

Hemerdon Tungsten Mine, Tungsten West Ltd

An Environment Agency update

3 July 2026

At the Local Liaison Group (LLG) on 17 June, Tungsten West Ltd (TW) told community representatives that it wants to use mobile crushing and screening equipment to process some of the stockpiles left on site by the previous operator.

TW first discussed this proposal with us in November 2025 and submitted detailed plans in May 2026. We carefully reviewed the proposal and, in June, advised TW that the activity should be covered by an environmental permit. We therefore told the company it would need to apply to vary its existing permit before the activity could become a permanent part of its operations.

TW had planned to begin limited processing activity in July 2026 and had already committed significant investment in staff and equipment. As a result, the company asked us to consider a temporary Local Enforcement Position (LEP) while it applies for the necessary permit variation.

After detailed consideration, we have decided to grant a temporary LEP, subject to strict conditions that TW must meet at all times.

What is a Local Enforcement Position?

A Local Enforcement Position is not a permit and it is not permission from the Environment Agency.

It is a regulatory decision that sets out when we would not normally take enforcement action against a specific activity. This only applies where:

- the conditions of the LEP are met
- the activity is temporary
- the risks are understood and controlled
- there are no unacceptable impacts on people or the environment

We are expected to consider LEP requests where they are made. In exceptional circumstances, we aim to be reasonable and pragmatic while continuing to protect people and the environment.

To report environmental problems please visit www.gov.uk/report-environmental-problem or call the incident hotline on **0800 80 70 60**

Our commitment to sustainable growth

We have a clear dual purpose: to protect the environment and support sustainable development. These two goals aren't in competition: environmental recovery requires economic investment, and lasting economic growth will only happen when it's built on a healthy, resilient environment.

Part of the way we support sustainable growth is to create investment certainty. Through regulation, we make our rules clear, consistent, and fair so businesses can plan with confidence. We use evidence to plan for the future and understand the potential risk to the environment of activities which we permit. When something is low risk, we step back. When the risks are higher, we tighten our oversight. And we act firmly when needed, to ensure clear and consistent standards.

How did you decide to issue the LEP?

We understand that many people have strong views about activities at Hemerdon Mine because of past experiences, particularly the low frequency noise issues that affected local residents when the previous operator ran the site.

Because of the site's history, the high level of public interest and the mine's strategic importance to the UK, we referred the request to our national Regulatory Directors Group for consideration. Most LEPs are considered through local governance arrangements, but we recognised the significance of this decision and sought additional national oversight.

In reaching its decision, the Regulatory Directors Group considered:

- the potential impact on the local community and environment, including noise and dust
- the measures TW has proposed to control, monitor and manage those impacts
- the length of time the LEP would be in place
- the additional conditions that could be applied to protect people and the environment
- the operator's performance and compliance history
- the strategic importance of the mine, including its role in supporting supplies of critical minerals

The LEP contains additional controls beyond those currently in place in the environmental permit, including restrictions on operating hours and limits on processing rates.

The arrangement is temporary and will only remain in place while TW applies for the appropriate permit changes and develops its permanent processing facilities.

Why did you not consult on this decision?

We recognise that some people may feel disappointed or frustrated that this decision was not subject to public consultation, particularly given the time and effort many local residents put into previous permit consultations.

An LEP is an enforcement decision. By law, it is not subject to public consultation. The decision is based on whether environmental risks can be controlled and whether allowing a temporary activity is in the public interest.

However, this does not mean that local views are unimportant to us.

We remain committed to being open and transparent about our decisions, explaining why we have made them, and listening to concerns raised by local residents and stakeholders.

The LEP is only a temporary arrangement. We expect TW to apply for a permit variation to continue operating this equipment. As with the existing permit, that process should include public consultation, giving local people the opportunity to review the proposals and provide their views.

Importantly, that consultation would take place with the benefit of evidence gathered during a limited and tightly controlled period of operation under the LEP.

What happens next?

As TW explained at the LLG, it intends to restart activity in stages. Different parts of the equipment will be operated separately so that their effects can be assessed and monitored.

The mobile equipment performs similar functions to the permanent plant already authorised by the existing permit, although there are differences in how it operates.

We recognise that crushing and screening activities have the potential to generate noise and dust. If these impacts are not properly controlled, they can affect local communities and the environment.

That is why we are adding additional controls for the operations in the LEP.

Once activity starts, we will closely monitor compliance with the LEP requirements. If we conclude that operations are causing unacceptable impacts, or if TW fails to meet any of the LEP conditions, we can withdraw the LEP.

If an LEP is withdrawn, the operator would be expected to stop the activity. If it did not do so, we would consider enforcement action.

A final reassurance

We know this decision may raise concerns, particularly for people who were affected by the site's previous operations and who participated in earlier permit consultations.

We want to reassure you that we have not taken this decision lightly.

We have carefully considered the proposal, sought detailed evidence from the operator and scrutinised the potential risks. The LEP includes additional safeguards designed to protect both local communities and the environment.

We would not issue an LEP if we believed the activity was likely to cause unacceptable harm to people, wildlife or the environment.

Our role is to protect people and the environment while supporting sustainable development. We will continue to hold the operator to account and will act if the conditions of the LEP are not met.

How can I get further information?

Find out about this, and other sites we regulate, on our local Regulated Sites webpage: [Devon, Cornwall, Isles of Scilly Regulated Sites | Engage Environment Agency](#)

Keep an eye on our local social media channels: [Facebook - Environment Agency South and South West](#) and [X - @EnvAgencySW](#)

For more general information about our permitting process please see www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/environmental-permits

Please forward this briefing note on to anyone you think may be interested.

If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list for this application, please email us at DCISEnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk or write to us at **Customer and Engagement Team, Manley House, Kestrel Way, Sowton Industrial Estate, Exeter, EX2 7LQ.**