

## **Minutes of 7th DECC Nuclear NGO Forum meeting, 17th October 2012**

### **Attendees:**

John Hayes, Minister of State for Energy, DECC Present from 16.00  
 Hergen Haye (Co-Chair), Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC  
 Professor Andy Blowers (Co-Chair), Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG)  
 Tessa Munt, MP for Wells in Somerset (present from 13:00 to 14:00)  
 Jo Brown, Parents Concerned About Hinkley (PCAH)  
 Pete Wilkinson, Communities Against Nuclear Expansion (CANE)  
 Barry Turner, Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG)  
 Val Mainwood, Bradwell for Renewable Energy (BRARE)  
 Rita Holmes, Ayrshire Radiation Monitoring Group (ARM)  
 Richard George, Greenpeace  
 Sean Morris, Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA)  
 Dr David Lowry, Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates (NWAA)  
 Nikki Clark, Stop Hinkley  
 Jill Perry, Save our Lake District  
 Neil Crumpton, PAWB and Wales  
 Dr. Ruth Balogh, West Cumbria and North Lakes FoE  
 Dr. Jill Sutcliffe, Low-level Radiation and Health Conference  
 Alan McGoff, Environment Agency (EA)  
 Annabel Lillicrop, Environment Agency (EA)  
 Roger Yearsley, Environment Agency (EA)  
 Derek Lacey, (ONR)  
 Robbie Huston, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)  
 Peter Lock, NDA  
 Bill Hamilton, (NDA)  
 Peter McDonald, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC  
 Margaret Mary McLaren, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC  
 Jane Cantwell, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC

### **A. Introductions and preliminaries**

The Co-Chairs welcomed members to the 7th DECC Nuclear NGO Forum.

A minute's silence was observed in appreciation of Crispin Aubrey.

It was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting had benefited from being more focused and that future minutes should highlight the key points and actions arising from the discussions.

Key points from the discussion of previous minutes were:

- Forum members expressed their thanks to Charles Hendry, former Energy Minister, for his input to previous Forum meetings, in particular his intervention in getting the meeting with COMARE set up. Professor Blowers also thanked DECC Secretariat for organising and arranging the meeting with COMARE.

- Professor Blowers referred to a letter that DECC wrote to the NGOs via him responding to the points made during the construction sites legislation agenda item at the previous meeting. It was agreed that this letter should be circulated to NGOs
- It was acknowledged that the NGOs have now met with DECC and agreed NGO involvement in the Department's emergency planning work. Three Forum members will represent the NGOs in taking this work forward, and progress will be reviewed at future meetings.
- The NGOs brought up a recent FOI case referring to a meeting on future policing at nuclear sites. DECC confirmed that the meeting in question was about funding for policing for legitimate protests. The NGOs thought that the role of the nuclear constabulary would be a useful topic of discussion at a future Forum meeting, including questions about misuse of the Terrorism Act.

**Action: DECC agreed to provide feedback to the NGOs on the issue of the FOI case referring to a meeting on future policing at nuclear sites.**

#### **B. Radioactive waste**

Dr Balogh presented a paper on current radioactive waste disposal & storage policy issues with special reference to the GDF proposals to the group, following which Professor Blowers presented a paper on Radioactive Waste Management and New Build – Problems and Policies. (Note that the papers are attached to the minutes.)

In the discussion following the presentations, DECC suggested it would be useful to focus the deliberations on what we could do collectively to instil more trust in the process and summarised the three main themes arising from the papers:

- What is currently taking place in Cumbria and what the process should be going forward.
- The relationship between new build and an acceptable long term solution for radioactive waste; and conclusions on waste for new build.

The following points were raised by the NGOs:

- The decision to delay the voluntarist process in Cumbria was seen as interesting, and it was queried what could change in 3 months. The DECC response to Dr Balogh's paper was felt to repeat what DECC had said before and not properly to take account of issues raised by NGOs.
- NGO representatives suggested that some of these waste issues may never be resolved. They suggested the need for transparent, clear processes in place for R & D, in particular a need for experts to focus on and discuss issues such as geology.
- It was suggested that social research is important for shedding light on how best to engage with different parts of society. DECC agreed and commented that its

capability has recently been strengthened in this area through its Customer Insight Unit.

- NGO representatives raised issues around defining what a 'community' is, and which communities or bodies are deemed as suitable for engagement. It was argued that Government Departments, organisations and NGOs have different definitions of openness and transparency, and it was felt that the Forum could look into these issues.
- As part of the discussion about openness and transparency, the NDA referred to their publication '*Regulator's review of the generic Disposal System Safety Case documents*' as an example of a document that had been independently reviewed and stated that the NDA would be happy to make DVDs available for NGOs to view and provide comments.
- NGO representatives raised the issue of making sure that disposal is feasible in the first place and in doing so have a process in place to inform the public of what is being done which will mean that a process will be in place that is trusted.
- Geological disposal may not, in the end, provide a solution. Therefore, there needs to be a greater focus on storage both as an interim measure of management and also as a potential solution in its own right.
- It was suggested by NGO representatives that DECC had encouraged Local Authorities to be hostile to NGOs. DECC reassured participants that this was certainly not the case.

**Action DECC: DECC to provide a fuller response on questions on Dr Balogh's waste paper in writing ahead of the next Forum.**

**Action NGO Forum Chairmen: To consider how to progress issues raised in both papers on radioactive waste.**

**Action DECC: The NGO papers on radioactive waste presented at the Forum would be conveyed to the residual body of the partnership and to the three council leaders in advance of their decision in January. In addition the papers and the policy implications would be discussed with appropriate bodies including relevant Government Ministers.**

### **Stress Tests**

Pete Wilkinson presented a paper. (Note that the paper is attached to the minutes)

In the discussion that followed, the key points that the NGOs made were:

- Questions around the GDA process and assumptions in language used in how this is being put across.
- Stress tests were carried out by the operators themselves and ONR released only its own reports; it was felt that this was a poor way of generating trust.
- It was suggested the peer review process should be discussed at public seminars in which the NGOs should attend.

- Question raised on where we are with resolution of matters from ONR. Stress report was released with a view from ONR that 'everything was fine'; however the full report shows some errors. It was suggested there are issues with ONR communications which link back to the issue of generating trust.

In response the ONR made the following points:

- ONR have made progress on key issues and are not influenced by political expectations/views.
- A new ONR report to Ministers is due to be published in the upcoming months. Assurance from ONR that this will be publicly available.
- EA also added that in June 2011, 31 issues were raised and there are resolution plans to overcome these. Now there are only 9 outstanding.

**Action ONR: Issues raised by NGOs relating to potential problems with ONR press are to be addressed at the next ONR meeting. ONR to report back to the Forum.**

### **C. Introduction from Minister John Hayes**

Hergen Hays introduced Minister of State John Hayes to the Forum. The Minister delivered a personal address to the members providing background on his career, his approach to policy, as well as his commitment to continuing with robust dialogues in this Forum.

The NGOs raised the following issues with the Minister:

- Reference was made to the earlier debate on waste issues and the fact that even although the approach was based on voluntarism, new build policy will mean that Government has identified eight sites and waste will be imposed on these communities. In response to this point the Minister commented that Government needs to take account of various solutions and be accountable and take fresh decisions in a considered and measured way and that there must be solutions that stand up to scientific scrutiny and that there must be community buy in. Furthermore, he stated that what we develop must be appropriate for long term and short term storage. He also emphasised that it is important that we learn from best practice internationally.
- NGOs feel they do not have a voice with operators or regulators. This Forum is a limited opportunity for NGOs to make their voice heard.
- Concerns of community benefits not benefitting young people.
- New build is now a reality so practicalities need to be addressed.
- Concerns about the start of the process and about uranium being used despite reported high health detriments.
- Issues around geology and science

**Action DECC: Officials to brief the Minister on the developing strategy on waste issues and report back to a future Forum.**

**Action DECC: Officials to provide the Minister with a briefing on the geology around the area of Cumbria.**

#### **D. AOB**

#### **Summary of actions and future issues**

##### **Actions:**

**Action: DECC agreed to provide feedback to the NGOs on the issue of the FOI case referring to a meeting on future policing at nuclear sites.**

**Action DECC: DECC to provide a fuller response on questions on Dr Balogh's waste paper in writing ahead of the next Forum.**

**Action NGO Forum Chairmen: To consider how to progress issues raised in both papers on radioactive waste.**

**Action DECC: The NGO papers on radioactive waste presented at the Forum would be conveyed to the residual body of the partnership and to the three council leaders in advance of their decision in January. In addition the papers and the policy implications would be discussed with appropriate bodies including relevant Government Ministers.**

**Action ONR: Issues raised by NGOs relating to potential problems with ONR press are to be addressed at the next ONR meeting. ONR to report back to the Forum.**

##### **Future issues:**

It was agreed that trust, engagement and transparency will be discussed as a topic at the next Forum meeting.

**Action NGOs and DECC: The NGOs should set out where they think there are deficits in openness and transparency around Government policy (in advance of the next meeting); DECC will consider this separately with its' Customer Insight Unit.**

Furthermore, a presentation on Energy Futures should be considered as a future item, as well as the broad issue of security, the issues raised around the nuclear constabulary.