

**Report to the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group
Progress of the newly formed Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) sub-
committee**

**Questions to be fielded at the next West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group
meeting on Thursday 6 October 2005**

by

**Cllr Sue Brown,
Chairman, Low Level Waste Repository sub-committee**

Following a Chairman's sub-committee on 28 September 2004, it was agreed that a sub committee should be formed to look specifically at issues relating to the Low Level Waste Repository in order to ensure that the issues relating to the site were getting discussed sufficiently.

This sub-committee was duly formed and Chairman David Moore presented a short report back to the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group in December 2004.

This report is to communicate the progress made by the sub-committee since that date. Cllr Sue Brown was elected as Chairman for the group at the meeting held in March 2005 and will answer questions fielded on this report at the first scrutiny meeting of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group on Thursday 6 October 2005.

At a meeting of the sub-committee in March 2005 members and attendees split into groups to identify the main issues and areas of concern that would be addressed and taken forward by the committee. This report is broken down into subject headings in line with the issues identified during this session.

Transport through village/deliveries to site

When the sub-committee met in March the issue of transport through the village of Drigg was raised as an area of real concern for the local community.

British Nuclear Group updated the sub-committee on progress made to date on minimising the number of LLW consignments coming to the facility. To date over 90% of these consignments arrive at the facility by rail.

British Nuclear Group has made a commitment to report back to the next sub-committee meeting on the findings of a transport study.

This issue remains one of concern to the community and one which the sub-committee will follow up on their behalf.

Authorisation Review

Ian Streatfield from the Environment Agency (EA) gave a presentation on the authorisation review for the site at the sub-committee meeting in May 2005. As part of their public consultation on the authorisation review the Environment Agency held open days at Drigg Village Hall and Whitehaven Civic Hall. Again this presentation

was valuable to the committee. I understand that the consultation on the Environment Agency's draft authorisation has now closed.

Higher Stacking in Vault 8

British Nuclear Group representatives have given a number of presentations on their intention to apply for planning permission for higher stacking in Vault 8 at the repository. This issue has been identified as an area of concern for the local community and the sub-committee has highlighted its views to the low level waste repository management team.

The original application for permanent higher stacking has now been withdrawn and an alternative temporary application has been submitted. The application will now go through due planning process. The committee will continue to seek assurances that the higher stacking is a temporary measure and that the Isofreights will be taken down once Vault 9 is operational.

Footpaths

At the May 2005 meeting of the sub-committee two issues were identified to be looked at by two small working groups. One of these issues was the suitability of footpaths in the village of Drigg.

As part of the working group John Hetherington, Cumbria County Council, presented the findings of the group to the sub-committee meeting in September, along with their recommendations.

They identified a number of actions in Holmrook Hill and Station Road including cleaning debris, increasing the height of retaining walls, additional lighting needed, repair and replacement of drainage, installation of a footpath and re-modelling of a junction along with general care and maintenance work. These actions have been brought to the attention of the Cumbria County Council Highways Agency.

The main issue in addressing these issues is one of funding and it is the recommendation of the working group that the most probable way of implementing this work was through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. It may be possible to tie this work into a condition of a forthcoming planning application for the LLWR site.

The sub-committee will use its influence to promote the visibility of the necessary path and road maintenance work necessary in the village of Drigg and will seek agreement from all stakeholders on possible ways forward. Further discussions are required to take this forward.

Visual screening at the low level waste repository

The second working group was charged with looking into the issue of visual screening at the Low Level Waste Repository.

It was recognised and appreciated that during the ongoing forestry management work to convert coniferous woodland to deciduous self sustaining woodland, there would be occasions when the original tree screen would be fully removed in certain locations. This would occur without the new plantations being sufficiently developed

to form an effective screen. The opinion of the representatives of the local community was that temporary screening arrangements were not the answer. The preference was to let nature take its course and allow the new tree screens to develop.

The second issue discussed was the storage of ISO containers on the rail sidings on the site. The representatives of the local community believed that the number of containers on the sidings was excessive, and was significantly greater than what they believed was required as a buffer feed stock to the grouting facility. The group proposed that the long term preference would be to have the buffer stock stored in a low lying central area of site.

At the meeting of the sub-committee in September British Nuclear Group gave a presentation outlining the progress made to date on reducing the number of ISO containers on the sidings along with a projection of how the number will be reduced in coming months. A commitment has been made by British Nuclear Group to provide regular updates on this issue. Notes from this meeting are currently being prepared.

Signage

Another key area of concern identified by the sub-committee was the internal (to British Nuclear Group) and external reference to the Low Level Waste Repository as Drigg. There was a wide acceptance by the local community that they wished to disassociate the name of the facility from the name of the village.

Progress to date against this issue is a commitment from the Highways Agency to change two road signs (on the A595 and the B5344) which refer to the BNFL Drigg Depot. At the September meeting of the sub-committee attendees agreed that the signs should be amended to remove all corporate reference and to refer to the LLW Repository. The agreed wording has been shared with the Highways Agency who will now complete the work.

British Nuclear Group has reported that they have, during the last twelve months, been briefing employees on the need to refer to the facility as the Low Level Waste Repository. The corporate sign at the entrance to the facility are also due to be amended to remove the Drigg name.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Representatives from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority have provided the sub-committee with useful presentations. These have covered their forward strategy for continued low level waste operations and also on their draft strategy which is currently out for public consultation. Both of these were informative and well received. We thank them for their contribution to date and welcome their future attendance.