

# ON THE LEVEL

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LLW REPOSITORY

## A smooth transition to NDA subsidiary status

On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020 it was announced that LLWR is to become a wholly owned subsidiary of the NDA in July 2021, ending the Parent Body Organisation's (PBO) 13-year ownership of the company.

The NDA's decision to terminate the contract supports its strategic direction to secure the One NDA model aimed at building a strong and cohesive group and adopting a more integrated approach to radioactive waste management across the estate. Integration of radioactive waste management is an approach we wholeheartedly agree with, and one we have been advocating for a long time.

I've known about NDA's intentions for some time and as exiting CEO, I'm content that being part of One NDA unlocks opportunities that could never be afforded under the current contractual arrangements and ensures a brighter future for LLWR and its workforce.



I intend to steer LLWR through the transition period before returning to Amentum, my parent company, along with fellow PBO representatives and LLWR executive team members Dave Rossiter, Director of Waste Services, and Rob Yetts, Director of the LLWR Site.

I and the PBO (a consortium of 3 companies, Amentum, Studsvik and Orano) are very proud of our association with LLWR, the tremendous achievements delivered to date, the fantastic reputation gained and the

supportive relationships that have been established. Achievements have included averting an immediate capacity issue at the Repository and extending the facility's lifetime by over a century, mitigating the requirement for a second Repository at a cost of over £2 billion by the introduction of a suite of waste treatment and alternative disposal services, and recognising the role the community plays with the establishment of the £1.5 million per annum Copeland Community Fund.

We've come a long way since the early days of 2008 and none of this would have been possible without the LLWR workforce and the cooperation of our stakeholders and local community.

I am committed to working with the NDA to ensure a smooth and efficient transition with the minimum amount of disruption.

**Paul Pointon**  
Chief Executive Officer, LLWR

## The time is right to bring LLWR into NDA fold



During its tenure the PBO has established the LLWR organisation as a national asset that is synonymous with best practice. It has demonstrated foresight, introduced new working practices, transformed the way the industry thinks about radioactive waste and delivered successful outcomes year-on-year. With such a glowing testament you might be wondering why NDA is implementing early termination of the PBO contract.

We did not take the decision lightly, in fact, we delayed the decision to accommodate for COVID-19 and the Lockdown period, but based on LLWR's achievements and because of the benefits we believe we will gain across the NDA Group, we took the decision with [our sponsoring Government department] BEIS, to push forward with the Group-wide subsidiary model and activate the early termination notice.

I appreciate this is hugely disappointing for the PBO and may have come as a surprise to the workforce and key stakeholders,

but the time is right to bring LLWR into the NDA fold and capitalise and build on the PBO and LLWR's success.

We have a solid foundation to work from and we want to ensure we take advantage of all the good work that has been done so far, not only for the benefit of our combined clean-up mission, but also for the benefit of the UK taxpayer.

We have established a transition programme team comprising senior representatives from the NDA, LLWR and the PBO, and we intend to move smoothly into a subsidiary model with share transfer scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Throughout the transition process, and thereafter, we are committed to retaining close links with local stakeholders, the community and specifically the site itself.

If you are concerned about anything you have read in this article please contact [LLWRTransitionMailbox@LLWRsite.com](mailto:LLWRTransitionMailbox@LLWRsite.com) and we will respond to your query.

**Corhyn Parr**  
Director Integrated Waste, NDA

# Banging the drum for One NDA

A major project to dispose of more than 1,000 stainless steel drums of waste at LLWR from the Winfrith Magnox site, each weighing around 1 tonne, has progressed to the physical works stage.

The project is a prime example of the One NDA approach, co-operation across the Group enabling an early, fit for purpose disposal solution to support mission acceleration, in this case at Winfrith.

It also compliments LLWR's Repository Development Programme, increasing the disposal potential of Vault 8 before it is capped, by fitting the drums into spaces too compact for other containers.

All drums, transported in cabriolet containers, will arrive at the Repository by rail, in consignments. On-site enabling works, beginning next month, will include construction of a new haul road along the east side of Vault 8, adjacent to the trench cap, to transport the so-called TRS drums to the vault for disposal, possibly starting in Spring 2021.



Trials of equipment designed and procured to safely handle the 1.2m-high drums were instigated by the integrated project team, comprising LLWR, Cyclife and REACT Engineering personnel, and



*Practice makes perfect: off-site trials run through the disposal of drums. Above: a mock-up of drum removal from train at LLWR site, and below, emplaced in 'Vault 8'*

are being completed off-site. The trials replicate the physical constraints on site as closely as possible to ensure the methodology, equipment and personnel are fully tested.

The 500-litre drums of encapsulated sludge waste resulting from operations at Winfrith, which are to be stacked 4-high in the vault, have been stored in the Treated Radstore Waste (TRS) facility on the Dorset site since 2010, decaying activity over the past decade leading to their reclassification from Intermediate Level Waste to Low Level.

## IT team help keep the show OFF the road!

More than 98% of LLWR staff are now working productively despite the limitations imposed by COVID-19 – and at the forefront of efforts to ensure all who are fit to work can play their part has been the Information Services & Technology (IS&T) team.

In common with other businesses across the country, LLWR had to switch virtually overnight in March this year from an office and site-based environment to a home one. Even during lockdown over summer, around 88% of staff remained productive, mostly whilst working from home, and IS&T has helped ensure those figures have continued to rise.

The provision of required IT equipment has been key and the department is currently working on a laptop refresh programme to allow video capability to be

standard on all LLWR laptops

Roll-out of Microsoft Teams to support remote working, and improve video capability, is progressing and the team is working on increased capacity which will allow all LLWR users to log on to the network concurrently. Both projects should be completed by the end of October 2020, enhancing the viability of working from home.

Paul Bell, IS&T Manager, said: "The team's dedication to their work has kept LLWR productive over lockdown, and we continually look for improvements to enhance the user experience."

Maintaining workforce welfare has been paramount during the pandemic and an anonymous Employee Pulse survey found that working from home had overall been a positive experience with a few obvious

caveats. These centred around difficulties with balancing work and home life demands, plus the increased intensity of work that has come with working remotely.

In response, a Home Working Etiquette will set a standard across LLWR, designed to ease the pressure of back-to-back meetings. Further surveys are planned to ensure the workforce remains satisfied with current arrangements. An average 105 people worked on site last month and that number is expected to rise to 125 in September, though these figures include contractors on site for specific purposes. Many more continue to work remotely and there are no plans to dramatically change working patterns, though there is a mechanism for those working from home to switch to site in extenuating circumstances.

# A site for more eyes ...

With up to 150 personnel having now returned to the Repository site following lockdown, we take a look at some of the important project work that has resumed.

Right: rail delivery to site (top of photo and inset) for the Repository Development Programme (RDP). 3 trains per week are each delivering 1400 tonnes of aggregate, taking up to 5 hours to unload. The aggregate will be used to progress the haul road and stockpile running surfaces in the contractor compound (foreground). Under Phase 1 of RDP an estimated 460 such deliveries by rail will be required. None of this material will travel to site by road. Below, a ground level view of the compound.



New site accommodation for LLWR's Facilities Management team is now in use, above right. Work was disrupted by the COVID-19 response but was completed through a sustained effort during the restart. Work has also continued to progress on the removal of soil and bitumen from 2 magazines, above left, resulting in a skyline change. The 5 remaining magazines will eventually be demolished and the clean spoil used as in-fill for RDP.



Acoustic barriers, 3.5m in height on their concrete bases, left, have been installed on site to mitigate the effects of construction noise from RDP.

Regular monitoring by LLWR's Environmental Team will ensure we adhere to noise levels stipulated within the planning consent. The barriers are designed to reduce noise by a minimum of 10dB.

## Paul's Points ...

As can be seen overleaf, we continue to bounce back strongly from lockdown, with more personnel returning to site, bringing a subsequent increase in workstreams and productivity.



In fact, field work has now restarted on all our projects.

This work, of course, is being carried out under COVID-19 standards and safety practices, with expectations being reinforced as appropriate.

The safety and welfare of our workforce and the supply chain remains paramount in our decision making around the pandemic response.

With social distancing guidelines still in force, many of our people continue to work remotely.

This way of working brings its own challenges, though I've been impressed with how well the workforce has adapted to the new normal.

A key challenge for us during this period is to maintain our focus on wellbeing, and ensure the organisation remains connected, remotely if not in person, and we all continue to look out for each other.

I've been asked several times, how much longer will the majority of our workforce be expected to work from home.

My preference is to maintain a cautious and controlled approach to returning the entire roster to company facilities, especially when the country is witnessing COVID-19 infection spikes and location specific lockdowns, and winter is just around the corner.

Where the health and wellbeing of our people is concerned, you simply cannot be too careful.

**Paul Pointon**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Great tour of site—virtually!

Tours of the LLWR site will soon be available to enjoy without stakeholders leaving behind their home comforts – and it's nothing to do with COVID-19!

A film crew from film and media sub-contractor Stanley Road has been on site capturing footage that will be used by LLWR for virtual tours.

LLWR usually hosts in person more than 50 tours annually for a range of diverse groups, from local schoolchildren and university students to representatives of counterpart sites around the world and local authority guests.

But work on the multi-decade Repository Development Programme is restricting

access to coach tours, meaning LLWR had to find a fresh way of showcasing the facility. A virtual site tour was already utilised by LLWR at Pelham House, using footage taken by Stanley Road on previous visits, and it is now working on a new platform it can share with visitors to enjoy the tour from their digital devices.

"Our previous footage was fantastic and it was even remarked on by the auditor when we were audited earlier this year," said Donna Glasson, Visits Co-ordinator. "She was really impressed that we had anticipated not being able to take people around site and had got an alternative up and running."

## Our drone pinpoints Irton Church roof damage



LLWR called its Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) into action when answering a plea for help from the picturesque St Paul's Church, in Irton.

Church Warden Sally Steele got in touch to ask if the drone could be used to help discover the cause of a major leak in the roof of the Victorian Grade II\* listed building, when not required for survey work on site.

"I was in church during a rainstorm this year and water was pouring in like a waterfall. It was quite distressing," Sally said. "It's quite a big church and we couldn't get on the roof, so we asked if LLWR could help."

"The day they came the weather was perfect and we got some staggering photos of the church, the condition of the roof and some fabulous views. The people who came to help were wonderful and we are so lucky to get the footage."

"It's so good to have a visual record. The drone is a really useful tool. We try to keep on top of maintenance but it's a very expensive job."

The drone identified severe damage to two cast iron downspouts and Sally is now costing the required work with builders.

"We believe this church is the physical and emotional centre of the community, and people relate to it," added Sally.

The building, *pictured by the drone*, was last re-roofed in 1999 and 11 years ago a lead section of the roof was stolen.

The church is maintained with monies raised within the parish.

### Low Level Waste Repository Site Offices:

LLW Repository Ltd  
Old Shore Road  
Holmrook  
Cumbria  
CA19 1XP

### Pelham House Offices:

LLW Repository Ltd  
Pelham House  
Pelham Drive  
Calderbridge  
Cumbria  
CA20 1DB

Tel: +44 (0)19467 70200