

# NUCLEAR LEGACY ADVISORY FORUM

## The LGA's SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING

### Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2005, Town Hall, Manchester

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Present:

Cllr Geoff Blackwell, Copeland Borough Council (Chair)  
Cllr Bill Risby, Manchester City Council  
Cllr Timothy Heslop, Cumbria County Council  
Cllr Brian Gregson, Shetland Islands Council  
Cllr Mike Rumney, Fife Council (CoSLA)  
David Davies, Copeland Borough Council  
Sue Crisp, Cumbria County Council  
David Stevenson, Glasgow City Council  
G Regan, Dundee City Council  
Jamie Woolley, Nuclear Free Local Authorities' Legal Adviser  
Cllr Neil Swannick, Manchester City Council  
Cllr Claire Nash, Leeds City Council  
Cllr Alan Matthews, Bury MBC  
Adrian Hurst, Hartlepool Borough Council  
John Hetherington, Cumbria County Council  
Stewart Kemp, Manchester City Council  
Cathy Birrell, Glasgow City Council  
Clare Hames, Tameside MBC

#### 1 WELCOME

1.1 Councillor Blackwell welcomed those present, especially the observers from Scottish City Councils, who are part of the move to form a CoSLA nuclear legacy Special Interest Group.

1.2 Sue Crisp acted as minute secretary.

#### 2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from;

Fergus McMorrow, **Copeland Borough Council**; Rob Tripp, **Dorset County Council**; Donna George, **Dorset County Council**; Cllr Kevin Jones, **Flintshire Council**; Bill Murray, **Kent County Council**; Tony Wolfe, **Lake District National Park Authority**; Cllr Don Yates, **Lancashire County Council**; Sean Morris, **Leeds City Council**; Kevin Thomas, **North Ayrshire Council**; Cllr Julian Swainson, **Suffolk County Council**; John Pitchford, **Suffolk County Council**; Cllr Oldham, **Tameside Metropolitan BC**.

#### 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 14 July 2005

3.1 Geoff wished to record thanks to Cllr Risby for acting as Chair at the last meeting.

3.2 Any matters arising were covered during the day's agenda.

#### 4 NuLeAF FUNDING UPDATE

4.1 Stewart tabled the budget monitoring statement. Monies received so far from members, amounted to £7500. £1500 had been spent on printing folders and two banners, which had been used at the LGA Conference in Harrogate. The balance of accounts stood at £123,000.

4.2 Stewart advised that he had only issued invoices for the year 05/06, to those Local Authorities who paid last year. He had drafted a letter to all other authorities (England & Wales), and it was agreed that Geoff would sign and despatch it once

Action

corrections and advice noted during the meeting had been amended.

**Geoff B**

- 4.3 a. Still no response from the DEFRA Minister, Margaret Beckett, to our letters concerning funding for NuLeAF. However, John Hetherington had spoken to Robert Jackson of DEFRA, during the LLW Policy Workshop. He had indicated that if NuLeAF write again now, he was very optimistic that we would get support. John agreed to draft a letter for Geoff to send.

**John H**

b. Stewart went on to explain other, potential, income generation, including support from DEFRA in 06/07 and possible funding from the European COWAM project.

## **5 NuLeAF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POST**

a. Stewart explained that background work had been undertaken on this appointment since April. Difficulties had included payscale mis-match with Suffolk County Council, thus NuLeAF had provided extra information to justify their logic. However, an e-mail from Suffolk had recently been received, indicating that the job specification now matched Suffolk Grade 8 (£40,249-£50,454) and it was OK to proceed with recruitment, once a few questions had been answered.

b. Bill Risby asked for the logic of setting the post in Suffolk rather than the north of England, where the majority of decommissioning would occur and the majority of waste was located. Stewart replied that it was the proximity to London and Ministers that was most important – although the location was flexible, it could be hosted by own LA or from home – plus the fact that it demonstrated the breadth of NuLeAF membership, as Suffolk County Council are contributing members and support our cause. John added that central Government (DEFRA/NDA/etc.) increasingly saw NuLeAF as an important body.

## **6 MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Stewart reported that the membership was static at 83. He was hopeful of positive responses from the letters that would be sent out.

## **7 NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY**

- 7.1 A letter in response to the NDA Strategy consultation was tabled, which had been drafted by John. He explained that he had based this NuLeAF response on both Cumbria County Council's and NFLA's responses, trying to reflect the range of perspectives within the membership. After discussion, it was agreed that the letter be despatched with two changes.

**John H**

- 7.2 Stewart reported that the first National Stakeholder group would take place on 17/18 October at a Manchester Airport hotel. John and Geoff would represent NuLeAF, Stewart would represent NFLA. David Davies added that he would attend as a representative of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group.

- 7.3 John explained that the NDA Prioritisation Working Group had grown out of the BNFL National Dialogue work. The prioritisation was based on Multi Attribute Decision Analysis (projects versus criteria) and looked at all NDA sites across the UK. It became obvious that two aspects - socio economic impacts and the implications for the wider community (e.g. noise, transport, planning, etc.) - were too complicated to assign priority numbers; thus, the working group wanted to develop a "best practice guide" to interface with the planning framework. The NDA will commission this project and pay for it; they will consult with NuLeAF. The NDA will also place relevant documents on their website for all to access.

## **8 COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT**

8.1 The September 2005 CoRWM newsletter had been attached to the last agenda circulation for NuLeAF membership information. Their focus was now on the four chosen options for radioactive waste management.

8.2 a. Stewart gave the salient points on feedback from the PSE2 submissions to CoRWM, and said that compensation, veto and volunteerism had been included. Jamie said that NFLA were concerned that potential hosts for deep disposal of wastes had not been proactively involved in the consultation, as CoRWM didn't receive the Nirex historic sites information soon enough; thus it had been asked if these LAs could 'catch up' with extra consultation time. John replied that any siting process will be new in terms of approach, criteria, etc., giving the opportunity to come at this afresh; thus, these LAs would not really be disadvantaged if they had not been involved in the CoRWM process so far.

b. Jamie pointed out that the option selection process was already complete, so these LAs could never contribute to that. John responded that CoRWM had not ruled anything out with their four sensible options; moreover, NuLeAF been involved all along with the process and agreed with the CoRWM choices so far.

c. Stewart raised the issue that he had been approached by CoRWM at the DEFRA LLW Policy workshop, asking when NuLeAF would respond to an invitation to meet; however, this invitation had not been received. It was decided that Jamie would draft a letter to CoRWM, accepting the invitation and explaining his fears about wider LA consultation, which would be followed up by a meeting. It was reiterated by all members present, that despite CoRWM's tight schedule, time should be made to engage with ALL LAs, not just those with nuclear facilities.

**JamieW**

## **9 DEFRA LOW LEVEL WASTE POLICY WORKSHOP**

9.1 a. Stewart reported on the DEFRA LLW Policy workshop that he and John had attended. Discussion centred on the draft policy paper, especially as the principles on which the policy is based was not clear in the paper. There is emphasis on catering for the 'small users' (i.e. hospitals, universities) of the waste disposal routes; it also considers climate change and the use of the Drigg facility. The paper will be redrafted and circulated to workshop invitees via email. A 3-month public consultation will follow, probably in January 2006.

b. John explained that the policy needs to dovetail with the CoRWM output. He said that the LLW paper was a very high-level, policy framework, which leaves much to be decided by the NDA. Stewart added that local landfill was one possible route for very LLLW disposal, which will affect all LAs.

## **10 COMMUNITY BENEFIT: RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

a. John spoke about the study brief, that had been developed (and funded) jointly by NuLeAF, Cumbria CC, Copeland BC and Nirex. CoRWM are also looking at this subject area, so there is the opportunity for an exchange of views. Both DEFRA and the NDA were also very interested in the outcomes. This could be a seminal contribution to the UK's management of the waste legacy. The study is due to finish at a critical decision point; the outcome will help NuLeAF take an informed view on aims, pitfalls and strengths.

b. In response to a question on how much interest had been received from potential consultants, John replied that the brief had been issued to six consultancies; there had been four clarification questions received so far and he was confident of

receiving at least four bids.

c. In response to a question concerning the make-up of the Steering Group for the study, and whether any LAs not hosting nuclear facilities were appointed, Geoff replied that he didn't mind extension of the SG, but Stewart (representing the non-nuclear Manchester City Council) was already co-opted and a rep from one of the Scottish LAs would be identified later today.

SKemp

## **11 EUROPEAN CARL & COWAM PROGRAMMES**

11.1 It was reported that David Davies (Copeland BC), Bill Risby (Manchester CC), Brian Gregson (Shetland Islands), Kevin Jones (Flintshire CC), Tim Knowles (Cumbria CC), Robert Jackson (DEFRA), Nirex and Peter Simmons (CARL project) were all attending the CARL workshop in Antwerp on 2 December.

11.2 John reported that he had attended a COWAM2 meeting a short while ago. It is a participatory project, attended by a large number of LAs from across Europe. There was a bid in for COWAM3. This would be entitled 'COWAM in Practice' and there would be research components provided by the Westlakes Research Institute (based in Cumbria) and the consultants Enviros; it should pull in £176,000 of Euro funding and Nirex match-funding. The project will run during 2007/9, when the UK policy on waste management should be settled. John agreed to circulate relevant paperwork to NuLeAF members.

JGH

## **12 GMF CONFERENCE, BRUSSELS 5-6 OCTOBER 2005**

Tim Heslop had attended this conference. He said that discussion resulted in the (old) idea of using brownfield industry sites for nuclear new build. The Germans were keen to put new build on existing nuclear sites, as they were already licensed and accepted by the community. David Davies had also attended the conference, and he added that there were recurring themes – transparency is important; there should be clear strategies for end states; concern over the energy crisis; and the fervent wish that local communities were involved in decision-making. He also said that there would be a free science research resource via Enviros and University of Catalunya (Spain), but it had to be a nuclear issue and a specific project.

## **13 CIRIA SD:SPUR PROJECT MEETING, OCTOBER 2005**

Sue Crisp attended the Project Steering Group meeting and reported back that the best practice guidance was now published on the CIRIA project website (ww.sdspur.co.uk). The SG would continue to meet in order to gather further information on recycling technologies and to organise a workshop on metal recycling options. Jamie added that he was on the SG for NFLA.

## **14 INTERIM STORAGE OF LAID UP SUBMARINES (ISOLUS)**

14.1 a. Stewart reported that the new Steering Group for the project had met yesterday. Various papers had been tabled and it was agreed that they be circulated to the NuLeAF membership. Mike Rumney expressed his concern that the new SG has no local community representative, it is solely civil servants and consultants = MoD. He intended to write to Gordon Brown and Lord Bach on this matter.

SK

b. Stewart added that the ISOLUS advisory group was to be convened by Lancaster University and they would invite members of the previous SG. He advised Mike to speak to Elizabeth Gray of the Scottish Executive, in order to resolve community involvement. Stewart offered to write to the MoD, expressing our concerns.

SK

**15 PUBLICATION OF NEW HSE CRITERIA FOR DE-LICENSING NUCLEAR SITES**

Jamie explained that before a site could be de-licensed, it must be shown that there is no danger. HSE have published a policy document, in which it states that danger = 1 in a million. Jamie felt that it was important to discover how NuLeAF's comments, sent in response to the HSE consultation, were handled and used. There was a Code of Practice on consultations published by Cabinet, and we should refer to this in all consultation responses. Jamie agreed to draft a letter.

JW

**16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**17 FUTURE BUSINESS MEETINGS**

- 17.1 The next meeting is on 26 January 2006, at the Newbury offices of West Berkshire Council. Several presenters had offered to attend - TBD.
- 17.2 The subsequent meeting would be on 6 April 2006, in the North Ayrshire Council offices, Cunninghame House, Irvine.
- 17.3 There would be a meeting on 22 June, at LGA House, London; then a meeting and AGM at a northern venue (TBD) on 12 October.

## PRESENTATION BY ROBBIE GRAY, HEAD OF NUCLEAR SAFETY DIVISION 3, HSE

A presentation was given by Robbie and was then followed by a question and answer session.

### QUESTIONS

1. What is the point at which regulation bites on material managed by NII when it comes to temporary storage/transport of wastes. How does this interface with Environment Agency roles. There could be big issues if there are extended periods of storage of radioactive waste.  
  
RG The licensed activity at the Drigg facility is not the disposal, but the storage, and the licensed site has attached conditions. As an NII officer, I can impose licence conditions on a licensed site even if the activity doesn't need licensing. Between NII and EA/SEPA there are a number of Memoranda Of Understanding. The Hampton review ensures alignment and no duplication. Any bulk **storage** of radioactive waste must be done on a licensed site.
2. How would NII adapt to long term interim storage.  
  
RG Accumulation of waste is a prescribed activity and needs licensing. Examples;  
  - a. if you take the core out of a nuclear submarine, you are left with very little residual driving force for dispersion of radioactivity; so it does not need to be stored in a seismically controlled building (because there is a lot of strength in the submarine's structure – it has to withstand depth charges). Thus, if you can put the submarine's core into Nirex boxes = passively safe condition.
  - b. volatile (Highly Active Liquor) material is held under pressure; this would need significantly different holding facilities.
3. What is the size of your Directorate? - you say you have resource problems  
  
RG NII should have 179 'nuclear safety specialists', but at the moment only have around 162. This takes no account of proposals by the NDA for competition nor any Secretary of State's statements next July, concerning waste management policies. This situation has arisen because 4/5 years ago, this was a sun-setting industry. The NDA also, offers considerable premium!
4. The Drigg facility is not sufficient for the expected level of LLW disposals - other sites are needed. When could a new site be open?  
  
RG This isn't in my remit, I just don't know
5. If an MoD site is not licensed, it doesn't need authorisation under RSA93. Thus, if nuclear material is sent to Coulport, does this waste become "civilianised"?  
  
RG The radioactive waste is still subject to Health & Safety laws and REPPIR. Hazard identification assessment is needed.

Bill Risby thanked Robbie for his presentation.