

Press release: Suez to pay £505,000 for pollution at Cornwall's largest landfill

The waste company, Suez Recycling and Recovery UK Limited, has been ordered to pay more than £500,000 in fines and costs for a series of offences at Connon Bridge landfill site near Liskeard.

In 2012 the Environment Agency became increasingly concerned at Suez's management of leachate (contaminated water) at the site. Heavy rain caused leachate levels to rise rapidly beyond limits specified by the site's environmental permit.

In January 2013, following reports from members of the public, Environment Agency officers visited the site and found two nearby watercourses, the Widowpath and Connon Streams, smothered in sewage fungus for a distance of approximately 4km. Sewage fungus is a sign of organic pollution.

Local residents started complaining of unpleasant odours caused by inadequately controlled emissions of landfill gas at Connon Bridge. It was apparent the site operator was struggling to regain control of the landfill. Investigations by the Environment Agency found that there had been spillages of leachate onto uncontained areas of the site. Surface water had been contaminated by leachate, and leachate had compromised water quality in a groundwater drainage culvert beneath the site.

Suez resorted to unauthorised methods of disposal in an attempt to remove large volumes of contaminated surface water from the site, pumping it onto adjacent fields.

Contaminated surface water was pumped onto nearby fields

The Environment Agency started monitoring the impact of the leachate spillages on the Widowpath and Connon Bridge Streams and concluded it was the worst outbreak of sewage fungus in the area for 20 years.

Investigators also became increasingly aware of the impact of odour pollution from the landfill site on the surrounding community. As the odour problem worsened, evidence was collected from people's homes.

Simon Harry, of the Environment Agency, said:

People living close to Connon Bridge landfill will not have forgotten the appalling odours that emanated from this site in 2013. The negligent failings of the landfill operator resulted in pollution both by odour and to local watercourses. The judge in this case acknowledged, in particular, the distress caused to the local community by the odour.

Officers found that uncapped areas of the landfill contributed to the release of foul odour

Mr Harry paid tribute to local residents for their 'forbearance' and said:

We take pollution incidents very seriously and this case should send a strong message to all industrial operators of the potential consequences of failing to take adequate steps to protect the environment.

At a sentencing hearing at Truro Crown Court on Friday, 3 February 2017, Suez Recycling and Recovery UK Limited was fined £180,000 and ordered to pay £325,000 costs after pleading guilty to 6 offences under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 including failure to comply with leachate level limits specified by an environmental permit, allowing leachate to overflow from a leachate extraction point, unauthorised emissions of contaminated water, failure to comply with water quality emission limits, failing to notify the Environment Agency and causing odour pollution.

The sentencing hearing marked the end of a lengthy and complex investigation lasting 4 years. The costs awarded by the court reflected the work that went into investigating and prosecuting this complicated technical case.

Note

At the time of the offences, the defendant was known as SITA UK Limited. The company now trades as Suez Recycling and Recovery UK Limited.

[News story: Women in innovation: female start-ups get inspired](#)

Around 200 female entrepreneurs attended Innovate UK's networking event on 8 February 2017. The event was designed to help the women – who all applied to our [Women in Innovation competition](#) – to turn their ideas into successful businesses.

Delegates were able to practice pitching their ideas, get advice from innovation experts and network with peers and business leaders. There was also a question and answer session with Innovate UK ambassador Claire Williams, the Deputy Team Principal of Williams F1.

Claire Williams, Deputy Team Principal of Williams F1, answers questions from delegates.

Dr Ruth McKernan, Chief Executive of Innovate UK said:

We want to inspire the next generation of UK entrepreneurs. Every growing business benefits from a mentor to show them the way. It's especially important that we do this for people from a diverse range of backgrounds who haven't traditionally participated in Innovate UK competitions but who would greatly benefit from our support.

Events like this help give aspiring innovators the tools they need to succeed, whether they're looking for funding to carry out a feasibility study or want the support of an established partner to take their solution to market.

This was the first women-only Innovate UK competition and is part of our new [infocus initiative](#) to encourage diversity in innovation. It followed research that [just 1 in 7 Innovate UK funding applications came from women](#).

The wider economic impact of addressing the gender imbalance is significant. Research suggests that if participation is increased to the same levels as men, women-led SMEs could potentially contribute an incremental £180 billion gross value added (GVA) to the UK by 2025.

Female entrepreneurs listen to inspiring speeches.

We continue to work with the 15 competition winners, who each received £50,000 as well as a package of tailored support and business mentoring.

[News story: Charlotte Hogg appointed new Deputy Governor, Markets and Banking](#)

HM Treasury has today (9 February 2017) announced that Her Majesty the Queen has agreed, on the recommendation of the Chancellor and Prime Minister, to appoint Charlotte Hogg as Deputy Governor for Markets and Banking at the Bank of England.

The appointment is effective from 1 March and for a renewable term of five years.

Charlotte Hogg will succeed Minouche Shafik, who will leave at the end of February. In addition to taking on the role of Deputy Governor, Charlotte will continue in her current role as Chief Operating Officer.

As the Bank's Deputy Governor for Markets and Banking, Charlotte will have specific responsibility for managing the balance sheet of the Bank. She will

look after the execution of financial stability and monetary policy decisions via balance sheet operations, the management of the Government's foreign exchange reserves, gold custody services, the operation of the real time settlement system, the effective risk management of these operations and the gathering of market intelligence relevant to policy decisions. Charlotte will also be a member of the Monetary Policy Committee, the Financial Policy Committee, the Prudential Regulation Committee and the Court of the Bank of England.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

I'm delighted to appoint Charlotte Hogg as the next Deputy Governor for Markets and Banking. I'm confident that her exceptional leadership skills and wide-ranging experience make her the right person to take on the position.

Charlotte has done an excellent job as the Bank's first Chief Operating Officer. She will take over this new role at a key time for the City.

I would like to thank Minouche Shafik for all her valuable work at the Bank, particularly on fair and effective markets. I wish her the best as she moves into her new role as Director of the London School of Economics."

Charlotte Hogg said:

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Bank's mission in this broader role, and I am committed to doing so to the best of my ability. I feel privileged to be able to build off the great work Minouche has done, and to work with such talented colleagues.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, said:

I am delighted that Charlotte has agreed to become Deputy Governor for Markets and Banking and the Bank's Chief Operating Officer. Many of the top priorities in Markets and Banking currently coincide with those of the Bank's central operational areas, meaning Charlotte is the ideal person to lead these efforts. Charlotte's breadth of financial sector and operational experience will contribute valuable, broader perspectives to the Bank's policy committees. I look forward to working with her in her new role.

The Bank of England has also today announced that Kristin Forbes will be stepping down at the end of her three year term as an external member of the Monetary Policy Committee. The Treasury will begin the process of recruiting her replacement shortly.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

I would like to thank Kristin Forbes, who the Bank announced today will be stepping down from the Monetary Policy Committee at the end of June, for the significant contribution she has made to the Committee's work during her membership. I wish her success for her future plans.

[News story: Britain and Italy stand together to tackle security threats](#)

In meetings with his counterpart Roberta Pinotti, Sir Michael Fallon said Britain was a key ally of Italy and would not be stepping back from European defence and security commitments following the Brexit vote.

They reviewed their partnership within the NATO alliance in particular. After the UK has spearheaded NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force this year, Italy will take on the responsibility in 2018.

The UK and Italy are also working closely to tackle illegal mass migration. The Defence Secretary confirmed the UK is considering providing more training to Libya's Coastguard as part of support to Operation Sophia, which focuses on tackling human smugglers and arms traffickers who endanger the lives of migrants seeking travel to Europe.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

In leading NATO's high readiness force and tackling illegal migration in the Mediterranean, Britain stands together with Italy to tackle threats to our security.

The Royal Navy has played a key role in training the Libyan Coastguard and we're now looking at extending this training alongside Italy and other European partners.

A small team of specialist Royal Navy personnel successfully trained members of the Coastguard before Christmas in the southern Mediterranean. They were taught search and rescue techniques and how to sail alongside, board and inspect vessels.

The purpose of the training, led by the Italians, is to increase Libya's ability to secure its own borders by increasing their Coastguard's ability to disrupt people smuggling and illegal arms trafficking in and around Libya.

Elsewhere, the UK has also supported NATO counter migration efforts in the Aegean Sea, and HMS Mersey recently returned home following six months supporting this task, contributing to nearly twelve months of Royal Navy presence in the Aegean. She will now undertake maritime security operations around the UK, maintaining the integrity of home waters.

Sir Michael added:

NATO is the cornerstone of our Defence, and the UK remains committed to European security, working with Italy and our European friends to tackle threats.

The Defence Secretary and Defence Minister Pinotti also discussed the development of the UK – Italian Defence industrial relationship, and potential trade options in the future. Sir Michael extended an invitation to host his Italian counterpart in the UK.

Sir Michael also recognised Italy's contribution to peace operations around the world and domestically, including support to disaster relief operations after earthquakes and heavy snowfall.

- HMS Echo continues to spearhead the UK's role in Operation Sophia, and Royal Navy ships have rescued more than 15,000 of the 32,000 lives saved since operations in the Mediterranean began.
- Echo has already rescued nearly 2,000 people and was involved in a rescue incident as recently as last week, when more than 500 migrants were saved.
- Royal Navy vessels have destroyed more than 140 smuggler vessels, and in addition to Echo, several other ships have been involved: HMS Enterprise, HMS Bulwark, HMS Diamond, HMS Richmond and RFA Mounts Bay.

[Speech: Changes and challenges facing UK bus industry](#)

Introduction – change

Good morning.

It's a real pleasure to return to the UK Bus Summit today.

I'm grateful to Professor Begg and the team at Transport Times for asking me back.

It doesn't feel anything like a year since I was last here.

And yet when you look back to January 2016, it seems like a different world altogether.

David Cameron was in an apparently unassailable position as Prime Minister.

After leading his party to victory at the 2015 general election, he was looking forward to securing Britain's future EU membership in the upcoming referendum.

Hilary Clinton was hot favourite to become the next US President, while Donald Trump was still 6 months away from even receiving the Republican nomination.

And Leicester City were on their way to a Premiership title.

If 2016 taught us anything, it was to expect change.

The world is changing.

Britain is changing.

And we have to be ready for change in this industry too.

Challenge of growth

Because buses face a huge challenge.

How to grow?

The argument in favour of bus travel is as strong as it's ever been.

No other form of transport can carry large numbers of people quickly, affordably and cleanly in already congested cities and towns.

That's why buses are still providing 4.5 billion passenger journeys a year.

Getting children to school.

Commuters to work.

And connecting communities with jobs and services.

That's why they're our most popular type of public transport.

More bus passengers mean fewer cars on the road.

Fewer cars mean more space for buses on congested city streets.

Which means faster and better journeys.

And in turn, that will attract more customer demand.

The bus isn't just a highly effective form of transport.

It's integral to the success of our economy.

To keeping our high streets thriving.

And to cutting pollution.

But last year bus passengers in England continued to decline.

And private bus operators saw patronage fall for the first time in 6 years.

So I see it as our shared goal to reverse that trend.

Successes

I've been hugely impressed with the strides many operators are making to attract new passengers and make the experience of bus travel more attractive.

Over 90% of buses are now accessible.

It should be 100%.

Many have free wifi, CCTV and USB charging points.

And since I last stood here major operators have begun the roll out of contactless bank card payment in earnest.

Arriva, First Group, Go-Ahead, National Express and Stagecoach have committed to this.

Which will bring contactless payment to every bus outside London by 2022, with many areas benefiting sooner.

The benefits of smart ticketing, whether on contactless cards, smart cards or otherwise, are clear.

They make journeys across modes easier and speed up journey times.

There are now at least 700,000 smart cards in use outside London and they will only get more and more popular.

So thank you to everyone who is supporting the ticketing revolution.

Bill

But we also need to innovate in other areas if we're going to achieve our objectives.

Chief among them is extending the range of options to improve bus services where improvement is needed.

How we organise the operation of buses throughout the country.

A year ago I spoke about how the [Bus Services Bill](#) would help local

authorities and bus operators enter into partnerships.

Allowing them to agree their own standards for services to help attract new passengers.

I spoke, too, about retaining the most valuable parts of the quality contract process.

So we can give Mayors and local authorities the choice to use new powers to franchise bus services in their areas.

And I said the Bill would address passengers' needs for better information.

Well, the Bill contains all of these things.

However, the journey of the Bill through Parliament has been longer than anticipated.

That was inevitable considering the other pressures on Parliamentary time over the past 6 months.

But although we came up against opposition in the House of Lords,

And although changes were made to the Bill as a result.

I can reassure you that I will be working hard to ensure that the Bill will return largely in its original form.

And it will do what we always intended it to do.

Increase passenger numbers, improve services, and deliver on our devolution deals.

Not by forcing any one approach on the industry, but by creating new options and opportunities.

And I'm also expecting the Bill's timetable to remain on track.

Article 50 has taken parliamentary time, but we are committed to getting the Bill through Parliament before the Mayoral elections.

Partnership and open data

At its heart are partnerships – between local authorities and bus operators – which are the bedrock on which a successful bus strategy for the future will be built.

The thing about bus services is that everyone should share the same objective.

Put bluntly, “more bums on seats”.

That's how local authorities can cut congestion, support businesses and improve air quality.

And it's how operators can improve their bottom line – if you'll excuse the pun.

New enhanced partnerships will allow local authorities and bus operators to agree their own standards for services in their area.

From branding and emission standards to ticketing.

Every enhanced partnership will have a plan which sets out the improvements that the authority and operators will make.

To make bus travel more attractive.

To identify the problems that are preventing more people from travelling by bus.

And through partnership commitments – to do something about them.

Partnerships offer major benefits for rural communities too.

So the Bill allows better integration between local bus services and other modes of transport.

It will also make more information available to passengers through the open data provisions.

I want bus passengers to have the same access to journey planning and real time information as rail passengers.

And the same as those travelling in London.

So the provisions will require bus operators to make data about routes, fares and the operation of bus services open and accessible.

Franchises

But partnerships may not be the best solution in all areas.

New powers to franchise services will be available to combined authorities with directly elected mayors...

Just as they are in London.

And private operators will compete for contracts.

One of the most notable changes made to the Bill in the House of Lords was the opening up of franchising to all local transport authorities in England.

The government's position is clear.

We do not support that change.

Strong governance and accountability is needed to make franchising a success.

So it remains our intention that mayoral combined authorities will have automatic access to franchising powers.

Reflecting the centralised decision-making responsibility for transport they will hold.

Other local authorities will be able to access franchising powers with the Secretary of State's consent.

We want to ensure that franchising is only pursued where it makes sense to do so, where the authority has a realistic plan in place, and – most importantly – where it will benefit passengers.

Consultation

The Bill that leaves Parliament must be fit for purpose.

Above all, that means it will help both bus operators and authorities deliver better services for passengers.

But it will only be a success if the powers it contains are easy to use – and if they are taken up.

That is why we continue to focus on the practicalities.

Working with organisations like the CPT, ALBUM and the Urban Transport Group to prepare key pieces of secondary legislation and guidance.

Your views matter.

So yesterday we [launched a consultation to gather your opinions](#) on those detailed bits of policy.

So please go to our website and let us know what you think.

Conclusion

So the challenge is clear.

To unite as an industry.

Bus operators, local authorities and government.

To show that buses are just as much the mode of the future as the mode of the past.

To do that, we have designed a Bus Services Bill that will work for every area of the country.

For franchises and partnerships.

To deliver the services that passengers want.

I'm absolutely confident we can do that.

Not just because we've worked so hard on the legislation.

But because I know this is a resourceful and creative industry, which is doing so much great work around the country.

With an average 85% of passengers satisfied with services.

That's why I'm proud to be Bus Minister.

To represent the industry in government.

And it's why I look forward to working with you over the next year.

So thank you for listening.

And enjoy the rest of the day.