

£10 million flood repair works planned for the Lower River Aire

Since the flooding in February, Environment Agency staff have inspected and maintained 130km of river banks and identified more than 40 locations on the lower River Aire that require repair work due to the damage caused during last autumn and winter. The repair works are needed to return the flood defences back to their pre-flood condition.

Temporary repairs have already been made to those defences requiring the most urgent attention, including the washland reservoir embankments known as Poor Bank and Pickhill Bank between Heck, Gowdall and the Snaith washlands. Washlands are areas of land adjacent to rivers which are designed to store water at times when the river levels are high.

Teams have also been working within Government guidelines to clear away flood debris along the Lower River Aire over the last month and have started their regular programme of grass cutting of flood defence banks to enable inspection and maintain their condition.

Kimberley MacPherson, West Yorkshire Operations Manager at the Environment Agency said:

Recovering from flooding is always incredibly hard and the coronavirus pandemic has added to this greatly. We are doing all we can within Government restrictions to keep up the maintenance programme of our flood banks and we're pleased to be starting this crucial repair programme of works to get the defences back to their pre-flood condition.

We'll continue to work closely with flood wardens, community groups and residents to provide support as best as we can during the coronavirus pandemic.

The flooding on the lower River Aire at the end of February followed an autumn and winter of exceptional rainfall that had fully saturated the ground and kept river levels high for prolonged periods. It was the wettest February on record for Yorkshire, with the River Aire catchment receiving 367% of the average monthly rainfall.

River levels responded very quickly and the volume of water in the river was such that the washlands filled to capacity and overtopped, to an extent not experienced in recent times.

There are 14 formal washlands on the Lower River Aire which have a capacity of 45 million cubic metres, equivalent to a sixth of the volume of Lake Windermere or 18,000 Olympic sized swimming pools.

The Environment Agency worked with its partners Selby District Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire County Council, the emergency services and the Internal Drainage Board to minimise the impact of the flooding through the operation of its existing and temporary flood defences and the use of 32 mobile pumps.

Despite these efforts, unfortunately over 100 properties were flooded and many more affected in the communities of Hirst Courtney, Snaith and East Cowick. Many landowners and farmers along the Lower River Aire, and road and travel routes between communities were also impacted.

The Environment Agency is still working on a full internal review to understand the causes and extent of the flooding, including how the washlands worked, the flood warnings and the effectiveness of the pumping operation once the washlands overtopped. The Environment Agency is also working with the local authorities as part of their investigations, and working on our own internal reviews to better understand the causes of flooding and any learning.

Although options to further reduce flood risk are limited by the tidal influence from the River Ouse, the Environment Agency will be working with partners and local communities to explore what may be possible.

While the package of 40 repair jobs won't increase the standard of flood protection for communities, there are planned investments for the next six years along the lower River Aire to improve and replace some of the existing flood defences, at a total projected cost of £36 million. These plans are all subject to approvals and will require partnership funding to deliver.

[Disqualified packaging boss sentenced for breaching ban](#)

Update

Following [Confiscation Orders](#) made by the court in accordance with the Proceeds of Crime Act, Mark Bottjer has been ordered to pay £64,712.83, while Susan Hearn was ordered to pay £18,594.87. Both defendants have to pay prosecution costs and the orders were made on 12 May 2020 at Chelmsford Crown Court before HHJ Gratwicke. The penalty for default of payment is 12 months imprisonment. The 59-year-old appeared at Chelmsford Crown Court on Friday 28 February 2020 where he received a 10-month sentence, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to complete 250 hours of community service.

Press release

Mark Bottjer, from Colchester, Essex, appeared at court after he pleaded

guilty to three counts of acting as a director while subject to a disqualification undertaking.

He was joined at court by Susan Linda Hearn after she pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and abetting Mark Bottjer to breach his disqualification.

The 58-year-old from Great Oakley, Essex, received a 2-year community order of 150 hours of unpaid work and 30 days rehabilitation.

The pair were also handed directorship disqualifications by His Honour Judge Christopher Morgan. Mark Bottjer is banned for 12 years, while Susan Hearn is disqualified from running companies for 7 years.

The court heard that Mark Bottjer voluntarily signed a 3-and-a-half-year disqualification undertaking in May 2014 after the company he was director of, Boxperfect Presentation Packaging Ltd, went into administration and he was deemed to be unfit to act as a company director.

This meant he was restricted from managing and forming companies unless he had permission from the courts and following the undertaking, Mark Bottjer terminated his directorship of another packaging company he was a registered director of, Redbox Packaging Design. He then appointed himself as Company Secretary for both Redbox Packaging Design and a separate company, Boxperfect International Ltd.

Despite the appearance that he had stepped back from managing the two packaging companies, he continued to act as director of both Redbox Packaging Design and Boxperfect International.

Evidence seen by the court demonstrated that Mark Bottjer had led meetings and negotiations for more than a year with a high-profile London retailer shortly after his ban. He continued to play prominent roles in the companies', including determining company purchases and making decisions about company finances, strategy and legal proceedings.

Mark Bottjer also gave the impression to staff that his role had not changed when he stepped down as director after his disqualification.

Susan Hearn had also been involved in the management of Boxperfect International and despite being aware of Martin Bottjer's disqualification, she facilitated a number of Bottjer's decisions to maintain the appearance that he was no longer running the company, including negotiating with the tax authorities.

Before passing sentence, His Honour Judge Christopher Morgan also heard that Mark Bottjer formed another company known as International Packaging Brands Limited and had made payment for its formation while he was restricted under the terms of his disqualification undertaking. The court noted that all 3 companies failed.

Ian West, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Disqualifications impose significant restrictions on your ability from managing companies. But Mark Bottjer completely disregarded the law when he continued to play prominent roles in three different businesses despite being banned from doing so. Whether that was making financial decisions or even talking to liquidators when one of the companies was being wound-up.

He was aided in his actions by Susan Hearn and the courts have rightfully recognised that the pair had broken the law, resulting in their sentences.

Notes to editors

Redbox Packaging Design (Company number 07575825) went into creditors voluntary liquidation in March 2015.

Boxperfect International (Company number 08905554) went into administration in November 2015.

International Packaging Brands Limited (Company number 09686787) went into creditors voluntary liquidation in August 2018.

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Water and energy networks could be used to deliver nationwide gigabit broadband](#)

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman is seeking views on changing regulations to make infrastructure sharing easier for broadband companies.

This would open up access for broadband network operators to house their equipment on 'passive' infrastructure owned and used by other telecoms companies. Passive infrastructure includes utility ducts, poles, masts, pipes, inspection chambers, manholes, cabinets, and antenna installations.

The government will also explore making it easier for these firms to run high-speed broadband cables through the electricity, gas, water and sewer networks that span the UK.

It could also mean strengthening broadband companies' access to run cables along new and existing infrastructure lining the road and rail networks across the length and breadth of the country.

Currently civil works, in particular installing new ducts and poles, can make up as much as 80% of the costs to industry of building new gigabit-capable broadband networks.

These measures could significantly reduce the time and cost it takes to roll out gigabit-capable broadband to every home and business in the UK, giving people future-proof internet connections capable of reaching download speeds of up to 1 gigabit (1000 megabits) per second.

Research from the National Infrastructure Commission suggests infrastructure re-use could lead to an £8 billion cost saving for companies deploying gigabit-capable broadband.

Minister for Digital Infrastructure Matt Warman said:

It makes both economic and common sense for firms rolling out gigabit broadband to make use of the infrastructure that already exists across the country. This will help them avoid the high costs and disruption of having to dig or build their own and ultimately benefit consumers.

We've seen progress with improved access to Openreach's ducts and poles, but other telecoms companies have large networks that are not easily accessible. We want them, and utility companies, to do more to open these up and help speed up getting next-generation broadband to people across the UK.

As a result the government is today launching a call for evidence as part of a review of the Access to Infrastructure (ATI) Regulations 2016, which enables sharing of information about access to physical infrastructure across the utility, transport and communications sectors.

They include provisions on the exchange of information about existing infrastructure, and the right to access that infrastructure on fair and reasonable commercial terms and conditions.

While telecoms companies are free to make their own commercial agreements on infrastructure sharing, the government understands that the ATI Regulations have not been widely used in the UK to date despite the rapid increase in the rollout of gigabit broadband to meet the government's ambitions for nationwide coverage.

The review will assess if there are changes that could be made to the

regulations to further boost investment in infrastructure, and encourage the use of infrastructure sharing to increase the availability of gigabit-capable broadband.

Clare MacNamara, CEO of the Broadband Stakeholder Group, the UK Government's advisory forum for telecoms policy, said:

It is important for the Broadband Stakeholder Group that the right measures are in place to support UK fibre and gigabit rollout in order for industry to meet the target of nationwide availability by 2025. We therefore welcome Government's review of the regulations".

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Change of Governor of Bermuda: December 2020

Press release

Ms Rena Lalgie has been appointed Governor of Bermuda in succession to Mr John Rankin CMG.



Ms Rena Lalgie has been appointed Governor of Bermuda in succession to Mr John Rankin CMG who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Ms Lalgie will take up her appointment during December 2020.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Rena Lalgie

Married to: Jacob Hawkins

Children: Two

2016 to present	HM Treasury, Director of Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation
2015 to 2016	UK Trade and Investment, Director of Operations, Trade Group
2013 to 2015	Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Deputy Director, Industrial Strategy
2010 to 2013	Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Deputy Director, Information Economy and Cyber Security
2008 to 2010	Better Regulation Executive, Deputy Director, Domestic Affairs and Public Sector
2007 to 2008	HM Treasury, Head of Counter-Terrorism and Security Review
2007 to 2015	Justice of the Peace (Central London Bench)
2006 to 2007	Cabinet Office, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Team Leader, Strategic Planning
2004 to 2006	HM Treasury, Head of Criminal Justice System and Crime Branch
2003 to 2004	HM Treasury, Drugs and Organized Crime Policy Analyst
2003	Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, Drugs Policy Analyst
2001 to 2003	Home Office, Young People Substance Misuse Policy Adviser
1998 to 2001	Short-term posts and internships at Commonwealth Institute, FCO, Home Office and No10

Further information

Published 12 June 2020

[2 UK roofing lead firms admit to illegal cartel](#)

Rolled lead is an important product for the construction industry, used mainly for roofing. The admission from 2 of the biggest players in the market: Associated Lead Mills Ltd and H.J Enthoven Ltd (trading as BLM British Lead), follows a Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation. A third company, Calder Industrial Materials Ltd, is also under investigation in relation to one of the arrangements and has not made any admissions.

In its [original provisional findings](#), the CMA alleged that Associated Lead Mills, BLM British Lead and Calder Industrial Materials – which together account for about 90% of UK rolled lead supplies – entered into a cartel to share the market amongst themselves through, for example, the allocation of customers.

The CMA has now revised its provisional findings and issued the 3 firms with a 'supplementary statement of objections', which outlines its updated allegations. The CMA's revised provisional view is that there was not a single overall cartel arrangement, but rather 4 individual arrangements that broke competition law.

The CMA's revised provisional findings indicate that Associated Lead Mills and BLM British Lead entered into arrangements including:

- sharing the market, including by arranging not to target certain customers
- colluding on prices
- exchanging commercially sensitive information on prices
- arranging not to supply a new business that risked disrupting the firms' existing customer relationships and was also a potential competitor in the market

In the light of the CMA's updated provisional findings, both Associated Lead Mills and BLM British Lead have now admitted to their parts in these arrangements, which took place between October 2015 and March 2017. The 2 firms have agreed to pay maximum fines totalling more than £11 million, although the exact amount will be determined at the end of the CMA's investigation, if there is a formal final decision that the law has been broken.

With regard to the third firm, Calder Industrial Materials, the CMA has provisionally found that it became involved, at a later stage, in the arrangement with Associated Lead Mills and BLM British Lead not to supply a new business that risked disrupting the firms' customer relationships and was a potential competitor in the market. Calder Industrial Materials has made no admission of liability and the CMA's investigation is continuing. No assumption should be made that Calder Industrial Materials has broken the law.

Notes to editors:

1. The investigation is under the Chapter I prohibition the Competition Act 1998 (CA98) and Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) [UK Exit from the EU: Guidance on the functions of the CMA under the Withdrawal Agreement](#)
2. The supplementary statement of objections is addressed to the following parties, which the CMA provisionally considers were directly involved in the alleged infringements or are liable as parent companies of the undertakings directly involved: Associated Lead Mills Limited, Royston Sheet Lead Limited (previously Jamestown Metals Limited) and their parent company International Metal Industries Limited (previously International Industrial Metals Limited); H.J. Enthoven Limited (trading as BLM British Lead) and its parent company Eco-Bat Technologies Limited; Calder Industrial Materials Limited and its parent company Calder Group Holdings Limited.
3. Associated Lead Mills has agreed to pay a maximum fine of £1,815,614 and BLM British Lead has agreed to pay a maximum fine of £9,516,572 as part

of a settlement agreement, if it is found that the law has been broken at the end of the CMA's investigation.

4. The maximum fines for Associated Lead Mills and BLM British Lead have been calculated following the approach set out in CMA's guidance as to the appropriate amount of a penalty (CMA73). This approach takes into account several factors, including the proportionality of the penalty relative to each company's individual circumstances. Differences in fines should not be taken to indicate relative culpability.
5. A party under investigation by the CMA may enter into a settlement agreement if it is prepared to admit that it has breached competition law and is willing to agree to a streamlined administrative procedure for the remainder of the investigation. In return, the CMA imposes a reduced penalty on the business where settlement would achieve clear efficiencies, resulting in the earlier adoption of any infringement decision and other resource savings. Associated Lead Mills and H.J. Enthoven (trading as BLM British Lead) (and their parent companies) have entered into settlement and admitted that they have infringed the law.
6. The CMA continues to investigate the conduct of Calder Industrial Materials, which is not a party to the settlement announced today. No conclusion should be drawn at this stage that Calder Industrial Materials has infringed competition law. Calder Industrial Materials will now have an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
7. The CMA will consider any representations it receives before any decision is taken as to whether competition law has in fact been infringed.
8. Further detail of the CMA's procedures in Competition Act 1998 cases is available in [CMA's procedures in Competition Act 1998 cases](#).
9. Anyone who has information about a cartel is encouraged to call the CMA cartels hotline on 020 3738 6888 or email cartelshotline@cma.gov.uk.
10. More information on this investigation can be found on the [roofing materials investigation case page](#).

Media enquiries should be directed to the CMA's press team: press@cma.gov.uk, or 020 3738 6460.