

18 June 2015 - Islandmagee Storage completes drilling on salt core well

Islandmagee Storage Limited (IMSL), the company behind plans to develop a gas storage project in salt caverns below Larne Lough, has successfully completed the drilling of a salt core well.

The well – the first deep well to be drilled in the Larne Lough area since 1981 – was drilled to a depth of 1,753 metres to retrieve cores of the 250 million-year-old salt deposits. The cores of Permian salt will undergo laboratory analyses, including rock mechanical tests, to further define the design parameters and cost estimate for the project.

Anita Gardiner, Managing Director of IMSL commented: "We are pleased to report the successful completion of the drilling of the salt core well at Islandmagee. The analysis of the Permian salt is an integral part in the development of the gas storage project which is recognised on a European level as being a strategically important asset that will improve the security of energy supply and increase the flexibility available in the gas markets in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It will enable greater interconnectivity across these three neighbouring markets whilst supporting the achievement of national renewable and carbon reduction targets."

The numerous wellsite personnel involved in the five-week drilling programme at Islandmagee included Larne-based Geological Data Services, who provided geology services for the well.

Acknowledging the huge effort from everyone involved, Ms Gardiner said: "The drilling was a 24-hour-a-day operation and its successful conclusion is testament to the hard work and commitment put in by the entire team. From the site security staff to the wellsite engineers, everyone played a key part in making sure this test well was completed smoothly and without impact to the local community. Islandmagee Storage was delighted to have been able to use many local services and provide a boost to local businesses throughout the five-week period. We look forward to working further with local stakeholders as the project develops."

Results from the salt analyses are expected towards the end of the year. The costs of the 2015 work programme are being funded 50% by the European Commission under their Connecting Europe Facility.

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