

REFERENCE NO: PCP01032022

POST-CONVICTION PLAN AT 01/03/2022

Name of Convicted Business: Northumbrian Water Limited

Address of Convicted Business: Northumbria House

Abbey Road

Pity Me

Durham

DH1 5FJ

Company Registration Number: 02366703

Plan Completed By: Edmund Higgins

Technical Advisor

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1.0 List of Offences

- (i) 22nd May 2017 at Heads Hope Dene, Castle Eden, Hartlepool
Heard at Durham Crown Court 4th to 6th October 2021 – guilty plea
Fine of £540,000 and costs of £142,550.90 against NWL
- (ii) 13th March 2017 at Coundon Burn, Auckland Park, Bishop Auckland
Heard at Newcastle Crown Court 19th January 2022 – guilty plea
Fine of £240,000 and costs of £34,238.50 against NWL

2.0 Relevant Authorisations

- (i) Regulation 38(1)(a) and 12(1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016
- (ii) Regulation 38(1)(a) and 12(1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016

3.0 Persons relevant: N/A- Convictions were against Northumbrian Water.

4.0 Circumstances of the offence and how and why it occurred

- (i) Pollution incident took place over 2-3 days; a manhole cover overflowed due to a blocked sewer downstream caused by root ingress which trapped debris. The pipe had a maximum capacity of 70L/s but it is not known how much sewage flowed into the water course.
- (ii) Discharges into Coundon Burn occurred from two manhole chambers; they arose due to third party damage to a manhole situated in an agricultural field causing a brick to enter the system thus causing an obstruction. The first chamber was cleared quite quickly but a second surcharging manhole was discovered in heavy foliage only on the next day. This was much more difficult to access and the sewer pipe downstream had to be cut into in order to remove the obstruction. It was determined that during farming activities a manhole chamber upstream from the discharging chamber had been struck and the resulting damage caused bricks to become dislodged and fall into the sewer. Whilst clearing out the blockage from the first manhole, a brick then travelled down the sewer and caused the blockage at the second manhole chamber.

5.0 Effect of the offences on the environment and/or people

- (i) The ecological assessment stated that there was a negative impact on the quality for approximately 2 km. Below the discharge the watercourse was cloudy and had a massive coverage of sewage fungus obscuring most of the substrate for approximately 1km. Thinner patches of sewage fungus and some dead invertebrates were noted in the watercourse downstream for a further

1km. There was extensive contamination of the watercourse with sewage fungus and sewage debris as well as a scarcity of live taxa and dead invertebrates downstream of the discharge.

- (ii) A physical inspection downstream from the discharges was carried out upon completion of the work on the 14th March and the watercourse was found to have quickly recovered. Effluent from the sewer system had entered Coundon Burn but the amount was unknown.

6.0 Ensuring compliance in the future

- (i) Extensive mitigation work was carried out. NWL are investing millions of pounds in abandoning the HDD line completely. NWL always takes environmental concerns very seriously and currently hold a 4 star rating as an industry leading water company.
- (ii) The general maintenance of this system consists of examining the storage tank. This storage tank controls flows entering the downstream network. It is fitted with a sewer level monitor which sends data to the NWL control room regarding the status of the tank. The other maintenance task on this part of the network involves examining the sewer outfall (CSO). This should only operate in storm conditions, so a check is made to ensure that it is not operating outside of storm events as this is an indication that there is a blockage on the sewer network.

7.0 Potential for repetition

- High
- Medium
- Low - unlikely to happen at these particular locations

8.0 Details of all authorisations

Northumbrian Water Ltd Waste Management Licences / Environmental Permits

Licence/Registration Type and Number	Site to which it relates
We have 2180 WRA consents to discharge	A list can be provided if required
PPC Permit LP3439LK	Bran Sands Effluent Treatment Plant
PPC Permit HP3937PN	Bran Sands Regional Sludge Treatment Plant
Variation Notice: UP3032XG	Bran Sands Advanced Anaerobic Digestion
EPR/AP3690LZV002 (EAWML64171)	Hendon STW Waste Transfer Station
EPR/KP3394ZEV002 (EAWML64172)	Howdon STW Waste Transfer Station
DUR280/EAWML67253	Burnhope Moor, Wearhead WTW Landfill
DUR285/EAWML60246	Cotherstone Moor Landfill, Lartington (Now closed)
DUR287/EAWML60018	Broken Scar Waste Transfer Station
EAWML64039	Washington Waste Transfer Station
EAWML64146	Cramlington Waste Transfer Station
EAWML60146	Bran Sands Waste Treatment Centre