

Marc

Thank you for your email and attached letter inviting us to respond to your Committee's inquiry.

As you may know, the NDA is a non-Departmental public body set up in April this year under the Energy Act 2004. Our core objective is to ensure that the 20 UK civil public sector nuclear sites are decommissioned and cleaned up safely, securely, cost-effectively and in ways that protect the environment. Those 20 sites include the UKAEA research reactor site at Dounreay in Caithness, and the (former BNFL) Magnox nuclear power station sites at Chapelcross and Hunterston, both of which have now ceased generation.

It is not within our remit to comment on questions about energy supply or demand, including the issue of new nuclear build (or not).

We do of course have an interest in environmental and social issues.

As you may have seen from the Scottish and other media coverage around 11/12 August, we recently published for consultation our first draft strategy, and an accompanying environmental assessment of the proposed strategy. I thought it best to wait to respond to you until it had been published, hence my delay in replying.

In the draft strategy, we state that our top six priorities for the next five years are to:

- Create robust, costed and funded plans to clean-up sites based on a comprehensive understanding of the liabilities;
- Demonstrate real progress in reducing high hazards in legacy facilities, especially at Sellafield but also at Dounreay;
- Complete competitions for managing and operating nearly all our sites (including the proposed new low level waste facility at Dounreay by end-2006, Hunterston and Chapelcross by end 2007, and Dounreay itself by end 2008);
- Determine a better approach to intermediate level waste storage and low level waste disposal;
- To accelerate the timescale for decommissioning Magnox sites to 25 years or less; and to
- Define end states and end dates for all our sites, in consultation with local communities;

As well as having:

- A clear understanding of the skills required to deliver decommissioning and clean-up; and plans to match skill with requirements, and
- Fully developed plans for socio-economic support to communities around our sites (again including those in Scotland).

We are seeking views on our draft strategy until 11 November, and we plan to submit it to Government before Christmas, for the Government's approval. The strategy must be approved by Scottish Ministers.

The baseline study that we undertook as part of our environmental assessment concluded that at present the normal operation of our sites does not represent a threat to the environment, though there are some recognised local effects.

The assessment also drew the following environmental conclusions that informed our draft strategy:

- The potentially significant impact of climate change and coastal erosion will need to be taken into account in determining site end states;
- More work needs to be done to develop contaminated land strategies;

- Future waste arisings and discharges will need to be considered further as part of the development of waste strategies (waste and related transport issues being of themselves significant issues);
- The potentially significant socio-economic implications of site closures in remote areas will need to be considered as we develop decommissioning programmes.

Though the draft strategy is UK-wide, both it and the environmental assessment include site-specific information on Dounreay, Chapelcross and Hunterston.

You asked that documents be sent separately. I am therefore forwarding to you copies of our draft strategy and the environmental assessment. They are available on our website at [www.nda.gov.uk](http://www.nda.gov.uk).

I'm copying this for information to various colleagues here, and to Elizabeth Gray in the Scottish Executive.

I hope this is helpful.

**David Hayes**  
**Strategy Director**  
**NDA**

W: <http://www.nda.gov.uk>