

Note of the meeting of Radioactive Waste Planning Group held at Coram Campus, Brunswick Square, on 24 January, 2017.

Present:

Sue Brett	Cumbria County Council
Lesley Stenhouse	Essex County Council
Phil Watson	Northamptonshire County Council
Dave Illsley	Shepway District Council
Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
Lisa Chandler	Suffolk Coastal District Council
Matt Meldrum	West Berkshire Council

Catherine Draper	NuLeAF
Phil Matthews	NuLeAF

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions.

PM welcomed everyone to the meeting and participants introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Steve Smith – Copeland District Council, Charlotte Rushmere – Dorset County Council, Terry Burns – Essex County Council, Bryan Geake – Kent County Council, Peter Day – Oxfordshire County Council, Paul Browning & Tess Bond – Somerset County Council, Gillian Ellis-King – South Gloucestershire Council, and James Cutting – Suffolk County Council.

2. Note of the previous meeting.

The Note of the previous meeting was agreed as a true and accurate record and would be posted on the NuLeAF website.

3. Matters arising

3.1 6.5 – RWM would still like to come back to the RWPG for further comment on the BGS outputs, but there was no indication when this would be.

4. Presentations and discussion with LLWR on Low Level Waste arisings in the UK.

4.1 PM welcomed Cath Giel (LLWR Ltd), Craig Ashton (LLWR Ltd), David Loudon (NDA), Tim Bond (Magnox Ltd) and Charles Mason (Sellafield Ltd) to the meeting.

4.2 David Loudon gave a presentation on the work on Integrated Waste Management at NDA. Key points were:

- NDA is developing a single Radioactive Waste Strategy. They are moving away from a category based approach to radioactive waste management route planning (i.e. for LLW/ILW etc) to a risk based lifecycle approach.
- This approach follows four stages: planning and preparation; treatment and packaging; storage, and disposal.
- As part of this new approach NDA are looking at:
 - waste treatment technologies (looking to reduce overall volumes of waste or treat/remove radiological component);
 - boundary wastes (those wastes which radiologically fall close to the dividing line between LLW and ILW for example);
 - problematic wastes (working to understand the inventory and what the management options are), and
 - alternative disposal options such as near-surface disposal for wastes such as short-lived ILW. This would apply to wastes from across the UK, building on existing work with the Scottish Government on near surface disposal, in line with Scottish policy.

NDA is working closely with RWM and LLWR on these issues.

- A rough draft of the Strategy has been prepared and NDA will undertake engagement with stakeholders. NDA is working towards a publication date of March 2018.

Questions:

Q: Will there be a formal consultation on the Radioactive Waste Strategy.

A: The Strategy is being produced on behalf of NDA, not as a national strategy. NDA needs to discuss this with BEIS. At present we are considering engagement with stakeholders, rather than formal consultation.

Q: What is the definition of a near-surface facility? How deep or close to the surface could it be?

A: The White Paper doesn't actually refer to the depth of a facility. It talks about isolation of the waste. The figures in the document are illustrative. Guidance from the Environment Agency also talks about isolation and not about depth of storage. In guides for near-surface disposal reference is made to tens of metres depth. The important thing is to make the Environmental Safety Case for the approach you are taking.

Q: Can you explain how the NDA Business Plan relates to the individual planning applications which come into local authorities, as the connection is not always apparent. Communities should be able to understand what it is that's happening on site and what they are being asked to host.

A: NDA provides strategic direction to the sites. It is then down to them to implement that and decide how they will do it. Lifetime plans set out the work-streams, and each site has an Integrated Waste Strategy which should help you understand what the plan is for each site. Magnox has a company strategy which recognises national strategy. However, each time something changes, Magnox needs to reconsider the approach is taking. The planning application is the result of an options assessment.

4.3 Charles Mason presented on waste management at Sellafield. Key points were:

- Diversion of wastes in 2016/17 is higher than was forecast.
- Sellafield has implemented transformational activities such as the expansion of the combustible route to include bulk wood and plastics, and enhanced arrangements for the management of asbestos contaminated materials which has diverted materials from LLWR.
- Sellafield is working with LLWR to continue its development of transformational activities.

Questions:

Q: You referred to VLLW landfilling operations on the Sellafield site. What is the size of the landfill site and is there an end use?

A: The volume is 120,000 m³, and at present we are looking at what the right end state would be, including whether the waste could be left on site. The Site Wide Environmental Safety Case will give a range of options, which we will refine to identify the appropriate solution.

4.4 Tim Bond presented on waste management at Magnox. Key points were:

- Over the past six years there has been an almost six-fold decrease in the volume of waste being consigned to LLWR, despite there being a two-threefold increase in waste arisings due to the accelerated decommissioning programme.
- Magnox has worked on developing appropriate treatment and disposal routes such as its metal decontamination capability at Winfrith, and a disposal route for problematic wastes such as LLW FED which is being super-compacted and sent to LLWR.
- Magnox has moved away from a site by site approach to introducing a standardised approach across the estate, with good practice from 'lead and learn' sites being followed elsewhere.

Questions:

Q: Disposals to the landfill site at King's Cliffe were lower last year than previously. Given your projections, is this likely to change in the future?

A: We only have two disposal routes for VLLW – Clifton Marsh and King's Cliffe landfill and we access these via LLWR. A big land remediation projection is scheduled at Harwell, and this has the potential to generate a lot of contaminated material, which may end up at Clifton Marsh or King's Cliffe, so disposals are likely to increase in the next financial year. However, we will look at re-use of in-situ disposal where we can.

Q: Is any of the FED waste radiologically low enough to be sent to landfill.

A: That is unlikely as it tends to be at the top end of the classification.

Q: Your presentation has provided the detail lacking in NDA's business plan. How will you communicate that to local communities?

A: Closure directors are responsible for safe implementation of the work programme. Programme directors are responsible for delivery of the programme.

4.5 Craig Ashton presented on work at LLWR. Key points were:

- Overview of waste diversion to date in 2016/17.
 - The Studsvik facility at Lillyhall has been acquired by EDF.
 - Tradebe Inutec is emerging as a key consignor. They provide super-compaction for the UK (excepting Sellafield which has its own facility) and also offer a route to facilities in France and the USA.
 - Tradebe is in discussions with NDA about taking over the Winfrith site and it hopes to have own nuclear site license.
 - Augean are undertaking trials of a new incinerator.
- Future capacity versus demand and risks. This shows a drop off in demand from 2019/20. Capacity is more than is required. The Magnox contract will end in 2028. Unknowns include:
 - the impact of European decommissioning programmes (if decommissioning programmes in Germany and France push ahead, this will put pressure on the supply chain);
 - Brexit (e.g. the UK has no metal smelting facility licensed to handle radioactive waste and relies on facilities abroad);
 - the impact of Guidance for the Requirements for Release of nuclear sites from radioactive substances regulation (GRR); and
 - the change in responsibility for liability from consignor to consignee, and declining demand. Although an exemption is coming in for wastes below 200 Becquerel (BqI), there will be a crossover period where a license is required and the consignor requires insurance, which to date has been covered by the consignee (NDA and LLWR).
- How they are meeting the challenge – freeing resources to address the issues. This includes:
 - Considering the potential for the blending of wastes
 - A new metals framework and developing the supply chain capability to manage borderline wastes
 - Reviewing the approach taken by other countries on the management of border wastes to see if there are approaches which the UK could follow.

Questions

Q: What is the rationale behind the change in liability legislation?

A: The original intention was to bring VLLW out of the requirement for nuclear liability insurance. However, there is no primary legislation in the UK which would cover this. It may be necessary to continue to provide insurance for VLLW until legislation can be introduced, but parliamentary time will be taken up with Brexit, so it is unclear how soon this would take place. The current cost of insurance is €70 million. It is possible that some VLLW disposal sites might decide to stop accepting waste.

Q: In general, there is a significant downturn in landfill disposals, and of the sites which accept VLLW that waste-stream is only a small part of their waste intake. The Environment Agency thinks you don't have a resilient range of options.

A: Augean are also looking at waste from decommissioning in the oil industry which could be very significant. A single VLLW site would be sufficient for our needs. However, there may be a medium to long term problem.

5. Update on Geological Disposal Facility siting process

5.1 PM presented the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

5.2 PM had attended a Welsh National Stakeholder event in early January. RWM are keen to work with NuLeAF and Welsh LGA on their stakeholder engagement programme, but no details on what this will involve are yet available.

5.2 Following significant changes in the members of CoRWM, PM gave a presentation on NuLeAF, its work and the issues important to its members to the refreshed group at their meeting on 12 January. CoRWM Chair, Prof. Laurence Williams has asked to speak to NuLeAF's Steering Group on CoRWM's work programme.

5.3 The consultations on planning and communities' issues of the Geological Disposal Facility siting process are now expected to take place March/April 2017.

6. Update on national developments in radioactive waste management

6.1 PM took the meeting through the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

6.2 Baroness Neville-Rolfe has moved to the Treasury. It is understood Jesse Norman MP will take on her portfolio although this has not been officially announced as yet.

6.3 Research for the NDA has concluded that there is no legal reason why pipelines cannot be left in situ, or removed, based on what is identified as the best approach (BAT).

6.4 Tom Smith has been appointed as the new Chair of NDA, and recruitment of a new CEO is underway.

6.5 Following consultation late last year on the Guidance for Requirements for Release of nuclear sites from radioactive substances regulation (GRR), the environment agencies have concluded that they do not need to make any substantive changes to their approach. The Guidance will now be trialled at the three lead and learn sites: Winfrith, Trawsfynydd and Dounreay. Based on the trial, and the comments on the draft, a final version is expected to be published in summer 2017.

7. Site updates

Sedgemoor – an application has been received for expansion of the ILW building at Hinkley. This is a result partly of the encapsulation of waste, and partly because

of importation of waste. DB had raised the issue of the piecemeal way in which applications were being made, and a meeting had been arranged with the Station Manager. Work on Hinkley Point C is forging ahead.

Shepway – Magnox has given a financial contribution to a feasibility study on the development of an industrial estate. Money had also been received towards supporting the economic development partnership coordinator for the Romney Marsh Partnership. Magnox were keen to engage in these projects but were careful to ensure projects supported were viable and represented good value for their investment.

Cumbria – Examination for Local Plan took place at the beginning of December. NDA and LLWR attended and provided briefing presentations for the Inspector, who also went on site visits to familiarise herself with the issues. Copeland Borough Council has objected to the inclusion of a site adjacent to Sellafield for the long term temporary storage of construction/demolition wastes. They are concerned it could become disposal. Modifications have been drawn up, but no response has yet been received from Copeland.

Suffolk Coastal – Second stage consultation is underway on Sizewell C. Suffolk Councils draft response has been published and will go to Cabinet w.c. 30 January. Suffolk Coastal DC holds the Chair of NNLAG. Their annual conference will take place in West Cumbria, 8 – 10 March.

West Berks – A new Local Plan is being prepared which will look at sites. AWE looking to expand industrial capabilities, developing parts of its sites to a more science based offering and less nuclear.

Essex – Waste Local Plan hearing took place back in October. Modifications have been made and these are out to consultations at the moment. Consultation closes 6th February 2017. The main modification to radioactive waste policy is the removal of the restriction on the importation of waste. Planning application has been received for ILW from Sizewell to be stored at Bradwell.

Northants – Hearing in Public has taken place. A few changes have been made to the Plan and it may not be possible to get the revised document to Council before purdah. Disposals to King’s Cliffe were down last year.

8. Date of Next Meeting

8.1 The next meeting will be held on 26 April 2017 at Coram Campus, 41 Brunswick Square, London.

9. Any other Business

The being no further business the meeting closed at 3.30.

Actions			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
3.2	Post 19 October Note of Meeting on the website	CD	Done 25 January