

GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL IMPLEMENTATION BOARD

11 July 2012

14:00-16:00

BIS Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

List of attendees

Name	Organisation
Charles Hendry	Minister of State, Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC)
Mark Higson	DECC
Peter McDonald	DECC
Bruce Cairns	DECC
Fiona Reynolds	DECC
David MacKay	DECC
Adrian Simper	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)
Bruce Mckirdy	NDA
Richard Savage	MoD
Robert Williams	Welsh Government
Prof Robert Pickard	CoRWM
Doug Ilett	Environment Agency
David Senior	Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)
George Sallit	ONR – Radioactive Materials Transport
Jeremy Western	EdF Energy
Alfio Vidal	NuGeneration Ltd
Peter Haslam	Nuclear Industry Association
Stewart Kemp	Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeAF)
Philip Matthews	NuLeAF
Dr David Lowry	Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates (NWAA)
Pete Wilkinson	NWAA
Graham Harris	Shepway District Council

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Kate Atkinson	HM Treasury
John Clarke	NDA
John Gilbert	Horizon Nuclear Power

Minutes

Welcome and introduction by Minister

1. The Minister welcomed members to the fourth meeting of GDIB. He extended a welcome to Graham Harris from Shepway District Council who was attending to provide the Board with an insight into how the Council was taking soundings from local residents on whether to formally enter into discussions with Government about the MRWS process via an expression of interest. The Minister also noted encouraging progress in west Cumbria where a recent public opinion poll had shown that just over half of respondents in Cumbria said that they thought the councils should take part in the search for a suitable site for a geological disposal facility.
2. The Minister announced the appointment of a new Chair designate for the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM), Professor Laurence Williams, who will take up post in November. He also took the opportunity to express his personal thanks to Robert Pickard for his Chairmanship of CoRWM for the past four-and-a-half years. The Minister informed members that the 2011-12 MRWS Annual Report to Parliament had been published on 10 July and that it showed steady progress in the programme over the last 12 months.

Geological Disposal Situation Report

3. Peter McDonald, Head of the GDF and International Team in DECC presented the situation report. The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership has now concluded extensive public consultation on whether local communities should formally participate in the MRWS siting process. A key part of this process was an Ipsos Mori opinion poll, in which the Partnership was looking for 'net public support' and the results from this were encouraging. Following a report from the Partnership to decision-making bodies in July, it is expected that the local authorities will make their decision on participation by the end of 2012.
4. Shepway District Council is currently taking soundings from residents in the Romney Marsh area on whether or not to make a formal 'expression of interest' in talking to Government about siting a GDF and to formally enter stage 1 of the MRWS process. Government's role in this is to provide support by making information available.
5. In terms of wider engagement, Government recognises the need to continue to make local authorities aware that the invitation to make an expression of interest remains open and what this could mean for them in practice. DECC and NDA had an exhibition stand at the recent Local Government Association Conference in Birmingham (26-28 June). The level of interest and the depth of the discussions that took place were encouraging.
6. Since the December 2011 GDIB meeting progress has been made on preparations for Stage 4 of the MRWS process. In March Government published its response to last summer's consultation on Desk-based Identification and Assessment of Potential Candidate Sites. Alongside the consultation response

Government published a Stage 4 Framework document (covered in more detail in the NDA update).

7. The recent Triennial Review of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management concluded that it should continue in its role as an advisory Non-departmental Public Body. A key finding was that the success of the Government's MRWS programme depends to a great extent on CoRWM providing an authoritative and independent source of scrutiny and advice. A further vote of thanks was made to Professor Robert Pickard for his valuable contribution to the work of CoRWM. It was noted that as well as appointing a new Chair, Government has also recently started the process of searching for some new members to take the Committee forward into the more operational phases of the MRWS programme.
8. Looking forward, MRWS work will include continuing to define more clearly the benefits of hosting a geological disposal facility and fine-tuning preparation for Stage 4 of the MRWS process. NDA's further consideration of potential options for acceleration of implementing geological disposal does not undermine Government's commitment to voluntarism and working in partnership with communities. Government will continue to work with communities and make progress alongside them at a pace with which they are comfortable.
9. On related nuclear issues, a Government response to the Weightman Report sets out work undertaken or in-hand to implement its recommendations including working with international partners on nuclear safety. In the context of Fukushima, an Ipsos Mori poll in December 2011 demonstrated overall net support for new nuclear power stations has risen and is now above that of November 2010. The withdrawal of RWE and E.ON from Horizon was disappointing but there was currently a lot of interest in buying the company. The Government introduced a draft Energy Bill in May, for which Electricity Market Reform is a cornerstone. The Bill provides greater regulatory certainty by putting the Office for Nuclear Regulation on a Statutory footing.

NDA update

10. Adrian Simper and Bruce McKirdy updated the Board on NDA's organisational changes, its Strategy and activities. On MRWS Stage 4 preparations, NDA was developing methodologies for the application of national criteria in site identification and assessment. If Government receives a decision to participate from a local community, the NDA will work with local stakeholders in volunteer communities to develop any further local criteria for site identification to map over these national criteria. NDA was preparing to engage with stakeholders on its proposed methodologies and was developing scoping reports for Strategic Environmental Assessment and related assessments.
11. A joint regulatory review of NDA's generic Disposal System Safety Case for a geological disposal facility had been published in December 2011 and NDA's response was published in June 2012. CoRWM had also reviewed the gDSSC, assessing the extent to which it gave confidence in NDA's competence to

implement geological disposal. NDA's work programme is being updated in response to these reviews.

12. In March 2012 NDA published a report on its approach to issues management for geological disposal, which can be accessed from its website. This includes an updated issues register and evaluation. The issues management report will be periodically updated to report progress with issues.
13. NDA provided an update on international co-operation on geological disposal. This included membership of the Äspö international underground rock laboratory (URL), which would allow NDA involvement in the URL for 5 years. Also, the NDA has recently reported on a technology transfer study with SKB in Sweden, which identifies opportunities to learn from SKB's safety submission and to explore options for technical knowledge transfer. NDA is now planning a similar study with Andra in France.
14. Looking ahead, NDA's work would include preparation for subsidiary formation in April 2013, further work to explore opportunities for accelerating the implementation of geological disposal and updating the gDSSC to include the requirements of non-NDA users of a disposal facility, as identified through the GDF User Group.

Shepway District Council update

15. Graham Harris explained that in the Romney Marsh area about 1000 jobs would be lost with the decommissioning of Dungeness A and Dungeness B. Hosting a geological disposal facility was being considered as a way of creating replacement local jobs in the nuclear industry. Since 16 May Shepway District Council had been taking soundings from local residents in order to determine the level of interest in entering into discussion with Government about the MRWS siting process. Over 10,000 newsletters had been distributed to local residents and letters sent to local businesses, landowners and councils. A website had been set up to provide further information and seven one-day local exhibitions, supported by DECC and NDA had been held across the Romney Marsh area, attracting national media interest.
16. At present there are strong opinions on both sides and a low level of understanding about what construction and operation of a geological disposal facility would entail. Views are sought by 20 July. To-date about 3000 responses had been received and would be analysed to focus on the local community whilst also taking account of views from neighbouring areas. The District Council currently plans to reach a decision as to whether to make an 'expression of interest' on 19 September. The Minister welcomed the approach being taken by Shepway District Council.
17. NWAA raised a number of issues in relation to the update reports including opportunities within the MRWS process for dissenting parties to have their concerns heard and addressed and the need for independent challenge. The subsequent discussion highlighted the staged approach to the MRWS siting process, with further levels of information becoming available as we progress and

consider issues in more depth without communities having to commit themselves in the early stages; the levels of public consultation involved in considering hosting geological disposal; the independence of regulators with regards to assessing safety of a proposed facility; and the independence of CoRWM with potential to challenge Government on how the siting process is managed. It was recognised that for the MRWS process to maximise its chances of success, communities needed to be engaged in an open and transparent way, including provision of independent information and relevant evidence at appropriate stages of the process, including the use of international evidence and independent reviews.

18. The Minister closed by suggesting that the next meeting should be before the end of 2012 and include updates on whether west Cumbria had taken a decision to participate in the MRWS siting process, the soundings in Shepway and work being undertaken on options for acceleration.