

Respondent Details	
Name:	John Wilkins

Please select the category below which best describes who you are responding on behalf of.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Business representative organisation/trade body
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charity or social enterprise
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Individual
<input type="checkbox"/>	Large business (over 250 staff)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium business (50 to 250 staff)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Micro business (up to 9 staff)
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The consultation document sets out the Government's proposed approach to the longer term management of the UK's plutonium stocks for public scrutiny and consultation. Comments on any aspect of this issue are welcome, but the key questions posed in this consultation are:

No	Question
Q1	Do you agree that it is not realistic for the Government to wait until fast breeder reactor technology is commercially available before taking a decision on how to manage plutonium stocks?
Response	<p>The whole plutonium issue needs some focus now so I support strongly the current initiative to clarify the policy. I think it is important that the utilities in the UK who may procure new reactors are aware of the Pu policy as it may impact on design/safety cases etc for new reactors. It may also help to decide on the future of reprocessing in THORP and the GDF project.</p> <p>It should also be noted that as the UK has no FR programme and developments elsewhere will take a long time to come to fruition there is little alternative but to start developing strategy now.</p>
Q2	Do you agree that the Government has got to the point where a strategic sift of the options can be taken?
Response	<p>The information on the various options varies and some (e.g. direct disposal of Pu) are not fully developed but in the interests of getting value from public expenditure it is a good opportunity to "take stock". Going forward the strategy will need to be kept under review.</p>
Q3	Are the conditions that a preferred option must in due course meet,

	the right ones?
Response	The conditions seem to be reasonable but it might be argued that the first condition does tend to favour the options which happen, at this point in time, to be the most developed. Could this condition lead to a promising option not being developed?
Q4	Is the Government doing the right thing by taking a preliminary policy view and setting out a strategic direction in this area now?
Response	Yes, as noted in response to Q1.
Q5	Is there any other evidence government should consider in coming to a preliminary view?
Response	No response.
Q6	Has the Government selected the right preliminary view?
Response	<p>I support the selected option of use of Pu in MOX fuel.</p> <p>I have a few concerns about the MOX fuel option but I think they are capable of resolution as the implementation work develops. In particular the “failure” of the SMP to produce significant quantities of fuel is worrying and needs to be properly understood. (Why have the French apparently got it right?) I would have expected this issue to have been covered in a bit more detail. The fact that MOX fuel could</p>

	<p>be reprocessed at a future date to provide material for a FR is helpful in not foreclosing the option of use of Pu in such a reactor.</p> <p>Some of the Pu stocks will be in the form of poor purity residues etc which may not be suitable for MOX fuel so will almost certainly need to be regarded as waste unless they are purified. The consultation paper seems to present a rather negative view on disposal of cemented Pu, particularly in terms of the loading. Also a rather negative view has been taken of alternatives to cement for Pu immobilisation but it is accepted that they are not yet well developed. However this does not detract from the selected option for the bulk of the Pu.</p> <p>Much of the UK stockpile has already been in store for many years and may not have been produced to the right specification for conversion to fuel. The ingrowth of Am in much of the Pu stock will be very substantial when a MOX fuel route is available and this needs to be taken into account. It is not clear if existing stocks of PuO₂ can be used to form fuel quality MOX without chemical processing to convert to the right physical form or to remove Am.</p> <p>The above points do not prejudice the selected policy but need to be taken into account in future work.</p>
Q7	Are there any other high level options that the Government should consider for long-term management of plutonium?
Response	<p>A final point which does not fit anywhere else.</p> <p>The Government needs to consider how the strategy for Pu stocks might impinge on the strategy for irradiated fuel. For example some may see the potential use of Pu in MOX fuel as supporting reprocessing of fuel from any new build reactors in the UK. This issue needs careful consideration.</p>