



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CHAPELCROSS STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT ANNAN ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB, ANNAN
WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2024**

Attendance/Apologies list

Attendance

Cllr Archie Dryburgh MBE
Cllr George Jamieson
Neil Carruthers
Helen Emberson
Cllr Sean Marshall
Willie McNairn
Carol Midwood
Donna Mounce
Jaime Nicholson
Ian Park
Andy Stott
Carolyn Wilson
Ian Winchester

Annandale East and Eskdale (Chair)
Annandale South (Vice Chair)
Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council
Dumfries & Galloway Council, CX Programme Lead
Dumfries & Galloway Council
2km Resident Representative
Federation of Community Councils/Canonbie and District CC
SOSE
Dumfries & Galloway Council
NRS Trade Union Representative
Restoring Annan's Waters
Dumfries & Galloway Council
JEMR team, Cumbria

Operators and Officers

Claire Aitken
Colin Hargreaves
Peter Hughes
Richard Murray
Danny Reynolds
David Wallace
Geoffrey Dore

NRS
NRS
ONR
Site Director, Chapelcross
ONR
NDA
Minute Taker

Apologies

Dianne Hamilton
Bill Hamilton
David Stone

Scottish Government
NRS
SEPA

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Cllr Archie Dryburgh welcomed the attendees to the Chapelcross SSG meeting.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Daine Hamilton, Bill Hamilton and David Stone.

Neil Carruthers confirmed that he is employed by NRS and was attending the meeting as a representative of the Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

An update to the current outstanding actions was included in the meeting pack.

Cllr Sean Marshall referred to agenda item 10 and the statement, 'There had been an original thought that there would be a spend of £26 million, with £30 million spent externally, mainly on the B722.' He clarified that he had stated that there would be an allocation of £26 million, with half to be spent on external roads.

The minutes were proposed by Willie McNairn and seconded by Cllr Sean Marshall.

4. CHAPELCROSS SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Richard Murray, (Site Director, Chapelcross)

EHSS&Q Performance

Richard Murray reported that performance remained unchanged. There had been significant damage encountered during storms Isha and Jocelyn, including a loss of cladding on reactors 3 and 4. Work was taking place to replace window banks for reactor 1. 90% had been repaired. There had been a loss of 24 hours of site access.

Site News

Eight MAC and cobalt MOSAIKS had been retrieved to the intermediate level waste (ILW) store. 44 of 52 500-litre drums had been filled and transferred to the ILW store. The last drum had also been packaged. 13 of the 14 low-level waste (LLW) consignments had been concluded. The cooling tower design work had been completed. Asset care delivery was progressing.

Cllr Sean Marshall asked if the March target for the remaining eight drums would be met. Richard Hughes responded that it would be.

Recruitment

New recruits:

- CXPP production technician
- Senior project engineer

External recruitment currently in progress:

- Assistant design support officer
- Safety and quality advisor x 3
- Project engineer
- Environment engineer

Emma Harper, David Mundell MP, Oliver Mundell MSP and Mark Leigh had all visited the site.

CXPP Decommissioning

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Richard Murray reported on the cave line ILW retrievals. Size reduced wastes had been removed in bags from the breakdown cave and packaged into CXPP 500-litre annular drums. The drums had then been loaded into stillage for long term storage in the ISF. The current financial year target of 52 drums had been achieved. 88 drums had been packaged to date. Work was taking place into the next cave line.

Pond Decommissioning

The MAC and cobalt MOSAICS work had been completed. All plant and equipment associated with the processing of the retrievals had now been removed from the pond building. Installation of the new zeolite skip retrieval equipment was almost complete.

Cooling Tower Remediation

The strategy for remediation of the cooling tower areas had been determined. Planning permission documentation was currently being produced to allow removal of the crushed concrete to be used as capping at NWS (Drigg).

Waste

There had been 13 shipments of LLW waste from the site. 130m³ of legacy waste had been removed from the site this financial year. Legacy waste had been repackaged into the disposable container/bags, while non-radioactive legacy waste had been shipped.

Asset Care

Glazing replacements continued on reactors 1 and 2. The portable water replacement had been put out to tender. Parts of the fire system had been upgraded. Several improvements had been made to the site traffic management, while several roofs had been replaced.

Socio Economic Update

NRS had spent over £1 million across its 12 sites, also supporting local projects. NRS was due to support the Canonbie Flower Show.

Ian Park asked how Chapelcross could accelerate its knowledge transfer. Richard Murray explained that NRS had a succession plan in place. Several trainees were on site. The environment was extremely challenging.

Cllr George Jamieson noted that NRS had accumulated £20 million in annual maintenance costs. Richard Murray clarified that the £20 million figure was related to the 12 NRS sites. There had been £3 million in maintenance costs for Chapelcross.

Cllr Sean Marshall noted that the reactor programme would take five years. However, storm damage was one of the most susceptible areas. He asked if the maintenance budget allowed for scope to accelerate work on storm prevention. Richard Murray responded that this had been reviewed, and NRS was adopting a risk-based approach. It would first work on the front elevations before turning attention to the rear phases. Regarding its prioritisation of asset funding, Chapelcross had a greater budget than other sites.

Ian Winchester queried the pathway for oil, liquid and graphite disposal. Richard Hughes stated that the oil and liquid were incinerated. A path had yet to be determined for the graphite.

Andy Stott noted that a planned visit had been cancelled and asked if it would be rescheduled. Richard Murray responded that several dates would be proposed for the rescheduled visit.

ACTION: Proposed dates for the rescheduled site visit to be circulated.

Cllr Archie Dryburgh asked if any Chapelcross staff had been seconded to other NRS sites. Richard Murray said one individual would be transferring to Dounreay, and a couple of individuals would be promoted into a central programme team.

Cllr Archie Dryburgh queried Chapelcross's approach to AI and robotics. Richard Murray explained that a company was looking at the future of this and had put forward several scheme designs. Richard Murray was of the view that this was a long-term investment. NRS had to ensure that it continued this forward programme of work.

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Cllr Archie Dryburgh asked if NRS would request that any staff working from home return to the site. Richard Murray responded that most NRS employees who worked virtually were expected to attend the site two days a week.

Cllr Archie Dryburgh asked if there was a continued link between Hunterston and Chapelcross. Richard Murray said there was a sharing of a few roles in the programme space.

Cllr Sean Marshall asked if there was any significant to report following NRS's rebranding. Richard Murray stated that Chapelcross had continued with business as usual. There had been no impacts at a local level. However, there had been some reorganisation of the target operating model that had mainly impacted the central function teams. xxs

5. NDA UPDATE

A. David Wallace (NDA)

David Wallace reported that he had attended a regional roadshow event in Wales on 12 March. Topics such as graphite and AI (artificial intelligence) had been discussed. Work was taking place with Strathclyde and other universities to identify challenges in advance.

The UK government was due to publish its consultation on the management of radioactive substances on 14 March. The consultation would be circulated to SSG stakeholders. The social impact strategy was due imminently.

A Civil Nuclear Industry cross-party group (CPG) meeting was scheduled for 27 March, at 18.00, with a drop-in session from 14.30 to 17.30. The CPG would address nuclear decommissioning issues in Scotland. There would be four meetings per year, and a report would be provided to the SSG. Only interested parties and individuals interested in decommissioning would be invited to the meetings, and all attendees would need to be approved by the MSPs. The agenda and Teams link would be circulated on 14 March. Ian Park asked if there would be any trade union representation. David Wallace responded that trade union representatives had been invited, but there had been no response.

ACTION: Ian Park to send David Wallace a note of potential trade union representatives to invite to the cross-party group meeting.

Peter Hughes asked if any regulators had been invited. David Wallace responded that SEPA, the ONR and the Environment Agency (EA) had been.

There had been some engagement on the near-site, near-surface disposal. A technical report had reviewed various design options for near-site, near-surface disposal in Scotland. The NDA's secondment, in line with the Scottish government, had presented potential design options. There would be additional consultation, and it was hoped that common sense would prevail.

Oli Smith had been seconded to the Scottish government from NRS. There would be an additional secondment into the NDA from the Scottish government. An individual from the Scottish government was also working within NRS's future missions' team on a scope of work that would review NRS in Scotland in the next five to 10 years.

Cllr Sean Marshall welcomed the formation of a CPG. He added that some MSPs had communicated that there was an opportunity to not only focus on decommissioning but also green energy. Cllr Sean Marshall also commended the engagement on near-site, near-surface. However, this was the beginning of the journey, and there was much work to undertake. David Wallace voiced his appreciation for the input provided by Cllr Sean Marshall during the seminar.

Ian Park said the workforce assumed that there was an ILW store. He also noted that he worked in higher activity radioactive waste (HAW). He stated that the current site plan was to store the waste for a 300-year period, a near-site, near-surface disposal site implied that this maybe not the case. If this was not the case, it needed to be communicated to the workforce. Cllr Archie Dryburgh said he thought Ian Park was referring to something different. The ILW stores on site would remain in position. The HAW stores would be in place for all nuclear sites.

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David Wallace confirmed that there would be a tender process. Cllr Sean Marshall stated that the policy was reviewing the disposal of the HAW.

Cllr George Jamieson stated that the CPG meeting would have little impact. While he welcomed the engagement, nuclear decommissioning needed to be separated from new nuclear. There also needed to be common ground. David Wallace said, while the CPG did not have any powers, it could ask questions. The right questions could influence some of the major agencies.

David Wallace explained that the aim was to promote a Scottish story. As the meetings progressed, certain issue would need to be discussed. Cllr George Jamieson stated that it was important for everyone to be on the same page. David Wallace said he was conscious that there would be questions regarding reviewing new nuclear in the context of decommissioning. It would be naïve to think that some politicians would not take advantage of the opportunity to highlight new nuclear. Cllr George Jamieson suggested that decommissioning and new nuclear not be intertwined.

Ian Winchester highlighted storage and disposal and asked if any lessons had been identified in England and Wales that could benefit Scotland. David Wallace responded that many lessons could be learned.

6. NRS UPDATE

A. Bill Hamilton (NRS)

It was noted that Bill Hamilton had offered his apologies.

ACTION: Claire Aitken to request a written NRS report from Bill Hamilton.

7. OTHER REPORTS FROM SSG BODIES

ONR

Peter Hughes reported that, for the period 1 October to 31 December 2023, he had conducted an inspection on incident reporting on 27 November. No issues had been reported. A quality of assurance inspection had also been carried out, with no issues highlighted. Peter Hughes would conduct an on-site inspection later in the week and would report on this at the next SSG.

Cllr Sean Marshall asked if the meeting with the health and safety representatives had been positive. Peter Hughes responded that it had been. The meeting had highlighted areas that he could use as regulatory intelligence.

SEPA

It was noted that David Stone had sent in his report. The report was taken as read.

Cllr Sean Marshall noted that the report had stated that, in line with Chapelcross applying for a further variation to its EASR permit, SEPA would undertake a public consultation on the application. He requested additional information on what the public consultation would entail.

ACTION: SEPA to provide additional information regarding its planned public consultation concerning Chapelcross's application for a further variation to its EASR permit.

Scottish Government

It was noted that Diane Hamilton had circulated a report.

8. EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND INVITATIONS

Cllr Archie Dryburgh reported that the following meetings had taken place:

- SSG National Forum Meeting on 12 January

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- Technical Investigation of the near-surface of high activity waste from sites in Scotland on 21 February

It was noted that the Chair and Vice Chair would be unable to attend the SSG Chairs' Workshop on 20 March. David Wallace stated that, in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, a report could be circulated.

Cllr Archie Dryburgh proposed extending an invitation to Scottish Water to attend the SSG.

ACTION: Scottish Water to be invited to send a representative to attend the SSG meetings.

9. CX PROJECT & SOSE UPDATE

Helen Emberson stated that progress was being attained. Ironside Farrar had been appointed to review the strategic development framework. It was currently evaluating all market interests and mapping them to the site to obtain the optimal adjacencies. The next stage involved a technical assessment and engagement with the services. Discussions had taken place with Scottish Power Energy Networks and Scottish Gas Networks, with Scottish Water and SEPA also in attendance.

Chapelcross had met with Openreach to discuss fibre connectivity to the site. The master plan would be submitted to the utility companies.

The NDA had engaged its commercial arm to determine how best to commercially dispose of the site. NRS was also reviewing the sustainability footprint of the site.

Richard Murray was ascertaining the sustainability footprint of NRS. Avison Young continued to market the site and field enquiries.

Helen Emberson reported on SOSE's purchase of zone 3. Ground investigation work was being undertaken to determine future uses for the site. This provided some acceleration and Chapelcross with available land.

Donna Mounce stated that SOSE had completed all site surveys. Ironside Farrar had been appointed to produce a mini master plan and was expected to circulate its report within the next month. Fencing was being erected, while a sign would be placed on site that would state that the land had been purchased by SOSE. The pedestrian access and gate would be maintained, though there would be signage that would state access would cease once development commenced. There were ongoing discussions with utilities. Cllr Archie Dryburgh welcomed the attainment of progress.

Willie McNairn welcomed the commissioning of work on the east section of the site. He noted that, 40 years ago, British Nuclear Fuels Limited had proposed converting the east section of the site to manufacture 40-gallon drums. However, this had not materialised. Willie McNairn was happy to see that a scope of work was being progressed. Donna Mounce said SOSE was hopeful. Conversations were taking place with stakeholders. She did not want to wait another 40 years for Chapelcross to start manufacturing 40-gallon drums. Donna Mounce added that she understood the anxiety and anticipation.

Ian Park stated that there was not a housing unit for the workforce near the site. He asked if there was a provision to get people to the site without the use of cars. Jaime Nicholson explained that there was an ongoing village links project that aimed to link Gretna to Powfoot and extend the link between Annan and the Chapelcross site. An update would be provided at a future meeting.

Andy Stott asked if the wind turbine recycling facility would be located on the site. Donna Mounce responded that confidential discussions were ongoing with several companies regarding this topic. Andy Stott stated that any shipping of turbine blades would have an impact on the roads. Consequently, access to the site would be important.

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Andy Stott queried the potential size of the hydrogen production facility. Helen Emberson responded that, from early discussions, there was to be a preference to adopt a phased approach, ensuring that supply matched demand. Andy Stott stated that, in any event where hydrogen was produced by water, the water used would end up back in the river. He wondered if anyone had reviewed the impact to the river, as any removal of water from the river would result in a reduced waterflow. Richard Murray clarified that Chapelcross' water had gone back into the estuary rather than the river. The environmental impact had been deemed to be sustainable.

Cllr George Jamieson highlighted the routes from Annan to Eastriggs and stated that the hill between Eastriggs and Chapelcross needed to be developed. He hoped for a reassurance that the project was being driven forward. Cllr Archie Dryburgh seconded Cllr George Jamieson's comments. Donna Mounce agreed to provide an overview of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) to SSG members via email. She added that she had experienced a strong partnership between SOSE, Dumfries and Galloway Council and the NDA. All three parties were committed.

ACTION: Donna Mounce to provide an overview of the MoU between SOSE, Dumfries and Galloway Council and the NDA via email.

Cllr George Jamieson said outcomes were necessary. The Chapelcross project had been viewed as an opportunity to develop Annandale south and east. It was hoped that the SSG would receive an assurance that the money was being well spent and that there would be outcomes. He proposed that the aims and objectives be clearly articulated. Donna Mounce stated that SOSE was aware of this. It did not want public money to be wasted, and it also wanted benefits for the community.

David Wallace suggested that Cllr George Jamieson's comments be directed to the communications team.

Cllr Sean Marshall asked if the land would be released in parcels. He also asked if there would be separate access for the site. Helen Emberson responded that the current study would attempt to determine the appropriate area for site access. It was likely that hydrogen would be preserved at the strategic site, and the smaller units located on the SOSE site. Regarding the parcels land, the aim was to cover the entirety of the site with utilities and not just parcels.

Ian Park asked if there had been any interaction with Harwell to obtain learnings. Richard Murray responded that Harwell was uniquely different. There was a real demand for the land at Harwell, which belonged to the campus. Cllr Archie Dryburgh explained that Chapelcross had a special planning zone. It did not have sections of land that were ready for onward sale. The project was huge and needed to be properly managed. The utilities and infrastructure needed to be in place. Donna Mounce said the cost of inserting utilities was prohibitive to most private sector investors. This necessitated a need for public sector interventions to offset some of the costs and entice private sector investment.

Jaime Nicholson stated that there was a need for local business units. She hoped that this was advertised locally. Donna Mounce responded that it would be. SOSE would review all local and national interests. There needed to be a conversation regarding expansion units for small businesses, start-ups or bigger investors.

Helen Emberson said there was a local development plan in place that covered the front two sections of the Chapelcross site. However, this needed to be updated. Ironside Farrar would determine if it was feasible to have a master plan concept area. The planning would be updated.

ACTION: Helen Emberson to circulate the link for the Chapelcross update video to SSG members.

Cllr Sean Marshall asked if SOSE would commence with developing the area opposite Annan business park. Donna Mounce agreed to check this.

ACTION: Donna Mounce to check if SOSE will update the area opposite Annan business park.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

David Wallace explained that, following a period of inactivity, the Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances (SCCORS) would reconvene its meetings. SCCORS would partner with Nuleaf, and the NDA would fund Nuleaf's appointment of an engagement officer. The engagement officer would work for SCCORS and engage with local authorities. The paper and job description for the engagement officer would be circulated to SSG members.

11. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no comments.

Next Meeting date: Wednesday 21 August 2024.