



On the Level

News and views from the LLW Repository site

Welcome to Nuclear Waste Services – and a new-look newsletter!

Whilst the newsletter may have changed its style, the content remains very similar to before, and you could say the same about our organisation.

As I've said many times during our journey into Nuclear Waste Services, continuity is key for me. We're still here, as before, with the same open door policy to our local community.

It was great to see our transition to Nuclear Waste Services acknowledged recently by West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG), and I look forward to continuing to work with them, and, of course, the LLWR Working Group.

Regular dialogue with our local parish councils will remain and I'm always available to local residents to discuss any concerns about our business, in person if they wish.

Our move into Nuclear Waste Services went according to plan without any significant issues.

All the hard work from everyone in the organisation paid off and when speaking to our teams I find them to be very optimistic about the prospect of working for a much larger organisation with many opportunities.

Meanwhile, our Continuous Improvement Programme rolls on and we are planning a number of events within departments in the coming months that add up to significant improvements in our organisation, cutting unnecessary red tape and making it easier to do business with us.

We're also finalising our performance targets for next year. We certainly won't be short of good news to share with our new Chair, Adrienne Kelbie, on her visit to us this month. She will bring a different perspective to the activities of Nuclear Waste Services.

We've adopted a cautious approach with our pandemic response over the past two years and several workplace restrictions remain in place to prevent the spread of infection. We will continue to

assess our arrangements alongside government guidance as we increase occupancy of our offices.

Finally, I hope you like the newsletter's new look. The focus on Waste Operations (the LLW Repository site) and Waste Services, plus our commitment to positive community relations will remain, as will I, keeping you updated on developments. New brand, same people.

**Martin Walkingshaw,
Chief Operating Officer**





Adrienne Kelbie,
Chair of Nuclear Waste Services

Adrienne Kelbie is to visit the Repository site during March for the first time since her appointment as inaugural Chair of Nuclear Waste Services in January this year.

She will tour the site with senior personnel led by Chief Executive Corbyn Parr, and Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer, to learn more about some of the great work taking place, including around the flagship Repository Development Programme (RDP).

Adrienne brings diverse experience to her new role and spent two terms as both the Chief Executive of site regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), and as Patron of Women in Nuclear UK.

2020

In 2020 she was honoured with a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) award for services to inclusion and the nuclear industry.

New sustainability trial's a wheely good idea!

Members of the Nuclear Waste Services workforce were invited to 'saddle up' at a demonstration of electric cargo bikes at Pelham House.

The demonstration was the idea of Steve Hardy, Environment Director at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), who leads the group's carbon net zero project and its environmental sustainability agenda.

Nuclear Waste Services was happy to oblige and will now consider the potential for trial usage of the e-bikes on the Repository site.

"It's a great idea to take a look at electric bikes and a step in the right direction, in terms of transporting people and equipment around site," said Megan Watson, Logistics, Waste & Stockpile Manager.

"We are making steps towards our sustainability goals and the less use of conventional vehicles on site the better, given our sustainability targets for the business and UK as a whole."

Cyclewise, based in Cockermouth, supplied the bikes for the Pelham demonstration – a 'compact', for individual cyclists, a 'cargo' that could carry up to 80kg of equipment and a

2050

The NDA is committed to being carbon neutral across the estate by 2050.

traditional cycle with trailer, though many other models of pedal-assist e-bikes are available through the company.

These bikes don't have a throttle or accelerator, are limited to 25km/h by law and classed as regular cycles so require no special licence to ride, and they can be fully charged overnight using a regular household socket. They make cycling easier but still require some pedal power, so do not entirely remove the exercise element.

The NDA is committed to being carbon neutral across the estate by 2050 and Steve Hardy, who took the opportunity to try out the e-bikes at the demonstration, said changes would need to be made now if the target was to be reached.

"Whilst the majority of our carbon footprint does not come from our on-site fleet of vehicles, electric bikes are a very visible way of reducing carbon impacts and a small part towards the culture change we need in society to address the climate crisis," he added.

We offered Pelham House as a venue for the demonstration, organised by Chris Arthur, from our Environmental team, to allow Sellafield Limited colleagues to attend, and they are also now considering a trial at their site.



Left to right, Steve Hardy, NDA, Sellafield cyclist Izzy Styles, and Chris Arthur, Nuclear Waste Services

Major new programme puts asset care centre stage

A new major programme has been launched on the Repository site that will give Nuclear Waste Services greater capacity to support current operations and future developments.

Repository Asset Care Enhancements and Remediation (RACER) focuses on the delivery of key regulatory commitments and strategic infrastructure to develop and operate the site, enabling major capital programmes.

Carl Smith, RACER Programme Manager, said: "RACER will give asset care, enhancements and remediation of the site facilities a higher priority, on par with other programmes, putting us on the front foot when preparing the site for the future.

"It's an exciting challenge for the site, but it is a great opportunity to work collaboratively with our infrastructure partner, Jacobs Clean Energy, to deliver our mission and future benefits for Nuclear Waste Services."

RACER is the successor to the Repository Infrastructure Programme (RIP), which has successfully delivered extensive scope around asset upgrades/restoration.

This included a mix of physical works, such as site gate upgrades, perimeter track and site drainage

improvements, and design and procurement activities.

Key asset management tasks at the top of RACER's agenda include upgrades to the site's Leachate Management System – managing rainfall run-off from the vaults and trench cap – and refurbishments of the Grout Plant as a key NDA asset, including replacement of its 13m-long, 4.5 tonnes shutter doors, prolonging the life of this plant.

Upgrades to the site's electric infrastructure and sewage system are also planned which will help progress our sustainability agenda.

Mike Pigott, Director of LLWR Nuclear Licensed Site, said: "RACER is a key component of Nuclear Waste Services, allowing me to execute my accountability to lead, direct and control all activities through the continued safe and compliant operation of the Repository, maintaining our moral obligation as good stewards, and enabling future missions."

Mark Ritchie, Senior Programme Manager for Jacobs Clean Energy, said: "There's a great opportunity for Nuclear Waste Services and Jacobs to enhance their collaboration to bring benefits to the Repository site."

RDP hits safety landmark

The Repository Development Programme (RDP) has celebrated a landmark 300,000 safe working hours across the project life cycle.

Enabling works currently being undertaken will lead to the first stage of RDP, which will include the construction of a final engineered cap over Vault 8 and adjacent section of the trench cap.

"This figure is a significant achievement, given that this is a construction activity, which carries more risk," said Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer.

"There are lots of legacy hazards, dating back to the site's wartime history as a Royal Ordnance Factory,

and the weather has also proved very challenging, which also adds to the risk. Congratulations to the team because their safety record is exemplary."

February also marked exactly four years since the organisation suffered a Lost Time Accident of more than seven days.

Meanwhile, the Drigg Stream bridge is scheduled for lifting into place on site at the end of March. When completed this will allow the continuation of construction of a haul road, which will enable transport of materials for RDP from the rail sidings, separating site traffic from construction vehicles.



RDP has celebrated a landmark of 300,000 safe working hours

Drumming up £9m savings

First use in the UK of ultra-sensitive new scanning equipment to identify radioactivity levels in sealed drums of material on the Repository site is set to divert the vast majority from eventual disposal in a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) and save the UK taxpayer around £9m.

The drummed material, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), machine parts and lighting, used in the Plutonium Contaminated Materials (PCM) Programme to decontaminate five legacy storage facilities on site, was initially categorised as Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).

But in summer last year a collaborative and integrated approach across the business and LLWR's supply chain partners (NSG Ltd & ANTECH Ltd) led to a new service being employed on a project to take advantage of advances in technology to reassess the radiological content of the waste. This ensures the drums are disposed of through the most appropriate route for their classification, in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

Simon Martin, Head of Infrastructure for Waste Operations and Waste Services, said: "This project is a testbed opportunity for innovation and new technology and it is valuable work for the NDA estate and Nuclear Waste Services, in terms of delivery and sustainability goals."

Projected savings are based on the lifetime cost of managing the waste. If still classed as ILW the drum population would be transported to Sellafield by train for processing, super-compaction and interim storage until eventual disposal in the GDF, at a lifetime cost of £12m-£14m, compared to a total £3m-£4m under the new project, due for completion in Autumn 2022. Drums classed as LLW will be processed for vault disposal on the Repository site.



Proud to be part of the Fostering Friendly Scheme

Nuclear Waste Services has joined the Fostering Friendly Employer scheme to assist employees who care for youngsters unable to live with their parents.

The organisation has agreed an adaptable approach to its foster carers under the Cumbria County Council scheme, enabling them to balance work and caring responsibilities.

This includes time off work for pre-approved training, flexible working arrangements and emergency leave, when the unexpected occurs, and it has also agreed to raise awareness of fostering across the organisation.

Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer of Nuclear Waste Services, said: "There is a huge requirement for foster carers, so we are delighted to do anything we can do to support our current carers, and perhaps encourage new ones. We're working closely with Cumbria County Council in this initial phase and the Nuclear Waste Services Management Board are committed to ensuring that all NWS employees across the UK have the support of the business if they choose fostering.

"This is an important life-decision, so when we have current and potential foster carers within our ranks, it's right that we implement policies to encourage them."

Children aged up to 18 can live in foster care, some of whom will return home once the problems that caused



Claire Lloyd, second right, Fostering Services Manager with Cumbria County Council, presents the scheme membership certificate to Rebecca Watkins, Senior HR Officer, as CEO Corhyn Parr and COO Martin Walkingshaw watch on, at Pelham House, Calderbridge

them to come into foster care have been resolved and that it is clear their parents are able to look after them safely. Others may stay in long-term foster care, some may be adopted, and others will move on to live independently.

Cllr Anne Burns, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, said the County Council was delighted to welcome Nuclear Waste Services as a Fostering Friendly Employer.

She added: "The company has put in place a policy to support their employees who foster, recognising the important role foster carers play for the benefit of local children.

"There are more than 700 children in care across Cumbria and foster carers provide them with all the love, care and stability they need to thrive and many combine this vital role with other employment.

"Additional foster carers are needed now more than ever but we understand that many people who are interested in becoming a foster carer still need or want to do other work, and we don't want that to be a barrier to fostering. We encourage all employers in Cumbria to follow Nuclear Waste Services in supporting foster carers in this vital role."

First TRS Drums due on site

The initial consignment of 'TRS Drums' under a project several years in the planning will arrive at the Repository site within weeks.

More than 1,000 drums of low level waste, from the Magnox Treated Radwaste Store (TRS), at Winfrith, in Dorset, will be consigned over the life of the project, for direct emplacement in Vault 8, utilising otherwise unusable space within the vault, reducing the amount of in-fill material required to close it.

All consignments will arrive at the site by rail.

Trial movements were made over several months at a test rig at a Jacobs Ltd facility, near Beckermat, to ensure emplacement operations could be handled safely.

1,000

More than 1,000 drums of low level waste from TRS will be consigned over the project.

