

Press release: Jailed fraudster ordered to repay more than £1.3 million

Terry Soloman Dugbo, 48, is currently serving a record seven years and six months in prison after defrauding the electrical waste recycling industry out of £2.2million.

The sentence handed down at Leeds Crown Court in July 2016 remains the longest ever for an environmental crime.

Dugbo was back at Leeds Crown Court again today where he was told he must pay back some £1.3 million which had been acquired through his illegal activity.

He was given three months to pay and faces a further eight years in prison on top of the sentence he is serving if he fails to do so.

The confiscation was brought by the Environment Agency under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) following a financial investigation into the profit Dugbo made from his crimes.

It followed a seven-week trial, concluding in July 2016 where Dugbo had denied charges of conspiracy to defraud, acting as a company director while disqualified and breaching an environmental permitting condition, but was found guilty on all counts.

He was convicted of falsifying paperwork to illegitimately claim that his Leeds based firm, TLC Recycling Ltd, had collected and recycled more than 19,500 tonnes of household electrical waste during 2011.

In reality, his company had never handled the amounts of waste described and he was not entitled to the substantial fees he was paid from two waste recycling schemes.

Dugbo had contested the POCA proceedings since 2016, which is why it can only be reported now. He had also tried to reduce previous benefit totalling more than £96,000 for convictions for VAT fraud in 2014 at Leeds Crown Court and exporting hazardous waste to Nigeria in 2011 at Basildon Crown Court.

During the current proceedings, the court heard how Dugbo had misled both courts by claiming that his assets had already been used to satisfy both of these earlier courts orders when in fact they had not.

During the course of the investigations, Environment Agency officers worked closely with HMRC. They uncovered bank accounts in Nigeria, Senegal and Spain. Further documents revealed that Dugbo led a lavish lifestyle with five-star holidays in Ibiza and mainland Europe, luxury vehicles, including a Bentley and tailor-made suits.

Judge Jameson QC ruled that Dugbo had claimed to have gambled away much of the assets he had acquired during the fraud, which the court rejected and concluded that he would say anything he believed would answer an immediate difficulty without regard to the truth, or even logic or realism of what he was saying.

Environment Agency's Dr Paul Salter said:

Dugbo was unable to provide any credible evidence to show what happened to the proceeds of his fraud. He has a history of dishonesty in court proceedings and non-disclosure of assets and bank accounts at home and abroad. Our financial investigation into his realisable assets suggest he had benefitted from his crimes to the tune of £1,373,060.09.

He has now been ordered to repay more than £1.3 million, which is a significant confiscation order on top of the custodial sentence already handed out. It sends out a clear message to others who flout the law that waste crime does not pay.

Not only do we use environmental law to prosecute those who abuse the environment but we also use the Proceeds of Crime legislation to ensure that criminals are deprived of the benefits of their illegal activity.

Waste crime undermines legitimate businesses and can have significant detrimental impacts on communities and the environment.

This hearing demonstrates how seriously we take waste crime and we'll continue to take action against those operating outside of the law and the regulations.