

SEPA invites you to share your views on sector plan for oil and gas decommissioning

📅 12 October 2018

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- SEPA is consulting on its sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry.
- Between 2016 and 2030 at least 60% of the oil and gas installations in the northern and central North Sea will be decommissioned.
- Consultees are being urged to have their say on the plan before 20 November.

Everyone with an interest in the environment is being encouraged to share their views on SEPA's sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry.

SEPA's sector plans will be at the heart of everything the agency does and will shape its interactions with sectors and the businesses in them. The sector plan for oil and gas decommissioning aims to bring a clear and co-ordinated approach to regulation, focusing SEPA on delivery and using its staff more powerfully to engage.

Between 2016 and 2030 at least 60% of the oil and gas installations in the northern and central North Sea will be decommissioned. As Scotland competes to win decommissioning contracts, there is potential for at least 480,000 tonnes of material to be brought to Scotland for processing. The sector plan aims to ensure that all operators meet a minimum standard of environmental compliance and as many as possible go further.

The incentives for Scottish businesses are massive with the Scottish Government recently making an additional £5 million available to the supply chain in Scotland to help maximise the economic benefit from the decommissioning of North Sea infrastructure.

Operators and regulators will need to work together to ensure, whether within Scotland, the UK or abroad, that infrastructure is processed at well-equipped yards which offer a high degree of environmental protection.

SEPA's sector plan for oil and gas decommissioning focuses on how the agency will work directly with oil and gas operators, waste operators, Port Authorities, trade bodies and also other environmental agencies, regulators and government bodies to facilitate a consistent approach to this emerging sector.

Consultees have until 20 November 2018 to respond to the consultation which is available to view on [SEPA's Consultation Hub](#).

Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's Chief Executive, said:

"Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and we are clear that compliance is non-negotiable. We are transforming our regulatory approach in order to create a world-class environment protection agency fit for the challenges of tomorrow, and sector planning will drive this new approach.

"The sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry realises that Scotland needs a 21st century regulator that will encourage businesses to think about going beyond compliance and creating commercial success from environmental excellence.

"It is important that we have the views of as many people as possible across Scotland on this sector plan to ensure we get this right. If you have an interest in the environment please read the documents and tell us what you think."

Regulators' Pioneer Fund

Last week it was announced that SEPA will receive funding from the Regulators' Pioneer Fund for a decommissioning regulatory hub. This will bring together operating companies and multiple regulators (from the oil and gas industry and the waste supply chain) to address cross-cutting areas, share best practices, create innovative solutions and manage the associated risks together.

Commenting on the funding which SEPA received from the Regulators' Pioneer Fund Allan Reid, SEPA's Director of Commercial Services, said:

"The decommissioning hub will help implement SEPA's sector plan by addressing cross cutting areas, and driving the potential to reduce, re-use and recycle materials. This will ultimately develop knowledge and experience across the sector and help deliver economic growth, health and safety as well as environmental improvements."

Ends

[Press release: Cambridgeshire man sentenced to 8 months for illegal](#)

waste sites

On Tuesday 09 October 2018 Michael Newsome was sentenced to a total of 8 months imprisonment (4 months consecutive for each offence) suspended for 24 months. Newsome was also ordered to carry out 240 hours of unpaid work for the benefit of the community, ordered to pay a total of £12,131.90 in compensation to the landowners where he abandoned tyres and a contribution of £1,000 costs after pleading guilty to breaking the law in Peterborough and Whittlesey.

Peterborough Magistrates heard that Newsome, aged 28, of Overwater Close, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, traded as Cambridgeshire Rubber Recycling Ltd and even advertised on Facebook as being licensed.

First he set up in Peterborough having registered an exemption that allowed him a limited number of tyres on site to be stored under set conditions for safety.

Mr Gurjit Bdesha, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that Newsome leased the Dickens Street site from an 82-year-old man to shred tyres, which he failed to do. Instead, he took well in excess of the number of tyres allowed under the exemption and stored them in a way that had no fire breaks.

Mr Bdesha said:

This was especially important as the site is in the middle of a residential area with the nearest home being 13 metres away. Tyres can combust and fire can easily spread.

Despite being asked to move the tyres, Newsome made no effort to clear the site and the landlord ejected him. He later broke into a lockaway on site, damaging the door, to take back equipment belonging to him. He left behind 87 tonnes of tyres (9,050) costing the landlord £8,121.

After being evicted Newsome took on a site at Lazy Acre Farm, Whittlesey and carried on business, failing to even register an exemption.

The landlord became worried at the number of tyres on site with no equipment to process them and asked him to leave.

Mr Bdesha continued:

The landlord was so desperate for Newsome to leave the site and clear the tyres that he was prepared to waive rent arrears of £3,500 if he removed them. The tyres were left there.

At that site Newsome abandoned 117 tonnes of tyres (14,040).

Mr Bdesha told the court that the site was listed as a High Risk Fire site as the tyres were stored within 70 metres of the mainline railway from Birmingham to Stansted Airport. If there had been a fire due to arson or self-combustion then the impact could have resulted in the closure of the railway and caused significant disruption to the national railway transport network.

He said there had been 2 failed attempts to arrest Newsome, 2 failed attempts to get him to voluntarily attend interview with Environment Agency investigators and since then no communication from him.

After the hearing Enforcement Team Leader Phil Henderson said:

We require operators have an approved fire prevention plan in place before a permit is issued. The Environment Agency seeks to work with operators to ensure compliance with the relevant environmental regulations.

However, as in this case, where those operators fail to take this advice we are compelled to take action, particularly in cases where the storage of waste may risk local residents or our transport infrastructure.'

Newsome pleaded guilty to:

On or before 3 November 2015 on land known as 61 Dickens Street, Peterborough, PE1 5ER, you operated a regulated facility, namely a tyre treatment and disposal facility, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 12 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Contrary to Regulation 12 and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Between 1 December 2015 and 31 December 2016 on land known as Lazy Acre Farm, Whittlesey, Peterborough PE7 1GR, you operated a regulated facility, namely a tyre treatment and disposal facility, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 12 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. Contrary to Regulation 12 and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

[Press release: Cambridgeshire man](#)

sentenced to 8 months for illegal waste sites

Huntingdon man ran two illegal waste tyre sites in Cambridgeshire, both of which he abandoned.

Press release: IWT conference 2018: new funding for counter-poaching training in Africa

On the first day of [the fourth international Illegal Wildlife Trade conference](#) in London (Thursday, 11 October 2018), £900,000 of new funding has been announced to develop a new British military counter-poaching taskforce.

The announcement builds on the significant success of, and lessons learned from, the UK's previous work to train rangers in Gabon and Malawi.

Operatives will be deployed to train African park rangers in more effective and safer counter-poaching techniques. The project aims to reduce the number of poaching incidents by catching poachers and bringing them to justice.

The UK will work in partnership with targeted countries to provide support for intelligence mapping, interception tracking tactics and operations management.

Training carried out by [the British Army](#) in Gabon and Malawi during 2018 has been well received with 84 Ecoguards being trained in Gabon, which will double by the end of the year, and 120 Rangers partnered in Malawi.

UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

The illegal wildlife trade is one of the most serious issues of organised crime facing the world. In the last year alone more than 100 rangers were killed on the front line of the fight against poachers – as an international community we must do everything we can to support their vital work. The ranger programme we are funding provides professional training and builds capability to tackle this crime across Africa.

This demonstrates the UK's global leadership and delivers our commitment in [the 25-Year Environment Plan](#).

UK Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

The training we already provide has made a significant difference to the protection of some of the planet's most magnificent wildlife.

As the British Army now takes its world-renowned training further across Africa, those responsible for this abhorrent practice should be looking over their shoulders.

Maj James Cowen, who led the deployment in Malawi, said:

Having seen the beauty of these animals up close, and how at risk their survival is due to poaching, we are more determined than ever to stop these criminals in their tracks.

Planning is currently ongoing to identify countries and parks across the region with which the British Army will partner and assist over the next year.

Assistance can be tailored to the needs of the specific parks and consists of both base located training, such as command and control and paramedic, and a partnering model that sees UK soldiers living and operating with Rangers – helping Rangers to improve techniques and procedures whilst the UK soldiers have been able to improve their own skills in tracking and bush craft; a true partnership.

Environmental Crime, which includes the illegal wildlife trade and illegal logging, is the fifth most lucrative serious organised crime and is estimated to be worth up to £17 billion a year.

The two-day conference in London (11 to 12 October 2018) is bringing more than 80 nations together including international political leaders, conservation organisations and individuals interested in closing down the vile trade in wildlife.

Official Statistics: Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire: Final 2017 data

This release contains the data on UK wood production, imports and exports to be submitted to international organisations for the production of international statistics on forest products.