

Hunterston Site Stakeholder Group

**THE TWENTY FIRST HUNTERSTON SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2010 IN THE BRISBANE HOUSE HOTEL, LARGS.**

Present:

Magnox North

Mr Stephen Price
Mr Reuben Phillips
Mrs Kerry McMillan (Secretariat)
Mr Tony Bale (Chair)
Dr Adam Meehan

British Energy

Mr John Morrison
Mrs Anne de Koning
Ms Claire Cook

Community Councillors

Mr John Lamb - West Kilbride
Mrs Rita Holmes – Fairlie (Vice Chair)
Mr Peter MacFarlane – Largs
Mr Kenny MacDougall – Ardrossan
Mr Ian Frame – Millport

Councillors

Cllr Robert Barr
Cllr Elizabeth McLardy
Cllr Elisabeth Marshall
Cllr Alex Gallagher

Hunterston Estate

Mr Angus Cochran-Patrick
Mr Ralston Ryder

Community Members

Mr John Robertson

National Farmers Union

Mr Willie Jack

NDA

Mr Clive Nixon
Mr Richard Mrowicki
Ms Deborah Ward, NDA

North Ayrshire Council

Mr Hugh McGhee

SEPA

Mr Keith Hammond
Mr Ian Robertson

Scottish Government

Ms Clare Dodd
Mr Ewan Young, Scottish Government

In Attendance

Mr Derek Rooney, Magnox North
Mr Stephen Worrall, Magnox North
Mr Scott Simpson, Magnox North
Ms Vikki Gray, Magnox North

A representative from the local press and several members of the public were also in attendance

Apologies:

Dr Les Davies, Mr Peter Rothwell, Strathclyde Police, Mr Robert Turner, Ms Nina Staebler and Cllr John Reid.

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Tony Bale welcomed everyone to the 21st meeting of the Hunterston Site Stakeholder Group (SSG).

2. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR UPDATES/CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs Kerry McMillan stated that all correspondence received to date had been passed on to the appropriate SSG members. There was a slight change to the agenda in that Dr Stephen Price, Deputy Site Director at Hunterston A Site, was standing in for Peter Roach.

Mr Bale provided updates on meetings and trips that both he and Ms Rita Holmes, Vice Chair, had attended since they were elected in May 2010. Mr Bale also reminded the group that the Site had offered further meetings for both the Hall Aitken draft report and the Solid Intermediate Level Waste Encapsulation review process. The group accepted these offers and the secretariat took an action to ensure meetings were arranged.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no amendments raised and the minutes of 1st April and 3rd May were approved.

4. NDA PRESENTATION

Clive Nixon & Richard Mrowicki from the NDA gave a presentation on the recently published draft strategy. The following discussion taking place:

Mr Kenny MacDougall stated that at one time Hunterston A was supposed to be returned to a Greenfield site and it would seem that this has changed. The understanding of the NDA was that the plan reflects the wishes of the outcome of the Site and Stakeholders consultation. Mr MacDougall continued by stating that the strategy is not going to bring jobs to the area to which the NDA replied that the outcome of the site end state consultation was agreed by local community Stakeholders, including local councils and the Site Stakeholder Group. The NDA has not changed its approach but has introduced the concept of interim state. When heading for the interim state it is recognised that the company will not get there in one full swoop. Therefore working towards interim state may allow other uses to the Site along the way, ultimately the Site will end up as agreed through the Site End State consultation. Obviously the planning authority has a key role to play in deciding what use a plot of land should be put to. It is true that the NDA has introduced interim state, however, the organisation has not corrupted the principal in heading for an end state even though it may be a long time in the future.

Mr Calum Coral of Largs and Millport Weekly News asked for clarification on whether the above was included in the end state? The NDA explained that the Site end state is detailed in the strategy document and is secure for the designated land at Hunterston A. The Radioactive and the Non Radioactive contamination must be reduced to the legal requirements of the relevant regulator regime for the next planned use.

Cllr Alex Gallagher asked if the NDA were happy with the approach of near site, near surface. The NDA stated that they have accountability for the implementation of geological disposal so we are comfortable with such approaches. Cllr Gallagher highlighted that this seemed to be different to the contract and asked if the NDA were comfortable with that to which they replied yes.

Mr McDougall asked if the cost of clean up at Hunterston would be £691m. The NDA confirmed the figure to be correct. Mr MacDougall then went on to talk about a report which detailed the actual clean up as £1.6 billion, equating to half the overall budget of DECC. He continued by asking if the funding is likely to be made available as time goes on. The NDA explained that there is no guarantee on lifetime funding on NDA programmes. Like any other government department, the NDA is subject to a four year spending review. There is no ring fence funding for the work that the NDA does, and the organisation has to bid to secure money. The cost highlighted is based upon the scope of work that needs to be delivered to reach the end state or which we have just described. Furthermore, £691m is a discounted cost for decommissioning Hunterston to take it into a retained state. The £1.6 billion refers to the annual funding from government for the whole of the NDA'S activities.

Mr MacDougall asked if doubling up assets was just another play on words by the NDA to make Hunterston the waste tip of Scotland. The NDA responded by stating that there is no specific reference to Hunterston to be used as a local site for disposal of waste. What has been considered is a strategic option aimed at improving waste disposal and ensuring maximum value. One option is to build a waste store on every single site / estate. Another option is to consider the regional storage or even a national storage disposal of waste. Significant cost savings can be achieved by consolidating waste at one or more locations in the UK. This is an issue and was discussed extensively in the waste issues group right at the beginning of the work on the NDA's waste strategy. It is not something new but there has been a significant amount of work carried out over the last few years which has been included in this document.

Mr Calum Corral asked about problems with the estate for the last three or four years in relation to land quality and waste issues. The NDA explained that a lot of effort had been spent characterising the issues across the NDA estate over the last three to four years.

Mr Corral continued by asking what the NDA meant by stating that sometimes more harm was done than good when it came to dealing with the waste issues. The NDA explained that the environmental assessment comes to the same conclusion that when carrying out large bulk excavations often, the dangers and the risk occurred outweigh the benefits to pulling it out of the ground, putting it in a box and then possibly putting it back into the ground. In some cases it might be better from a risk assessment just to leave it where it is and obviously to continue monitoring it.

Mrs Holmes asked if the NDA was getting rid of more technical people and would be left short of expertise as a result. The NDA explained that essentially, the NDA's job is to make sure that programmes are carried out cost effectively, whilst the technical skills and expertise resides over the SLC. Mrs Holmes then continued by asking how can the NDA be an effective watchdog without its own expertise and if the NDA were happy to have all the expertise shifted to EnergySolutions? The NDA explained that they do not shift expertise to EnergySolutions, there is a level of technical capability to oversee work and it is also not true to say that the NDA has no watchdog. There are a number of watchdogs and the whole of the government is a watchdog for the NDA. Furthermore the committee of radioactive waste management provides an oversight service overseeing the NDA's approach on higher activity waste. In addition, this is very well regulated industry, so regulators such as Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, the Environment Agency and the NII all have a key role to play in making sure the NDA does its job properly and with the right resources and skills available.

Mrs Holmes asked why the NDA was putting money into choosing the next course of industry coming into the area. The NDA explained that it is required to make its land available for future use, whatever that future use might be. The actual use of the land that is made available is up to the local representatives such as local authorities who will decide based on the economic regeneration need.

5. GRAPHITE PATHFINDER PROJECT PRESENTATION

Dr Adam Meehan gave a presentation on the Graphite Pathfinder Project. The following discussion took place:

Mrs Holmes asked how the team could be so sure about the carbon 14, when no one really has much information it. Her understanding was that it binds with the DNA of vegetation and if consumed, the carbon 14 somehow gets into the system and binds with DNA. Mrs Holmes continued to highlight the fact that it needs to put somewhere safe suggesting that there must be some sort of health risk associated with it. She felt it would be very difficult to believe that graphite is not a high risk. Dr Adam Meehan explained that there is a health risk associated with radioactive waste and it must be managed responsibly. What is being talked about now is maintaining that regime as well as researching more appropriate solutions for managing the waste. Dr Meehan agreed with Mrs Holmes in that the possible facility for Hunterston A is different from some of the other sites we are looking at which are inland. One of the reasons for this is that the waste could become exposed and that's why deeper facilities are being looked at.

Mr Peter Young clarified that Carbon 14 is very securely bound within the graphite. The only way carbon 14 can get out of that graphite is if it became exposed to the atmosphere surrounding us enabling it to bond with carbon dioxide. That is not going to happen; no one is going to let that react with the environment. In addition, when carbon 14 does get into the atmosphere it is very significantly diluted by the natural carbon dioxide which is in the atmosphere as it is in competition with billions of ordinary carbon in the air.

Mrs Holmes further asked that if it did pose a risk to get into the atmosphere would there be regulation as to what is allowed into the atmosphere. She also went on to ask if it was too soon to ask what would happen with the ILW store is space was freed up by not putting all the graphite in there and whether the Site would take someone else's ILW.

Mr Tony Bale asked for the topic to remain on Graphite at this moment and time.

Mr MacDougall highlighted the fact that the Scottish Government policy was still in draft format following a period of consultation. He went on to ask if Hunterston was the only Site looking at this concept. Dr Meehan confirmed that the concept is being looked into at other Sites.

Mr MacDougall asked how many are we actually proposing to build on the Hunterston site to which Dr Meehan confirmed one cell. Furthermore, Dr Meehan went on to explain that the design of this concept is a small modular cell that would be easy to replicate at the site. It is primarily intended for core graphite at many sites. Mr MacDougall went on to ask if the feasibility study would include waste from other sources such as the MOD. Dr Meehan explained that the design of the concept is for a small cell which could be replicated at other sites for their graphite waste and the study is not looking to receive waste from other sources.

Councillor Elisabethe Marshall asked who carried out the feasibility study for this. And what expertise did they have on Graphite Waste? Dr Meehan responded that it was the licensee who is carrying out the study, made up of a team of specialists.

Councillor Marshall continued by asking why the company are looking at this type of waste disposal now after building the ILW store? Dr Meehan explained that is an opportunity that has come up as we were looking internationally at what a lot of other countries were doing and what came to view was that there may be a better way of dealing with graphite. The ILW store is an interim solution, what we are looking at here is a permanent solution.

Cllr Robert Barr asked whether the project would create more jobs. Dr Meehan was confident that there were certainly potential for retaining jobs beyond 2020. Cllr Gallagher was interested in the number of jobs and how many highly skilled jobs were sourced locally. Dr Meehan suggested that he would need to discuss this question with Peter Roach. However, the site is committed to recruiting people locally and using local firms.

Mr Doug McFarlane asked for clarity over the dimensions and number of disposal cells being looked into. Dr Meehan explained that the waste would roughly be 20 metres in diameter and 50 metres below ground level. Mr McFarlane went on to ask if that meant below sea level to which Dr Meehan agreed.

Mr McFarlane was aware that Hunterston is on a double fault line and asked if any consideration had been made for this. Dr Meehan confirmed that a British geological survey has been contracted and yes there is some fault in the locality but there is no problem with the area that the study is covering. There is a glacial till which has been there for around 10,000 years overlying the area, however there are no problems associated with this and the area is considered very stable.

Cllr Gallagher asked if the cell being under water would pose a problem. Dr Meehan confirmed that this would not be a problem and gave examples.

Mr John Robertson asked about the containers that would be used to package the waste before disposing of them in the cell. Dr Meehan explained that there were a whole range of options for packaging and part of the feasibility study was looking at this.

Mr Angus Cochrane-Patrick asked to hear what the NDA thought of the project. Ms Deborah Ward explained that as the project is currently a feasibility study it wouldn't be appropriate to say at this stage.

Mrs Rita Holmes stated that she felt Hunterston was going to be used as a waste dump for other industries. Mrs Holmes looked for clarification on how many cells the study was looking at. Dr Meehan stated that the study is looking into one disposal cell. Mrs Holmes went on to explain that the only way she would find the disposal cell acceptable is if the study could prove that placing the graphite in an underground cell would be safer than placing it in the ILW store. Mrs Holmes was also keen to find out what the ILW store would be used for if the graphite cell went ahead as the group were of the understanding that the store was only for Hunterston A waste. Dr Meehan explained that there was a possibility that options may be looked at with regards to Hunterston B waste but that would only be subject to consultation and local authority planning.

Mr MacDougall asked for clarification on whether or not the ILW store would be used for Hunterston B waste. Dr Meehan stated that the current plan was for Hunterston A waste only and reiterated that any change to that plan would require discussion between the NDA, British Energy and the local planning authority, and would be subject to public consultation.

6.A HUNTERSTON B STATION REPORT

Mr John Morrison, Technical & Safety Support Manager, deputising for Mr Ian Stewart, Station Director, presented the Hunterston B quarterly report, and the following discussions took place:

Cllr Barr congratulated B station on their excellent safety performance record. He went on to add how impressed he was by the restoration of the 1895 Columbia Printing Press by the B station apprentices.

6.B NII REPORT

Mr Peter Rothwell, Nuclear Inspectorate presented his report, advising that Hunterston B had performed extremely well over the previous six months.

Mrs Holmes asked Mr Rothwell to elaborate on the final paragraph of Item 2.1 of his Report.

Mr Rothwell stated that the NII had carried out inspections on various licensee conditions resulting in 99% performance compliance. Sometimes it is found that different sites do a certain thing better and when this is the case we will suggest to other sites that perhaps this way should be tried. This way we raise standards.

6.C SEPA REPORT

In the absence of Mr Keith Hammond of SEPA the Report was taken as read and accepted without question.

7.A HUNTERSTON A SITE REPORT

Dr Stephen Price and Mr Reuben Phillips presented the Hunterston A Site report and the following discussions took place:

Having previously sat as Chair of the Land Quality sub group, Mr Kenny McDougall was under the impression that the contamination found in the CP7 compound had already been highlighted and asked for clarity on what had been found. Dr Price clarified that the CP7 compound had historic contamination from around thirty years ago which had been previously reported to the group. The current discussion surrounding the CP7 compound was about remediation work that is being undertaken to move the contamination and prevent any other contamination in that area. The work has been subject to scrutiny by the regulators and the safety case and is now completed. Work is now complete and monitoring continues. Mr McDougall asked about the amount of contamination and an action was taken to find out the volume of contaminated soil removed.

Further discussion took place on the history of the CP7 compound and Dr Price explained that there appeared to be some confusion as the group had covered this particular Land Quality matter over 18 months ago when the Site confirmed that there were no concerns about the area because it had been dealt with. However, given the history there may be the possibility of contamination which is why the area is monitored regularly.

Mr John Lamb asked about the variation to RSA93 and in particular what waste materials are being talked about. Dr Price confirmed that the report is referring to materials that are being recovered from the Site which are very low level waste, such as samples of foundations taken at the start of some projects. Dr Price continued to explain that no material had left Site.

Cllr Alec Gallagher wished to thank Magnox for their very generous donation to the Festival this year.

Mrs Rita Holmes enquired about the provision of signage at the very low level waste pits. The secretariat took an action to find out more details. **ACTION K. MCMILLAN**

Mrs Holmes further enquired about minimising the amounts of low level waste being sent to the low level waste repository (LLWR) in Cumbria and asked why the Site would want to send high volumes of very low level waste there. Dr Price responded that the LLWR at Drigg is a national asset and is required for use by the whole country. Hunterston A will therefore not be filling the repository with inappropriate waste and instead will continue to discuss a fit for purpose disposal unit with both the stakeholder group and the Site regulators. Mrs Holmes continued by asking if such a facility would be temporary, landfill or incineration. Dr Price stated that discussions were around a specifically engineered very low level waste facility which is something that Scotland currently doesn't have but is seen by some as a real benefit for Hunterston.

Mr McDougall asked for further clarification regarding the Land Quality and asked if the report had been rushed and was the contamination found by SEPA. Dr Price explained that there are no concerns and the work had certainly not been rushed. The CP7 work had been planned over the last couple of years. He reiterated that there appeared to be some confusion over something that has been long standing and it has been discussed frequently. Mr McDougall agreed to email his concerns to the secretariat at a later date once he had the chance to check previous paperwork.

Mr Peter Young asked for clarification that the CP7 is an area of where an old leak had taken place. Dr Price confirmed this to be correct and that the area has been capped and sealed, and is frequently monitored with the use of borehole drilling.

Mrs Holmes asked if one of the disposal cells proposed for Graphite was in the CP7 compound. Dr Price confirmed this to be correct however, in terms of proximity of the contamination the Site will make sure that this is not an issue.

7.B SEPA REPORT

Mr Ian Robertson presented the SEPA report for Hunterston A Site and the following discussion took place:

Mrs Holmes asked for SEPA's response to the graphite pathfinder project. Mr Robertson stated that SEPA would undertake an independent review and therefore felt it would be inappropriate for him to make comment at this stage. Mrs Holmes then went on to ask if there was enough expertise within SEPA to deal with and oversee the GPP feasibility study. Mr Robertson explained that the documents were being held by their Policy Unit were they have very good expertise.

Mrs Holmes asked for clarification about matters regarding the MAETP. Mr Robertson confirmed that SEPA is looking for some clarification principally on the operating parameters

which has progressed and feeds through to the optimisational performance. SEPA are very satisfied with the progress which has been made.

Mr Young asked for an explanation on what was meant by optimisation of the pond. Mr Robertson explained that optimisation in this particular context means looking at circles of operation parameters, such as flow rates and optimum number of treatment cycles.

The NDA are entirely confident that the parameters are correct and are looking upon it as an opportunity to share all the good work at the Site.

7.C NII REPORT

In the absence of Dr Les Davies, the report was taken as read and accepted without question.

8. DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

16 December 2010 1.30pm in the Lauriston Hotel, Ardrossan.

Mr Tony Bale
SSG Chairman