

Press release: Valentine's Day of action against illegal waste activity

Environment Agency enforcement officers, on the 14 February, paid unannounced visits to 14 sites across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Hampshire and West Berkshire in a bid to stamp out waste crime and protect the environment from the threat of pollution.

Named Operation Arrow, officers targeted sites suspected of operating in the waste business without the required environmental permits, flouting the law and committing crime.

Waste that ends up at unregulated sites is often stockpiled in vast quantities and for long periods of time. The waste can pose a significant risks to the environment, blighting communities with smoke fumes and causing noise and odour complaints. Illegal waste operators also undermine the work of legitimate waste companies, creating an unfair playing field for business.

Helen Page, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

We want to make sure the right waste goes to the right place – to protect the environment and local communities. Site visits on our days of action are just one of the ways we are tackling waste crime to help make sure this happens.

We are really pleased with what we achieved. Of the 14 sites visited, 5 were found to be operating illegally. The information we have gathered is helping us target our work at those involved in organised environmental crime and where their activities pose the greatest risk to the environment.

Everyone can do their bit to reduce waste crime by making sure that any waste for disposal is collected by a licensed waste carrier and taken to a properly permitted, legitimate waste site.

To check if someone is registered please visit environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers.

For all media enquiries please phone 0800 141 2743, or email us at southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk

[Official Statistics: Forestry Commission England Headline Performance Indicators at 31 December 2016](#)

The document will present Forestry Commission England's six headline indicators: number of high priority forest pests in the UK Plant Health Risk Register, percentage of known tree felling that is carried out with Forestry Commission approval, percentage of woodland in active management, area of woodland, cost of managing the Public Forest Estate and number of private sector businesses operating on the Public Forest Estate.

[Press release: Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme well under way](#)

The Environment Agency's Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme that began in December is progressing well. Preparations for the construction of the embankment have now started.

To make sure that the public stay safe while the work is being carried out, the Hagley playing fields will remain closed to the public until 2018, once the scheme has been completed.

During a flood, the embankment will hold water from the Rising Brook and help to reduce the risk of flooding for over 114 homes and 159 businesses. Other benefits of the £3.8 million scheme include improving habitat, restoring heritage features and reconnecting footpaths and improving accessibility. It also forms an integral part of Cannock Chase council's plans to regenerate parts of the town centre.

Environment Agency Project Manager Matt Griffin said:

We're working hard to get the scheme completed as soon as possible so we can minimise any disruption and inconvenience. However, keeping people and the community safe during the work remains our priority which means closing the playing fields is essential.

The works are a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise

Partnership.

[Policy paper: Civil Nuclear Cyber Security Strategy](#)

This strategy supports the government in ensuring that the UK has a secure and resilient energy system, by ensuring that the civil nuclear sector is able to defend against, recover from, and is resilient to evolving cyber threats. This enables the sector to continue to produce secure, affordable and clean energy. The strategy will also support the safe, responsible and cost effective management of the UK's energy legacy.

[News story: Doors open at unique nuclear archive](#)

Speaking today at the Nucleus (Nuclear and Caithness Archive) in Wick, NDA chairman Stephen Henwood, said:

Today we see a new chapter in the important role Caithness has played in the UK's nuclear history. For many decades Dounreay was at the forefront of the development of the British, and world, nuclear industry and now Nucleus will see this knowledge protected for future generations.

NDA Chief Executive John Clarke added:

Across the UK, at over 17 sites, we have accumulated large volumes of important and valuable records, some dating back to the 1940s. Now we have Nucleus, we have ensured that this information is accessible, secure, and managed efficiently for the taxpayer.

At its peak, Dounreay employed more than 3,000 staff and brought a wide range of contracts for local businesses. By placing Nucleus in Wick, the NDA is honouring our responsibility to help offset the economic impact of closing down sites that were once major regional employers.

Located near one of the UK's earliest nuclear research sites, Dounreay in Scotland, the Nucleus archive will have a dual role: as well as housing nuclear records, the facility will contain a collection of local Scottish records that has outgrown its existing home.

An exercise lasting at least five years is now under way to collect many thousands of important plans, photographs, drawings and other records from locations across the UK for transfer to Nucleus.

The site's records – including plans, drawings, photographs and other information – will be the first nuclear collection transferred to Nucleus from the 17 NDA sites. The Caithness collection, with records dating back to the 16th century, are already in place.

Up to 26 km of shelving has been installed in a series of secure pods to take the material and ensure it is preserved. Nucleus will employ a staff of approximately 20 including archivists, preservation experts and support staff.

An operation has already been under way for a number of years to retrieve, collate and organise the huge quantities of records that are currently stored at or near individual sites.

It is hoped that, during 2017, Nucleus will be granted Place of Deposit status by The National Archive at Kew.

Once achieved, it will become one of the largest accredited repositories outside London.

An official opening ceremony will take place later in the year.

Archive material will be catalogued, indexed and stored in a carefully controlled environment, with humidity and temperature kept stable to minimise the potential for deterioration.

Old decaying documents will be transferred to archive-quality paper by on-site preservation specialists, and digitised for improved accessibility.

It is anticipated that interest in the nuclear material will be overwhelmingly from academics, regulators, journalists, industry representatives and all other researchers. The information will be provided digitally, wherever possible, avoiding risks of damage to the original material.

The triangular single-storey building has a large public area, including a reading room and community space for exhibitions, study or training.

The archive will also fulfil an important role for the future geological disposal facility (GDF) that is being developed for the UK, acting as a central repository for detailed waste records that must be safeguarded for many generations.

Discussions are also under way with the wider nuclear industry, including the Ministry of Defence, new build developers and operators of the UK's current

nuclear power stations, to potentially consolidate their records at Nucleus.

[Nucleus Archive – video showing construction progress](#)

[Case study: NDA archive: Nucleus \(the Nuclear and Caithness Archives\)](#)