

News story: End of reprocessing at Thorp signals new era for Sellafield

The last piece of nuclear fuel was 'sheared' (where nuclear fuel is cut into pieces at the beginning of the reprocessing cycle) at Thorp (Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant) last week, and marks one of the final steps in Sellafield's transformation towards becoming a site that is solely focused on decommissioning and hazard reduction.

Nuclear Energy Minister, Richard Harrington, said:

This marks a new and welcome chapter in Sellafield's decommissioning and environmental clean-up journey, protecting the public from hazards, ensuring the land can be re-used in the future.

In 2012, the decision was taken to end reprocessing at Thorp by 2018, once the current reprocessing contracts were complete.

It is an important move towards the end of all reprocessing at Sellafield site, a journey that will finish with the closure of the Magnox Reprocessing Plant in 2020.

Safely cleaning up the legacy from the earliest days of the nuclear industry, at Sellafield and the 16 other nuclear sites across the UK, is the NDA's core mission.

David Peattie, Chief Executive of the NDA, said:

The end of reprocessing at Thorp is a clear demonstration that we are delivering our core mission of the safe, secure, and cost effective clean-up of the UK's nuclear legacy.

This is a historic moment for Sellafield and the UK nuclear industry. Passing this milestone marks another major step in the transformation of the site.

As we continue to make pioneering progress in decommissioning and hazard reduction, the world will continue to look to the UK and to Cumbria for its nuclear skills and expertise.

A flagship of commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing, Thorp operated for 24 years and dealt with spent 'oxide' nuclear fuel from the UK's nuclear reactor fleet and from customers overseas.

Thorp's contribution to the global nuclear industry is a source of great

pride for the communities of West Cumbria.

It was the second reprocessing plant built at Sellafield and, at the time, was one of the largest and most complex construction projects in Europe, rivalled only by the Channel Tunnel and Disneyland Paris.