

NDA Briefing Note for Berkeley SSG Meeting, 4 November 2009

New Chief Executive Joins NDA

On Thursday 1st October, Tony Fountain took up his position of NDA Chief Executive and attended his first Board meeting.

Tony joins the NDA from BP following an extensive international career over the last 25 years including several postings to the US. In his most recent position as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of BP's Fuels Value Chains business, he was responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of BP's integrated businesses in the Eastern Hemisphere, with a multi-billion income stream of 15,000 staff across Europe, Australasia and Africa.

The Board meeting was held at Chapelcross site and it is hoped that a future Board meeting will be held at Berkeley.

NDA Chairman Visits Berkeley

Meanwhile we were pleased to welcome NDA Chairman Stephen Henwood to Berkeley in July. Mr Henwood visited Oldbury site in the morning and met with Berkeley SSG Chair Penny Wride over a working lunch at Oldbury.

In the afternoon Mr Henwood toured Berkeley site and was briefed on progress with the projects and with workforce restructuring at the site. He was also updated on plans for developing Berkeley Centre.

NDA Delivers Successful Year

The NDA signalled a successful year in its 2008/09 Annual Report & Accounts laid before Parliament in July, delivering its programme within its £2.7 Bn budget and with £183 M of efficiency savings ploughed back into the clean-up mission.

Key 2008/09 programme highlights include:

- ❖ Significant progress in hazard reduction at Sellafield
- ❖ Completion of a major decommissioning milestone at Dounreay with the demolition of the PUMA cell
- ❖ Defuelling of two further Magnox stations commenced
- ❖ Vault 9 construction underway at the Low Level Waste Repository
- ❖ Sellafield competition completed
- ❖ Nuclear Skills Strategy launched

- ❖ Asset Disposal programme underway (with £387M raised from land sales at 3 sites in 2009/2010)

This successful delivery programme is set against a backdrop of strong financial performance. Commercial income for the year was £2.0 Bn – a £517M increase on the previous year, due in part to increased electricity sales from the Oldbury and Wylfa stations. This has meant that the Government grant element of the NDA's funding reduced to £898M from the previous year's figure of £1.6B – the income surplus has helped to increase the amount of contingency funds held by Government to help address NDA's future challenges.

Sizewell A Starts Defuelling

Sizewell A Nuclear Site, owned by the NDA and operated by Magnox South, began defuelling in August when the first spent fuel flask since it ceased generating on 31 December 2006 was dispatched to Sellafield.

This is the start of a key phase in the site's decommissioning plan and its eventual completion, planned for 2012, will represent a huge milestone for the site. The flask dispatch programme will continue for the next three years until all the fuel, which is currently stored safely in Sizewell's twin reactors, has been shipped to Sellafield for reprocessing.

New Waste Store at Trawsfynydd Opened

Trawsfynydd celebrated a major milestone in September when its new Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) Store was officially opened – marking a first for a Magnox site.

Once the ILW has been retrieved, it needs to be placed in a secure and controlled environment awaiting a long term storage option for the UK's nuclear wastes.

Construction of the store, which can hold up to 368 concrete 'overpacks' and 2,444, drums containing ILW, began in May 2006. The construction phase of the £20m Trawsfynydd ILW store was completed March 2008.

UK Low Level Waste Strategy Consultation

The NDA is drawing closer to finalising the UK strategy for the Management of Solid Low Level Radioactive Waste from the UK Nuclear Industry, as the consultation period draws to a close.

The consultation originally ran from 5 June 2009 to 11 September 2009 but has recently been extended to the end of November. It gives members of the public the chance to comment on the draft strategy, which was produced in response to revised Government policy for the management of solid Low Level Waste (LLW).

The strategy looks at ways of applying the waste management hierarchy to potentially reduce the amount of solid low level radioactive waste generated throughout the UK.

At present most of this is disposed of at the Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) near Drigg, Cumbria, which has been in use since 1959 and is now close to capacity.

More space is being built and there are plans for expansion in the future. But even with all of this extra capacity (potentially 700,000 m³ subject to planning and regulatory approvals) there will still be a significant shortfall compared with the amount of waste forecast to be generated over the long term (3,000,000 m³ over 120 years).

SSG Take the Lead in Dounreay Competition

It has been announced that the first part of the Dounreay competition industry event will be hosted in Caithness by the Dounreay Stakeholder Group (DSG), with support from the NDA.

The aim of the industry event is to give potential bidders details of the competition to secure a Parent Body Organisation (PBO) for the Dounreay Site Restoration Limited Site Licence Company (SLC).

Hosting the first part of the two day event in the area will also enable bidders to meet key local stakeholders and hear first hand the socio economic impact of the closure of the site and the Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership's plans to diversify the economy.

The second day will be held in Edinburgh or Glasgow and will outline the overall aim and scope of the contract, the detailed timetable, and the process to be followed.

The Dounreay Stakeholder Group will set up a small Steering Group to provide the programme for the first phase of the industry event which is expected to take place in early 2010. Bidders will also have an opportunity to visit the Dounreay site as well as informal interaction with stakeholders during their visit to Caithness.

The competition was formally launched in September 2009 and is expected that the process will be completed with the announcement of the selected bidder in Spring 2011.

Nuclear Graduate Programme

The nuclear graduates programme, initiated by the NDA, has received a Top 100 accolade from The Times newspaper.

The programme, launched only last year, is the second highest new entry, at number 72, in the Top 100 Graduate Employer category. Described by the Times as the "most comprehensive graduate scheme the industry has ever seen", 30 graduates from engineering and other courses have so far joined the programme.

The programme brings together leading businesses and organisations, with more than twenty different companies and governmental bodies backing it, including Sellafield, Rolls–Royce, BAE Systems, the MoD and the Environment Agency.

The scheme's global focus ensures that both UK and international placements are standard for the participants with opportunities to work in France, Sweden, India, the USA and Japan.

The programme aims to bring a new kind of graduate to the industry by providing a breadth of technical experience from across Government sites, supply chain and regulators. Next year the programme will expand to include opportunities for 42 graduates.

The local NDA Team was pleased to welcome one of the graduates to Berkeley as part of our Lifetime Plan review team earlier in the year.

And finallyAn Alternative to Laser technology for decommissioning

After the item in the last SSG update about the use of lasers comes the report of the discovery by workers at Dounreay that one of the country's best-selling household cleaning products removes plutonium stains more effectively than many industrial alternatives.

The discovery came when a decommissioning team found their normal cleaning fluid was slowing down work to dismantle an experimental chemical plant used in the 1980s to recycle plutonium liquor.

One of the team suggested trying Cillit Bang, after watching a television advert that suggested it could strip grime instantly from a 2p coin.

The idea was taken up by managers who ordered tests on the £1.99 household cleaner. These confirmed its effectiveness and the product is now playing a key role in keeping on track the clean-out and demolition of the plant, a test-bed for the giant THORP reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

Note – All documents referred to can be downloaded from www.nda.gov.uk