

Regulatory Interface Management (RIM) Group Meeting
Warrington, 20 February 2014

Attendees:

Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC, by telephone)
Environment Agency (EA)
Local Government Association Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeAF)
Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Radioactive Waste Management Directorate
(NDA, Chair & Secretary)
Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

1. Introduction and opening remarks

The Chair welcomed attendees, in particular the representatives from NRW and DECC who were attending the RIM Group meeting for the first time.

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the previous meeting (29 October 2013) were accepted as a true record and approved for publication on the NDA website.

Action RIM2014/01: RIM Group Secretary to publish approved minutes of previous meeting (29 October 2013) on the NDA website.

Actions

RIM2012/11	RIM Group Secretary to include item on 'Update on implementation of Localism Act 2011 amendments to major infrastructure development provisions' on the agenda for the next RIM Group meeting – on-hold . Awaiting outcome of Government's review of the geological disposal facility siting process.
RIM2013/07	RIM Group Secretary to publish approved minutes of previous meeting (13 June 2013) on the NDA website – complete .
RIM2013/08	NuLeAF Representative to provide RIM Group Secretary with electronic copy of NuLeAF's Service Plan for distribution to RIM Group membership – complete .
RIM2013/09	RIM Group Secretary to confirm date for RIM Group meeting in February/March 2014 - complete .

3. DECC update

DECC provided an update on the review of the geological disposal facility siting process. The consultation on the Government's proposed changes to the

geological disposal facility siting process ran from September to December 2013.

The consultation document reaffirmed that geological disposal remains Government policy for the long-term management of higher-activity radioactive waste, and that the approach to siting continues to be based on voluntarism and partnership. The purpose of the consultation was to gather views on how aspects of the siting process for a geological disposal facility for higher activity radioactive waste could be revised and improved.

Over 700 responses to the consultation had been received. DECC was considering the responses. The responses and an accompanying summary paper which identifies the main themes arising in the responses would be published in due course.

A number of events were held to support the consultation. These were attended by the nuclear regulators in England and Wales, who were there to observe and answer questions on their roles in geological disposal. Three reports on these events were to be published shortly.

It was expected that any resulting changes to the geological disposal facility site selection process would be introduced in the summer.

4. RWMD update

NDA work to form RWMD into a subsidiary in April 2014 continued. A submission had been made to ministers for endorsement. The subsidiary's name was still to be decided.

The new Waste Management Director role and the part-time position of Chief Geologist had been filled. The Chief Geologist would report to the Science and Technology Director. A hydro-geochemist has been recruited to the position of senior research manager within the Research team. Efforts to recruit a structural geologist to the Research team continued. The position of Head of Engineering had been filled.

Action RIM2014/02: RIM Group Secretary to distribute Organisational Chart to RIM Group membership.

The existing agreements between RWMD and SEPA, EA and ONR for the provision of regulatory scrutiny need to be transferred to the subsidiary. Consideration was being given to whether the scope of these agreements should remain as it is or be expanded to include regulatory engagement with the wider programme.

RWMD's shadow board continued to develop towards becoming the board for the subsidiary, with training on nuclear regulation planned for March 2014. The EA and ONR were to interview board members in April 2014.

A new member joined RWMD's Nuclear Safety and Environment Committee in December 2013. ONR had been informed of this change in membership in writing.

RWMD was to provide a briefing to ONR's inspectors on geological disposal and RWMD's role in the management of higher activity radioactive waste.

A Level 1 meeting was to take place in March 2014 and would involve members of RWMD's executive team, a Deputy Chief Inspector from ONR and the EA's Deputy Director of Radioactive Substances Regulation and Nuclear Regulatory Group North Manager. Topics to be discussed at the meeting would include engagement structure, subsidiary formation, charging, and working with NRW.

RWMD was reviewing the scrutiny programme with the regulators. The aim was to ensure continued engagement on the significant issues, primarily organisational development and site characterisation. It was recognised that regulators' resource limitations would need to be accommodated in the programme.

RWMD outlined its current approach to disposability assessments of packaging proposals provided by a number of waste packagers.

RWMD met with representatives of NRW in January 2014 to discuss possible future interactions.

RWMD provided the meeting with an up-date on its Issues Management Process.

5. NuLeAF update

NuLeAF would welcome observations on its Service Plan for 2013 to 2015, which included a Work Programme containing a number of key tasks and proposed tasks relating to geological disposal.

NuLeAF submitted its response to the review of the geological disposal facility siting process in November 2013. It was generally supportive of the proposed changes to the process, but:

- was concerned that the proposed new decision making arrangements might introduce new uncertainties into the siting process;
- called for the development of a clear national strategy for higher activity waste management, to complement the strategy developed for low level radioactive waste management;
- was firmly of the view that local decision making should be undertaken within the existing, mature, local democratic decision making structures; and
- suggested that underground operations should include underground research as an explicit stage in the development of a geological disposal facility to promote public confidence.

NuLeAF offered to support the local government aspects of the geological disposal facility siting process going forward.

NuLeAF's current representative on the RIM Group announced that this would be his last RIM Group meeting as he was retiring at the end of April 2014. The RIM Group Chair thanked him for his considerable efforts and wished him well.

6. Regulators' update

NRW had been in existence for almost one year. It was formed on 01 April 2013 from Environment Agency Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales and Forestry Commission Wales. NRW is responsible for regulating the nuclear industry in Wales on environmental matters such as disposals of radioactive waste. Whilst it must maintain full responsibility for permitting and enforcement decisions, and oversight of regulatory work-streams, it supplements its own nuclear resources by contracting in specialist support from the Environment Agency.

NRW works closely with EA and SEPA on matters of mutual regulatory interest. For example, NRW maintains oversight of the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process through its membership of the Environment Agency GDA

Programme Board and was working with EA, SEPA and ONR on revising the Joint Guidance on Radioactive Waste Management.

NRW explained that the Welsh Government reserved its position on geological disposal of higher activity waste, but was considering reviewing its current policy on the management of higher activity waste for a number of reasons.

EA's operating structure was due to change on 01 April 2014 – the six regions would be replaced by a larger number of smaller areas. The EA web-site is to move to the GOV.UK website.

EA had provided a permit application form, permit template and associated guidance for the regulation of intrusive investigations under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 to RWMD for comment. The documents currently only deal with radioactive substances activities – they do not deal with any other regulated activities that require an environmental permit, such as groundwater activities.

Dr Andy Hall had been appointed ONR's Chief Nuclear Inspector. Under the Energy Act 2013, ONR would become a public corporation on 01 April 2014 and a wholesale change of its management structure would follow. In particular, a new operational delivery programme structure will be developed that will reflect nuclear industry sectors:

- Civil Nuclear Reactor Programme (incl. New Build)
- Sellafield programme
- Decommissioning, Fuel and Waste programme
- Civil Nuclear Security
- Cross-ONR programme (incl. Transport)
- Regulatory Assurance programme

Geological disposal will fall under the Decommissioning, Fuel and Waste programme. Further aspects of the restructuring of ONR were discussed.

The first Chief Nuclear Inspector's Report was launched in November 2013, presenting the Chief Inspector's view of safety and security standards across the nuclear industry.

ONR and EA were in the process of carrying out the second half of their joint inspection and audit of the disposability assessment processes, which focuses on waste packagers' arrangements. The inspection report was anticipated to be available early in the new financial year.

7. Any other business

None

8. Proposed date and venue of next meeting

It was agreed that the next RIM Group meeting should be held following the release of the revised siting process and that a date during August 2014 would therefore be appropriate. The meeting would be held at the NDA's Warrington office.

Action RIM2014/03: RIM Group Secretary to confirm date for RIM Group meeting in August 2014.

Summary of ongoing actions

RIM2012/11	RIM Group Secretary	Include item on 'Update on implementation of Localism Act 2011 amendments to major infrastructure development provisions' on the agenda for a future RIM Group meeting.
RIM2014/01	RIM Group Secretary	RIM Group Secretary to publish approved minutes of previous meeting (29 October 2013) on the NDA website.
RIM2014/02	RIM Group Secretary	RIM Group Secretary to distribute Organisational Chart to RIM Group membership.
RIM2014/03	RIM Group Secretary	Confirm date for RIM Group meeting in August 2014.
