



Nuclear
Decommissioning
Authority

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1/6/11

Dear Sharon

Geological Disposal – baseline for socio-economic assessment

3KQ have noted that in various conversations with the Partnership recently, the point has been made that if impacts are to be measured and then either mitigated or compensated for, it would be useful to establish a baseline from which things are measured. I understand that the context of the discussions has been “pre-development” effects on things such as tourism, house prices, inward investment and so on. I also understand that the Technical Review Group has queried what experience there is overseas of establishing a set of measured indicators that can be assessed as (and if) the siting process develops and whether other countries have seen it necessary and useful to establish a formal baseline against which to measure impacts. In responding to these points I hope the following will help.

RWMD's definition of the “baseline” is explained in the generic scoping report¹ as follows:

The “baseline” is defined as the situation in the absence of the proposed plan or programme, at any defined point in time. Baseline information will provide a yardstick against which the predicted effects of the geological disposal implementation plan (GDIP) can be compared - and useful context for assessing their significance.

During Stage 4 of the MRWS site selection process, the environmental and socio-economic assessment work will be based largely on readily available baseline information, although some limited survey and modelling work may be undertaken to better define the baseline for certain topics.

The baseline will be defined by considering the existing situation and identifying likely trends through time. It will reflect the different phases of geological disposal and will focus on the period up to and including GDF closure. It will consider other proposed developments and likely future changes to the environment within and around potential candidate sites.

RWMD's SEA work during MRWS Stage 4 will consider “pre-development” effects and will include consideration of socio-economic issues such as house prices and inward investment. The generic scoping report lists a number of potentially significant issues which could be used as the basis for developing appropriate indicators. We hope to be discussing our scoping work with a wide range of stakeholders this year (including the Partnership) and further developing our technical approach to assessing potential socio-economic effects. We will also be discussing this work with our sister organisations overseas with a view to sharing knowledge and good practice.

¹ NDA (March 2011) *Geological Disposal: Strategic Environmental Assessment generic scoping report* (NDA – RWMD Report NDA/RWMD/058, ISBN 978-1-84029-442-2)

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If the Technical Review Group needs any further information on this aspect of RWMD's work please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Mark Gough