

Cross-Party Group on Civil Nuclear Industry

11th September, 6pm

Minutes

Present

MSPs

- Oliver Mundell MSP
- Craig Hoy MSP
- Colin Smyth MSP
- Emma Harper MSP
- Kenny Gibson MSP.
- Jamie Halcro Johnson MSP
- Douglas Lumsden MSP
- Finlay Carson MSP
- Edward Mountain MSP

CPG Members

- David Wallace - NDA (Secretariat)
- Charlotte Percival – NDA (Secretariat)
- David Alexander – Dounreay Stakeholder Group
- Laura Hogg - NDA
- Fiona Bruce – NRS Dounreay
- Louise Kirk – NRS Dounreay
- Fiona McCall - EDF
- Stuart McGhie – Hunterston SSG
- Pete Roche
- Cathryn Walley - Jacobs
- Oli Smith – Scottish Government
- Susan Stirling – Scottish Government
- Emily Ashwell - DESNZ
- Janet Fenton
- Cllr Sean Marshall – CPX SSG/D&G Council
- Sam Long – Decom Mission
- Pete Thompson – NRS Dounreay
- Debbie Miller – University of Highlands and Islands
- Douglas Dickson
- Keith Bender – University of Aberdeen
- Malcolm Stone – University of Aberdeen
- Helen Emberson – CPX Programme
- Rita Holmes – Chair – Hunterston SSG
- Richard Murray – NRS
- Dale McQueen – NDA

- Colin Shaw – Dumfries and Galloway College
- Phil Matthews – NuLeaf
- Gordon McGuinness – Skills Development Scotland
- Jacq Longrigg – NDA
- Nicola Bacon – NDA
- Alan Mackay – NDA
- David Calder – NRS Dounreay
- Andrew Hall – EDF
- Jamie McMillan – EDF
- Ian Park – CPX/Unite
- Laura Hogg – NDA
- Cllr Struan Mackie – DSG/Highland Council
- Lincoln Hill – NIA
- Millie Beaver – NIA
- Dan Couldridge – Scottish Government

Apologies

- Peter Faccenda – Focus North
- Dr Samantha Harris – NDA

Agenda item 1 – Welcome and Introduction

Speaker: Oliver Mundell MSP and Colin Smyth MSP

Key points:

- Oliver introduction to the CPG and the MSPs in attendance and an overview of the agenda and those speaking

- Speakers introduce themselves:

Agenda item 2 – A Career in Nuclear

Speaker – Andrew Hall – EDF (3rd Year Apprentice)

Key points:

- Andrew Hall expresses his gratitude at being invited and for the ability to share his experiences – now in his fourth year of his apprenticeship as a C&I Engineer at Turness which he has been completing alongside attending college. Enjoyed the practical, hands-on approach of an apprenticeship which has provided him with experience he wouldn't have received during a university.

- Had experience to join the Nuclear College in Somerset which provided him with life skills, as well as hands on experience.

- Touched on challenges ahead with decommissioning in Scotland and that he may have to explore roles outside of Scotland; however, understands that the industry is growing in Scotland which will provide him with different opportunities and is excited about his future within the nuclear industry.

Agenda item 3 – Decommissioning

Speaker – Jacqueline Longrigg – NDA group, People Development Director

Key points:

Previously on national nuclear skills task force and member of national nuclear delivery board

- *The NDA have a responsibility for skills and people, school engagement, talent, mobility, board development. There are challenges and opportunities within the NDA.*
- *14% of the NDA workforce is Scottish and the NDA are in a period of growth with a 17,000 workforce across sites.*
- *The AGR future missions programme with NRS/EDF will mean further growth in Scotland.*
- *A main challenge with regards to skills is within the demographic. 38% of the workforce is able to retire in the next few years and at Dounreay that number is around 47%. The challenge is replacing these skills and we need to manage knowledge and address the demographic challenge.*
- *Projections show that by 2030 we'll be 1 million engineers short across all home nations and sectors.*
- *There is an opportunity for us to work in partnership to understand the challenges and opportunities of others and we believe that, with further expansion, Scotland is hugely important to NDA's future.*
- *We do currently use our Socio-Economic funding in Scotland in areas surrounding NDA sites including Huntertson, Chapelcross and Dounreay.*
- *Would be great to discuss with Scottish government and agencies present, about access and availability to skills.*

Agenda item 4 – National Nuclear Skills Plan

Speaker – Emily Ashwell

Key points:

- *One of two joint skills directors to drive delivery of national skills plan launched earlier this year, with ambitious growth targets to grow nuclear skills by 2030 and to add 40k net people to meet demand needs.*
- *Detailed plan put together by major employers in group, as well as UK government and has 15 workstreams including early careers looking to double apprentices and grads and 4x PHD's.*
- *Destination nuclear to galvanise recruitment and grow the exciting sector.*
- *2 pilot hubs up and running in Northwest and Southwest England with two more planned for Midlands and Scotland, and a range of areas they're looking to build the capacity and capability across sector including activities to optimise training landscape.*
- *Interchange programmes to give them the ability to move across sectors.*
- *Cross sector leadership.*
- *Need to improve diversity and inclusion across the industry.*
- *Huge commitment from government, including funding that has been announced.*
- *Careers portal up and running with destination nuclear.*
- *Early career starters have been increased by 4000 additional joiners.*
- *Cross sector collaboration with employers, public, private and gov can move the needle.*
- *How do we build from this foundation to assist with the local and national needs.*

- *Working with industry and education to deliver and build on platform.*
Action: NDA/DESNZ to report back on progress on Scotland Skills Hub

Agenda item 5 – Skills Development Scotland

Speaker – Gordon McGuinness, Director of Industry and Enterprise

Key points:

- *Haven't had much engagement but plan to put this right with NDA, DESNZ and others in the meeting.*
- *Looked at plans for national nuclear – themes are very common – collaboration that deepens and increases the workforce.*
- *Reported work SDS are doing with Scottish engineering, heightened increase in Scotland around transmission/distribution of energy – over next 10 years combined investment of around 30 billion.*
- *Big demand in offshore energy which broadens demand for the skills but creates pressure.*
- *There's been an increase in use of visa waver schemes to get around skills shortages.*
- *Important to work with employers to assist with hiring, apprenticeships, etc.*
- *Each regional area has strong relationships with the employers of their area.*
- *Need solid plans and investment as well as strong collaboration with employers.*

Agenda item 6 – The Keystone to safe decommissioning

Speaker – Ian Park, Chapel Cross site

Key points:

- *Senior trade union rep for Unite as well as day job on site – his key focus is workforce.*
- *From graduates, highly qualified people – a lot of jobs in nuclear industry require people who can work proactively and think on their feet – skills we need for this are people who have abilities beyond normal academic abilities.*
- *His team is 60% pension age.*
- *The base level jobs are the keystones and foundation of what we do, and without them nuclear decommissioning doesn't happen.*
- *Investment is important and there's no way of getting it wrong because it's so needed. We don't have the people to be able to continue working towards our mission.*
- *Why do we have to send people to Somerset from Scotland to Nuclear skills academy – Should we not have training facilities in Scotland?*
- *Need to focus on investing in people and investing on being able to train them in Scotland.*
- *No centralised hub for Scotland – needs to be localised training for site specific requirements.*
- *Site experience and the investment in those on the ground is important, graduates will follow and support them, but we need to make a point to focus on the local people who have key roles and want to do a job that will improve the future of everybody.*
- *Asks MSPs to help - his union will stand up and hold them to account if they don't support.*
- *Oliver Mundell MSP thanks him for his time and contribution, as well as all speakers, as this is why we set up the CPG and he's aware we need to focus on this important subject and the key points highlighted.*

Agenda item 7 – Open discussion

Key points:

- **Emma Harper MSP** said we've never had a conversation about skills required for decommissioning – highlighted her school days in Annan, and a lot of those she went to school with went to Chapel Cross to work. Good that CPG has a key focus on skills and how diverse the skills required for the sector are – is a skills passport something that would be of benefit – how would skills be used across sectors?

Gordon McGuinness said he would be looking at a workforce plan to ensure employers are plugged into local careers through schools, job centres, careers advisors and making sure apprentice programmes are as diverse as they can be – look to get future skills aligned to needs as much as we can.

Action: Gordon McGuinness/SDS to consider workforce plan as a result of discussion.

Oliver Mundell MSP – If this isn't accessible with people having to travel to 'Somerset' - does this push people out of the sector?

Gordon McGuinness – apprentices at Dounreay attend college at Thurso so there are some specialisms and places like north highlands have strong training programmes.

Jacq Longrigg – national college for nuclear – funded in 2015 to invest and to start process of what we're here to discuss. EDF have made a conscious decision, as have NRS, that their apprentices go to Bridgewater, but we are looking to make an argument to encourage them to work with local educators to get the same level of education locally – there is a challenge around Scottish, Welsh and English systems – requirement to ensure there is consistency in approach resulting in equality around the country.

Nicola Bacon – picking up point on skills, we need to think about nuclear skills differently. Coming back to the challenge - a lot of the roles we need are NOT nuclear specific and are broader – could we reach a wider talent pool by looking at this way – Emily's team are looking at it as what is needed and what is niche.

Action: NDA/DESNZ to report progress.

Lincoln Hill NIA – The elephant in the room, why do we send people to somerset? This is because there's a new nuclear new build there that's driving funding into the sector. If there is no new nuclear development, there will always be a challenge in trying to retain and renew the skills in Scotland. There is a need for new nuclear in Scotland – question is what can we do to bring new nuclear back to Scotland that would bring skills back to the sectors.

Andrew Hall – when he was in somerset, and with Hinkley being there, it was incredible to see the people and age range of those he was training with – some doing degrees, some doing level 3s, welders, joiners, amazing to see how much funding was being invested, and how many young people were getting training as well as jobs.

Ian Park – A college is a building where people teach things, but people can go to site and be taught the same and we need to facilitate this in the local areas. It is going to have to be localised to meet the number of people required and having a facility close and available to site will give the opportunity to have more people qualified and refreshed – learning can be anywhere if you put the effort in.

Oliver Mundell MSP – We should give people this option if they want it.

Cathryn Walley – from **Jacobs in supply chain** – delightful to hear numbers and quantity in people needed to support nuclear industry from supply chain perspective. There is a huge range of job levels and disciplines – what can we do to gain a shared vision granular in breakdown/timeline, so suppliers/contractors can meet demands the industry needs?

Jacq Longrigg – from an NDA perspective we have a strategic imperative on short, medium and long term not just on investment and people but also risk profile. We need to consider

sustainability in the context of sustainable careers, communities and skills, and mobility of how we move the work to where the skilled individuals are, not just around work. There are synergies between Sellafield and Dounreay (as a lead and learn site) and we're working more towards this way of working – learning from each other and sharing experiences. On a national level, there is a big drive on data and where is it good enough to inform us on investment and requirements. Last couple of days we have seen NIA jobs match launched – how do we aggregate this and how do we cut it into a Scotland view and use it to engage education establishments. We need to use our people to develop training – Dounreay has 2,000 people, we need to do more around the 360 view.

Cathryn Walley – she understands all supply chain are keen to engage, not duplicate, but ensure as an industry we're working towards shared ambitions.

Emily Ashwell – With regards to data, some of work her task force is going is try to improve the data picture and improve understanding on outlook for demand. The number of net 40k short on engineers by 2030 is an underestimate of what we need, and is a net figure and the figure we need to create this will exceed 100k. There is a picture and view on employers and capabilities and where we need to find people from and how we develop existing skills – regions will require different things. A Scotland hub will look at Scottish specific data.

Peter Roche – once defueling at Hunterston B has completed, the workforce will be reduced by 250 – will this not provide pool of workers who can move elsewhere?

Jamie McKinney – one reactor is defueled at HNB, another to be completed in January. We are looking actively to make sure EDF transfers skills where and when required.

Fiona Bruce – supply chain can support us – we don't need accurate data, but it will help us make decision on capabilities – all foundations are there to give us vision of the future as supply chain has a key role to play.

Cllr Sean Marshall – interested to hear what speakers have had to say – on Pete's point, we have done this across other sites but still have resource issues where we have age profile issues with too many people looking to retire. There used to be an apprentice training school at Annan where they worked on site and in education. When the NDA set up skills academy there was supposed to be one in Scotland. The SSG has raised this with Scottish Government and NDA and want hubs to be put on sites. We need apprenticeships as there are skills in the nuclear industry who would benefit from training and ideally that would be on site. It's frustrating for people in the nuclear industry as there's a high turnover – when competing with nuclear new build, a lot more people are attracted into new build due to misconception of a longer career. Scotland hasn't stepped up to mark with opportunities for nuclear skills and having a CPG is excellent as we can get around a table and identify where the weaknesses lie

Gordon McGuinness – I don't have the expertise to come back with detailed answers, but will follow up with colleagues and specific sites and universities. We've done a lot in some industries where they haven't had to send people long distance which also assists health and safety – will come back to future meeting with more details.

Action: SDS to engage with local decommissioning sites and colleges to explore more localised training opportunities.

Oliver Mundell MSP – supported the requirement for SDS to make contact with key players in the meeting to support better co-ordination of activity. This would also support understanding of what SG are doing in support of skills agenda.

Anne-Marie Copperthwaite from Arup – It is important to make nuclear more attractive, which destination nuclear is starting to do, and make nuclear less scary. We are currently

reskilling from high competent people with the skillset they need who don't know about nuclear. We need to change perceptions of what nuclear actually is, and show the skills set works across industries. This goes back to requirements when supply chain is bidding for work, always says 10-20 years of experience, but we can't have this with people retiring, and need to allow people more junior to come in to develop and gain that experience to build that workforce. Also, new nuclear may be new, but it's not as exciting as decommissioning which is more exciting and will be around forever – new nuclear has no future without decommissioning as it can't progress until we decommission what came before. We need to make decommissioning the most exciting thing as new nuclear can't succeed without it.

Professor Michael Ward from Strathclyde University – curious about the extent to which consequences of not addressing skills in decommissioning is, and what the barrier is to progress – opportunities developing people around the sites can help economic development.

Richard Murray site director at CPX – The longer we prolong, the more we must spend in asset care, and the more we have to spend keeping sites safe and secure. The quicker we can decommission, the less cost to the taxpayer.

Oliver Mundell MSP - new projects can't progress while so many are stuck in the decommissioning phase, although it's good when things are delayed so people have a job for longer, it's also a concern people are less productive.

Jacq Longrigg – agreed that if we don't get it done right, faster and safer, we hamper investment on new build. There is inter-dependency between new nuclear and decommissioning. The skills from nuclear are transferable to other industries, you aren't limited to the site you begin at, you can travel the world due to your skills in one of the most difficult industries in the world, skills are sustainable. We need to think about bigger picture around skilled people – particularly when we have a global decommissioning market and the potential that exists for a Scottish workforce.

Cllr Struan Mackie – Dounreay SSG – We're looking at 2060's/2070's for final decommissioning. When we talk about skills, people, etc, for a lot of sites there's almost two competing missions – decommissioning and net zero. There are 1300 people at Dounreay site and hundreds who are involved with the local supply chain. Caithness and North Sutherland is a region with decades of pipeline activity, but because of net zero we are competing over skills and there is a worry that this will get worse. If we don't get this right, we might fail to hit both missions rather than working together to achieve both missions. Caithness have brought CNC training up and away from Oxford which has helped retention.

Nicola Bacon – There are opportunities as well as challenges – some of what we have talked about will take time and is challenging but we can talk to schools and young people about myth busters e.g. can only get into nuclear if they have a relative in it. Destination Nuclear has a real opportunity to support Scotland. We need to consider what Scotland has to offer in short term as vehicle for delivery.

Action: NDA/DESNZ to consider potential for 'Destination Nuclear' to support decommissioning skills in Scotland.

Emily Ashwell – there are opportunities and how we think about that with Destination Nuclear. We want to tell the story about career pathways and opportunities not only to move around the UK but globally. There is significant demand in Australia for nuclear skills that could be appealing to new joiners. There are positive stories to tell about the range and transferability between skills and we will focus on using Destination Nuclear campaign to "myth bust".

Susan Stirling – Scottish Government – fascinated by tonight's discussion and a curious question for Andrew – everyone is trying hard in terms of skills and fantastic job opportunities but seems to be disconnect – what type of jobs do young people want to get into? Seems to be disconnect between appetite for young people – heading towards national skills crisis because young people don't want to go down these routes despite lifetime job available – what's the disconnect?

Andrew – Apprenticeships and routes other than university, need to be advertised more for those in school. Younger people in the industry need to go into schools and speak to students directly, we need to meet them at their level and excite them. I didn't know what I wanted to do until after school and a lot of people don't know which career they want to follow so it's key we talk to them about options.

Susan Stirling – I agree, but I think the style of communication is important. We need to boost up baseline skills which can be learned quickly – how is the future job market communicated and who is present?

Oliver Mundell MSP – need to show people that you can make a really good living without having to go to university, these jobs are well paid and flexible without needing a degree.

Dave Calder NRS – There is a lot of talk on NRS/Dounreay and it's challenges. With regards to skills in nuclear, we are suffering due to demand for skills and other sectors in the area. As great as push for renewables are across Scotland, it puts pressure on the area for skills and it's good to have sector incentive. The place-based business we're in and challenges around transport links, connectivity, travel, housing - how do we entice people into these areas? We have grant giving powers and community benefit funds which are fragmented could be doing more to align this – particularly through greater partnership working in the renewables sector.

Oliver Mundell MSP – really helpful. NRS/NDA what are you doing to bring on other partners, understand there is a lot of work in that space.

Cameron Bell Head of Learning and Skills at Ayrshire College – We have 1500 students and and with help of NDA/NRS we received £500k funding to redevelop campus. This has resulted in a campus that is more accessible to students, and performance indicators have been through the roof. For the first time we've been able to provide apprenticeships and it's a fantastic legacy we are being left with, with real skills and real jobs of whom 70% of their catchment areas are some of the most deprived areas. I want to say a huge thanks from a college perspective and to show it's about regeneration of industry, not just education of those coming into college

Gordon McGuinness – in response to Susan, we have got a problem with apprenticeship demand oversubscribed. There are 170 apprenticeship places at BAE and we had 3000 applicants. Skills development Scotland has a huge ambassador programme.

Oliver Mundell MSP – interested in taking CPG away from parliament and would be interested in going to colleges to get a sense of what is happening locally.

Keith Bender – University of Aberdeen – We have a small grant through NDA for Socio-Economic purposes – the more co-ordination we can do would help the community in Dounreay. Predictions in double grads/apprenticeships 4x PHDs – who is going to train these people? When we have a workforce so close to retirement, we need to be making sure people looking to retire are coming back into the classroom to become the teachers for the next generation.

Jacq Longrigg – NDA has a number of national programmes, funding available for PHD's, a number of workstreams around capital and investments. NDA has flexi-retirement options so those looking to retire can educate those coming in. No issues around training and recruitment

in communities where nuclear sites are located, but the issue is in nuclear deserts where there are no sites and people don't know about the sector.

Fiona Bruce - *agreed with point about education sector promoting universities not apprenticeships and learn while you earn opportunities are not promoted enough. Dounreay hosted a mentoring event and networking had 18 new grads, 30 new apprentices and 20 other early careers people in attendance – positive outlook on where we're at. There are some really positive stories we're seeing too that need to be highlighted*

Debbie Miller UHI – *one benefit is that we are an academic partner so can teach from junior level to PHD. There is a war on talent. Over the years working with Dounreay, around 2010, they were advised no more apprenticeships due to renewables, in 2013 we were advised to look at jobs in renewables as decom is coming to an end. That didn't happen and we're now rebuilding and working with the supply chain as we realise Dounreay has a much longer lifespan than initially suggest, but still has a huge people shortage. What can we do around Brexit to bring people back to the highlands? There is a need to partnership as we can't do it alone.*

Ian Park – *We are handicapped by funding and headcount – can those in power positions influence others to allow us to overrecruit because we'll still be under employed? We need to start over employing now to combat the amount of people retiring in the next three years – if we don't it'll cost more in the long term.*

Colin Smyth MSP – *This is such an important area which I'm glad we're addressing at the CPG. Labour and skills shortages is the same across all sectors and employers and there are issues around solutions being cross sector. We need politicians to be aware of these issues. A skills passport is important as we know people move due to their transferable skills. I was struck by point of ageing workforce which cuts across sector, and seems there are specifics around nuclear industry, and I want to look at how they can take it forward within Scottish government/parliament to focus cross party as well as nuclear specifically. I know that this is not an endangered sector, and we need to put it higher up the agenda to focus on changing the perception that decommissioning is the end of something – whilst realistically it's the start of something. Glad we did tonight on skills as it's so important and we won't do decommissioning any quicker without the workforce. Challenges in nuclear are not old but need to remind everyone they are very much ongoing and need to be a priority. Massively useful to hear from people on the ground.*

Oliver Mundell MSP – *Emma is interested in holding a parliamentary debate in public on nuclear skills. Some points raised don't need government intervention and we hope the CPG can provide connections and opportunities to connect and work towards finding solutions.*

Action: CPG Secretariat to create a CPG directory.

Action: Emma Harper MSP – to consider member debate on skills.

Oliver Mundell MSP – *next meeting 17th December and will be on nuclear waste policy and we are looking for ideas and suggestions for future meetings and if you have views on the next topic and would like to speak, we are eager to hear from you. Had contact from nuclear all party parliament group from Westminster about working closer in future – his dad has taken over with Josh McAllister – great opportunity to join groups on a UK wide level*

Secretariat – *Opportunity to revisit this subject to see how we've progressed as we have 4 meetings per year*

Oliver Mundell MSP – *thanks to speakers as there was some scepticism whether there would be interest but looking at number of attendees and SNP shows this is an important issue we can boost across parliament*

Date of Next Meeting – 17th December 2024, 6pm, Scottish Parliament, Topic: Waste