

Yorkshire Water fined £1.6M for sewage pollution

Yorkshire Water has been fined £1,600,750 for polluting a Bradford watercourse in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency. It was also ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £170 and £22,112.79 in costs.

The company appeared at Leeds Magistrates' Court for sentence on Monday, 18 July, where it pleaded guilty to unauthorised sewage discharges into Bradford Beck, and breaches of its environmental permit.

The court heard its George Street detention tank in Bradford was full for up to eight months during 2018, leading to 25 unauthorised sewage spills into Bradford Beck.

The city centre tank collects and stores a mixture of rainfall and sewage from the sewer network during times of heavy rainfall. Once storm conditions have passed the tank operates its pumps to return the mixture back into the sewers. If it's a prolonged event and the tank fills to capacity, it's designed to overflow into the watercourse. When operating correctly the tank should be empty in dry weather.

Over two days in August 2018, the Environment Agency received four reports of sewage pollution in Bradford Beck. An officer attended and an investigation, combined with additional information from the community, led to a request for further data from Yorkshire Water. The investigation revealed one or both of the two pumps that emptied the tank were at various times not working between August 2017 and September 2018. The Environment Agency concluded the tank was full between January and August 2018, with spikes in the data showing the tank spilled 25 times.

Yorkshire Water was aware the storm pumps were out of action and of the fact the tank was full. It failed to fix the pumps as soon as practical, to provide a stand-by pump, to maintain its pumps and to maintain the overflow.

Information from the community suggested an impact on the wildlife, including invertebrates and fish in the immediate time after the August 2018 unauthorised discharge.

Bradford Beck at Ambler Mill, upstream of George Street

District Judge Kitson confirmed that Yorkshire Water knew from August 2017 that there were significant problems with the George Street Detention Tank and that it was 100% full from January 2018. He was satisfied Yorkshire Water knew the pumps were not in operation and had no means of pumping sewage back into the network. The Judge concluded that the company would have known a discharge into the tank would cause an unlawful discharge into the Beck. District Judge Kitson found that Yorkshire Water were reckless in this

offending due to the fact they were taking some steps but not with sufficient urgency.

Yorkshire Water in mitigation stated that Chief Executive, Nicola Shaw, was present in court because the company took its environmental responsibilities seriously. The company was remorseful and indicated remedial steps were taken to address the issues. It recognised it had failed to get a grip of the problem, but it had co-operated with the investigation.

Ben Hocking, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in Yorkshire, said:

We take our responsibility to protect the environment very seriously. Water companies are aware that their activities have the potential to cause serious environmental impacts and they have a legal duty to avoid pollution. The regulations are clear.

Yorkshire Water was aware the tank was full and likely to illegally discharge into the beck and failed to take action to prevent it from happening. They undermined the permitting regulations, which are in place to protect the environment.

Our officers carried out a thorough investigation, with the support of the community, to put the facts before the court as part of our continuing commitment to hold water companies to account.

Illicit drug users to face tougher consequences

So-called recreational drug users will face a fine and could have their passports and driving licences seized under new proposals announced today (Monday 18th July).

The tougher penalties will help tackle the scourge of substance abuse in society which devastates lives and tears communities apart, as well as make our streets safer.

The government is committed to reversing the rising trend of drug use in society, protecting vulnerable people from harm and exploitation. These measures are a step towards changing the damaging culture of drug use and the consumption of drugs such as cannabis and cocaine.

The proposals have been published in a white paper entitled ['Swift, Certain, Tough. New Consequences for Drug Possession'](#). The escalating tougher penalties that so-called recreational drugs users in England and Wales could

face include:

- first-time offenders required to pay for and attend a drug awareness course or, if they don't, pay an increased fixed penalty notice or face prosecution
- those found using drugs for a second time given a caution, sent on a further drug awareness course and face a period of mandatory, random drug testing for a period of up to three months
- offenders caught for a third time would likely be charged for their offence, and upon conviction, as part of a civil court order, could be subject to an exclusion order banning them from a specific location, such as a nightclub

They could also be given a drug tag monitoring their usage, and have their passports and driving licences confiscated.

The measures follow the publication of the 10-year drugs strategy in December and come after statistics which show over three million people in England and Wales in 2019 to 2020 reported using drugs in the last year, putting themselves at risk and handing lucrative profits to criminals running a violent and exploitative supply chain.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Drugs are a scourge across society. They devastate lives and tear communities apart.

Drug misuse puts lives at risk, fuels criminality and serious and violent crime and also results in the grotesque exploitation of young, vulnerable people.

We are cracking down on drug use with tougher consequences for so-called recreational drug users who will face the consequences of their actions through sanctions including fines and conditions to attend rehabilitation courses, while drug offenders could have their passports and driving licences confiscated.

In line with our strategy to tackle the harmful consequences of drugs, we aim to reverse the rising trend of substance use in society, to protect the public from the harm and violence of drug misuse.

The proposals will now be subject to a 12 week public consultation.

More people die every year as a result of drug misuse than from all knife crime and road traffic accidents combined. The total cost to society and taxpayers in today's prices is nearly £22 billion.

Overall prevalence of drug use has increased since 2012 to 2013 with drugs being used by a higher percentage of young adults and children.

The government is committed to reversing this trend and making our streets safer by stamping out drug supply in its 10-year drugs strategy, which is backed by an additional £900 million of funding for enforcement, treatment and recovery, taking the total investment on combating drugs over the next three years to £3billion.

Published last December, the strategy focuses on three key priorities – reducing demand for drugs, delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system and breaking drug supply chains. Today's proposals are a core part of delivering this strategy.

Police activity funded by the Home Office's County Lines Programme has already closed over 2,400 lines, made over 8,000 arrests and engaged over 9,500 individuals through safeguarding interventions since November 2019.

New national enterprise approach for air platform protection

At Farnborough International Airshow, the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD), Leonardo UK, Thales UK and Chemring Countermeasures are delighted to announce the formation of Team Pellonia.

A collaborative national enterprise approach to delivering UK next-generation air survivability (NGAS) solutions, the team will ensure that UK armed forces' air platforms have access to the best possible protective equipment while maintaining strategic skills and capabilities onshore.

Named after the Roman goddess who was renowned for protecting people from their enemies, Team Pellonia will see the UK Ministry of Defence, led by the Royal Air Force (RAF), Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) working in a close relationship with a best-of-British industry team comprising:

- Leonardo UK: the UK's onshore provider of integrated air platform protection capabilities, including advanced radio frequency (RF) and infrared (IR) sensors and effectors
- Thales in the UK: the UK's producer of a world-class infra-red based threat warning system and intelligent countermeasures dispensing system
- Chemring Countermeasures: the UK-based global leader in design, development, testing and manufacture of RF and IR countermeasures, including active decoys and threat agnostic countermeasures

Together, the team represents UK onshore knowledge and capability in the field of air platform protection. Team Pellonia will develop integrated self-protection systems for UK armed forces' platforms, with a mission to ensure that aircraft crews can respond to emerging threats with life-saving speed

and agility.

Air Vice-Marshal Lincoln Taylor CB OBE, Chief of Staff – Capability, Royal Air Force said:

Survivability is at the heart of the UK's operational independence. As part of Team Pellonia, the UK MOD will strive to ensure that UK NGAS capabilities are available to meet the UK's air platform protection requirements. This will provide the best possible protection for our people and capabilities, ensuring that MOD and Industry investment is perfectly aligned as we develop the next-generation of capabilities.

The announcement builds on the individual strategic partnering arrangements signed by the 3 companies with the MOD over the last 12 months, as well as on the team members' rich history of collaboration on UK platform protection capabilities. Leonardo provides integrated defensive suites for RAF Typhoons and the majority of the UK's helicopter fleet including the AW159 Wildcat, AW101 Merlin and Apache AH-64E. Many of these systems incorporate electronics from Thales, while Chemring countermeasures are widely employed across the UK's fleets. Team Pellonia will act as a catalyst to deepen this cooperation further and deliver enterprise-wide innovation.

The team are already on contract to deliver protection systems for the RAF's fleet of Shadow surveillance aircraft and the new Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft. Looking to the future, a number of UK air platforms will be reviewed in the coming years. Team Pellonia will drive to ensure that UK NGAS capabilities are available to meet defence's needs.

Team Pellonia partners will work together to offer defence platform-level integrated self-protection systems based on Leonardo's Modular Advanced Platform Protection System (MAPPS) architecture. Depending on the platform requirements, sensors and effectors could include Leonardo's Miysis Directed Infrared Countermeasure (DIRCM), Thales's Elix-IR® Threat Warning System (TWS), Thales's Vicon XF Countermeasures Dispensing System (CMDS) and Chemring's full suite of expendable countermeasures.

As the science inside UK defence and security, Dstl will act as technical partner to the team throughout the capability development, system integration and entry into service process, providing quality assurance throughout to ensure military advantage now and into the future.

As well as working together to provide the advanced capabilities of today, the Team Pellonia members will work together to agree a roadmap for investment that draws on the strengths of each team member in a collaborative enterprise-wide approach to the future survivability of air platforms. UK allies that share similar requirements will also be able to access self-protection systems from Team Pellonia. These systems will be compliant with the NATO Defensive Aids System (NDAS) standard and therefore have substantial export potential, bringing economic and social value back to the UK.

The close relationships forged through Team Pellonia will give UK defence and UK industry the confidence to invest in and develop cutting-edge new capabilities and maintain critical skills onshore, ensuring that the UK's armed forces continue to have access to the latest protective technologies for years to come.

Sovereign Base Areas Specialised Committee meeting: 18 July 2022

Press release

The fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee, co-chaired by the European Commission and the UK Government, discussed issues relating to the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus.



The UK and EU issued a joint statement following the fourth meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Specialised Committee on the Sovereign Base Areas of the United Kingdom in Cyprus:

The fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee was held on 18 July 2022 in Brussels, co-chaired by officials from the European Commission and the UK Government.

The Committee was established by the Withdrawal Agreement to facilitate the implementation and application of the Protocol.

The EU and the UK reviewed the operational phase of the implementation of the Protocol since its entry into effect on 1 January 2021.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to its smooth implementation and agreed to continue technical discussions with the objective of reaching a common understanding on the correct implementation of

the Protocol in the area of fisheries (Article 6 of the Protocol).

The co-chairs agreed that the technical discussions should include legal experts from both sides and be completed by the autumn. The Specialised Committee will revert to this issue immediately afterwards.

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New Service Centre opens in Newport

News story

The centre will provide court users with support and guidance on their cases.



The Newport centre opens today (Monday 18 July) and is our fifth and final Service Centre following sites opened in [Stoke-on-Trent](#), [Birmingham](#), [Loughborough](#) and [Salford](#). The centres are an important part of the government's £1 billion reform programme.

This centre brings staff together under one roof to provide support and guidance about cases. This increased capacity helps court users who need information about criminal cases, and complements the teams in Salford and Stoke-on-Trent who already advise on criminal cases and the [Single Justice Service](#). These teams allow court staff to focus on helping people attending hearings and court in-person.

Service Centres answer more than one million queries each year. They allow us to answer calls and queries quickly and offer better access to justice by providing a service that is more consistent. They also handle several important services that the public relies on, such as applications for probate and supporting video hearings.

Paul Harris, Operations Director, said:

I'm delighted that our new Service Centre is now open. It delivers on a promise we made at the beginning of our reform programme to make it easier for court and tribunal users to find information on their cases.

The Newport Service Centre will help callers with queries about criminal cases. Common queries they'll advise on include listing enquiries, interpreter bookings and enquiries about hearing results.

Service Centres have achieved a huge amount and bring value to court and tribunal users every day. For example, the new digital divorce process has improved the service at Stoke service centre. A majority of divorces are now concluded within 20 weeks and the number of divorces rejected has been reduced from 40% to less than 1%.

The opening of the Newport Service Centre completes this part of our £1 billion investment to reform courts and tribunals by providing more and better ways to access justice for everyone that needs it.

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