

Construction restart continues

Work on the Box Encapsulation Plant (BEP) and SIXEP Continuity Plant (SCP) sites ceased when the lockdown hit on 23 March 2020.

Since then the organisation has been planning a phased restart. These projects are the third and fourth to bring construction teams back on-site.

As with their predecessors, every effort has been made to ensure employees are as safe as they can be whilst at work.

Construction sites offer more outdoor work and space to move around, meaning that social distancing can be easier than in other parts of the business – especially with fewer people on-site. But there are still new safety measures for people coming back on-site at BEP and SCP that change the working day.

These include new one-way systems, socially distanced change rooms and canteens, barriers, and changes to the way people access and leave the site.

SCP construction manager Steve Gilroy said:

Our project is fundamental to protecting and enabling the site's future mission of high hazard reduction, post operational clean out and broader decommissioning of the site, so returning the project to construction activities is time critical.

The project team have worked closely with our supply chain partners, including workforce representatives, to prepare the site to ensure our workforce can return to work with confidence that their safety is our top priority.

Learning from other major construction projects at Sellafield and nationally has been incorporated into the SCP restart arrangements, which are based on a phased approach with careful consideration of our work activities.

The work that will restart includes continuation of excavation activities that were paused in March, foundation formation works for the two main buildings and associated asbestos remediation activities. This phase is anticipated to take 6 to 8 weeks to complete, during which time we will be working up the restart plan for the next phase.

I'd like to thank the wider Projects Delivery Directorate restart cell for their support, valuable insights and learning from other major projects and the Sellafield Ltd and supply chain workforce representatives for their constructive engagement.

BEP Construction Manager Dave Beirne said:

We've completed the Covid-19 control measures and undertook a walk round as a management team with the project trade union safety representatives to confirm the suitability of our arrangements.

Our initial plan for construction work covers the first 8 weeks and what we will be doing has been specially selected to ensure our teams can work at distance, as well as being on or close to the project critical path.

We'll be continuing work to close our temporary construction access opening, installing primary and secondary steelwork, painting, fire boarding and floor installation.

The first of our projects to restart construction was our Box Encapsulation Plant Product Store Direct Import Facility (BEPPS-DIF), on 11 May. Since then work there has concentrated on:

- trialling and verifying the stacking of waste stillages up to nine high in its vault
- for the first time under system control; moving the bogie which brings packages from the Direct Import Facility through the cells and into the vault
- electrical installation progressing

Senior Project Manager Mike Robinson said:

We've also been assessing the effectiveness of our arrangements seen during and since the restart. We want to build on the learning we've had as the first project to return to construction activity.

Through daily feedback sessions we've seen increased confidence from our workforce in the arrangements and approach we put in place and this is helping us decide on our next steps as well as helping the other projects that are set to restart.

Box Encapsulation Plant

When built our Box Encapsulation Plant will place waste from our legacy facilities (including Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, First Generation Magnox Storage Pond, and the Pile Fuel Storage Pond) into 3m³ boxes, prior to them being stored in the Box Encapsulation Plant Product Store.

SIXEP Continuity Plant

The SIXEP Continuity Plant is being built alongside Sellafield's Site Ion Exchange Effluent Plant, or SIXEP – what is referred to as “the kidneys of the site”. SIXEP does vital work to clean our liquid effluents before

discharge to the sea. Its importance is beyond question – but it won't last forever, which is why the continuity plant will replace it.

More information on the restart of construction on the Sellafield site

[First construction site to come safety back online](#)

[Second construction site set to return to work](#)