

## **Note of the meeting of the Radioactive Waste Planning Group meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023, 10.00 – 12.00, online.**

### *Present:*

Heather Morrison	Cumberland Council
Steve Smith	Cumberland Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Essex County Council
Linda Marsh	Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Linda Townsend	Gloucestershire County Council
Richard Outram	Manchester City Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Ross Walker	Suffolk County Council
Rachel Whaley	Westmorland & Furness Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Catherine Draper	Nuleaf

### *Speakers*

Adam Draude	Department of Energy Security & Net Zero
Simon Boniface	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

1.1 PM welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Eleanor Godesar - Dorset Council, Bethany Rance – East Suffolk Council, Jonathan Holland – Flint District Council, Sion Roberts – Snowdonia National Park Authority, John Burton & Louise Martin – Somerset Council.

## **2. Note of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

2.1 The meeting note was held to be a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and would be posted on the Nuleaf website.

### ***Action: CD***

### **3. Matters arising**

3.1 All matters arising were completed or were dealt with under items on the agenda for this meeting.

### **4. Discussion with Simon Boniface, NDA, on Code of Practice on determining the time and pace of decommissioning**

4.1 PM welcomed Simon Boniface to the meeting. A copy of the Code of Practice had been circulated prior to the meeting. One of the aims of the document was to clarify terminology used. It also set out the NDA definition of tolerability of risk. The process described within the document is a result of discussion with Site Licence Companies (SLCs). It is a live document which will be subject to review in light in change of policy or circumstances.

4.2 The meeting opened up to questions:

4.2.1 *Q: Could you say something about the misuse of terms?*

A: Confusion arose with the term in-situ disposal, which in Canada refers to their use of the term 'in-situ decommissioning' which in reality means entombment. However, entombment is not a recognised decommissioning strategy and nor is it long-term deferral but is simply disposal 'in-situ', which isn't the same as the UK definition of in-situ disposal. Also – such disposals akin to entombment (often called walking away or abandonment) is not always the cheapest option as it means leaving waste which remains under regulatory control.

4.2.2 *Q: The document refers to stakeholder engagement but does not describe the level of engagement required. How do you ensure SLCs carry out meaningful engagement?*

A: The Code of Practice does not replace any NDA strategy or policy currently in operation, i.e. existing requirements for public and stakeholder consultation remain in place.

4.2.3 *Q: There will, on occasion, be some items which will be subject to planning consent, so there will be an element of control from the local authority.*

A: The Code of Practice is focused on the determination of decommissioning strategies in terms of when work is completed (timing) and how fast (pace) – requirements for planning consents remain unchanged.

4.2.4 *Q: What international aspects have been taken into consideration in producing the document?*

A: The Code of Practice words are entirely aligned with those in the revised IAEA Safety Guard No. 50 (SRS50) 'Selection of decommissioning Strategies' which is going for internal IAEA approval at present.

4.3 Adam Draude, DESNZ, confirmed that they are looking to ensure that the new UK radioactive waste management and nuclear decommissioning policy aligns its language with that from IAEA. Simon Boniface noted that the Code of Practice could be placed either on the NDA website or DESNZ.

4.4 *Q: The Radioactive Waste Management Policy consultation document states that "planning permission may be required for on-site disposal". On-site disposal of waste is a huge change for local communities, and it is important that planning permission is sought for disposal of any form of radioactive waste on a site as it will give the community and local authority the opportunity to ask questions and seek to influence the form of disposal if appropriate. It would be better if the Code of Practice stated that there was a need for planning permission for on-site disposal.*

A: We are not proposing any changes in planning regulation. If the phraseology is not clear as it could be we may need to review. The Radioactive Waste Management Policy is designed to set out the high-level expectations of what government expects of all sites in the UK. NDA's Code of Practice is something it wants SLCs to use. It may prove useful if the Code of Practice applied outside the NDA's estate, but it is not a statutory requirement.

4.5 Adam Draude confirmed that DESNZ and NDA are working closely together to ensure the policy and Code of Practice are aligned.

## 5. Local site updates

**Cumberland/Westmorland & Furness:** The new authority had come into being on 1<sup>st</sup> April, and staff transferred from the old authorities to the new. Steve Smith has been asked to remain with Cumberland for a few months to aid transition. The first meeting of the Cumberland Nuclear Issues Board will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> May. Views and directions will arise from that meeting. The whole Cumbria County Council Minerals and Waste Team transferred to Westmorland & Furness Council, and will for an interim period provide cover on land use aspects to both councils.

**Essex:** Two applications have been received from Magnox to remove the end dates for the importation of waste from the titles on the decision notices. An application will also be submitted to import empty waste containers to Bradwell, where they will be kept prior to being sent to Sizewell and Dungeness for filling, before being returned to Bradwell ILW Store for storage.

**Somerset:** Senior staff from the Hinkley Point C site were moving to Sizewell C site. The reactor pressure vessel had been delivered. EDF feel that they are on course to complete construction to the new timetable. Peak numbers of staff are being reached, with concomitant problems for housing and services in the local area.

**East Suffolk:** (provided by email after the meeting) Sizewell A – a planning application for the demolition of the turbine hall is expected to be submitted later in the year, and if consented Magnox plan to start demolition works in March 2024. EIA screening produced in January 2023, considered demolition to be EIA development.

All other areas had no updates to report.

## **6. Discussion on consultation on EIA and EIADR, Adam Draude, Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).**

6.1 PM welcomed Adam Draude to the meeting. Mr Draude explained that although the consultation on Environmental Outcome Reports was being led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, it reached across to DESNZ as it had implications for nuclear licensed sites. Key points from Mr Draude's presentation were:

- SEA and EIA would be replaced by an Environmental Outcomes Report with the view of providing a more streamlined system, moving away from EU derived law and placing greater focus on delivering environmental ambitions. This proposal only applies to England.
- The new system will have a selection of pre-determined environmental outcomes, which draw on the 25-year environmental plan. The applicant will match their development against the selection of outcomes.
- The powers in the Levelling Up Bill will be available to DESNZ to reform EIADR, should they wish to do so. It offers the opportunity to consider what could be improved about the current EIADR system, and how the interaction of the Town and Country Planning, nuclear decommissioning and other EIA regimes could be improved.

6.2 PM noted that the potential for different regimes to be developed by the different devolved administrations had the potential to impact the NDA as it's estate was spread across Great Britain.

6.3 The meeting opened up to questions:

6.3.1 *Q: Climate change is not listed in the possible environmental impacts.*

A: DLHUC is considering whether climate change should be an outcome. There is a desire that outcomes are measurable. Waste management and decommissioning can generate significant quantities of CO<sub>2</sub>, and the implications of this need to be considered.

*6.3.2 Q: The existing regime is robust, and using a set of pre-determined topics is unlikely to work effectively at a local level, and there may be consequences from not including local criteria in the outcomes list. There is a risk of 'dumbing down' and there is also no reference to human health in the new proposals.*

A: DLUHC are considering how to balance the tensions between national and local requirements. It would be of benefit if you could provide examples in a response to the consultation of where you foresee issues around local needs.

6.4 PM thanks Mr Draude for joining the meeting. Nuleaf will submit a response to the consultation and copy the response to DESNZ for their information.

***Action: PM***

## **7. Update on developments in radioactive waste management**

7.1 PM took the meeting through the paper which had been circulated in advance and which gave updates on: the NDA, UK Government, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs), fusion, regulatory matters and the decommissioning of AGR reactors.

7.2 It was noted that Nuleaf was holding a session, as part of the Steering Group meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June to discuss AMRs. Further information would be sought at that meeting on the new SMR competition, and the definition of SMRs and AMRs, and on the siting strategy.

***Action: PM***

7.3 It was noted that NWS had held a launch event for their new Corporate Strategy. The event had been focused on the supply chain and the invitation of other stakeholders appeared to be limited. The strategy had been published but there had been limited engagement beyond this event.

## 8. Update on the GDF siting process

8.1 PM took the meeting through the paper which had been circulated in advance and gave updates on Nuclear Waste Services, GDF Community Partnerships, CoRWM, and the international situation.

8.2 Concerns were note regarding the move by the Swedish government away from supporting Local Safety Committees, which are comparable to SSGs. The reasons behind this shift in policy were unclear.

## 9. Date of next meeting

9.1 The next meeting will be held online on 10.00 – 12.30, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## 10. Any other business

10.1 Use of secure web space: Nuleaf had created a secure section of its website where members could share examples of good practice. A member proposed that future consultation responses could be posted in Word format to permit people to add and share proposed changes.

**Action: PM**

The meeting closed at 11.48

### Action List

27 <sup>th</sup> April 2023			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
2.1	Post note of the 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 on Nuleaf website subject to amendments.	CD	Done
6.4	Copy response to EIA consultation to Adam Draude	PM	Done
7.2	Seek updates from DESNZ on SMR/AMR siting strategy, definition of SMR/AMR and new SMR competition at the meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> June	PM	Event on AMRs held.
10.1	Post consultation responses on secure web section.	PM	Done