

DOUNREAY PARTICLES

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 4TH JULY 2005 IN THE HILTON HOTEL, EDINBURGH.

Present:	Elizabeth Gray	Scottish Executive	(Chair)
	Ian Hall	Scottish Executive	
	Anita Popplestone	Scottish Executive	
	Paul Dale	SEPA/DPAG	
	George Hunter	SEPA	
	Byron Tilly	SEPA	
	Ian Hargrave	Highland Council	
	Ian Laidlaw	NDA	
	Bill Fernie	Particles Consultation Steering Group	
	Alex Elliot	COMARE	
	Arthur Johnstone	Scottish Executive Health Department	
	Norman Harrison	UKAEA, Dounreay Director	
	Tony Wratten	UKAEA, Reactor Decommissioning	
	Joe Toole	UKAEA Environmental Programmes	
	Beth Taylor	UKAEA, Corporate Communications	
	June Love	UKAEA, Dounreay Communications	

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Elizabeth Gray welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF MEETING

Norman Harrison thanked everyone for attending. This issue was, no doubt, one of the biggest challenges UKAEA face at Dounreay, not because they are the biggest hazard but because they are in the environment outside the licensed site.

UKAEA firmly believes that there is no ongoing source leaving the site today but recognises there are real uncertainties on the number of particles that have been discharged. This was now the time to address the real significance of the particles and not focus on the relatively low level of hazard this issue posed.

The finds at Dunnet beach in March (particle and piece of contaminated plastic) have certainly made UKAEA question previous assumptions. No further items were found on completion of the beach monitoring. Nonetheless it is important to recognise the degree of uncertainty and the level of concern, and the potential damage, not just to UKAEA, but to Caithness in general.

Areas to cover at this meeting were the closing off of potential sources, the research programme, the monitoring programme and the timing of the UKAEA's Particles consultation process.

There was a lack of certainty around three areas of the site – which all have historic cumulative issues around them. The shaft where work is in hand to isolate it from the environment by grouting. The old diffuser chamber on the seabed which is plugged off but at some point it will be sealed with concrete to

isolate it from the offshore environment. A review of the drainage system will also be completed.

While UKAEA could not make any commitments on the day to any change in the programme it was felt that it would benefit UKAEA to listen to views and take any proposals away to discuss with NDA and SEPA.

Elizabeth Gray thanked Norman for his remarks. She said it was important to ensure that as much as possible is done to reassure the public and others that what can be done is being done. This was not only in UKAEA's interests but also in the interests of the NDA and the Scottish Ministers, to whom the NDA is accountable.

3. SEPA/DPAG UPDATE

Paul Dale presented – attached.

4. UKAEA UPDATE

Joe Toole presented – attached.

It was suggested that a scale on the picture of the plastic item would be beneficial.

It was noted that there were inconsistencies in numbers related to Dunnet beach coverage between SEPA and UKAEA presentations. It was agreed to look at this.

ACTION 1: IN ASSESSMENT OF BEACH COVERAGE, JOE TOOLE/PAUL DALE TO DISCUSS THE INCONSISTENCY WITH A VIEW TO EITHER MAKING THEM CONSISTENT OR EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCE.

It was suggested that before discussions moved on to the timing of the consultation it would be beneficial to discuss the following first:

Closing all possible sources of contamination.
Research issues and monitoring programme
Action Plan

5. DISCUSSION

Elizabeth Gray noted that an earlier question had been responded to by Norman Harrison on the issue of closing off sources. She asked if everyone believed that there is nothing left to do on this.

Paul Dale said the issue of the find at Dunnet beach had been debated within DPAG. DPAG was of the view that it would like to see some reassessment of the integrity of the old diffuser – there was a concern that if it were to collapse, further particles could be released.

It was felt that by DPAG that Dunnet should be re-monitored and also Murkle beach where the eddy effects are similar to other beaches.

Elizabeth Gray said it was a question of timing of the issue of the DPAG report. Paul Dale said that the “definitive” report of DPAG was currently scheduled to be available by Christmas this year and ready to launch in January 2006. It was pointed out, however, there were still areas of uncertainty and this includes a practical demonstration of the present detection system. Elizabeth asked if DPAG could finish the definitive report if there were pieces of work outstanding. Paul Dale said that DPAG could do this, though the report would have significant gaps in the science, alternatively DPAG could await until the information was available. Joe Toole stated that UKAEA had reviewed methodologies for measuring the density of particles, however the one selected was, under closer scrutiny, not going to deliver what was required. The methodologies would be revisited and UKAEA would declare by the end of July 2005 which, if any, would provide useful information. Should a suitable method be identified, results on mass and density of particles would be provided by December 2005.

George Hunter noted that it would be difficult to explain to a lay person why a particle could not be weighed or measured. If the mass of the particles is not known then there is a gap in the data. Alex Elliot noted that these issues had been brought up at a previous meeting and it was suggested that UKAEA look at the notes of that meeting to identify outstanding actions.

Questions were also raised on the potentially destructive methods of research on particles.

Elizabeth Gray observed that two separate advisory bodies had made recommendations and greater visibility was needed on how those actions, which remained outstanding, were being addressed.

ACTION 2: ANITA POPPLESTONE TO DISTRIBUTE NOTES OF THE QUADRIPARTITE MEETING HELD LAST YEAR. [COMPLETE SENT ON 4TH JULY 2005.]

ACTION 3: JOE TOOLE TO LIASE WITH ARTHUR JOHNSTONE, PAUL DALE AND ALEX ELLIOT WITH A VIEW TO REVIEWING LAST YEAR’S ACTIONS AND UPDATE WITH CURRENT VIEWS BY 18TH JULY. [NB: CONFERETEL ORGANISED FOR 11TH JULY].

ACTION 3.1: IAN LAIDLAW TO REVIEW PROGRESS AT THE END OF AUGUST AND MONTHLY THEREAFTER, TO SATISFY THE NDA THAT ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN.

The measurement of particle mass was discussed. Arthur Johnstone asked if UKAEA had standard methodology for composition, sediment, density, etc. Joe Toole confirmed that some procedures existed and it was suggested that this issue goes back to the visibility of these.

Ian Hall stated that receiving the DPAG report was vitally important to Scottish Executive and that if there are uncertainties or issues missing because of lack of data it would be important for the Report to make this very clear.

The question of the particle detection capability of the groundhog system was raised. Alex Elliot noted that COMARE had written to Scottish Executive some months ago to enquire whether they could approach the owner of Sandside with a view to gaining access to carry out sensitivity testing on the groundhog. It was agreed that COMARE would write to the owner of the estate direct for this request. COMARE would be responsible for supplying and burying sources and UKAEA would make the vehicle available for testing.

ACTION 4: ALEX ELLIOT TO WRITE TO THE OWNER OF SANDSIDE ESTATE REQUESTING ACCESS FOR SENSITIVITY TESTING OF THE GROUNDHOG VEHICLE SYSTEM AND SEEK AN ALTERNATIVE SITE IF UNSUCCESSFUL.

ACTION 4.1: AGREEMENT ON TEST SITE TO BE SOUGHT BY END AUGUST.

Monitoring

Ian Hall noted that it had to be clear whether we were talking about monitoring for public health and regulatory purposes or that undertaken for research. There needed to be a clear statement on what advantages new technology would bring since the current technology capability is comfortably good enough to carry out public reassurance monitoring.

Paul Dale noted that to look at it from the perspective of the regulation of a practice then it would be necessary to have lower detection limits than previous targets. Joe Toole pointed out that UKAEA had committed to investigating new technology and there had been some criticism during the tender process that we did not pick the best technology.

Beth Taylor noted that the constraints were on the time because the monitoring had to be done so slowly. New technology may bring with it better methods of carrying out the same monitoring but faster.

Paul Dale said that the present monitoring was currently required by SEPA through the regulation of a practice. Once SEPA was satisfied that potential sources could not be discharged through the authorised discharge route, the regulatory regime could change to one of an intervention and the level and frequency of monitoring would be reviewed.

Ian Hall noted that there was no evidence published for whether the monitoring regime should be increased or reduced. The DPAG report may bring together sufficient information to allow an informed decision to be taken.

Elizabeth Gray said that there should be no intention to decrease the level of monitoring until the evidence from DPAG is presented

Joe Toole queried in the light of the find at Dunnet should UKAEA consider repeating the monitoring programme. No-one objected to additional monitoring. Tony Wratten suggested that this be carried out after the summer season ended. In Joe Toole's presentation, it was noted that any second survey should occur after

the information on beach accretion/erosion had been obtained. If this additional monitoring shows nothing it would not become a regular event but perhaps done on a reduced frequency to provide reassurance.

Paul Dale noted that SEPA had received requests for other beaches to be monitored in the vicinity of Dunnet.

UKAEA agreed to make their Particles Action Plan available by the end of July.

ACTION 5: JOE TOOLE TO DEVELOP PARTICLES ACTION PLAN BY END OF JULY.

6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Beth Taylor presented (attached). She addressed two issues – the principles and timing.

Bill Fernie was concerned that the process appeared to be stretched longer and longer. He hoped that with the publication of the DPAG report a conclusion can then be reached. He also had concerns that the consultation would be too localised, adding that most people within the Caithness area have an association with Dounreay in some form. He also thought it would be useful to make it apparent whether this was a consultation or an information drive.

Paul Dale noted that SEPA had raised their concerns previously about the timing of the BPEO consultation in that they felt it premature while some information was still to be provided, e.g. the extent of the offshore contamination. SEPA confirmed this agreement with the process, it was the timing it questioned.

Paul also noted that DPAG's view was that it would be useful to wait for the final SEPA/NRPB report to be published which would then allow the assessment of risk (hazard and probability) to be made available.

Tony Wratten noted that some issues may interfere with the consultation process, including the ongoing mediation process, the Dunnet finds and the lack of a confirmed source. Making available the facts would be important for the information stage.

However, early engagement was considered beneficial, in terms of agenda-setting.

It was agreed that Stage 2 (information stage) should not start until the NRPB report is made available (October) and that the DPAG definitive report was essential to Stage 3 (consultation stage) which could then take place in Spring 2006.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Action 1: In assessment of beach coverage Joe Toole/Paul Dale to discuss the inconsistency with a view to either making them consistent or explaining the difference.

Action 2: Anita Popplestone to distribute notes of the quadripartite meeting held last year. [*complete sent on 4th July 2005.*]

Action 3: Joe Toole to liaise with Arthur Johnstone, Paul Dale and Alex Elliot with a view to reviewing last year's actions and update with current views by 18th July. [NB: conferetel organised for 11th July].

Action 3.1: Ian Laidlaw to review progress at the end of August and monthly thereafter, to satisfy the NDA that action was being taken.

Action 4: Alex Elliot to write to the owner of Sandside Estate requesting access for sensitivity testing of the Groundhog vehicle system and seek an alternative site if unsuccessful.

Action 4.1: Agreement on test site to be sought by end August.

Action 5: Joe Toole to develop Particles Action Plan by end of July.