

## **Enviro- crime Sticker Scheme**

### **Manchester City Council**

The Enviro- crime scheme was introduced in Manchester in 2006, although the original idea came from the London Borough of Southwark. If officers see fly-tipping they investigate it, use the stickers to identify that crews have been through it and they are then used to re-seal any holes in the bags. It makes it clear to passers-by and residents that the fly-tipping incident is being investigated. The stickers are 8"x 6" with a white background and a chevron around the perimeter. The police and Manchester City Council logos, along with 'Enviro- crime', are printed on it. The council believe that if the police logo is featured then people take it more seriously; it is seen as a crime that is being investigated.

No direct correlation has been found between the use of Enviro- crime stickers and a reduction in fly-tipping. However, there has been an overall reduction in fly-tipping from 33,000 cases in 2007 to 29,000 in 2008. Manchester City Council believes this is due to their rigorous prosecution system.

#### **Prosecution**

Every prosecutable case is followed up and offenders are publicly reported in the Manchester Evening News. Immediately after a prosecution approximately 200 flyers are distributed in the local area informing residents about the prosecution and naming the offender. However, there are considerations to be made in terms of bad publicity – some offenders only receive a caution which is not a strong enough deterrent to prevent future offences. The age of offenders also has to be taken into consideration. Fixed penalty notices are a complex strategy and can be expensive to implement.

#### **Tracing Offending Vehicles**

In order to trace vehicles the council has access to the DVLA database (and they may also contact the police) and vehicle owners can be immediately traced. They are then invited to present themselves at the council where the evidence is put before them. If they are prosecuted they can either pay a fine or be taken to court. However, often a great deal of historical evidence is required in order to prosecute. They also come up against problems when vehicles have been stolen, or number plates cloned. This then makes it far more difficult to trace offenders.

There is only a limited amount of revenue to be gained from fly-tipping prosecutions as most offenders do not pay and the case ends up going to court. This process is very expensive in terms of specialist services, processing teams, legal fees, etc. therefore the income gained is normally ploughed back into the prosecution team.

### **CCTV**

Cameras are very expensive to install and maintain and they require intensive staffing. Manchester undertook a 3 month trial where 20 sites were installed with cameras. There was a reduction in fly-tipping but some cameras were damaged and the scheme was extremely costly. An electricity supply is also required for the camera that isn't always available at hotspots. Most offenders will try to disguise their identity by wearing hooded tops etc., again making the identification process all the more difficult.

CCTV cameras are used in city centres and these have the greatest capacity for identifying offenders. They have zoom lenses and are manned 24 hours a day. However, it is rare that fly-tipping will occur in locations where these cameras are. The council is also investigating the use of 'stealth' cameras hidden in trees etc.

### **Use Of Section 59 Under Town And Country Planning Act**

Enforcement officers tend to favour using Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act rather than Section 59. Manchester has found that in Section 59 the phrase 'knowingly permitted' can be a get out clause for some cases. This is not permitted in Section 215 although there is a 28 day notice period (S59 is 21 days plus appeal).

Under a Section 215 it will, on average, take one week to trace the landowner, a Section 16 notice will then be served to identify that this person is still the landowner, if so they will receive a Section 215 notice. This notice can be served on the owner or occupier when the poor condition and the appearance of the property or land are detrimental to the surrounding area or neighbourhoods. The section 215 notice requires proper maintenance of the property or land in question, and it specifies what steps are required to remedy the problem within a specific time period. In most cases the fly-tipping is removed before a 215 is issued. It is the most effective piece of legislation in terms of land improvement as section 215 also ensures that grass is trimmed, graffiti is removed and the site is tidied up. There is also no defence for a 215.

**For further information please contact:**

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