

ITEM 8: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Report to RWPG, 29th July 2020

This report provides an update on recent developments in radioactive waste management. It covers:

- NDA Update;
- NDA Strategy 4;
- BEIS Update;
- Magnox Update; and
- Sellafield update.

1. NDA update

1.1 The NDA has published its **Economic and Social Impact Strategy**¹ which has been amended following a consultation to which NuLeAF and a number of local authorities responded.

Given the significant impact of Covid-19 on the economies of nuclear communities, the NDA have moved away from their aspiration that this Strategy would remain in its current form for the next 6 years. Instead there is a commitment to further discussion on how the NDA can help support communities in the Covid-19 recovery phase. As part of this, NuLeAF hopes to host further regional engagement events with NDA in the coming months.

The NDA has also been working to improve and standardise the online grant award process to ensure more transparency and consistency. A new system has been developed and will be used by the NDA, Magnox, Sellafield, Dounreay and LLWR.

1.2 NuLeAF's Executive Director has been invited to join the NDA's recently established **Net Zero Beacon Project Group**. The aim of the Group is to set meaningful targets for carbon emission reductions and develop a roadmap of opportunities for delivery. The work covers the whole of the NDA estate including nuclear sites and subsidiaries and is looking at both direct and indirect emissions. NuLeAF is the only external organisation represented on the Group.

The NDA's work on carbon emission reduction is part of its wider undertakings on sustainability. Another key strand of that is the development of a **One NDA Sustainability Report**. Alyson Morris of NDA will present the draft report to the RWPG for discussion at the July meeting.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/working-with-our-communities>

1.3 Meetings of the **Site Decommissioning and Remediation (SDR)** and **Integrated Waste Management (IWM) TOGs** were held on the 14th and 16th July respectively. As NuLeAF's Director was on leave, Rachel Whaley of Cumbria County Council and Lisa Chandler of East Suffolk Council attended the meetings on behalf of NuLeAF and will provide the Group with a brief verbal report. NuLeAF would like to thank both Rachel and Lisa for covering these meetings.

2. NDA Strategy 4

2.1 A full draft of Strategy 4 has now been completed and reviewed by the NDA's **Strategy 4 Development Group (S4DG)**, of which NuLeAF is a member.

The NDA has published a **pre-consultation pack** on the draft. This is intended to provide stakeholders with an update on progress, setting out the changes that are under consideration from the previous Strategy (Strategy 3). NuLeAF has circulated the document to members and would welcome feedback on the proposals. Drawing on member views, NuLeAF will submit a formal response to the NDA. Members are also able to provide direct feedback to the NDA by email via strategy@nda.gov.uk .

A formal 12-week consultation on Strategy 4 is planned for the autumn, and NuLeAF has pencilled in an online workshop for 2.00 – 4.00 on 23rd September. Further details will follow once the timetable for consultation has been confirmed.

3. BEIS Update

3.1 Covid-19 has impacted on progress with the development of BEIS' **Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Substances White Paper**, with the staff resources allocated to the new Policy and other decommissioning work significantly reduced. A consultation on the Policy was expected this summer but it is not clear whether that will now take place.

3.2 BEIS' **Planning Guidance for In-Situ Disposal** was due for publication this summer but there is some uncertainty as to when it will emerge. NuLeAF will alert members as and when the guidance is available.

4. Magnox Update

4.1 Magnox has announced the appointment of Paul Winkle as its new Chief Operating Officer (COO). Most recently Paul held the role of Director on the Conventional Island Programme at Hinkley Point C and previously was Safety, Security and Assurance Director at EDF Energy Generation. Paul took up his role at Magnox on 1 May 2020.

4.2 Magnox has launched a new socio-economic website² and also published an infographic on their socio-economic scheme³.

5. Sellafield Update

5.1 Cumbria County Council has granted permission to Sellafield to continue to store 11,000 cubic metres of encapsulated Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) at one of its buildings.

Permission for storage of the waste was originally granted in 1992 but this was due to expire next year. At a virtual meeting of the Council's development control and regulation committee yesterday, councillors voted unanimously in favour of removing the condition and allowing the waste to continue to be stored there, following an application by Sellafield Ltd. The new permission enables interim storage to continue until an alternative, namely a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF), is available.

5.2 Sellafield has also developed a 6-month tactical plan⁴ to guide the scaling up of operations on the site. Only around 1,000 staff remained on site during the height of the Covid-19 emergency but it is envisaged that number will increase to around 4,500 by the end of 2020, about half the pre-Covid-19 onsite workforce.

Under the plans the Magnox Reprocessing Plant will reopen and be able to reprocess the final 1% (538 tonnes) of Magnox fuel; and work will also restart on the retrieval of waste from the high hazard legacy silos and ponds. It is also expected that the plan will provide a similar level of work for contractors as was the case before lockdown, helping to support the West Cumbria economy.

² <https://magnoxsocioeconomic.com/>

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888099/Final_Magnox_Infographic_2020_English.pdf

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sellafield-ltd-to-restart-reprocessing-and-further-boost-operations-in-2020?utm_source=277376ff-c392-4584-98e5-9787c419a005&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate