

**Radioactive Waste Planning Group meeting, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024  
10.30 – 12.00, online.**

**Attendees**

Heather Morrison	Cumberland Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumberland Council
Trevor Badley	Dorset Council
Emma Devereux	East Suffolk Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Essex County Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Tse Wau	Folkestone and Hythe Council
Amartya Deb	Gloucestershire County Council
Bryan Geake	Kent County Council
Edward Wright	Lincolnshire County Council
Richard Outram	Manchester City Council
Jonathan Holland	North Wales Councils
John Burton	Somerset Council
Louise Martin	Somerset Council
Sion Roberts	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Jon Severs	South Gloucestershire Council
Ross Walker	Suffolk County Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Chloe Atkinson	Nuleaf
Steve Smith	Nuleaf

**Speakers**

Matthew Meldrum	Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS)
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## **1. Welcome and apologies.**

1.1 PM welcomed members and noted that the meeting would be shorter than usual as certain presentations had had to be postponed due to the impact of the General Election.

Apologies had been received from Eleanor Godesar - Dorset Council; Philip Ridley - East Suffolk Council; Paul Hickson - Somerset Council; and Sion Roberts – Snowdonia National Park Authority.

1.2 Phil noted the sad passing of Linda Townsend of Gloucestershire County Council. Linda had been a long standing and popular member of this group and would be greatly missed. On behalf of Nuleaf, Phil had passed on his condolences to her family and colleagues. A donation had been made to Cancer Research UK in her memory.

## **2. Minutes held on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

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 Matters arising are all in hand.

3.2 There were a few points from the minutes of the last meeting that Matthew Meldrum was going to follow up on during his update. Additionally, Item 5 in the minutes proposed a date for a meeting with the NDA and Avison Young.

## **4. Update from NRS**

4.1 PM welcomed Matthew Meldrum from Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS).

Matt gave the Group an update on recent NRS activities and his role in supporting work on planning within the organisation. This includes providing guidance and support to the various sites including around the submission of planning applications. Key updates are:

- NRS is still progressing with proposals for onsite disposal in below ground structures at Winfrith and Trawsfynydd. Applications for Environmental Permits are likely to be submitted later this year.
- The election of a new Government may have implications for the NDA Group, but no clear signals have emerged yet. They are keeping an eye on proposals for EIADR reform. The devolved dimension of NRS' work is also significant.
- Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an important issue across the NDA estate, as discussed at the last RWPG. NRS continues to work on baselines of biodiversity and to understand the constraints on sites. A key part of the strategic approach is to identify suitable parcels of land off-site and then work with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and landowner.
- To respond to an issue raised at the last RWPG, NRS is working with EDF and the NDA to look at how the estate will change in coming years, and what the implications of that are for BNG e.g. in terms of land availability. One critical issue is to ensure that no land is committed to more than one purpose.

Matt then invited questions and comment:

*Comment from Charlotte Rushmere: My local authority (Essex) received funding from DLUHC to consider the scope for BNG to go from a mandatory 10% to 20% for NSIPs. I would be happy to share the work with the Group when ready, probably in August.*

**ACTION: CR to send when ready to be circulated to the Group.**

*Question: Is there a timeline for when you hope to be in a position to have a good understanding of what BNG means for individual sites?*

We are focussing in on planned developments at the sites over the next 5 years, trying to get a clear picture of what the implications of this are for BNG but at the same time we are recognising that things are constantly changing so our plans need to be flexible. We are also looking at the longer term but that is a more high-level exercise.

*Response: Thank you – the five-year timeline is helpful for us in Somerset as that coincides with the Local Plan cycle – we are working on a new Local Plan just now following the creation of a unitary authority. We will be looking at sites for BNG as part of that and so it would be helpful if I could share with you the local contacts who will be working on that. Would that be helpful or are you still looking at the strategic level?*

That would be helpful. As noted, I am not the BNG expert at NRS, but I can put your contacts in touch with my colleagues.

**ACTION: LM to contact MM**

*Question: At the last meeting we had some discussion on the preparation of baseline surveys for all sites. Could you give us an update on those and whether they will be shared with local authority partners?*

The baseline surveys were done towards the end of last year before the final metrics for the preparation of the baseline were set out by Government legislation. We are looking at them again in light of this to check that we don't need to make any amendments. So, to answer your question we are starting to share those baselines with local authorities. At the same time, it is the case that there isn't a great deal happening at some sites, so the conversations aren't urgent. I will chat to the BNG team and see if we can pull together their reports and maps that could be shared at a national level with groups like this.

**ACTION: MM to check with BNG colleagues about the scope for sharing information.**

*Comment: Two final comments from a Nuleaf perspective: Firstly, we have a members area on our website and so this can be used for the sharing of information on BNG. Also, if Nuleaf could help to facilitate a discussion between NRS and local authority biodiversity staff then we would be happy to do so.*

Phil thanked Matt for his presentation and looked forward to hearing from him again at the November RWPG.

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

5.1. PM presented the paper on radioactive waste management and highlighted the range of engagement work that had been commissioned by Nuleaf and the NDA.

Phil had been interviewed by Baringa as part of their review for the NDA of the Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) and would be taking part in a focus group discussion in the near future. He also noted that the University of Aberdeen has been commissioned by the NDA to investigate the scope for the use of deliberative democracy approaches within a nuclear context.

Nuleaf had commissioned Steve Smith and Doug Bamsey to look at local authority engagement on nuclear decommissioning and waste management. As part of this work, Steve had facilitated a discussion at the Nuleaf Annual Gathering.

Steve Smith added that the discussion in Llandudno had been useful and had shown a range of views among members about how engagement could be improved. The next phase would be to look at examples of how things work in other countries and other industries, and also to have a conversation with some people within the NDA. The plan was to bring the emerging findings to the September Steering Group meeting to get member views.

PM also noted:

- The **NDA Stakeholder Summit** will take place in Manchester on the 17th and 18th September. Nuleaf has been invited to participate in the opening panel discussion and has also invited NDA CEO David Peattie to meet with our members, as has occurred at previous Summits.
- The joint SDR and IWM TOG which Steve Smith attended on Nuleaf's behalf. Key items of discussion at the meeting were around the launch of the Government policy on decommissioning and radioactive substances, which was finally published in May; and the NDA's ongoing work on reviewing its waste stores. On the latter the RWPG agreed it would be useful to arrange a discussion with the NDA lead at a future meeting.
- There would be a member meeting with Great British Nuclear (GBN) this afternoon. There had been a high level of interest in this.
- The new Labour Government at Westminster has so far maintained the previous departmental structure and so DESNZ would continue to be the sponsor department for the NDA. Ed Miliband had been appointed as Secretary of State, and Lord Hunt had been confirmed as the Minister covering the nuclear portfolio – both decommissioning and new nuclear.
- The Annual Gathering in Llandudno had been well attended by members and the feedback on the meeting very positive. A proposal for the 2025 Gathering would be brought to the September Steering Group.
- Avison Young and the NDA had tried to join the April RWPG to provide a planning update, but this had to be curtailed because of technical issues. It was agreed that a stand-alone meeting, online, would be set up for the 6<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- **PM to request presentation from NDA on Waste Storage.**
- **PM/CA to confirm 6<sup>th</sup> September meeting with AY and NDA.**

#### **6 Update on the GDF sitting process.**

6.1 PM tabled the paper. He noted it had been a quiet period for the GDF programme due to the election, but highlighted two items:

- It had been announced that the Development Consent Order (DCO) process for the GDF boreholes was moving forward with an intention to submit the DCO as early as 2027. This would enable drilling to commence by 2029 or 2030.
- The EURAD research programme on radioactive waste, of which Nuleaf has been a member, has now ended. A new 5-year programme is planned, but it is not clear yet whether Nuleaf will be part of this given the UK's exit from the EU.

## 7. Local Site Updates

**Somerset** – EDF has recently run the second round of consultation on their proposals for the decommissioning of Hinkley Point B and they are now reviewing the feedback received. They anticipate submitting their EIADR application to the ONR later this year. Additionally, discussions have been held about consolidating and utilising the existing waste facilities at the station. Finally, a new site director has taken up post at the site.

**Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness** – Updates are:

- There have been some issues with the Sellafield Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) following local government reform, but these have now been resolved.
- The design guide for Sellafield has been updated and is currently going through internal processes before being finalised.
- They are having conversations with Sellafield about how to apply Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This discussion of the issue in the RWPG is useful in supporting that.
- The business case for the offsite rail head is being prepared.
- There is a restructure ongoing within Cumberland Council and it has been announced that Jane Meek, who was Head of Planning, is leaving the authority. Michael Barry, the Assistant Director, is taking over.
- The new Copeland Local Plan is about to be adopted and an early consultation on a new Westmorland and Furness Local Plan has just been launched. We are keen to share the consultation with other local authorities and have been in touch with Nuleaf to discuss how this can be done. The consultation will run through until September.
- Finally, a new Minerals and Waste Plan for the whole of Cumberland will be developed in the future.

It was noted that Rachel Whaley is seeking support from members for upcoming consultations. If any members are interested in being added to the database for when their input is needed, they should contact Phil, Chloe, or Rachel directly.

**Dorset Council** – NRS are progressing with preparation of the decommissioning and restoration planning application for Winfrith, and we are anticipating submission at the end of this year. The Council is also meeting with NRS to discuss the site masterplan and issues relating to the environmental statements for the EIA regs and the EIADR. Finally, the Council has received a planning application to regularise the construction of a concrete and grout plant that was constructed in the wrong place.

**Essex County Council** – The latest waste importation of Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) has been signed off, consisting of 134 packages from Dungeness. We are also awaiting the next load from Sizewell but that isn't due imminently.

**ACTION:** Terry requested the PowerPoint presentation on the Netherlands nuclear store that was noted earlier. PM will send the link to this.

**Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council** – We're still determining the planning application for the demolition of the turbine hall and the electrical annex, and if consented, the works are anticipated to start in 2024 and finish in late 2025.

**Lincolnshire County Council**- It has been quite quiet in terms of the GDF process given the General Election. One area of work has been to consider the approach to the Test of Public Support (TOPS) that has been proposed for 2027 and we have been considering international examples, particularly Canada where one Community (Ignace) has voted to accept the proposals and the other (South Bruce) is due to vote soon. Another area of interest is the Hosting Agreement the community have signed with the developer which sets out what they would expect in return for accepting the development e.g. in terms of infrastructure, employment, and education. Also, the Theddlethorpe Community Partnership is in the process of appointing a new chair.

## 8. Date of Next Meeting

8.1 The next RWPG will be held via Teams on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November from 10am – 12:30pm.

## 9. Any other Business

9.1 No items of AOB were raised.

## Action List

18 <sup>th</sup> July 2024			
Item	Action		Outcome
2.1	Upload RWPG minutes to Nuleaf Website	CA	Completed
4.1	Louse Martin to contact Matt Meldrum re: BNG work around Hinkley.	LM/MM	Update at meeting
4.1	Matt Meldrum to check with NRS colleagues when it will be possible to share their site level work on BNG	MM	Update at meeting
4.1	Essex work on BNG and NSIPs to be shared	CR	Charlotte has now left Essex CC.

5.1	PM to request presentation from NDA on Waste Storage	PM	Done – agreed for next Steering Group meeting
5.1	Nuleaf to confirm 6 <sup>th</sup> September meeting with AY and NDA.	PM/CA	Confirmed. Information sent out.
7.	Nuleaf to circulate link to presentation on Netherlands waste store.	PM/CA	Done.