



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Mary Creagh CBE MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Nature

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Shelley Kipling
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26 May 2026

Dear Ms Kipling,

Thank you for your letter of 8 April to the Secretary of State about Oldham Council's motion on tackling fly-tipping, waste crime and litter. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

I am grateful to you for setting out the Council's concerns so clearly, and I recognise the significant impact that environmental crime can have on communities.

Fly-tipping is a serious crime which blights communities and the local environment, and I share your view that it must be addressed robustly. The government's role is to support and enable strong local action by providing a clear legal framework and national standards, while local authorities remain responsible for keeping their land clear of litter and for taking enforcement action against offenders.

Councils already have a range of powers to tackle fly-tipping and littering. These include the ability to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £1,000 for fly-tipping and up to £500 for littering; prosecute offenders, and seize vehicles used in committing offences. Updated guidance introduced earlier this year supports councils in using these powers effectively and proportionately, including new provisions enabling action against littering from vehicles and strengthening enforcement approaches more broadly.

In addition, we are exploring further measures such as the introduction of penalty points on driving licences for those convicted of fly-tipping offences. We are also committed to supporting local authorities directly. Through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group, chaired by Defra, we are working with councils, enforcement bodies and partners to share best practice and provide practical tools to strengthen local enforcement and prevention activity. We have also published guidance to support councils in making full use of powers such as vehicle seizure and in building robust cases for prosecution.

I note the specific proposals set out in your Council's resolution, including increasing financial penalties, introducing a national licensing scheme for waste carriers, enabling cost recovery, and strengthening sanctions. The government is already taking forward a number of measures aligned with these objectives through our Waste Crime Action Plan, which represents the most comprehensive crackdown on illegal waste to date.

This plan will tighten regulation to prevent waste crime, including reforms to the waste carriers, brokers and dealers regime: we are closing the loopholes that let rogue operators dump waste illegally and our new reforms mean waste handlers must pass enhanced background checks to get a permit, while those caught mishandling waste risk up to five years in prison. Find out more here [New reforms to stop waste criminals from exploiting loopholes - GOV.UK](#).

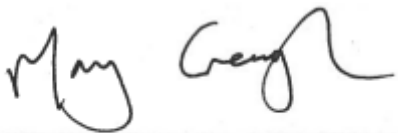
The Waste Crime Action Plan also strengthens enforcement by increasing funding for the Environment Agency, enhancing intelligence-gathering capabilities, and improving prosecution outcomes to ensure offenders face appropriate penalties. The introduction of digital waste tracking also helps to improve transparency

On sentencing, this remains a matter for the independent courts, which consider each case in line with the Sentencing Council's guidelines. However, we continue to work with partners to ensure that enforcement action is proportionate, effective and acts as a genuine deterrent to offending.

I also welcome the proactive steps Oldham Council is taking locally, including targeted enforcement and community engagement. Strong local leadership, combined with national action, is essential to tackling environmental crime effectively.

Please be assured that tackling fly-tipping and waste crime remains a clear priority for this government, and we will continue to keep our approach under review to ensure that the powers and tools available are effective and fit for purpose.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact the Secretary of State about this important issue. I hope this response is helpful, and I look forward to ongoing collaboration with local authorities, including Oldham Council to address these issues.


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Creagh', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

MARY CREAGH CBE MP