

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

17 OCTOBER 2023

QUESTION NO. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Singh to ask the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

Fly Tipping

Fly Tipping has been going on for a while on a section of unregistered land near Waitrose on Oxford Road and Roadway Road. It is an eyesore and degrades the neighbourhood. Additionally, waste appears to be noxious, harmful, and a source of insect infection. What steps is the Council taking to deal with this problem, and when will they be completed ?

REPLY by Councillor Rowland Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

Thank you, Councillor Singh, for your question, which gives an opportunity to highlight how our street-cleansing team and enforcement team deal with fly-tipped waste on private property.

For clarity, there is no "Roadway Road" as your question stated, but as you have mentioned "near Waitrose," we have taken that you meant near Romsey Road and I will therefore address primarily the land at 930-940 Oxford Road on the boundary of the Waitrose, as you had raised this through a previous councillor enquiry. That land is not unregistered, nor is it owned or maintained by Reading Borough Council, but it is instead privately owned. May this also serve as a reminder not only to you, Cllr Singh, but to all councillors, that precise clarity around defining sites is important in helping officers out who's time can be wasted in chasing unclear locations.

The Council has a duty to keep the public highway and other Council-owned land clear of waste. Cleansing operatives routinely empty street litter bins, collect litter and remove fly-tipped waste from public land. The Council does not have a duty to clear waste from private property, privately owned land or unregistered/unadopted land. Landowners have and should take that responsibility for their own land and the Council will get involved only when the waste is putrescible or is an on-going exacerbated situation.

The Council does have a Recycling & Enforcement team that investigate litter, fly-tipping and other waste offences around the borough, whilst also engaging with, and educating residents regarding recycling and appropriate waste management/minimisation. The team priorities their enforcement activity on Council land such as highway, parks, and the housing estate but in certain private land cases, the team endeavours to identify private landowners and contact them to request they arrange clearance of waste on their land.

The land registry search for this site has shown that the land to the rear of the shops is owned by multiple different owners. Each Oxford Road address

owner is responsible for the section of the alleyway that they back on to. Officers have reviewed the site and noted that the waste that has accumulated appears to mostly be bulky waste consisting of furniture, white goods, and discarded heras-fencing. The vegetation is overgrown in places, but the waste was not considered to be putrescible.

The landowners of the sections of the alleyway where the rubbish is located have been written to requesting urgent clearance of their land within a set timeframe and have been advised that a further inspection of the site will be made on the 10th of November. Community Protection Notices (CPN) which fall under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 are used where the issue is unreasonable, of a continuing nature and is detrimental to the locality. Failing to keep private land clear of large amounts of waste is considered to be those 3 things –especially in the more substantial cases and those that are attracting lots of attention/complaints. Therefore, failure to remove the waste from this particular site, if our initial contact elicits no action, will likely result in enforcement action being taken against the landowner in the form of a CPN as it seemingly meets those criteria. It is our policy, that if escalated to a CPN, they are given 28 days on a Warning Notice and then a further 28 days in the form of a Formal Notice. They would be allowed more time if they seem to be working towards compliance.

The team will continue to monitor this site and the matter will be progressed should the landowners fail to take responsibility for their land. I do hope and trust this is the site that you had enquired about.