



DSG(2011)C223

Shetland Islands Council

Head of Services: Iain MacDiarmid

Planning

Head of Service:

The report states "it is clear that the detection efficiency, particularly at depth, is not 100% and...the same is true for the recovery efficiency for detected particles". The Group says offshore work this summer will allow a comparison with earlier predictions of the number and distribution on the particles and they hope to be able to make "a more reliable estimate of the absolute numbers of particles remaining".

Despite the many years of analysis and surveying, these statements appear to highlight a continued lack of information and certainty regarding the number, location and movement of particles in the areas where recovery work is taking place. The comments by the Group are especially disappointing given the reassurances the DSG has received over the apparent efficiency of current recovery work.

When considering any End State for the site, the Group also commented on a statement by the north region board of SEPA in 1998 that the seabed should be returned to a "pristine condition", which PRAG said implied removing all the particles. However the Group states compliance with this statement is "not feasible" due to the lack of efficiency of the recovery work.


With the data collected in 2011 the group says it will be possible to estimate "the effort required to remove a given proportion of particles from the seabed. It will then be necessary for a decision to be made as to the target value to be achieved". The Council is concerned that the Group stresses this only relates to the recovery of significant particles, not those of lesser activity.

The Council believes the comments in the report raise serious questions about the reliability of the current recovery work and the information the work is based upon. The Group's report needs a speedy response from DSRL and SEPA and the Group should be asked to provide an urgent assessment of the results of this summer's recovery work.

In addition urgent consideration needs to be given as to what final condition of the seabed, foreshore and beaches is acceptable to stakeholders.

I would be grateful if you would put this on the agenda for the next meeting of the Site Restoration Sub-Committee and circulate to all members.

Yours sincerely



John Mouat
Environmental Liaison Officer
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