



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

A Fly-tipping and Litter Strategy for Manchester (2026-2035)



Let's all

Clean
&
Green

Manchester

Love it. Look after it.



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1. Foreword

Manchester is a city that attracts people from across the globe. From world-class education and business opportunities, to music, sport and culture – Manchester has it all. Our residents are proud and welcoming, and our city continues to grow – now home to over 630,000 people. Globally recognised as a hub for innovation and enterprise, Manchester makes a fast-growing contribution to the UK economy.

Yet like many places across the country, we face a major challenge: fly-tipping and litter. This careless behaviour harms our environment, undermines community pride, and wastes public money that could be better spent on vital services.

Over the past 15 years, austerity has hit local services hard. While Manchester’s population and economy have grown rapidly, funding hasn’t kept pace with demand. This has meant tough choices and limited resources for street cleaning and enforcement, even as pressures have increased. That’s why we want to invest more in this area to meet the needs of a growing city.

We’ve worked for years to tackle this issue and are grateful to the volunteers, partners and businesses that help keep Manchester clean. However, residents want more action – and so do we. Real change needs a collective effort.

Through the Our Manchester Strategy 2025–35, we’ve committed to making Manchester cleaner and greener – a city where children and young people thrive in safe, welcoming neighbourhoods. We’re delivering through initiatives such as the UNICEF UK Child Friendly City programme, the Clean and Green Manchester investment plan, and our Keep Manchester Tidy partnership with Keep Britain Tidy.

This new Fly-tipping and Litter Strategy sets out how we will work with communities, partners and businesses to tackle the root causes of dumped waste. By understanding the problem, trying new approaches, and strengthening collaboration, we can turn the tide and create a city we’re all proud of. Together, let’s all keep Manchester clean and green. We love Manchester, so let’s look after it.



Cllr Lee-Ann Igbon
Executive Member for Vibrant Neighbourhoods

2. Introduction

In 2015, Manchester City Council launched a citywide consultation that shaped the ‘Our Manchester’ approach – a shared vision for a vibrant, sustainable city that is clean and green.

Building on this foundation, the refreshed Our Manchester Strategy 2025–35 reinforced our ambition through Manchester Clean and Green, a three-year programme investing £15million in neighbourhood improvements, new litter bins, better play areas, new pathways in parks, benches, and safer routes to schools.

When we refreshed this strategy in 2025, residents told us their top priority: a cleaner, tidier city with less litter and fly-tipping. This Fly-tipping and Litter Strategy delivers on that priority. It sets out our vision, examines the scale and impact of the problem, and addresses key issues. Our three-year Fly-tipping and Litter Action Plan will tackle these challenges under four themes:

- **Data, insight and review** – understanding hotspots and trends.
- **Infrastructure and services** – improving what’s on offer and raising awareness of legitimate disposal options for household waste that does not fit in kerbside bins.
- **Participation, engagement and education** – changing behaviours through education, engagement and collaboration with residents, businesses and partners.
- **Compliance and enforcement** – stronger enforcement and visible deterrents.

We will monitor and evaluate all activity to measure impact, learn what works, and continually improve. Progress against our action plan will be updated every three years, and our progress will feed into the State of the City Report as part of the Our Manchester Strategy.

Together, we can create a cleaner, greener Manchester for everyone.



3. Our vision and aims for a clean city

Our vision: Manchester is a much-loved, clean and green city where everyone works together to look after it and keep it clean.

Our aim: By 2035 we want fly-tipping to be the exception, not the norm. Our strategy commits to work jointly with our communities, partners and businesses to cut incidents by a third.

Together, we will achieve our vision and aims by delivering improved cleanliness standards, boosting community pride, promoting responsible waste behaviours, enhancing volunteering, and investing in services across all wards of the city.

This strategy supports the Our Manchester Strategy 2025–35 priority for attractive, well-maintained neighbourhoods. It sets out how we will achieve our vision through improved data and insight, enhanced infrastructure and services, stronger compliance and enforcement measures, and sustained participation, engagement and education.

What success looks like by 2035

- Fly-tipping incidents reduced by a third, and tailored targets being set out in our Fly-tipping and Litter Action Plan
- NI195 cleanliness ratings consistently high across all land types
- More residents and businesses managing waste responsibly through reduction, reuse, repair, sharing and recycling
- Increased community participation in volunteering, Eco-Schools, and local projects by at least 10% each annually.

We will ensure all activity is monitored and evaluated so we can measure impact, learn what works, and continually improve our approach together.

Why this matters

This strategy is key to delivering the Our Manchester Strategy 2025–35 priority for attractive, well-kept neighbourhoods. It also supports our ambitions for a UNICEF Child Friendly City, a zero-carbon city, and a connected, sustainable city. Tackling litter and fly-tipping is essential for health, wellbeing, climate resilience and civic pride. We will be guided by the four themes outlined in the introduction in progressing these priorities.

Our commitment to participation and engagement

Stakeholders have emphasised the need for effective, targeted communication and meaningful engagement. This strategy commits to delivering tailored messaging for specific audiences and adopting innovative approaches.

Together, we can make fly-tipping and litter things of the past and create a cleaner, greener Manchester for everyone.



4. Background

4.1. What do we mean by fly-tipping and litter?



The word **fly-tipping** is derived from the term ‘on the fly’, meaning on the go, combined with the verb ‘tip’, meaning to throw out.

Fly-tipping is simply described as waste in the wrong place. It involves the unauthorised deposit of waste on land or water. It differs from littering primarily by the size and nature of the deposit. Fly-tipping can range from bin bags and white goods to large-scale industrial deposits. It can be a single bulky item like a fridge, or a lorry load of things that may be solid or liquid waste (eg. oils, paints, chemicals).

Litter refers to smaller items, such as drinks containers, confectionery wrappers, food packaging, cigarette butts, chewing gum, and dog fouling discarded in public spaces.

Legal responsibilities

- **Residents and businesses:** Must use their council services, licensed waste carriers, or approved sites, such as Household Waste Recycling Centres/tips. By law (Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Household Waste Duty of Care Regulations 2005), waste can only be transferred to authorised persons.
- **Local authorities:** Responsible for investigating fly-tipping on public land, keeping highways and land clear of litter where practicable, and taking enforcement action.
- **Environment agency:** Handles large-scale or hazardous fly-tipping and cases linked to organised crime.
- **Private landowners:** Must clear litter and fly-tipping from their land, often with their council’s support for investigation and co-ordination.

Why this matters

Managing litter and fly-tipping places a heavy strain on the Council’s resources – funds that could otherwise support essential services. Beyond cost, fly-tipping and litter harm our environment, contribute to flooding, release pollutants (including microplastics), affect health and wellbeing, and undermine civic pride and perceptions of safety.

4.2. Policy context

The Litter Strategy for England (2017) emphasises behaviour change, proportionate enforcement and improved infrastructure. Looking ahead, the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers, which is expected to be launched in October 2027, is designed to boost the return of drinks containers and reduce litter. National policy direction is increasingly aligned with circular economy principles – designing for durability and reuse, improving recycling, and extending product life through repair and remanufacture. At a city level, this Strategy supports:

- **Our Manchester Strategy (2025–35) and the Clean and Green Manchester investment programme**
- **Climate Change Action Plan (2025–30) and Climate Ready Plan – highlighting active waste prevention, reuse, repair, sharing and recycling**
- **UNICEF Child Friendly City ambitions – recognising children’s right to clean, safe environments**
- **Making Manchester Fairer – acknowledging the link between environmental quality, deprivation, and health inequalities.**



In developing the strategy, we considered the policy context alongside the views, experiences and insights of stakeholders, as outlined below.

Source area	Details of what was considered
The Our Manchester Strategy	Over 8,000 clean and green-related comments were analysed and considered from the Our Manchester consultation.
UNICEF Child Friendly Cities	Reports from the discovery phase consultation involving more than 11,000 children and young people in which 'clean, green, safe neighbourhoods' was identified as a top priority.
Keep Britain Tidy workshops	Two workshops held: one with internal staff, one with partners and community groups focusing on co-produced solutions.
Written and verbal submissions	Eighty written and verbal submissions were received, including views from litter-picking groups and individuals, contractors, housing providers, businesses, community groups, charities, health and wellbeing providers, and school pupils.
Making Manchester Fairer Sounding Board	This was a group session held to capture experiences, views, and ideas.
The University of Manchester	Following a discovery session, three Master's degree students provided written research reports to support the background of the strategy.
Internal staff survey	116 responses received.
Elected member sessions	Two on-line sessions were held with elected members.
Strategy steering group	Three steering group sessions held with leads from across Neighbourhood Services.

4.3. Scale of fly-tipping and litter

Nationally (2023/24), local authorities dealt with 1.15million fly-tipping incidents (+6% year-on-year), 60%+ involving household waste.

Fly-tipping in Manchester:

- 14,963 fly-tipping incidents were reported in 2024/2025.
- Locations: Roads and pavements (59%), alleyways (22%); the remainder are on other land types that the Council is responsible for. We don't record tipping on private land.
- On average, the Council investigates the source of 346 fly-tipping incidents each month.

How does Manchester compare to other core cities?

Local authority area	Reported fly-tipping incidents (2024/25)
Nottingham	30,511
Liverpool	20,003
Birmingham	17,823
Newcastle upon Tyne	15,874
Manchester	14,963
Leeds	12,280
Sheffield	11,272
Bristol	8,556

Data caveats: Figures depend on how incidents are recorded and the speed of removal. We continue to improve data capture, cleansing and transparency to avoid duplication and ensure that relevant incidents are counted. Note: Cross-authority comparisons are affected by local reporting practices, population density, geography, and service models.

Litter in Manchester:

- In addition to removing litter and detritus as part of a scheduled service, the Council responded to 6,563 reports of dust, dirt or litter in 2024/25.
- A total of 11,952 fines were issued for littering in the same period.

5. Insights into fly-tipping and litter

What Keep Britain Tidy's research tells us

Keep Britain Tidy's national studies on litter show:

- Litter is widespread, but it is more prevalent in deprived areas.
- People feel alleyways and cut-throughs are the most littered places.
- Smoking-related litter is most prevalent, followed by confectionery litter.
- The public perception of litter can differ from reality.
- There is strong public support for anti-litter action.

Keep Britain Tidy's national studies on fly-tipping show:

- People don't think of small-scale householder tipping (eg. black bags) when they hear or see the term fly-tipping.
- There is an expectation that fly-tipping will be removed quickly without repercussions.
- Fly-tipping is perceived to be low impact.
- Some councils' policies may unintentionally encourage fly-tipping.
- The 'hassle-factor' is a significant driver of fly-tipping.
- Some types of fly-tipping are seen as socially acceptable (eg. side waste, green waste, scrap metal).
- Some households are not managing their waste effectively.
- The perceived threat of enforcement is low.

Our Manchester-specific qualitative insights

Local focus groups and community feedback indicates:

- Some residents use unlicensed or rogue waste carriers for convenience/cost, mistakenly believing responsibility transfers when they hand over their waste.
- There is a perceived low risk of enforcement, and quick removals can normalise dumping and reduce deterrence.
- Awareness of legitimate waste options and householder duty of care are inconsistent.
- Residents express that visible enforcement, improved communications, and values-based campaigns highlight personal responsibility for dealing with waste.

What's driving fly-tipping and litter in Manchester?

There are many factors and challenges driving fly-tipping and littering in Manchester, including:

- **Feelings of disconnection and local pride:** The presence of rubbish can attract more rubbish and that impacts on how proud we feel about an area. Supporting a sense of local ownership and helping to boost pride are therefore central to prevention.
- **Resident expectations and service signals:** Rapid removal is essential in high-risk or hazardous cases, but swift clearance of fly-tipping by authorities can be mistaken for a free collection service, weakening deterrence. We will balance responsiveness with deterrence, as well as clear, in situ messaging about responsibility and enforcement outcomes.
- **Landlords, changeovers, and rogue carriers:** High tenant turnover, poorly managed move-ins/outs, and the use of unlicensed waste carriers (including rogue traders offering cheap deals on social media) contribute to fly-tipping. We will strengthen landlord/letting-agent engagement, promote the householder duty-of-care checks, and explore take-back and reuse options for bulky items.
- **Waterways, transport, and complex locations:** Clearing waste on canals, rail corridors and highways requires specialist access and equipment, making removal more complex and resource-intensive. We will continue to work with partners Canal & River Trust, National Highways, Network Rail, and utilities to address challenges.
- **Visible enforcement and evidence challenges:** Enforcement is complicated by timing, evidence quality, repeat offending, and limited CCTV coverage in some locations. We will promote enforcement action and publicise outcomes, including Single Justice Procedure results, while improving reporting and making it easier for residents to upload evidence.





Our children's view on fly-tipping and litter

“When I see rubbish, I feel mad because it's our environment to keep clean. I feel disappointed, because there are so many bins everywhere.”

“I feel if the world was alive, it would be disgusted and angry.”

“I feel shocked, angry, disappointed and scared for the future.”

(Emily, Arielle and Owen, St Wilfred's Primary School)

“Sadly, I see loads of cardboard, plastic and even glass. It makes me feel shocked at the poor choices people make.”

“I normally see dumped rubbish in alleyways, as well as mattresses and bin bags that are bulging with very smelly rubbish. It makes me feel sad, because I'd like to make the world rubbish-free and a better place for humans and animals.”

“When I walk to school, the first thing I see is litter. It makes me shocked. We can do everything to stop it.”

“Each time I go to the park I see rubbish everywhere on the grass. I feel nervous and worried about what's going to happen to the environment.”

“When you dump rubbish it's not good because people don't like it and it also stinks a lot. I feel worried, dirty, sad, frustrated and bad at what will happen to Manchester.”

(Clementine, Imbi, Morgane, Sienna, Yorgo and Lara – Oswald Road Primary School)

How we use these insights

Insights directly inform our communications, service design, target-hardening and enforcement visibility. They underpin the targeted actions in our first three-year Fly-tipping and Litter Action Plan.

6. Our current approaches to tackling fly-tipping and litter

Operationally, Manchester uses in-house teams and contractors, managing a blend of responsive and proactive activity – investigating cases, gathering evidence, and targeting hotspots, alongside scheduled cleansing and community reporting.

Our current approach to fly-tipping and litter is managed through four key areas of action:

Participation, engagement and education

- **Community engagement:** Our teams lead tailored engagement based on local needs, including door-knocking campaigns, Active Streets events, and support for community-led projects through funding streams.
- **Volunteering:** Initiatives such as the Great British Spring Clean, Friends of Parks groups, and the MCRVIP platform encourage residents to take part in clean-up activities.
- **Education:** Keep Manchester Tidy delivers targeted campaigns, school programmes (Eco-Schools), and values-based messaging to promote responsible waste behaviour.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with contractors, housing providers, schools, businesses, community groups and individual activists ensures a joined-up approach to tackling hotspots and promoting civic pride. Social value partnerships also play a key role in supporting activity.

Infrastructure and services

- **'Binrastructure':** Investment through Clean and Green Manchester has delivered thousands of new litter bins across the city.
- **Waste collection:** Manchester offers free kerbside collections for refuse, recycling and bulky waste, alongside Household Waste Recycling Centres (tips accessible by foot, bike or car).
- **Standards:** Street cleansing aligns with national standards, ensuring all land types maintain a minimum Grade B cleanliness rating, and remedial action within defined timescales.
- **Innovation:** Target-hardening measures at fly-tipping hotspots and trials to improve bulky waste services are underway.

Compliance and enforcement

- **Investigation:** Dedicated teams inspect fly-tips for evidence, supported by CCTV and joint operations with Greater Manchester Police.
- **Action:** Fixed penalty notices and prosecutions are pursued. Recent cases have seen increased fines via the Single Justice Procedure.
- **Visibility:** Plans include more visible enforcement branding and publicising successful prosecutions to deter offenders.

Data, insights and review

- **Data and intelligence:** Regular audits, hotspot mapping, and NI 195 cleanliness monitoring inform targeted interventions.
- **Governance:** Clean and Green Manchester provides oversight, ensuring alignment with wider strategies, such as the Climate Change Action Plan and Making Manchester Fairer.
- **Digital improvements:** Enhancements to reporting systems will make it easier for residents to report fly-tipping and track progress.

These approaches provide the foundation for our Strategy, but feedback from residents and partners shows we need to go further – making enforcement more visible, improving options for bulky waste services, and strengthening community participation.



7. Our co-produced solutions to tackle fly-tipping and litter

Facilitated by Keep Britain Tidy, we worked alongside stakeholders to co-produce solutions to tackle fly-tipping and litter. These solutions focus on fostering community pride, ensuring accountability, enhancing communication, increasing the visibility of enforcement, and reducing waste through legal routes.

Area	This could include
Increasing pride and personal responsibility Outcome: Stronger sense of ownership and reduced dumping	Focusing on alleyways Beautification and hyper-local projects Engaging local leaders and influential figures Community Clean-Ups Supporting businesses, keeping shopfronts clean
Celebrating volunteers Outcome: Sustained volunteer engagement and community cohesion	Celebration events Local signage and murals Personalised recognition, eg. letters and merchandise
Participation, education, engagement Outcome: Increased awareness and behaviour change	Targeted campaigns for specific audiences, eg. a campaign by and for teens Putting campaign signs in situ when fly-tipping is removed (values-based) Using social media and online groups
Landlord accountability Outcome: Reduced waste from property changeovers	Using HMO licensing and selective licensing schemes to focus on waste rules Developing communications with landlords and tenants (see Keep Britain Tidy guides)
Visible enforcement action Outcome: Greater deterrence and public confidence	Visible enforcement action Using crime scene tape and social impact stencils Publicising the outcome of compliance activity and prosecutions Supporting witnesses and creating new options around the supply of evidence

Area	This could include
Cut off the waste supply to rogue traders Outcome: Reduced illegal waste disposal	Campaigns to highlight the Householder Duty of Care Proactively tackling traders where they advertise Skip days and additional bulky collections A legitimate traders scheme
Build our circular economy and reduce waste Outcome: Less waste generated and more reuse	Supporting a repair café Encouraging loaning through a Library of Things Campaigns, eg. Buy Nothing New Renew shop

Next steps

These ideas will be embedded in our three-year action plan, which will include clear measures of impact, including reduced fly-tipping incidents in the long term, increased volunteer participation, and improved cleanliness ratings. These actions will be applied based on evidence and local need, ensuring resources are targeted where they will have the greatest impact.



8. Delivering and measuring progress

Our Strategy: Evidence-led approach

To prevent and reduce fly-tipping and littering, we will adopt an integrated model:

- **Behaviour change and engagement:** Values-based campaigns, clear duty-of-care messaging, and targeted communications for key audiences, eg. landlords, students, new residents.
- **Infrastructure and service design:** Reduce hassle (simpler, accessible bulky waste options), highlight legitimate disposal routes and target-harden hotspots.
- **Compliance, enforcement and deterrence:** Increase enforcement visibility, make reporting easier, and close the gap between offence and consequence.
- **Data and insight:** Strengthen data capture, visual dashboards, and hotspot analysis; use NI195 and other indicators to measure impact.
- **Targeting and fairness:** Direct resources where evidence shows greatest need, considering deprivation and avoiding unintended consequences.
- **Partnerships:** Align with regional/national policy (DRS, circular economy) and collaborate with strategic partners on complex assets and boundaries.

How we'll apply this:

- Prioritise evidence-led interventions at citywide hotspots.
- Design trials to test insights, eg. reducing hassle, reframing messages.
- Monitor and evaluate with consistent measurements (incident trends, NI195, enforcement outcomes, participation, awareness), sharing results with stakeholders.
- Maintain a continuous learning loop – adapting services, communications, and enforcement based on what works.

Delivering this Strategy will require strong governance, clear accountability, and active participation from partners and communities. Our approach focuses on collaboration, transparency and measurable outcomes.

Governance and co-ordination

• **Fly-tipping and Litter Action Group (FLAG):**

A multi-service group meeting bimonthly {Query meaning. Bimonthly can mean once every two months or twice a month} to drive delivery, set targets and monitor progress. FLAG will include Council services and key contractors. Tasks for the group include setting targets and monitoring the progress of the Fly-tipping and Litter Action Plan. FLAG will link into the Clean and Green Locality groups being guided by the Clean and Green Board.

• **Strategic Partners Group:**

Engaging national and regional partners such as GMCA, TfGM, National Highways, Network Rail, and Canal & River Trust to tackle issues on waterways, highways and transport networks. We will continue to build our partnership with Keep Britain Tidy and seek their support in engaging wider partners in a strategic network for Manchester. We will consistently share learning and good practice from Keep Britain Tidy's national network of local authorities, keeping people up to date on developments.

Key delivery components

- **Training:** Equip staff with knowledge and tools to support communities and enforce compliance.
- **System and process review:** Improve reporting systems for fly-tipping incidences involving witnesses and/or evidence, test improvements to the bulky waste service, and enhance the customer experience.
- **Communications and engagement:** A clear plan to deliver consistent messaging, promote participation, and make enforcement visible. This includes:
 - Targeted campaigns for residents, businesses and letting agents/landlords
 - Publicising successful prosecutions and compliance activity
 - Further opportunities for community involvement in shaping solutions.

Delivery overview

What we will do	What communities can do	What we need nationally
Build partnerships and FLAG	Report incidents and use legitimate disposal routes	Tougher sentencing and licensing
Improve processes and services	Avoid rogue traders and check licences	Improved waste carrier licensing scheme
Increase visible enforcement	Join clean-up campaigns and volunteer	Deposit return scheme
Continue to develop our support for Eco-Schools	Ask for support with funding, advice and guidance	Circular economy measures

Measuring success

We will track progress through clear targets and measures, monitored via the Clean and Green Board and reported annually to the relevant scrutiny committee and in the State of the City Report. Measures include:

- **Reduction in fly-tipping incidents and litter reports – over the life of the Strategy**
- **Improving NI195 cleanliness ratings across all land types**
- **Number of enforcement actions and prosecutions**
- **Participation and engagement (including volunteering and community projects)**
- **Awareness levels of legitimate waste disposal routes and householder and business duty of care**
- **Community sentiment about the local environment.**

We will share progress and outcomes with residents and stakeholders through regular updates, reports and community engagement sessions.



Appendix A – Glossary of terms

Bulky Waste Service: The Council’s collection service for large household items that cannot be disposed of through regular waste collection.

Circular Economy: An economic model focused on reducing waste by reusing, repairing and recycling materials to keep products in use for longer.

CoPLAR standards: National standards for street cleansing, ensuring minimum cleanliness grades across land types.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS): A forthcoming national initiative (expected 2027) where consumers pay a deposit on drinks containers, which is refunded when returned for recycling.

Eco-Schools: An international programme engaging schools in environmental education and sustainable practices, managed in the UK by Keep Britain Tidy.

FLAG (Fly-tipping and Litter Action Group): A multi-service group responsible for co-ordinating delivery of the Strategy, monitoring progress and ensuring accountability.

Fly-tipping: The illegal dumping of waste on land or water without permission. It can range from a single bulky item to large-scale deposits of industrial materials.

Householder Duty of Care: A legal requirement under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Household Waste Duty of Care Regulations (2005) for individuals and businesses to ensure waste is transferred only to authorised persons.

Keep Manchester Tidy: A partnership between Manchester City Council and Keep Britain Tidy, aimed at engaging communities to tackle litter and fly-tipping.

Littering: Discarding small items such as food packaging, cigarette butts and chewing gum in public spaces.

NI195: A national cleanliness indicator used to measure the presence of litter, detritus, graffiti and flyposting on land.

Single Justice Procedure: A streamlined legal process allowing certain offences, including fly-tipping, to be dealt with without a full court hearing.

Target-hardening: Measures designed to make locations less vulnerable to fly-tipping, such as barriers, gates and CCTV.

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Appendix C – Fly-tipping and litter Action Plan, first sprint 2026–2029

This document is held separately as a quick read.





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