

Note of the online meeting of the Radioactive Waste Planning Group, 10.00 – 12.00, 29th July 2020.

Present:

Rob Ward	Copeland Borough Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council
Charlie Pope	Devon County Council
Jerry Smith	Dorset Council
Lisa Chandler	East Suffolk Council
Linda Townsend	Gloucestershire County Council
Gavin Kingsnorth	Maldon District Council
Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
Sion Roberts	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Louise Martin	Somerset County Council
John Burton	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Cameron Clow	Suffolk County Council
Philip Matthews	NuLeAF
Catherine Draper	NuLeAF

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 PM welcomed members to the meeting, noting that it was the first meeting for Gavin Kingsnorth of Maldon DC. Apologies were received from Terry Burns (Essex CC) and Richard Griffin (Allerdale BC).

1.2 The meeting was recorded to assist with note taking and will be deleted once the meeting note has been agreed.

2. Note of the last meeting

2.1 The Note of the meeting held on 23rd April was approved as a true record and will be posted on the NuLeAF website.

Action: CD

3. Matters arising

3.1 PM went through the action points from the previous meeting:

4.6.3/4/5 & 4.7.9 NuLeAF had been unable to get an update from BEIS or Avison Young on these points.

5.2 The Briefing Paper on retrievability (GDF siting process) had been approved by the Steering Group in June and was now posted on NuLeAF's website.

5.3 A Briefing Paper on the inventory for disposal in a GDF had been circulated and would be discussed under item 6 on the agenda. Written comments on this Paper could also be made up to the end of August.

6.2 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the visit to Rosyth was unlikely to take place this year, but if anyone was interested in participating please advise NuLeAF. PM will approach MoD in due course to ask about expanding the invitation.

4. Master-planning, Local Plans and S106/Community Benefits

4.1 To assist member authorities with the development of Local Plan policies, and in view of developments in radioactive waste management such as proposals for on-site disposal of Low Level Waste, members of the group discussed co-ordinating approaches to Local Plan development. The Group also considered the related issues of Masterplanning, Planning Obligations/Section 106 agreements and community benefits. While Magnox was asking local authorities to address decommissioning in their Local Plans, they were hampered by the uncertainties about Magnox's decommissioning timetable. Although there are differences amongst member authorities in terms of scale and context of sites and proposal, planning applications for individual proposals are often submitted to the LPA without providing an understanding of the context of the overall nature and programme of proposals for the site.

4.2 It was agreed therefore that creation of a Masterplan is a good approach for all legacy sites including both Magnox and AGR. It had been followed to good effect at Winfrith and NuLeAF had now produced a case study on this instance. The members agreed that it would be beneficial to meet with Magnox and NDA to try to address their concerns about master-planning, as there was a sense that, despite the successful process at Winfrith, there was not support for Masterplanning to be used across Magnox sites.

Action: PM/CD

4.3 In 2009 NuLeAF published a Briefing Paper on Planning Obligations. It was agreed that it would be timely to review and update this.

Action: PM

4.4 Regarding community benefits it was agreed that communities storing waste on behalf of the nation should be able to expect recognition of the service they provide in the form of community benefits. It was also noted that plans for on-site disposal of waste would save the NDA hundreds of millions of pounds and that it was therefore reasonable that some of this saving should flow back to communities.

There are examples of S106 Agreements (e.g. Sizewell B Dry Store and Kings Cliffe LLW disposal) where Community Benefit schemes are established to mitigate / offset impacts. To have been agreed, these must have met the planning tests of being relevant, necessary and proportionate and therefore the planning grounds may provide a useful reference for other Councils seeking to frame planning policy for other sites. There are also many examples in other industries where community benefits are paid e.g. off and on-shore wind farms. Although the timetable for decommissioning the AGR fleet is not yet known, it is important that member authorities set out from the start that community benefits in some form are expected as part of the decommissioning programme. Where possible evidence should be of real impact, but perceived impact is also relevant and there is acceptance within planning case law that the fear of impacts is a material consideration. Given the uncertainty around decommissioning proposals for many sites, it was agreed that LPAs should endeavour to future proof policies or position statements.

4.5 Members were invited to comment on the draft policies and provide examples of policy and supporting evidence to GEK.

Action: All

5. Review of draft NDA Strategy 4 document

5.1 NDA had issued a pre-consultation document which gave an abbreviated version of the NDA Strategy 4 consultation document. It contained a request for comments and NuLeAF had circulated this to members.

5.2 PM advised that he had been part of the group working on the development of Strategy 4. The pre-consultation document did not contain a lot of the detail which was included in the final consultation document which means that NDA's commitments were not made clear. This impacted on the value of the pre-consultation exercise.

5.3 It was noted that there was a lack of clarity in reference to the decommissioning of the AGR fleet. The re-direction of BEIS staff to work on the Covid-19 response had resulted in a number of work areas being suspended e.g. the announcement regarding the NDA's involvement in decommissioning the AGR fleet, and the review of UK radioactive waste policy. NuLeAF will contact BEIS for update on timetable for announcement.

Action: CD

5.4 A query was raised regarding the Local Economic & Social Impact (LESI) Strategy, whether this was just covered in the Critical Enabler section or if the final consultation document had a separate dedicated section. PM advised that he had encouraged NDA to reference the LESI Strategy more generally through-out Strategy

4, but there was a tendency for the sections to be self-contained. The final draft document does refer to the need to assist communities in coming out of the Covid-19 crisis.

5.5 The lack of detail on how future site end uses are determined was noted, but this may be due to the limitations of the format of the pre-consultation document. Should this be replicated in the final Strategy 4 document NuLeAF will raise the issue as part of its response to the consultation.

The meeting took a short break.

6. Review of draft Briefing Paper on GDF inventory

6.1 PM reviewed the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and asked if there were any further comments. There being none the meeting moved on to the next item on the agenda.

7. Update on GDF siting process

7.1 RW advised the meeting that Copeland BC's Executive Committee had agreed to formally enter discussions with RWM under the Working with Communities policy. The council recognises as current hosts of Sellafield site most of inventory currently identified for disposal at a GDF is located within its area and therefore the council and community will be impacted by this project. It was incumbent upon the council to engage with process in order to best represent the interests of its community. The council is expecting to set up a working group in November to review the search area which comprises the whole local authority area excluding that covered by the national park.

8. Update on developments in radioactive waste management

8.1 It had been announced that the LLWR would cease being a PBO and revert to NDA in 2021. Whilst there had been issues in the past with the PBO model, it was generally felt that this format had worked with LLWR Ltd.

8.2 NDA had published its Local Economic and Social Impact Strategy. NuLeAF members had engaged in the preparation of this document over the past 18 months. PM sought the meetings views on whether NuLeAF should seek early engagement with NDA on reviewing the strategy in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed that NuLeAF would approach NDA to propose an initial discussion on the impacts of Covid-19 on local communities in the coming months and then more detailed engagement would be carried out once there is greater understanding of the impact of the pandemic.

Action: PM

8.3 PM advised the meeting that NuLeAF had set up an online meeting on 23rd September to discuss the draft NDA Strategy 4 – the consultation period is scheduled to open on 17th August.

9. Local site updates

Copeland: Following a great reduction of staff and activity on the site due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Sellafield is now resuming work and aims to have all essential people (4,500) back on site by September.

East Suffolk: Proposal for the construction of Sizewell C has been received. The application for relocation of facilities at Sizewell B is undergoing judicial review. The relocation is to permit the release of land at Sizewell B for the Sizewell C project – NDA has released land at Sizewell A which the B site will use for the relocation. East Suffolk DC is supportive of this approach. Work on decommissioning at Sizewell A has resumed.

Gloucestershire: Magnox has now agreed to make a contribution of £5,000 to a flood warning system at the request of the Environment Agency which will now expedite the planning application for the construction of overvaults at Berkeley site

Maldon: There was no change at Bradwell A, but Stage 1 consultation for Bradwell B had just finished.

Somerset West & Taunton: JB advised that discussions with EDF were already underway regarding decommissioning at Hinkley Point B. EDF had advised that preparations were further at Hunterston in Scotland. JB expected planning applications to both SW&TC and Somerset CC by the end of the year. The Hinkley Point SSG had called extraordinary meeting for Friday 31st July and JB would report back at the next meeting.

All others reported no updates for their area.

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 The members agreed to reinstate the October meeting. NuLeAF to circulate a date in due course.

Action: CD/PM

11. Any other business

11. There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.49. PM thanked everyone for their participation.

Action List

Item	Action	By	Outcome
	Post agreed Note of the Meeting held 23 rd April on NuLeAF website	CD	Done
4.2	Arrange discussion with Magnox & NDA re masterplanning	PM/CD	Taking place at October meeting
4.3	Review Briefing Paper 9	PM	Done
4.5	Send instances of policy or supporting evidence to GEK	All	Examples received.
5.3	Contact BEIS for update on timetable for AGR decommissioning announcement	CD	Andy Maggs advises early 2021. Pencilled in session for March Steering Group
8.2	Contact NDA re Local Economic & Social Impact Strategy and implications of Covid-19 crisis on local community	PM	John McNamara to raise with Andrew van der Lem at NDA
10.1	Circulate date for October meeting	CD	Done