

## **LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING**

### **Minutes of the Steering Group meeting held online on 10th March, 2021**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Matthew Riddle	South Gloucestershire Council (Chair)
Cllr David Moore	Copeland Borough Council (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Eddy Newman	Manchester City Council (Vice-Chair NFLA)
Cllr Craig Rivett	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Sean Chaytor	Hull City Council
Cllr David Blackburn	Leeds City Council
Cllr Mike Caswell	Sedgemoor District Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council
Steve Smith	Copeland Borough Council
Priya Hira	Copeland Borough Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council
Charlie Pope	Devon County Council
Lisa Chandler	East Suffolk Council
Bethany Rance	East Suffolk Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Dave Illsley	Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Robin Drake	Gloucestershire County Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Maldon District Council
Sean Morris	Manchester City Council
Kevin Broughton	Oxfordshire County Council
Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
Louise Martin	Somerset County Council
John Burton	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Cameron Clow	Suffolk County Council
Alistair Buckley	West Berkshire Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Catherine Draper	Nuleaf

*Speakers*

Hazel Blears            NDA  
 Neil Smith             NDA  
 Davide Stronati        NDA  
 Alan Woods            UKSMR  
 Craig Lester            BEIS

*Observers*

Simon Napper           RWM  
 Richard Griffin        RWM  
 Katherine Reading     BEIS

1.	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through protocols for running the meeting online.	
1.2	The Chair advised the meeting that Richard Griffin had moved from Allerdale Borough Council to work for RWM as Senior Policy Advisor. He thanked Richard for his engagement with Nuleaf and looked forward to working with him in his new role.	
1.3	Apologies were received from: Nik Hardy – Allerdale Borough Council, Cllr David Southward – Cumbria County Council, Jerry Smith – Dorset County Council, Linda Townsend – Gloucestershire County Council, Lucy Atkinson – Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, Cllr Chris Morgan – Somerset West & Taunton Council.	
2.	<b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020</b>	
2.1	The Minutes were approved as a true record and will be posted on the NuLeAF website.	CD
3.	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
3.1	All other matters arising had been addressed or were in hand. Comments were noted on the action list at the end of the Minutes.	
4.	<b>UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>	
4.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and which gave updates on: NDA and the development of Strategy 4, activities at BEIS and ONR, the decommissioning of EDF stations, Nuleaf's international engagement, the formation of a group of Welsh member authorities and the launch of a new Nuleaf website.	
4.2	Key points noted were:	
4.2.1	NDA has appointed Davide Stronati as Director of Sustainability. Mr Stronati will be present during the afternoon	

	session of the meeting to give a brief introduction. NDA is also publishing a Sustainability Report.	
4.2.2	<p>There has been further restructuring at NDA and a Group Leadership Team comprising board members and CEOs of all the subsidiaries has been established. Corhyn Parr is CEO Designate of the waste division and Nuleaf has offered her a speaking slot at the June Steering Group meeting.</p> <p>A concern was noted regarding the formation of the waste division. A member felt that it was more appropriate for RWM to remain a separate body, and that its incorporation into a wider body, and the timing of the announcement, could potentially be detrimental to the GDF siting process. Also, one of the Copeland Working Group interested parties had proposed that the headworks could be placed at the LLWR, which would create a conflict of interests with the new waste management body. Simon Napper said he would feedback these concerns to RWM.</p>	
4.2.3	The meeting with BEIS to discuss the review of UK Radioactive Waste Policy had been postponed due to delays in launching the consultation. This was now expected in July and Nuleaf would reschedule the meeting accordingly.	
4.2.4	The meeting with EDF to discuss the decommissioning of the AGR stations had been postponed. Commercial arrangements had not yet been agreed, but the meeting would be rescheduled once these had been finalised. In the meantime, EDF Comms, NDA Stakeholder Engagement and Nuleaf had agreed to meet once a quarter.	
4.2.5	Nuleaf's new website would be launched shortly. The new site contained a blog and members would be welcome to contribute.	
4.3	A member noted that there was scope for SMRs to be deployed on non-nuclear sites and that this had the potential to diversify sources of waste arisings and the associated transport of the waste.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>UPDATE ON GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY SITING PROCESS</b>	
5.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and provided an update on the GDF siting process, activities at RWM and international engagement.	
5.2	Key points highlighted were:	
5.2.1	A second Working Group had now been established in Allerdale.	
5.2.2	RWM had set up a forum to engage with NGOs.	

5.3	SM advised the meeting that he had been involved in setting up the RWM NGO forum which would provide a critical review of the GDF siting process.	
5.4	<p>RWM provided a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simon Hughes has joined as the Siting and Community Engagement Director.</li> <li>• Site Evaluation and Community Engagement teams have previously operated separately but are now working more closely together as a single team, led by Sam King.</li> <li>• Steve Reece is taking on wider role.</li> <li>• A new team has been set up to handle social impact across the programme, including community investment funding. This is led by Mike Brophy.</li> <li>• The policy team has expanded with Richard Griffin joining to work with Bruce Cairns.</li> <li>• RWM has also taken on more staff working on planning and land use permissions.</li> </ul>	
5.5	<p>Cllr David Moore provided an update on the Copeland Working Group. Three workstreams have been set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we engage with community during the pandemic? The virtual workshop has had a lot of views.</li> <li>• Looking at potential areas to bring forward as a proposed site.</li> <li>• Who should be on the Community Partnership? There has been a lot of support through parish councils and we have been actively sought to give presentations. Engagement been positive and is moving forward in good manner.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
6.1	The next meeting will be held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2021.	PM
6.2	The meeting discussed the future format of Nuleaf meetings and agreed that a further paper should be presented to the June Steering Group meeting outlining options.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
7.1	The Chair advised the meeting that he would like the Steering Group to discuss the role of Nuleaf in relation to new nuclear technologies.	
7.1.2	Concerns were expressed by some members that this was not appropriate for Nuleaf and that a new nuclear Special Interest Group already existed (NNLAG). It was suggested that problems could arise if Nuleaf also spoke on this issue.	

7.1.3	Other members supported the Chair's proposal as many Nuleaf member authorities were also NNLAG members and they felt that this led to duplication and was inefficient.	
7.1.4	It was agreed that the Chair, along with the Vice-Chairs, would speak to LGA about this proposal.	MR/DM/SC
7.1.5	The secretariat will prepare a paper which will be discussed at the meeting on 2 <sup>nd</sup> June.	PM
7.2	The meeting broke for lunch at 11.55.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WITH HAZEL BLEARS, NEIL SMITH AND DAVIDE STRONATI ON SOCIAL VALUE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR THE POST-COVID RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
8.1	The Chair welcomed Ms Blears, Mr Smith and Mr Stronati to the meeting.	
8.2	Ms Blears is currently engaged with NDA on a 12-month contract to provide advice on Social Value. She gave a brief outline of her work.	
8.2.1	There are three main strands to developing Social Value in an organisation: 1. How goods and services are bought – getting the maximum positive impact from spend. 2. Who is employed – how to help those most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market. 3. Investment decisions – ensure the criteria used for making a business case incorporates social value.  In addition, Ms Blears is also interested in the potential of using pension funds to unlock social investment.	
8.2.2	When making any item of expenditure, however small, it is important to pause and be intentional about trying to spend the money in a way which will make a difference to the most disadvantaged. There is evidence that doing good is good for business. It gives the social licence to operate.	
8.3	Neil Smith introduced himself as NDA's Business Manager for Economic Development and gave a brief presentation on his role at NDA. Key points were:	
8.3.1	NDA's Socio-economic Strategy was published in July 2020. The original intention had been to make the strategy cover a number of years, but in light of the Covid-19 pandemic a more focused strategy had been published.	
8.3.2	NDA has identified that it needs to refresh and update its economic development studies.	

8.3.3	<p>NDA is looking at utilising other elements of its business activities to support local communities. They would be interested in knowing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are local authority priorities coming out of the pandemic?</li> <li>• Have your priorities and plans changed in light of the impact of the pandemic?</li> <li>• Do you foresee potential changes in any sectors?</li> <li>• What impact has the pandemic had on developing projects?</li> </ul>
8.4	<p>Davide Stronati advised the meeting that he had joined NDA in mid-November 2020 following 14 years working on sustainability issues for Mott MacDonald. There was clearly a great deal of passion at NDA on sustainability and creating social and climate justice for future generations. He looked forward to moving to a more proactive position in embedding social and environmental value in NDA's work.</p>
8.5	<p>The meeting opened up to questions and comments:</p>
8.5.1	<p>Members identified issues affecting young people as a priority coming out of the pandemic. Their education had been disrupted and historically it was those trying to get on the employment ladder who suffered most.</p>
8.5.2	<p>HB advised the meeting that the next part of her work for NDA on social value was around employment. She recognised the importance of helping young people, especially those who found it hardest to get into work. She will be looking at pre-apprenticeship training. She will also encourage NDA to look at engaging and benefiting people who are not necessarily destined to become part of the NDA work force.</p>
8.5.3	<p>NS highlighted the importance of skills development, especially, but not limited to, STEM.</p>
8.5.4	<p><i>Q: NDA sites are in rural areas and for some travel to work or education can be an issue. Is this something NDA could assist with?</i></p> <p>A: There may be ways of addressing this.</p>
8.5.5	<p><i>Q: The pandemic has taken local authority staff away from this work, so whilst projects were in the pipeline, they had not been able to complete applications. Could NDA provide any resource?</i></p> <p>A: NDA is considering supporting project development given the current pressures on staff time and priorities.</p>
8.5.6	<p>The potential for the pandemic to shake up the economic landscape was noted, with previously prosperous areas suffering because of industry decline. NDA needed to review its priorities to see if they were still relevant.</p>

8.5.7	<p><i>Q: Nuleaf represents a lot of local authorities with nuclear sites across country. How are you getting on in terms of embedding social value across the estate, and how will we see a difference do you think?</i></p> <p>A: There is enthusiasm across the organisation for this agenda. Sellafield Ltd has been doing this for a while, but the Heads of Procurement at Magnox and Dounreay are keen to use the funds they have to get the best social value outcome. With Magnox sites going into rolling decommissioning I think can get more social value from supply chain from this approach than under Care &amp; Maintenance. All areas of NDA should learn from what has been happening in West Cumbria. It is important to engage with local people about how money should be spent and this will be different in different places. Legislation will be forthcoming next year (Green Paper out now) and it will be a mandatory requirement.</p>
8.5.8	<p><i>Q: It would be good to see this move beyond a statement of good intent to specifics for each site. Can this be done? I don't see the clarity at Sellafield being replicated at other sites.</i></p> <p>A: In principle we want to work in partnership but we do need a strategic framework how we take it forward.</p>
8.5.9	<p><i>Q: How is NDA going to keep their plans live and agile. There is a lot of change and uncertainty at present. Much has changed over the past year and it is important that NDA looks at what how its communities have changed and reflect that in their plans.</i></p> <p>A: Once circumstances have settled we will review the situation and talk to local communities.</p>
8.5.10	<p>JMcN advised the meeting that NDA was increasing its engagement with stakeholders and communities to ensure it has the latest information for all sites. Responses to the Strategy 4 consultation had identified a need for NDA to broaden its stakeholder base.</p>
8.5.11	<p>The £25K grant from Magnox which was made early on in the pandemic was cited as an example of agile thinking which should be replicated. It enabled individual local authorities to address local needs.</p>
8.5.12	<p><i>Q: What non-financial help would you be able to offer?</i></p> <p>A: Support can be given in the development of business cases, developing projects or at board level.</p>
8.5.13	<p>SS spoke about the Copeland BC 'Reboot' initiative. They were working with NDA, Sellafield and the supply chain who were coming forward and making people available to assist projects in the locality using skills such as bid writing and financial monitoring. The initiative was in its early days but</p>

	was starting to gain momentum. He would be happy to share the experience with other members at a later date.	
8.5.14	<p><i>Q: Are you going to develop indicators to measure progress in your sustainability goals?</i></p> <p>A: We will develop Key Performance Indicators when we have established what results we wish to achieve. The priority is setting a common vision. KPIs need to be in keeping with the vision. We want to share examples of best practice and knowledge amongst the NDA group companies and hope that you will share examples of what works with us.</p>	
8.5.15	<p><i>Q: Will you integrate the circular economy into your sustainability plans?</i></p> <p>A: The circular economy is more than just about waste recycling. It needs to look at local and regional economies and broaden its scope.</p>	
8.5.16	<p><i>Q: There is an opportunity to make a big difference if you embed initiatives and projects into work life.</i></p> <p>A: The carbon footprint is an example – we need to set the right culture in company as this drives sustainability.</p>	
8.5.17	<p><i>Q: Will you review your current social value criteria?</i></p> <p>A: It will be reviewed – we need to be clear about the measurements we use.</p>	
8.5.18	A member suggested that the Steering Group should consider more frequent internal discussion on sustainability and the impact on member authority communities.	PM
8.6	The Chair thanked Ms Blears, Mr Smith and Mr Stronati for attending the meeting. He encouraged them to use Nuleaf to help inform their work and to keep the dialogue going outside meetings.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WITH UKSMR</b>	
9.1	The Chair welcomed Alan Woods of UKSMR to the meeting.	
9.2	Mr Woods gave a presentation on the UKSMR programme which included some updates since the presentation given on 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2020:	
9.2.1	The appearance of the station has changed to reflect a slight change in design beneath. It is also now more cost effective. The design will probably change again as further details are finalised.	
9.2.2	The feasibility study has been completed for deployment in Turkey which has quite a high seismic risk. As a result the seismic raft has been standardised to be suitable for all deployment areas.	



9.2.3	Electricity costs have been estimated as between £35 – £50 per MWh, depending on cost of financing. This is competitive with the cost of intermittent renewables at today's prices, if battery storage is included.
9.2.4	<p>Phase 1 of the programme will conclude at the end of April. Phase 2 will run 2021-2024. During this period the consortium will become a shareholder company. Tasks during this period are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design development;</li> <li>• Verification and validation process;</li> <li>• Regulatory design approval to support fleet deployment GDA starts 2021;</li> <li>• Site development support;</li> <li>• Win first orders.</li> </ul>
9.2.5	The focus is now moving to how we deliver. The delivery model for SMRs is different – conventional nuclear is perceived as always late and always overbudget. This results in a high cost of borrowing. Because SMRs are constructed in a different way these pitfalls can be avoided by investors need to be convinced of this. We are talking to government about the role it can play in de-risking the construction of the first units.
9.2.4	The SMR Delivery Alliance will comprise of: UKSMR, operators, investors, HM Government, sites and stakeholders. We have just begun to work out how to put this together and it is not yet a formal entity. Exelon will be the operator and we already have financiers who are willing to invest if there is government commitment. Money invested by HM Government will be returned – its main purpose is to de-risk the early builds.
9.3	The meeting opened up to questions:
9.3.1	<p><i>Q: Could you please clarify the footprint required?</i></p> <p>A: The requirement is 4 hectares (just under 10 acres) which is around 10<sup>th</sup> of the size required for Hinkley Point C.</p>
9.3.2	<p><i>Q: Are the cooling towers inside or outside the berm?</i></p> <p>A: The baseline plant is designed around indirect cooling. This will maximise site availability. It also is perceived to be better environmentally. The cooling towers are short and so wouldn't be visible in the landscape. A modular array will sit alongside the berm. We are in discussions with the manufacturers as to how the visual appearance can be improved further.</p>
9.3.3	<i>Q: Are there other companies looking at developing SMR technology?</i>

	<p>A: There are a number of companies developing SMRs. Some are looking at future technologies, whereas our model is based on existing tried and tested technology. We will adopt future developments when they can be incorporated.</p>	
9.3.4	<p><i>Q: Are you able to provide an update on the economic benefits of hosting an SMR?</i></p>	
	<p>A: At the peak there will be about 800 jobs on site. There will also be a lot of sustainable high skilled jobs in the construction factory and supply chain. An operating shift will comprise 180 staff and there need to be three shifts plus a spare. The availability of a lot of low cost zero carbon electricity will also attract other industry to the area. A clean energy park has the potential to bring SMR together with other industries.</p>	
9.3.5	<p><i>Q: In terms of the next three years and the siting process, what can local authorities do to help you?</i></p>	
	<p>A: At present, we are looking at deploying this on existing sites, but we need the policy to support this approach. We will also need to engage with the local community. If a site is selected we can build the seismic bearing and that is a transformative situation for a commercial operator.</p>	
9.4	<p>The Chair thanked Mr Woods for his presentation, and Mr Woods left the meeting due to a prior commitment.</p>	
10.	<p><b>UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS FOR ADVANCED NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGIES</b></p>	
10.1	<p>The Chair welcome Craig Lester, Deputy Director, Advanced Nuclear Technologies at BEIS to the meeting.</p>	
10.2	<p>Mr Lester gave a short presentation on the UK Government role and his departmental activities:</p>	
10.2.1	<p>A revision of policies EN1 (Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy, July 2011) and EN6 (National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation, July 2011) will be undertaken with specific reference to SMR siting.</p>	
10.2.2	<p>Siting will always be easiest where there is existing nuclear. Developments at Trawsfynydd are being monitored with interest.</p>	
10.2.3	<p>The Ten Point Plan and Energy White Paper gives support to nuclear and to SMR development. BEIS has a budget for the rest of the enabling framework, and local authorities could have a role here. We would welcome contact if you think your local economy could support early roll out of the SMR programme.</p>	
10.2.4	<p>Although existing sites have advantages, that wouldn't preclude other sites coming forward. It has been suggested</p>	

	that old coal fired power stations sites may be suitable given their grid connections.	
10.3	The meeting opened up to questions:	
10.3.1	<p><i>Q: How will you engage with local authorities?</i></p> <p>A: There will be several opportunities for engagement: as statutory consultees, on the revision of the NPS, and we are happy to visit sites and discuss with local representatives what SMR deployment could mean for them.</p>	
10.3.2	<p><i>Q: Are you considering adopting the UKAEA model of siting which asks communities to put sites forward.</i></p> <p>A: We are monitoring that process, however there is a difference in perception between nuclear fusion and fission, especially around safety requirements and waste. This can affect a communities' willingness to have a reactor in their location.</p>	
10.3.3	<p><i>Q: The Copeland nuclear prospectus sets out our support for SMRs. You didn't mention West Cumbria when talking about where you have engaged.</i></p> <p>A: We visit Cumbria on a regular basis and Moorside, and the other sites initially proposed for new nuclear stations all have potential as SMR sites.</p>	
10.3.4	<p><i>Q: In a recent webinar on dealing with communities which don't have nuclear sites, it was obvious that the over-riding concern was the waste which was generated at the site.</i></p> <p>A: We acknowledge that if this programme goes ahead we will add to the legacy stockpile of waste. However, new nuclear generates low carbon, high temperature heat and energy, which has a role in dealing with climate change. There is also research being carried out into the transmutation of waste which may help address waste arisings in the future.</p>	
10.4	The Chair thanked Mr Lester for attending the meeting and looked forward to future engagement.	
10.5	There being no other business the meeting closed at 15.15.	

## ACTION LIST

<b>10<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
2.1	Post minutes of December meeting on website.	CD	Done
6.2	Submit paper to June SG on post Covid meeting format.	PM	Paper outlining meeting options submitted for discussion.
7.1.4	Speak to LGA about review of Nuleaf remit.	MR	This will be done after the June Steering group discussion, depending on the decision taken.
7.1.5	Submit paper to June SG on Nuleaf remit.	PM	Paper prepared for discussion at June Steering Group.
8.5.18	Nuleaf to consider addressing sustainability issues more frequently at meetings.	PM	Noted as an ongoing action.