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Press release: Significant fine for water company following hazardous chemical leak

On 19 April 2018, at Derby Crown Court, sitting in Nottingham, Severn Trent Water Limited was fined £350,000, ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £68,003, as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

An estimated 30,000 dead fish and 5km of damaged ecology along the River Amber led to proceedings brought against Severn Trent Water Limited following a pollution incident.

On 1 November 2015, the Environment Agency received reports of several hundred dead fish in the River Amber in Derbyshire and, following a search of the area, and discussions with Severn Trent Water employees, the source of the pollution was found to be a release of sodium hydroxide from the Ogston Water Treatment works, operated by Severn Trent Water, into the river.

Severn Trent Water identified that a leak within a chamber at the Treatment works had led to the contents becoming contaminated with sodium hydroxide, which was then washed through the road gully into the River Amber via an outfall pipe.

The pollution had a significant negative impact on the fish and invertebrate populations within the River Amber. The Environment Agency has been monitoring the natural recovery of the river ecology over the last two years. Monitoring has shown that whilst there has been some improvements, something resembling a full recovery is not expected until the summer of this year.

In passing sentence, His Honour Judge Smith found that:

It beggars belief that a company of the size and expertise of Severn Trent Water had no policy whatsoever in respect of potential incidents arising in connection with their dosing chamber, either at this treatment works or indeed at any others throughout the UK.

To have no policy whatsoever when dangerous chemicals could have leaked out in any number of ways is highly negligent. The size and success of Severn Trent makes it even more astonishing.

In mitigation Severn Trent expressed regret and apologises for the incident. The company co-operated fully with the investigation and contributed £228,000 to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer involved with the investigation said:

This is a significant fine imposed on Severn Trent Water Limited for causing pollution. I hope it sends a strong message that it is far more cost effective to avoid these incidents, as we will continue to take companies and individuals to task where they ignore their responsibilities.

Pollution causes damage to the environment and river ecology, in this case sodium hydroxide with a concentration of 20% amounts to a hazardous chemical and the leak affected 5km of the River Amber and killed approximately 30,000 fish and damaged other wildlife.

We encourage anyone who sees suspected pollution to call our incident hotline 0800 90 80 70 so we can act to reduce damage, investigate and in serious cases take enforcement action.

[News story: NDA announces new Chair of Sellafield Ltd Board](#)

Lorraine has extensive experience in senior roles across a range of international companies and high-profile public sector organisations, including Thames Water, the Olympic Delivery Authority and London and Continental Railways Ltd. As Chair of Sellafield Ltd, Lorraine will report directly to David Peattie.

In her role as Chair of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Council, Lorraine Baldry has already gained valuable experience of working within the nuclear industry.

David Peattie said:

I am extremely pleased to welcome Lorraine as Chair of the Sellafield Ltd Board. Her contribution will be valuable to Sellafield Ltd, as it continues to make progress in cleaning up the hazards left from the earliest days of the UK's nuclear industry.

Her unique blend of experience, from a diverse range of organisations in the private and public sector, will help Sellafield provide a continued focus on safety while making decommissioning progress and delivering value for the UK taxpayer.

Lorraine Baldry said:

I am privileged to be given this opportunity, as Chair of Sellafield Ltd, to help the organisation in its mission to clean up some of the most complex nuclear facilities in Europe.

The next few years will be an important time for Sellafield as we look towards the end of nuclear fuel reprocessing and making accelerated progress in decommissioning and hazard reduction.

Corporate report: Robotics and artificial intelligence research and development: preferred option

Further developments in RAI technology could improve UK nuclear decommissioning in ways that could be faster, cheaper, safer and with less environmental impact.

Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (RAI) is a broad area of technology. It includes interconnected, interactive, cognitive and physical tools, able to variously perceive their environments, reason about events, make or revise plans and control their actions. RAI technologies perform useful tasks for us in the real world, extending our capabilities, increasing our productivity and reducing our risks.

Through our work on emerging technologies, RAI technologies have been identified as technologies that could significantly improve the existing technical baseline for decommissioning the UK's nuclear legacy. Whilst our mission is already benefitting from the use of some RAI technologies, further improvements in RAI technology could significantly enhance the situation. This will require Research and Development (R&D).

This Preferred Option paper outlines our preferred approach for delivering

this R&D.

National Statistics: Household Energy Efficiency National Statistics, headline release April 2018

This release includes measures installed under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Green Deal schemes. It also includes further analysis and geographical breakdowns of ECO measures, ECO delivery costs, estimated carbon and energy savings from measures installed and the supply chain. These statistics are provisional and are subject to future revisions.