



# On the Level

News and views from the LLW Repository site

## Reflecting on our first half of 2024

**As we reach the halfway point of 2024, I'm very proud to reflect on the work carried out by our whole team as everyone continues to work hard to achieve our vision of making nuclear waste permanently safe, sooner.**

The most exciting news to share since our previous edition of On the Level is the announcement of our Southern Trench Interim Membrane (STIM) contract being awarded. We have secured a brilliant team to complete the project – and you may recognise them from their previous work with us. This is great news for us at NWS, and I am personally incredibly excited about what this

means for our Capping Operations journey, which you can learn more about further on in the newsletter.

Collaboration with others across the NDA group also remains at the forefront of my mind after the successful completion of the Treated Radwaste Store (TRS) drum project. We are therefore pleased to have mobilised Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS) as our rail maintenance contractor. This is the first contract awarded under the new Intercompany Trading Agreement (ITA), which outlines guidance on how companies across the NDA group work together. It's fantastic to have utilised this new agreement, as rather than going through the lengthy process of putting the contract out to tender, we were able to simplify the process and award it directly to our skilled colleagues at NTS.

It's brilliant to be working with the team once again, and we are currently considering more opportunities to implement partnership working going forward, with the aim of sharing and developing our skills, knowledge and experience. This will in turn enable us to deliver projects even more efficiently in the future.



Mike Pigott, Director of Sites and Operations

## Saying goodbye to Vault 8's 'tennis court'

You may remember us sharing the great news of our recently completed Grouting Campaign in our previous edition, which saw us grout 251 waste containers as part of our first prolonged grouting campaign in four years.

And following the success of this project, the good news continues, as we will soon begin moving these containers from where they are currently being stored in Vault 9 to their permanent disposal location in

the remaining space of Vault 8; a small area often referred to as the 'tennis court'.

Once these containers are in their final disposal location, this will be a key step forward to officially closing Vault 8 ready for final capping.

This project is expected to take approximately 12 months to complete, and we're looking forward to sharing more as the project progresses.



The 'tennis court' area in Vault 8 is ready and waiting to receive its final waste containers



# Big news for STIM

**Following completion of the Early Works for Capping Operations in November, we are pleased to share that we have taken another step forward with the project, securing Graham Construction Ltd as our main contractor to carry out the Southern Trench Interim Membrane (STIM) replacement and associated works.**

Graham Construction Ltd has worked on our Repository site many times before, and not only are the team hard-working, reliable and trustworthy, they also understand the importance of respecting you – our local community – when completing their work. We have high expectations from our contractors and wider supply chain and are pleased to have full confidence in the team's commitment to being certified Considerate Constructors.

**This is exciting news for us as it is another major milestone for our Capping Operations, taking us one step closer to achieving our vision of making nuclear waste permanently safe, sooner.**

The project is expected to cost up to £67m and will be delivered over four years, with a replacement membrane installed over parts of the trench cap to protect the waste until the final cap is progressively installed in future years.

Our preparatory work onsite continues and is set to be completed soon, with mobilisation expected later this year, beginning with the contractors' cabins being delivered to site. Physical works are due to start in February 2025 in line with our planning conditions and ecological windows, and we will continue to update and engage with you as our Capping Operations work progresses.



An aerial view of the herringbone drainage, installed during the STIM early works

## Welcoming visitors from far and wide

**We're always eager to share knowledge, skills and learn even more about how nuclear waste is managed and disposed of across the world. With three international visits under our belt in the past few months, we're delighted with the level of collaboration we've experienced so far this year alone.**

In April, we welcomed representatives from the Korea Radioactive Waste Agency (KORAD). The team were keen to learn about our success in implementing the waste hierarchy, how we dispose of low-level waste, our Capping Operations, and even had the joy of spotting a few of our resident deer sunbathing on the trench cap.

The success of this visit was echoed with the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) in May, with the group attending the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG) NWS Working Group meeting before their tour of the Repository site the following day.

Last but certainly not least, it was a pleasure to welcome representatives from the Federation of Electric Power Companies in Japan back to West Cumbria at the end of May. The team visited us last year and we were happy to see them again and continue to learn from each other.

Each visit was beneficial in developing and maintaining strong working relationships with our range of stakeholders across the globe. Not only that, working closely with such a wide range of organisations allows us to develop our knowledge and remain at the forefront of innovation.



Our visitors from KORAD enjoyed learning more during a walk on the trench cap



The ARWA visitors narrowly missed the classic Cumbrian weather



It was good to welcome back the Federation of Electric Power Companies in Japan team

# Using innovation to deliver results

We're always eager to adopt innovative methods to divert or dispose of radioactive waste, and we recently achieved this by using new equipment UDASS (Universal Drum Assay and Segregation Service) to identify radioactivity levels in sealed legacy drums on our Repository site.

This project used modern technology that offers greater accuracy when classifying waste, and by using this new system, we found that material previously classed as Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) was actually lower activity than first thought. This meant the drums no longer needed to await disposal in a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) in the future and could instead be transported off site for immediate permanent disposal in appropriate disposal facilities, saving millions of pounds for the UK taxpayer.

**Simon Martin, our Head of Infrastructure said: "In terms of outcomes, the project couldn't have gone any better. It has been immensely successful. We are now realising the benefits of carrying out the work. It has saved a great deal of money, we've optimised the waste hierarchy and we've delivered on NWS's vision to make waste permanently safe, sooner."**

The project adopted an integrated and collaborative approach across the business and supply chain partners NSG Ltd and ANTECH Ltd, who developed the new assay technology.



The team were excited to see the drums leaving the LLWR site

# Supporting diversity and Pride across our community

Celebrating and supporting diversity across our communities is so important, and we're honoured to play our part through our LLW Repository Socio-economic Fund.

After being main sponsors of Proud and Diverse Cumbria's Pride by the Harbourside 2023, we're proud to continue supporting the team with a donation to help fund their new Colours Hub in Whitehaven.

Located on King Street, the hub provides a safe space for everyone, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race or religion. The group hopes that having a permanent presence in the community will raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and help improve acceptance for everyone across West Cumbria. The hub will also provide a youth zone, café, community groups and more to make sure every member of the community feels comfortable visiting, asking questions and communicating with one another.

Proud and Diverse Cumbria is an incredibly valuable group, and we're pleased to offer our support to them in this way.



We are delighted to be supporting the Proud and Diverse Cumbria team once again

In addition to the new hub, the team is also hosting their second Pride by the Harbourside on 3 August, in Whitehaven, and we're looking forward to seeing the town flooded with colour and life to celebrate our LGBTQ+ community. We hope everyone attending has a brilliant day!



If you wish to be considered for funding, you will need to meet the eligibility criteria and complete an online application form which will be assessed by the Fund committee.

Visit [bit.ly/repository-funding](http://bit.ly/repository-funding)



# And finally...

In April, we officially became Nuclear Waste Services Ltd. This was an exciting moment for us all; two years after bringing together LLW Repository Ltd and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd under the banner of Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), we are now a single legal entity. Combining the expertise of each business and creating an organisation that can deal safely and securely with all categories of radioactive waste is the right thing to do. We'll continue to invest in our existing Repository site as we redouble our efforts to develop the UK's Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Most importantly for our communities and our neighbours, you won't see any change in the way we carry out our work. We remain accountable to the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group for our activities in this part of the world, and we will be transparent and open about our business wherever we have a presence in the community.

Placing the final cap over the Repository is always a subject of interest, so everyone at NWS is delighted to welcome Graham Construction Ltd back to complete the next phase of this important work. We know the Graham team well, having worked with them before and winning multiple Considerate Constructors Scheme awards together over the years, and we are confident they will continue to uphold the high standards we all expect. You will see some increased activity as the team get things set up, but we'll keep the Parish Council and our neighbours updated.

The regulatory concerns over the pace of capping have been in the media in recent months, following the Warning Letter and Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Report (RASCAR) issued by the Environment Agency earlier this year. We have revisited the schedule for capping the Repository site and will ensure that the EA's expectations are met in full.

The good news continues; the much-anticipated overarching UK policy framework for Managing Radioactive Substances and Nuclear Decommissioning has finally been published. The document is the culmination of a substantial review of many individual policy positions that have arisen on specific topics across all the governments of the UK since 1995. Although its primary purpose was to bring all relevant existing policies into one document, there are some important policy changes that affect us – amongst other things, it obliges waste producers to consider

the waste hierarchy (avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle) for all categories of radioactive waste (and not just LLW). We will share more about the policy framework and how it will impact our work at the Repository site in the coming months.

We were pleased to welcome Steve Glasson to our Executive Team in May as Commercial Director, along with Andy Bevington who also joined us in May as GDF Programme Director, replacing Tom Keegan who has been the Interim Programme Director since February 2023. Things are only getting busier here at NWS, so having two new pairs of capable hands to support this work is fantastic.

As Steve and Andy join us, we're saying farewell to Adrienne Kelbie CBE who is stepping down as Chair of the NWS Ltd Board of Directors. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Adrienne, and she kept us on the right path as we brought two well established businesses together to create NWS Ltd. She enjoyed spending time with us in Cumbria and with our GDF Community Partnership in Lincolnshire, and I wanted her to have something to remember us by. Fortunately, we have no shortage of excellent craft shops in our area, and I was pleased to find the perfect gift close to home at one of Seascale's newest businesses and it's on its way to Adrienne with our best wishes.

## Nuclear Waste Services

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Some more local news that we were all delighted to hear; Drigg and District Young Farmers Club have qualified for the National Tug of War's GENSB Youth International Tournament. We were pleased to provide funding through our Repository Socio-economic Fund for the team's new tug of war boots last year. We wish them the best of luck in the tournament in August – may your skills, strength and boots take you to glory!

A final note from me: your feedback is always valued, and we greatly appreciate when members of the community come to us with comments, questions and concerns. Please keep talking to us and sharing your thoughts by emailing [info@nuclearwasteservices.uk](mailto:info@nuclearwasteservices.uk). We have also been working with Drigg and Carleton Parish Council to explore how we can improve our communications with you. In addition to our regular communications such as this newsletter and our letter drop, the Parish Council have kindly agreed to share our updates with you on their website: <https://drigg.org.uk/>



We are pleased to have introduced another channel of communication with you, and would like to thank the Parish Council for making this possible!



Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer