

Note of the online meeting of the Radioactive Waste Planning Group, 10.00 – 12.30, 30th April 2021.

Present:

Steve Smith	Copeland Borough Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council
Charlie Pope	Devon County Council
Janet Moore	Dorset Council
Coralie McGown	Dorset Council
Beth Rance	East Suffolk Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Robin Drake	Gloucestershire County Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Maldon District Council
Louise Martin	Somerset County Council
John Burton	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Cameron Clow	Suffolk County Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Catherine Draper	Nuleaf
Will Higgins	BEIS
James Heavingham	Environment Agency
Steve Hardy	NDA
Alyson Morris	NDA
John McNamara	NDA
Davide Stronati	NDA

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 PM welcomed members, noting that it was the first RWPG meeting for Janet Moore & Coralie McGown of Dorset Council and Robin Drake of Gloucestershire County Council. Apologies were received from Lisa Chandler (East Suffolk C), Dave Illsley (Folkestone & Hythe DC), Linda Townsend (Gloucestershire CC), Gillian Ellis-King (South Gloucestershire Council).

2. Note of the last meeting

2.1 The Note of the meeting held on 28th January 2021 was approved as a true record and will be posted on the Nuleaf website.

Action: CD

3. Matters arising

3.1 All matters were either in-hand or had been dealt with.

4. Presentation on Net Zero Carbon with Alyson Morris and Steve Hardy, NDA

4.1 PM welcomed Alyson Morris (Environmental Sustainability Officer, NDA) and Steve Hardy (Environmental Director, NDA) to the meeting.

4.2 In 2020-21, NDA had conducted a Beacon Project on Carbon Net Zero across the group of companies. The work had been supported by the Carbon Trust and was divided into four stages:

- Mapping the NDA carbon footprint;
- Projecting the baseline going forward;
- Identifying opportunities for reduction; and
- Developing a roadmap for implementation.

4.2.1 The aim is reach carbon net zero. Emissions will be reduced as far as possible, with any remaining being offset.

4.2.2 The project identified purchased goods and services as the single biggest emitter, followed by consumption of natural gas. This was based on a bespoke model used by the Carbon Trust as the NDA does not currently have direct information from the supply chain.

4.2.3 NDA has produced a range of scenarios showing what will happen as the decommissioning mission progresses. It is envisaged that there will be an increase in emissions in 2035 due to the construction of the GDF. Switching off the Combined Heat and Power plant at Sellafield will give a noticeable reduction. NDA is also looking at increasing its electrification and how it can reduce its carbon emissions during construction.

4.2.4 The Carbon Trust identified and prioritised 92 carbon reduction initiatives across the NDA estate. A low carbon procurement strategy needs to be developed and embedded, and low carbon heat and power used at Sellafield. NDA is looking at the use of renewable energy both on and off-site at Sellafield. Alternative forms of power for ventilation systems will be considered, and the vehicle fleet decarbonised where possible. LED lighting will be installed to reduce consumption. Plans for all the sites will be produced.

4.2.5 A roadmap has been developed showing start dates for workstreams. A carbon policy will be introduced to set the mandate and level of ambition across the organisation. As the project only completed on 31st March, this has not yet become NDA policy, but a governing strategy will be established and implemented.

4.2.6 NDA would welcome engagement with local authorities to understand their aspirations in this area, and how NDA and local authorities can work together.

4.3 The meeting opened up to questions:

Q: How much influence do you have in terms of decision making at Sellafield about potential alternative energy routes for Combined Heat Plant, recognising that plant still needs to provide steam for another 20 years.

A: There is planning permission for a new steam generation plant which is gas-fired and would operate to 2049. However, this wouldn't align well with what we've been talking about today and discussions are ongoing between NDA and Sellafield. We expect a decision within the next 3-4 weeks. NDA will need to talk to the local authority as there are planning conditions attached to the permission. NDA needs to ensure the existing plant can provide steam for Sellafield while we come up with an alternative solution. This approach must be approved by the appropriate safety committee at Sellafield. We are in early stages of coming up with a plan for replacing the proposed gas-fired plant.

Q: Recognising the limitations resulting from the remit of NDA, are you getting the opportunity to explore fuel route options with BEIS such as deployment of SMRs at Fellside.

A: We are not proactively pursuing deployment of SMRs, however we are facilitating government ambition in that area. We are also meeting later today with Cabinet Office to discuss whether it is appropriate that government arms-length bodies should be developing energy strategies.

Q: Recognising that this is very early in the process, do you have any idea of how many of the proposed measures would be cost saving, cost neutral or lead to increased costs?

A: When we looked at the opportunities for carbon reduction, we did have a high level of cost benefit information embedded, but it is too early for us to say what that will mean in detail. There is a lot of work we need to do to produce lifetime costs. There is a general assumption that this will cost more and take more time, however NDA liaison with other organisations suggest that this is not necessarily the case. NDA are doing more work to establish what the costs associated with the work might be.

An example would be that the cost and energy usage of running ventilation systems is high. Keeping buildings up longer than necessary doesn't make sense, so bringing decommissioning forward would be the best approach. There is a general assumption that this will cost more and take more time, however NDA liaison with other organisations suggest that this is not necessarily the case. NDA are doing more work to establish what the costs associated with the work might be.

Q: Can you be more proscriptive in your procurement and require suppliers to improve their own practice?

A: We are taking a draft Carbon Policy to the NDA group leadership team which will include low carbon procurement. We need the support of NDA's commercial and procurement teams to be able to deliver this, so our present phraseology is more tempered to avoid overpromising and under-delivery. Whatever we do we need to be sure that it is both fair and legal.

5. Presentation and discussion with Davide Stronati and Alyson Morris on NDA's Sustainability Report

5.1 PM welcomed Davide Stronati, NDA's first Director of Sustainability to the meeting. He had joined NDA in November 2020. As the majority of the work on the Sustainability Report had been carried out by Alyson he handed over to her to talk about its history and he would then talk about its future.

5.2 AM advised the meeting that early drafts of the report were used as a tool for communicating within the NDA group, and also with stakeholders. They had received a lot of useful feedback and initially badged the report as proof of concept in presentation terms. This was submitted to the NDA Executive who liked the report and approved publication. The report was subsequently published on NDA's website in February 2021.

5.3 DS continued that there were some slight differences between the draft report Nuleaf had commented on and final document. The title was changed as the content was a snapshot of what had been done in the NDA. Future reports will give updates on vision, the roadmap and objectives. We need to set the vision and the strategy which we can then report on. There is a clear commitment from the Group Leadership Team and the NDA Executive that the publication of the report will be a

way to be more publicly transparent. Future annual publication on Sustainability may be incorporated into the NDA's Annual Report.

The meeting opened up to questions:

Q: As we come to end of this phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a lot of discussion about how recovery can be green and sustainable. In terms of socio-economics how do you see sustainability integrated.

A: The governments overall agenda is to "build back better". The Covid-19 pandemic is a human and economic tragedy, but it gives us an opportunity to reduce all sorts of inequalities. We are active in seeking collaborations for future jobs in local economies.

Q: Do you see indicators being at a corporate or site level?

A: Indicators can be helpful, but it is important to drive quality. Indicators need to be meaningful and long term – at least 10 years - or even until we finish site remediation. They need to be robust enough to be measured.

5.4 PM Thanked Alyson and Davide for their presentation. He then introduced John McNamara from NDA.

5.5 JMcN advised the meeting that NDA was looking at its engagement plans for the year, and that they are wanting to widen their audience, particularly in area of innovation and environment. They would welcome the opportunity to engage with not just the traditional nuclear audience and would like to work with Nuleaf on this.

A member of the RWPG commented that there was an opportunity there to engage with a wider audience about what NDA and the communities around its sites does on behalf of the nation. Local authorities have a wide remit around climate change, economic development and innovation. There should be opportunities to engage with a wider audience on these topics.

6. Presentation and discussion with James Heavingham on the Environment Agency's approach to wider sustainability at Winfrith site

6.1 PM welcomed James Heavingham to the meeting.

6.2 JH is a Non-nuclear Project Manager and leads a team dealing with the non-nuclear issues at Winfrith. He works alongside Adam Davis from the EA's nuclear regulation group. The project is described as "an opportunity to work with the site operator and stakeholders to ensure the legacy of the nuclear site is the creation of a space to benefit the environment and people."

6.2.1 Winfrith was a research site with 9 reactors, of which only 2 now remain. The end state will be to return the site to acid heathland. In the interim, all structures will be taken down to below ground level. Preparation for decommissioning and site restoration offers the Environment Agency the opportunity to advise and support all stakeholders involved in the project to embed sustainable goals into environmental decision making. Winfrith will be the first remediated site to have in-situ disposal of radioactive waste. The site will be used as a case study and lessons learnt applied at other sites.

6.2.2 The site has a range of environmental and socio-economic features, such as:

- Ground water is currently kept artificially low, and this will cease, thus affecting the flow of the rivers bordering the site, and permitting the return of acid heathland. Engagement with Natural England has highlighted that public access to this space may lead to protection of other heathland with higher environmental worth.
- There will be an element of contaminated land which will require remediation.
- Sub-surface voids left following the removal of buildings will be used for the disposal of waste. Existing soil piles will be used for landscaping. Both of these activities will avoid importation of materials and reduce transport.
- Consideration is being given to electrification of services where possible, and the use of biofuels for work vehicles.
- The site sits next to a science park. The disused railhead may be reinstated which would permit greener travel for workers at the science park.

6.2.3 The Environment Agency's ambition is to be a leader in delivering low carbon solutions. A 5-year action plan was launched in 2020. The agency recognises that it cannot achieve its goals alone and will need to work collaboratively. This area falls outside regulation and will be based on providing advice and helping other set goals. The action plan has three goals:

Goal 1 – A nation resilient to climate change

Goal 2 – Health, air, land and water

Goal 3 – Green growth and a sustainable future.

The Environment Agency wants to be recognised as an exemplar for support and directing sector sustainability. The aim of this particular project is to make the legacy of the Winfrith nuclear licensed site one which benefits the community.

6.3 In response to a question Steve Hardy confirmed that the timeline for completing removal of the pipeline is currently estimated to be 2033, again this will dependent on current strategic review by Magnox and NDA.

6.7 PM thanked JH for his presentation.

7. Update on guidance on in-situ disposal of radioactive waste, Will Higgins, BEIS.

7.1 PM welcome Will Higgins to the meeting. Nuleaf members had been involved in the development of the guidance on in-situ disposal over a number of years.

7.2 WH gave a short presentation: the draft guidance produced by Avison Young had returned to BEIS for completion. The guidance had been amended slightly and now focused more on planning aspects. A few final comments were still to be addressed and the document would then be reviewed by BEIS legal team. The next stage will be to share the final draft with those organisations, such as Nuleaf, who had commented on earlier versions. BEIS and MHCLG have discussed publication of the document and it is most likely to form part of National Planning Policy. In response to a question he confirmed that there would be a public consultation which would take place late summer/autumn this year.

7.3 PM thanked WH for the update and Nuleaf would be happy to provide comment on the final draft.

8. Update on GDF siting process

8.1 PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and which provided updates on the GDF siting process and RWM and CoRWM activities.

8.2 The meeting discussed the decision by Cumbria County Council not to participate in the Copeland Working Group. The Group can continue without the council's engagement, and there will be a further opportunity for the council to participate when the Community Siting Partnership is created.

9. Update on developments in radioactive waste management

9.1 PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and which provided updates on: NDA (including Strategy 4), BEIS, Sellafield and Magnox, the decommissioning of EDF stations, international engagement, creation of a Welsh members group, and the launch of the new Nuleaf website.

9.2 PM noted that a presentation on the Land Transport Strategy (see item 1.3 on the paper) may be appropriate for this group at some point in the future.

9.3 In response to a question PM confirmed that no further information was as yet available on the timing of engagement and consultation by BEIS on the siting process for small modular reactors (SMRs).

10. Local site updates

East Suffolk: The application for Sizewell C was heading into examination. East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council are currently preparing their local impact reports.

Somerset West and Taunton: There has been little activity at Hinkley Point A and B sites. Progress is being made at pace on Hinkley Point C. EDF is looking to have the first reactor completed by the middle of 2026. The council is currently engaging in negotiations for an increase in workforce of many 1000s.

Suffolk: Nothing further to add.

Devon: Nothing further to add.

Maldon: The council is currently going through the local plan review process. Local elections may see Maldon DC become an anti-nuclear local authority, which will impact on policies.

Essex: While the site is still open for ILW from Dungeness and Sizewell A, no deliveries are expected for the next two quarters.

Somerset: The council has received and application for the development of a new building at Hinkley Point A for the processing and storage of LLW, pending disposal off-site.

Gloucestershire: No new activity at Berkeley site.

Copeland:

- Work is progressing apace on the three workstreams of the Copeland Working Group: engaging with the community, defining the search area, and designing the Community Partnership structure. It is important that these workstreams are coordinated. A decision about the transition to Community Partnership is expected in the summer. The Working Group has asked RWM if it can obtain a recording of online community engagement between NWMO and the community of Ignace regarding NWMO's proposals for siting a repository in their locality. Copeland Working Group feel this would be of interest, unfortunately the time difference made it impossible to attend the actual meeting.
- Engagement is being undertaken with Sellafield and Cumbria County Council about onsite waste management. There will be a number of planning applications coming forward from Sellafield and LLWR Ltd.

- Concerns about the development of a single waste management division have been raised with NDA. There was no stakeholder engagement prior to the announcement of the creation of this division, and timing was poor in respect of the GDF siting process.

Cumbria: Nothing further to add.

Folkestone & Hythe: Dave Illsley had provided a written update:

- Romney Marsh Partnership is recruiting a Senior Specialist, a three year post developing socio-economic projects with funding of £90k from Magnox, and matching funding from FHDC and Kent County Council. The deadline for applications has been extended until 10th May – salary up to £42k.
- The council is awaiting further information regarding possible early closure of EDF Dungeness B. Originally the station was intended to generate until 2028, with a possible lifetime extension beyond that, but it has not generated since summer 2018 following routine outage. Much investment has gone into repairs but there is now concern that a safety case will be hard to make. Options, including starting defueling this year, are under consideration and a decision is expected this summer.

11. Date of next meeting

11.1 The next meeting will be held online on 21st July 2021, 10.00 – 12.30.

12. Any other business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.30.

Action List

30th April 2021			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
2.1	Post agreed Note of the Meeting held 28 th January 2021 on Nuleaf website	CD	Done
29th July 2020			
8.2	Contact NDA re Local Economic & Social Impact Strategy and implications of Covid-19 crisis on local community	PM	John McNamara to pick this up with Andrew van der Lem at NDA.