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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

NUCLEAR SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NuSAC) TRIENNIAL REPORT 1999 - 2001

A Paper by Kevin Allars, Secretary to NuSAC

Advisors: Prof John Head, CBE, Chair to NuSAC and Joyce Boorman, HSE Policy Group

Cleared by Nick Starling on 16 April 2003

Issue

1. To approve the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee (NuSAC) Triennial Report for publication. It covers the major topics addressed by NuSAC during the period 1999 to 2001.

Timing

2. Routine

Recommendation

3. The Commission is asked to approve publication of the NuSAC Triennial Report for 1999 – 2001. The report will be supported by a suitably directed press release.

Background

4. NuSAC, which is chaired by Prof John Head, advises HSC and, when appropriate, Secretaries of State, on major issues affecting the safety of nuclear installations including design, siting, operation, maintenance and decommissioning which are referred to it or which it considers require attention. Currently, NuSAC has five Review Groups (RG) to handle its workload more effectively. These are: RG1 - Safety Management; RG2 - Safety Performance; RG3 - Fuel Cycle and Decommissioning; RG4 - Emergency Arrangements; RG5 - MoD related topics. However, NuSAC has recently discussed possible changes to these RGs as part of its reconstitution process to align the RGs to better reflect the

changes proposed for the nuclear industry as a result of the DTI's initiative to form a new Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

5. In addition to the RGs, NuSAC has a standing Sub-Committee on Research (SCR) which helps NuSAC to advise the HSC on the adequacy and balance of its nuclear safety research programme.

6. Since 1986 NuSAC has, with the approval of the Commission, published a biennial report covering the topics it has discussed. This is seen as a contribution to openness, reflecting the Commission's policy and responding to recommendations following Public Inquiries. In 2001 NuSAC decided to revert back to a triennial report as it fitted better into the 3 year reconstitution cycle (prior to 1986 there had been triennial reports). The Committee also continues to provide advice to HSC on the adequacy and scope of the Commission's co-ordinated programme of nuclear safety research.

Argument

7. The draft Triennial report is attached at Annex A, which HSC is invited to approve for publication. Copies of the report are sent to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and to the Secretary of State for Defence (both with ministerial accountability for nuclear safety). It will also be sent to the First Minister for Scotland, the Secretary of State for Wales and the Minister of State for Work and Pensions, for information.

8. Reported are the main topics considered by the main committee including control of contractors and organisation change where NuSAC had concerns over the continuing changes within the industry in downsizing and the increase in the use of contractors from both the safety management and safety performance perspective. NuSAC also addressed the issue of storage of liquid high level waste at BNFL Sellafield; management at BNFL following the NII Team Inspection report and the falsification of records report; decommissioning of the ponds and silos at Sellafield, Windscale Piles, WAGR and Magnox NPPs. NuSAC provided advice to the Minister of State for Energy on options for dealing with Prototype Fast Reactor fuel at Dounreay as part of DTI's consultation. NuSAC also provided advice to the HSC on DETR's CD 'UK Strategy for Radioactive Discharges 2001 to 2020'.

9. NuSAC also worked with the Defra's Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMAC) on two Joint Studies with each Committee taking the lead for one.

Consultation

10. NuSAC members were consulted on the draft report.

Presentation

11. The NuSAC Triennial Report will be published following HSC's approval. There will be a press release to support the publication.

Costs and Benefits

12. Not applicable.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

13. Publication of the report and provision of 2000 copies will cost approximately £13,000. The report will be in the standard format for Advisory Committee reports and will be issued as a free publication. HSE's publications unit has advised that sales of the Triennial Report were not sufficient to justify the cost of distribution and storage as a priced publication. After initial distribution, HSE Information Centres and the NuSAC Secretariat will hold copies. It will also be available on the Internet.

Environmental Implications

14. None.

Other Implications

15. None.

Action

16. The Commission is asked to approve publication of the NuSAC Triennial Report for 1999-2001 and a press release.