

NuLeAF: NUCLEAR LEGACY ADVISORY FORUM

LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING

**Minutes of the Steering Group meeting held
on 29th January 2020 at 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ**

Present:

Cllr Matthew Riddle	South Gloucestershire Council (Chair)
Cllr David Southward	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Craig Rivett	East Suffolk Council
Cllr David Wimble	Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Cllr Mike Caswell	Sedgemoor District Council
Cllr Chris Morgan	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council
Richard Griffin	Allerdale Borough Council
Steve Smith	Copeland Borough Council
Charlie Pope	Devon County Council
Emma Macdonald	Dorset County Council
Lisa Chandler	East Suffolk Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Bryan Geake	Kent County Council
Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
Louise Martin	Somerset County Council
John Burton	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
James Cutting	Suffolk County Council
Dylan Llewelyn Jones	Ynys Mon County Council
Philip Matthews	NuLeAF
Catherine Draper	NuLeAF
Keith Duncan	BEIS
Bill Hamilton	Magnox
James McKinney	NDA
Kelly Anderson	NDA
John McNamara	NDA
Andy Harper	NDA
Simon Napper	RWM (observer)

	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
	<p>Cllr Riddle welcomed everyone to the meeting and round the table introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Cllr David Moore – Copeland Borough Council, Tess Luetchford - Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Linda Townsend – Gloucestershire County Council, Cllr Sean Chaytor – Hull City Council, Cllr David Blackburn – Leeds City Council, Cllr Eddy Newman & Sean Morris – Manchester City Council, Jon Beckett – Stroud District Council, Cllr Carwyn Jones – Ynys Mon County Council.</p>	

2.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD SEPTEMBER 2019	
2.1	The Minutes were approved as a true record and will be posted on the NuLeAF website.	CD
3.	MATTERS ARISING	
3.1	All matters arising had been addressed or were in hand. Comments were note on the action list at the end of the Minutes.	
4.	REVIEW OF UK RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY, KEITH DUNCAN, BEIS	
4.1	The Chair welcomed Keith Duncan (KD), Head of Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Policy, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to the meeting.	
4.2	KD had attended the Steering Group meeting held in Manchester on 3 rd September 2019 and advised the meeting of the government's intention to review decommissioning and radioactive waste policy. Stakeholders at forums such as the Radioactive Substances Policy Group (RSPG) and Nuclear Decommissioning Strategy and Policy Group (NDSPG) had suggested that a revised policy framework for these policies could be produced.	
4.3	Work to date included identifying areas the policy review would cover, and benefits and opportunities arising from the review (details can be found in the presentation posted on the NuLeAF website). Further work will require ministerial sign-off.	
4.4	BEIS is aware that the policy review needs to be completed before the publication of the final version of NDA Strategy 4.	
4.5	A query was raised whether the revised policy framework would address the decommissioning of the AGR fleet and community benefits. KD confirmed that the areas would be considered as part of the policy review.	
4.6	The lack of reference to socio-economic impact on local communities and the social licence to operate was raised. KD confirmed that this was area would be considered as part of the policy review.	
4.7	The Chair thanked Keith Duncan for his presentation, and for agreeing to stay on to provide government comment, if necessary, on the following item.	
5.	NEAR-SURFACE DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE, JAMES MCKINNEY, NDA	
5.1	The Chair welcomed Dr James McKinney (JMCK), Head of Integrated Waste Management at NDA.	

5.2

JMcK presented an overview of the technical study currently being carried out into near-surface disposal by NDA. This area is also subject to the policy review being carried out by government. The main points of the presentation were:

- Near-surface disposal was considered in the CoRWM recommendations made in 2006 and seen as a possible option for some of the Higher Activity Waste (HAW) inventory. It was also included in NDA Strategy both in 2011 and 2016. Scottish Government policy is currently for near-surface disposal; this is to be reviewed in 2021.
- Near-surface disposal could provide a proportionate disposal approach for some of the Intermediate Level Waste inventory currently designated for disposal at a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF), but which does not require the full isolation and containment which a GDF would provide.
- Near-surface disposal could support accelerated decommissioning through providing a disposal solution for wastes, including early risk and hazard reduction.
- The 2019 UK Radioactive Waste Inventory has been published. There are more than one thousand reported radioactive waste streams. The nature of waste streams will change as the decommissioning process progresses. There is an expectation that there will be large volumes of waste which sit on the boundary between the classifications of Low Level Waste and Intermediate Level Waste. This could be suitable for near-surface disposal.
- There are two types of near-surface disposal facilities: surface disposal vaults, and vaults or silos which are placed at 10s metres below ground level. Both have vulnerabilities (e.g. erosion, water ingress) but the waste inventory would be tailored to accommodate these. The choice of facility would probably reflect the site's geology.
- Phased implementation of near-surface disposal is preferred in order to reduce the risks associated with delivery of the project and is subject to Policy review.

5.3

The meeting opened up to questions:

5.3.1

Q: Will waste arising at a particular site be disposed of locally i.e. will each site have its own near-surface disposal facility?

A: We are waiting for direction from the revised policy and therefore at this time we assume a range of options could be available.

5.3.2

Q: From the slides it would appear that a lot of the waste is currently located at Sellafield, is that correct?

A: Yes, there could be some waste currently at Sellafield suitable for near surface management. In the future there could be larger volumes of decommissioning wastes that could be suitable for NSD or even candidates for reclassification.

5.3.3

Q: Will the near-surface disposal facilities be subject to generic design assessment, be dealt with as a Nationally Significant

	<p><i>Infrastructure Project, and will you be looking for a community to volunteer to host the facility?</i></p> <p>A: At present we are unable to comment on this as policy has not yet been agreed, but these are issues which are being considered.</p>	
5.3.4	<p><i>Q: Looking at the timing of waste arisings, if a near-surface disposal facility was built before a GDF was available, then it would be a separate facility and need clear community consent where it was constructed.</i></p> <p>A: Timing of the volume of waste arisings can change, as can where it is sent for disposal. Assumptions have been made that material is ILW, but it may be when it is further characterised it is actually LLW. We are looking at waste minimisation and decontamination where possible.</p>	
5.3.5	<p><i>Q: Would there be more than one site?</i></p> <p>A: The timeframe for decommissioning is long and thus we may require more than one site in England. Scotland will also require at least one site, though the policy is 'near-site, near-surface'.</p>	
5.3.6	<p>Comment: NDA needs to be clear about where the sites will be located, and also clarify the difference between long term storage and disposal. Communities will be concerned that one will lead to the other. Clear, open engagement is important.</p>	
5.4	<p>The Chair thanked Dr McKinney for his presentation and looked forward to further discussions on this topic as the work progressed.</p>	
6.	<p>NDA SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATEGY, ANDY HARPER & JOHN McNAMARA, NDA</p>	
6.1	<p>The Chair welcomed Andy Harper (AH), Project Controls Manager, and John McNamara (JMcN), Head of Stakeholder Relations at NDA to the meeting.</p>	
6.2	<p>AH gave an overview of the Local Impact and Socio-Economic Strategy being prepared by NDA. This had arisen from comments made by the Public Accounts Committee in 2018, and the draft would go out for consultation in the next few days.</p>	
6.3	<p>NDA has been engaging with stakeholders looking at the impact of decommissioning on the local communities, the benefits which arise and how the negative impacts can be mitigated. There is no one-size fits all approach and sites need to be addressed individually.</p>	
6.4	<p>Under the new strategy, NDA hopes to be able to increase the level of socio-economic funding. Initially the strategy will be for a six-year period (2020-2026), but NDA recognises the need for it to remain fluid so it can reflect and accommodate changes in need.</p>	

6.5	Members of the meeting welcomed the approach and commented that it gave local authorities the opportunity to identify how NDA business objectives aligned with theirs, and to harness NDA ethos and resources to drive local authority projects. It presented NDA as a transformational partner in a locality.	
6.6	It was noted that mechanisms for spending the funds provided through NDA could be overly complex, and simplification would be welcome.	
6.7	The Chair thanked Andy Harper and John McNamara for their presentation. NuLeAF would submit a response to the consultation and would encourage member authorities to also respond.	
7.	NuLeAF POLICY STATEMENT AND BRIEFING PAPER ON COMMUNITY BENEFITS	
7.1	At the request of members, the secretariat had produced a revised Briefing Paper and a new Policy Statement on Community Benefits. The drafts had been circulated for comment and the revised version had been sent to meeting delegates for further review. PM thanked members for the very useful feedback on the first drafts and asked for comments on the revised papers.	
7.2	The meeting discussed the need to differentiate between community benefits and mitigation. PM would clarify this in the final version. It was also suggested that opportunity costs could be referred to such as the economic impact of land use.	
7.3	An additional Principle on stakeholder and local accountability was proposed for inclusion in the Briefing Paper, and that the proposed framework should suggest how a Community Benefit scheme could be implemented to ensure stakeholder involvement.	
7.4	Concerns were raised about how a 'community' would be geographically defined, but it was felt that this should be discussed at another point and that should not hold up publication of the Policy Statement and Briefing Paper.	
7.5	It was hoped that NuLeAF and members would take forward the actions proposed on page 6 of the Policy Statement.	
7.6	The meeting agreed that, subject to amendment following the comments made at the meeting, the papers should be adopted.	PM
8	UPDATE ON GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY SITING PROCESS	
8.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication tools on geological disposal; 	

8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report on regulatory scrutiny; • RWM staff update; • RWM funding for NuLeAF; and • International update. <p>It was agreed that a paper on NuLeAF's engagement with the GMF should be submitted to the AGM for approval of continued participation.</p>	PM
9	UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT	
9.1	<p>PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from NDA Theme Overview Group (TOGs) meetings; • Updates on NDA, Strategy 4, BEIS, ONR and SCCORS; • Developments in waste management; • Submarine Dismantling Project; and • Appointment to the Board of SEPA. 	
9.2	<p>It was agreed that NuLeAF should consider taking a presentation covering spent fuel, plutonium and uranics at a future meeting.</p>	PM
9.3	<p>There was discussion on the decision by Somerset County Council to reject an application by Magnox for the importation of ILW to Hinkley Point A for treatment. Further information was provided by Charlie Pope who had been the case officer and it was agreed that a link to the report and decision should be circulated after the meeting. Magnox had until April to appeal the decision or could consider re-submitting the application at a later date following steps to address the concerns raised by Somerset County Council members.</p>	CD
9.4	<p>PM advised the meeting that he would prepare a draft response to the consultation by ONR on its strategy and circulate it to members.</p>	PM
9.5	<p>PM and Sean Morris of NFLA had met with Ian Booth, CEO of the Submarine Delivery Agency to raise concerns about the lack of progress in the dismantling of the laid up nuclear submarines and the lack of engagement with stakeholders. PM would write to Ian Booth reiterating the points raised at the meeting to reinforce NuLeAF and NFLA's concerns.</p>	PM
10	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>The next meeting will be held at the Central Library, St Peter's Street, Manchester on 11th March, 2020 at 11.00 – 3.00.</p>	
11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
11.1	<p>A member who attends their local Site Stakeholder Group had received a copy of a 'Draft Magnox Stakeholder Charter'. Concerns were raised that it was unclear who the document was aimed at, that it was unclear who the 'stakeholders' and</p>	

11.2	<p>'community' referred to in the document were. Also, that there seemed to be no wider consultation on the document, and that the document failed to refer to engagement with local authorities in their regulatory capacity, nor did it refer to undertaking consultation with communities. The document would set out an aspiration to engage with sections of the community beyond those who normally are reached.</p> <p>(NB. NDA staff present withdrew from the meeting before the discussion took place, and Cllr Mike Caswell also withdrew saying he had been involved in the drafting of the document.)</p> <p>It was agreed that the NuLeAF secretariat should write to Magnox raising the concerns above.</p> <p>NuLeAF has circulated a draft response to the NDA Business Plan and would welcome comments from members.</p>	PM
12	PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON DECOMMISSIONING PROGRESS AND WORK PROGRAMME AT MAGNOX, BILL HAMILTON, MAGNOX	
12.1	The Chair welcomed Bill Hamilton (BH), Communications and Stakeholder Relations Director at Magnox, to the meeting.	
12.2	BH gave a presentation providing an overview of the transition of Magnox from Parent Body Organisation (PBO) to wholly owned subsidiary of NDA. He also spoke on the current work programme and looked ahead at future developments. Key points from the presentation were:	
12.2.1	Magnox transitioned to a wholly owned subsidiary of the NDA on 1 September 2019. 30 staff from the former PBO, Cavendish Fluor, departed and were replaced with either new recruits or with people appointed from within NDA/Magnox.	
12.2.2	Following a spike in incidents at the point when Cavendish Fluor took over from Energy Solutions (previous PBO), the new company is strongly emphasising the importance of safety. BH was pleased to note that there has been no similar spike during the transition from Cavendish Fluor to NDA subsidiary.	
12.2.3	Magnox's mission remains the same, but now it is a subsidiary of NDA, and no longer a contractor, it is ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, and the company aims to utilise skills, intellectual property etc to maximise their potential for UK plc.	
12.2.4	The Magnox Executive is reviewing the areas which are different now the organisation is not a contractor. There will be greater staff involvement. Magnox is in discussions about multi-year funding with BEIS, and steps will be taken to improve the digital environment and metrics. Magnox is also developing a people strategy to ensure people are in the right place with the right skills. Working groups have been set up to	

	look at all these areas; each is led by a member of the Executive, with staff involvement.
12.2.5	The current programmed approach to decommissioning is continuing e.g. cleaning up ponds site by site and taking lessons learnt at a site to the next.
12.2.6	The budget for 2020/21 has been increased; this is partly to support Wylfa following the pause on Wylfa Newydd, and to accelerate decommissioning at Harwell which will release land to support development of the science park.
12.2.7	Magnox has broken into the reactor core at Winfrith and this has attracted a lot of attention internationally. Assets management costs are being reviewed to inform decisions on decommissioning.
12.2.8	Magnox is working with NDA to define and deliver requirements for optimised end states for all Magnox sites. This process is in its early stages and there will be opportunities for stakeholders to share their views.
12.2.9	Magnox was refused permission by Somerset County Council to import waste skips for treatment at Hinkley Point A. Magnox is considering its options on whether to appeal or reapply.
12.2.10	Following agreement by NDA Board and government, Magnox is moving away from the strategy of fleetwide Care and Maintenance towards continuous reactor decommissioning. This arises from lessons learnt by putting Bradwell A station into Care and Maintenance: it is costly, requires annual maintenance; and cost-effective robotics and new routes for waste and recycling have been developed. This new approach will provide opportunities for synergies between A and B stations, and for interim or re-use of sites.
12.2.11	Continuous reactor decommissioning will involve totally dismantling the reactor and demolishing the pond building to allow the site to be reused. The lead and learn approach will be taken - initially one site will be decommissioned, but all the sites will remain part of a peloton throughout, taking them to a stable interim state that will either enable continuous reactor decommissioning or a period of short to medium term quiescence with minimal intervention. All sites will be taken to a Back to Bioshield state which will reduce the reactor building to 10% of its current volume. This will significantly reduce maintenance costs and may offer the potential to release some land on the site at an earlier date.
12.2.12	Treatment of Higher Activity Waste and bulk asbestos remains a top priority across the sites.
12.2.13	Magnox is currently engaging with the regulators prior to the announcement of the lead site in March/April.

12.2.14	Following the change in strategy, the lifetime plans for all sites will require updating. Early engagement with the supply chain is planned.
12.2.15	Hazard reduction will be the focus for the majority of staff over the next 2-3 years.
12.3	The meeting opened up to questions:
12.3.1	<p><i>Q: When you announce the lead site for continuous reactor decommissioning, will you also announce the programme for the other sites?</i></p> <p>A: At that point we won't be able to give much detail beyond the lead site, but we will be able to share the criteria used to make the decision. We will be clearer about other sites in 2021.</p>
12.3.2	<p><i>Q: You mentioned that decommissioned sites could be used for Small Modular Reactors. Given that NDA and Magnox are decommissioning bodies, how will this happen?</i></p> <p>A: SMRs are a government supported initiative. As Magnox is a wholly owned subsidiary of a government agency we need to work to support government strategy, provided it doesn't run contrary to our mission.</p>
12.3.3	<p><i>Q: In the process of taking a site Back to Bioshield incorporate in-situ/on-site disposal of waste, or will waste be removed from the site?</i></p> <p>A: A lot of the material would be glass and steel which would be removed from the site. Other material could go to near-surface disposal.</p>
12.3.4	<p><i>Q: Could give an update on activities at Dungeness A and B?</i></p> <p>A: A site is well into decommissioning. Low Level and some Intermediate Level Waste currently remains on sites. There are some specific issues because of its location – the site is in an advanced state of degradation. Work will begin to remove the boilers from the site. Dungeness B will continue to generate electricity until it closes in this decade.</p>
12.3.5	<p><i>Q: Why is there no consultation with stakeholders on the decision of which site will enter continuous reactor decommissioning first?</i></p> <p>A: Every site would want to be the first to be decommissioned.</p>
12.3.6	<p><i>Q: Previously it had been suggested that 2 sites may be decommissioned at a time. Is this no longer the case?</i></p> <p>A: That approach was not approved.</p>
12.3.7	<p><i>Q: Will you let the local authority of the lead site know in advance of the announcement so they can be prepared for questions from the public?</i></p> <p>A: We will provide a copy of the press-release the day before it is released. We cannot undertake any further briefing that this.</p>

12.3.8	<p><i>Q: How does this new approach fit in the NDA Business Plan, as at present the new draft Business Plan makes no reference.</i></p> <p><i>A: I will speak to John McNamara about the need to reflect the potential for change.</i></p>	
12.4	The Chair thanked Mr Hamilton for his presentation.	
13	REVIEW OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES AT SITES	
13.1	As this Steering Group meeting had replaced a meeting of the Radioactive Waste Planning Group, a short round-up of activities at the sites was held.	
13.2	<i>South Gloucestershire:</i> no updates.	
13.3	<i>Somerset:</i> no further updates.	
13.4	<i>Sedgemoor:</i> The council had been notified that the peak workforce at Hinkley Point C would be above 5600.	
13.5	<i>Anglesey:</i> Wylfa has been defueled. A decision by the Secretary of State on new build is expected on 31 st March 2020.	
13.6	<i>East Suffolk:</i> The grid building has been taken down on Sizewell A site. Applications in support of other decommissioning projects are expected. The council is awaiting submission of the Sizewell C application.	
13.7	<i>Suffolk:</i> no updates.	
13.8	<i>Essex:</i> Bradwell continues to take waste from Dungeness.	
13.9	<i>Copeland:</i> We are working with Sellafield on a masterplan for the site, and on the Sellafield travel plan. Work is also underway with NDA and Sellafield on an estate property review. They have advised us that there are another 2200 employees to be relocated off-site. We have seen a 10 year programme of large scale planning applications for the site. LLWR Ltd continues with its impressive record of diverting waste from disposal.	
13.10	<i>Allerdale:</i> no updates.	
13.11	<i>West Somerset:</i> no updates.	
13.12	<i>Dorset:</i> We expect the application for the main Winfrith site in mid-2021. The pipeline decommissioning application has been separated from this. We are looking at co-ordinating our work with ONR.	
	There being no other business the meeting closed at 14.55.	

ACTION LIST

<i>29th January 2020</i>			
2.1	Post Minutes of the meeting held on 3 rd September 2019 on NuLeAF website	CD	Done.
7.6	Amend Community Benefits Policy Statement and Briefing Paper and then post on website	PM	Done.
8.2	Prepare paper on GMF membership for consideration at the AGM in March 2020	PM	Submitted to AGM on 11 th March.
9.2	Arrange presentation on spent fuel at a future meeting	PM	Added to the list of presentation topics
9.3	Circulate link to the planning case on ILW at Somerset County Council	CD	Done 30 th January. Further links included in e-bulletin.
9.4	Circulate draft response to ONR consultation for comment	PM	Circulated 31 st January prior to submission.
9.5	Write to Ian Booth at SDA reiterating points raised at the meeting on 14 January 2020	PM	Letter sent 7 th February. Response received 11 th March.
11.1	Write to Magnox regarding the Stakeholder Charter	PM	Letter sent 6 th February. Response received and reported to March SG.
<i>12th June 2019</i>			
10.4.4	Feedback to NDA need to engage with other energy sector companies especially in terms of socio-economic impact.	JM	Awaiting update.
<i>12th September, 2018</i>			
9.10	Provide feedback to NDA/NuLeAF on what topics local authorities wish to see covered in combined outcomes report.	All	Awaiting clarification from NDA and will then consult members.
<i>6th June, 2018</i>			
3.3	Follow up with Mike Caswell re meeting	DB	Email sent 21 June and MC said he would follow this up with Aled Morris Jones.
9.13	Raise issue of need for Magnox to communicate with sites receiving Magnox waste.	PM	To be done once new Magnox structure in place post September.