

**Radioactive Waste Planning Group meeting, 31st January 2024  
10.00 – 12.30, online.**

**Present:**

Eren Balkir	Dorset Council
Eleanor Godesar	Dorset Council
Bethany Rance	East Suffolk Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Essex County Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Amartya Deb	Gloucestershire County Council
Linda Townsend	Gloucestershire County Council
Mandy Ramm	Lincolnshire County Council
Edward Wright	Lincolnshire County Council
Richard Outram	Manchester City Council
Jonathan Holland	North Wales Councils emergency planning
Sion Roberts	Snowdonia National Park Authority
John Burton	Somerset Council
Louise Martin	Somerset Council
Ross Walker	Suffolk County Council
Gillian Ellis King	South Gloucestershire Council
Tom Rice	South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Rachel Whaley	Westmorland & Furness Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Chloe Atkinson	Nuleaf
Steve Smith	Nuleaf Consultant

**Speakers**

Adam Draude	DESNZ
Jo Hodgson	NRS
Elly Joyce	NRS
Ruth Letourneur	NWS

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

1.1 PM opened the meeting. He welcomed Mandy Ramm and Edward Wright from Lincolnshire County Council who were attending their first Nuleaf meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Heather Morrison - Cumberland Council and Linda Marsh - Folkestone and Hythe Council. PM Noted that Linda had now left her post with the Romney Marsh Partnership. He wished her well and thanked her for her contribution to Nuleaf.

## **2. Minutes held on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

2.1 Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and will be posted to Nuleaf's website.

**ACTION: CA**

## **3. Matters arising**

3.1 All matters arising were complete. It was requested that Paul Skelton's email be circulated to RWPG members.

**ACTION: PM**

## **4. Update on potential changes to EIA and EIADR: Adam Draude, DESNZ**

4.1 Mr Draude delivered a presentation on EIADR, a mechanism whereby the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) grant consent to a decommissioning project based on an Environmental Statement prepared by the operator.

Government has been looking again at this issue as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are also required throughout decommissioning projects. EIADR requirements were brought in through the European Union, and there is therefore an opportunity to look again at this issue. In particular there is an ongoing review of Retained EU Law (REUL) across Government and plans by DHUHC to develop an 'outcomes based' system for Environmental Outcome Reports (EOR). The move towards Proportionate Regulatory Control (PRC) is also important context.

The outcomes for EOR are linked to environmental objectives in the 25-year Environment Plan but it is unclear if this system will work for EIADR which operates over long timescales. Previous Nuleaf feedback on EIADR and EIA has included:

- There is an apparent duplication of effort between aspects of the two processes.

- It is unclear how ONR actually regulates EIADR and the Environmental Management Plans on an ongoing basis.
- Local authorities may lack the capacity and capability to take EIADR from ONR at the point of delicensing.
- The preference of some Nuleaf members was that the EIADR regime ends at the end of the licence, at which point projects continue to be regulated under EIA when necessary.

Question: Are we likely to have the same regime across Great Britain given that the current review only applies to England and Wales? *EIADR applies across Great Britain but given devolved powers in Scotland there is the potential for divergence. This would not be an ideal outcome however and it would be hoped that any changes could be agreed by different governments.*

Question: Is there a need for a system to enable regular review and updates? *Given the long timescales (100 years plus) there is a need for plans to be reviewed and updated. However, there would be one EIA in operation that would set the baseline.*

Question: Has any thought been given for documents and how they may change over 100 years considering language and terms can change during this period? *This is a good point and one that Adam would take away and consider.*

Comment: As already noted, we must be mindful of the limited capacity of Local Planning Authorities to deal with the changes that will be required under PRC. Government and others should consider better resourcing of local authorities to help deliver this. Also, Planning Performance Agreements (PPA's) might be a means of covering additional resource needs.

Question: Work is progressing at Hinkley Point B and EDF has indicated it intends to begin an EIADR this summer. How would that be impacted on by any proposed changes? *Government will consider this and discuss with EDF.*

## **5. Progress with the Winfrith Masterplan: Elly Joyce and Jo Hodgson, NRS**

5.1 PM welcomed Elly and Jo to the meeting.

5.2 Their presentation noted:

- Magnox has now been rebranded as Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) to reflect the expanding remit with responsibility for Dounreay and AGR fleet decommissioning.
- Dounreay, Trawsfynydd and Winfrith are the NDA's three Lead and learn sites and all are looking at the planning aspects of decommissioning.

- At Winfrith it has been agreed that the site will return to heathland with public access and progress towards the end state is considerably more advanced than at other NDA locations.

The aim of the master plan is to provide a clear and consistent framework for the remediation of the site, supporting engagement between the site, local authority and regulators. Issues that it addresses include onsite storage of the waste, the impacts of the transport of waste off site and the interface between the site and the local innovation park and community.

The Winfrith master plan is split into two parts. The first section is an overview of the site providing a strategic vision and high-level objectives. The second part of the plan is more dynamic and considers the evolving activities on the site. This will include a section on stakeholder engagement and this part of the plan will be regularly updated.

5.3 Question to members: Is anything missing from the plan as outlined?

It was commented that the plan could consider:

- Defining the land area required for decommissioning and the opportunities for interim uses of parts of the site.
- Costs.
- How the public could have access to the Plan.

Question: Are there any significant differences in the Masterplans for the three Lead and Learn Sites? *We have attempted to be as consistent as possible, but this became a challenge as sites are all different due to lifetime plans and timescales.*

Question: How do you consider the impacts on other communities outside of immediate locality e.g. through movement of materials? *We have a broad understanding of the amount of waste that will be generated but the specific waste arisings and their destination will evolve over time. We are looking to engage both locally and on impacted communities elsewhere as the process moves forward.*

Question: Is the master planning approach now going to go forward on other sites? Is there a potential for other sites to be engaged in this? *This specific approach is not necessarily appropriate at all sites but it will be considered on a case by case basis.*

## **6. Presentation on the National Policy Statement (NPS) and the planning aspects of the geological disposal process: Ruth Letourneur, Nuclear Waste Services**

6.1 PM welcome Ruth to the meeting.

Ruth began by introducing herself and her role within Nuclear Waste Services. She then moved on to the planning aspects of the GDF. These are unique. When Geological Disposal Infrastructure was added into the Planning Act 2008 in 2015 it created a whole new category of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) with a community consent dimension. The NSIP covers both the deep boreholes that will be required and the GDF infrastructure itself. The National Policy Statement (NPS) is also unique in that it sits outside the suite of Energy NPS'.

The siting process was now live, with 3 Community Partnerships in Lincolnshire and Cumberland following the withdrawal from Allerdale. Investigations and site characterisations are progressing using a variety of techniques. These technical investigations are running in parallel with community engagement, and each community is taking this forward in different ways.

The interface between the two elements of the programme are interesting. For example, the statement that there will be a Test of Public Support in Theddlethorpe in 2027 will mean that this takes place before the information from the deep boreholes has become available.

Questions: Is there going to be one GDF for the whole of the UK? *The policy allows for more than one GDF but the intention is that we will only have one for the UK due to the complexity and the cost. Scotland has a separate policy of new surface disposal.*

Question: Will the DCO cover all boreholes or is it specific to one site. *There will be one covering all boreholes.*

Question: We now have a large new nuclear programme planned for the UK which may generate large amounts of different types of waste. This is on a greater scale than when the policy was drafted. Are there implications for the GDF from this change? *The policy covers existing and new build waste, and potentially covers other materials that have not yet been designated as waste, such as Spent Fuel and Plutonium. If the new nuclear programme is larger or generates different wastes that will have to be factored into the planning and design of the facility.*

Question: CoRWM appears to believe that an Underground Rock Laboratory (URL) is required in the UK, particularly for the more complex geology off Cumbria. NWS seems to take a different view. Can you say more about the current position?

*Discussions will continue between NWS, regulators and CoRWM on the requirements for research and characterisation. The objectives can be met in a variety of ways.*

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

PM introduced the paper and highlighted some of the items. No questions or comments were made on the paper.

## **8. Update on the GDF siting process**

PM introduced the paper and highlighted some of the items. No questions or comments were made on the paper.

## **9. Local Site Updates**

**East Suffolk Council** – The scoping report for our demolition of the turbine hall at Sizewell A has been published. Sizewell C got the formal go ahead in recent weeks though discussions are ongoing about funding.

**Essex County Council** – Interested in the recent consultation on new nuclear siting which seems to propose a move away from a site-specific policy to criteria-based policy. The implications of this for Essex and the Bradwell site will need to be considered and thought will need to be given to how the Council might seek to promote the site for new nuclear development.

**Gloucester City Council** - We have an ongoing planning application for the erection of temporary waste stores and buildings at Berkeley and this should be completed by the end of February under delegated powers.

**Lincolnshire County Council**- The GDF Community Partnership has been meeting regularly. We are looking at the vision for the area and how the GDF fits into this, with a focus on flood defences and wider infrastructure.

**Dorset Council** –Lots of detailed modelling on the natural environment is underway which will be shared in 1-2 months with Natural England.

**Somerset** - Hinkley Point C is in the process of a consultation exercise around a second material amendment to the DCO. At the SSG meeting last week, Bill Hamilton spoke about the production by NRS of a 10-year strategy document identifying visions, challenges, and opportunities. Bill also mentioned that NRS have done some

work with a polling company seeking community views around futures of sites and decommissioning.

### **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next RWPG would be held via Teams on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### **11. Any other Business**

PM mentioned that he had met with Matt Meldrum, a former member of the RWPG who now works for NRS. Matt will be attending the next meeting to discuss biodiversity net gain and had asked if it would be possible to join future meetings of the RWPG as an observer. Members expressed some concerns that the presence of NRS may limit discussion of some issues. It was agreed that members could discuss this proposal more with Matt when he attended the April RWPG.

Members were asked whether they would prefer notification of future meetings by email or via a diary invitation. It was agreed that email notifications would be sent out alongside a separate Teams link. A reminder would also be sent.

### **Action List**

<b>31<sup>st</sup> January 2024</b>			
Item	Action		Outcome
2.1	Upload RWPG minutes to Nuleaf Website	CA	Completed
3.1	Paul Skelton email to be circulated to RWPG.	PM	Completed