

**NDA NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING, 18-19 NOVEMBER 2009,
MANCHESTER****Adam Scott****Summary**

1. I attended the latest in NDA's twice-yearly series of meetings, as part of CoRWM's scrutiny role for Task Group 6. The meeting was generally uneventful. Participants seemed broadly satisfied with its conduct. There were updates on geological disposal and other waste issues of interest to CoRWM, and some useful opportunities to meet individuals and organisations.

The meeting

2. The meeting followed the usual pattern of plenary presentations, round-table discussions and feedback, and some "breakout" sessions in smaller rooms. The agenda is on NDA's website at <http://www.nda.gov.uk/documents/upload/NSG9-Draft-Agenda.pdf>.

Some highlights

3. *Opening presentations:* from new CEO Tony Fountain, and from Executive Director Richard Waite on the Business Plan & funding. Comments and questions from stakeholders covered: whether asset sales were getting good prices and proceeds being spent locally, deficits in pension funds, flask and evaporator problems affecting Magnox sites, NDA's role in / attitude to the new-build debate, whether nuclear materials could now be declared assets, how decisions on cost savings would be made, the risk that deferring work to save money might push up costs in the long term, and how soon sites like Harwell could be cleaned up.
4. *Geological disposal facility: update:* presented by Alun Ellis on progress in W Cumbria, NDA planning including preparation of the Generic Disposal System Safety Case by September 2010, leading then to desk-based studies once the community was ready, and progress in establishing the shadow SLC. This is now a regular report (see NSG85).
5. *Health, safety & environmental performance:* tables discussed questions from NDA on: how to focus on reducing its "level of concern"? how to measure progress? and what performance measures were most important?
6. *Break-out: update on waste issues:* presentations from Phil Davies on strategic objectives in integrated waste management, and Michael Calloway on LLW strategy. Comments from stakeholders included concern about VLLW going to landfill: citizens did not comprehend "very low", they just saw it as nuclear waste; while councils were radically reducing their use of landfill.
7. The second day had break-out discussions on 4 topics (transport & logistics, R&D, site end states, asset management) with 2 sessions so people could attend more than one.
8. *Break-out discussion: transport & logistics:* NSG in 2008 had proposed that transport be upgraded to a strategy; it was one of the key enabling strategies; NDA was working it up with SLCs, regulators and the two transport operators; and stakeholders were invited to comment on draft guiding principles. The meeting suggested content (e.g. reference to the need to minimise the "carbon footprint") and process (e.g. involving local government NSG representatives when considering how to address concerns of communities on transport routes).

9. *Break-out discussion: R&D:* mainly a presentation; participants were not asked to comment on anything specific. Their questions covered: the extent of NDA's international collaboration; in its collaboration with SLCs (who accounted for 90% of spend) how far NDA steered or had an intelligent-customer role; how it involved regulators; and the role of the supply chain in coming up with innovative solutions (e.g. yellow boxes, Cillit Bang).
10. *Networking & drop-in:* opportunities to visit a number of information stalls (e.g. on the GDF project) or to network with one another.
11. *Final plenary:* closing comments from stakeholders were brief and generally positive about the event. Questions related to socio-economics, recruitment, and how stakeholders could contribute to future NDA reviews and strategy developments.
12. The meeting was an opportunity to hold or observe some useful conversations with NDA, regulators and representatives, NGOs, W Cumbria partnership and local site stakeholders.

Some observations

13. The meeting was generally well attended. It may be just an impression but I did not see many representatives from "green" NGOs. This may be partly due to the pressure of other consultation type activities. But there were other participants, e.g. representing site stakeholder groups, who provided some often challenging questions or comments. And I believe there have been some recent NGO discussions with NDA and DECC about increasing their involvement in discussions on nuclear issues.
14. The meeting was informative and participants seemed broadly satisfied with the event and the NSG process. NDA are happy for us to see summary reports on feedback / evaluation if Members would like, as part of task 16 in the 2009/10 work programme.
15. Things that seemed to work well (either because stakeholders said so, or because they seemed to stimulate good discussion or follow-up) included
 - a session on transport and logistics, involving group working, where the presenter told them at the end what he had gained from their contributions, and
 - an update on the GDF, where people seemed impressed by the way information was presented and questions answered.
16. Things that didn't go so well generally seemed to involve lengthy Powerpoint presentations to people sat in rows, where there was some opportunity to question but little involvement in developing anything.
17. An NDA representative at one session said that one of their greatest failings had been a couple of years ago, when some stakeholders at relatively low-hazard sites had high expectations about the likely pace of clean-up, and NDA had transferred significant resources to Sellafield with little or no consultation. This had damaged some local communities and their trust in NDA.
18. There will be a full report in due course on the NDA website, where papers are also available via the link <http://www.nda.gov.uk/stakeholders/>. If Members would like a copy of any of these papers, please let me know.
19. This summary note has been shown to the NDA meeting organiser to ensure that it complies with NSG "ground rules" - for example, not attributing comments or viewpoints to individual stakeholders.