

# News story: Installed: the machine set to clean up Sellafield's most hazardous building

The £100 million Silo Emptying Plant will scoop radioactive waste out of the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo.

The 1960s storage facility has been described as one of the most hazardous buildings in western Europe and contains 10,000 cubic metres of intermediate level waste from the earliest days of the UK's civil nuclear industry.

John Clarke, outgoing NDA Chief Executive, unveiled the machine – the first of three being assembled in the building – at a ceremony yesterday.

He said:

This is an enormous step forward for the Sellafield decommissioning programme.

It is the culmination of 20 years of work to get to the position where we've got the first machine in place that will retrieve waste from these silos.

The machines will sit on rails on top of the silo's 22 vertical waste compartments. Each compartment is big enough to accommodate six double decker buses stacked three high.

Once operational, the emptying machines will be manoeuvred into place over the top of each compartment to scoop out their contents.

The material will then be packed into nuclear skips and sent to modern waste stores at Sellafield, pending final disposal in the UK's Geological Disposal Facility.

The machines will be ready to start retrieving waste in 2018, taking an estimated 20-25 years to complete the task.

Chris Halliwell, head of the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, said:

This is probably the most complicated and advanced machine ever built at Sellafield.

It has about 13,500 different working parts and its design and concept was first drawn up more than 20 years ago.

Turning that vision into the machine we have today has been a major challenge for the UK's advanced manufacturing and nuclear supply

chain.

The process has been hugely challenging because no plans were drawn up for how waste would be taken out of the building when it was built in the 1960s.

The emptying machines were built by engineering firm NES Ansaldo at its Wolverhampton factory, before being dismantled and sent to Sellafield in 23 separate modules.

These modules were lifted one by one into the silo building and then re-assembled in situ.

Chris Halliwell added:

There is no job at Sellafield more important than the one being done by this machine. Emptying the waste from this legacy silo is our number one priority.

It has to be reliable because once it starts taking waste out, the contamination inside it would make it very difficult to maintain or repair.

The silo took waste from nuclear power stations all over the UK until its closure in June 2000.

Its contents are chiefly made up of magnesium cladding which was stripped from nuclear fuel rods before they were sent for reprocessing.

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## [Notice: CV33 90B, Tachbrook Farming Limited: 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: Tachbrook Farming Limited
- Installation name: Barnwell Poultry Farm
- Permit number: EPR/UP3133DE/V002

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## [If the Chancellor has no plans to cut top rate of tax to 40p he can simply put the record straight – John McDonnell](#)

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, responding to Philip Hammond's refusal at Treasury Questions today to rule out cutting the top rate of tax from 45p to 40p in next week Budget, said:

"It

is alarming that the Chancellor is happy to admit he is prepared to continue with brutal cuts to disability payments next week, but he won't rule out further unfair tax giveaways to a wealthy few such as cutting the top rate of tax. When he is slashing public services in this parliament how can he not rule

out another handout to the wealthy?

“Philip Hammond has shown that he is prepared to follow on with George Osborne’s failed austerity cuts, and it looks like he could go even further than his predecessor with the tax giveaways to a wealthy few – paid for on the backs of the disabled and the poor.

“It is very simple, if the Chancellor has no plans to cut the top rate of tax to 40p in this parliament then he can simply put the record straight.”

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## [Labour councillor joins Exeter Greens](#)



# Green Party

28 February 2017

The Green Party in Exeter have gained their first city councillor, following the defection from Labour by Alphington councillor, Chris Musgrave. Councillor Musgrave says he has been drawn to the Green Party because of their deep-seated commitment to openness and transparency in local government, something he says is ‘in short supply with the current Labour administration.’

Councillor Musgrave says he has become increasingly disillusioned with a ‘small clique making decisions behind closed doors’ and a refusal by the Labour group to accept proper scrutiny in decision making. He also accuses the Labour-run council of ignoring the results of public consultations, Cllr Chris Musgrave said:

“Openness and transparency is in short supply in the local Labour Party. Major decisions are increasingly made by a small clique behind closed doors with the majority of councillors locked out of the process. Whenever I have challenged the Labour Party and Labour-led council on major decisions – which is exactly what I believe I should be doing as an elected Councillor – I have been told in no uncertain terms to be quiet.

“I have become convinced that the best way I can serve the residents of my ward is by joining the Green Party, which is clearly committed to open and transparent local government. I have also become increasingly convinced that the Greens have the right policies for protecting public services, safeguarding our local environment and tackling the city’s rising inequality.

“The Tories seem incapable or unwilling to challenge Exeter Labour, so it will be up to the Green Party to hold the Labour Party to account. As the city’s first Green councillor, I intend to do just that.”

**Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West**, has expressed her delight that Exeter has its first Green councillor. She said:

“Great news for Exeter! The South West is the strongest region of the country for Greens. This defection builds on resounding wins in recent local elections in [Weymouth](#) and the [Forest of Dean](#) – where Greens unseated a UKIP councillor. People across the region are coming to realise that the Green Party offers effective opposition and a clear alternative vision to business as usual”.

**Caroline Lucas MP, co-leader of the Green Party**, who studied as an undergraduate at Exeter University, said:

“It’s great that Exeter now has a Green councillor to hold the Labour run council to account. Greens are committed to working hard for their communities and fighting the corner of local people. This defection will strengthen our local party and puts us in good stead to win further seats in the coming years.”

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