

## **July 2023 NGO Forum meeting minutes**

This meeting was conducted in two parts, on 4<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July, due to Ministerial availability.

Attendee list at Annex A for both parts of the forum meeting.

### **NGO Forum meeting with Minister Bowie**

4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 10:00 – 10:30

1VS, London and via Teams.

Minister Bowie (MB) welcomed the forum and highlighted that it is an important part of his job to listen to all those who have views on government policy. He acknowledged that the last forum where a Minister attended was with his predecessor Greg Hands a year ago and that forums have not been attended by a Minister as regularly as he would have liked, but he would endeavour to attend as the Minister for the Department more regularly going forward. MB also stipulated a desire to visit Suffolk again soon.

The meeting moved to a brief introduction of the forum members and a short overview of their concerns to Minister.

MB listened and sought to answer some of the concerns that had been raised. MB advised that nuclear in Scotland is a largely devolved matter and therefore questions should be directed to Scottish Government. He proceeded to say that the Department officials are monitoring, and will be ensuring any learnings from Taishan are applied including learning from the successful Finnish development.

MB highlighted there are a number of things that cannot be discussed due to ongoing legal action or commercial sensitivities. Minister emphasised that nuclear is a continuous source but would not be the only source, this must form a part of the energy mix in order to decarbonise the grid.

Minister had to leave for further commitments on time and therefore this meeting was closed at 10:30 with the main forum meeting with officials taking part on 19<sup>th</sup> July at 11:30.

### **NGO Forum meeting**

19<sup>th</sup> July 11:30 - 13:00

Online via MS Teams.

Chris Heffer (CH) welcomed attendees to this part of the forum following on from a good meeting with Minister Bowie, he recognised the need to hold an in-person meeting and that something would be arranged after the summer but noted this would only work if we could get enough attendees present. He acknowledged that we didn't complete the proposed agenda last time therefore Siting would be first on today's agenda.

Alison Downes (AD) confirmed there had been a gap in an in-person meeting so was interested in arranging one after the summer. She emphasised to NGO members the need for them to commit to attending one.

Jon Sutton (JS) advised that due to the format of this meeting (NGO members presenting to officials) the department opened up an invite to all nuclear officials to hear the points that the NGO forum members had to raise.

## Siting

AD thanked the forum for attendance and introduced Andy Blowers (AB) giving guidance on time. AB presented and highlighted a paper he wrote that was published in Town and County Planning. He raised two points relating to siting – new nuclear and radioactive waste facilities. He gave a history of Nuclear Power Stations in the UK from the mid-60s and subsequent concerns relating to nuclear policy statements.

Tonima Saha (TS) advised that there will be a consultation in the autumn followed by consultation on the draft NPS next year. CH confirmed that no decisions have been taken.

Concerns were raised that consultations were undertaken in 2017 but nothing happened with those so want to understand why nothing came from those inputs. TS confirmed that all contributions would be taken into consideration and reiterated that no decisions had been made.

There were many questions on industry's marketing and PR, stating sites and pushing information that this would be a site. CH responded that the Department would not be commenting on claims by others, and then repeated no decisions have been made and a consultation will launch in due course which the department would welcome thoughts.

## Modelling and alternative scenarios

Neil Crumpton (NC) has written a paper that he is just finalising prior to submitting to the Department and Minister. It proposes an offshore wind counterfactual as an alternative to Sizewell C using the RAB model. AD also added to NC's viewpoints with a question seeking when CCM will be implemented.

BOD provided a response to NC highlighting some of the major challenges with renewable energy sources. BOD generally agreed with the assumptions made in the paper, for instance around levelised cost, but noted that there might be significant security of supply challenges in proposed system. BOD then noted that other technologies, such as nuclear, help to ensure security of supply in low carbon systems. BoD confirmed that AFRY (with their BID3 model) were the successful bidders to replace the DDM. The BID3 model should improve on the current modelling by providing more granular data on weather; have better simulation of flexible demand, storage, and demand side response, and is a pan-European model that can simulate the whole of the UK, rather than just GB. BOD expects the model to be up and running around March 2024.

NC agreed that the 'litmus test' will be low solar and low wind. BOD confirmed he would take away the paper that NC is writing comes to him for deeper consideration. JS advised to pull out specific questions for a more robust response.

There were further questions from the forum pertaining to grid stability, energy efficiency and considerations of tidal power. CH advised that the energy efficiency questions, in particular, would be best suited for Minister Bowie to respond to in due course.

## Sizewell C Finance discussion

AD called Paul Collins (PC) to introduce his points on Sizewell C. PC advised he had many questions initially he raised; latest cost estimates, percentage equity stake; percentage equity for investors and capital raise before taxonomy.

Michael Lindsay (ML) offered apologies on behalf of Erin Coghlan (EC) and advised that he was also apologetic that there are a lot of questions he cannot answer due to ongoing commercial sensitivities and negotiations. On capital raise, this is subject to policy development and ministerial approvals and can confirm there are no timings as yet. HMT have set out plans for the autumn. PC asked further questions relating to consultants and assumptions on cost of fuel and ML also cannot provide an answer today as no decisions have yet been taken. PC raised another few questions to ML but asked about the cost of the Sizewell C Company sponsoring the 2023 Suffolk Show; ML advised the department does not hold that information as that decision was prior to the department's involvement in the project.

PC handed over to Chris Wilson (CW) who raise the question about mis-selling to investors by stating that there is a predicted 60-year lifecycle but this contradicts EDF's DCO, what is the department's expectations of operational dates. Pete Wilkinson (PW) asked about investors being aware of issues too, what are the learnings of Taishan and the learnings on core vibrations; also the issues surrounding the water supply.

CH advised that some of those questions were posed to the Minister so would not repeated answers here. ML confirmed that all and any potential investors would be made aware of any of the details and considerations. ML also advised that we are aware of the RAB issues through Thames Water and will closely monitor to help us develop how we conduct things. RAB will still be the model for Sizewell C.

#### Great British Nuclear (GBN) Launch

Michael Jones (MJ) highlighted the launch event at the Science Museum with SofS lead. Off the back of the British Energy Security Strategy commitments one of the main elements of the launch event was to start the technology selection process, highlighting market engagement in the spring with AMR/SMR vendors.

Prior to calling the meeting to close, Jill Sutcliffe spoke about the ONR workshop looking at climate change with the met office. The second workshop was in Birmingham with a third one planned, these have proven successful engagement. AD noted the cross-cutting nature of the impact of climate change on nuclear installations so officials should be involved in future decisions.

CH summarised the meeting, noting a different format and that officials were sent papers in advance. It was good to hear the views of the members and hope the discussions were useful. We will look to roll-over the other items to the next forum meeting.

Close.

**Annex A****Attendees:**

Minister Andrew Bowie MP	Mike Taylor
Alison Downes	Chris Wilson
Neil Crumpton	Sue Aubrey
Doug Parr	Allan Jeffrey
Jon Sutton	Jill Sutcliffe
Chris Heffer	Tor Justad
Michael Lindsay	Ruth Balogh
Rita Holmes	Ian Ralls
Jo Smolden	Rod Donnington-Smith
Pete Wilkinson	Paul Collins
Varrie Blowers	Andy Blowers
Richard Outram	Peter Banks
Tonima Saha	Jonathan Jenkin
Ben O'Driscoll	Michael Jones