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[CMA clears Uber and Autocab deal](#)

Press release

The CMA announced today that it has cleared Uber's purchase of Autocab, following a Phase 1 merger investigation.



The CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) opened its Phase 1 merger investigation into ride-hailing company Uber's acquisition of GPC Software Limited (Autocab) in January 2021. Autocab supplies booking and dispatch technology software (BDT) to taxi companies. It also operates a referral network for taxi and private hire operators called iGo, where those companies can send and receive jobs to each other.

The investigation considered the deal's possible effect on competition in the supply of BDT, as well as referral networks, and any potential impact of the merger on taxi companies who are Autocab's current BDT customers. After

thorough scrutiny, the CMA has found that there is only limited indirect competition between Uber and Autocab, and the CMA did not find evidence to indicate that Autocab was likely to become a significant and more direct competitor to Uber in the future.

The CMA also considered whether Autocab and Uber could try to put Autocab's taxi company customers at a disadvantage by reducing the quality of the BDT software sold to them, or by forcing them to pass on data to Uber. However, the CMA found that there are other credible suppliers of BDT and referral networks that these taxi companies could switch to if Uber were to reduce the quality of the Autocab service or force them to share their data.

Joel Bamford, Senior Director of Mergers said:

Millions of people across the UK rely on taxis every day and technology has transformed the way this industry works. It is therefore important that mergers like these are properly scrutinised to ensure that customers aren't negatively affected.

After a thorough investigation, the CMA has found no competition concerns as a result of this deal. This is because the companies are not close competitors, the two businesses will continue to face competition from rivals and Autocab's customer taxi companies can switch to credible alternative providers if they wish.

Further information relating to the investigation is available on the [case page](#).

Notes to editors

- Autocab develops and supplies two main types of software to taxi companies in connection with taxi services. This includes (i) booking and dispatch technology enabling taxi companies to connect drivers to end customers and (ii) the iGo network (iGo) which connects demand for taxi trips with taxi companies that can supply the services. Taxi companies use iGo when demand arises for services outside their own service area or when their customer demand exceeds the number of drivers they have available. Other companies, such as travel and emergency transportation companies, use iGo because they themselves do not supply taxi services but have customers who require such services.
- For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

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Cambridgeshire energy-producer admits pollution

A company that turns crops into energy has been fined almost £27,000 after an “extremely harmful” liquid polluted a stream.

Labelled “reckless” by magistrates, Pretoria Energy allowed silage liquor, created when the crops are in storage, to escape into a tributary of the River Cam.

The incident at Pretoria’s site off the A10 near Ely in 2018 happened when the liquid seeped through poorly-maintained drains into the water. The pollution was evident for nearly half a mile.

Pretoria runs an anaerobic digestion plant at Chittering to process the crops that are used to produce energy to power homes and businesses.

Cambridge magistrates’ court heard that while the silage, or compressed crops, is being stored, it produces a liquor with highly-elevated nutrient levels. If discharged into the environment, it is extremely harmful, especially to fish and other water life.

Miriam Joy, a land and water officer for the Environment Agency, investigated the pollution. She said:

Companies should take their environmental responsibilities seriously. Appropriate checks and methods need to be in place to ensure their activities don’t cause pollution or harm the environment.

We hope the large fine handed out to Pretoria Energy acts as a deterrent to others.

Magistrates heard the company had the necessary drainage system, but cracks around drains and concrete paving meant the silage liquor leaked into drains and out into the unnamed stream.

An officer from the Environment Agency attending the site following the incident in May 2018 found the water “coal black” in colour.

Officers took samples of silage effluent in the water. The Environment Agency told the court subsequent investigations found the drains were in such a poor state of repair that the silage liquor was able to escape from cracks around the drainage channels and follow the path of the drains to the discharge point.

At Cambridge magistrates’ court on 22 March 2021, Pretoria Energy Company (Chittering) Ltd, Padro House Chear Fen, Ely Road, Chittering, was fined

£26,650 and ordered to pay costs of £15,622 and a victim surcharge of £170.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 12(1) (b) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

Bucks farmers' second conviction for criminal waste site

A district judge has branded a landowner "pig-headed" for ignoring repeated warnings he shouldn't burn waste illegally.

Father and son David and Nicholas Channer were convicted, with the latter jailed, following an investigation by the Environment Agency. The pair were caught continually storing and setting light to rubbish at their farm at Mop End, near Amersham, putting the environment at risk.

Nicholas Channer was sent to prison for 13 months, including 5 months for breaching an unrelated suspended sentence. David Channer received a 6-month jail term, suspended for 2 years.

Oblivious to countless letters and visits from environmental crime investigators, the two accumulated everything from wood and metal to waste from two agricultural concerns.

They then set light to the rubbish as a cheaper alternative to authorised disposal. The blazes left mounds of smouldering ash. The Channers even incinerated rubbish they said had been fly-tipped.

As J Channer & Sons, David Channer provided farming services across central southern England out of Mop End Farm, which he owned. The court heard, however, Nicholas Channer played more than an active role in the company.

David Channer admitted burning waste collected from elsewhere, leading district judge Malcolm Dodds to say the 67-year-old was "pig-headed" for not responding to "plentiful warnings" from the Environment Agency.

DJ Dodds added Channer took no steps to limit the effect of his son's tree maintenance firm as the illegal rubbish built up.

Nicholas Channer managed Chiltern Tree Care, based at the farm. The operation created significant amounts of waste that should have been disposed of legally.

The 47-year-old was already subject to a suspended prison sentence for unrelated matters at the time of these offences. As a result, Nicholas Channer was jailed by Aylesbury crown court for 5 months, on top of the 8 months for waste crime.

Charlotte Milton, a senior environmental crime officer for the Environment Agency, said:

David and Nicholas Channer have been rightly punished by the courts for riding roughshod over the law around managing waste safely and securely.

The men had no system in place to limit the amount or type of waste held at Mop End Farm. Nor did they establish measures to protect the environment or human health.

The law requires anyone dealing with waste to keep it safe, make sure it's handled responsibly, and only given to businesses authorised to take it.

Anyone with suspicions of waste crime can call our incident hotline, 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers, on 0800 555111.

Investigators made a series of visits to the farm between 2017 and 2019. They also wrote to the men, telling them to stop illegally storing and burning the waste.

The Channers carried on breaking the law regardless. Smoke with a chemical odour caused an Environment Agency officer's eyes to sting.

High Wycombe magistrates' court was shown body-worn video and photographs of large piles of rubbish on fire – painted and treated wood, green waste, chipboard and plastic among the items burning.

When asked to explain their actions, the Channers told the agency they either hadn't seen letters from crime officers, or were unaware exemptions from permits for managing the waste had expired.

The agency had been alerted to what the men were doing by Buckinghamshire County Council.

Crime officers visited Mop End Farm in January. Open land was used to hoard everything from white goods to soil, bricks and wood they would later torch. Nicholas Channer confessed to holding 100 tons of scrap metal there he obtained from online customers or by driving around looking for it.

Later accompanied by county council enforcement officers, investigators found burning cardboard and PVC. They also saw a mountain of ash, with the charred remains of treated and untreated wood and other debris.

Officers discovered 2 more fires at Mop End Farm in June 2017, between 10 and 16 metres long and several metres wide – and smoking ash, metal, rubble and wood and even manure burning unattended.

With no response to the request to stop offending, the Environment Agency took legal action against the two men.

While the areas where the fires took place have been partially cleared, David Channer, as landowner, has until December this year to remove the remaining contaminated ash.

David Channer and Nicholas Channer, both of Mop End Farm, Mop End, Buckinghamshire, each pleaded guilty to 8 counts under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The offences were that between or before January 2017 to June 2019, they allowed waste to be stored and burned. They were also prosecuted for not properly documenting moving waste between different sites.

As well as his suspended prison term, David Channer was ordered by High Wycombe magistrates' court to pay the Environment Agency's full costs of £14,925, and a £115 victim surcharge. In a separate hearing at Aylesbury crown court, in addition to his custodial sentence, Nicholas Channer was fined £40,000, with full costs of £15,122.45, and a victim surcharge of £140.

The pair were prosecuted 8 years ago for committing similar offences.

Notes to editors

On Friday 16 April, Nicholas Channer lost an appeal against 8 months imprisonment and £40,000 fine for storing and burning waste illegally. The Court of Appeal ruled the 5-month custodial sentence for breaching an unrelated suspended prison term should run concurrently with the 8 months, not consecutively.

The victim surcharge against Channer was increased to £170, and original costs awarded to the Environment Agency remained £15,122.45.

UK and Thailand commit to strengthening trade ties

The UK and Thailand have today (Monday 29) committed to further strengthening trade and investment ties through a new joint trade dialogue.

The Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) is the UK's first new JETCO in 10 years, and offers a significant new opportunity to improve bilateral trade, including by addressing market access barriers affecting UK business activity in Thailand.

This follows a Joint Trade Review (JTR) which was carried out by the UK and Thai governments over the last year to explore opportunities to increase trade and investment in each other's countries and identify priority sectors to advance our trading relationship. The JTR identified agriculture, food and

drink, financial services, healthcare and tech as priority sectors on the UK side. Key goods exported to Thailand include power generating equipment and motor cars, parts and accessories.

The International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, and Thailand's Minister of Commerce and Deputy Prime Minister, Jurin Laksanawisit, have today signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which, as well as establishing the JETCO, highlights the findings of the Joint Trade Review and commits to initial further collaboration in a number of areas. These include:

- Resolving market access barriers for both sides in the food and drink, fisheries and agricultural sectors.
- Increasing access to each other's financial services markets, by further developing our relationship in this sector and scoping out future opportunities.

Thailand is a key partner for the UK with total trade worth over £5 billion last year alone. It is also a key hub for Southeast Asia and ASEAN, as we aim to deepen our engagement with the region, including through our application to become a Dialogue Partner with ASEAN.

The International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, said:

The UK and Thailand have a long and historic relationship, with shared values and interest in mutual prosperity and maintaining the rules-based international system.

By 2030, 66% of the global middle class will be in Asia and today's agreement sets out our commitment to deepen ties with some of the fastest-growing markets globally.

We want to forge new partnerships that will boost our economy, create jobs, increase wages and bring prosperity to our people as we build back better, stronger and greener from Covid-19.

The first meeting of the new UK Thailand JETCO will take place later this year.