

# **Note of the meeting of Radioactive Waste Planning Group held at Local Government House, Smith Square, on 20 July 2016**

## *Present:*

Mike Garrity	Dorset County Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Bryan Peake	Kent County Council
Phil Watson	Northamptonshire County Council
Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
Dave Illsley	Shepway District Council
Tess Bond	Somerset County Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Graham Gunby	Suffolk County Council
Matt Meldrum	West Berkshire Council

Catherine Draper	NuLeAF
Phil Matthews	NuLeAF

Mark Shaoul	RWM
Steve Barlow	RWM

## **1. Welcome and introductions.**

PM welcomed everyone to the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

## **2. Review of draft outputs from BGS for national geological screening exercise.**

This session was led by Mark Shaoul, Head of Stakeholder Engagement at RWM, who gave a brief overview of his work background in market research, communications and engagement. He hoped this session would highlight the top ten issues with the BGS outputs, and enable RWM to determine how to take this project forward. He started by asking participants what they thought when they received the document and who thought the document was aimed at them? Comments were:

- Read South Anyshire as South Ayrshire (comment echoed by others) which could be misconstrued.
- Most local government people reading the document will be doing so thinking that the GDF will not be sited in their area, and will be reading out of interest rather than because they will need to inform their elected members.
- Reassurance is given by the information on the screening process.
- Information on the safety aspects, timescales and decay of nuclear materials is helpful.

- Felt that the document was trying to do two things at once – give a geological lesson and explain geological disposal.
- Found the maps least helpful as tried to cross-reference rock types to markings on map.
- If the document was designed to help someone from 'Anyshire' to find out if their locality was suitable it was quite difficult to find that information. Got bogged down in detail, would have preferred to read the 'headline outcomes' and then go on to how that conclusion was reached.
- Some of the language is complex and would benefit from a glossary.
- A 3D graphic would help people understand the depths involved.
- I was more uncertain after reading the document than before. Expected more of a yes/no outcome. I recognise that there is uncertainty on geology but this should be properly explained.
- Could maps be overlaid so a potential area of search was identified. People are going to want to pinpoint their home on the map and see how it would be affected or whether it was in or out of a suitable site.
- Confusion arose as text said there would be no deductions made on whether a site was suitable, but later reference was made that 'x' may be suitable and 'y' may not be suitable.

*Comment from RWM:* there is a lot of uncertainty about the geology of the UK and it has been a struggle to communicate that. Some parts of the UK are better understood than others. We've tried to keep the level of information standard across the county and indicate where more information is available for individual areas.

- People see uncertainty as risk and it is important that is managed.
- The document provides useful information and will include links to where further information can be found. This will be helpful when doing research for preparing a report. Putting it online will be helpful as can then click through to links.
- Most people reading this will not have a geological background and whilst it is helpful to have the rock definitions in the document, one needs to keep referring back, so further clarification throughout the document would be helpful.
- Links to detailed information are helpful, but also a non-technical summary would be useful for planners, elected members and the public.
- Information needs to be presented in plain English.
- Document needs to give level of information which can be used to produce a report for elected members, which would say, for example, the west of our region has been heavily mined and so is unsuitable, but the east of the region may be suitable. More detail should then be available to deal with more specific queries.
- People will acquire expertise on specific topics to deal with issues in this area. You need to ensure that misinformation fed out by those opposed to this process is countered. People will find an expert who contradicts your information and they will use this to derail the process. Misinformation is hard to control.

- It is important that from the very start you demonstrate confidence in what you are doing. Be honest about uncertainties and say how they will be dealt with. Don't let uncertainties turn into risks. Communities will want to eliminate themselves from the process.
- You need to be clear on what you know and what you don't know.

*Comment by RWM:* The document we are considering today is a summary of more detailed reports. BGS are producing individual reports on each of the attributes being considered (rock types, rock structure, resources, groundwater, and natural processes) for each of the 13 regions. These will all be available on the BGS website, independent of RWM. Once this information is on the website we can provide links to further information so people can drill down.

- You need to be clear that this is only part of the process.

*Comment by RWM:* We are developing a Prospectus which will be used to launch the search for a volunteer community. It will include information on how we will work with communities, what the benefits of hosting the GDF will be, and the longer term vision.

*Question by RWM:* what gives this document credibility?

- It should show that it was prepared by an independent, scientific body.

*Comment by RWM:* As part of the White Paper, DECC set up the Independent Review Panel (IRP) which comprises an international panel of geological experts put together by the Geological Society of London. They reviewed the guidance to BGS before it was finalised. Once the comments draft outputs have been taken on board the guidance will be applied and report produced for each of the 13 regions. We would then like to come back to you to review the reports, and they will also go to the IRP. We would look for them to give a public statement that the reports are based on sound science and fit for purpose.

- RWM should highlight role and composition of IRP. International experts are welcome as some may see British members as having a vested interest in the GDF, even if this is not the case.
- Document did not give confidence that there would be safeguards against human intrusion in the future.
- The statement that the site will be permanently sealed implies that it will not be managed after it has been closed. This does not give confidence. How can we be sure the site will be safe without further human intervention?
- There needs to be confidence that the site will be monitored to make sure radioactivity isn't escaping, demonstrate safety and give confidence

*Comment from RWM:* As part of applying for a license to build the GDF from ONR and an environmental permit from Environment Agency we will need to demonstrate that we have developed a strategy about how we maintain continuity of knowledge that the GDF is there. The site will be monitored whilst it is operational and we will

only be allowed to close it when we can demonstrate that it is safe without further human intervention.

- Research has indicated that communities would be more interested if the waste was retrievable.

*Comment from RWM:* The White Paper requires us to keep that option open.

- The more questions you have outstanding the less likely you are to have a community to come forward.
- Need to show that the waste cannot be left indefinitely at the current sites.
- Local communities around existing nuclear licensed site understand the issues and see the benefits. However, you will have difficulties in getting a volunteer for something new and where there are a lot of unknowns.
- This document should be shown to local authority CEOs, other officers and elected members. It needs further road testing with those who have less understanding of the process and issues.

*Comment from RWM:* I am considering getting a short video made explaining the issues. It would be good if it could be fronted by someone like Tim Peake.

- It is important to get the branding right as you can't fool people. You need to refer to importance of nuclear power in dealing with climate change. Present positively.
- If there are comparative examples elsewhere in the world it would be beneficial to mention these, especially if the location is perceived to have high safety and environmental standards.
- Unless you present the evidence for geological disposal being the only or preferred solution people will argue for alternate solutions for treating the waste.
- You need to explain that the underground disposal facility need not be located beneath the headworks. Also that it is possible for the facility to run out under the sea to a distance of 10Km.
- You need to explain what groundwater is, otherwise it may be confused with drinking water.
- The graphic which explains about hills and valleys needs to give an indication of height/depth.
- There are no graphics about rocks.
- You need to be aware that there will be people or groups who will try to hijack your process and take people off the path of understanding and try to get them to a different conclusion. As soon as the document is published there will be those who will try to derail or discredit the process.
- Have you engaged with NGOs or the NFLA about these documents? The MOD carried out very effective engagement on the production of documents for the Submarine Dismantling Projects which involved the NGOs in their design and development.
- Please do not use gov.uk as a platform for your website. It will be unusable.
- RWM should try to step out of the shadow of NDA
- Do the colours in the right-hand column of Table 2 mean anything?

- The relevance of geological timescale to understanding whether an area may or may not be suitable for a GDF was questioned by those with a non-geological background. The website should have an online forum where people can ask questions.

Mark thanked the participants for their input. This will be collated with that from other meetings and shared with the team at RWM. There is obviously a need to address the issue of whether the data allows people to work out whether or not their locality is suitable or not. He hoped to come back to the group in the autumn with the draft regional outputs for comment. Mark asked that any comments on the draft outputs not submitted today be sent to Phil for onward transmission.

***Action: All***

### **3. Note of the RWPG meeting of 12 April**

The note was agreed to be a true and accurate record and would be posted on the website.

***Action: CD***

### **4. Matters arising**

4.3 GEK asked if James McKinney had fed back any comments from Anna Clarke on the lack of engagement by Magnox on their plans. PM said that no response had been received and he would follow this up.

***Action: PM***

### **5. Update on Geological Disposal Facility siting process**

5.1 PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It covered:

- Community Representation Working Group;
- GDF Stakeholder Action Group;
- NuLeAF/RWM fringe event at LGA Conference 2016;
- RWM Societal Aspects report;
- Update on CoRWM;
- National Policy Statement on the GDF; and
- National Geological Screening.

5.2 PM gave an overview of the work of the Communities Representation Working Group. MG highlighted that there needed to be a consistent approach to the definition of a community across volunteer sites, and that specific requirements are set out in the Duty to Cooperate.

5.2.1 There would be a role for the county council in the Siting Partnership, but no tier of local government would have a veto.

5.2.2 There would be a period of 10-15 years from a community engaging in the process to the results of borehole exploration indicating suitability of a site. DECC anticipates the cost of drilling boreholes at the two candidate sites remaining at the end of the selection process would be in the order of £500 million each.

5.2.3 In answer to a question as to whether Government has Plan B, PM said that there was an indication that volunteerism could be abandoned, but only after every effort had been made to make it work. It is possible that some ILW (Intermediate Level Waste) could be disposed of in the near-surface as this is something the NDA is investigating for England and Wales. Near surface disposal is policy in Scotland and so the NDA is already considering it on behalf of the Scottish Government.

5.2.4 DI asked if there would be a screening process to weed out those who were merely engaging in order to attract the community investment? PM advised that once a community indicated their interest there would be a meeting with RWM and a work plan would be agreed covering the next 5-10 years. The Community Siting Partnership would be held accountable for delivering that work plan.

5.3 PM advised that following a successful event at the LGA conference this year, NuLeAF and RWM would probably run another at Conference 2017 and hoped a Minister would be the headline speaker.

5.4 The new members of CoRWM had been announced. It was disappointing to note the lack of local government experience amongst the members. DB advised that he had been approached to apply for membership but had not taken up the opportunity. It was also felt that there was no reflection of the emotional issues involved in the siting process, or communication skills.

5.5 There may be further delays in timetable for the production of an NPS because of changes in government.

## **6. Update on national developments in radioactive waste management**

6.1 PM took the meeting through the key points of the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. This covered:

- NDA Theme Overview Group meetings;
- Publication of the Higher Activity Waste Strategy;
- Guidance on Requirement for Release of Nuclear Sites from Radioactive Substances Regulation (GRR);
- Submarine Dismantling Project;
- Magnox Socio-economic Plan; and
- Annual Report of the Office of Nuclear Regulation.

6.2 With regard to the GRR, it was noted that there had been a shift away from the proposal of handing over administrative control to local authorities on the surrender of a nuclear site license. The approach was now that there would be clear

demarcation of responsibilities and changes would only be initiated following agreement of all parties.

6.2.1 GEK commented that it would also be necessary to provide adequate information to affected communities as to why it was safe to dispose of waste on site, and what mechanisms/controls would be put in place to ensure this.

6.2.2 MG advised the meeting that the Environment Agency had raised concerns that the approach should not set an optimised path which precluded addressing site specific issues. At Winfrith, it may be that there are 'islands' which are still licensed within the main site because of waste which has been left in-situ. However, until a lot more detailed investigatory work has been carried out the exact outcome is unclear.

6.2.3 PM advised that the possibility of handing responsibility back to NDA had been raised.

6.2.4 DB expressed disappointment that there was not a location amongst the 'lead and learn' sites which had both a decommissioning site and new build, and that there seemed to be a continual avoidance of addressing synergies between sites in the NDA.

6.2.5 PM asked the meeting if a site visit to Winfrith would be beneficial. The meeting felt there were lessons which could be learnt. MG suggested that it would be sensible to wait until after the ESC had been published in March 2017.

**Action: CD**

## **7. Site updates**

**South Gloucestershire:** Magnox had successfully demonstrated that they did not require a new planning application to process Ion Sieves at Oldbury. There has been no communication about lifetime plans – the SSG met next week and GEK would raise this issue, if necessary.

**Sedgemoor:** Magnox has announced that they will bring in skips from other sites (Dungeness, Oldbury and Sizewell) which will be encapsulated and stored pending disposal to the GDF, rather than milled for reuse. Magnox discussed this with the SSG and have now agreed that they need to apply for planning consent as an existing consent exists which does not permit importation of waste. Earth moving work is underway for HPC. EDF are working under the DCO and a variety of payments have been triggered. FB attended a nuclear expo in France. Magnox and NDA were absent.

**Suffolk:** Work will start shortly on updating the Waste Plan. There is still uncertainty over the future of Sizewell C.

**Kent:** The Waste Local plan had now been adopted. It contains a nuclear waste policy which does focus on Dungeness estate, and would permit VLLW/LLW disposal within curtilage of the site.

**Somerset:** A review of the Waste Strategy is planned. Plans had been to undertake Issues and Options consultation in the autumn, but Guy Robinson is now leaving Somerset CC so this may push the timetable back.

**Shepway:** Previous plans had been for an interim Care & Maintenance phase to start in 2018 before moving to full C&M in 2027. This has now been changed so that the interim phase no longer takes place, thus avoiding the laying off of staff, and continuation of socio-economic funding. Magnox has also been discussing moving ILW from Dungeness to Bradwell subject to planning permission.

**Dorset:** Magnox are preparing the Environmental Safety Case (ESC) which they will use to form options for decommissioning wastes, e.g. whether left in-situ, moved off site, and the use this as a mechanism for presenting optimised path. Inutec who are on the adjacent site to that being decommissioned want to obtain their own nuclear site license. Consultation is being undertaken on additional site for the Waste Plan but this does not affect Winfrith. Tradebe are also intending to apply for their own permission to treat waste. The SSG works well in keeping people on-board and engaged.

**West Berkshire:** Consultation on waste sites under way. Somewhat surprised that AWE was not the chosen site for the SDP ILW storage.

**Northamptonshire:** Disposal rates at King's Cliffe are low as NDA is not releasing LLW for disposal and are finding other treatment routes. King's Cliffe is currently permitted for operation until 2026 and at present there is no indication that an application for extension will be forthcoming. The final draft of the Waste Plan is out for consultation prior to submission.

**Essex:** The Waste Local Plan was submitted in June, for examination before the end of the year. Magnox has submitted a planning application for the importation of waste from Sizewell and Dungeness.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 19 October. This will be the last meeting before Local Government House closes for refurbishment.

## **9. Any other Business**

9.1 DB told the meeting that the Chairman of the Hinkley Point SSG had heard that Community Benefits would be paid for the importation of waste from Oldbury to Berkeley. Local authorities need to be organised and take a consistent approach about how they deal with NDA/Magnox on this topic. PM said that NuLeAF had raised this issue with NDA some years ago but discussions had fizzled out. However, Bill Hamilton had raised this issue again recently and NuLeAF would follow this up. GEK also to speak to Cllr Penny Wride at the next Oldbury SSG meeting to see if she was aware of this offer.

**Action: PM/GEK**

9.2 PM asked the meeting if they felt that the Brexit decision had any implications for their work. DB responded that at an expo the day after the French delegates

were of the opinion that it wouldn't make any difference. What was important was that DECC/BEIS took a stand.

<b>Actions</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
2	Send comments on draft BGS outputs to PM for onward transmission	All	
3	Post note of meeting on 12 April on website	CD	Done
4	Contact James McKinney re Anna Clarke and lack of engagement by Magnox on their plans.	PM	
6.2.5	Consider site visit to Winfrith in 2017	CD	Paper to December SG
9.1	Contact NDA re community benefits for importation of waste	PM	
9.2	Speak to Cllr Penny Wride re above	GEK	CD contacted PW. No community benefits for importation of waste at Berkeley.