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Taking pride in keeping Suffolk safe

Police are urging Suffolk farmers and landowners to beware of a scam that has been occurring in Essex, in which waste rubbish is being illegally dumped on open land and camouflaged as plastic-wrapped hay bales.

The warning follows the discovery of about 1,500 tons of waste after a search warrant was executed on land in south Essex. Officers from the Environment Agency are now concerned that other sites in Essex may be targeted in the same way.

Investigators from the EA believe that criminals are making huge sums of money by charging to take away household or business waste but then dumping it at remote rural locations instead of using official permitted sites.

The rubbish is being compacted into plastic wrapping, capable of holding about half a ton. These are taken to fields or open land and built into haystack shapes, to give the impression that they are seemingly 'normal' plastic bags used by farmers to store hay, straw or silage.

Lesley Robertson, an Environment Agency Environmental Crime Team Leader, said: "The discovery of around 3,000 bales of rubbish in Essex is believed to be linked to a highly-organised criminal scam involving the disposal of household and business waste.

"This is an emerging trend but the first time evidence of the scam has been found in South Essex. However, we are concerned that more bales may have been dumped elsewhere and we want to urge people to look out for these sites and report them to us.

"This is a form of fly-tipping but on a massive and organised scale. The bales are being stored to look like farmers' haystacks and the contents will only come to light if the bags tear.

"The waste includes all forms of household and business rubbish such as food waste, plastic and cans.

They are being dumped and abandoned with total disregard for the environment, landowners and any member of the public who use the land.

You can report such concerns or problems to the Environment agency's 24-hour free phone incident hotline number 0800 80 70 60, or make an anonymous report to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or you can call Suffolk Police on 101

Please use the following link to pass useful information to Suffolk Police about any incident.

<http://www.suffolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/reportacrime/tellthepolice.aspx>

DO NOT USE THIS LINK IN AN EMERGENCY OR IN A SITUATION THAT REQUIRES AN IMMEDIATE POLICE RESPONSE WHEN YOU SHOULD RING 999.

Police Direct Team

