

## PROGRESS REPORT

JULY 2007  
Policy

Sustainability & Nuclear

This reports on:

- Technology transfer project
- Socio –economics
- Education & training
- National nuclear laboratory
- Nuclear new build
- NDA
- PCM workshop
- Thorp

### Technology Transfer Project

The recruitment campaign currently in progress at Sellafield was an indication of a fundamental change in manpower planning for the site. BNGSL is no longer able to support employees to leave the company to set up spin-off businesses. As an alternative, BNGSL has proposed an alternative project to support the spin-off of knowledge (formal IPR and informal "know-how") to local supply chain businesses, to be developed and used by the companies in nuclear decommissioning projects at Sellafield and elsewhere.

BNGSL has agreed with the NDA a new policy for the exploitation of IPR (which belongs to the NDA not to BNGSL) which will facilitate this process.

This revised project will therefore apply to existing businesses rather than newly formed "spin-offs", but other fundamental principles will still apply, i.e.:

- Intensive process to confirm suitability of applicant company and relevance of IPR.
- Business support and mentoring through the development phase
- Ongoing links to "demanders" in BNGSL but no guarantee of work

### SOCIO-ECONOMICS- COMMERCIAL COMPETITIONS

First Tier 1 Competition - Low Level Waste Repository

A 'down select' announcement is expected imminently from the NDA on the remaining bidders in the competition.

First Tier 1 Competition – Sellafield Parent Body Organisation contract

There are four remaining consortia in the competition, Jacobs and Energy Solutions having withdrawn.

- Fluor Ltd in partnership with Toshiba
- SBB (Serco, Bectel, BWXT)
- Washington Group International/ Amec Nuclear/ Areva
- CH2M Hill International Nuclear Services Ltd



Local partners (CBC, ABC, Invest in Cumbria, Cumbria Community Foundation and West Lakes Renaissance) are working in conjunction with the NDA competition Team, led by Richard Jones on the following areas:

- Consultation on evaluation criteria
- Providing opportunities for bidders to be presented with a common set of messages with regard to community aspirations including progress and summary of the Master Plan.

It is understood that political leaders would still wish to have their own dialogue with bidders but that a set of common messages agreed across community stakeholders, promoting a single voice, would be enormously helpful.

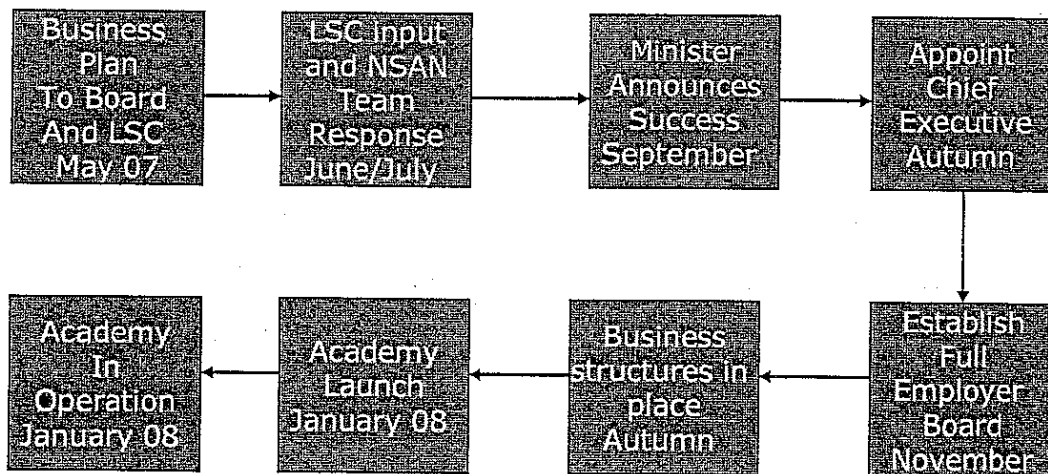
Meetings with all 4 bidding consortia were held in June.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

National Skills Academy Nuclear (NSAN)

The Business Plan for NSAN was sent to the Learning and Skills Council on 25<sup>th</sup> May after approval by the Shadow Board.

Timeline for accreditation / operation:



### National Community Apprenticeship Scheme

A scheme similar to that operated by GenII/BNG aimed at supporting apprentices in the supply chain will operate from the NSAN from September 2007. A manager for the scheme is being recruited and will be located at the Nuclear Academy in West Cumbria. In West Cumbria the scheme will be delivered by GenII and look to increase numbers of Community Apprentices from the planned intake of 25 to 50 in 2007/8.

Nuclear Academy North West – Lillyhall

The Chief Executive, Andrew King, will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. WLR is about to commission a market research study to understand the skill needs of the employers in the supply chain to help inform the final design stage of the build and to inform the short and longer term curriculum requirements. Andrew King has provided input into the brief and will be a member of the Steering Group once in post.

### **National Nuclear Laboratory**

The DTI submitted an update to the Secretary of State in April that outlined progress on the National Nuclear Laboratory project; it is DTI's intention to submit comprehensive advice to ministers by the Summer after having consulted with DTI lawyers and other key stakeholders.

Substantial work has been done on a National Nuclear Laboratory business and financial model. DTI continue to assess the risk profile to ensure that full recovery of facilities operational costs can be achieved through paying customers and any under utilisation risk is minimised.

DTI continue to work with BNFL and the NDA and is pressing for an operating model to be agreed by all parties that meets with the expectations of key stakeholders, in particular the SLCs and the Regulators but which is also attractive to the market place in preparation for a formal competition process.

While considerable work has been done and all the relevant information gathered there remain a number of key issues that must be resolved before DTI can finalise advice to ministers. DTI have confirmed that they are committed to establishing a National Nuclear Laboratory provided that there is a viable business plan for it and the risks can be clearly managed.

### **Nuclear New Build**

The month of May saw the publication of 3 White Papers by government which are of vital interest to West Cumbria.

1. Planning for a Sustainable Future – this proposes reforms to the planning system for nationally significant infrastructure which includes power stations.
2. Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy – this sets out a framework for action to address the challenges of climate change and security of energy supply given the inevitability of growing global and UK economies.
3. In parallel with the Energy Paper, the DTI has published a consultative document – The Future of Nuclear Power – to explore the role of nuclear power in a low carbon UK economy.

As part of this consultation exercise, the government has also set out a proposed process for a Strategic Siting Assessment of potential locations for new nuclear stations.

### **NDA**

The NDA has today published a summary of the "Uranium and Plutonium: Macro-Economic Study". The Study has provided the NDA with a wide-ranging analysis of the possible futures for the UK's stocks of uranium and plutonium materials. It lays out different potential futures and sets out their financial, socio-economic and environmental impacts. The NDA will take these findings into account in its discussion with Government on the options for the future. The study was carried out by ERM and IDM

The NDA responded to an article published on 17 June 2007 in the Independent on Sunday newspaper concerning the Government's consultation on advance fuel allocation and the impact on THORP at Sellafield.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority welcomes its extended role as the single UK body responsible for implementing geological disposal of higher activity radioactive waste, as announced today by Government.

The decision, announced by UK, Scottish and Welsh Environment Ministers, widens the NDA's remit to now oversee the full cycle of nuclear waste management and disposal.

NDA Chief Executive, Dr Ian Roxburgh, said:

"We welcome this decision as it heralds a new era for nuclear waste management in the UK, setting out a clear path towards deep geological disposal as supported by the NDA.

"We are pleased to take on the responsibility for providing a national integrated approach towards the recovery, treatment, storage, transportation and ultimate disposal of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste. This builds on our existing accountability under the Energy Act for low level waste disposal.

"We regard this further responsibility as a measure of the Government's confidence in our ability to work with our stakeholders to implement a long-term radioactive waste management option for the UK.

"The NDA continues to work hard to build trust for safe and environmentally responsible nuclear site clean-up, and there are clear benefits in terms of knowledge and accountability for us taking on similar responsibility for waste disposal.

"We already work in an open and transparent way and we will ensure we continue to do so in taking forward the challenge Government has set us to plan and develop a geological disposal facility.

" In consultation with Government, regulators and stakeholders, the NDA will now start planning a detailed programme to take the geological disposal concept forward.

Commenting on the Government's proposal to transfer the shares in United Kingdom Nirex Ltd to the NDA, Dr Roxburgh said:

"Nirex staff have carried out important research and repository development work and have provided valuable advice to both industry and latterly to CoRWM for which they deserve credit. There is tremendous technical expertise which would be of great assistance to us in taking forward the geological disposal concept, and we plan to talk to Nirex staff as soon as possible to discuss with them the opportunities that would lie ahead in a restructured NDA."

Today's announcement was made as part of the Government's response to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management report published on 31 July 2006. The NDA supports CoRWM's findings which included the recommended approach to geological disposal, making waste storage arrangements compatible with the likely disposal timetable, and stakeholder and community engagement processes.

#### **PCM WORKSHOP NOTE**

The workshop was arranged by BNG, held at the Ennerdale County Hotel and facilitated by Dr. Ray Kemp of Quintessa.

There was a good turnout with Tim Stoddard and Sean Gorman from the County and various other stakeholders together with officials from NDA, BNG and UKAEA. There were also representatives from Harwell and Dounreay.

The workshop focused on how to treat PCMs in the future and the following volumes were provided:

<u>Current</u>	<u>Forecast</u>
Sellafield: 7975m <sup>3</sup>	22000m <sup>3</sup>
Harwell: 1230m <sup>3</sup>	1390m <sup>3</sup>
Dounreay: 840m <sup>3</sup>	1240m <sup>3</sup>

*Aldermaston (non NDA site)*

2300m<sup>3</sup> rising to 6500m<sup>3</sup>

The problems with the present process are around:

- Can only handle production waste
- Limited capacity – only one process line
- Secondary waste from process – liquid

A solution and facility has to be in place by 2020.

Though the exercise mainly looked at PCM waste generated on the Sellafield site it did also discuss the possibility of PCM waste from other NDA sites being moved to

Sellafield. *I reiterated the Council's maintained consistent policy that additional LLW and ILW from outside the area should not be moved to Copeland.*

The audience agreed this was a very sensitive issue and the NII confirmed that whilst there were not against waste from other sites coming to Sellafield per se, it would have to be fully satisfied that safety, resources, capacity and need have been established.

Though the workshop really did not address community benefits, it was at this point that Tim Stoppard and I said that communities needed to be satisfied that if it were to house additional waste and/or additional process facilities, then community packages to offset detriment were needed to make any such facility acceptable to receiving communities.

On the Planning side the County flagged up its role and responsibilities and there was a plea for BNG to talk to the Planning Authority as soon as it had a plan in mind and not leave it to the last minute.

There was a debate on how long the waste would be stored and should some contingency be built in to the time frame to take account of a possible delay in the repository being available to take the waste. *I said this was another major issue for the Council both in terms of benefit packages for storing the Nation's waste and the current thinking/consultation on Site End States. There could be a perception that if more waste goes to Sellafield and above ground storage is in multi decades, then the Sellafield site will never return to its original state and by default the national repository will be in Copeland.*

I was a bit of a lone voice on this but was another opportunity to restate our case.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The consensus was that BNG need to come up with a strategy on how to handle PCM waste from Sellafield though that needs to take account and feed into a national strategy for PCMs. At this point we were told that there was National Working Group on PCM management, which included BNG, UKAEA and Aldermaston. There was a plea for transparency as most if not all were unaware of this group.

A worthwhile event but we need to keep a close eye on how things role out, particularly on waste from outside Cumbria being forced on the community, particularly if it does not attract a benefit package.

#### **Thorp Update**

The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate granted consent to re-start Thorp operations in January 2007, since which time Sellafield Ltd has been progressively bringing more of the plant back into operation.

Many parts of Thorp have been operating throughout this period including flask handling, sampling, ventilation and effluents.

Over the past several weeks the Chemical Plants within Thorp have been slowly restarted, firstly with the resumption of operations in the Product Finishing Lines followed

by a full inactive restart. The plant is now processing the Feed Clarification Cell liquors that have been held in buffer storage since the plant shutdown in 2005. In addition a short shearing campaign of 33te has commenced this morning.

Martin Leafe, Head of Thorp, at Sellafield said: "The team in Thorp have worked diligently to ensure that the stepping up of operations in the plant is done safely and with due care. While we are delighted to see the plant returned to this level of service we continue to apply a prudent approach to the restart.

"Once this limited campaign has been successfully completed we will review the performance of the plant along with the available evaporative capacity before discussing the next phase of restart with our regulators and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority".