

Submission to DECC consultation request on UK nuclear waste disposal, 5 June 2013.

Large amounts of nuclear waste exist, and no routine successful method of disposal has been developed. The UK has a particularly large UK inventory of Intermediate and High Level radioactive waste, much of which is currently stored at Sellafield, with no established method of disposal. The UK Government has adopted a single strategy approach which has failed, leaving a considerable hiatus on a very complex problem. Until recently, the approach to policy has been defensive, but now there is a willingness to consult, for which the UK community is grateful.

This brief note raises a few points which it is hoped will prove helpful.

Interim storage.

It is now obvious that the radwaste accumulating at Sellafield and surround is going to remain there for a long time, decades if not centuries. This makes it vulnerable to something going wrong with devastating consequences, due to accident, terrorism, natural disaster etc. This has been sidelined as a relatively minor issue due to prominence given to deep burial and the GDF, along with counter arguments of the unsuitability of the West Cumbrian geology to host such a radwaste disposal site. Future considerations must address this potential lack of safety extensively. This should include avoidance of further accumulation arising from future radwaste being offloaded at Sellafield. Surface management and possibly shallow interim burial is an important sister topic requiring consideration.

Plutonium.

Another issue which has been allowed to cause considerable potential hazard is that of Plutonium. The inventory of plutonium stored (some unwittingly) in Sellafield is uncertain due to poor recording in early days, and its storage or disposal is another topic for extensive consideration.

Sellafield work force.

A simple management point. Now that the nuclear authorities are more ready to listen, the work force at Sellafield may have some useful ideas. There will be a natural bias towards continuing due to the maintenance of jobs, but if the work force is persuaded that there will be no damaging consequences resulting from their input, they may have a few useful surprises. There is at least considerable experience on tap.

REDACTED REDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTED REDACTED
REDACTED REDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTED REDACTED
REDACTED REDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTED REDACTED

Email REDACTEDREDACTED