

CMA finds Veolia / Suez merger raises competition concerns

Press release

The CMA has found that the merger of Veolia and Suez could lead to a loss of competition in the supply of several waste and water management services in the UK.



Veolia and Suez are two of the largest suppliers of waste management services to councils and businesses in the UK and global leaders in the sector. The transaction is being reviewed by a number of competition authorities globally. Both companies are active across the waste management supply chain from the collection of waste to the operation of facilities for composting and incineration and landfill sites. The companies also supply water and wastewater management services to industrial customers.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has received a number of complaints from customers and other market participants during its investigation and it has identified a number of competition concerns that could lead to councils paying higher prices, with a knock-on effect on taxpayers.

In particular, the CMA is concerned that Veolia and Suez are 2 of only a small number of suppliers active within the UK that are able to service the largest and most complex waste management contracts with councils. As a result, the merger could lead to higher prices and lower quality services across a range of waste management activities in the UK.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Councils spend hundreds of millions of pounds on waste management services. Any loss of competition in this market could lead to higher prices for local authorities, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill, and reduced innovation to achieve Net Zero targets. Everyone in the UK uses waste and recycling services in some way, it is

therefore vital that this deal is subject to more detailed scrutiny if our concerns aren't addressed.

The CMA also identified competition concerns in several water management markets, where insufficient competition after the merger could mean that industrial customers would also have to pay higher prices.

Veolia and Suez now have 5 working days to submit proposals to address the CMA's concerns. If suitable proposals are not submitted, the deal will be referred for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation.

For more information, visit the [Veolia / Suez merger inquiry page](#).

1. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.
2. The CMA found that the merger gives rise to a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition in the following areas on a UK-wide basis: the supply of complex waste management contracts procured by local authorities; the supply of non-hazardous commercial and industrial waste collection services; the supply of non-hazardous municipal waste collection services; the supply of services for the operation and maintenance of local authority-owned energy recovery facilities; the operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment facilities for industrial customers; and the supply of mobile water services.
3. The CMA also believes that the merger gives rise to a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition in the following waste management services, on local bases: the supply of non-hazardous waste incineration services; and the supply of organic waste composting services at open-windrow composting facilities.
4. Under the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act) the CMA has a duty to make a reference to Phase 2 if the CMA believes that it is or may be the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, or arrangements are in progress or contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and the creation of that situation has resulted, or may be expected to result, in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.

[Call for Bids: China Network's International Programme – Third Funding Round](#)

World news story

The British Embassy in Beijing is pleased to open a call for bids to the China Network's International Programme (Economic Resilience) for projects running between 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022.



UK Government

All projects should focus on economic resilience issues related to mainland China and Hong Kong. Issues on which we welcome bids include – but are not limited to – the below:

- Economic resilience
- UK-China economic and trade links
- Competitive neutrality

Selection criteria

Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Project design: Feasibility of activities and outputs including the capacity of implementing organisation to deliver outcomes
- Impact: Supporting UK economic resilience interests related to mainland China and Hong Kong
- Viability and risks: Clear engagement/buy-in of key stakeholders. Robust analysis of key risks, and a plan of action to manage and mitigate those risks
- Value for money: Comparable and reasonable costs against the number of direct beneficiaries and the scale of achievable outcomes

We draw your attention to the below key points:

- Proposals should be between £10,000 – £80,000 (105,000RMB – 840,000RMB).
- The entire project must begin and complete in the period 1 January 2022 and 31 March 2022.
- All funding must be activity-based (i.e. not for general staff costs, office rental etc.).

Process

- Project proposals must be received by 23:59 (GMT) on Sunday 12 December. Late proposals will not be considered.
- Proposals must be submitted using the attached forms only (Project Proposal Form and Activity Based Budget), which must be completed in English.
- Proposals must be submitted to: China.InternationalProgramme@fcdo.gov.uk

Attachments

[PrOF Template Project Proposal Form above £10k](#)

[PrOF Template Activity Based Budget](#)

Guidance

[Project Proposal Form – Guidance](#)

[ABB Form – Guidance](#)

Published 7 December 2021

New law to prevent use of force in mental health settings

- A new law will ensure better accountability and transparency over the use of force in mental health units
- New guidance published sets out clear advice to ensure NHS trusts comply with the law
- The Act, known as Seni's Law, is named after Olaseni Lewis who died as a result of being forcibly restrained in 2010

Patients in mental health settings will be better protected from inappropriate use of force following the commencement of landmark regulations and publication of guidance of the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 today (Tuesday 7 December).

The important legislation will protect patients and workforce by providing a much-needed drive for improved record keeping and reporting of data on the use of force, the quality of staff training and the way in which investigations are carried out.

The Act sets out the measures needed to both prevent the inappropriate use of force and ensure accountability and transparency in mental health units, ensuring patients are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

New guidance published today will make sure trusts will have a clearer understanding on how to comply with the duties under the Act.

Minister for Mental health Gillian Keegan said:

It is vital anyone receiving care in a mental health setting – a time which can be incredibly distressing – is treated with dignity and respect.

Today's legislation and guidance is an important step forward to ending the disproportionate and inappropriate use of force – protecting both patients and our fantastic workforce – within our mental health services.

We must ensure what happened to Seni does not happen to anyone else. I want to thank Seni's family, particularly his mother Aji, and Steve Reed MP for driving this work forward.

The Act, which received royal assent in November 2018, is better known as Seni's Law and is named after Olaseni Lewis, who died as a result of being disproportionately restrained while a voluntary inpatient in a mental health unit in South London.

The guidance has been developed following extensive engagement with the

mental health sector and a wide range of stakeholders including those with lived experience, the NHS, regulators and Aji Lewis and Seni's family.

Aji Lewis, Seni's mother said:

It's so good to see the guidance published today and the Act being commenced.

This is my son's legacy, and I hope it will mean what happened to Seni will not happen to anyone else.

I look forward to continuing to work with the government and mental health providers to make sure the act is properly implemented and real change is achieved

Steve Reed MP said:

I'm delighted the guidance for Seni's Law has now been published and a date is in sight for the Act to come into force.

Seni Lewis died in tragic and avoidable circumstances. His legacy is this Act and the changes it makes to ensure people with mental ill health are treated with care, compassion and respect.

Seni's Law forms part of the government's wider commitment to transform mental health services for those with severe mental illness and follows publication of the Mental Health Act White Paper earlier this year which set out proposals for once in a generation reform.

[New film shows Martin Kemp as Father Christmas in vaccine drive](#)

- Martin Kemp stars as Father Christmas in a new film to increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake this winter
- Former EastEnders and Spandau Ballet member urges people to get their jabs as part of their Christmas preparations
- Booster programme is being accelerated with more vaccination centres and military support

Former soap star and member of Spandau Ballet Martin Kemp has joined the national effort to get people vaccinated – by appearing as Father Christmas in a new film released today (Tuesday 7 December).

The video shows Martin preparing for Christmas – booking the sleigh in for an MOT, polishing his boots, getting his beard in shape, and most importantly, getting his COVID-19 vaccine. The film is part of the government's ongoing campaign to remind people of the importance of getting booster and flu jabs to ensure they are protected as soon as they are eligible.

Vaccines are the best way to protect people against COVID-19 and, in light of the new Omicron variant and following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the government is expanding the booster programme to all adults over 18, with all those eligible being offered a top-up jab by the end of January, as well as halving the gap between doses to protect more people more quickly.

To speed up the vaccination programme, around 400 military personnel will be drafted in to support deployment, with 1,500 community pharmacy sites, additional hospital hubs, and pop-up sites opening in convenient locations across the country. Extra financial support to GPs, community pharmacies and primary care staff will help boost capacity and encourage more visits to those who are housebound.

Government's priority remains to protect the most vulnerable first so everyone over the age of 40 who received their second dose at least three months ago will soon be able to book an appointment for their booster jab. Younger age groups will be invited by the NHS in order of age in due course.

Martin Kemp said:

We all know the run up to Christmas can be one of the busiest times of the year – buying presents, decorating the tree, eating mince pies with family and friends. But I can't stress enough how important it is to tick your COVID-19 booster or flu jab off your 'to do' list this festive season, among all your other preparations, to ensure that you can enjoy Christmas with your loved ones.

It's quick and easy and will keep us all protected as best as possible this winter. Now go book your jabs – Father Christmas said so!

Tomorrow [Wednesday 8 December], the UK will celebrate one-year since it became the first country in the world to administer an approved COVID-19 vaccine to Margaret Keenan in Coventry.

A total of 20 million people have had their booster or third doses in the UK. 51 million have had a first dose and 46 million have had a second dose. The COVID-19 dashboard will be updated at 4pm with the latest figures.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

More than 20 million people have already had their booster jab, securing the vital protection they need to enjoy Christmas safely.

I am delighted to see Martin Kemp play his part, encouraging others to do their bit in this national mission. It's never too late to get your first and second dose – I encourage everybody to come forward to protect yourself and those around you.

The first real-world study on the effectiveness of booster vaccines against the Delta variant by the UK Health Security Agency shows top-up jabs boost protection back up to over 90% against symptomatic COVID-19 in adults aged over 50, two weeks after being vaccinated. Data from the CovBoost trial shows the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines being used in the UK as boosters give the best overall immune response.

It is not yet known how effective existing vaccines will be against the Omicron variant, but it is likely they will provide at least some measure of protection. Those who have received their booster are likely to have a stronger response.

Flu is another winter virus that can be serious. To give people the best protection over winter, those eligible for a free flu vaccine should come forward and book an appointment at either their GP practice or their local pharmacy, or take it up when offered by their employer or other healthcare provider.

The government is running a nationwide advertising campaign, encouraging people eligible to get their booster and flu jabs to protect themselves and their loved ones and help reduce pressures on the NHS. This includes outdoor billboards, broadcast and community radio and TV.

The offer of a first and second COVID-19 vaccine remains open to anyone who is eligible. Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England.

Background

- 'Father Christmas prepares' short film is available [here](#)

[Government announces £35 million for](#)

vital improvements to A40 in Oxford

- government invests £35 million in crucial Oxfordshire road scheme as we build back better from the pandemic
- works will ease congestion, improve bus journeys, boost road safety and provide more options for cycling and walking
- improvements to local infrastructure will also allow construction of over 4,800 new homes in the area

Vital upgrades will be carried out on the A40 to ease congestion, boost local bus services and allow the construction of thousands of new homes in Oxfordshire, thanks to £35 million in government funding announced today (7 December 2021).

The scheme will see an 850-space park and ride facility, including cycle parking and electric car chargepoints, built to the north-west of Eynsham, as the Department for Transport (DfT) pushes ahead with plans to build back greener from the pandemic.

Two new bus lanes will also be created along the carriageway, taking bus-users eastbound from the new site to just before the Dukes Cut, and westbound on the approach to Cassington, helping to significantly improve bus journey times.

The works announced today will form the first part of the wider £156 million A40 transport package, which aims to provide additional highway space and improve transport links while encouraging a shift to more sustainable forms of travel. These plans will provide access to over 4,800 new homes in the region and a significant boost to the local economy.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

Local residents have suffered with traffic and congestion along the A40 for too long, which is why I'm thrilled to announce this multimillion-pound investment to improve the route, increase capacity and provide a significant boost to public transport.

Providing faster, more frequent and more reliable bus journeys is a key commitment in our [national bus strategy](#) – and one I take very seriously. I'm, therefore, delighted to see this funding going towards giving local residents the bus services they deserve.

And by building improved and safer infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, we will enable more people to take up active travel as a healthier and more sustainable way to get around.

The A40 is currently one of the last-remaining main roads through Oxford that lacks a park and ride service. The new scheme will help to cut congestion by

encouraging local motorists to stop using their cars for their whole journey and choose to use more sustainable modes of transport, such as local bus services to get about the region.

Proposed works will also see the creation of a 3-metre wide separate path for cyclists and pedestrians along the route of the A40 from Witney to Oxford, replacing the existing narrower path. This will include safe, signal-controlled crossings for cyclists and pedestrians at various junctions, making greener modes of travel more accessible to people in the area.

It's estimated the proposed works will help create a green legacy in Oxfordshire and improve air quality by reducing CO2 emissions in the region.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy, said:

We are delighted the funding is confirmed to support transport, particularly regular swift buses and world-class cycle lanes, along this major route. For years residents in West Oxfordshire have had to endure congestion on the A40 and its impact on every aspect of their lives.

This key project will not only deliver safer and more reliable travel options between Witney and Oxford, but support the growth of much-needed jobs and housing in the area. All while promoting vital sustainable transport.

The total cost of the scheme comes to £49.3 million, with the remaining funding coming from the Oxfordshire Growth Deal – Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and private developer contributions – in addition to the DfT's multimillion-pound contribution. Main works should get underway in 2022 and be completed in mid-2024.