

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 07 October 2024

Question from: Cllr Hunt

Question to: Cllr Durrans

It has become apparent over the past few months that there has been a Borough wide spike in fly tipping, which has caused immense pressure on the Neighbourhood Teams and of course enforcement at CMBC. I know this because the pin drop map for Elland is littered with reported sites of terrible examples of fly tipping which both myself and residents have logged. In some cases, I have raised and re-raised increasing piles of fly tipping in Elland to no avail. When I press for answers, I am informed it is due to the overstretched enforcement team struggling to keep up with the increase in incidents across Calderdale. We as a council can either ignore this emergency and the miserable fall-out from allowing fly tipping to go unanswered or address the root causes for why we are unable to respond expeditiously and what we will do to deal with this issue going forward. What do you intend to do about this situation?"

Response

Can I first thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

I can assure you I am fully aware and share the concern being expressed as to the fly-tipping issues across Calderdale.

You refer to the issue as a spike in the last few months however I can confirm that the number of fly-tipping reports is not a recent development. Following the Covid pandemic fly-tipping like many other environmental nuisance types such as noise and dog related matters reporting levels have continued to increase at an unprecedented level and this is of significant concern to Cabinet and officers.

In the first 6 months of this financial year (April to Sept) the number of fly-tipping reports **has increased by 38% (+779)** when compared to the same period of time last year.

- 2024 (April to Sept) = 2807
- 2023 (April to Sept) = 2028

Officers have responded accordingly but given there has been no increase in resources due to the demand on the Council's budget, they have had to look at innovative ways to tackle fly-tipping and other illegal waste/ littering concerns that we commonly refer to as "Environmental Blight".

In the last 2 years the Council has:

- Increased the use of enforcement cameras which has seen deployment to the hotspot areas across the borough.
- Increased the use of enforcement powers as well as working with neighbouring authorities to identify good practice.

- Continued improvement to the on-line reporting of fly-tipping and the feedback that is given to residents who report such incidents – there are further plans to improve this service including how reporting persons can help prioritise officer response by providing specific information as to the nature and content of the tipped waste.
- Successfully secured funding from DEFRA which has seen static enforcement cameras deployed on key rural roads in and out of the borough.
- Following a review of Fixed Penalty Notice Charges in July 2023, the fine level for fly-tipping has been increased to £1000, the maximum tariff allowed under DEFRA guidance. We are one of only a few local authorities to implement this level of charge.
- Worked with communities and elected members on initiatives to tackle fly-tipping such as the A672 Gateway Pilot in Ryburn. The Council recognises the invaluable work of volunteers in keeping Calderdale tidy and I do know that the Community Protection Team is exploring further ways to improve the relationship and information sharing with community groups.

I'm pleased to report that the Community Protection Team has taken robust enforcement action when evidence has been found and so far this year, the team has issued **33 FPNs** for offences of fly-tipping and duty of care (this is where the officer cannot positively identify the actual fly-tipper and therefore the tariff is set at a lesser amount (£150) as per DEFRA guidance).

This is a significant increase on the same period as last year which saw 6 FPNs issued.

Fly-tipping offending is a crime type that delivers a high reward for low-risk behaviour and given the topography of the borough and its size Calderdale is highly susceptible to this type of criminality. Our resources are stretched as they look to tackle fly-tipping, an epidemic that is not just restricted to Calderdale so I do thank the member for recognising that our resources are stretched and under pressure but as I hope you can see there is no lack of effort or commitment from Officers and this Cabinet.

In respect to the members concern in respect to Elland I will ask officers who are involved in the Safer Cleaner Greener Group to speak to him and identify the specific issues in Elland.