

NWS/D&CPC LIAISON GROUP MEETING – Tuesday 28th November 2023

Present

John Jennings, D&C PC (JJ)	Andy Pratt, D&C PC (AP)
Sadie Clarke D&C PC (SC)	Martin Walkingshaw, NWS (MW)
Mike Pigott, NWS (MP)	Paul Skelton, NWS (PS)
Nicole Nicholson, NWS (NN)	Samantha Ward, NWS (SW)
Laura Hogg, NDA (LH)	

Apologies Samantha McKenzie, NWS (SM)

MP offered to chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made around the table. SW sends apologies on behalf of SM. LH and MW were present and gave their updates via teams on this occasion.

Outstanding Actions

- Further assurance on the mineral rights on land identified. Explore potential for letter of comfort to be issued – NN- **Action Closed**

NN (Senior Legal Counsel, Nuclear Waste Services) led the conversation and shared a map of the locations being discussed. She explained that the areas acquired that were within the boundary of the LLW Repository site were done so to avoid any issue of future trespassing complications when doing work on existing boreholes. Those outside of the site boundary were included in the acquisition as part of the transfer as these were part of the mineral rights' overall ownership, and so it made sense to transfer all, rather than divide. The areas beneath the site not covered by the mineral rights acquisition are believed to be already owned by the Repository in existing deeds. NN confirmed that generally speaking, the mineral rights ownership should not affect most small-scale builds at surface and will only cause major issue if the build was at depth – for example, digging a well. SC asked, for the mineral rights that are located off site, if NWS would require permission to access. NN confirmed that normal landowner permission and any necessary planning permissions would have to be sought as is standard for any works to be carried out on privately owned land.

AP said a query had been raised by the owner of Sandy Acre regarding the purchase of land around their property, along with experiencing septic tank issues. MP offered to reach out to the property owner to discuss any issues **New Action MP**.

AP asked if there was any update that could be shared on the Newhouse Farm demolition and rebuild. NN confirmed she had no info, and this was an NDA matter.

- Invite Laura Hogg (NDA) and Paul Skelton (NWS) to future meeting to discuss NDA perspective on potential NSD siting, and potential cost of an NSD vs savings against a GDF – SW. **Action Closed**

- Produce report to show the benefits LLW Repository brings to the Drigg and Carleton Parish – SM- **Action Closed**
SW led through the LLW Repository benefits report in SM's absence. (A copy of the report has been provided separately)
- Printing of A0 size maps for use in Drigg Village Hall – JB- **Action Ongoing**
- Update regarding section 106 agreement (Vault 9 operational lifetime) – SM- **Action Closed**
In SM's absence, AP explained this was an original query around a conversation that was had with a Cumberland representative regarding the ringfenced £50K per year, where it was suggested, the amount was not specifically ringfenced for the area, and monies not spent could not be guaranteed for the Drigg and Carleton parish. MW explained he had raised this with Gillian Elliott (NDA) and Dr Richard Cummings in his capacity as Copeland Community Fund (CCF) Chair. They have raised the matter with the CCF Fund Manager and explained that no change had been made to the original agreement. MW offered to share the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) where the position is clearly stated. **New Action MW**
- Provision of a rock to mount slate plaque for the oak tree on Shore Road – **Action Ongoing SW**

Nuclear Waste Services update from Martin Walkingshaw

April next year will see Nuclear Waste Services Limited formed as we move to a single legal entity. There will be no need to relicense, and there will be minimal noticeable in the change. Potentially some minor changes to signage to notate the new legal entity and a TUPE process will commence to align terms. Supply chain contracts will novate, and this should be a smooth process.

Our move to a single IT system across the business, and the move to a single management system are both going well.

STIM (Southern Trench Cap Interim Membrane) early works are now complete and any issues as a result of the challenging weather conditions have been managed well.

Our current safety record remains high, with one minor incident the day before the meeting which will have a slight impact. MP covers the detail in the site operations update.

Attrition across site and the broader business has recently been higher than usual. There is currently a buoyant market specifically for project controls and engineers. We are working through this, and roles are currently advertised via the recruitment portal - <https://rwm.hireserve-projects.com/current-vacancies.html>

As discussed as part of previous updates, the decision to withdraw from Allerdale as a search area was a significant milestone in the GDF programme. This is the first time the developer has stepped away from a search area based on the geological suitability. NWS are currently going through the learning gained from this process, noting the reasonably positive feedback from the Allerdale Partnership and their Chair.

Two big procurements are almost ready to go out to tender, with social value having a significant weighting; the major permissions support to assist with the next stage of the GDF siting process and the main STIM work on the Repository site.

The search for a permanent GDF Programme Director will be out for recruitment in the near future. Tom Keegan has done an excellent job in the interim position as we look to move forward with this role.

MW ended his update by expressing his condolences for the late Dave Millington, noting the impact will be felt across the business and there is an intention from a number of LLW Repository colleagues to attend his funeral to pay their respects.

Site operations overview and look ahead from Mike Pigott

General

Continued focus on Nuclear/Conventional Safety, Compliance, and Responsible Stewardship.

Continued busy period of activity and as we know, increasingly so on site, with key highlights since the last meeting noted as:

- 10 November we held a successful emergency exercise one site.
- Capping Operations Herringbone Drainage is progressing well in spite of inclement weather.
- Leachate Management System enhancement programme progressing well, again in spite of inclement weather.
- An interview with MP and MW on the progress being made on the site was aired on ITV Border News on 24 November.

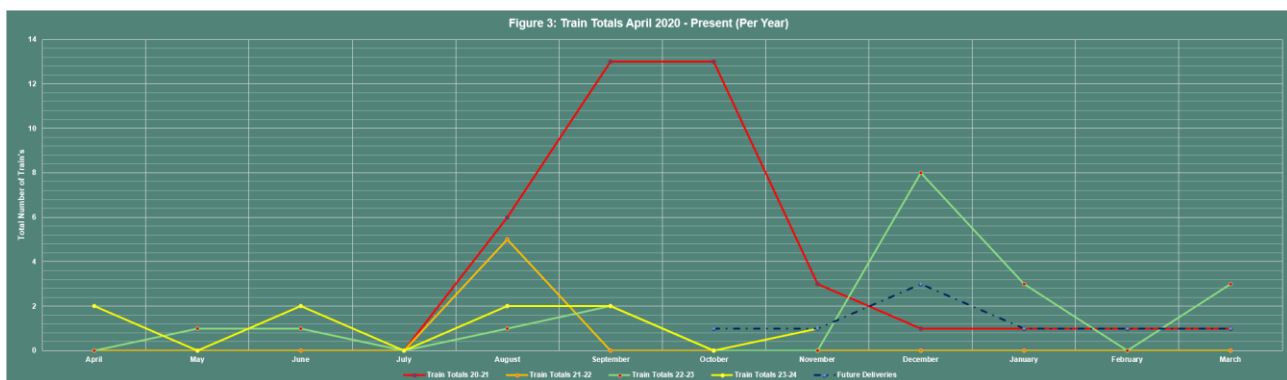
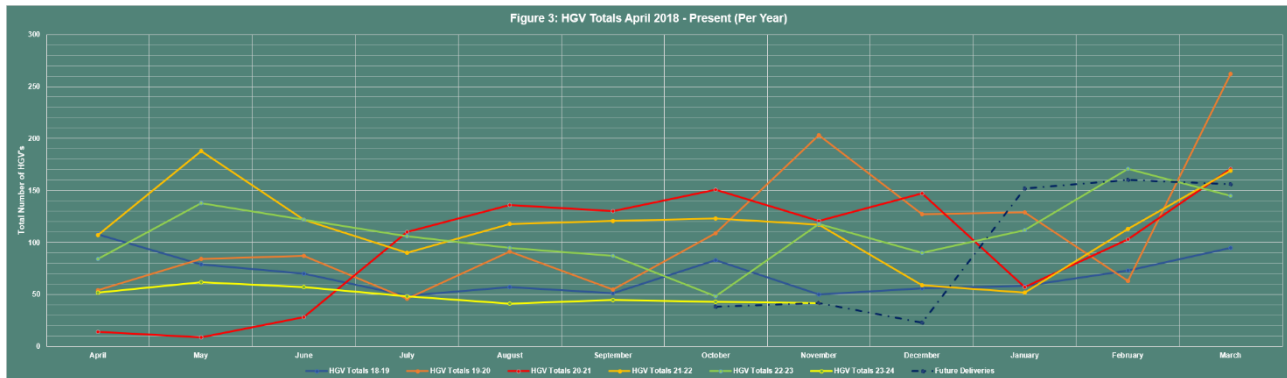
We held a planned safety stand down for the site workforce on 27/28 November. The sessions were supported by facilitators who supported playing out real-life scenarios to the workforce to prompt challenging conversations. The sessions were well attended and with the nature of the site and the risk profile changing, we felt this was a good time to reinforce our safety practices to the workforce with a reminder of some of the potential risks. Across the construction industry, there has been a 55% rise in fatalities. As we move to programmes of work including major earthworks, confined spaces and hidden voids, we aim to maintain a safety focus.

JJ raised issue with the parking at the Village Hall on the days of the safety standdown workshops. MP was also concerned about this and will be addressing directly with the workforce. MP agreed it was disappointing and recognises it had caused issues on the day. MP stressed that it was explicitly stated in the invitations that no personal cars were to be used and that alternative transport arrangements were being provided for attendees by NWS. We will continue to stress the importance of considerate driving and parking behaviours with the workforce. AP stated there needs to be a balance with parking, as the hall does need to provide some parking for those using the facility, and that other groups can also be at fault for inconsiderate parking.

The safety issue raised by Martin saw a member of the guard force team, trip over a low crash barrier. As a precaution, the person was taken to A&E and treated accordingly. We will monitor the situation going forward, but this highlights the main impact to our good safety record tends to be slips, trips and falls.

- TRS Drum emplacement progressing to plan. The next delivery is due within the next couple of months with the final shipment due in early 2024.
- The grouting campaign continues on site and plant is running well.

HGV and Rail import forecasts are looking to change, with some of the expected deliveries being postponed until the next financial year. This decision has been taken in line with our current work profile, resulting in a steady pipeline rather than us seeing a peak during February/March.



Update from Laura Hogg (NDA) and Paul Skelton (NWS)

Paul Skelton (Programme Director, NWS) asked the group if there was any specific information they would like to ask while he (and Laura Hogg (Strategy Manager, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)) were present at the meeting, noting that recent Policy Consultation is still being worked on, with no official announcements expected to be made until early 2024.

JJ wanted to know how the policy change will bring cost savings, by implementing a potential Near Surface Disposal (NSD) against disposal in a GDF (Geological Disposal Facility), and at what point would a host community be engaged. LH commented that specifics would not be known until the policy was first deemed successful. If this was to be the case, then a framework would be developed which would look at implementation. PS stated that after the identification of a preferred site there would be specific engagement with stakeholders in that community and that this would include discussions on the NSD concept being considered, the potential waste inventory for that concept and also the preferred arrangements for engaging with the community going forward.

JJ asked if there were a shortlist of suitable sites, or if this was specifically one site. LH said the policy was open to the possibility of more than one site, and this would depend on many factors, which would need to be explored dependent on the policy's success. AP commented that the willingness of the communities to host may be slim, and continued if the LLW Repository site was chosen to host an NSD, how would this impact the Repository's capacity going forward?

PS commented that should the LLWR site be chosen then we would have to work with waste producers on best use of the Repository but that adoption of NSD for lower activity Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) would not stop the site from receiving LLW and that we would look to use the site to handle both types of material. MP added that with the implementation of the waste hierarchy, the initial capacity for LLW and its limitations has now changed. New technologies have been applied which have helped to divert waste and maintain capacity at the LLW Repository site, and this would continue. Above all, the policy sets out to help make risk informed decisions on making the waste, safer, sooner, which is the ultimate goal.

PS commented on the question of cost saving, stating that one of the benefits of NSD would be the opportunity to package wastes appropriate to the hazard posed by the waste meaning that Intermediate Level Waste assessed as suitable for NSD could be packaged accordingly rather than currently where it has to be packaged against the more conservative requirements of the GDF, the earlier availability of NSD when compared to GDF also offered the opportunity to avoid costs associated with storage of wastes on the waste producer sites. MP gave the example of the 1810 PCM drums that have been successfully recharacterised from ILW to LLW or VLLW. By using new technology, this has saved a lifetime cost of £9 million for the taxpayer alone, where previously these drums would have been stored as ILW, in interim stores and destined for a GDF.

AP stated that in feedback to the consultation D&CPC had commented that Town and Country Planning Act was inappropriate for a development of this type and that a Development Consent Order (DCO) process, similar to that used for GDF would be more appropriate, LH expressed her understanding and appreciation of the Parish Council's comments and would like to thank those that responded to the policy for their input, as it will help to form any decisions made. LH noted the comment stating that this would be considered by DESNZ as part of the finalisation of the policy and its subsequent implementation.

SC commented that the Parish would like something similar to a Section 106 agreement which will have a direct benefit to those living in the host community. PS commented that when a site is identified these are discussions that NWS would be seeking to have with the local community as part of the planning process. PS reiterated that following the NDA decision on the preferred site for implementation NWS will then start engagement with local stakeholders in the same way that D&CPC have with the LLWR site.

MP concluded that there are obviously some key points over the next few months with the publication of policy and then the decision of a preferred site and when there was more information available, PS and LH would be invited to attend a future meeting to provide further update and answer any subsequent questions.

AOB

- Egremont Wildfowlers

Friday 8 December (pm) proposed as a potential meeting date. AP provisionally agreed to the date. SM to progress meeting. **New Action SM/ AP** *Post meeting note: the meeting is now scheduled for 19 December.*

- Marquee Installs

Prior to the meeting NWS confirmed to JJ the number of basic installs for the marquee per annum will remain at six.

- Policy Consultations

AP wanted to raise concern on the issue of why policy consultations, in general, are released over the Christmas period, noting this was generally a time when people were off work and had limited time to reply. Whilst recognising the frustration, MP noted there was little we could influence in this forum, especially as the consultations are not those of NWS. However, going forward, should we as NWS have any advance notice of upcoming policies, we would make a note to mention as a standard agenda item in our liaison meetings. **New Action SW/ SM**

- Summer View Road Repairs

AP stated that the issue of a request for help with road repairs at Summer View had been brought to the Parish Council's attention while trying to establish the ownership of the area in question. AP confirmed that upon speaking to his contacts at Cumberland Council, this was confirmed as a bridleway registered with Cumberland Council, and any maintenance to the area for adjacent properties would be the responsibility of the homeowners. The Parish Council would be unable to assist in any repairs to this road.

New actions

- To set up a meeting with Egremont Wildfowlers, Drigg Parish Council and NWS representatives. **New Action SM/AP Complete**
- To inform of any upcoming policy consultations as a standard agenda item going forward. **New Action SW**
- To share the memorandum of understanding with Parish Councillors regarding the section 106 agreement and its funding allocation, once made available. **New Action MW**
- To contact the homeowner of Sandy Acre to discuss property matters. **New Action MP**

Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting Tuesday 23 January 4.30pm, location: Pelham House.

Current Vacancies

All current vacancies can be found at <https://rwm.hireserve-projects.com/current-vacancies.html>