

Mary Creagh CBE MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Seacole Building

2 Marsham Street London

SW1P 4DF

18th November 2025

Dear Mary Creagh,

Re Waste Crime – Kidlington Illegal Waste Tip & Response

I write concerning the above-mentioned waste crime incident that has rightly attracted interest from politicians and stakeholders including the national press.

In particular, on behalf of our members representing resource and waste management professionals across the UK, I would like to express concern as to the response to parliamentary questions and subsequently widely reported that the Government has ‘inherited a whole system failure in the waste industry, from end to end, with failures at every level...that has caused an epidemic of illegal fly-tipping.’

This phrasing not only misrepresents the legitimate waste industry but seems to deflect blame away from the perpetrators - the organised criminal groups who knowingly work outside of the regulated system.

Our members and the wider professional resources and waste sector work tirelessly to deliver services that protect human health and the environment, and that enable local economies to thrive. CIWM strives to further raise standards through training, accreditation, skills and professional development in this vital sector.

Waste crime seriously undermines all of this and the reputation of our responsible sector. It is not the sector or waste industry that is failing, but arguably a systemic failure over time of regulation and effective enforcement that is leading to incidents such as this occurring regularly, at scale and often in plain sight.

Tackling waste crime at all levels must be a priority for UK governments, our sector and wider society. Incidents such as the Kidlington illegal waste tip are becoming far too frequent.

Waste crime (including illegal dumping, waste misclassification and tax fraud, fly-tipping, and even littering) causes misery and anxiety to people and communities across the UK, undermines the legitimate resources and waste sector, and damages local economies and environments.

It costs the UK economy £1 billion per year. Resourcing and effectiveness of regulation and enforcement has fallen over the past two decades and risk-based regulation is vital.

We would be pleased to further discuss and explore practical measures that Government can quickly act upon to reduce the risk of waste crime. These include:

- Properly resourced and more effective regulation and enforcement - including better training of regulators, and closer and more effective coordination between the Environment Agency/SEPA/NRW, local authorities, the police, and the Joint Unit on Waste Crime.
- Urgent changes to Treasury rules that prevent the Environment Agency (and equivalents) from using funding from permitting and regulatory work to be used on enforcement capacity to tackle waste crime.
- Government to continue to implement the RWS 2018 reforms, including the accelerated introduction of digital waste tracking and new waste controllers and transporters regulations (previously carriers, brokers and dealers regs).

Only an effective regulatory framework, enabling focused regulation and enforcement to drive out waste criminals, will enable the professional waste sector to continue the required investment in valued waste services, infrastructure and jobs.

There are also many successes and best practice examples that do exist of effective enforcement and coordination between regulators, police, local authorities and landowners, that we can collectively learn from and replicate. These can result in successful prosecutions, ensuring the right waste goes in the right place, leading to higher quality environments and enabling local economies to thrive.

Landowners and members of the public also have a clear role to play in reporting suspected waste crime whenever they see it, either to Crimestoppers, the Environment Agency Hotline or to their local authority – only 27% of waste crime is currently reported.

We continue to actively support the Government in the implementation of the RWS reforms and with its circular economy ambitions and related policy development.

We'd be pleased to discuss and consider how we can best assist the Government in its ongoing efforts and ambition to tackle waste crime and clean up Britain, including the practical measures listed above. We would also welcome clarification going forward on the above-mentioned phrasing and look forward to working with you in our joint determination to enable growth, skills and the highest professional standards in this vital sector.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Poulter,
CEO, CIWM