

**Report to the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group
Progress of the Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) Sub Committee
October 2010 to March 2011**

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This report covers the period October 2010 to March 2011 and is intended to communicate the progress made by the Low Level Waste Repository Sub-Committee during that period.

The main topics covered during the past 6 months have revolved around:

- The Environmental Safety Case (ESC)
- Waste Services
- Planning Strategy 2011-2080

Environmental Safety Case

Arguably the most important project LLWR has in its portfolio is the Environmental Safety Case (ESC). The ESC makes the safety case for continued operations at the LLWR and the Environment Agency (EA) is the organisation who determines whether the ESC stands up to scrutiny and satisfies regulatory requirements. The site cannot function without an authorisation permit and in May 2011 LLW Repository Ltd will submit their ESC to the EA for consideration and approval. It is anticipated this will take approximately 2 years to complete. This concludes many months of effort in testing, collecting and reviewing data from multiple sources to address a number of key questions not least radiological capacity and potential impacts from coastal erosion and climate change.

Over the years the Sub-Committee has been involved in various aspects of the ESC development ranging from optioneering studies on Vault 9 design and closure cap to the Site End State Process. We have received a number of presentations on the ESC, most recently in December 2010 when both the EA and LLWR reported on progress made, albeit from different perspectives. I am pleased to say that both organisations reported satisfactory progress with no apparent 'show stoppers' but the proof will be in the detail and we must await the outcome of the review scheduled to conclude in 2013. However, the work does not stop there and the Sub-Committee will continue to follow progress on this very important project with interest.

Waste Services

Previously I have reported on metallic waste treatment services and the progress LLWR have made in opening up this treatment route to waste producers and consigners. I am pleased to report that LLWR are well on their way to being able to offer a combustible waste service to their customers. Contracts are in place with four service providers utilising seven facilities both in the UK and abroad:

- Tradebe (Fawley, UK);
- Socodei (Centraco, France);
- Bear Creek (Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA);
- Belgoprocess (Mol-Dressel, Belgium);
- Inutec (Winfrith, UK);
- Grundon (Colnbrook, UK);
- Studsvik AB (Nyköping, Sweden).

In addition to metallic and combustible waste treatment services, LLWR are developing packaging solutions - the prototype for their new reusable transport packaging was on show at Rhegged during their annual customer conference last year and is due to be licensed any day. All of these measures bring us one step closer to implementing the waste hierarchy and ensuring that the Repository is used in the right way, preserving the facility for decades to come.

Planning Strategy 2011-2080

At our meeting in March 2011, we received a presentation on LLWR's planning strategy which encompasses a number of planning applications in one overarching application and covers the period from present day to 2080. At first the Sub-Committee were disconcerted to learn that a planning application would be submitted to cover all planning activities up to the point of cessation of operations with the closure and final capping of Vault 14. It is difficult to envisage how things will look and work 50 years from now. We were comforted to learn that LLWR are in discussions with the Waste Planning Authority at Cumbria County Council to work out 'break points' in the implementation of the strategy should approval be given. We were also assured that consultation would take place at set points throughout the phased implementation, some aspects of which – higher stacking – have local sensitivities that we would need to be mindful of. We were also led to understand that at each phase of implementation, additional information would be required to substantiate further development which put our minds at rest.

In general, the Sub-Committee were in support of the principle of one overarching planning application with phased implementation of key components e.g. closure cap, future vaults, cut off walls etc and viewed it as a sensible approach because it provides clear visibility and clarity of what is required over forthcoming decades and how it all fits together.

General topics

During the course of our meetings the Managing Director of LLWR does a general round-up of LLWR activities and progress against project headings – this is covered in the minutes from the meetings. We have also heard presentations on:

- Low Level Waste Strategy;
- NII roles and responsibilities;
- Drigg Bursary
- PCM Facility Decommissioning
- 11KV Electrical supply and distribution system

Future Meetings

Future meetings will continue to monitor progress on Repository operations identified in the LLWR Life Time Plan.

Sue Brown
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