of these vehicles give a clear message that the Environment Agency takes waste crime seriously and will persistently pursue those suspected of illegally dumping waste.

We're making good progress to tackle waste crime. Our enforcement action is resulting in higher fines and custodial sentences. In the past 2 weeks, prosecutions in West Midlands have resulted in a 26-month jail term for one waste criminal and a 200 hour community service order for another.

Last year, the Environment Agency closed down 2 illegal waste sites every day and we have already seized another vehicle connected with waste crime across the Midlands. With our new waste powers, we can take tougher action to reduce illegal waste activity, which will make a real difference to the local communities.

Gill Heath, Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet member for Communities, said:

It took us 3 days to remove approximately 175 tonnes of rubbish from the car park and footpath at Madeley Heath, so I'm delighted that a vehicle involved in that crime is being taken off the road permanently.

Dumping commercial waste has the potential to harm people and the environment, causes a great deal of trouble for the victims and it's extremely frustrating that public bodies have to spend taxpayers' money cleaning up a crime.

Members of the public can report illegal waste activity anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via the [online form](#)