

TITLE OF REPORT: Fly-tipping Review

REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Strategic Director, Housing, Environment & Healthy Communities and Peter Udall, Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth

SUMMARY

This report provides a full update on levels of fly-tipping, how the council is addressing fly-tipping and also a 6 month review of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) booking system and any impact on fly-tipping levels.

Background

1. OSC have requested as part of their 2022-23 work programme a report on how the council is addressing fly-tipping and also a 6 month review of the HWRC booking system.
2. This report provides a full update detailing the fly-tipping levels, operational arrangements to remove fly-tipping and the impact Covid has had and continues to have on fly-tipping enforcement. It also reviews the HWRC booking system implemented in November 2021 and considers whether there has been any impact on fly-tipping levels.
3. Fly-tipping cuts across a number of groups and services of whom work together to help tackle the problem. Updates in the report are provided by Street Scene (responsible for the collection of fly-tipping), enforcement and private sector housing (responsible for enforcement) and Waste Services (HWRC and waste collection services).

Fly-tipping Collection and Performance

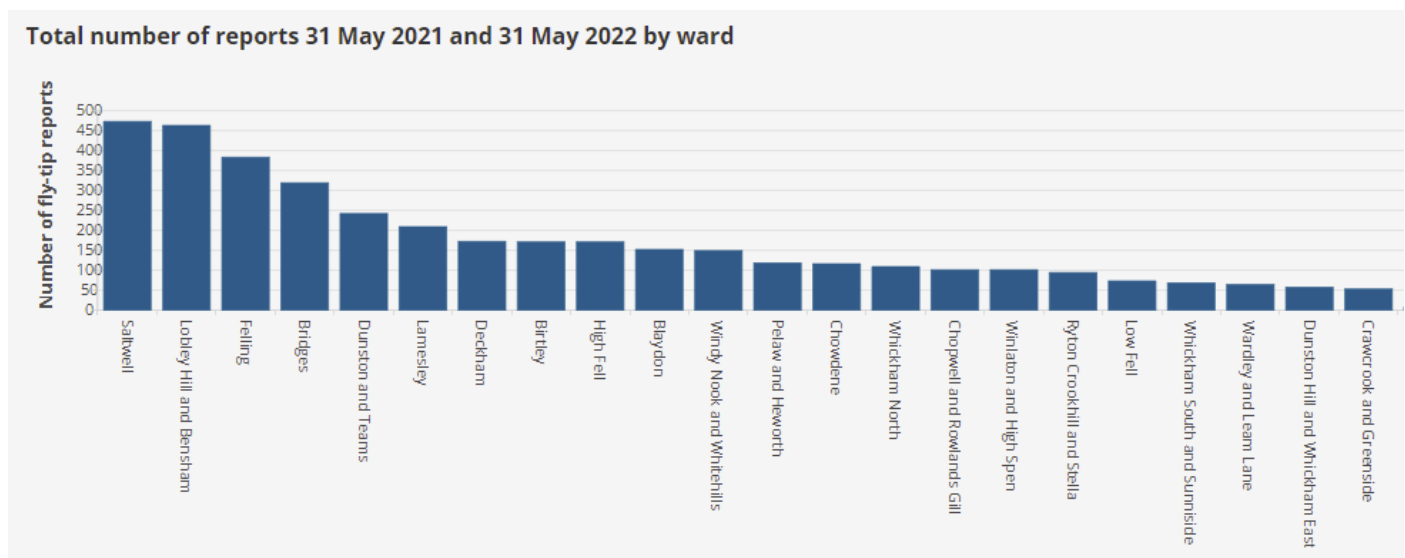
4. Guidance and how to report fly-tipping is given on the council's website at [Fly-tipping - Gateshead Council](#). An interactive reporting system (Goss) is available which enables residents to pin-point fly-tipping on a map and describe the items deposited. The reporting system updates the resident with progress on the fly-tipped waste collection. The report is 'triaged' by the enforcement team to consider which reports may be suitable for further investigation with a view to prosecution before being allocated to Street Scene for collection. The report is sent to rugged iPads used by the collection teams which helps direct them to the correct location. After the team have collected the waste they mark the job as completed and the resident is automatically updated. The system enables more accurate reporting of fly-tips, reduction in duplication and improved management information to help identify hotspots and trends. Fly-tipping can also be reported to our Customer Services who report the fly-tip through this system on behalf of the caller. Appendix 1 to this report provides screen extracts of the reporting system for illustration purposes.

- Fly-tipped waste is collected by 3 teams of 2 staff using a tipper vehicle per team. The service currently only has a budget for 2 teams and the additional team has been funded by a budget overspend. The additional team has been necessary to meet the increased demand from rising fly-tip incidents in some areas and ensure collections are completed within an acceptable timescale. One team concentrates 4 days per week in the Saltwell, Deckham and Bensham area due to the higher level of incidents particularly in the back lanes. Each team will collect items not previously reported and record this using their iPad on the Goss reporting system.
- Each fly-tip is recorded through the Goss fly-tipping system and the data is reported to DEFRA through their waste data flow system on a quarterly basis. Data is verified for each financial year and used for a range of statistical reports for all authorities in England. (Data for 2021/22 is still to be verified by DEFRA but provisional figures have been provided). Key fly-tipping data for the borough is presented below.

No. of fly-tips/annum

Year	Apr-June	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Fly-tips collected
2018-19	2059	2084	2007	2385	7886
2019-20	2553	1901	2282	2160	7804
2020-21	2694	2933	2596	3018	9513
2021-22	2566	1651	1289	1430	5638

Fly-tips per Ward



Description of fly-tips collected

Location of Fly Tips

Year	Highway	Footpath	Back Lane	Railway	Council Land	Agriculture	Private	Commercial	Waterway	Other
21/22	142	387	2458	0	1293	1	54	37	0	881
20/21	413	501	5554	5	1561	18	67	35	19	1340
19/20	190	216	4241	8	2546	8	53	22	5	515
18/19	180	421	3980	12	1763	12	88	46	6	1405

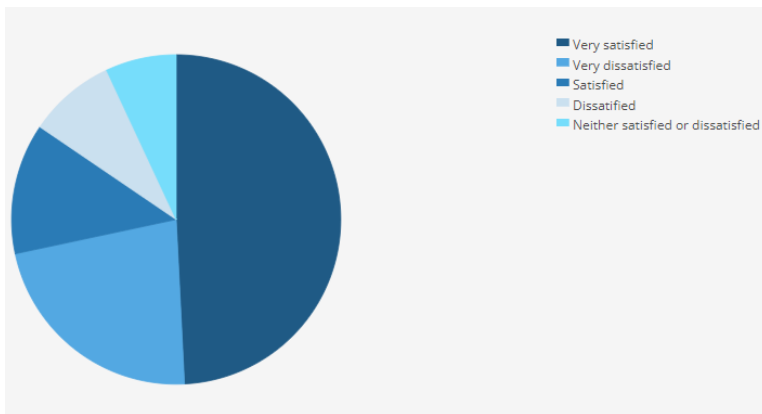
Type of Fly Tips

Year	Animal	Green Waste	Vehicle	White Goods	Other elec	Tyres	Asbestos	Clinical waste	Const.	B/Bags Comm	B/Bags house	Chem	Other household	Other comm	Other
21/22	1	98	16	315	53	79	10	0	366	23	1176	12	1809	46	1502
20/21	2	257	66	525	99	70	16	6	692	28	2042	16	4055	83	1556
19/20	1	204	62	379	55	75	10	4	563	28	1295	49	4161	63	855
18/19	3	174	61	400	39	199	28	22	480	27	1594	11	3436	43	1389

Size of Fly Tips

Year	Single B/Bag	Single Item	Car boot or less	Small Van	Transit Van	Tipper Van	Multiple Loads
21/22	4	968	1293	1832	667	353	276
20/21	12	1396	3378	3169	1260	172	184
19/20	8	1118	2167	2835	1251	222	198
18/19	32	1494	1438	3160	1390	246	126

Fly-tipping service satisfaction



Summary

7. In summary, fly-tipping increased significantly during the pandemic (nearly 22%, DEFRA reported an increase in 16% across all English authorities). Numbers of incidents have decreased overall in 2021/22 but larger fly-tips have increased whilst smaller fly-tips have decreased. Saltwell and Lobley Hill & Bensham wards experience the greatest level of fly-tipping with back lanes being the most heavily fly-tipped location. Single or car boot size volumes of bin bags and household waste are the most common types of fly-tips in this area. Satisfaction with the reporting process and collection service was 62% over the last year.

Household Waste and Recycling Centre Review and Impact on Fly-tipping

Background

8. The advanced booking system was introduced at the two Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) at Campground, Wrekenton and Cowen Road, Blaydon on Wednesday 24 November 2021 allowing residents to book an appointment to visit the sites from Monday 29 November. The booking system was developed in-house with support from the Council's external partner GOSS.

9. During the pandemic, queuing issues were even greater than pre pandemic when there were regular issues of long queues and access issues. To mitigate this, operating hours were extended, traffic management was put in place and an odd and evens registration plate system introduced. All of which did not solve the queuing problems at the sites.
10. Following our waste partner authorities introducing successful booking systems, it was decided to implement a booking system to mitigate the problems of excessive queuing, blocked roads and access problems for operational vehicles.
11. At the time of introduction, a 6 month review was requested of the system because of public concerns raised at the announcement of the booking system and also additional concerns over increased fly-tipping.
12. The key features of the booking system are:
 - The online booking system allows residents to book a time slot for their chosen site. This helps prevent queues as it controls the number of vehicles that access the site at any given time. This in turn reduces the disruption to the public highway, improves road safety, and removes the need for additional traffic management costs at significantly busier periods, such as public holidays etc. Therefore, the customer experience of using this key frontline service is vastly improved. The reduction in queuing also realises improved environmental benefits through reduced CO2 emissions, as access to site is completed more quickly than, potentially, queueing for hours.
 - Anyone without access to a smart phone or computer can still book an appointment by telephoning Customer Services.
 - Integration with the current waste permit system for vans and trailers.
 - Residents can book an appointment up to 2 weeks in advance.
 - The booking process is simple and easy to use with 30 min time periods offered throughout the opening times of the sites.
 - An appointment can be amended or cancelled if residents' arrangements change.
 - Data can be monitored effectively by the Council, which means we can react more flexibly to any potential changes that may be required to improve the system. There is a feedback form for the booking process too, so residents can have their say about the new system.
 - There is no limit on the number of bookings that a resident can make however waste must be from their household.
 - The new system enables the Council to physically control the service users that are allowed on site, i.e. the application process is only available to Gateshead residents (and Sunderland residents for Campground). Preventing residents from other Local Authorities disposing of waste at the two sites helping deliver cost savings.

Review and findings

13. Since its implementation in November 2021, the online booking system has been very popular with over 130,000 bookings being made to visit both HWRCs (29th November 2021 to 10th May 2022).
 - 98% of bookings have been self-service (online)
 - 2% of bookings have been assisted service (telephone calls to Customer Services)

Site	No. of Bookings	%
Campground	75,354	57.89

Cowen Road	54,824	42.11
<i>Total</i>	<i>130,178</i>	<i>100</i>

The table below shows the number of residents who have made a booking but not attended the sites.

Site	Number of No Shows	% no show
Campground	8748	11.6
Cowen Road	5448	9.93

14. There have been 1,334 responses provided via the feedback forms and the current satisfaction rating is 4.6 out of 5. Satisfaction levels are improving over time as shown below.
- November 3.0
 - December 3.6
 - January 3.8
 - February 4.1
 - March 4.2
 - April 4.6
15. With regard to the amount of material being deposited at the HWRCs since the booking system was introduced, we have seen a slight increase in overall tonnage at Campground (3%) and a decrease in overall tonnage at Cowen Road (12%) when comparing December to March 2021/22 to the same period in 2019/20 before the pandemic. (Tonnage may have decreased at Cowen Road more significantly as residents from Northumberland and Newcastle can no longer access this site unrestricted). Recycling levels at the HWRCs are similar to those before the implementation of the booking systems. During the pandemic it has been very difficult to compare changes in waste arisings and tonnages due to the change in residents' behaviour and lifestyles. These changes may be impacting on current and future waste arisings at HWRCs as well as the cost-of-living crisis currently being experienced in the UK.
16. One of the biggest concerns raised was the fly-tipping cases would increase as a result of the booking system. However, the number of incidents or cases of fly-tipping began to reduce to pre pandemic levels in August 2021. The numbers have continued to reduce since and are now well below previous levels. This shows that the introduction of the HWRC booking system in November 2021 did not lead to an increase in numbers of fly-tipping incidents. In fact, the introduction of the booking system coincides with a sustained reduction in incidents however it is difficult to confirm why smaller flytip numbers have continued to fall across Gateshead and may not be as a direct result of the HWRC booking system.
17. Feedback has included some very positive comments about the booking system process, the system itself at the sites and site staff. There has also been some negative feedback received including the potential of increasing fly-tipping. See appendix 2 for more detailed comments.
18. There have been a number of improvements made to the system since implementation. These have included:

- Updated email and web content to make it clearer that the 30 minute time slot is time of arrival and that a booking is needed per visit.
- Shows number of appointments available per half hour slot.
- Updated web content around options available to customers without a mobile device.
- Changed the colour of buttons throughout the form to make them clearer.
- We have updated the last page of the form (wording and styling) to ensure users complete the form.
- Updated the styling of the date/time selection to help prevent users from selecting the wrong time slot.
- Vehicle registration is now editable by customers themselves.
- Vehicle registration and address are added to a customer's record when they submit a booking form so it's remembered for next time.
- Expired time slots now hidden from calendar to improve look of the page.
- Content changes to confirmation page to remind users about bringing licence, hire agreement and proof of address.
- Bespoke login snippet before the form to encourage people to take advantage of their details being saved / autofilled next time.
- The form now uses local and national gazetteer – so Gateshead residents don't have to wait until their address is added to the national gazetteer to book to visit.

19. The number of appointments per half hour slot were as follows:

29th Nov 21 to 31st March 22

- Campground - 30 appointments
- Cowen Road - 25 appointments

1 April 22 onwards

- Campground - 35 appointments (Except 9-9.30 and 17:30-17:50 when there is 30 appointments)
- Cowen Road - 30 appointments (Except 9-9.30 and 17:30-17:50 when there is 25 appointments)

This was amended at Campground only - in response to higher traffic numbers during the Easter holidays/bank holiday weekend, so between Wednesday 20th April - Sunday 24th April, there was additional reduction in availability on the earliest/latest slots:

- 9am to 9.30am - 30 appointments – (no change)
- 9.30am to 10am - 30 appointments (reduced from 35)
- 5pm to 5.30pm - 30 appointments (reduced from 35)
- 5.30pm to 5.50pm - 25 appointments (reduced from 30)

This helped to ensure that queues did not build up at the start of the day and ease the pressure before closing time at the site. This also demonstrates how flexible the system can be and how quickly we can react to any particular service changes.

20. The availability of appointments has been generally positive with residents able to book an appointment on the same day for a large proportion of bookings. It has been busier during the Christmas and Easter holidays but this is to be expected as these are busy every year due to additional demand to dispose of extra household waste. During these periods the wait time between booking an appointment and the appointment itself was not excessive. See table in appendix 2.

21. There are a number of reports that can be produced to help monitor the booking system. Weekends are the busiest and the 3-4pm slots Tuesday to Thursday are the least popular, possibly coinciding with the end of the school day. See site utilisation heat map in Appendix 2.
22. The effectiveness of the online booking system will continue to be monitored which will include fully investigating any areas where potential improvements can be made and looking at feedback from residents, but it is envisaged that the booking system will be retained due to its success in the first six months of operation.
23. The Leader of the Council did receive a letter from DEFRA (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs) dated 4th March 2022, asking the Council to carefully consider whether we continue with the booking system. The Council replied to this letter stating that we would be looking to retain the system permanently although we agreed that we would review overall effectiveness after a period of six months. Furthermore, DEFRA have released a call for evidence on booking systems at HWRCs in April 2022 as part of a technical consultation on preventing charges to householders for the disposal of DIY waste at HWRCs. They have stated they will review the number of booking systems that remain in place later in the year.

Enforcement of Flytipping

24. The council tackles fly-tipping enforcement in two different settings:
- larger fly-tips on land normally away from housing.
 - fly-tips associated with dwellings.

Large scale fly-tips

25. This is usually deposited by perpetrators whose business model is to receive payment for disposing of waste and dump it wherever they can to avoid the cost of lawful disposal and trades people and landlords etc. who fly-tip their business waste again to avoid disposal costs, Prior to the Covid pandemic the team had more resource and would regularly prosecute offenders. During the pandemic all the team were redeployed to Covid enforcement work and so fly-tipping investigation was halted for some time and a backlog built up. The team focuses on gaining evidence to prosecute large scale offenders and the work is time consuming and detailed. Progress is slow because of a limited resource but also because of the post pandemic delays in the Magistrates Court system.

Fly-tips associated with dwellings

26. The Council has a number of powers available to it to deal with accumulations of waste in gardens and houses. There has been a resource intensive pilot in the Saltwell and Bensham area of selective landlord licensing, which was run to try to understand the true cause of why people do not deal with their waste responsibly.
27. Whilst the pilot has been successful in making a difference in a short period of time, it is not a sustainable way of working and would be impossible to roll out over a wider area due to the intensity of resources required. Options for applying the techniques used in this pilot are being considered but would have significant challenges for the budget if adopted.

28. An internal review of how we deal with anti-social behaviour is ongoing and has considered waste issues. It is hoped the findings of this review may inform changes to working practices to improve the effectiveness of our response.

Recommendation

29. It is recommended that the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC note the contents of the report.

Contact: Anneliese Hutchinson/ Philip Hindmarsh Ext: 3881/7445

Illustration of key pages of Goss fly-tipping reporting system

Where is the fly-tip?

Enter an address or postcode







Once you've searched for a location, check the pin is at the right address. If not, drag the pin to the exact location of the fly-tip.



Would you like to upload an image of the fly-tip?

- Yes
- No

How much waste is there?

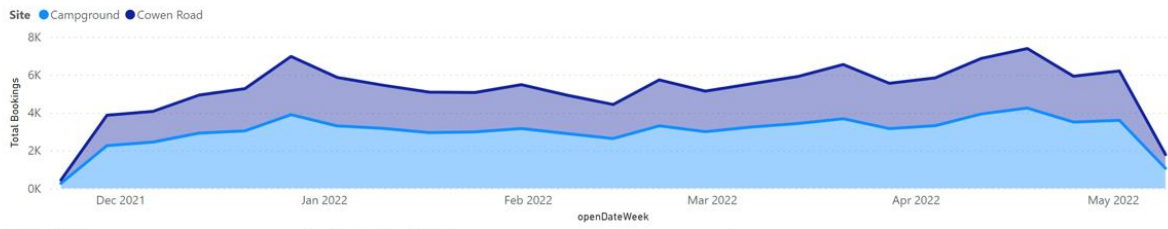
 <p>Single item</p>	 <p>Car boot load</p>	 <p>Small van load</p>
 <p>Transit van load</p>	 <p>Tipper truck load</p>	 <p>Multiple loads</p>

Appendix 2

Advanced Booking system data.

Service Overview

Total Bookings by openDateWeek and Site



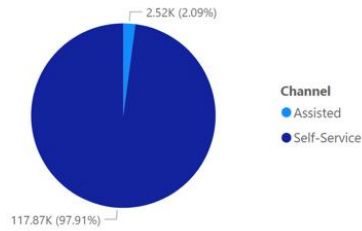
Total Bookings

130,178

Site Usage Summary

Site	Total Bookings	Percentage
Campground	75354	57.89%
Cowen Road	54824	42.11%

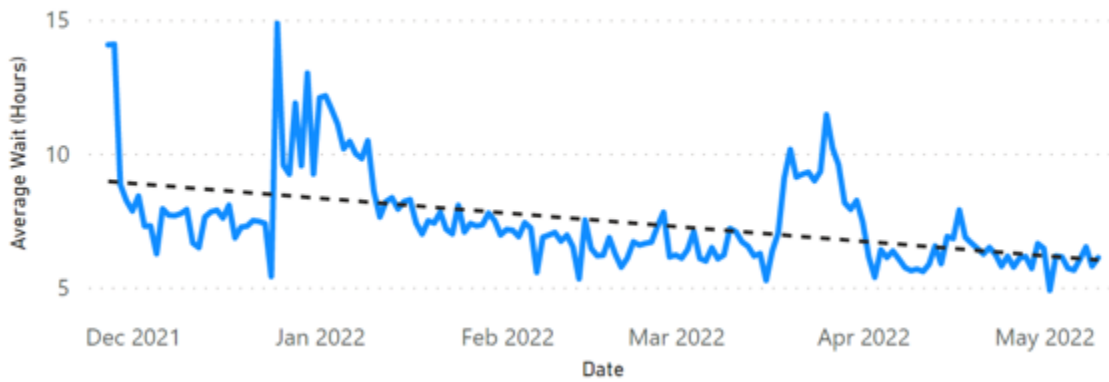
Bookings by Channel



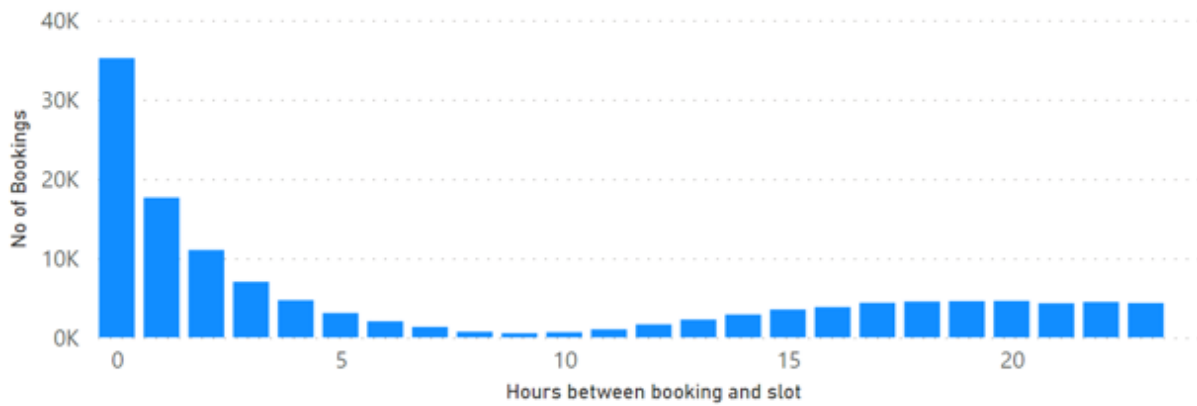
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Average time between booking and slot



Time between Booking and Slot



Site Utilisation Heat Map

Slot Time	1: Monday	2: Tuesday	3: Wednesday	4: Thursday	5: Friday	6: Saturday	7: Sunday
08:00:00	0.76	0.74	0.69	0.69	0.75	0.77	0.83
08:30:00	0.81	0.77	0.65	0.68	0.71	0.82	0.93
09:00:00	0.85	0.79	0.78	0.75	0.87	0.90	0.92
09:30:00	0.77	0.75	0.74	0.71	0.81	0.91	0.91
10:00:00	0.84	0.83	0.83	0.80	0.87	0.92	0.94
10:30:00	0.78	0.80	0.75	0.71	0.80	0.89	0.93
11:00:00	0.84	0.81	0.81	0.79	0.82	0.90	0.92
11:30:00	0.76	0.75	0.68	0.71	0.74	0.86	0.92
12:00:00	0.79	0.75	0.74	0.76	0.80	0.89	0.93
12:30:00	0.75	0.67	0.66	0.68	0.72	0.85	0.89
13:00:00	0.84	0.76	0.74	0.79	0.81	0.88	0.89
13:30:00	0.74	0.71	0.66	0.68	0.73	0.87	0.89
14:00:00	0.82	0.72	0.72	0.76	0.78	0.89	0.89
14:30:00	0.71	0.66	0.65	0.65	0.69	0.87	0.85
15:00:00	0.73	0.61	0.64	0.61	0.67	0.87	0.84
15:30:00	0.63	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.56	0.83	0.80
16:00:00	0.66	0.55	0.56	0.61	0.60	0.85	0.80
16:30:00	0.68	0.65	0.61	0.65	0.63	0.71	0.73
17:00:00						0.70	0.72
17:30:00						0.64	0.72

Examples of feedback

Feedback

Very straightforward and should save time at the centre. Good idea!

Simple and easy

Really quick to register. Really easy to book a slot

Great booking system - very easy to use. Thank you.

well done I think this will really work so easy thumbs up

Much better system than before would be handy if details were remembered so you don't have to enter them all again

Odd /even days seemed more appropriate for most people, as not every one can use technology the system could put people off and encourage fly tipping.

can not plan as well with having to prebook

Requires far too much personal information

The ability to save options selected, car, address etc would be a great time save.

far too complicated form should be easier 😞

Takes too long to fill in & will only increase the amount of fly tipping in the borough

Feedback

awesome way to do recycling no queues brilliant.

Very clear, easy to understand, well set out so that everything is easy to see. A good design job!

Such a improvement on previous systems. Great idea. Thank you.

This is such a straightforward process, plus really quick.

So easy to use. It's unusual for the council to make things simple. The staff at the campground site are very helpful and friendly.

I wish everything in life was as simple as booking a slot at Cowen Road. And the staff there are absolutely excellent.

This booking method reduces car pollution and waiting time at the centre, allows staff more time to monitor and direct customers to the appropriate section for recycling items. An addition benefit is that the whole centre is cleaner and seems to run more efficiently

Takes too long to fill in & will only increase the amount of fly tipping in the borough

Far too convoluted process to get rid of household waste. No wonder there's too much illegal fly-tipping. Make it simpler,

No wonder there is fly tipping when you have ridiculous administration like this

Fly-tipping statistics

Fly-tipping volumes by month per year

Year ● 2017 ● 2018 ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022

