

UK-US Joint Statement on Addressing Global Steel and Aluminium Excess Capacity

News story

Joint statement from the UK and US on the start of bilateral discussions to address the issue of global steel and aluminium excess capacity.



United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan, United States Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo and United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai today announced the start of bilateral discussions to address global steel and aluminium excess capacity, including the United States' application of tariffs on imports from the United Kingdom under Section 232 and the UK's retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. exports to the UK. Both parties are committed to working towards an expeditious outcome that ensures the viability of steel and aluminium industries in both markets against the continuing shared challenge of global excess capacity and strengthens their democratic alliance.

During a virtual meeting today, Secretary of State Trevelyan and Secretary Raimondo discussed the impact on their industries stemming from global excess capacity driven largely by China. The distortions that result from this excess capacity pose a serious threat to market-oriented steel and aluminium industries in the United Kingdom and the United States, and to the workers in those industries. They agreed that, as the United Kingdom and the United States are close and long-standing partners, sharing similar national security interests as democratic market economies, they can partner to promote high standards, address shared concerns and hold countries that practise harmful market-distorting policies to account.

Secretary Trevelyan, Secretary Raimondo and Ambassador Tai will enter into discussions on the mutual resolution of concerns in this area that addresses steel and aluminium excess capacity and the deployment of effective solutions, including appropriate trade measures, to preserve our critical industries.

[Northumbrian Water fined for County Durham pollution](#)

The company appeared at Newcastle Crown Court for sentence on Wednesday, 19 January, after previously pleading guilty to two offences of polluting Coundon Burn on March 13 and 14, 2017.

They were fined £240,000 and ordered to pay costs of more than £34,000.

The court heard that on two consecutive days in March 2017, a brick appeared to have blocked a combined sewer causing raw sewage to pour out of manhole chambers and discharge into Coundon Burn at Auckland Park, Bishop Auckland.

A member of the public reported the initial incident to Northumbrian Water which attended and officers believed they had cleared the blockage. But when officers returned to clear up the following day, they found a second manhole further downstream was now discharging sewage into the Burn. They cut into the pipe and discovered a brick surrounded by rags and raw sewage.

An Environment Agency officer attended to investigate and discovered a plume of discoloured water entering the River Gaunless from Coundon Burn. Sample results indicated raw sewage – potentially fatal to aquatic life – had entered the Burn with further assessments revealing around 300m of the riverbed covered in sewage material.

Raw sewage enters Coundon Burn

Damaged manhole chamber

Northumbrian Water said that the brick blockage was from a damaged manhole chamber on farmland and said they had since taken steps to protect them.

During the investigation manhole chambers along the sewer route in agricultural fields were checked and some damage was found, but enquiries revealed that the company had no maintenance system in place to periodically check them for damage. Instead, the company responded to any reported pollution incidents.

Passing sentence Judge Robert Adams found the company were negligent by having no preventative systems in place but gave them credit for the steps taken since the incident to remedy the issue.

Sewage in the Coundon Burn.

'Officers worked tirelessly'

Rachael Caldwell, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

We take our responsibility to protect the environment very seriously. Water companies are aware that their activities have the potential to cause serious environmental impacts and they have a legal duty to avoid pollution. The regulations are clear.

Our officers worked tirelessly to bring this case to court and we're committed to holding water companies to account.

The Environment Agency has secured fines of over £137million since 2015 with record fines handed down last year, making it clear that polluters will pay for damage to the environment.

In October 2021, Northumbrian Water was fined £540,000 for polluting a watercourse that runs through Heads Hope Dene in Castle Eden, in May 2017.

Ben John's sentence increased following personal intervention by the Solicitor General

Ben John, 22, has been sentenced to an immediate prison term after the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP personally presented the case at the Court of Appeal.

On 7 January 2020, Lincolnshire Police searched John's home and seized several electronic devices including a phone and hard drives. Police found tens of thousands of politically extreme and far-right documents and files. This included white nationalist and anti-Semitic materials.

Amongst the materials, Lincolnshire Police found a copy of the 'Anarchy Cookbook', a book containing instructions for the manufacture of explosives and rudimentary weapons. John was found guilty of one count of possessing information likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism.

On 31 August 2021, John was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment, suspended for 2 years, at Leicester Crown Court.

Following the sentence, the Solicitor General referred John's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme.

On 19 January, the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 2 years' imprisonment with a 1 year licence period.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP said:

The Government is committed to confronting terrorism in all its forms, including from the Extreme Right Wing. We remain focussed on disrupting the activities of the most dangerous extremists, supporting those who stand up to their hateful rhetoric, and protecting vulnerable people being drawn into terrorism.

I referred Ben John's sentence to the Court of Appeal, and chose to personally present it, because I believed it to be unduly lenient. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal agreed and chose to increase his sentence today.

[Intelligent street lighting illuminates the way to digital roads for National Highways](#)

Closed circuit television and wireless technology that enables vehicles to communicate is among the kit that could be neatly stored inside the lanterns of street lights alongside the National Highways network.

This could enable the existing infrastructure to be employed in the future to push out information on traffic updates, speed limits and diversions – helping vehicles to plan journeys more effectively.

Street lighting has often been viewed as a standalone asset but technology that has emerged in recent years could enable wider use of this vital infrastructure.

Bandwidth has restricted air wave transmissions in the past, but with the roll-out of 5G and the IoT (Internet of Things) infrastructures lighting could be equipped with devices such as wireless access points and cameras.

A 'proof of concept' trial on this intelligent street lighting has been carried out on the M40 junction 15 Longbridge roundabout near Birmingham.

Drivers would have been oblivious to the CCTV and communications technology hidden away in the street lamp as it was installed when the lights were switched to the improved, greener LED lighting.

The Illuminate trial took place over five months last year and successfully proved the concept. The technology was able to communicate data to office equipment and tablet computers.

The knowledge gained in the trial will be used to help shape National Highways' strategy for managing the Connected and Autonomous (CAV) infrastructure.

National Highways is looking for technologies that can effectively support autonomous vehicles so they can push and receive messages across the network. These messages could be about speed limits, incidents, updates on clearance times – useful information to help drivers plan their journeys.

This would involve a large-scale deployment of technology across the network and street lights may be the answer.

National Highways' Innovations Lead for the Midlands, Lisa Maric, said:

These are exciting times as we progress on our Digital Roads journey with the growth of digital technology and the move to electric, connected and autonomous vehicles that will fundamentally change how we use roads in the future.

National Highways is committed to ensuring we are at the forefront of this digital revolution and are preparing the way for the greener and safer roads of tomorrow.

Initial trials such as Illuminate will help us identify new innovations, technology and methods to meet our digital goals. We were pleased with how Illuminate performed as a proof of concept and the useful knowledge gained as we continue to plan for the roads of the future.

National Highways worked with Kier Highways on the Illuminate trial. Kier Highways Project Manager, Carla Vicente, said:

Being able to install technology, such as CCTV, while we are replacing street lighting is a more efficient way of working and provides better value for customers. More importantly, it is a safer and less disruptive way of working, reducing the amount of road closures required.

The Illuminate project was a great example of collaboration across internal Kier teams, our client National Highways, the supply chain and the manufacturer.

This proof of concept will feed into other future projects and the learnings will help to deliver more collaborative and sustainable projects which supports National Highways' Carbon Net Zero targets.

The trial has been funded through National Highways' Innovation and Modernisation Fund which is helping to maximise the opportunities offered by developments such as automated vehicles while putting safety at the forefront of emerging technologies.

You can find more information about the future of our roads on our [Digital Roads webpage](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[MMO gives consent to ABP's £25 million development of Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility for offshore wind](#)

News story

MMO grants marine licence to marine development project following collaboration and joint working.



Last month the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) granted a marine licence

to Associated British Ports (ABP) for the development of the Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility (LEEF).

This followed a period of collaboration and joint working, beginning in November 2020, when ABP applied to the MMO to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for reconstruction of the existing quay in the Outer Harbour at the Port of Lowestoft. The proposed works also required a capital dredge of the approach channels and a maintenance dredge and disposal programme to be put in place once construction was completed.

Joint meetings were organised to ensure MMO and East Suffolk Council Local Planning Authority (LPA), could work collaboratively and adopt principles under the Coastal Concordat. A joint consultation was then launched to coordinate responses from stakeholders. Both MMO and LPA shared information on associated impacts to produce scoping opinions under individual legislation.

The joint working continued when the EIA Marine Licence Application (MLA) followed, with MMO again working with the LPA for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This included consulting and advertising together to reduce the regulatory burden on the applicant and consultees. The consent decision and marine licence was then issued and ABP is now able to proceed with the works, while complying with the licence conditions.

Adam Chumbley, MMO Marine Licensing Manager said:

We aim to provide a friendly and supportive service to all marine licence applicants and this case is a good example of how positive outcomes can be achieved by working together.

Our role in licensing marine development is to provide solutions that protect the sea and deliver environmental, economic and societal benefits. Enabling sustainable marine activities and development actively supports the government's ambitions in its 25 Year Environment Plan and supports economic growth for the UK economy.

Sophie Young, Environmental Lead, Associated British Ports said:

At ABP, we're proud our LEEF development will support the increased production of more renewable, clean energy and bring hundreds of new jobs, investment and interest to the region.

The collaboration between ABP, the MMO and East Suffolk Council has been exemplary, and has allowed us to deliver against the needs of multiple stakeholders in an efficient and coordinated way.