

Journey to Success 2008 – 2021

7. Planning Application 2016

Whilst the issuing of an Environmental Permit in 2015 had been a huge step forward, planning consent for a vast programme of work on the LLWR site was also required to secure continued disposal of waste at the Repository for decades to come.

Following the Environment Agency's decision to grant a revised permit to LLWR, consent to press ahead with its Repository Development Programme (RDP) was the final piece of the puzzle needed to slot into place.

Many years of work had been required to prepare the planning application, with extensive engagement with Cumbria County Council – the Waste Planning Authority - regulatory bodies, district authorities and community representatives, culminating in October 2015 when the application was submitted.

LLWR's Environmental Safety Case (ESC), on which the planning application was based, for instance, covered areas including geology, hydrogeology, waste characterisation, waste processing, engineering of the waste vaults, potential radiological impacts, coastal erosion and engagement with stakeholders.

This weighty document, comprising 17 reports, took three years to compile and considered environmental safety now and up to thousands of years into the future.

The planning application sought to permit the construction of a final cap over existing and new vaults and seven landfill-style trenches where waste was disposed of prior to the opening of the site's first vault in 1988.

It would also enable the phased construction of an extension to Vault 9 – 9a – and two new vaults, 10 and 11, where low level waste would be disposed of in specially-grouted containers.

And allow higher stacking of containers in Vault 8

and the disposal of containers in Vault 9, where they could then only be stored.

Dennis Thompson, the then Managing Director of LLW Repository Ltd, was on hand at the Planning Authority meeting when consent was granted in July 2016.

Granting of the application ensured the site's future until around 2050. But LLWR plans to accommodate the UK's forecasted low level waste arisings well into the next century, potentially constructing more vaults, if required, subject to securing the necessary permission and consents.

RDP, LLWR's most ambitious programme to date, was readied for launch.

"We are absolutely delighted. After three years of hard work, millions of pounds of investment, utilising dozens of technical and scientific experts, we submitted a substantive technical document that makes the case that it is safe to dispose of low level waste (LLW) at the site.



"We submitted this case to the Environment Agency, and they did the same thing. They spent an additional three years reviewing it in detail.

"Every calculation, every model, every assumption was re-reviewed by the EA and their experts and they concluded that the case is made. It is safe to dispose of LLW at the LLWR both now and centuries into the future."

MD Dennis Thompson commenting on LLWR securing planning consent, July 2016

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