

NDA Monthly Update

April 2015

Summary

- Sellafield sludge removed for first time
- NDA Business Plan published
- Go-ahead for NDA Archive
- NDA estate spends more with smaller businesses
- Success for Welsh workforce transition scheme
- Endorsement for NDA's cyber security safeguards
- Bespoke equipment looks under Dounreay reactor top
- Documents published on Sellafield management arrangements
- Hunterston empties first bunker
- 2015 Supply Chain Event date announced
- New publication explains cost of clean-up

Diary Dates

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| • LLWR Community Open Day | 18 April |
| • Total DeCom annual conference 2015, Glasgow | 22 April |
| • Direct Rail Services 20th anniversary Open Day, Carlisle | 18 July |
| • Nuclear Institute Conference on Radioactive Materials | 19 May |

Sludge removed from pond for first time

Sellafield decommissioning took a major step forward after decades-old radioactive sludge was removed from one of the site's legacy fuel ponds for the first time. The material was pumped from the First Generation Magnox Storage Pond (FGMSP) via a pipe-bridge to a new interim store – the Sludge Packaging Plant (SPP1) – during a series of trials. The transfers were designed to prove the capability of the export route and the new store. Routine sludge retrievals are due to start in April 2016. FGMSP needs to be emptied of 1,500 cubic metres of radioactive sludge lying at the bottom. The sludge is a similar consistency to sand and has to be carefully removed, while leaving the water in place to provide a radioactive shield for the stored nuclear fuel. The pond holds 14,000 cubic metres of contaminated water, covering spent nuclear fuel, various nuclear wastes and skips. All of this is draped in a blanket of radioactive sludge.

[Weblink: Sludge removal](#)

Business plan published

The NDA has published its latest Business Plan, setting out anticipated income and expenditure for 2015/16. The Plan also includes a high-level 20-year overview of targets and a detailed look at key activities over the next three years. Total planned expenditure for 2015/16 is £3.31 billion of which £2.09 billion will be funded by the UK government and £1.22 billion by income from commercial operations.

[Weblink: NDA Business Plan](#)

Go-ahead for NDA Archive

Highland Council has now given the go-ahead to the NDA's plan for a nuclear archive at Wick in Scotland. Planning permission for the £20 million facility was granted by Highland Council North Planning Committee at a meeting in Dingwall. The NDA has appointed Morrison Construction to carry out a detailed two-month design and cost review before beginning construction this summer. The building is due to be completed by the end of 2016 and will house more than 70 years' worth of historic information from across UK's civil nuclear industry, including up to 30 million digital records.

[Weblink: Archive plan approved](#)

Increased spend with smaller businesses

The NDA estate has measured that more than 21% of its annual supply chain spend is with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), equating to £330 million out of the annual £1.7 billion total. In 2012, the Government set itself and all public bodies an aspirational target to increase the proportion of spend with SMEs to 25% by the end of the current Parliament.

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This challenge was set to more accurately reflect the demographics of the UK business sector and to encourage public sector buyers to use companies best suited to deliver a project irrespective of their size. The NDA and its estate set a 20% target and developed an associated action plan. The Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, recently announced that the Government had spent £11.4 billion with SMEs, equating to 26.1%. The announcement was supported by details showing the individual performance by Department.

[Weblink: SME spend increases](#)

Workforce transition scheme success

New opportunities have opened up for workers whose jobs are disappearing from the NDA's two Welsh sites, thanks to the success of a £4 million support scheme. 'Shaping the Future' was launched three years ago to address the impact of dwindling employment at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa. The scheme provided the workforce with career coaching and funding to help them diversify their skills and find new work. The training programme signed up 1,402 employees, exceeding the 1,200 target by 17%. Shaping the Future is backed by £1.2 million of NDA funding and £2.3 million from the European Social Fund, through the Welsh Government. Other funding partners include Gwynedd County Council and Isle of Anglesey Council. Magnox Ltd, which operates both sites, has been integral to the development and implementation of the programme.

[Weblink: Workforce scheme exceeds expectations](#)

Endorsement for NDA's cyber safeguards

The NDA's cyber security systems have been endorsed by a new Government scheme designed to reduce the risk of digital disruption. According to a recent Cabinet Office report, The Cost of Cyber Crime, around £27 billion a year is lost to the UK economy through cyber crime, much of which arises from the theft of Intellectual Property. The Cyber Essentials (CE) scheme is designed to reduce the vulnerability of businesses and the NDA has been awarded the highest level of certification, Cyber Essentials Plus, following a comprehensive assessment by independent specialists, confirming that its systems are well protected.

[Weblink: NDA's digital security systems endorsed](#)

Bespoke equipment reveals beneath Dounreay reactor top

The removal of trapped fuel elements from the Dounreay Fast Reactor moved a step closer with the successful trial of bespoke equipment to lift off the top plate. Decommissioning the 50-year-old experimental reactor is one of the most technically challenging projects in the NDA estate. In 2012, a camera looked inside the reactor for the first time. Subsequent inspections over a three-month period enabled the Dounreay Fast Reactor (DFR) team to assess the internal conditions in detail, providing an

accurate basis for planning future fuel removal. The reactor top plate, a stainless steel honeycomb structure, has been submerged in hazardous radioactive alkali metal for decades. Working with Caithness company Enterprise Engineering Services Ltd, the DFR team has now carried out a series of trials, using specialised equipment to demonstrate that sections of the reactor top plate can be removed to release the trapped elements underneath. Additional work is planned during the summer to prepare for removal and repackaging of the remaining fuel.

[Weblink: Dounreay equipment looks into reactor](#)

Documents explain Sellafield management arrangements

The NDA has published documents that explain more fully the rationale behind the decision to change the Sellafield management arrangements. The documents provide an analysis of issues considered during the review and how they shaped the decision announced by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change in January.

[Weblink: Sellafield documents](#)

Hunterston empties first bunker

Magnox has successfully emptied more than 120 tonnes of hazardous material from the first of Hunterston A's five solid waste bunkers. Retrieval of the highly radioactive graphite and metallic waste has posed a technical challenge for many years and the recent success is a major milestone for the site. Following removal of the 62 packages from Bunker 5, work will start on breaking through into the next bunker, No 4, with a scheduled completion date for 2016. Magnox expect that emptying the solid waste from all bunkers will fill more than 1,200 packages and take a further three-four years.

[Weblink: Bunker emptied](#)

Date for 2015 Supply Chain Event announced

Following the resounding success of last year's event, the date for the 2015 NDA Estate Supply Chain Event has now been confirmed as Wednesday, 4 November. The one-day event for businesses supplying the decommissioning sector, now believed to be the largest of its kind in Europe, will once again be held at EventCity in Manchester. As with previous years, entry to the event will be free of charge to both visitors and exhibitors.

[Weblink: 2015 Supply Chain Event](#)

Nuclear Provision explained

The NDA has published an explanation of the Nuclear Provision which is the best estimate of how much it will cost to clean up the NDA's legacy sites over a programme lasting 100-plus years

[Weblink: The Nuclear Provision.](#)