

Press release: Plastic pollution could stop horse riders in their tracks

Plastic granulate, sold as an alternative surface for equestrian centres, could place Yorkshire's horses and riders at risk, present a pollution hazard and lead to owners falling foul of the law.

Plastic granulate is a waste material derived from the recycling of cable sheathing and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). It's being marketed by some waste producers and brokers as a base material for horse maneges and track surfaces. However, there is no legal route available for its use for this purpose except in accordance with an Environmental Permit.

Furthermore, the plastics contained within this material can contain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's), phthalates and lead stearate. Weathering can cause leaching of these toxic substances into the wider environment, potentially causing contamination to land and groundwater. Some plastic granulate may even be cross-contaminated with non-plastic elements such as metal fragments and glass, making surfaces where it's used potentially harmful for horses and riders.

Environment Agency officer, Greg Deakin said:

We're determined to eliminate avoidable waste and crack down on plastics as part of the government's 25-year environmental plan.

We're therefore urging those with equestrian facilities to carefully consider the use of this material. It might be offered free of charge or for a small delivery fee, but it is an offence under the Environmental Permitting Regulations to use this waste without appropriate environmental controls.

If you're found to have plastic granulate waste deposited on your land without the appropriate Environmental Permit awarded by the Environment Agency, you could be fined and be liable for the cost of its disposal.

Producers or brokers of plastic granulate have a legal duty of care to ensure plastic granulate is disposed of at a permitted facility. If you are approached and offered this material and you do not have an appropriate Environmental Permit, please let us know on 03708 506 506 and ask to speak to your local waste team. Alternatively you can email the details to enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

If you are aware of any deposit of this waste please report it, anonymously if you prefer, to our 24-hour National Incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Research and analysis: Infrastructure finance review: insights for district heat network investment in the UK

This review of key UK infrastructure sub sectors by Deloitte was designed to identify lessons learnt from relevant infrastructure sub sectors that will help unlock third party finance for district heat/cooling networks in England and Wales.

Sectors explored include:

- energy from waste
- offshore wind
- ground mounted solar
- smart meter portfolios
- licenced offshore transmission links (OFTOs)
- interconnectors
- licenced Regulated Asset Base (RAB) networks under economic regulation
- infrastructure provider model as used in Thames Tideway Tunnel
- PFI / PF2 / PPP

Guidance: Heat networks: procuring finance

This paper is designed to help local authorities which recognise the potential benefits of engaging with a non-public investor (NPI) to deliver a heat network, but want to better understand:

- at what stage the local authority can engage with the NPI
- what role the NPI could play in developing the heat network project
- the procurement law and state aid implications of involving the NPI
- the alternatives for delivering the project in a way which meets the local authority's objectives, complies with legal requirements and supports investment from non-public sources

Similarly, NPIs considering investment in a heat network project with a local

authority may want to better understand the procurement law and state aid considerations which are relevant to the structuring of the project, and how these influence the local authority's approach.

[News story: Divers complete ponds mission at Sizewell A](#)

The team of underwater experts explored new depths at the former nuclear power station, with the task of cutting up old fuel storage skips and other redundant equipment as part of work to dismantle the site.

The team tackled their first UK 'nuclear dive' at Magnox's Dungeness A Site in 2016. Bringing valuable learning from their work at Dungeness, the team arrived on site at Sizewell A in October 2017.

The divers, who wear full protective suits and are shielded from radiation by the water in the ponds, successfully cut up and 'size reduced' all 35 skips left in the ponds.

The team also cut up around 100 tonnes of other redundant equipment during the dives before removing all the radioactive sludge from the pond floor.

During the operational life of the power station, the ponds were used to store thousands of used nuclear fuel rods, held in metal skips, after they were discharged from the reactors. After the last fuel was transferred to Sellafield for reprocessing, the skips and a range of other waste items, including radioactive sludge, were left behind under the water.

Conventionally, pond clean-out is done using remotely operated equipment to lift the whole radioactive skips and other pond furniture clear of the water, exposing them to the air, where they are carefully cut up and decontaminated. This process is slow with potential radiation dose risks for workers.

Using this innovative underwater decommissioning technique, radiation levels for workers were around 20 times less than with conventional techniques. As well as reducing the overall radiation dose for workers, the diving technique has a lower environmental impact, is quicker and more efficient, resulting in greater value for the UK taxpayer.

[Divers complete ponds mission at Sizewell A Site](#)

David Rushton, Programme Manager for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority which owns Sizewell A and 16 other UK nuclear sites, said:

Using divers at Sizewell is a fantastic example of Magnox taking an innovative approach to decommissioning and hazard reduction.

The end of the work to remove radioactive waste from Sizewell's ponds will mark another successful step towards cleaning up the UK's earliest nuclear sites. We've learned valuable lessons and gained some useful experience in ponds decommissioning which could help our work to reduce the hazards at the NDA's other nuclear sites.

The ponds are set to be completely emptied and drained by the end of 2019.

Notice: NG22 9LD, John Brooks Metals Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: John Brooks Metals Limited
- Installation name: John Brooks Metals
- Permit number: EPR/BP3430ZA/V002