

Radioactive Waste Planning Group meeting, 26 April 2017

Present:

Nick Barron	Copeland District Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Dorset County Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Bryan Geake	Kent County Council
Phil Watson	Northamptonshire County Council
Dave Illsley	Shepway District Council
Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
Sarah Povall	Somerset County Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Lisa Chandler	Suffolk Coastal District Council
Cameron Clow	Suffolk County Council
Catherine Draper	NuLeAF
Philip Matthews	NuLeAF
Dr Juliet Long	Dept. of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy
Mark Shaoul	RWM Ltd
Dr Jonathan Turner	RWM Ltd

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 PM welcomed people to the meeting and around the table introductions were made. Apologies were received from Sue Brett, Cumbria County Council and Peter Day, Oxfordshire County Council.

2. Discussion with Juliet Long on the review of UK radioactive waste policy and infrastructure

2.1 JL is carrying out a review of radioactive waste policy and infrastructure on behalf of UK government. Radioactive waste infrastructure within the UK is currently not defined and there is no single coherent description of radioactive waste policy. The purpose of the review is to consolidate current understanding of infrastructure and policy and to consider what opportunities, if any, may exist for improvement. For example, to consider how to UK policy can ensure it addresses the needs of the nuclear and defence industries, but also the wider needs of healthcare, manufacturing, and the oil and gas industries.

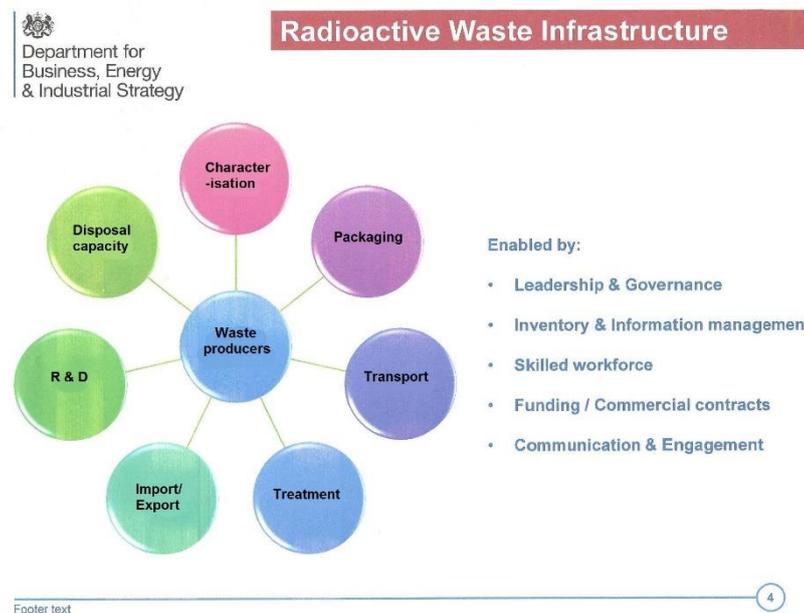
2.2 The UK's current radioactive waste infrastructure provides a capacity to deal with waste arisings in the short to medium term. In the longer-term however (>10 yrs) it is fragile. Our access to disposal routes relies on the supply chain provision of suitable facilities. However, uncertainty in the UK radioactive waste inventory, both in terms of how much waste needs treating and when it will occur, has limited the

supply chain interest. For example, the current inventory does not include naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) wastes which may arise from decommissioning of the offshore oil & gas industry. Thus, understanding how best to ensure we continue to incentivise the supply chain and have access to a robust and sustainable infrastructure relies on confidence in the forecasts for waste arisings from all radioactive waste producers.

2.3 Whilst waste arisings from the non-nuclear sector are far less volumetrically and in total activity terms than that from the nuclear industry, they do pose their own challenges – for example, often being characterised with other non-radioactive hazardous properties, and containing often particularly long-lived radionuclides. An example of this would be waste from the NORM producing industries such as oil and gas. This increases the level of difficulty in treating and disposal. (e.g. there is only 1 landfill in the UK permitted to dispose of radioactive waste with hazardous properties).

2.4 If we wish the radioactive waste producing industries to thrive then we need to make sure there is access to appropriate infrastructure to support them.

2.5 Part of this project will be to pull together some sense of what radioactive waste infrastructure is. Slide 4 of the presentation sets out initial thoughts.



The planning regime is key to this - included in the considerations headed 'governance'.

2.6 JL asked the meeting for its views on UK radioactive waste policy: does it work; how modern and up to date is it; and whether it is clear?

2.6.1 Comments from the meeting members were:

- There is no national planning policy on radioactive waste and national planning policy in its current form excludes radioactive waste. This makes it difficult at local level. If the Local Plan is absent on policy, then there is a policy vacuum.
- Uncertainty in this area can mean that industry is put off coming forward with applications for facilities to expand or to attract new industry.
- An issue with NORM wastes is the uncertainty over when these will arise.
- At a local level, in the vicinity of NDA sites, it can feel that decisions are driven by cost and not by policy.

JL – NDA sets their national policy for decommissioning and clean-up (as described in their national strategy) which takes account of a range of factors (the 'value framework'). A similar decision-making approach is required at the sites – required both by the NDA but also through the regulatory framework that applies (which is very site focused). Decisions at a site level are often constrained by the particular funds that they have been allocated. It may be that there are opportunities to drive better value from waste management through adopting a more national approach – perhaps through revised funding arrangements or amendments to the current regulatory framework.

- The experience of local authorities on the ground is that the NDA/Magnox do not discuss the broader policy framework but instead focus very much on immediate, issue specific and local decisions without reference to the bigger picture or an integrated approach. This makes it difficult for councils to appreciate whether what is proposed is the best option in terms of broader national or local outcomes.
- The aspiration to have a single policy framework is laudable, but is it practicable?

2.7 The NDA has undertaken considerable work to develop a more integrated strategic approach to radioactive waste management (as published in its latest strategy) and in that respect are ahead of the rest of the nuclear sector. However, the challenge remains in implementing this effectively, particularly given some of the constraints mentioned above.

2.8 Reliance on the supply chain to meet capacity has inherent dangers, as facilities will close if there is a lack of waste for disposal, i.e. no money to be made. Establishing radioactive waste disposal facilities (with the need for suitable assessments to be developed as well as favourable planning and permitting decisions) takes a considerable amount of time, and maintaining a suitable Environmental Safety Case and relevant operator management arrangements is not cheap. These means that once full or lost, any further or new capacity will take considerable time to develop. Thus care is needed to make best use of existing facilities as well as looking to how the UK continues to secure its future needs.

2.9 NDA strategy reflects UK policy for the liabilities for which it is responsible (i.e. civil nuclear legacy). It does not apply to other nuclear or non-nuclear radioactive facilities or wastes for which other parts of government policy continue to apply (e.g. Review of Radioactive Waste Management Policy: Final Conclusions (Cm2919))

published in 1995, or The Decommissioning of the UK Nuclear Industry's Facilities, 2004).

2.10 JL was confident that a single coherent UK wide policy was possible. The devolved administrations are supportive of this review and already share the majority of policy positions. Consolidation of this information should help clarify the common positions that are shared as well as respecting and reflecting the few areas where policy differences exist at present. It is hoped that through this work, across the parts of the UK, so broader shared support might be brought to addressing aspects of infrastructure that currently receive limited attention e.g. to help communicate the importance of radioactive waste management, and address the need to sustain the particular skills and capabilities required to support safe management of such wastes.

2.11 Attendees noted that as has been highlighted in various meetings on related matters, it is important that in carrying out this review, BEIS has access to appropriate in-house advice in order that any proposals for change are realistic, and reflect the reality of what is required and what can be controlled by the planning system and the fact that planning enforcement is an inherently reactive rather than preventative system. It will also need to be comprehensible by any local communities who may be affected by any changes. Clear, comprehensive, and early engagement by operators at the pre-application stage, both with the public and with planning authorities, is important to streamline the decision making process for planning applications, and to enable stakeholders to understand how the proposals fit with the bigger decommissioning picture.

2.12 The meeting stressed the importance that other government departments, particularly DCLG, are involved in the review, in order to help support their understanding of the planning system and local authority role and requirements with respect to radioactive waste management.

2.13 JL thanked the meeting for their comments, and asked that any further suggestions be sent either to her directly or through NuLeAF. She hoped to attend the Steering Group meeting in July to provide an update and get a view on the work from elected members.

2.14 PM thanked JL for her presentation. The meeting broke for short break.

3. Update on Geological Disposal and discussion with RWM on the latest version of national geological screening outputs

3.1 Mark Shaoul thanked the group for their participation in the review of the national screening output materials. He went on to give an overview of the work currently being undertaken by RWM in preparation for launch of the consultations, and the siting process.

3.2 The meeting then split into groups to review the current iteration of the geological screening outputs on screen. Each group had an RWM representative who recorded comments.

3.3 At the end of the session Mark gave a round-up of some of the comments which included:

- Start with a map and then move onto text
- The materials need to be more visually interesting
- Important to highlight key points and findings. People will then move on to detailed text to find out more
- People need to be able to easily locate themselves on the maps
- The regional maps used do not represent familiar boundaries, such as former regional government divisions (e.g. south-west England); thus there is no easy way to overlay information on other topics of importance such as transport, environment, and socio-economics. RWM needs to think beyond the geological aspect of this.
- The glossary needs to cover any term not in regular everyday usage.
- Those in the room who had some geological education found the pages interesting and engaging, everyone else found them difficult.
- Use of pdfs does not make moving between information easy.
- There was a general feel that the use of gov.uk templates was restrictive, did not help the project, and tied it too closely to government.

3.4 PM advised that the calling of a snap general election had pushed the launch of the consultation on land use and community back to September, probably. Thus it was unlikely the siting process would launch before summer 2018.

3.5 At the request of BEIS, NuLeAF had set up a meeting with County Councils Network (CCN) to discuss how they could assist in disseminating information in the run up to the launch of the consultations. A meeting had also been held with the President of ADEPT and will be set up with the District Council Network (DCN).

4. Note of the meeting held on 24 January

4.1 Apologies from Terry Burns had been omitted. Subject to the addition of these, the Note of the meeting was agreed as a true record and will be posted on the NuLeAF website.

5. Matters arising

None

6. Update on national developments in radioactive waste management

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

6.2 It was noted that Dr Long had asked for people to volunteer with planning advice for the review of radioactive waste policy and infrastructure. It was felt that,

whilst members of the group were happy to comment on the review, government had people with a planning background who they should call on in the first instance.

7. Site updates

Sedgemoor - officers from Sedgemoor and Somerset met with Hinkley A. Permission has been granted for a revised ILW store, and a planning application has been submitted for an encapsulation plant. Magnox have said they don't believe they need planning consent for pre-commissioning. SDC have advised them they need to review this approach. There was no pre-application consultation carried out on the encapsulation application. A centralised national team submits applications. By September, Magnox will advise SDC whether or not they will be importing waste to HPA. However, given that they have already published the intention to take waste from Berkeley and Oldbury, it would seem that this decision has already been taken. Magnox has stated that the only public engagement they intent to carry out will be is if waste is imported. Work on HPC is progressing

Somerset - Sarah Povell introduced herself – she has replaced Guy Robinson. Sarah echoed comments made by Sedgemoor.

Suffolk Coastal - No further engagement on Sizewell C is expected until after the summer.

Essex - The council responded to the inspector's modifications for the Waste Local Plan, and they await the inspector's review of the responses. Approval was given to the application for importation of waste from Sizewell and Dungeness, and a stipulation was included that 80% must be moved by rail. An application is expected for an extension of 12 months to the life of the LLW store.

Suffolk – Cameron Clow introduced himself – he had recently joined the planning team at Suffolk. The Issues and Options phase for the revised M&W Plan concluded in February.

Copeland - Nick Barron introduced himself – he had taken over as Nuclear Issues Manager. Comments had been submitted regarding the nuclear aspects of the Cumbria M&W Plan. The forthcoming SSG meeting had been cancelled because of purdah.

Dorset - Planning permission had been granted to Tradebe for radioactive waste treatment facility at Winfrith. This will take waste from non-nuclear as well as nuclear sites. Waste will predominantly come from Harwell and Winfrith. The Winfrith Active Liquid Effluent Management comes off line in June, and Tradebe now has its own facilities. Magnox has submitted an application for temporary waste water management. Permission has also been granted for a temporary LLW building. DCC charge an hourly rate for handling Magnox's planning applications, but they would like to get a PPA in place.

The meeting agreed that it would consider how a collective record could be made of applications around the sites, and whether a standard for local authority/Magnox meetings should be set.

Action: CD

Kent - The forthcoming SSG meeting has been cancelled because of purdah. KCC is refreshing waste capacity requirements in the M&W Plan. BPP consultants were employed to carry this out and have concluded that there is sufficient capacity for radioactive waste.

Shepway - The Chair of the Dungeness SSG was concerned about the tone of the NFLA report on SSGs as it did not match his view of the situation at the Dungeness SSG. The working relationship between Magnox and Shepway is good.

South Gloucestershire - policy for new build has been included in Sites and Places Plan. Decommissioning has reached the stage where it is proposed that plans for dealing with a release of radioactivity are no longer needed. While SGC has had one meeting to discuss the overall decommissioning plans, the SSG remains the main vehicle for site updates, and when planning issues come up these continue to be on an ad hoc basis.

Northants - disposals to the landfill site at King's Cliffe continue, and the capacity is being used for hazardous rather than radioactive waste.

8. Date of next meeting

PM noted that because of the election, the planned Steering Group meeting on the 18th June had been moved to the 19th July. It was therefore proposed that the next meeting be held at Coram Campus on Wednesday, 18th October, 2017. This was agreed.

9. Any other business

There being no other business the meeting closed at 15.42.

Actions

26th April, 2017			
	Action	By	Outcome
4.1	Add apologies from Terry Burns and post on website	CD	Done 27 Apr 17
7	Arrange discussion of how central database for planning applications for Magnox sites could be created	CD	Suggestions of format received.