

Group 2 Minimising Visual Impact

West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG) Low Level Waste Repository Sub-Committee Group tasked with developing the option to minimise visual impact of the LLW Repository Site. Meeting held on the LLWR Site on Wednesday 6th July 2005 at 1530 hrs.

Present

Cllr Kneale Thompson	Drigg and Carleton Parish Council
Mr Dave Millington	Resident Drigg and Carleton Parish
Mr Bill Paul	Stakeholder Manager, LLWR

Apologies were received from Mr Steven Shepherd, Cllr DCPC.

1. Purpose of Group

At the previous meeting of the sub-committee on the 27th May 2005 the group had selected two particular issues of concern to tackle as priorities. One of these was to minimise visual screening. The issues were listed as follows at the sub-committee:

Low level stacking

- Relocate rail sidings
- Input to LCBL & NTWP via NDA strategy
- Reduced temporary storage
- Temporary storage at Sellafield

Screening

14,000 trees to be cleared and then replanted
mature planting - cost
permanent managed screening
security implications

Taskforce members: Cllr K Thompson, Cllr S Shepherd, Mr D Millington, and Mr W Paul.

The purpose of the group is to consider the issue in greater detail by:

- 1) Assessing what the principal concerns are,
- 2) Understanding British Nuclear Group's policy for screening,
- 3) Assess how to balance the concerns with the ongoing activities on the site, and
- 4) Make proposals and recommendations to the sub-committee to resolve the issue.

2. Tour of LLWR Site

The group travelled around the site to inspect the tree screen. They noted the devastating effect of the January storm to the tree screen on the western and southern perimeter areas. They also noted that work was underway and well advanced to tidy up the areas affected by the storm damage.

DRAFT NOTE FOR COMMENT

3. Defining the Issues

The basic criterion for operational facilities on the site from the perspective of the representatives of the local community was 'out of sight out of mind'.

British Nuclear Group do have a policy to maintain a tree screen around the site. It was recognised and appreciated that during the ongoing forestry management work (started approx 15 years ago); to convert from 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. An example being the severe storm in January this year. 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.

In general, the main visual screening issues were from locations on the Seascale to Drigg road and from the village locations.

The discussions lead to one key issue to be resolved. Although only partially visible from a few points outside the site the main issue was the number of ISO containers on the rail sidings. 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 Drigg Grouting Facility (DGF). They suggested the following proposals may solve the issue:

- 1) The long term preference would be to have the buffer stock stored in a low lying central area of the site, and sufficiently screened so as to not visible from off site.

- 2) The shorter term preference has two strands:

British Nuclear Group to control the stock of containers on the sidings to a small strategic feed stock. The local community won't have 150! This could mean storing containers at customers' sites (possibly Sellafield rail sidings?).

Provide a hard standing close to the Drigg Grouting Facility for storage of the main buffer stock.

British Nuclear Group do recognise that the future Bulk Material Handling project could possibly deliver 1) above in approx 3 years time. There could be no firm commitment to this until the project team had fully evaluated and optioneered, and optimised the definition of the project.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The preference is to have a natural tree screen around the site rather than revert to quick fix screening arrangements.

4.2 During the period for the new tree screen to develop sufficiently it is accepted that certain facilities will be clearly visible from off site.

4.3 Storing an excessive number of ISO containers on the rail sidings is not acceptable, irrespective of the quality of the tree screen in this location.

5. Recommendations

5.1. British Nuclear Group to continue to prioritise forestry work to provide a new effective tree screen as soon as reasonably practicable.

5.2. British Nuclear Group to continue to include forestry management as a routine discussion topic at the formal meetings with the DCPC to ensure it maintains a priority.

5.3. British Nuclear Group to consider the proposals within this note to resolve the issue of the use of the rail sidings to the satisfaction of the local community.

(N.B. During these discussions on tree screening/visual impact road transport kept arising as the key issue to tackle for the local community).

Distribution

Those present plus other members of sub-committee