

## [Press release: Harron Homes fined £120,000 over construction pollution](#)

A Leeds-based house building company has been fined £120,000 for illegally polluting a watercourse from a Huddersfield construction site.

Harron Homes Limited was sentenced yesterday (20 November) at Leeds Magistrates' Court after admitting one charge of causing illegal discharges from its Farriers Croft estate in 2015.

The Environment Agency prosecuted the firm after investigating reports of contaminated run-off which was entering a tributary of Grimescar Dyke.

Rosalind Emsley-Smith, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that an officer visited the site on 20 November 2015 and saw polluted water flowing out of the entrance of the construction site. The company was also pumping silt contaminated water from site excavations which also entered the watercourse.

Following the Environment Agency's visit, Harron Homes attempted to control the silt run-off by setting up settlement tanks. However, further incidents of pollution were reported in November and December 2015 and subsequent inspections revealed that this system was inadequate. Silty water was found to be discharging, resulting in further pollution.

Samples taken from the discharges showed that they were having a significant impact on the water quality in the watercourse up to three kilometres further downstream. Some samples showed there to be nearly 35,000 milligrams of suspended solids per litre of water, whereas a healthy watercourse is expected to have a concentration lower than 30 milligrams per litre.



The firm's attempt to contain the muddy water was inadequate; silt was seen flowing off the site

Mark West, environment management team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

These pollution incidents had a significant impact on the water environment over a number of weeks, and were entirely avoidable. In West Yorkshire there has been a worrying increase in the number of pollutions incidents reported to us that on investigation are attributable to the construction sector.

Construction companies should consider the potential environmental impact of developments they undertake at the initial planning stage and must adhere to environmental permitting rules and invest in appropriate management systems to prevent their activities from affecting the local environment.

If anyone spots pollution of this kind, they are urged to contact the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060 so we can investigate.

In mitigation, Harron Homes told the court that it had now put procedures in

place to prevent future pollution incidents.

In addition to the fine, the company was ordered to pay £8,706.71 in legal costs and a £120 victim surcharge.

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## **Press release: Flood defences put to the test in Bewdley**

Environment Agency along with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Wyre Forest Council and the community flood group have conducted a successful barrier deployment exercise on the Stourport Road, Bewdley, Worcestershire.

The exercise, which ran from 9am to 3pm, tested the barrier deployment plan and procedures, and working arrangements with partners and the local Community Flood Group. This ensures barriers can be quickly and safely erected when needed during a flood with minimum disruption to residents and businesses.

Environment agency staff were on hand to talk to members of the public about the work they do during flooding and other times of the year and also how people can better protect themselves and their properties during times of flood. Students from the local school were given a tour of the barriers and shown how they are assembled, they also discussed the issues of flooding in the local area.

Mark Bowers, Flood Risk Manager said:

This exercise allowed us to practice and test our barrier deployment plan for Bewdley, gaining valuable training experience with our partners as well as the opportunity to identify ways in which we can further refine our plans. This in turn will enable us to better respond during floods.

Temporary barriers are just one of the ways we aim to better protect people and properties. It's important to remember we can never fully protect against flooding, which is why we encourage people to go online at <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk>, check their flood risk by entering their postcode, and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.

Nick Farress, Bewdley Town Council Clerk added:

The exercise was an opportunity to test the community flood plan and prepare our group of volunteers for the real thing. We are very grateful to the Environment Agency for organising the event and continuing to support the use of the temporary barrier. The community flood group, managed by the Town Council, is a vital resource in a flood event and is always in need of new volunteers, so I would encourage anyone who can help to get in touch with the Town Council.

Wyre Forest Station Commander, Daryl Justice, said:

Our involvement with the Bewdley Flood Barrier response is a new arrangement that will see our firefighters add even more value to the Wyre Forest community.

When flooding is predicted our on-call firefighters will be given a period of notice which will minimise the impact on their primary employment and, although deployed under the direction of the Environment Agency, they will remain available for life threatening emergencies.

This is one of the first initiatives of its type in the UK and is a great example of how fire crews can add value in other areas. It also supports Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's wider vision of 'Saving More Lives'.

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## **Press release: Second phase of assessment on new nuclear reactor for UK begins**

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Environment Agency announced today that they are progressing to the next phase of their assessment of a new nuclear reactor design for the UK.

The assessment follows preparatory work by General Nuclear System Ltd (GNS) and the regulators.

The process, known as Generic Design Assessment (GDA), allows the regulators to begin assessing the safety, security and environmental aspects of new reactor designs before site-specific proposals are brought forward.

In addition, GNS will be launching a [comments process](#), which enables anyone to submit comments and questions about the reactor design to the company for

their response.

Mike Finnerty, ONR's Deputy Chief Inspector and Director of ONR's New Reactors Division said:

The purpose of GDA is to determine whether the design meets the robust safety and security standards to make it suitable for use in the UK. I am satisfied that there are adequate project management and technical provisions in place to enter Step 2 of the process and, as regulators, we can begin our technical assessment phase.

Steve Hardy, Environment Agency Nuclear Regulation Group Manager said:

In this GDA we're assessing the environmental acceptability of a new reactor design from China, the UK HPR1000. We'll identify any issues or concerns we have with the UK HPR1000 and work with GNS, CGN/EDF's company bringing this reactor to the UK, to make sure it understands our expectations and delivers a design that meets them.

We are beginning a process of robust scrutiny on which we will report our progress and findings. People can contribute to this work through the comments process that can be accessed from our websites.

ENDS

Notes to Editors and contact details

Generic Design Assessment (GDA) is a joint process between the Office for Nuclear Regulation and Environment Agency.

GDA enables the nuclear regulators to assess the safety, security and environmental impacts of any new reactor designs at a generic level, before receiving an application to build a particular nuclear power station design at a specific location.

Due to the complexity and the level of scrutiny required in the GDA process it is expected to take around four years to complete, provided General Nuclear System Ltd meet the timetable for submissions and the submissions are of sufficient detail.

Bradwell Power Generation Company Ltd, a joint subsidiary of China General Nuclear (CGN) and EDF, proposes to construct a new nuclear power station at their site next to the existing Magnox site at Bradwell in Essex

Read more about the GDA process on the joint regulators' [website](#).

Read more about General Nuclear System's UK HPR1000 [website](#).

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## [Press release: Waste site operation to protect workers and environment](#)

The Environment Agency has joined forces with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the North East to carry out combined visits to check waste sites aren't flouting important legislation.

This ongoing multi-agency approach aims to improve working practices on regulated sites.

The joint initiative, named Operation Hercules, focuses on sites that recycle, process or store waste, from scrap vehicles to general household waste. Operators use a variety of processes and equipment to store, sort and process waste which have the potential to expose workers to risks to health and safety.

The aim of these visits is two-fold; to make sure the sites are operating within the conditions of their Environmental Permit to protect the environment and community, while ensuring the health and safety of workers isn't put at risk.

Carla Metcalf, Waste Specialist for the Environment Agency, said:

We manage our permitted sites every single day to ensure they are operating within the law, to protect the environment and to minimise impact on the local community.

Health and safety is paramount when our officers are visiting sites and officers regularly contact HSE if they feel a site is unsafe.

These joint operations are a really good opportunity to share knowledge with other agencies and mean we look at the site from different perspectives, ensuring any issues impacting on the environment and community can be looked at together with site safety.

Inspector Victoria Wise from the Health and Safety Executive added:

In the last five years 39 workers and 11 members of the public have been killed because of work activity in the sector. The main causes of death are people being run over or struck by a moving vehicle. A high number of workers in this industry are also exposed to processes that cause irreversible ill health conditions.

During the last joint regional initiative HSE found all eight sites

visited to be in significant contravention of health and safety law. HSE and the Environment Agency have therefore agreed to run the initiative again throughout this region in November.

Joint operations such as this mean we can work alongside the Environment Agency to make sure those responsible for the sites are not exposing workers, members of the public and the environment to harm from the operations they undertake.

During the last series of joint visits at the back end of 2016, HSE and the Environment Agency attended eight sites across the region.

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## **Press release: Significant milestone reached on Newhaven flood defence project**

These works will reduce flood risk to 244 homes, 88 commercial properties and vital infrastructure.

The Newhaven flood alleviation scheme has been developed in partnership with Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and South East LEP. Construction work started on 3 January 2017 following consultation with the local community.

JacksonHyder are designing and building the scheme. Construction has initially focussed on the west bank of the River Ouse, where defences will protect mainly residential properties. Work here has varied from minor measures to plug gaps in existing defences, to sizable sections of new concrete flood wall and earth embankment.

This has included:

- Building a 150-metre-long bund north of Cantell's Boatyard.
- Building a 130-metre wall built along the edge of the footpath either side of Denton Island Bridge.
- Realigning and raising the flood defence bund at the rear of Huggett's Green, plus constructing various concrete walls in this area for seating and to support a new floodgate.
- Building a 140-metre-long reinforced concrete wall which runs from near the Swing Bridge to just north of the Ark Pub with access to fishermen's jetties.
- Raising 20 metres of flood defence bund in West Quay.

With just a few finishing touches to be done on the west bank, focus now

shifts to the east bank. Work here has recently started, and the whole scheme is expected to be completed by 2019. Once finished, it will reduce flood risk to approximately 430 homes and 390 commercial properties and vital infrastructure, as well as bringing significant economic benefits to the coastal East Sussex town.

The whole scheme will cost around £18 million, with the majority of funding coming from government in the form of Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid (GIA). The 'Coast to Capital' and 'South East' Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), are each contributing £1.5 million as part of their wider commitment to the regeneration of Newhaven. This partnership approach will both significantly reduce flood risk to the local community, and provide confidence for developers to contribute to the regeneration of Newhaven.

In December 2013 the south coast of England was hit by a storm surge coming down from the North Sea. The storm saw hurricane-force winds and the highest tide in some places for almost 60 years. The tidal surge in the Newhaven area badly affected between 50 and 60 properties in the Railway Road area, as well as closing the railway line between Lewes and Seaford.

Gordon Wilson, Environment Agency Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, said:

I am delighted that works have been completed on the west bank at Newhaven, and that residents and businesses will now benefit from a significantly reduced flood risk. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Newhaven community for their support and encouragement throughout the construction period and ask for their continued forbearance, as there will inevitably be some disruption whilst this essential work is completed.

When the flood alleviation scheme is completed in 2019, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to hundreds of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area, as well as protecting important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway tracks and the train station. We believe that it will also contribute to the wider regeneration of Newhaven, helping to bring new investment, jobs and homes to the town, and the surrounding area.

Jonathan Sharrock, Chief Executive at Coast to Capital, said:

With the impact of adverse weather being felt across the world and the UK, improving flood defence resilience is of huge importance. We are thrilled to have contributed to a project which will not only protect the economic, social and environmental assets of Newhaven but will also have a direct impact on enhancing regional growth.

Councillor Isabelle Linington, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental



Impact, said:

I am very pleased that work is now completed on the west bank which takes us one step further to completion of this scheme that is so vital for local residents, businesses and community.

Further information on the scheme is available by calling 03708 506506, by emailing [newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk) or by writing to:

SSD Enquiries,

Environment Agency,

Guildbourne House,

Chatsworth Road,

Worthing,

BN11 1LD

[Check you are at risk of flooding](#) for information on how to prepare for flooding and the latest flood warnings in your area or ring Floodline on 0345 9881188.

For all media enquiries please contact 0800 141 2743 or email [southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk).