

News story: Liquid waste made safe

Highly radioactive liquid, known as raffinate, has been stored in tanks for around 20 years after being produced as a by-product of Prototype Fast Reactor (PFR) fuel reprocessing.

A project is underway to reduce the risk by filling more than 30 drums with 15,000 litres of solid waste as part of an initial commissioning process.

Project Manager, Stuart Andrew, explained:

One of the reasons that this material is so hazardous is because it is in a mobile, liquid form.

We are taking an exact amount of liquid waste from each tank to create a consistent blend. It is then mixed with cement, pulverised fuel ash and lime powders to create a stable solid waste package.

Waste Director Sam Usher added:

This is probably our highest single remaining hazard at Dounreay. Safely and compliantly creating the first solid waste drums is a huge achievement for the team and a major step forward as we deal with the site's legacy hazards.

It has taken almost 2 years to modify the plant and equipment which was previously used to process more than 230m³ of Dounreay Fast Reactor raffinate.

Up to 100 drums are expected to be produced in the next few months, as part of the first phase of this programme, with all PFR raffinate expected to have been processed within the next 5 years.

Mark Raffle, Lead Programme Manager from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, said:

Immobilisation of this highly radioactive liquid will be a significant step towards reducing the remaining hazards at Dounreay.

Completion of this work will enable decommissioning of the major facility where the material is currently stored, moving the site closer towards its interim end state.

Suppliers are being asked to express their interest in a contract to construct an extension to the facility where the waste packages will be

stored – in accordance with the Scottish Government’s higher activity radioactive waste policy. The multi-million pound project is expected to begin later this year.

Notice: EX17 1HN, Graphic plc: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Graphic plc
 - Installation name: Down End
 - Permit number: EPR/PP3239RN/A001
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Press release: Mucking in together in Tyneside

Around 80,000 cubic meters of soil, that’s enough to fill 32 Olympic sized swimming pools, is being reused to help form the embankments on a nearby scheme.

By reusing this material it will benefit both schemes by reducing vehicle movements and costs. Transporting the soil will involve more than 10,000 lorry movements totalling over 60,000 miles.

The A19 Coast Road scheme is digging deep to remove the earth to form an underpass, creating the first triple decker roundabout in the North East.

As the soil is removed it will be transported to a site in Wardley where it will be stored to create the embankments for the A19 Testos scheme.

Highways England’s project manager for the A19 Testos scheme Paul Ahdal said:

This is just one of the many examples where Highways England is re-using materials which will not only reduce costs but also provide environmental benefits for both schemes.

Both of the schemes will provide smoother journeys for drivers

along the A19 as they will no longer need to negotiate the roundabouts. Work on the A19 Coast Road involves digging out an underpass and the A19 Testo's involves creating a flyover structure over the roundabout. The excess soil will be used to form the embankments for the Testo's scheme which is due to start in 2019 in the same year Coast Road is due to be completed.

This is just one of the ways the A19 Coast Road team is re-using or recycling excess material from site in line with Highways England's Sustainable Development Strategy.

Around 250 tonnes of the old road surface has been donated to Benton Quarry Park in Benton and 160 metres of steel fence from the central reservation has been donated to Stephenson Railway Museum in North Shields.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Speech: Commonwealth has key role to play in the bright future for Britain: article by Boris Johnson](#)

Do you know what occasion attracted one of the biggest mass gatherings in the history of East Africa? A Bob Marley concert, perhaps? Or a Papal visit? In fact, it was the Queen's arrival in Uganda to open a Commonwealth summit that inspired hundreds of thousands of people to come together in 2007.

As Her Majesty and Prince Philip drove from Entebbe Airport to the capital, Kampala, they were greeted by cheering crowds lining every inch of the 20-mile route. I cannot imagine any head of state except the Queen – or any international organisation except the Commonwealth – stirring such popular enthusiasm.

So I'm delighted to report to readers of the Sunday Express that Her Majesty will be opening another [Commonwealth summit](#) on April 19 and this time the occasion will be here in London.

We are unlikely to rival Uganda when it comes to mass gatherings – something that will be of comfort to the Metropolitan Police – but this event will demonstrate the immense value of the Commonwealth, now and in the future. In some countries, international meetings happen in plate glass conference centres – think sumptuous and functional but, dare I say it, rather bland.

That's not how Britain does these things, certainly not when the occasion is so special. We will hold the summit in Buckingham Palace, Lancaster House and St James's Palace. On the final day, the leaders will travel to Windsor Castle. I hope this will be a uniquely memorable gathering, showing just how much importance Britain attaches to the Commonwealth. And I believe that our faith is amply justified.

As we celebrate Commonwealth Day tomorrow, the Commonwealth's 53 members comprise a third of humanity. Of those 2.4 billion people spread across 6 continents, 60% are under the age of 30. They are joined with us by ties of history and friendship and the English language. They share our values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. And our natural affinity finds its expression through the institution of the Commonwealth.

When you're looking for future opportunities, any good businessperson will tell you to go where the growth is. And for decades, if you untangle the numbers, you will discover some remarkable facts. Since Britain decided to join what became the European Union in 1972, the EU has recorded average annual economic growth of just over 2%. Yet, over the same period, the Commonwealth's economies have expanded twice as fast – by an average of 4.4% every year. Today, the Commonwealth has a combined GDP of \$10.5 trillion, accounting for almost 14% of the global economy.

India alone has an economy of \$2.3 trillion and annual growth of 7% – faster than any EU country. All of this represents a huge opportunity for British business.

The good news is that when we leave the EU, we will regain the power to sign free trade agreements with our Commonwealth friends, allowing the UK to make the most of thriving markets. Brexit will give us the ability to open a new era of friendship with countries across the world.

A key theme of the London summit will be how to boost trade within the Commonwealth. We'll also discuss how to improve security co-operation and take joint action to protect the world's oceans, bearing in mind that the Commonwealth includes island states in the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean.

And I will ensure that the summit focuses on the terrible injustice that deprives millions of girls of the chance to go to school. At this moment, over 130 million girls across the world are not in the classroom, many of whom – alas – live in Commonwealth countries.

My aim is for all governments to promise to deliver 12 years of quality education and learning for every child. The fact that we will discuss such a wide range of subjects – trade, security, girls' education, protecting the

oceans – is yet more proof of the value of the Commonwealth.

This is going to be a great summit and a huge opportunity for a Global Britain.

Statement to Parliament: HS2 Crewe Hub consultation response

I am pleased to inform the House that we have published our [consultation response on taking forward the vision of a Crewe Hub](#).

This response signals how our plans will support that vision and allow for the introduction of an additional HS2 service to Stoke-on-Trent.

To enable this, we will amend our plans for HS2 Phase 2A, from Birmingham to Crewe. This includes 400 metre platforms at Crewe, which allow longer HS2 trains to split and join, opening up opportunities to serve more destinations including Stoke-on-Trent and enabling more people to access high speed, long distance services.

We also intend to ask the franchise operator, West Coast Partnership, to include a high speed service to Stoke-on-Trent in its market development and service plans.

A Crewe Hub could generate significant opportunities – not only for Crewe, but also for the surrounding region. To fully realise that vision will need central and local government to work together and require future decisions to be taken as part of Phase 2B.

We welcome the progress being made by Cheshire East Council and the local enterprise partnership in identifying how they could invest in the scheme to ensure the benefits are fully realised.

The steps we are taking today will ensure Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent can benefit fully from HS2 and builds on the earlier decision to bring the benefits of HS2 to Crewe from 2027, 6 years earlier than originally planned.

HS2 will become the new backbone of our national rail network. It will increase capacity on our busy railways and improve connections between our biggest cities and regions. It will support our [Industrial Strategy](#), generating jobs, skills and economic growth to help build an economy that works for all.