

## ITEM 7: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



### Report to RWPG, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

This report provides an update on recent developments in radioactive waste management. It covers:

- NDA Update;
- NDA Strategy 4;
- BEIS Update;
- Brexit and the nuclear sector;
- Magnox Update;
- ONR Update;
- Planning News; and
- Decommissioning of AGR stations.

#### 1. NDA update

1.1 Davide Stronati has been appointed as the NDA's first Director of Sustainability. Davide joins NDA from Mott MacDonald. During that time he spent a number of years on secondment to Anglian Water, where he led work in developing their highly regarded carbon strategy. He is also Chair of the Sustainability Guidance Panel at the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE).

Nuleaf's Executive Director held an online meeting with Davide on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, and it has been agreed that Davide will participate in the Steering Group meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

1.2 It is expected that the NDA's first report on sustainability will be published in late January or early February. Nuleaf will circulate this to members when available. Rather than a formal paper setting out performance over the last year, the report will offer both a reflection on progress and a vision for the way forward. The NDA's approach to sustainability reporting will be developed over the next year, and this is likely to include the creation of a set of indicators of progress.

1.3 The consultation on NDA's **Draft Business Plan 2021-24**<sup>1</sup> closes on the 1st of February. Nuleaf submitted a response which was circulated to members for comment.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/nuclear-decommissioning-authority-business-plan-2021-to-2024>

1.4 Mark Rouse has been appointed as the Managing Director of Dounreay Site Restoration Limited (DSRL) when it becomes an NDA subsidiary company in April<sup>2</sup>. Prior to his work at Dounreay, Mr. Rouse has acted as Managing Director of Dounreay since 2020 and was previously President of Cavendish Nuclear Japan.

1.5 It was announced on January 19<sup>th</sup> that the NDA will create new Waste and Transport divisions.

Following on from the launch of an integrated waste management programme in November 2020, a single division will be created, operating across the waste lifecycle from treatment and packaging to storage, transport and disposal. The aim is to build group capability, simplify operations and deliver greater value. Corhyn Parr will lead the work to develop the new division on behalf of the NDA and will work closely with the CEOs of LLWR and RWM to determine how it should be shaped.

NDA will also create a single nuclear transport division, **Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS)**. This will begin operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and operate Direct Rail Services (DRS) and Pacific Nuclear Transport Limited (PTNL). NTS's primary objective will be to support the NDA mission through a range of activities including transporting spent AGR fuel from UK power stations to Sellafield, moving irradiated fuels from Dounreay and returning reprocessing products to customers overseas.

## 2. NDA Strategy 4

2.1 A total of 75 responses were received to the consultation on NDA draft Strategy. A final version is now in development. In addition to some textual changes to reflect the consultation responses it has been decided that:

- The Strategy will include a new, stand-alone section on Sustainability and Carbon.
- The NDA will undertake a review of its stakeholder engagement, with an emphasis on encouraging more participation from under-represented groups.
- The Strategy will provide a clearer statement on the management of staff transport.
- A full IIA will be undertaken on Strategy 5, as opposed to the more limited refresh of the Assessment applied to Strategy 4.

The revised **Value Framework** will not be published alongside Strategy 4 but will be released at a later date following further discussion with stakeholders.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mark-rouse-appointed-as-managing-director-of-dounreay>

### 3. BEIS Update

3.1 A public consultation on the new **Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Substances Policy** is expected to be launched shortly. Nuleaf will prepare a response to the consultation and will hold an engagement event with BEIS, online, on the 24<sup>th</sup> February.

3.2 The long-awaited **Energy White Paper**<sup>3</sup> was launched by the UK Government on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020. This builds on the **Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution**<sup>4</sup> published on the 18<sup>th</sup> November.

The primary objective of the White Paper is to drive moves towards a 'net zero' energy system through action across energy generation, industry, transport and the domestic sector. By 2030 it sets targets for:

- 40GW of offshore wind, representing a quadrupling of current capacity.
- 5GW of low carbon hydrogen.
- Ending the sale of petrol and diesel engine cars and vans.
- The Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) of 10Mt of carbon in four industrial clusters.
- Development of at least one more large nuclear station. Government is looking to develop new funding mechanisms to reduce the costs of conventional nuclear by at least 30%.

The Paper also commits to:

- Consideration of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs). A £385 million **Advanced Nuclear Fund** has been announced. This will see £215 million allocated to develop a domestic SMR design and up to £170 million to a research and development programme on AMRs. A further £40 million will be provided to develop regulatory frameworks and support the UK's supply chain.
- The construction of a commercially viable fusion power plant by 2040.

The White Paper envisages that electricity demand could double by 2050 as heat and transport are decarbonised. Two scenarios of the future energy mix are offered. Both require a huge increase in renewable generation but also at least a doubling of nuclear capacity. As any new nuclear development is likely to be on or adjacent to existing NDA land, the proposals have clear implications for sites and for the waste inventory.

3.3 Alok Sharma has relinquished his role as Business Secretary to work full time as President of COP26, the major UN climate summit being held in Glasgow this autumn. Kwasi Kwarteng is promoted from Energy Minister to Business Secretary,

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution/title#point-3-delivering-new-and-advanced-nuclear-power>

with former International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan replacing Mr Kwarteng as Energy Minister.

#### **4. Brexit and the nuclear sector**

4.1 Following the agreement of a new relationship between the UK and European Union, Government has provided information on the implications of this for the nuclear sector. This includes guidance on the shipping of radioactive waste and spent fuel<sup>5</sup>, radioactive sources and nuclear materials. Information on radioactive waste disposal is also provided<sup>6</sup>.

#### **5. Magnox Update**

5.1 The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report on the **NDA's management of the Magnox contract** was released on the 27<sup>th</sup> November<sup>7</sup>.

The report estimates that the mismanagement of the contract cost £140 million (almost £20 million more than the previous estimate) and that this episode *'seriously damaged the NDA's reputation'*. The report also notes that the estimated cost of decommissioning the UK's civil nuclear sites has now risen to £132Bn and will take 120 years to complete, with estimates for the clean-up of Magnox sites also increasing to between £6.9Bn and £8.7Bn. While the Committee supports the aspiration of the NDA to accelerate decommissioning, it states that *'We are concerned that the NDA's ambition... will be hindered by the perpetual lack of knowledge about the condition of the sites.'*

#### **6. ONR Update**

6.1 The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> December that it plans to align its leadership structure to other nuclear regulators around the world with a new combined post of Chief Nuclear Inspector/Chief Executive<sup>8</sup>.

Current Chief Nuclear Inspector Mark Foy will take up the new combined post, subject to government approval, and will be supported by current Deputy Chief Executive, Sarah High. A new senior regulatory role, Executive Director of Operations/Deputy Chief Inspector, will also be established. The changes will come

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/shipping-radioactive-waste-and-spent-fuel?utm\\_source=6b810aee-920e-4a25-941d-e646ac5d1abe&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/shipping-radioactive-waste-and-spent-fuel?utm_source=6b810aee-920e-4a25-941d-e646ac5d1abe&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transboundary-impacts-of-radioactive-waste-disposal-reporting-and-notification-obligations-euratom-article-37>

<sup>7</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmpubacc/653/65302.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://news.onr.org.uk/2020/12/new-leadership-structure-for-onr/>

into effect later this year, with current Chief Executive Adrienne Kelbie stepping down.

Nuleaf's Director has written to Mark Foy welcoming him to his new role and offering some thoughts on how ONR could enhance its engagement with local government.

6.2 A response was submitted to the ONR consultation on the **revised interpretation of 'bulk quantities'** in the licensing of storage and disposal of radioactive material<sup>9</sup>. The consultation closed on the 17<sup>th</sup> January.

## 7. Planning News

7.1 Nuleaf's Executive Director, along with officers from South Gloucestershire, Maldon and Copeland Councils, met with NDA on the 27<sup>th</sup> November to discuss plans for an NDA **'Town and Country Planning Group'** and the integration of **Social Value** into the NDA's work.

The discussion was positive. Key points made by Nuleaf/local authorities included that:

- Ongoing and active dialogue on how to best advance the agenda of economic, social and environmental benefit is needed. Planning as an important component in this, both in terms of statutory policy but also wider place making.
- Magnox has no planners in house. This is a significant weakness and limits the effectiveness of their engagement on these issues.
- Work should be undertaken to better define the terms we use. For example, Social Value is, in terms of legislation, about procurement but often when we use it we are also referring to the wider socio-economic and environmental benefits to host communities.
- NDA should recognise the resource constraints on Nuleaf and local authorities and that these limit the ability to engage. Some modest additional support by NDA could assist and is likely to be a more cost-effective means of taking this work forward than employing consultants.

7.2 Nuleaf responded to two planning consultations being undertaken by the UK Government:

- Changes to the current planning system<sup>10</sup> – which set out proposals intended to improve the effectiveness of planning; and
- Consultation on the Waste Management Plan for England<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ONR-bulk-quantities-response.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

<sup>11</sup> <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/waste-management-plan-for-england/>

Nuleaf has also submitted responses to current consultations on the **West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan**<sup>12</sup> and the **South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020**<sup>13</sup>.

## **8. Decommissioning of AGR stations**

8.1 Following discussions at Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group regarding the decommissioning of the B station, at the direction of the Steering Group, Nuleaf has made contact with EDF requesting a meeting to discuss their proposals.

A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 10.00 – 12.00. BEIS and NDA have been invited to attend. If you have not already registered please contact the secretariat.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/document-library/consultation-responses/consultation-responses-2021>

<sup>13</sup> [Consultation Responses 2021 :NuLeAF](#)