

News story: Sellafield decommissioning reaches new heights

A chimney on top of the oldest reprocessing plant on the nuclear site, will be crunched away at a rate of 1 metre a week.

The tower will be gone by 2020, resulting in a permanent change to the Sellafield skyline.

The stack sits on top of the First Generation Reprocessing Plant and provided ventilation to a fleet of reprocessing plants.

The 60 year old structure no longer meets modern construction standards, therefore must be removed as a priority.

What went up must come down

At 61 metres tall, on top of a 61 metre building, it was the tallest structure on the site, until a modern replacement was built.

It's position on one of the most congested nuclear sites in the world has made this a complicated and lengthy process.

Conventional demolition techniques like explosives and cranes can not be used in such a crowded, hazardous environment.

Stuart Latham is head of remediation at Sellafield Ltd, he said:

Cleaning up our legacy facilities safely, quickly and cost-effectively is our absolute priority, so are delighted to now see the stack coming down after 4 years of preparation.

Given the structural integrity of the stack, its location in the heart of the site and the fact that this new technique has never been used here before, the planning has been comprehensive. The project demonstrates the challenges of decommissioning the Sellafield site.

We couldn't move a crumb of this chimney without building a modern replacement first, so this has been a complicated project, made easier by working closely with our supply chain.

Safety is the number one priority, so thorough testing has helped us ensure everything works as it should.

Sellafield Ltd has worked with Nuvia Ltd and Delta International; who have brought specialist demolition expertise and innovative ideas to the project.

This work saw Nuvia win the Technology Innovation Implementation award at the

2017 NDA Estate Supply Chain Awards.

A self-climbing platform has been designed, engineered and installed to act as a podium so that workers can safely access the 650 tonne chimney.

Using hand held tools like drills, hydraulic breakers, concrete crunching jaws and plasma steel cutting torches, workers will remove each piece of concrete and steel from the stack by hand to a waiting waste skip.

The demolition started in October, with workers accessing it from the circular platform, which is held in place by friction, and moves up and down the barrel of the stack.

Mina Golshan, Director of ONR's Sellafield, Decommissioning, Fuel and Waste Division, said: "Starting demolition of this redundant stack is a key achievement by Sellafield and another important step towards reducing the risk and hazard posed by legacy facilities on site in order to further enhance safety. This is the focus of our regulatory strategy for the site.

"Our inspectors have engaged with Sellafield Ltd during the design, build, testing and commissioning phases and gathered evidence that assured us of the suitability of the proposed demolition activity and Sellafield's supporting safety case."

Press release: M5 Oldbury viaduct team gives gardeners a helping hand

A team working on the M5 Oldbury viaduct repair scheme is helping to transform a former derelict site into a community garden so it can be used by local charity, Ideal for all.

The derelict land, near junctions 1 and 2 of the M5 at Oldbury, is part of a programme of projects to give something back to local communities where work is currently being carried out by contractors BMV on behalf of Highways England to repair the viaduct.

Highways England is working with Ideal for All, a registered charity run by disabled people for disabled people in the Black Country, to create a fully functioning therapeutic garden and community learning space at Barlow Road in Wednesbury.

Ideal for All, through its award winning Growing Opportunities project, has already successfully developed two existing gardens; Salop Drive Market Garden (Oldbury) and therapeutic unit Malthouse Gardens (Smethwick). They are now working alongside the local community, M5 Oldbury viaduct team and Power to Change Community Business Fund to expand the project into Wednesbury

(Barlow Road).

The site has already undergone phase one and one of development, being initially overgrown and unused for many years. Since the start of the Oldbury viaduct scheme, the team are carrying out further phase three development works and clearance across the Barlow road site.

In July, workers from contractors BMV attended the Ideal for All 'volunteer day'. This involved working alongside local volunteers and project participants, weeding and hedge trimming around the existing orchard. More recently the team has been back on site carrying out some rotovating and larger scale orchard clearance work.

Highways England senior project manager, Zbigniew Twarowski, said:

We appreciate the impact that M5 Oldbury viaduct project currently has on the local community.

We are always looking to minimise the disruption, but we know that there is a limit to what we can do. We are therefore looking to create a lasting legacy for the project. We will return a refurbished viaduct but we also want to support communities and improve lives.

Ideal for All's CEO, Khatija Patel, said:

We are excited to be working with local people, businesses and Power to Change. Together we're working hard towards the final transformation into a full functioning local asset, complete with community gardens, accessible buildings and community spaces.

The project will provide health, mental health and wellbeing opportunities alongside employment and skills training; benefiting local people, protecting the natural environment and creating opportunities to support and sustain economic regeneration of the area.

Seeing the project develop through the generous support from the Oldbury viaduct scheme has been fantastic and we cannot thank you all enough!

Ideal for All provides a range of social and health care services for disabled people, carers and disadvantaged groups.

The aim is to help people to learn new skills and live as independently as possible, regardless of background or additional needs. The charity offers a range of services to promote independent living, health and wellbeing and employment and skills and brings people together through peer support and social events.

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.

Press release: Volunteers in drive to give school facelift

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School received a much-needed facelift after 80 employees from 12 different organisations provided materials to carry out the work over a two-week period.

Among the many tasks achieved, communal areas were cleaned, walls and woodwork painted and 275 old coat hooks replaced with brightly coloured, matching ones. New plastic sheeting was also installed around busy places near banisters and the canteen, so they can be wiped clean more easily.

There were major improvements outside as well. Benches were given a new lease of life while planters were built out of fence posts that create a welcoming entrance to the building. The playground has had new long-lasting rubber surface laid to ensure that pupils are able to play in a safe environment.

This hugely impressive team effort was made possible through close collaboration between the various organisations working via East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) for Highways England. They include maintenance and response contractor Amey, design contractor Kier and 21 other suppliers.

Amey's Principal Operations Manager Katy Stephens, who was a key organiser of the event, said:

This was a great community involvement project which saw the many partners in EMAD really work together and get a brilliant result. Not only does this primary school in the heart of Kettering now look significantly improved but this was a wonderful opportunity for the various organisations in EMAD to further cement their working relationships. A great project which was an honour to take part in!

Highways England regional director, Catherine Brookes, joined colleagues in

carrying out the facelift. She said:

We were delighted to get involved and do our bit to help the school. It's great to see organisations coming together like this to support the local community.

Fraser Donald, Headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, said:

I would just like to say a huge 'thank you' to Amey, Highways England and their suppliers for all their hard work, commitment and vision to our summer renovation project at school. The work was carried out to a high standard and I am so pleased with the fresh start they have given to all of our school family at St Thomas More. Thank you again for everything and please know that you are always welcome back – you are part of the family now!

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[News story: Dr Gillian Tully reappointed in key role for setting standards for forensic science](#)

The Home Office has today (14 November) announced the reappointment of Dr Gillian Tully as Forensic Science Regulator.

Dr Tully's term has been extended from 3 to 6 years with her contract now expiring on 16 November 2020.

Dr Tully was originally appointed for a 3-year term ending on 16 November 2017, and has spent over 25 years working in forensic science, including a 4-year period as Head of Research and Development for the Forensic Science Service.

The Forensic Science Regulator is an independent role responsible for establishing and enforcing quality standards for forensic science used in the investigation and prosecution of crime.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, Minister of State for Countering Extremism, said:

Dr Gillian Tully has demonstrated her experience, judgement and talent in the role to date and I congratulate her on her reappointment in this key role of setting the standards for forensic science.

Dr Gillian Tully:

I am pleased to have been reappointed to my role as Forensic Science Regulator. I look forward to overseeing the introduction of standards across the remaining areas of forensic science in the criminal justice sector over the next three years, and will seek to build on the quality improvements made to date.

Speech: Launch of the ScaleUp Institute review 2017

Thank you all. It is great to be here. I would like to thank our hosts. And I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work that the [ScaleUp Institute](#) has done.

Irene Graham and Sherry Coutu are tireless advocates of scale up businesses, along with their partner organisations, many of which I can see here today.

The institute undertakes important research, spreads best practice, and provides opportunities for both public and private organisations to come together and share ideas. All of this advances our understanding of how to build an environment where small businesses can become high growth businesses. And I welcome the publication of this review as another step forward for the Institute.

Everyone in this room will know how important it is that we help people start up and grow their own businesses.

High growth businesses are vital to the economy – so the more small businesses that can make that leap from start up, to scale up – the better for our economy. And we continue to implement measures that help to make

setting up a business as easy as possible.

We start from a strong position. There were a record 5.5 million private sector businesses at the start of 2016. This is an increase of nearly 100,000 since 2015 and over 1 million since 2010. This record of success is one of the reasons that we rank third in the OECD for start-ups.

We are determined to continue that success, just as we are determined to support those businesses which want to scale up. To this end, we have taken serious action since 2010. British Business Bank programmes are supporting almost £3.5 billion of finance to over 56,000 smaller businesses. We have invested an additional £400 million in the British Business Bank to catalyse later stage venture capital investments by the private sector, which will unlock £1 billion of equity funding in later stage venture capital. We will work with investors to further understand the obstacles firms face accessing capital outside London and the South East.

We are supporting more companies to innovate through the UK's R&D Tax Credits scheme. In 2014 to 2015 more than 20,000 companies, including over 18,000 SMEs, claimed nearly £2.45 billion of R&D support. We are working with high growth innovative businesses and new entrants into sectors and markets to help ensure the value these businesses bring is realised.

We want to support businesses to thrive. High growth businesses in particular make a big contribution to growth and productivity. They also create around one third to a half of all net employment growth amongst established businesses. This is one of the reasons that we want to see more high growth businesses in the UK, but to realise that ambition there is more to do on scale ups.

The OECD ranks the UK as 13th for scale ups, so we must nurture those businesses with the potential to be high growth, create an environment where they can thrive and, importantly, find them and help them at the right time.

Soon, we are going to publish our Modern Industrial Strategy. We are facing tough challenges. Growth has not been even across the UK. Prospects for people and businesses vary too much. We have world-class businesses and sectors – but some are not yet achieving their full potential.

However, great challenges offer great opportunities. Leaving the EU allows us to make fresh choices about how we shape our economy and presents an opportunity to deliver a bold, modern Industrial Strategy. One which builds on our strengths, provides certainty, and stands the test of time, creating a resilient economy ready for the future. Our strategy will enable the UK to work more productively and boost the earning power of people, businesses, places and the nation as a whole.

Key to all of this is creating an environment in which business can thrive. The UK is already a great place to start and grow a business but we want to build on this. That's why it is one of the pillars of our Industrial Strategy. We must ensure that businesses across the UK can access the finance and skills they need to grow and we must create the right conditions for

companies to invest for the long term.

As part of this, we want to help promising, growing companies to scale up. As the government's Scale-Up Champion, I have set up a Scale-Up Task Force to look at the issues preventing businesses from taking action to grow and why those that do are not always achieving their full growth potential, whether in scale or speed.

I am delighted to see that some of the members of the Task Force are here today. I would like to thank them for the energy, enthusiasm and innovative thinking that they have brought to our discussions so far. It has been a privilege to work with this group and it has given me a renewed appreciation of just how challenging it can be for people who want to transform their businesses.

The next step will be the publication of Industrial Strategy white paper. A lot of thinking has gone into the development of this paper and not just the work of the Scale-Up Taskforce; people across the country have responded to the [green paper consultation](#).

There is also the [Patient Capital Review](#), considering the barriers to accessing long term finance, and the Entrepreneurship Review into how we can support businesses to start well and grow. All this work will feed into the white paper, which will reaffirm our commitment to driving business growth and productivity.

We are already a start-up nation; now, the opportunity is to become a scale-up nation. Let us continue to press on with this agenda. There is a wealth of ideas and support in this room.

Thank you once again for inviting me and for listening to me. And I congratulate the ScaleUp Institute for the publication of this review.