[Brockham oil site permit variation issued]

Press release

Decision to allow waste water re-injection follows second round of public consultation.

The Environment Agency has issued a permit variation to Angus Energy, which operates the Brockham oil site.

This will allow the operator to re-inject waste water, which must be from its operations at Brockham, into one of the existing boreholes on the site.

This decision follows public consultation that took place between 29 December 2021 and 31 January 2022. Having reviewed the responses, the Environment Agency decided to approve the application.

See further information on the application published for the consultation.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

> In deciding whether or not to issue this permit variation, the Environment Agency took into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements.
>
> An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that all oil and gas sites must adhere to. We will not issue an environmental permit for a site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

It is a condition of the permit variation that the waste water to be re-injected must originate from operations at Brockham oil site. This condition is made clear in the Decision Document and in the introductory note of the permit.

Until the operators have a Radioactive Substances Regulation bespoke permit, they cannot accept produced water from outside Brockham oil site.

Information on how the Environment Agency determines applications, the timescales involved and how onshore oil and gas is regulated, can be found at:

Public consultations

Further information on how when and how the Environment Agency consults on permit applications and standard rules for environmental permits, can be found at:

Existing environmental permits at Brockham

Angus Energy is currently the holder of a number of environmental permits issued by the Environment Agency in accordance with the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

The current permitted activities at Brockham oil site allow the undertaking of the following activities:

- the loading, unloading, handling or storage of, or the physical, chemical or thermal treatment of crude oil
- storage of additional raw materials
- use of diesel generator for on-site electricity
- flaring of gas for emergency only
- combustion of produced gas in an engine with a rated thermal input of 0.93 megawatts
- use of oil-fired bath heater for oil/water separation
- discharge of surface water from non-process areas of the site.
- the management of extractive waste from production activities, not involving a waste facility
- the management of extractive waste generated by well workover
- the management of extractive waste generated by well decommissioning
- storage of radioactive waste on site prior its disposal off site (a standard rules radioactive substances permit)

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Abramovich and Deripaska among seven Oligarchs targeted in estimated £15bn

sanction hit

- Owner of Chelsea FC sees his assets frozen, a prohibition on transactions with UK individuals and businesses, a travel ban and transport sanctions imposed.
- Abramovich's one time business partner, leading industrialist Oleg Deripaska, also sanctioned with the same measures.
- Putin's right-hand man Igor Sechin and four more of Putin's inner circle targeted with asset freeze and travel ban.
- Economic Crime Bill coming into force next week will allow UK Government to move further and faster than ever on sanctions.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has today (Thursday 10 March) announced a full asset freeze and travel ban on seven of Russia's wealthiest and most influential oligarchs, whose business empires, wealth and connections are closely associated with the Kremlin.

As part of the UK's leading efforts to isolate Putin and those around him, these oligarchs – who have a collective net worth of around £15bn – will have their assets in the UK frozen, they are banned from travelling here and no UK citizen or company may do business with them.

Those newly-sanctioned by the UK include Roman Abramovich, owner of Chelsea Football Club, worth more than £9 billion; leading industrialist Oleg Deripaska worth £2 billion, and Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin. A further group of Russia-based oligarchs close to Putin have also been placed under sanction. Those sanctioned today are:

- Roman Abramovich owner of Chelsea FC and has stakes in steel giant Evraz and Norilsk Nickel
- Oleg Deripaska has stakes in En+ Group
- Igor Sechin is the Chief Executive of Rosneft
- Andrey Kostin is Chairman of VTB bank
- Alexei Miller is CEO of energy company Gazprom
- Nikolai Tokarev is president of the Russia state-owned pipeline company Transneft
- Dmitri Lebedev is Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank Rossiya

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

> There can be no safe havens for those who have supported Putin's vicious assault on Ukraine.
>
> Today's sanctions are the latest step in the UK's unwavering support for the Ukrainian people. We will be ruthless in pursuing those who enable the killing of civilians, destruction of hospitals and illegal occupation of sovereign allies.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

> Today’s sanctions show once again that oligarchs and kleptocrats have no place in our economy or society. With their close links to Putin they are complicit in his aggression.
>
> The blood of the Ukrainian people is on their hands. They should hang their heads in shame.
>
> Our support for Ukraine will not waver. We will not stop in this mission to ramp up the pressure on the Putin regime and choke off funds to his brutal war machine.

These sanctions are the latest step in the UK’s response to Putin’s illegal and unprovoked invasion, designed to ensure he fails in Ukraine by crippling Russia’s economy supporting his war machine. The UK has been at the forefront of this effort, shutting out large proportions of whole sectors of the Russian economy, such as its defence industry, its financial institutions and its transport sector. The UK has already sanctioned more than 200 of Russia’s most significant and high-value individuals, entities and subsidiaries since the invasion, with over 500 of them now covered by the UK’s sanctions list.

The Economic Crime Bill coming into force next week will also significantly simplify the process of imposing sanctions, allow the UK to more easily sanction individuals, stop oligarchs threatening the UK with multi-million pound lawsuits for damages at the taxpayer’s expense and also allow the UK to mirror allies’ designations. The UK will keep going further, faster and deeper to punish Putin’s regime for this callous war.

The UK will continue to lead global efforts to provide Ukraine with economic, diplomatic, humanitarian and defensive support.

Given the significant impact that today’s sanctions would have on Chelsea football club and the potential knock on effects of this, the Government has this morning published a licence which authorises a number of football-related activities to continue at Chelsea. This includes permissions for the club to continue playing matches and other football related activity which will in turn protect the Premier League, the wider football pyramid, loyal fans and other clubs. This licence will only allow certain explicitly named actions to ensure the designated individual is not able to circumvent UK sanctions. The licence will be kept under constant review and we will work closely with the football authorities.

Notes to Editors

Asset freeze: an asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person and which are held in the UK. It will also prevent funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.

Travel ban: a travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual to be an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.

Transport sanctions: recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK, and give the Government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.

1. Roman Abramovich has stakes in steel giant Evraz, Norilsk Nickel and owns Chelsea FC. He sold a 73% stake in Russian oil firm Sibneft to state-owned gas titan Gazprom for £9.87 billion in 2005. His net worth is an estimated £9.4 billion. He is one of the few oligarchs from the 1990s to maintain prominence under Putin. None of our allies have yet sanctioned Abramovich.

2. Oleg Deripaska has stakes in En+ Group, a major extractives and energy company which owns UC Rusal, one of the world's major aluminium producers. He has a multi-million pound property portfolio in the UK. His net worth is an estimated £2 billion. The US designated Deripaska in 2018.

3. Igor Sechin is the Chief Executive of Rosneft, a Russian state oil company and particularly close and influential ally of Putin. Sechin has been sanctioned by the US and EU.

4. Andrey Kostin is Chairman of VTB bank, the second largest bank in Russia. VTB Bank was designated by the UK on 24 February 2022. Kostin is a close associate of Putin, and has long supported Kremlin objectives through VTB Bank. His net worth is an estimated £379 million. Kostin has been sanctioned by the US and EU.

5. Alexei Miller is CEO of energy company Gazprom, making him one of the most important executives supporting the Russian Government. Miller served under Putin in the 1990s when Putin was deputy mayor in St Petersburg. Miller has been sanctioned by the US.

6. Nikolai Tokarev is president of the Russia state-owned pipeline company Transneft. He first met Putin, when both served as KGB officers in Dresden in East Germany in the 1980s. They have remained closely associated ever since. Tokarev has been sanctioned by the US and EU.

7. Dmitri Lebedev is Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank Rossiya. The UK designated Bank Rossiya, widely considered to be the Kremlin's private bank, on 22 February 2022. Lebedev was sanctioned by the US in 2016.

*Net worth calculated by Forbes.

[Crime news: Crown Court fee guidance updates and new claim forms]

News story

We are updating Crown Court fee claims guidance, unused material claim forms and local bar travel allowances.

Updated guidance and revised forms are now available for practitioners to use when claiming for work in the Crown Court.

Ineffective trials

Guidance changes include a revised approach to fees for ineffective trials. These are likely to be payable where the case was listed for trial but did not proceed on the due date.

Daily attendance fees are payable where the trial has begun and the advocate attends court on a listed trial date. This applies irrespective of whether the case is called on to proceed on the day. The advocate should ensure they have signed in.

Reasons for ineffective trials include court administrative problems, absent defendants, absent witnesses, and the defence or prosecution being 'not ready'.

This change follows feedback from the Bar Council.

Minor amendments have also been made to:

- clarify mandatory use of appropriate special preparation and unused claim forms
- confirm that the unused schedule (MG6C) and Disclosure Management

Documents (DMDs) are payable as unused material but correspondence/covering letters are not included.

Unused material claim forms

We have also simplified the unused claim forms (AU1 and LU1) to make them more straightforward for providers to complete. This follows feedback from the Crime Contract Consultative Group (CCCG).

Travel allowances

The local bar travel allowances spreadsheet has been updated to reflect rail fare increases from March 2022.

Further information

Crown Court fee guidance

LF1: claim litigator fees

Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme claims

Graduated fee travel expenses

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Natural England prescribes ponies and pasties to improve wellbeing

Press release

Wild ponies at a Natural England nature reserve in Cornwall have been boosting people's mental health thanks to a winter series of events.

Cicendia and the other ponies at Goss Moor NNR have become very popular during Natural England's Green Social Prescribing activities

Green social prescribing is the practice of supporting people to engage in nature-based activities. This can include activities such as walking, cycling, community gardening and food-growing projects, as well as practical conservation tasks such as tree planting.

But at Goss Moor National Nature Reserve (NNR), the herd of 26 wild Dartmoor and Shetland ponies have been the focus of a unique and free activity where attendees, either referred by a social prescribing link worker or self-referred, find the ponies using a tracking app.

Feedback from the 4 events held between December and March have been positive, with attendees saying they left feeling 'informed, healthier, happier' and would visit Goss Moor NNR again.

Janine Sargent, the Natural England visitor warden who ran the events, said:

> Green Social Prescribing events like this are wonderful for connecting people with nature, which is great for mental health and wellbeing.
>
> Goss Moor can be a very wild and windy place with tricky terrain, but our guests have had a great time during these walks, with free pasties being offered to participants to keep everyone sustained and fuelled.

The walks are part of a longer-term plan to recruit pony checking volunteers, acting as a 'taster' session for this role, and they have already been successful in attracting some potential new volunteers.

The wild ponies guided walks was one of 30 projects funded by the G7 Legacy Project. Future events, including photography for mindfulness, a cycling event for young people and more pony activities will be posted on The Growing Goss Project Facebook Page.

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Action needed on "dysfunctional" children's social care market

- Market study recommends development of national and regional bodies to

support local authorities with getting suitable placements for children
- CMA also seeking to address concerns about financial stability of private children's home providers and high profits in the sector, through financial health assessments and by boosting in-house foster care

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched a market study into children's social care in March 2021.

The final report, published today, found there is a shortage of appropriate places in children's homes and with foster carers, meaning that some children are not getting the right care from their placement. Some children are also being placed too far away from where they previously lived or in placements that require them to be separated from their siblings.

This shortage also means that high prices are often being paid by local authorities, who are responsible for placing children in appropriate settings, with these costs picked up by taxpayers. The CMA's analysis finds that the main reason for this is the fragmented system by which services are commissioned, which means that local authorities are not able to leverage their role as the purchasers of placements or to plan properly for the future.

To address these issues, the CMA is recommending that the UK Government, Scottish and Welsh Governments create or develop national and regional organisations that could support local authorities with their responsibilities in this sector. These would improve commissioning by carrying out and publishing national and regional analysis and providing local authorities and collective bodies with guidance and by supporting them to meet more placement needs in their local area.

The CMA is also concerned about the financial resilience of some private providers of children's homes in England and Wales, particularly those financed through private equity. High levels of debt among these firms could lead to them getting into financial difficulties, which could impact the care provided to children.

To address these issues, the CMA is proposing:

- a system for assessing the financial health of the most difficult to replace providers of children's homes and providing warnings to relevant authorities if a failure is likely;
- that options are actively explored for bringing foster care in-house;
- a review of the barriers to provision of children's homes, as well as the recruitment and the retention of care staff and foster carers.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

> The UK has sleepwalked into a dysfunctional children's social care market. This has left local authorities hamstrung in their efforts to find suitable and affordable placements in children's homes or

foster care.

We have also identified issues with the financial stability of children's home providers. It is important to manage the risk of children's homes providers going bust and local authorities having to pick up the pieces.

Local authorities cannot be left to face these challenges alone. There are several areas where national governments should make changes to address issues in the sector, including new financial oversight of providers and the development of new bodies to support local authorities with commissioning. With children's social care currently being reviewed across the UK we want to see our recommendations reflected in any changes to policy.

The study looked at the provision of children's social care in England, Scotland and Wales, across which there are over 100,000 looked-after children. The current annual cost for children's social care services is around £5.7 billion in England, £680 million in Scotland and £350 million in Wales.

The CMA's market study found that large private sector providers of fostering services and children homes appear to be making higher profits in England and Wales than the CMA would expect in a well-functioning market. This suggests that local authorities may be paying more for these services than they need to, particularly with fostering services, which are cheaper when run by local authorities.

The market study highlights and reflects the significant differences in the policy context for children's social care between England, Scotland and Wales. The devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales have each committed to move away from the model of for-profit provision in children's social care, and national organisations already exist in these nations to support local authorities. The recommendations the CMA makes will be relevant for each nation as they move through their own policy reform processes.

1. Market studies, like this one, may lead to a range of outcomes, including recommendations to businesses in the market and to the government to change regulations or public policy.
2. The children's social care system is the subject of significant policy attention across the UK, including through the independent review of children's social care in England, the implementation of the Promise review recommendations in Scotland and the Welsh Government's Rebalancing care and support White Paper. The CMA's recommendations will feed into ongoing policy reviews in the three nations in scope. In England, the CMA expects the recommendations to be considered as part of the ongoing Independent Review of Children's Social Care, which is due to report this year. In Scotland and Wales, the CMA expects its recommendations to feed into the implementation of on-going reform proposals, including commitments to remove profit-making from the children's social care sector.

3. Media queries should be directed to: press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.