

Work to remove diesel affected soils from the Llangennech fuel spill site has begun

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Three months on from the Llangennech freight train fire, remediation work to remove and replace 12,000 cubic metres of diesel contaminated soil around the site has begun.

Specialist environmental contractors Adler and Allan and Jacobs are carrying out the complex operation.

They will be working around the clock for the coming weeks to complete the work safely and as swiftly as possible.

The remediation plan has split the contaminated site into cells. Each cell will be carefully excavated, removing up to 30 cubic metres of affected soil at a time. It will be removed from the site by lorry and safely treated at a licenced waste management facility near Merthyr Tydfil.

The excavated areas will then be filled with clean quarried materials specifically selected to match the pH levels of soils in the area, and the replacement railway line is expected to be put in place, if all goes to plan, early in the new year.

An area of woodland to the north east of the incident site on Coal Authority land will also be similarly restored.

Bill Kelly, Network Rail Wales route director, said: “We understand that the temporary closure of the railway line in Llangennech is a big inconvenience for local businesses, public travel and tourism but our teams are working extremely hard to get the line back up and running as soon as possible.

“We believe the decision we have made to remove more soil, deeper under the railway line is the right thing to do, as it will minimise any impact on the environment for future generations.

“The work involves more vehicles moving to and from the site, most of which will happen during the day, but we are trying to keep noise levels down as much as possible.

“We continue to be very grateful to the local community for their patience as we work to restore the railway.”

Ioan Williams, South West Environment Team Leader for Natural Resources Wales, said: “This is an extremely complex recovery operation. There has been careful and considered effort put into the remediation work plan by a wide range of organisations and individuals, and after considerable planning and preparation it is encouraging to see that work finally getting underway.

“We have had to plan for potential disruption to the surrounding land that excavation work could cause, the safe disposal of the affected soil as well as ensuring there are plans in place to continue with the containment of the diesel and ongoing monitoring of the surrounding environment and fisheries.

“We have also been working closely with the Coal Authority to establish the safest way possible to remove pollution from their land without compromising the mine water treatment lagoons, or risk any mine water escaping from the former Morlais Colliery.

“As a multi-agency group, we are confident that all the necessary steps are being taken to help this area recover safely from the pollution.

“The Heart of Wales railway line, will remain closed until all remediation works are completed, which continues to have an impact on the public, businesses and tourism.”

Multi-agency strategic and tactical groups are overseeing the recovery effort. They include representatives from Natural Resources Wales, Carmarthenshire County Council, City and County of Swansea, Network Rail, British Transport Police, Food Standards Agency, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and the Coal Authority.

They’re working together to reduce any potential for impact of the incident on the local community, the environment and the economy.

Nia Griffith MP, Lee Waters MS and Tonia Antoniazzi MP have visited the site to see progress for themselves.

Lee Waters MS said: "I'm really impressed with the way the different organisations are working together on site to remove truckload after truckload of contaminated soil. This is vital work which is helping to minimise the environmental impact of this terrible incident."

Nia Griffith MP added: "Being on site really brings home the scale of the rebuilding work and the depth that has been dug out for the clean-up and to re-lay the track, and I look forward to when both the District line and Heart of Wales line are fully operational again."

Tonia Antoniazzi MP added: "I'd just like to add a big thank you to the teams working out in the mud here, NRW, Network Rail and Adler and Allen.... such important work to safeguard the estuary."

Monitoring and sampling work at the derailment site and the surrounding area will continue. This includes monthly sampling of cockles to ensure there is no risk to public health through further seepages of diesel into the wider environment.

The ongoing investigation into the cause of the freight train derailment is being led by the [Rail Accident Investigation Branch](#). Further detail can be found on [Network Rail's website](#).

For more information and advice visit <https://naturalresources.wales/Llangennech>.

Photo credit: Network Rail

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