

LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING

Minutes of the Steering Group meeting held online on 9th September, 2020

Present:

Cllr Matthew Riddle	South Gloucestershire Council (Chair)
Cllr David Moore	Copeland Borough Council (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Eddy Newman	Manchester City Council (Vice-Chair NFLA)
Cllr Marion Fitzgerald	Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr David Monk	Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Cllr David Blackburn	Leeds City Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council
Richard Griffin	Allerdale Borough Council
Steve Smith	Copeland Borough Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council
Lisa Chandler	East Suffolk Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Gavin Kingsnorth	Maldon District Council
Sean Morris	Manchester City Council
Katharine Schollar	Sedgemoor District Council
Louise Martin	Somerset County Council
John Burton	Somerset West & Taunton Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Cameron Clow	Suffolk County Council
Dylan Llewellyn Jones	Ynys Mon County Council
Philip Matthews	NuLeAF
Catherine Draper	NuLeAF

Speakers

Sir Nigel Thrift	CoRWM
Dr Ray Kemp	CoRWM
Stephen Tromans, QC	CoRWM
Andrew Walters	CoRWM
Danny Fox	NDA

Observers

Simon Napper	RWM
Rachel Roffe	RWM

	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
	<p>Cllr Riddle welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through protocols for running the meeting online.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Cllr David Southward – Cumbria County Council, Cllr Craig Rivett & Lisa Chandler – East Suffolk Council, Graham Hammond- Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Linda Townsend – Gloucestershire County Council, Cllr Michelle Campbell – SCCORS, Cllr Mike Caswell & Doug Bamsey – Sedgemoor District Council, Jon Beckett – Stroud District Council.</p>	
2.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JUNE 2020	
2.1	The Minutes were approved as a true record and will be posted on the NuLeAF website.	CD
3.	MATTERS ARISING	
3.1	5.3.8 This had been completed and Copeland BC had met with NDA.	
3.2	All other matters arising had been addressed or were in hand. Comments were noted on the action list at the end of the Minutes.	
4.	UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF UK RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY, KEITH DUNCAN, BEIS	
4.1	The Chair welcomed Keith Duncan (KD) to the meeting.	
4.2	Work on the review of UK radioactive waste policy had been paused as staff had moved on to work on the Covid-19 response. Work was now resuming and it was hoped that a public consultation would take place either at the end of this year or early in 2021.	
4.3	The review will look at updating policies supporting decommissioning and radioactive waste management including near surface disposal of Intermediate Level Waste, on-site disposal of radioactive waste, regulation of sites following release from ONR regulation and Magnox reactor decommissioning.	
4.4	Prior to the public consultation, NuLeAF will have the opportunity to engage with the development of the policy through Phil Matthew's membership of the Radioactive Substances Policy Group.	

4.5 4.6 4.7 4.8	<p>In response to a question KD confirmed that the revised policy would take account of Small and Advanced Modular Reactors and other emerging technologies.</p> <p>BEIS was aware that the provision of community benefits or investment was an area that would be raised by stakeholders in responding to the revised policy. However, KD was not, at this stage, able to say whether the revised policy would contain any reference to community benefits.</p> <p>It was pointed out that the timing of this policy review could impact detrimentally to the GDF siting process, as near-surface disposal could be championed as an alternative to deep geological disposal. KD said that BEIS were aware that their messaging needed to take into account the GDF siting process and NDA Strategy 4. Deep geological disposal would always be necessary as some of the wastes were not suitable for near-surface disposal.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Duncan for his contribution and looked forward to a further update at the December Steering Group meeting.</p>	
5.	CoRWM WORK PROGRAMME	
5.1 5.2 5.2.1	<p>The Chair welcomed Sir Nigel Thrift (NT), Steven Tromans, Andrew Walters and Ray Kemp to the meeting.</p> <p>NT thanked the Chair for the invitation to join the meeting. His presentation covered: an overview of CoRWM, the current and future work programme, the geological disposal facility (GDF) siting process, the role of local authorities and engagement with communities and international good practice. The presentation is posted on NuLeAF's website.</p> <p>Key points from the presentation were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoRWM was set up in 2003. It is an advisory committee to the UK government and 3 devolved administrations. It comprises 12 highly experienced members and offers independent advice. • CoRWM's remit includes community and public engagement. • Nearly every country has a similar body that gives independent and therefore trustworthy advice. 	

- CoRWM's position paper on the costs of a GDF is being reviewed. A number of other position papers are also in preparation.
- Publication of the CoRWM position paper on regulation should coincide with the government review of UK radioactive waste policy.
- The revisions to the CIL contained within the Planning White Paper currently under consultation have the potential to impact on major infrastructure projects including near-surface disposal.
- CoRWM recognises the potential for near-surface disposal to impact on communities.

5.3 The meeting opened up to questions:

5.3.1 *Q: Could you please tell me CoRWM's view on the element of the HAW inventory from Scotland which is not suitable for near-surface disposal?*

A: Scottish policy at present is to keep waste near the site since most of it is ILW or LLW. The exception to this is some material at Dounreay which at present does not have a disposal solution.

5.3.2 *Q: Given the potential for GDF to be located under the sea-bed, will you be looking at the international aspects of the UK geological disposal siting process?*

A: There are some issues in how a sub-sea GDF would be regulated and we have flagged this up in position papers. Whilst the situation is complicated under international law, the issues are not insuperable. It is quite possible for an offshore facility to be constructed within UK waters.

5.3.3 *Q: Does CoRWM think it would be a good idea for UK government to fund an NGO forum to act as a critical body as happens in some other countries?*

A: BEIS already funds an NGO Forum.

5.3.4 *Q: Is there a 'Plan B' if the current GDF siting process fails?*

A: It is not CoRWM's role to make policy.

5.3.5 *Q: With regard to the proposed changes to the planning regime and infrastructure levy - the new regime is reliant on uplift in land values and contributions are paid at end of process. A GDF will take decades to complete so communities would have to wait decades to get any benefit. Does CoRWM think there needs to be some sort of S106 solution in place?*

	<p>A: The content of the renewed infrastructure levy is unsure. The emphasis on planning reform is not being directed at GDF but at chronic need for housing. There may be several layers of contributions and commitments for GDF communities. CoRWM are clear that benefits are needed early on to make this work as the engagement phase is very demanding. We will reflect on this in forthcoming papers.</p>	
5.3.6	<p><i>Q: I note that your working groups includes a community strand and I hope that includes local authorities – they can be forgotten in engagement. We would welcome a push from you to encourage joined up thinking at a site and local level. Looking towards regeneration plans, one of the things we’ve been discussing at NuLeAF is the adoption of the master-plan approach. We’re also interested in identifying opportunities for the interim use of sites. There is a lot that your Committee could help achieve.</i></p> <p>A: CoRWM will look at how the White Paper addresses site and interim end states. These are important points and we will take them away for consideration. The White Paper will provide an important opportunity to address the problems caused by policy vacuum or inconsistency.</p>	
5.3.7	<p><i>Q: Transportation of radioactive waste has the potential to impact on many communities outside of those which host nuclear sites. Is this something you monitor?</i></p> <p>A: In producing a position paper on transport CoRWM recognises the importance of the subject. We are clear that the transportation of radioactive waste from the site of storage to the site of disposal is important and a solution will be required.</p>	
5.4	<p>The Vice-Chair recommended that members considered inviting CoRWM to give a presentation to their council.</p>	
5.5	<p>The Chair thanked the members of CoRWM for their presentation and they left the meeting.</p>	
6.	<p>SPENT FUEL AND NUCLEAR MATERIALS, DANNY FOX, NDA</p>	
6.1	<p>The Chair welcome Danny Fox, Head of Nuclear Fuel Cycle at NDA to the meeting.</p>	
6.2	<p>Key points from the presentation were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These strategic themes tend to be Sellafield focused as this is where much of the materials are stored or are 	

being consolidated to. The exception is uranium as most of the NDA's uranium is held at Capenhurst.

- The next decade will see most of EDF Energy's AGR power stations shut down. These will have a lot of fuel in the core and that will need to be moved to Sellafield. NDA is working closely with EDF Energy to increase the rate with which NDA takes fuel.
- All of the Magnox stations have now been defueled and the NDA expects to complete reprocessing in about a year from now.
- NDA strategy is to put plutonium beyond reach which means putting it in a form which suitable for storage and eventual disposal in a GDF. The position paper published in 2019 sets out the potential long-term options for plutonium and the development work being done by the NDA.
- There is a significant inventory of uranium. Most of the NDA owned material is stored at Capenhurst. Customer owned material has arisen predominantly from reprocessing at Thorp. Material is returned to customers who may choose to export the material re-enrichment prior to reuse in the nuclear fuel cycle.

6.3 The meeting opened up to questions:

6.3.1 *Q: What is the scale, and who is responsible for wastes arising from the defence programme?*

A: The decision about what to do with spent fuel from submarines sits with MoD. NDA receives and manages these fuels from MOD at Sellafield. These fuels are not compatible with processing in the existing or shutdown reprocessing facilities. We also store some depleted uranium on behalf of MoD. We expect to manage this material alongside NDA material. Unless there is a rise in the price of uranium it is likely that in the future some of the material held by NDA will be declared as waste.

6.3.2 *Q: In terms of the materials for disposal in a GDF is there any sense of whether materials will definitely be consigned to GDF and when will the decision be made.*

A: For planning purposes we are assuming that this material will go to a GDF and we work closely with RWM to understand the implications of this. This approach doesn't preclude a "better solution" being found prior to a GDF being available to accept the waste.

6.4	The Chair thanked Danny for his presentation and for joining the meeting.	
7.	UPDATE ON GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY SITING PROCESS	
7.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Siting Process; • update on activities at RWM; • NuLeAF Briefing Paper on the Inventory for Geological Disposal; • update on CoRWM; and • International activities update. 	
7.2	NuLeAF had prepared and circulated a Briefing Paper on the inventory for disposal in a geological disposal facility. It was noted that reprocessing of Magnox spent fuel would now end in 2021. Subject to this amendment the Steering Group approved the paper which would be published on the NuLeAF website.	CD
7.3	The Executive Director advised the meeting that the AGM of the GMF Group would take place online on 6 th October. NuLeAF members were welcome to participate and NuLeAF would circulate the meeting invitation when it was released.	CD
8.	UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT	
8.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting and provided covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update on activities at NDA; • the launch of Strategy 4 Consultation; • Sellafield update; • Magnox Decommissioning Strategy; • publication of ONR Strategy; • meeting with SSG Forum; and • NuLeAF Briefing Paper on Planning Obligations. 	
8.2	Under section 6 of the meeting paper the Steering Group was asked to agree that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NuLeAF should co-opt, as an observer, the Chair of the UK SSG Forum to the Steering Group. • NuLeAF's Chair should be co-opted, as an observer, to the SSG Forum. 	PM/CD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual meeting involving the SSG Chairs and NuLeAF should be organised, to discuss issues of common interest and share experiences. This should be held approximately 6 months after the annual NDA Stakeholder Summit. NDA will help organise this meeting. <p>The Steering Group agreed unanimously to support the proposals.</p>	
8.3	NuLeAF had circulated a draft Briefing Paper on Planning Obligations. Comments had been received and the Steering Group was asked to adopt the paper. This was agreed unanimously and the paper would be published on the NuLeAF website.	CD
8.4	It was agreed that the Executive Director would draft a response to the consultation on the Planning White Paper which would be circulated to members and discussed at the next Radioactive Waste Planning Group meeting. The focus of the response would be on the Community Infrastructure Levy and zoning.	
9	NuLeAF MEETING FORMAT	
9.1	As a result of the Covid-19 crisis, NuLeAF had moved its meetings online. When safe to do so, meetings will again be held in person, but the secretariat felt that there was interest amongst members in maintaining the ability to attend remotely. A paper outlining various options for future meeting formats was put to the Steering Group.	
9.2	The meeting agreed that the proposal to organise hybrid meetings as outlined in section 4 of the paper was appropriate.	
10.	REFRESH OF NuLeAF LOGO, PRINTED MATERIALS AND WEBSITE	
10.1	At the Steering Group meeting in September it was agreed that the secretariat should seek professional assistance in refreshing NuLeAF's logo, printed materials and website.	
10.2	Following a tender process, the Chair and secretariat had selected a new logo design produced by the successful company. The Steering Group was asked to approve the design.	
10.3	Following discussion the proposed logo was approved by vote: 4 For, 1 Against, 1 Abstention.	

10.4	A request was made that the website should incorporate a members section which could be used to replace the facility on Knowledge Hub which did not adequately fit the requirements.	PM/CD
11.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
11.1	The next meeting will be held on 9 th December 2020. NuLeAF secretariat will advise members of the format of the meeting as soon as practicable.	
12	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
12.1	John Burton of Somerset West & Taunton Council gave the meeting a brief overview of the extraordinary meeting of the Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group on 31 st July where EDF gave a presentation on their plans for decommissioning Hinkley Point B (HPB).	
12.2	HPB is expected to cease power generation in 2023. Before work on decommissioning the station can begin EDF will need to demolish a range of existing ancillary buildings and construct new buildings to support decommissioning.	
12.3	This will include storage of waste, but it was stressed that it will be limited to waste arising from HPB. No waste will be imported.	
12.4	JB has received a number of planning applications relating to the above and Somerset County Council are waiting for the Environmental Impact Assessment and screening exercise to be submitted.	
12.5	De-fuelling will take from 2023 to 2027. Decommissioning of the station will take from 2027 to 2035 and the site will enter care and maintenance thereafter. At present the assumption is that EDF will carry out the whole decommissioning process.	
12.6	NuLeAF advised the meeting that BEIS hoped to be able to make an announcement on whether or not NDA would assume decommissioning of the AGR fleet in early 2021. NuLeAF intended to organise a meeting with EDF as soon as the announcement had been made.	
12.7	The Chair thanked JB for the update.	
12.8	The meeting closed at 14.47.	

ACTION LIST

9th September 2020			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
2.1	Post Minutes of the last meeting on NuLeAF website.	CD	Done
7.2	Publish BP 17 on website	CD	Done
7.3	Circulate GMF meeting invitation	CD	Done
8.2	Advise SSG Chair of Chairs re approval of observer status.	PM	Done
8.3	Publish BP 6 on website	CD	Done
10.4	Look at providing members space on website.	PM/CD	A paper was put to the RWPG meeting on 12 th October. Following discussion it was agreed to continue with the current system of circulating papers for comment, but to keep opportunities for a different approach under review.