

Cross-Party Group on Civil Nuclear Industry

27th March, 6pm

Minutes

Present

MSPs

- Oliver Mundell MSP – Conservative (Dumfriesshire)
- Colin Smyth MSP – Labour (South of Scotland)
- Emma Harper MSP – SNP (South of Scotland)
- Douglas Lumsden MSP – Conservative
- Finlay Carson MSP – Conservative
- Craig Hoy MSP – Conservative

Invited guests

- Dan Couldridge – Scottish Government
- Oli Smith – Scottish Government

Non-MSP Group Members

- David Wallace - NDA (Secreteriat)
- Nicole Tait – NDA (Secreteriat)
- Alan Cumming – NDA Group Chief Assurance and Performance Officer
- Paul Winkle – NRS Managing Director – Sites
- Cathryn Walley – Operations Director, Jacobs
- Alan Mackay – NDA Programme Manager
- Gail Ross – NRS Dounreay Head of Communications
- David Calder – NRS Dounreay Head of Sustainability and Socio Economics
- Claire Aitken – NRS Regional Communications Manager
- Cllr Archie Dryburgh – Chapelcross SSG Chair
- Helen Emberson – Dumfries and Galloway Council – CX Programme Lead
- Cathryn Walley – Operations Director, Jacobs
- Rick Wylie – University of Central Lancashire
- Peter Faccenda – Focus North Programme Manager
- Michael Ward – Strathclyde University
- Sam Long – Decom Mission – CEO
- Heather Barton – NDA Cross-Industry Learning Manager
- Fiona Bruce – NRS Dounreay Head of Commercial Development
- Bruce Cairns – NWS Chief Policy Advisor

- Laura Hogg – NDA Disposal Strategy Manager
- Richard Murray – NRS Chapelcross Site Director
- Bill Hamilton – NRS External Affairs Director
- Rita Holmes – Hunterson SSG Chair
- Pete Roche – Nuclear Free Local Authorities Policy Advisor
- Cllr Struan Mackie – Dounreay SSG Chair
- Cllr Aled M Jones – SSG Chair of Chairs
- Ann-Marie Cowperthwaite – Arup Associate Director
- Mark Longland – Arup Senior Project Manager
- Fiona McCall – EDF Senior External Affairs Manager
- Ian Park – Chapelcross Site Trade Union Representative
- Jon Woodburn – NIA Public Affairs Manager
- Malcolm Stone – Aberdeen University
- Peter Finnie – SEPA Public Affairs
- Jo Zwitserlood – SEPA Head of Energy
- Peter Hughes – ONR Principal Inspector Nuclear Safety, Nominated Site Inspector Chapelcross and Hunterston A

Apologies

- Paul Sweeney MSP – Labour
- Jamie Halcro-Johnston MSP – Conservative

Agenda item 1 – An Introduction to the NDA Group

Speaker: Alan Cumming (NDA, Group Chief Assurance and Performance Officer)

Key points:

- *Alan provided a short overview of the NDA Group, which has 17 decommissioning nuclear sites across the UK with over 16,000 employees (approximately 2000 of those on Scottish nuclear sites).*
- *Touched upon challenges and opportunities in the sector, with the decades of work there are to complete decommissioning.*
- *Also touched upon opportunities for international collaboration, learning lessons and sharing best practice with Japan.*

Agenda item 2 – Nuclear Restoration Services – Decommissioning in Scotland – activity and opportunity

Speaker - Paul Winkle (NRS, Managing Director - Sites)

Key points:

- *Paul provided a short overview of NRS, which is made up of 13 decommissioning nuclear sites across the UK. Particular focus on the three decommissioning nuclear sites in Scotland – Hunterston A, Chapelcross and Dounreay.*
- *Detail was provided on each of the three sites, including examples of socio-economic work being done in each of the communities near the sites as a result of NDA funding.*

Agenda item 3 – A Supply Chain Perspective

Speaker - Cathryn Walley (Jacobs, Director of Operations)

Key points:

- *Cathryn provided an overview of Jacobs as a supply chain company operating in the UK and internationally, particularly focusing on the landscape in Scotland.*
- *Discussed challenges and opportunities as a supply chain company in nuclear sector, and examples of socio-economic work carried out by the organisation.*

Colin Smyth MSP joined the meeting at this point.

Agenda item 4 – Q&A

Speaker – Oliver Mundell MSP chaired this section of the meeting, inviting those in the room and joining via Teams to ask questions.

Questions:

- *A question was asked around the change in completion date for the Dounreay nuclear site from Peter Roche, Nuclear Free Local Authorities.*
 - *Alan Cumming noted there were a number of reasons for this, with the primary reason being the change in understanding of the scope of work given advancement in the information we now know. The projects on site are complex and first of a kind. Previous methodologies assumed for the decommissioning were re-visited and no longer found to be the optimum solution. There were also impacts to decommissioning progress as a result of COVID.*
- *David Wallace, NDA, reflected on the wide-ranging number of people and organisations in attendance at the CPG meeting. Oliver Mundell agreed and reiterated the group aims to be action focused.*
- *Cllr Archie Dryburgh, Chapelcross SSG, noted the importance of the skilled workforce currently at the decommissioning sites, and their importance going forward at all future stations, for example Torness and Hunterston B.*
 - *Paul Winkle, NRS, agreed and noted they are currently working with Hunterston B on skills when it will become part of the NRS portfolio.*
- *Ian Park, Chapelcross site TU representative, highlighted the aging workforce at Chapelcross and the need to invest in skills and key knowledge transfer now, before losing employees to retirement.*
 - *Alan Cumming agreed, and noted the large number of apprentices and graduates the NDA group have recruited, and the large number of operators at Sellafield. He also noted that skills are transferable between industries and the opportunity of re-training and upskilling.*
 - *Cathryn Walley noted the supply chain can also work with sites to supplement peaks and troughs of resource requirements, particularly through graduates and apprentices.*
 - *Bruce Cairns, NWS, noted there are two issues, recruiting new skills and also ensuring skills are retained. Ian Park added that while graduates and apprentices are required, skills such as crane driving are needed at sites and require a local presence.*

- *Richard Murray, NRS Chapelcross, agreed and noted the challenge in providing apprentice qualifications in Scotland in, for example, NVQ level Health Physics.*
- **Oliver Mundell noted the topic of skills would be of interest at a future CPG meeting and should be an agenda item at the next meeting.**
- *Cllr Struan Mackie, Dounreay SSG, noted his welcome of the formation of the CPG and invite to join, and the importance of a wider understanding of nuclear decommissioning in Scotland particularly with elected MSPs. Struan also asked what the vision of the CPG was in terms of what was being taken forward at future meetings, how they planned to be action focused, and if it would consider Scottish Government policy and Just Transition.*
 - *Colin Smyth MSP noted that future meetings should be driven by what the CPG members want to discuss, and agreed that the previous point made by Ian on skills should be included in a future session.*
- *Colin Smyth, MSP, asked the group what would be next for areas such as Chapelcross where the site has been in the community a long time, and how much work there would be to get supply chain investment to stay in the local economy.*
 - *Paul Winkle, NRS, noted that this was different site to site as they have different geographical challenges. Chapelcross would be the pilot in this.*
 - *Richard Murray, NRS, discussed the Chapelcross Project (CX project).*
 - *Oliver Mundell, MSP, noted this would be the same challenge in other site communities and a plan was needed.*
 - *Cllr Struan Mackie, Dounreay SSG, noted the opportunity in having ministers attending the CPG and asking questions on policy where useful.*
 - *David Calder, NRS Dounreay, noted that these conversations were also happening at Dounreay, given the land available outside of site, grid connection opportunities and renewables in the area. David also noted there may be a point where policy becomes a barrier and discussions in this forum would be useful.*
 - *Fiona Bruce, NRS Dounreay, added that a large proportion of the Dounreay annual budget is spent within the supply chain, and with Dounreay now being part of the wider NRS portfolio, this will be an area to look at opportunities. Colin Smyth MSP asked whether there were challenges with SME availability locally. Fiona Bruce acknowledged there are geographical challenges but skills profiling will allow opportunities to be better understood going forward.*
 - *Peter Faccenda, Focus North, echoed experience with NRS Dounreay and noted the importance of maximising benefits of the decommissioning site for the communities around them. The sites have valuable resources that should be tied into as a nation.*
- *Oliver Mundell, MSP, asked if there were any other topics members would like to be included as future agenda items.*
 - *Alan Cumming, NDA, noted the decommissioning mission was long, and technology and innovation developments were key in helping to drive progress, utilising existing NDA links to university PhD students.*
 - *Ian Park, Chapelcross site TU representative, noted the difficulty that arises when dealing with nuclear waste in Scotland due to the difference in Waste Policy from Scotland to the rest of the UK. Oliver Mundell agreed he had been asked about this previously. Paul Winkle agreed, and noted that to drive the most value for money for the taxpayer, only having to design something once would save significant costs, and while the NDA will comply with whichever policy Scotland have, the more alignment between UK and Scottish Waste Policy the better. **Oliver Mundell noted importance***

of ensuring the policy works for communities too, and that this topic should be something that can be looked at in a future session.

- *Sam Long, Decomm North, noted the similarity in issues raised at this CPG with those faced by the oil and gas industry, and renewables. Oliver Mundell noted that the nuclear decommissioning industry didn't have the same awareness as the oil and gas.*
- *Ann-Marie Cowperthwaite, Arup, noted that the issues raised here were also felt by private sector companies, and that the most sustainable solution will be through collaborative efforts between private sector, public sector and the communities. Ann-Marie also noted the importance of this CPG in helping to drive this.*
- *Fiona McCall, EDF, noted thanks for the invitation to join the CPG, while there were less people/organisations present from the nuclear generating organisations, Hunterston B and Torness would be in Scotland for some time. Oliver Mundell agreed, and noted that the CPG would be open other organisations/individuals who may want to join from the generation side as it was important to include them in the conversation. **Oliver also noted it would be good for members to learn more about the defueling process to better understand the extent of work being done in Torness and Hunterston, and that this could be a future agenda topic.***
- *Gail Ross, NRS Dounreay, noted the importance of this CPG and value it can bring in raising important issues to MPs and Ministers. Oliver Mundell agreed, and encouraged members to share the group with key contacts.*
- *Oliver Mundell noted that while it is useful to meet in person in Edinburgh, going forward it would be great to explore possibility of moving the meeting location to around the Scottish decommissioning sites.*

Summary of topics suggested for future CPG sessions:

- *Skills*
- *Waste policy (Scotland vs UK)*
- *Overview of EDF defueling programme at Scottish nuclear sites*
- *Research and Development*
- *International connections and leverage to benefit local site communities and Scotland more widely*