Minutes of 14th DECC/NGO Forum – Wednesday 21st January 2015

Welcome and preliminaries

Co-chairs welcomed the group to the 13th DECC/NGO Forum. Apologies were received from:

- NGOs –There we no apologies for this meeting. It was reported that Val Mainwood had resigned from the Forum. The Co-Chairs thanked her and wished her well for the future.
- EA - Alan McGoff

Short verbal progress reports - Radiation and Health, Emergency Planning, Nuclear Security, GDF

The NGOs referred to the following progress reports:

Radiation and Health

NGO Pete Wilkinson summarised what had taken place on this subject from the NGO perspective and that work was continuing on a draft chronology. His main concern was in relation to the progress of the Richard Bramhall paper outlining a proposal for a Joint Fact Finding on Key Issues and Controversies concerning the effects of radiation on health (October 2011); A way forward (19th April 2013).

NGO Richard Bramhall outlined the work done and conclusions from his paper.

DECC then stated that having looked at the evidence presented by the NGOs they were of the view that the process for advancing the debate would be through the John Beddington project. The Beddington work is expected to be published around May 2015, and initial discussion with the Beddington Team has shown their willingness to involve NGOs.

NGOs made the point that new evidence about health effects of low level radiation is available.

DECC pointed out that COMARE's remit is to advise government on radiation and health matters. NGOs raised issue of only having had one meeting with COMARE.

It was agreed that DECC should determine whether it would be workable to get back in touch with COMARE and to contacts for the Beddington project to ask how best to involve the NGOs in any ongoing process.

Action DECC: *DECC should give further consideration to the appropriate way forward and then communicate this to NGOs.*

Action NGOs: *Pete Wilkinson to circulate draft chronology at next Forum.*

Action DECC: *to contact COMARE about possibility of another meeting between them and NGOs.*

Emergency Planning

Sean Morris NGO, referred to the below report provided by NRAD:

- National Emergency Planning and Response Update: In line with feedback received, the programme has been re-scoped taking into consideration the intended deliverables and available resources. An update was also provided on the key elements of the programme. The Nuclear Emergency Planning and Response Guidance is currently under review and will be re-launched in 2015, taking the place of the Consolidated Guidance.
- Basic Standards Safety Directive (BSSD): The European Commission published their new Basic Standards Safety Directive (BSSD) in January 2014 relating to radiation exposure. These new standards have an impact on REPPIR. DECC and legal teams from across government are looking into what changes will be required and how to implement these. HSE have the policy lead for any changes to REPPIR and they have, thus far, held an initial stakeholder meeting which will be followed by others prior to the process of formal consultation.
- EP&R Communications: Since the Warning and Informing workshop in September 2014, the scope and structure of the new W&I guidance chapter has been refined. Once the next iteration of the draft chapter has been completed, it will be circulated to the group. As part of an overall reprioritisation of communications planning, an increased focus will been placed on social/digital media best practice. DECC's current civil nuclear digital media plan was shared with the group. As part of this work, a small workshop will be held to review social media practices in the context of nuclear emergency planning and response. DECC will look to include representatives from government, local authorities and NGOs to ensure a good cross-section of views.
- The ONR provided an update on future detailed emergency planning area determinations including Barrow, Chapelcross, Hinkley and Sellafield.
- The next meeting will take place in April 2015 however work will continue in the margins of our meetings e.g. warning and informing guidance drafting, development of an EP social media workshop.

Nuclear Security

- The first Nuclear Security Sub-Group meeting was held on 9 October 2014, prior to the DECC NGO Forum meeting. Topics covered included the purpose and objectives of the meeting, an outline of DECC's nuclear security functions, how NGO representatives can share information on their areas of expertise, identify specific areas of interest and future possibilities for engagement.
- DECC had circulated responses to questions raised at the last security session and members had found the information interesting and helpful.

- As raised at the previous security meeting in October, it was reiterated that there is a limited amount of substantive information to include in proactive presentations so it would be preferable that security meetings take place when there are substantive matters raised to discuss, or a series of prior questions to respond to.
- Security group members were asked if they would prefer a security meeting at the time of the next main NGO Forum, or if a prior meeting was preferred. The consensus appeared to be that a prior meeting was preferred to allow security questions to be asked, to follow up on at the subsequent main NGO Forum. DECC would contact the security group members to find an intermediate date, which might take place on the same day as the emergency planning session to realise efficiencies provided by the part-overlapping membership.
- NGOs asked DECC to respond at the future meeting on sector whistleblowing policies and UAVs in particular.

GDF

Professor Blowers provided an update on the GDF process, some aspects of which are being taken forward through discussion at the Community Representation Working Group (CRWG).

Action DECC: *To find out about what "whistleblowing" arrangements exist for nuclear employees.*

Action DECC: *To set up a meeting for the Nuclear Security Sub Group.*

Secretary of State, Ed Davey in attendance at meeting

The Secretary of State, Rt Hon Ed Davey MP, joined the meeting and Prof. Blowers welcomed his attendance and said a few words on behalf of the NGOs about the work of the Forum.

The Secretary of State then addressed the Forum and made key points on behalf of the Government, including:

- He welcomed the work of the Forum saying that we need to have an exchange of views and that difficult conversations were necessary to improve understanding.
- He acknowledged that the Lib Dems had changed their stance on support for nuclear and that the main reason for him now being a supporter of new nuclear is the cost and that we need to look at all low carbon technologies.
- The DECC 2050 calculator is available on line and enables users to experiment with many different ways of meeting the UK's target to reduce emissions 80% by 2050.
- In this country, we are facing a looming energy crisis in the next decade thanks to years of neglect and underinvestment.

- If we do nothing – the lights will go out and the cost of electricity for our homes and our businesses will soar, because it will become a scarce resource.
- We also know that we need to decarbonise our economy – and the longer we delay those decisions, the more painful and expensive they will be.
- Hinkley Point C will be the first nuclear project where the costs are taken account of up front.
- Government continue to push forward their Electricity Market Reform Programme and continue to discuss EDF's proposals for Hinkley's Funded Decommissioning Programme to ensure that secure financing arrangements are in place to meet the full costs of decommissioning.

The NGOs highlighted key concerns:

- Why not make documents around financing of power stations public.
- There is evidence around subsidy / support for nuclear, specific documents should be in the public domain, particularly documents sent to the EC.
- A specific request was made concerning the Funded Decommssioning Programme which the Government will agree with EDF for Hinkley. The SOS was asked if the Government would publish this document, rather than wait until the nuclear operator does.
- Would like to see documents published about the change of management at Sellafield.
- Concerns around DECC's failure to participate on the subject of low level radiation and health and the use of plutonium.
- Need for debate through the DECC NGO Forum in relation to the National policy statement on nuclear energy.

There was also mention at the meeting that the NDA was to publish an update on the plutonium strategy in the spring.

The Co-Chairs thanked the Secretary of State for his attendance at the meeting.

Item on nuclear new build strategy and implications

A presentation was introduced by Neil Crumpton to consider the key issues and questions arising from the paper, 'National Policy Statement – Reasons for a review'. Neil talked through the salient points of the Paper covering what has changed since the NPS was published in 2011.

NGOs considered that the changes since the NPS was published were so significant that a review is necessary.

DECC stated that the NPS has a specific role to help the Planning Inspectorate. The date of 2025 in the NPS is not a cut-off date and would not become invalid if a developer wanted a (for instance) 2030 date.

Baroness Verma present – Policy update and Q & A.

Baroness Verma joined the meeting and provided an update on recent policy developments including:

- The Secretary of State published his decision that the UK ABWR is Justified in December and laid a draft Statutory Instrument before Parliament.
- The National Nuclear Laboratory's report on Small Modular Reactors, published on 3 December.
- On geological disposal, Government and the developer have been progressing with actions outlined in the 2014 White Paper.
- And the work continues with EDF to finalise the full terms of the Contract for Difference and the financing arrangements for the Hinkley Point C project, which includes support from the UK Guarantee. Meanwhile, EDF continues its discussions with potential external investors to secure the investment needed to deliver the plant and take their final investment decision.

The Baroness also announced Prof Blowers had been appointed to the Community Representation Working Group (CRWG), following the Radioactive Waste White Paper.

Questions and comments were then taken from the NGOs. Points raised included:

- Concern that only limited information had been made available about the HPC State Aid decision. All documents in the process should be published on the DECC website for transparency.
- Whether the decision included a decision on the Funded Decommissioning Programme.
- That the SoS and Baroness Verma should read the full paper produced for the Forum by Neil Crumpton on the NPS -'National Policy Statement – Reasons for a review'.
- Reference to the lack of participation by DECC on the subject of low level radiation and health and the use of plutonium.

Action DECC*: The paper by Neil Crumpton on the NPS - 'National Policy Statement – Reasons for a review' should be forwarded to the SoS and Baroness Verma for review.*

The Baroness then left the meeting and Co Chairs thanked her for being present.

Recap of issues raised in Neil Crumpton's paper, 'National Policy Statement – Reasons for a review'

Professor Blowers summarised the points from the earlier item on new build strategy and implications. The following points were made by the NGOs:

- Should a review of the NPS on Nuclear now take place to look again at the eight nominated sites?
- Will DECC involve the Forum in any future NPS review?
- Specifically can the Justification for the Nuclear NPS be reviewed?
- Existing sites that have been chosen deliver an estimated amount of electricity, but, consideration should be given to smaller reactor designs that will be nearer to cities.
- Emphasis that Neil Cumpton's paper should be endorsed as appropriate for consideration by Ministers.
- Can DECC issue a monthly report of what is being discussed about sites on an ongoing basis.

The DECC Co-chair explained that the Nuclear National Policy Statement was approved by a large House of Commons majority and designated in July 2011. The Nuclear Statement detailed the case and need for new nuclear power in the UK and identified 8 suitable sites for new nuclear power stations to be built by 2025. Furthermore, responsibility for approving planning applications was taken over by the new Planning Inspectorate body (PINS) in April 2012. The new streamlined process aims to reduce delays and uncertainty by imposing a maximum period for consideration of applications.

The Co-chair also explained that there will be a separate NPS done on GDF. And, if a future Government decide to roll out SMRs or fast breeder reactors then yes there would likely be a separate NPS needed for that. The Government policy is that nuclear should be part of the energy mix in the future, alongside renewables and clean coal and gas and that the NPS should be kept under continuous review.

Action NGOs*: The NGO Co-chair asked Forum members to put questions on this issue of the review of the NPS to DECC through the Forum secretariat for consideration by the Department.*

Action NGOs*: To construct a letter for the attention of Baroness Verma seeking her view on the subject of the review of the NPS.*

Action DECC*: The Richard Bramhall paper should be considered in the same way.*

Item on foreign wastes and Plutonium

The NGO Co-chair made the point that the DECC response to the earlier NGO paper had raised a whole new set of questions from NGOs.

NGOs made the point that policy options should be clarified. Also, would be helpful to know what treaties exist between countries so that who owns the waste/Pu can be identified.

DECC noted that further discussion on this topic may be needed; and will consider if FCO involvement is required.

Action NGOs*: To provide written questions in response to the DECC paper produced for this Forum meeting.*

Action DECC*: To undertake further discussion of the policy options at a future Forum.*

Other business and Chairmens' closing remarks

Consideration was given to themes for the next Forum meeting.

Prof. Blowers invited members to get in touch with him to propose issues that they thought should be covered in the future.

Attendees:

Ed Davey, Secretary of State for Energy, DECC
Baroness Verma, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DECC
Liz Keenaghan-Clark, (co-chair) Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC
Professor Andy Blowers, (co-chair) Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG)

Neil Crumpton, PAWB
Jo Brown, Parents Concerned About Hinkley (PCAH)
Geoff Bettsworth, Cumbria Trust
Sean Morris, Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA)
Rita Holmes, Ayrshire Radiation Monitoring Group (ARM)
Ruth Balogh. West Cumbria and North Lakes FoE
Lydia Meryll, SERA
Phil Davies, NWAA
Richard Bramhall, LLRC
Pete Wilkinson, CANE
David Lowry, NWAA
Doug Parr, Greenpeace
Tim Deere-Jones, Stop Hinkley
Sue Aubrey, Stop Hinkley
Joan Girling, CANE
Janine Core, Sellafield
Barry Turner, BANG
Ian Ralls, FOE
Peter Burt, Nuclear Information Service

Bill Hamilton, (NDA)
Annabelle Lillicrop, (EA)
Tom Wintle, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC
Bryan Payne, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC
Colin Mackie, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC
Richard Sargent, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC

Colin Mitchell, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC
Matt Clarke, Nuclear Resilience and Assurance (NRAD), DECC
Margaret Mary McLaren, Office for Nuclear Development (OND), DECC