

Note of the meeting of the NuLeAF Radioactive Waste Planning Group held online, 23rd April, 2020

Present:

Steve Smith	Copeland Borough Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council
Charlie Pope	Devon County Council
Emma Macdonald	Dorset Council
Lisa Chandler	East Suffolk Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Linda Townsend	Gloucestershire County Council
Bryan Geake	Kent County Council
Phil Watson	Northamptonshire County Council
Louise Martin	Somerset County Council
John Burton	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Philip Matthews	NuLeAF
Catherine Draper	NuLeAF

Speakers

Tom Nixon	BEIS
Matt Verlander	Avison Young
Patrick Whitby	Avison Young

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 PM welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the first time NuLeAF had held an online meeting, and there would be an opportunity for people to give feedback on how they felt the meeting had gone at the end of the session.

1.2 Apologies were received from Richard Griffin, Allerdale Borough Council, Graham Hammond, Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Graham Gunby, Suffolk County Council

2. Note of the meeting held 24th October 2019 and 29th January 2020

2.1 Both meeting notes were agreed as a true representation and will be posted on the NuLeAF website.

Action: CD

3. Matters arising

None.

4. Discussion with BEIS on guidance for on-site disposal of radioactive waste

4.1 PM welcomed Tom Nixon, BEIS and Matt Verlander and Patrick Whitby or Avison Young to the meeting.

4.2 TN gave a short presentation on the final draft of the guidance document. NuLeAF has been involved at several stages of the production of this document, and although this is the final draft BEIS are happy to take comments and make further minor amendments if necessary. It was agreed that NuLeAF would circulate the document and send final comments to BEIS by 7th May.

Action: PM/CD

4.3 The guidance document has been developed to provide a first point of reference to understand the permitting and permissions process for the on-site disposal of radioactive waste materials on a current or former nuclear licensed site. It is primarily intended for local planning authorities, but it will also be a resource for site operators and other stakeholders. BEIS would encourage local authorities to update their Waste Plans to reflect the provisions of the guidance.

4.4 The guidance will not be published formally until after the revision of UK Radioactive Waste Policy, and as such has been delayed by current Covid-19 situation.

4.5 MV and PW went through the contents of the guidance document. They highlighted that there were still a few sections awaiting input from MHCLG. Where text is in bold and underlined, these will be hyperlinks to further information to allow readers to dig deeper into the topic. Categories A and B need to be added to the table on page 27, and the chapter on case studies can be developed over time as more applications come forward.

4.6 The meeting opened up to questions.

4.6.1 *Q: What will happen to this document now?*

A: We will make alterations based on your feedback. It will not be published as a policy document until the review of decommissioning and waste management policies is completed, but hopefully later in 2020 it will be published, but may be released in an unpublished form prior to this.

4.6.2 *Q: Have the Site Stakeholder Groups been involved in the development of this guidance.*

A: There has not been dedicated engagement with SSGs, but we have met with some SSG members in the process of carrying out engagement. It would be for NDA to facilitate engagement with SSGs and I will take this back to Frank Wigley.

Action: Avison Young

4.6.3 *Q: We have previously heard about the development of a national narrative in support of the guidance, can you tell us about what progress is being made with this?*

A: This is being developed by NDA, SEPA and EA and will probably not be published before the guidance is released.

4.6.4 *Q: The paper lacks explanation of the division of roles in a planning sense between district and county authorities.*

A: This is something we could address.

Action: Avison Young

4.6.5 *Q: How will this fit with the (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

A: We are discussing this with MHCLG and can get back to you on this.

Action: BEIS

4.7 Other comments:

4.7.1 It was good to see you included pre-planning, but this section could be strengthened as it is important in de-risking applications. Also, it would read better if the sections on making a planning application were dealt with in chronological order e.g. bring PPAs forward to sit with pre-planning.

4.7.2 Both communities and planning authorities need to see proposals for on-site disposal in the context of the holistic proposals for the site, therefore the guidance should advocate the Masterplan approach to sites.

4.7.3 Planning applications should include security and mitigation measures, as well as a transport plan, hours of operation, landscape, biodiversity mitigation, and heritage implications.

4.7.4 Some local authorities may have radwaste related policy in adopted planning policy outside the Waste Plan, including other Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents.

4.7.5 The concept of community benefits should be introduced earlier in the document, along with Section 106 agreements, and these need to be added to the glossary. Community benefits should relate to the community hosting the disposal of radwaste on behalf of the nation.

4.7.6 The concept of 'abandonment' of radioactive materials as forming part of the strategy for a site, yet not apparently requiring any planning permission is concerning. I would suggest that since leaving radioactive material in the ground is part of the development /land use masterplan for the site, it should form part of planning applications. Otherwise this seems to indicate an approach that seeks to 'get round' the planning system rather than being up front about the land use proposals for the site?

4.7.7 Last FAQ about how knowledge transfer relating to contaminated material is relayed to the Local Planning Authority: it is presumed that this relates to the LPA having access to all relevant information to inform the determination of planning applications? Should there be a requirement that the relevant regulatory bodies (ONR and EA) must be consulted on all planning applications relating to nuclear or formerly licenced nuclear sites?

4.7.8 Avison Young acknowledged the comment about restructuring the planning application section to be more sequential.

4.7.9 PW confirmed that the Winfrith masterplan had been considered as a case study but Magnox had indicated that it wasn't sufficiently advance, however we will ask again.

Action: Avison Young

4.7.10 There may be a vacuum between publication of the guidance and local authorities updating their waste plans as these are reviewed in a timetabled manner.

4.7.11 The document could be used to familiarise local councillors with the issues prior to making a decision on an application.

4.8 PM thanked the presenters for their contribution and the meeting broke for a short comfort break.

5. Update on the GDF siting process

5.1 PM took the meeting through the update paper and draft Briefing Paper on GDF and Retrievability which had been previously circulated. The update paper covered:

- Geological Disposal and Covid 19;
- NuLeAF Briefing Paper on Retrievability;
- Meeting with Karen Wheeler; and
- International Update.

5.2 The meeting agreed that the paper on retrievability of wastes from a GDF provided a useful overview of the approach taken in other countries and aided understanding of the issues around retrievability. The paper will be circulated to the wider membership for further comment before adoption.

Action: CD/PM

5.3 PM agreed that he would produce a similar paper on the waste inventory for the GDF.

Action: PM

5.4 PM noted that NuLeAF hoped to invite NDA to speak on plutonium and uranium at a future Steering Group meeting as this was a topic NuLeAF hadn't addressed for a while.

6. Update on developments in radioactive waste management

6.1 PM took the meeting through the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and covered:

- NDA Update;
- NDA Strategy 4;
- Sellafield Permit Variation;
- BEIS Update;
- Lillyhall landfill site; and
- Submarine Dismantling Project (SDP).

6.2 A suggestion was made that, if the MoD were willing to open the visit to Rosyth to a wider group of participants, this could be tied in with the NDA Stakeholder Summit which is being held in Edinburgh in October this year. PM agreed he would approach MoD to see if this was something they would consider.

Action: PM

6.3 In respect of socio-economic support, the NDA 'Decomm' newsletter had been circulated on 22nd April and this contained some information about how to access the socio-economic support and other activities by NDA in support of local communities at this time.

7. Local site updates

Copeland – A draft nuclear prospectus for Cumbria had been produced with the local LEP and other stakeholders, however this will be reviewed in light of the Covid-19 crisis. A new CEO and other senior managers had been appointed at Sellafield. Sellafield and NDA are supporting the local response to Covid-19. Work has ceased on all the main projects and the workforce has reduced from 10,000 to 850. Sellafield is continuing to support the supply chain to minimise the impact. SSG meetings have been suspended. Sellafield has

used its masterplan to create a time-delayed video showing how the site will change over the next 100 years. Copeland BC has reviewed its position statement on geological disposal in readiness should any community engage in the Working with Communities process.

Cumbria – No site updates, but when I attended the TOG on NuLeAF's behalf Penny Dunbabin said she was hoping to get a slot for the UK Radioactive Waste Policy to go through parliament in 2021 and for legislation to be in place in 2022. The Planning Guidance would be signposted in the NPPF.

Somerset – We understand that Magnox is not going to appeal the decision to refuse importation of pond skips for treatment to Hinkley Point A. Magnox may submit a new application as there is no alternative way of treating the waste, and they believe their approach is backed by UK radioactive waste strategy.

Dorset – Applications for the main decommissioning of Winfrith are expected in 2021, though they may be delayed by the current situation. A decision on the whether the main discharge pipeline will be removed or left in the ground has yet to be made. Prior to the pandemic a concept workshop was held which looked at a number of credible options for the site end state which was well attended by stakeholders.

East Suffolk – We have been approached by Sizewell B regarding a potential change to their hazardous waste permit to allow them to stockpile materials during the Covid-19 crisis. The application for Sizewell C is expected soon. This has not been welcomed by locals given the current situation, and we are awaiting guidance about how the NSIP process will proceed given the current restrictions.

Essex – An application is expected from Magnox regarding changes to the time period it can import canisters to the Bradwell store, and the quantity thereof, and possibly expanding the number of sites from which they come.

Gloucestershire – The application for the construction of overvaults is on hold pending resolution of an issue between Magnox and the Environment Agency over a request for a contribution to the early flood alert system by EA. Magnox are keen not to set a precedent for this type of contribution to be requested at other sites.

Kent – A full review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan will take place next year. We will need address omissions on radioactive waste policy.

Northamptonshire – King's Cliffe landfill continues operation and is expected to be full by 2026. In 2018 a total of 10,600 tonnes of VLLW was disposed of at the site and this resulted in £53,000 going to the community fund for local projects. This was superseded in 2019 by a disposal figure of 14,511 tonnes giving a community fund of £75,555 which will be paid at the end of April 2020. Auegan is planning to extend the site, and this will be a DCO application. Investigatory works are being carried out this year and if successful will add 15-20 years to the life of the facility. Unfortunately, planned community engagement has been halted by Covid-19. Local government in the area is being reorganised and the district and county councils are being combined into two unitary authorities – North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire. However, there are insufficient staff to make separate planning teams for both councils, so a joint team is likely.

Somerset West and Taunton – We have been speaking to EDF regarding the decommissioning of Hinkley Point B which will cease generating in 2023. EDF has indicated

that planning applications for the storage of waste, demolition and construction of buildings are likely to be made towards the end of this year. EDF has reduced the number of workers at HPB to the bare minimum necessary. Construction at Hinkley Point C continues though with a reduced workforce to accommodate social distancing. However, many of the workforce who are accommodated in local villages during the week return home at weekends, so increasing the possibility that they may bring Covid-19 into the local community. EDF is encouraging them to move into the on-site accommodation. EDF does have the necessary equipment to check individual staff to see if they are running a fever.

South Gloucestershire – Magnox has kept us advised on their suspension of work and there has been a positive response on the provision of PPE. The Joint Spatial Plan has been withdrawn from the examination process, and work has begun on a revised version. There is emerging interest in the potential for using Oldbury for solar or battery storage during the interim phase, but it has been difficult to have a discussion with Magnox/NDA.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held online on July 29th at 10.00.

9. Any other business

9.1 PM asked the participants on how they felt the online meeting had worked. The feedback was generally positive. Concerns were noted that elected members might not be as familiar with the technology as officers. It was agreed that, when face to face meetings can be resumed, it would still be beneficial to provide video conferencing facilities which would enable some participants to join the meeting who otherwise, for a variety of reasons, would be unable to. NuLeAF will investigate adding the agenda and papers to the screen, and it was agreed that there were benefits to holding face to face meetings on occasions such as the opportunity to network with other members.

Action: CD

Action List

	Action	By	Outcome
2.1	Post meeting notes on website	CD	Done 29 th April
4.2	Circulate final draft of on-site disposal guidance for comment and feedback to BEIS/Avison Young.	PM/CD	Circulated 23 rd April
4.6.3	Contact Frank Wigley re engagement with Site Stakeholder Groups	Avison Young	
4.6.4	Add information to guidance on roles of district and county councils in planning	Avison Young	
4.6.5	Feedback to NuLeAF MHCLG response regarding relationship of guidance with NPPF	BEIS	
4.7.9	Contact local authority re Winfrith masterplan	Avison Young	

5.2	Circulate Retrieval paper for further comment before submitting to June SG meeting for approval.	CD/PM	Circulated 23 rd April.
5.3	Produce Briefing Paper on GDF inventory	PM	Draft prepared and circulated for comment.
6.2	Contact MoD to see if they would extend the invitation to view Rosyth and if this could be arranged to follow the NDA Stakeholder Summit in October.	PM	On hold until confirmed that Summit will proceed in Edinburgh this year.
9.1	Find out how to add agenda to screen	CD	Can be added via meeting details.