

[News story: UK to ratify international protocol to reduce air pollution](#)

The government has taken an important step towards ratifying the 2012 amendments to the Gothenburg Protocol, an international agreement to reduce air pollution.

An Explanatory Memorandum signed by the Environment Secretary and the text of the amendment to the Gothenburg Protocol were yesterday laid before parliament. This follows on from progressing with ratification of two other amended air pollution Protocols earlier this year.

The amended Protocol sets ambitious international targets for the reduction of damaging air pollutants including new national emission reduction commitments to be met by 2020 and beyond for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ammonia, non-methane volatile organic compounds and fine particulate matter.

The amended Protocol also introduces stricter limit values for emissions from new and existing major stationary sources, such as combustion plants, and iron and steel manufacturing plants.

The UK has been a Party to the Convention since 1982 and ratified the original Protocol in 2005. Over this period major investment by successive governments and industry and a shift in the UK fuel mix away from coal towards cleaner forms of energy have helped to significantly improve air quality levels. However work is still needed to combat harmful pollutant emissions.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

“Air pollution remains a significant threat to public health and we are committed to tackling its causes and improving air quality.

“This is why we are signing up to the amended Gothenburg Protocol and will shortly build on our £3.5bn plan to tackle roadside emissions by publishing a comprehensive Clean Air Strategy.”

[Press release: A crushing end for seized waste crime vehicle](#)

The vehicle was detained by officers last year after months of surveillance and intelligence gathering as part of Operation Poppy, a joint operation

between the Environment Agency and local police into 28 incidents of large scale illegal dumping of commercial waste in North Staffordshire, Shropshire, South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire. The DVLA also issued a prohibition notice and immediately removed the vehicle off the road after the vehicle was found to be using trade plates illegally and deemed unsafe to drive.

The driver and passenger were questioned by the police and remain a line of enquiry.

The vehicle was used to transport and dump large quantities of shredded household commercial waste, varying between 30 and 500 tonnes, on farmland, private wooded estates, secluded public footpath areas and business compounds. Secured areas were broken into and locks replaced by the offenders.

Environment Agency officers working on the case have since reported a reduction in illegal waste activity in the area since the lorry was seized.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

We are determined to make life hard for waste criminals by preventing and disrupting illegal activity. Today's vehicle crushing highlights the lengths we will go to make criminals pay for their unlawful deeds.

Thanks to the recent £30 million funding from the government and new powers to tackle problematic sites including authority to lock up sites and force rogue operators out of business, we are in a better position to safeguard the environment, local communities and the economy from the effects of waste crime.

In the financial year 16/17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2m in fines.

As the fight against waste crime ramps up, the Environment Agency has recently introduced body worn cameras for waste enforcement officers. The move follows a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

Environment Agency, West Midlands Area Director, Mike Grimes said:

This is the second vehicle destroyed this week, that has been taken as part of Environment Agency enforcement action. The seizure of these vehicles give a clear message that the Environment Agency takes waste crime seriously and will persistently pursue those suspected of illegally dumping waste.

We're making good progress to tackle waste crime. Our enforcement action is resulting in higher fines and custodial sentences. In the

past 2 weeks, prosecutions in West Midlands have resulted in a 26-month jail term for one waste criminal and a 200 hour community service order for another.

Last year, the Environment Agency closed down 2 illegal waste sites every day and we have already seized another vehicle connected with waste crime across the Midlands. With our new waste powers, we can take tougher action to reduce illegal waste activity, which will make a real difference to the local communities.

Gill Heath, Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet member for Communities, said:

It took us 3 days to remove approximately 175 tonnes of rubbish from the car park and footpath at Madeley Heath, so I'm delighted that a vehicle involved in that crime is being taken off the road permanently.

Dumping commercial waste has the potential to harm people and the environment, causes a great deal of trouble for the victims and it's extremely frustrating that public bodies have to spend taxpayers' money cleaning up a crime.

Members of the public can report illegal waste activity anomalously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via the [online form](#)

Research and analysis: ACRE advice: application for a trial of GM camelina (18/R08/01)

These documents are the advice of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) to government on an application from Rothamsted Research to carry out a trial of *Camelina sativa*, which has been genetically modified to produce omega-3 fatty acids, wax esters, and a pigment in its seed.

The committee advised that the risks to human health and the environment from this trial are extremely low.

Notice: The East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board: application made to abstract water

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
 - which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
 - when you need to comment by
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