



Bromsgrove
District Council

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SCRUTINY REPORT

FLYTIPPING — **SCRUTINY REPORT**

Task Group Report –
Scrutiny Steering Board
February 2007

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
REPORT OF THE FLYTIPPING TASK GROUP

FEBRUARY 2007

MEMBERS

Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell J.P. (Chairman), D. Hancox, S. R. Peters, C. R. Scurrall and C. J. Tidmarsh.

SUMMARY

In brief, the role of the Flytipping Task Group was to:

- examine all aspects of flytipping in Bromsgrove District;
- to determine the extent, nature and impact of the flytipping problem;
- investigate how this Council deals with flytipping;
- where necessary, recommendations be made for improvements to existing arrangements for tackling flytipping;

For the purpose of this report, the definition of 'Flytipping' is to include all types of illegally deposited waste except for abandoned vehicles. (Abandoned vehicles are dealt with separately and therefore do not fall into the remit of this Task Group.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A Guide for the Public
Information relating to flytipping be incorporated into the Waste Awareness Guide currently being compiled by officers from Street Scene and Waste Management. (*Cost: Nil*)
2. Re-use and Recycling Schemes
The re-use guide produced by Worcestershire County Council be emailed to all members. (Printed versions also be made available in Members' Room.) (*Cost: Minimal – only printing costs of two guides.*)
3. Reporting Flytipping
Officers be requested to regularly publicise the various ways in which the public can report flytipping to this Council i.e. telephoning, emailing or visiting the Customer Service Centre or by completing an electronic form on the Council's website. (*Cost: Minimal and could be met within existing budget*)

4. Display at the Customer Service Centre
Information relating to flytipping be incorporated into the existing Street Scene and Waste Management display at the Customer Service Centre. *(Cost: Nil)*

5. National Flytipping Prevention Group (NFTPG)
The guide by the National Flytipping Prevention Group be publicised by the Council by creating a link to its website from the Council's website and offering a copy to any landowner who contacts the Council for assistance and advice on how to tackle flytipping. *(Cost: Minimal – only printing and posting when necessary)*

6. Disposal of Tyres
The website for the Tyre Recovery Association (www.tyrerecovery.org.uk) be used by officers and publicised by this Council by creating a link to its website on our website. *(Cost: Nil)*

7. Environment Agency Flytipping Forum
The Head of Street Scene and Waste Management be requested to ensure that a representative from the Council attend all future meetings of the Environment Agency Flytipping Forum to ensure effective partnership working with the Environment Agency is continued. *(Cost: Minimal – travel costs only)*

8. Household Waste Site and Permit Scheme Trial
The District Council's Press and Media Relations Officer assist, if possible, in publicising the County Council's permit scheme trial in the New Year to ensure all residents are aware of the new scheme. It is believed publicity might reduce cross-border traffic trying to use the waste site unaware of the permit trial and therefore perhaps resorting to flytipping as a consequence. *(Cost: Minimal - Could avoid future increase in costs for clearing flytipping as increased publicity may help reduce the likelihood of an increase in flytipping in the area around the household waste tip.)*

9. CCTV
Should the flytipping problem in Bromsgrove worsen, the possibility of introducing a phased scheme to deal with flytipping be considered. It is suggested that the scheme could include the use of dummy cameras as an initial step. Other phases of the scheme could be the use of mobile CCTV and appropriate signs as well as other CCTV systems as appropriate such as covert surveillance. However, this would need to be fully investigated as and when necessary. *(Cost: Nil. However, if the use of CCTV systems was investigated in the future, all financial implications would have to be taken into consideration at that time.)*

10. Perryfields Smallholdings in Sidemoor
The Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management be asked to arrange a letter to be sent to the Manager of Property Services at Worcestershire County Council asking that they consider the suggestion of improving the gate and fencing around Perryfields Smallholdings to reduce accessibility which has proven to be a popular site for flytipping. The obvious benefit to this Council is it links to the Council's priority of having a clean district and also the reputation of the Council as local residents will see the improvement. The major benefit to the County Council is, due to the likelihood of flytipping on that site decreasing, less funding will be required to pay the District Council to clear up the waste. *(Cost: Minimal – printing and posting of one letter)*

11. Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)
It is ensured that there are good communication links between all parties (Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust) so that effective partnership working can continue to be strengthened. *(Cost: Nil)*

12. Parish Councils – Waste Awareness Guide
Along with a copy of this report, a Waste Awareness Guide (see recommendation 1) be sent to all Parish Councils, once complete (subject to approval). *(Cost: Minimal – only printing and posting)*

13. Parish Councils – Response
Street Scene and Waste Management Officers be requested to contact each Parish Council and respond to individual comments made to inform them how the Council is addressing the issues. *(Cost: Minimal – only printing and posting)*

14. Flytipping Hot Spots
When Street Scene and Waste Management are unable to promptly remove flytipping, whilst waste removal is being arranged, the option of cordoning off flytipping incidents similar to police investigation scenes (particularly those in highly visible areas) with a sign stating that Council officers are aware of the issue and are dealing with it, be looked into further by officers and implemented if possible. To further deter flytipping, it could also state on the temporary sign that it is an offence to flytip and that anyone caught would be prosecuted and could face a fine of up to £50,000 and imprisonment. *(Cost: Minimal and could be met within existing budget)*

15. Increasing profile of next prosecution
This Council ensures it does all it can to increase the profile of the next prosecution to show residents that the matter is taken seriously and is dealt with accordingly. It is also believed that such action could deter others from flytipping. *(Cost: Minimal and could be met within existing budget)*

16. Publicity with involvement of local schools and media
The possibility of involving schools and the local media by inviting pupils to design a poster relating to flytipping be looked into further. *(Cost: Minimal and could be met within existing budget)*

17. Publicity of enforcement action
When an incident of flytipping is reported, either the local press or the Council's press officer is contacted to take photographs and run a story in the local newspapers to show the public that flytipping is taken seriously by this Council and at the same time help to deter others from flytipping. *(Cost: Minimal and could be met within existing budget)*

Please Note: Members of the Task Group also suggested that re-use schemes should be publicised on the application forms for the bulky collection service to inform members of the public of alternatives (see page 12 of this report). However, this has not been included as a recommendation in this report as officers have already implemented this suggestion and an updated version of the application form is attached as Appendix 6.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 1st August 2006, it was decided a Task Group would be established to scrutinise issues relating to flytipping.

The Task Group's terms of reference which was compiled by the appointed Chairman, Councillor Miss Campbell, was approved by the Board at its meeting held on 5th September 2006 and 31st October 2006, following amendments by the Task Group at its first meeting held on 12th October 2006. The full terms of reference is attached as Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

There were a total of six task group meetings and at the first meeting a schedule of work was devised.

The Task Group covered a range of areas including:

- Flytipping problem faced by this Council at the present time and historically, including hotspots in the District
- Flytipping triggers
- How to report flytipping
- Enforcement including fixed penalty notices and prosecution
- Roles and responsibilities of this Council, private land owners, Worcestershire County Council and Environment Agency
- Household collection service, disposal of bulky refuse, recycling and reuse schemes
- Excessive packaging
- Disposal of tyres, electrical goods and batteries
- The role of Community Safety (Neighbourhood Wardens and CCTV); Environmental Health Team; Street Scene and Waste Management and Strategic Housing.
- Flycapture Enforcement Project
- Issues surrounding Worcestershire County Council's Household Waste Site located in Romsley and the introduction of a Permit Scheme Trial
- Information on Birmingham City Council's Operation Cleansweep, Borderline and sting operations and ways in which colleagues at Birmingham deal with flytipping
- Comments made by Parish Councils in regard to flytipping in their Wards
- Flytipping issues relating to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust and partnership working with this Council
- All legal aspects (Environment Protection Act 1990 and Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005)
- Positive publicity to raise public awareness

The Flytipping Task Group decided to invite several witnesses including officers from the Environment Agency and other local authorities as well as officers from this Council. A list of all those invited are set out in Appendix 2.

A press release was issued informing the public the Flytipping Task Group had been set up and members of the public were encouraged to submit any comments and suggestions relating to flytipping in the District. The Task Group also sent out a questionnaire to all Parish Councils requesting comments. There was an excellent response rate to the questionnaire and 70% of Parish Councils gave a written response.

A wealth of information was considered by members in between meetings which related to other scrutiny exercises undertaken by other local authorities across the Country and Defra Good Practice Guide for local authorities.

The detailed minutes of Flytipping Task Group meetings gives further information on the Task Group's investigations. If any member would like a copy of any of the minutes, please contact the relevant committee services officer (see final page of this report for contact details).

FINDINGS

Scale of flytipping problem in Bromsgrove District

Members of the Task Group gathered a large amount of information in relation to flytipping and we were pleasantly surprised to learn that Bromsgrove District has a relatively small problem with flytipping compared to other local authorities.

The Task Group were informed that the overall national ranking for this authority from figures for 2004/05 was 23. This is taken from the total of 343 local authorities in the UK with 1 being the best and 343 being the worst. It is also interesting to note that neighbouring authorities tend to suffer far more with flytipping as the table below shows:

Local Authority	Overall National Ranking
Bromsgrove District Council	23
Worcester City Council	30
Wychavon District Council	165
Wyre Forest District Council	174
Redditch Borough Council	162

Total of 343 local authorities in UK - 1 being the best and 343 being the worst

Flytipping in the District

Although in the previous section the table shows that flytipping is not a major problem in comparison to other local authorities, needless to say, members of the Task Group believe it is important that this Council should not be complacent and should ensure that everything is being done to deal with flytipping that is occurring in the District.

Officers record all incident of flytipping that occur in the District using 12 categories taken from the Flycapture Database as set by Defra which are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Household black sacks | 7. Tyres |
| 2. Other household | 8. Construction |
| 3. Commercial | 9. Commercial black bags |
| 4. White Goods | 10. Vehicle parts |
| 5. Green waste | 11. Electrical |
| 6. Other | 12. Asbestos |

Flycapture is the national flytipping database developed by Defra and the Environment Agency and was launched in April 2004. All local authorities and the Environment Agency are required to submit monthly data. It contains summary information on incidents dealt with and actions taken. For further information please visit the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk

According to the Council's records for 2005/6, the most common form of flytipping in Bromsgrove District is household black sacks (e.g. black sacks being left beside wheelie bins - side waste).

Who is responsible for dealing with flytipping

Responsibility for dealing with flytipping rests primarily with local authorities and the Environment Agency.

The Environment Agency is a national organisation and tackles larger and more organised environmental crime. The work of the Environment Agency includes dealing with illegally operating waste sites and unlicensed shipping companies and transfer yards. For further information on the Environment Agency please visit their website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk

In order to clarify who deals with what, a working protocol has been agreed (Working Better Together, Flytipping Protocol 6, 2005). In brief, the Environment Agency investigates the larger scale incidents of flytipping involving hazardous waste and incidents involving organised gangs of flytippers whereas local authorities tackle clear up of flytipping on publicly owned land including roads and lay-bys.

With regards to clearing flytipping on privately owned land, it was made clear to the Task Group that it is the responsibility of the land owner to remove waste deposited on their land.

How flytipping is tackled in Bromsgrove

We were pleased to find that officers from various services in the Council are aware of the flytipping issue and are actively dealing with flytipping in a variety of ways depending on what is flytipped and where. In brief, the usual procedure for dealing with flytipping is: to record the incident electronically; inspection; enforcement action (as appropriate); clean up; and report through Flycapture to Defra.

- Side Waste (Kerbside Collection)

As members are aware, this Council made the decision to collect waste via a kerbside wheelie bin system which means that if anyone leaves side waste beside their bin, it is not collected and is in fact classed as flytipping. Although some local authorities deal with side waste by immediately issuing a fine, this Council is at present taking a more flexible and tolerant approach and instead is trying to educate the public and inform them of their responsibility to appropriately dispose of waste. They are also given an opportunity to do so.

Street Scene and Waste Management staff leave any side waste left by bins and report it as flytipping (for performance information) as well as giving details to the Customer Service Centre so that if residents contact the Council asking why the bags had not been collected, the situation can be explained. As members are aware, there has been and is continuing publicity regarding the kerbside refuse and recycling collection service giving information on how to properly use the service.

The Task Group were also made aware that officers are looking at the possibility of a supervisor from Street Scene and Waste Management visiting those who leave side waste to advise them that they were committing an offence and request that they dispose of their waste appropriately. This proposal would be for a trial period only and its effectiveness in reducing the amount of side waste would be reviewed.

- Warning Letters and Visits

Neighbourhood Wardens report any incidents of flytipping following a foot patrol of the area or after a report to the wardens from a member of the public. The wardens obtain a photograph of the flytipping in most cases and if the waste can be traced back to its owner, a warning letter is sent out to the address (an example letter is attached as Appendix 3). The next stage of the process is to identify the landowner to ensure removal of waste.

- Prosecution

Environmental Health Officers also send out a carefully worded warning letter to individuals suspected of being involved in flytipping and although enforcement action against flytippers is difficult, in the past two years the Council had initiated legal proceedings against two offenders.

There are various issues surrounding prosecution which were discussed and it is felt that it would be inappropriate to expand on these issues within this report due to the possible adverse impact on future prosecutions. However, should any member of the Council require any more details, it is suggested that you contact the appropriate committee services officer in the first instance (see final page of this report for contact details).

- Empty Properties

Members of the Task Group found out that empty properties, particularly properties in rural areas which were concealed, were likely to attract flytipping. However the role of the Council's Housing Initiatives Officer is to locate properties that have been left empty, identify the owners and work with them to help bring the properties back into use. There is also assistance available to owners including a discretionary grant of up to £5000.

Although the grant is usually a good incentive, if owners refuse such assistance it is still the owner's responsibility to at least make the property safe and to a standard that does not attract flytipping. It was reported that compared to other local authorities in Worcestershire, there is a low number of empty properties.

- Environment Agency

The Task Group was informed that there have been five incidents of flytipping in the District reported to the Environment Agency during the current year compared to a total of six incidents reported in the previous year. It was stated that four out of the five incidents had enforcement outcomes (i.e. formal warning letter, formal caution or prosecution).

The Team Leader of Environment Management from the Environment Agency confirmed that they had a good working relationship with this Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ A Guide for the Public

One of the first recommendations that came to light was the idea of raising public awareness in regard to flytipping. It is believed that a guide for the public informing them of all the issues surrounding flytipping such as what is classed as flytipping; who is responsible for dealing with it; and how to report incidents of flytipping could be very useful. It is understood that officers from Street Scene are currently compiling a waste awareness guide which could include information on flytipping.

It is possible that some members of the public are flytipping unknowingly and officers agreed that the public need to be aware that if they leave side waste by their wheelie bins they are in fact flytipping. It is also important to regularly remind members of the public that if they hire “a man with a van” to dispose of their waste that they ensure the person has a registered waste carrier licence as if the person hired disposes of the waste material illegally, it is the hirer that is responsible and potentially could be prosecuted.

It is felt that such information should be incorporated into a guide to assist the public as it is believed that ignorance is a trigger for flytipping. Therefore the first recommendation of the Task Group is as follows:

Recommendation 1	Information relating to flytipping be incorporated into the Waste Awareness Guide currently being compiled by officers from Street Scene and Waste Management.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications directly related to this recommendation as a Waste Awareness Guide is already being compiled.

This recommendation is in line with the good practice guide from Defra which states that local authorities should be educating the public of the risks associated with flytipping, informing them of services available and alerting them to their rights and responsibilities.

(It should be pointed out that officers from Street Scene and Waste Management do already liaise with the Press and Media Relations Officer, and it has been reported that there is an excellent relationship between the departments. However, the Task Group would like more information to be provided to the public.)

➤ Re-use and Recycling Schemes

The Task Group discovered there were re-use and recycling schemes in the County but there was concern that such facilities were not widely known. However, the Task Group was informed that the County Council had issued a

guide recently giving information of all re-use schemes in the County such as The Network in Kidderminster. This is attached as Appendix 4

Further information on all local re-use schemes can be found on both the County Council's and District Council's website.

Recommendation 2	The re-use guide produced by Worcestershire County Council be emailed to all members. (Printed versions also be made available in the Members' Room.)
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications relating to emailing the document and only minimal cost for printing two copies of the leaflet.

➤ Reporting Flytipping

Reports of flytipping incidents are normally made to the Council or to the Environment Agency on their 24-hour hotline number: 0800 80 70 60. Members of the public can also report flytipping via the Council's website by completing an on-line form. It was confirmed that the public can report incidents anonymously if they wish to do so.

There is information on how to report incidents of flytipping on the Council's website (attached as Appendix 5). However, the Task Group is concerned that not all members of the public are aware of how to report flytipping and feel this is something that needs to be publicised more which is why it is believed it should be included in the Waste Awareness Guide as stated above.

The Task Group did initially suggest having a dedicated number for reporting flytipping which would be dealt with by the Customer Service Centre; however, after further thought and a discussion with officers, it is understood that this proposal would not support the strategic vision of the Customer Services Centre and Worcestershire Hub having a single contact number giving access to several services. Therefore, members would like to recommend the following to increase awareness:

Recommendation 3	Officers be requested to regularly publicise the various ways in which the public can report flytipping to this Council i.e. telephoning, emailing or visiting the Customer Service Centre or by completing an electronic form on the Council's website.
Financial Implications	There would be minimal financial implications which can be met through the existing budget.

➤ Display at the Customer Service Centre

It was understood that there is a display on recycling at the Customer Service Centre and it was requested that officers consider adding information relating to flytipping for the general public.

Recommendation 4	Information relating to flytipping be incorporated into the existing Street Scene and Waste Management display at the Customer Service Centre.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications directly related to this recommendation.

➤ Bulky Collection Service

The Bulky Collection Service was discussed by members and officers and it was reported that the usual charge is £10.30 with the exception of very large items such as pianos which cost £30.90. It was pointed out that this was a subsidised service.

We were told that if the Customer Service Centre received queries relating to the bulky collection service, the public are informed of the re-use schemes as an alternative. Members believe that this is extremely helpful and it was decided that a recommendation would be included in this report requesting officers go one step further and include information about such schemes on the application forms for the bulky collection service. However, officers have already revised the form following the suggestion of the Task Group and the updated version is attached as Appendix 6

➤ National Flytipping Prevention Group (NFTPG)

The Task Group was informed that there is the National Flytipping Prevention Group (made up of a group of organisations, including the Environment Agency) that are working with the common aim of identifying solutions to the problem of flytipping. There is a guide to tackling flytipping for landowners which can be accessed from their website: www.nftpg.org.uk

Recommendation 5	The guide by the National Flytipping Prevention Group be publicised by the Council by creating a link to its website from the Council's website and offering a copy to any landowner who contacts the Council for assistance and advice on how to tackle flytipping.
Financial Implications	There are minimal financial implications relating to possible printing and postage of the Guide produced by the National Flytipping Prevention Group which can be met through the existing budget.

➤ Disposal of Tyres

Amongst other items, it appeared that there was a growing problem with appropriately disposing of tyres. It was explained that they could no longer be disposed of via landfill but we were informed by the Environment Agency that there is a national organisation called the Tyre Recovery Association (TRA) whose aim it is to provide information and support to the public and industry to encourage re-use, recovery and appropriate disposal of tyres.

Recommendation 6	The website for the Tyre Recovery Association (www.tyrerecovery.org.uk) be used by officers and publicised by this Council by creating a link to its website from our website.
Financial Implications	There no financial implications relating to this recommendation.

➤ Environment Agency Flytipping Forum

There is a Flytipping Forum that has been set up by the Environment Agency which representatives from local authorities have been invited to attend. They are held on a 3-6 monthly basis and Bromsgrove District Council has been invited.

It is understood that although the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management did attend these meetings initially, he was unable to continue due to workload. However, it is believed that such meetings are vital to ensure effective working with the Environment Agency, particularly as there is a local agreement being drafted relating to partner organisations joining together to pledge their active support to the actions included in the joint policy statement. Members feel it is important that this Council join in the consultation process of finalising the local agreement and joint policy statement and therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 7	The Head of Street Scene and Waste Management be requested to ensure that a representative from the Council attend all future meetings of the Environment Agency Flytipping Forum to make certain effective partnership working with the Environment Agency is continued.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications relating to this recommendation other than minimal expenses to cover travel to and from such meetings which can be met through the existing budget.

➤ Household Waste Site and Permit Scheme Trial

The Waste Services Manager from Worcestershire County Council attended a meeting of the Task Group and reported on the issues surrounding the household waste site located in the District. Worcestershire County Council would like to relocate the site to a more central part of the District and away from the West Midlands conurbation, however, it was explained that the County have been having difficulty in finding a suitable location for the household waste site.

It was acknowledged by the County Council's officer that there are several issues surrounding the design of the current household waste site and it is planned that once relocated, the site will be of a similar design to other recently refurbished sites in the County, including the site at Hanbury. The Task Group found out through their investigations that Worcestershire is very well serviced in relation to household waste sites compared to other counties.

It was reported by the County Council that a recent survey had shown that 50% of the waste deposited at the household waste site was due to cross border traffic. This finding had partly led to the County Council deciding to trial a residents only permit scheme for the household waste site in 2007 as approved by the Joint Members Waste Forum¹. It was explained that any resident would be able to use the tip providing they could show their permit or had ID proving they resided in the District. It was planned that the trial would take place in Bromsgrove and Redditch and would commence April 2007 following an extensive marketing campaign over three months which would also cover the Birmingham area. It was stated that residents would receive their permit with their Council Tax bills. A similar scheme was already in place in Birmingham.

It is hoped that a permit scheme may assist with the queuing issues as only residents with a permit would be able to access the site. Residents with commercial high-sided vehicles would also be allowed to access the site to dispose of household waste only. However, there are still some concerns amongst members of the Task Group that the permit scheme may increase flytipping in the surrounding area and therefore it is hoped that suitable land for relocation of the site will become available in the very near future.

Recommendation 8	The District Council's Press and Media Relations Officer assist in publicising the County Council's permit scheme trial in the New Year to ensure all residents are aware of the new scheme. It is believed publicity might reduce cross-border traffic trying to use the waste site unaware of the permit trial and therefore perhaps resorting to flytipping as a consequence).
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¹ Joint Members Waste Forum is made up of elected representatives from all local authorities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire whose aim is to look at reducing the amount of waste produced via recycling and re-use schemes.

Financial Implications	There are no financial implications relating to this recommendation, however, should flytipping increase around this area, there will be the added clear up costs. (Please note: The Press and Media Relations Officer has agreed to this recommendation.)
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➤ Green Waste Collection

It has been questioned whether the suspension of the green waste collection for a temporary period during three winter months may increase flytipping in the District. However, Council officers anticipate there will not be an increase in flytipping of green waste as less than 200 tonnes are collected per month in winter compared to 1000 tonnes per month at other times of the year. It was pointed out that there were other ways in which people could dispose of their green waste such as home composting or even via the bulky waste collection service if required.

Members were informed by the Waste Services Manager from Worcestershire County Council that the County Council fully support the District Council's decision to stop green waste during December to March and agreed that it was unlikely it would have any significant impact on flytipping. It was also mentioned that the County also heavily promoted home composting and minimising waste was a key focus similar.

➤ Excess Packaging

Members of the Task Group were concerned over the amount of excess packaging, however, we learnt that manufacturers do have to recover a certain percentage of their packaging (except when packaging was 100% recyclable) and Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) assisted retailers in reducing waste. It is believed the process of ensuring retailers select appropriately packaged products will be slow, partly due to long standing contracts with suppliers and financial implications. However, there has been a slight shift such as Sainsburys using compostable packaging and Tescos encouraging customers to reuse carrier bags.

➤ Provision of Skips

During our investigations, the Task Group put forward the idea of providing skips, perhaps with the assistance of Parish Councils. There was much discussion relating to this suggestion and although initially it appeared to be a good suggestion, we soon became aware of several issues surrounding this proposal which would cause the Council great difficulty in implementing it and perhaps put the Council at risk of losing its waste carriers licence due to increased legal implications.

There is also concern from officers that the provision of skips went against the work that is being carried out in partnership with other organisations to promote waste minimisation incentives. As well as the financial implications of hiring skips and the potential for skips to be overfilled (therefore leading to side waste which is flytipping!), it is also very unclear whether providing skips would reduce the amount of flytipping. In fact there is a possibility of encouraging more.

After discussing this at length and due to the reasons outlined above, it is the decision of the Task Group that providing skips is not a viable option. However, it is noted that the Council does supply skips following a request from Parish Councils for a litter picking exercise e.g. after a community event, which is very successful should continue.

➤ CCTV

The Task Group gathered information relating to CCTV and the use of dummy cameras from the Community Safety Partnership and the Environment Agency.

The Team Leader of Environment Management from the Environment Agency informed members that the Environment Agency and other local authorities had found dummy cameras and active cameras useful and it had been known for people who had flytipped to go back and pick up their waste, contact the Environment Agency and apologise for their actions.

It was stated that although CCTV could be effective, it was onerous on time and other resources and therefore, other possible alternatives which had also been known to be successful was the use of dummy cameras and permanent signs for mobile CCTV in other areas. It was also suggested that signs could be erected warning potential flytippers that the maximum fine was £50,000 and imprisonment to act as a deterrent.

The Environment Agency representative stated that there was a stock of 8 to 10 dummy cameras at Kidderminster some of which could be made available to this Council for use at hot spots. However, it was stressed that they should only ever be used as part of a bigger scheme should tipping continue.

Recommendation 9	Should the flytipping problem in Bromsgrove worsen, the possibility of introducing a phased scheme to deal with flytipping be looked considered. It is suggested that the scheme could include the use of dummy cameras as an initial step. Other phases of the scheme could be the use of mobile CCTV and appropriate signs as well as other CCTV systems as appropriate such as covert surveillance. However, this would need to be fully investigated as and when necessary.
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Financial Implications	There are no financial implications relating to this recommendation, however, if the flytipping problem in Bromsgrove worsened and the use of dummy cameras and CCTV was looked into, officers would need to investigate all associated costs (including any other implications such the need to comply with certain legislation).
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➤ Perryfields Smallholdings in Sidemoor

The Community Safety Officer and one of the Neighbourhood Wardens informed the Task Group that flytipping often occurred on the Perryfields Smallholds in Sidemoor which was owned by Worcestershire County Council. Amongst others, the workmanship of the gate leading on to the site was mentioned as a possible problem leading to flytipping as it was reported that it could be easily removed, therefore allowing access to vehicles. It was stated that between February and September 2006 it had cost Worcestershire County Council approximately £2500 for Street Scene and Waste Management Services to clear the area of waste.

However, according to the representative from Worcestershire County Council, it was felt that there was not a major issue and the partnership between the two Councils was working well. It was also confirmed that the County did reimburse the District for any clear up costs.

It is stated in the Good Practice Guide by Defra, local authorities need to reduce the availability or accessibility of popular sites for flytipping which leads us on to our next recommendation:

Recommendation 10	The Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management be asked to arrange a letter to be sent to the Manager of Property Services at Worcestershire County Council asking that they consider the suggestion of improving the gate and fencing around Perryfields Smallholdings to reduce accessibility on to this popular site for flytipping. The obvious benefit to this Council is it links to the Council's priority of having a clean district and also the reputation of the Council as local residents will see the improvement. The major benefit to the County Council is, due to the likelihood of flytipping on that site decreasing, less funding will be required to pay the District Council to clear up the waste.
Financial Implications	There are minimal financial implications i.e. the cost of sending a letter. It should be noted that although the cost of removing flytipping by this Council is funded by the County Council, if there were less incidents of

	flytipping then District Council staff would have more time to concentrate their efforts on other issues.
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Although CCTV could be an option in the future for this site, it was stated that it might not be an ideal solution due to the layout of the site, not to mention the financial implications. On the other hand, ensuring the fencing and gate of the site is secure is far less expensive and could lead to similar results of reducing flytipping in the area.

The Street Scene and Waste Manager informed the Task Group that sometimes there was a lengthy delay between when the flytipping appeared and Worcestershire County Council giving agreement for the District Council to clear the waste deposited on this site. However, we were assured that officers are already looking into this issue as it is understood that flytipping attracts flytipping and therefore any flytipping should be removed as quickly as possible. It is anticipated that the process can and will be shortened to avoid any unnecessary delays.

➤ Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)

BDHT reported that they disposed of waste which had been flytipped on their land; however, the private waste site they used did not take black bin bags. It was reported that there was side waste being left in the bin stores (i.e. black bin bags) due to the lack of space in the communal bins which therefore caused a problem for BDHT as they did not have a means available to dispose of them. This in turn also caused a problem for this Council as they could not always access the bins due to the side waste.

It was understood that this Council had recently commenced a six week trial and all side waste in the bin stores of flats belonging to BDHT would be removed by Council staff. BDHT are expecting the results of the trial and suggestions of ways forward to be reported to them soon after the end of the trial period.

Obviously BDHT residents are also our customers, consequently the Task Group believe it is important that they receive the same services as any other Council Tax payer. It was therefore believed by both BDHT officers and members of the Task Group that the most ideal solution would be to offer a recycling service to residents living in flats. We discovered that officers from Street Scene and Waste Management had already looked into this option and although it was unsuitable to give each resident their own boxes (due to health and safety issues), officers were liaising with Worcestershire County Council regarding having communal recycle bins for commingled materials. At the time of compiling this report, the District Council were awaiting a response from the County Council as this Council needs agreement from the County Council before it is able to roll out such a scheme. There is a similar scheme in existence in Redditch and Worcester City and therefore it is hopeful that Bromsgrove could join.

As BDHT are currently having a problem with the private waste site in Stoke Prior, officers were also asked to pass on contact details of the appropriate officer at Worcestershire County Council to enable BDHT to discuss directly with the County Council any suggestions on how BDHT could dispose of household waste via waste sites.

Recommendation 11	It is ensured that there are good communication links between all parties (Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust) so that effective partnership working can continue to be strengthened.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications directly relating to this recommendation.

➤ Parish Councils

The Task Group very much appreciated Parish Councils completing questionnaires sent out to them as it assisted the Group to carry out its scrutiny investigations. All Parish Council responses, including any late responses were considered by members and relevant officers.

Recommendations relating specifically to the comments received are as follows:

Recommendation 12	Along with a copy of this report, a Waste Awareness Guide (see recommendation 1) be sent to all Parish Councils, once complete (subject to approval).
Financial Implications	There are minimal financial implications directly related to this recommendation which are printing and posting costs.

Recommendation 13	Street Scene and Waste Management Officers be requested to contact each Parish Council and respond to individual comments made to inform them how the Council is addressing the issues.
Financial Implications	There are minimal financial implications directly related to this recommendation which are printing and posting costs of letters.

➤ Flytipping Hot Spots

It is widely known that flytipping attracts flytipping and therefore it is important that flytipping incidents are dealt with as swiftly as possible. However, it is understood that it can take time to arrange clearance, particularly when a large amount of

waste needs to be removed and this can generate a feeling of disquiet in the community.

It was agreed that the public need to be reassured that the Council does take flytipping incidents seriously. It was also understood that it is important to deter others from flytipping in the same place and therefore, this led to the following recommendation:

Recommendation 14	When Street Scene and Waste Management are unable to promptly remove flytipping, whilst waste removal is being arranged, the option of cordoning off flytipping incidents similar to police investigation scenes (particularly those in highly visible areas) with a sign stating that Council officers are aware of the issue and are dealing with it, be looked into further by officers and implemented if possible. To further deter flytipping, it could also state on the temporary sign that it is an offence to flytip and that anyone caught would be prosecuted and could face a fine of up to £50,000 and imprisonment.
Financial Implications	As the cost of temporary signs and tape to cordon off sites would be relatively inexpensive and the materials could be re-used, it is believed this could be met within the existing budget.

➤ Increasing profile of next prosecution

To show the public and anyone who has ever flytipped that this Council takes the matter very seriously, it is felt that more should be done to increase the profile of any future prosecutions which could also deter further flytipping.

Recommendation 15	This Council ensures it does all it can to increase the profile of the next prosecution to show residents that the matter is taken seriously and is dealt with accordingly. It is also believed that such action could deter others from flytipping.
Financial Implications	There are minimal financial implications such as issuing a press release and including an article in the Council Chat magazine. Any costs incurred can be met within the existing budget.

➤ Publicising Flytipping and Enforcement Action

The final recommendations again relating to publicising what the Council is already doing to tackle flytipping:

Recommendation 16	The possibility of involving schools and the local media by inviting pupils to design a poster relating to flytipping be looked into further by officers and implemented if possible.
Financial Implications	It is believed there would be minimal financial implications and could be met through the existing budget.

Recommendation 17	When an incident of flytipping is reported, either the local press or the Council's press officer is contacted to take photographs and run a story in the local newspapers to show the public that flytipping is taken seriously by this Council and at the same time help to deter others from flytipping.
Financial Implications	There are minimal financial implications relating to this recommendation and could be met through the existing budget.

CONCLUSION

Members of the Task Group believe that although compared to other local authorities across the UK this District does not suffer badly from flytipping, we feel it is still very important for this Council to do all that it can to ensure it reduces flytipping and is proactive rather than reactive wherever possible.

There is a major risk attached to not continuing to deal with flytipping effectively as if flytipping is not dealt with and it increases, there would be a major impact not only on the Council's resources but on our reputation as a Council.

By ensuring that local residents and flytippers are aware that this Council does see flytipping as a serious offence and will do what is necessary to prevent and reduce flytipping, it significantly increases its chances of successfully dealing with the problem. This message in itself could help deter flytippers and encourage our customers to report offences to ensure they are dealt with as speedily as possible. It should also be pointed out that recommendations contained within this report do link to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which is a legal duty on local authorities.

We have learnt that preventing or even reducing flytipping is not an easy task and it appears that there is not one solution to deal with all types of flytipping in all areas. However, through good partnership working and the continuing efforts of officers at this Council, we hope that we continue to deal with flytipping promptly and effectively and that the recommendations contained within this report assist the Council in doing so.

It should be pointed out that recommendations outlined in this report do relate to the Council objectives relating to environment and improvement as well as Council priorities of having a clean District, reputation and performance.

We have found this scrutiny exercise very valuable and hope the Executive Cabinet will see the benefits of the recommendations put forward for consideration. We would also like to take this opportunity to once again thank all those who contributed to our scrutiny investigation.

REVIEW

The Flytipping Task Group will reconvene in 12 months time to carry out a review of the outcome of this report including whether or not recommendations were approved and implemented.

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