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Quarterly News

October – December 2012

Office for Nuclear Regulation
An agency of HSE
ONR aims to protect people and society from the hazards of the nuclear industry, a big part of which means regulating existing nuclear sites.

But we also regulate future activity and this quarter, ONR played an essential role in ensuring that proposed new nuclear build plans for the UK meet high standards of safety and security by granting a new nuclear site licence and accepting the generic design for a new reactor.

You can find out more about ONR’s work on new nuclear build in the first of our spotlight features, whilst our second feature focuses on how the organisation responds to freedom of information requests.

There are also the usual corporate and operational programme updates, and a look ahead to next quarter.

As ever, we appreciate your feedback. Please send your comments to ONR@hse.gsi.gov.uk.
ONR corporate update

In this section, you’ll find the latest organisational news, as well as updates on plans to establish the Office for Nuclear Regulation as a statutory corporation.

Statutory Corporation – where we’re up to

ONR is currently an agency of the Health and Safety Executive but is working towards becoming an independent, statutory corporation. Part of that means considering all the necessary arrangements required to form a statutory body on the assumption that the legislation to achieve this is approved by Parliament. ONR will ensure that those arrangements are in place and delivered on time and to budget.

Energy Bill

This quarter the Energy Bill, which includes the provisions required to create the statutory ONR, started its journey through Parliament. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 29 November and had its first proper debate ("second reading") on 19 December. So far, as expected, there has been little discussion specifically on nuclear regulation as electricity market reform has dominated the debate. The establishment of the statutory ONR has however received cross party support.

Next quarter the Energy Bill will proceed to the next step of parliamentary scrutiny – "committee stage". Here the clauses that will create the ONR will be looked at in greater detail.
Mike Weightman Honour

Dr Mike Weightman was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the New Year’s Honours list for services to nuclear safety.

Commenting on the award, ONR Chair Nick Baldwin said:

“Mike has made many outstanding contributions to improvements in nuclear safety in Britain and internationally over a distinguished career in the Health and Safety Executive, and before that at British Nuclear Fuels. He has served with distinction as Her Majesty’s Chief Nuclear Inspector for seven years and played an important role in developing the Office for Nuclear Regulation. The Honour recognises the enormous personal contribution he has made to nuclear safety throughout his career.”

In 2011, Dr Weightman led a comprehensive review of the implications of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear incident in Japan resulting in two major reports to the UK Government. He chairs various international nuclear safety committees on behalf of OECD and EC. He is acknowledged internationally as a leading figure in shaping and setting nuclear safety standards, and has been formally recognised by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Read more about how ONR is structured

- ONR Board
- Executive Management Team
- ONR Programmes
Programme updates

Programme updates focus on ONR’s operational activities during the quarter. Covered here are activities from October to December 2012. For the latest information from ONR, please visit our website.

Civil Nuclear Reactors

Regulating operating nuclear power stations, defueling nuclear power stations and licensing and permissioning of proposed new build nuclear power stations

Operating reactors

- **ONR officially closes periodic safety reviews for three sites.**

Periodic safety reviews are required by one of the conditions attached to a nuclear site licence and happen around every 10 years.

British Energy completed periodic safety reviews for Dungeness B in 2008 and for Hinkley Point B and Hunterston B in 2006. At the time, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (ONR) concluded that although the sites could continue operating safely, a number of shortcomings needed addressing before the periodic safety reviews could be officially closed.

The licensee for all these sites is now EDF Energy Nuclear Generation Limited (EDF NGL) and it has continued to make progress on all outstanding issues. ONR has been monitoring progress and is now content to officially close the safety reviews, confident that EDF will deal with any remaining issues in an effective and timely manner.
Read more about the closure of periodic safety reviews for Dungeness B and Hinkley Hunterston.

● Hinkley Point B – re-licensing and start up of reactor three.

As you’ll read in our spotlight feature, this quarter ONR granted a new nuclear site licence for a proposed power station at Hinkley Point C. A number of things had to happen before this licence could be issued, including the re-licensing of Hinkley Point B to take account of the new site boundary with the proposed new site. Read more about ONR’s role in this decision here.

Reactor 3 at Hinkley Point B re-started this quarter following a periodic shutdown. All reactors at operating nuclear sites shut down for a period of time to allow for essential maintenance. Before they can be re-started, ONR must be satisfied that it is safe to continue operating the reactor until the next periodic shutdown.

Quick fact – What is a periodic safety review?

Periodic safety reviews must be carried out by the licensee of a nuclear power plant as outlined in condition 15 attached to a nuclear site licence.

The reviews are complementary to the day-to-day regulatory controls which are applied to nuclear power stations. They provide the opportunity to carry out a comprehensive study of plant safety, taking into account aspects such as its operational history, ageing factors which could lead to deterioration in safety, and the advances in safety standards since the time of construction or the previous review.

From this, the safety of future operation of the plant can be evaluated.

More information on the ONR website.

EDF NGL confirmed that the required work has been completed during the shutdown and the reactor is safe to restart. Along with routine inspections, the licensee also carried out work to conclude that the current graphite safety case remains valid.

ONR is satisfied that the plant remains within its safety case.
ONR statement on EDF lifetime extension plans

EDF Energy announced in December that it wants to operate its nuclear power stations Hinkley Point B and Hunterston B until 2023. ONR is in the process of examining EDF NGL's 'Lifetime Management Programme' for the extension of the operational lifetime of its existing fleet of nuclear power reactors. Read more on the ONR website here.

Sizewell B – update on defects found at Belgian reactor

In June 2012, defects were found in the reactor pressure vessel of the pressurised water reactor at Doel 3 Nuclear Plant in Belgium. Sizewell B is the only operating reactor in the UK with a steel reactor pressure vessel and so ONR requested that EDF NGL undertake a review of manufacturing and inspection records to establish the likelihood of similar issues at Sizewell B. EDF has now provided documentation comparing the production and inspection of the Doel 3 reactor pressure vessel with the one at Sizewell B. This includes reviews of the manufacturing records and the inspections carried out both during production and in-service. ONR's preliminary assessment of NGL documentation indicates that the Sizewell B's inspections, both before and during service, were shown to be capable of finding defects such as those seen at Doel 3; and no such defects have been observed. A comparison of the manufacturing records from Doel 3 and Sizewell B reactor pressure vessels show that the likelihood of these defects occurring at Sizewell B is significantly lower than at Doel 3 due to the steps taken during forging production to avoid hydrogen defects. The licensee's submissions are now being considered in detail by ONR with the assessment due to complete early in 2013, when ONR will publish a summary of its assessment.

Defueling power stations

Oldbury – changes to operating rules

ONR has granted approval of new operating rules for Oldbury power station, which provide limits and conditions for post operations and defueling. Oldbury consists of two gas cooled nuclear reactors that have permanently ceased
Before they can progress with their plans, NNB GenCo require permissions from ONR, permits from the Environment Agency and planning consent from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

You can read more about it in our spotlight feature on nuclear new build and online here.

**Intervention reports**

The programme publishes executive summaries of ‘intervention reports’, which summarise what our inspectors do at the sites we regulate and any significant actions we require of the site operator.

This quarter we published 29 summaries including details of a planned inspection at Hartlepool, a reactive inspection at Heysham 1 and meetings about a proposed dry fuel store at Sizewell B.

**Hinkley Point C**

On 26 November 2012, ONR granted the first new site licence for a UK nuclear power station in 25 years.

The licence was granted to NNB Generation Company (NNB GenCo), which wants to build a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset.

The regulators are satisfied that this reactor, designed by EDF Energy and Areva, meets regulatory expectations on safety, security and environmental impact.

Additional site-specific consents and approvals are required from the regulators before this reactor can be built at any UK location and planning permission must be obtained from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Read more on the joint regulators’ website here.

**Nuclear new build**

- **Generic Design Assessment**

In December, ONR and the Environment Agency confirmed that a new nuclear reactor design, the UK EPR, is suitable for construction in the UK after an in-depth assessment of its generic design.

The current operating rules were designed for operational reactors and became unsuitable or redundant when the reactors permanently stopped generating power.

Read more here.

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The licence was granted to NNB Generation Company (NNB GenCo), which wants to build a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset.
Sellafield

Regulating all activities at the Sellafield site in Cumbria

Reducing the risk at Sellafield

ONR has granted permission for Sellafield to use the refurbished crane known as the skip handler machine at the First Generation Magnox Storage Pond to transfer and remove fuel from this legacy pond. To date Sellafield has successfully used the skip handler to move four skips of fuel.

It's one of the ways in which Sellafield aims to reduce hazard and risk at its legacy ponds and silos, which are used for storage of used fuel and waste. ONR remains focussed on pressing Sellafield to make progress in this area and engaging with others to influence decisions on decommissioning.

ONR publishes full Project Assessment Reports on Sellafield

The Sellafield Programme in line with other ONR programmes will publish full project assessment reports (PARs) online from January 2013.

PARs are documents which explain our regulatory decisions and we publish them to help are stakeholders, including the public, understand our work.

Some terminology used in the nuclear industry is unfamiliar to those outside of it, so we aim to write executive summaries for the reports in plain English.
Report on audit of Sellafield

ONR welcomed the National Audit Office (NAO) Report on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority’s management of the Sellafield site. NAO sought ONR views during the compilation of the report, and the references to safety in the report were the views of the regulator. ONR hopes that lessons will be learned from this study which will assist in further safety and secure acceleration of hazard and risk reduction on the Sellafield site.

Sellafield safety and security exercise

ONR witnessed a successful demonstration of Sellafield emergency arrangements in November 2012. The scenario was challenging and tested both safety and security responses together for the first time. These exercises have previously been held separately. ONR sought assurances from Sellafield that they will continue to make improvements to emergency preparedness on the Sellafield site.

Annual safety review

In December we held the Annual Review of Safety meeting for the Sellafield site. Overall we consider that safety performance on the Sellafield site during 2012 was adequate, however Sellafield performance on the delivery of major projects to support hazard and risk reduction remains a concern.

ONR stated its regulatory expectations that Sellafield continues to make substantial improvements to nuclear safety and delivers the required improvements to major project performance on the Sellafield site.
Decommissioning, Fuel and Waste (DFW)

Regulates safety on a variety of nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear research sites, waste management and decommissioning

Materials Consolidation

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is responsible for decommissioning and cleaning up civil nuclear facilities and implementing Government policy on the long-term management of nuclear materials and waste.

In 2011, the NDA published its credible and preferred options for the management of Dounreay’s fast reactor breeder material, which identified that the preferred option is to transport the material to Sellafield to be reprocessed along with Magnox fuel.

Although the decision to move materials from one site to another lies with the NDA, ONR will ensure that any movements comply with relevant UK and international regulations.

This quarter, ONR has successfully overseen the initial safe and secure transfer of breeder material from Dounreay to Sellafield and we continue to discuss with NDA how to safely implement Government policy.

ONR publishes its position statement on Bulk Quantities following consultation

This quarter ONR completed a further consultation (Sept - Dec 2012) on its proposed approach to interpreting ‘bulk quantities’ of radioactive matter.

Taking the results of these consultations into account ONR has published its position statement which describes ONR’s approach to the interpretation of ‘bulk quantities’. The statement provides clarity for ONR inspectors and prospective operators of installations designed or adapted for the storage of radioactive matter who may be considering whether they require a licence under Section 1 of the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 to operate that installation.
Visit from Japanese Government Advisor

In January Yuji Enokido, Director of the Radioactive Waste Management and Nuclear Facility Decommissioning Technology Centre in Japan, met with Frans Boydon and Liz Thomas from the DFW programme.

Yuji Enokido wanted to explore ONR’s approach to decommissioning nuclear licensed sites and in particular our delicensing process. The visit was in advance of future work in Japan to decommission, clean up and delicense the Fukushima nuclear power site.

Urenco Capenhurst relicensing

ONR granted permission for the relicensing of two adjoining but previously separate licensed sites in Cheshire to create one enlarged licensed site.

The former Sellafield Limited Capenhurst Works site is now part of an enlarged site licensed to Urenco UK Limited and operated by a tenant organisation.

This single site will continue to produce enriched uranium, store the bulk of the UK’s depleted uranium and uranium hexafluoride (products which are potentially reusable in the nuclear fuel cycle, dependent on Government policy), and have responsibilities relating to decommissioning and waste disposal.

Most of the Sellafield Limited Capenhurst Works staff have transferred into the new tenant Capenhurst Nuclear Services Limited, a subsidiary of Urenco Limited, to do the decommissioning, uranic materials storage and waste disposal work of the former Sellafield Limited licensee.

You can read more online here.
Security

Regulating security at all civil nuclear facilities

Publications

This quarter saw the publication of:

- The National Objectives, Requirements and Model Standards (NORMS) – ONR’s guidance to industry on how to plan and implement their site, personnel, information and transport security arrangements. Read more about NORMS here.

- ONR’s 2011/12 Annual Report to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on the state of security in the civil nuclear industry and the effectiveness of regulation.

International security conference

On 4 December, Adrian Freer, ONR’s Deputy Chief Inspector responsible for Civil Nuclear Security, spoke at the inaugural ‘International Regulators Conference on Civil Nuclear Security’, held in Rockville, Maryland, US.

His presentation, on ‘Personnel Trustworthiness and Reliability’, outlined the processes and procedures employed by the UK regulator and the civil nuclear industry in the UK to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of personnel with access to nuclear facilities and sensitive nuclear information.

A copy of the ONR presentation is available via the conference website here.

Security briefing for the nuclear industry

The second biannual senior managers’ security briefing was held in November at the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) in Buxton. The aim of this briefing is to raise the security awareness of managers across the civil nuclear industry.

The three day event, comprising presentations and practical demonstrations, was attended by 30 invited delegates, and feedback of the event continues to be positive.
Defence

Regulating the defence sector at weapons sites, naval dockyards and bases, working closely with the Ministry of Defence’s (MOD) Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator

Aldermaston Improvement Notice

ONR served AWE with an Improvement Notice on 8 November, after AWE’s scheduled building inspection in August revealed corrosion on structural steelwork in one of its manufacturing facilities at Aldermaston. ONR fully supported AWE’s decision to suspend all non-essential operations within the facility when the extent of the corrosion became evident.

ONR’s subsequent investigations concluded that AWE had not fully complied with its Licence Condition 28 arrangements for examination, maintenance and inspection and testing.

AWE has since carried out a site wide review of the condition of a number of similar constructed facilities - no corrosion problems were revealed in any other facility undertaking nuclear operations.

ONR has continued to monitor AWE’s proposals for the repair of the structure, since the safety justification will need to be submitted to ONR as a modification requiring our formal agreement.

Adequate control arrangements in place at Coulport

Following a joint inspection at Coulport in November 2012 with the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR), ONR has concluded that MOD retains control of the site under the proposed outsourcing arrangements, and that the site does not require licensing under the Nuclear Installations Act. ONR has also concluded that adequate arrangements are in place for emergency response legislation (REPPIR) and ionising radiation regulations (IRR).

Coulport, part of Her Majesty’s (HM) Naval Base Clyde, is home to the Royal Naval Armament Depot, which provides support to the UK’s nuclear deterrent, the Trident Strategic Weapon System (SWS).

In May 2011, MOD announced their intention to outsource elements of the SWS support services to an experienced supplier within the private sector, in order to ensure that the work of Coulport could continue to be carried out effectively in the long term.

A 15 year contract was signed in July 2012 with an industrial alliance consisting of AWE, Babcock and Lockheed Martin UK Strategic Systems. A key aspect of these proposed changes was that MOD would continue to remain in charge of Coulport, with Naval Base Commander (Clyde) retaining overall responsibility and acting as intelligent customer for the contract.

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Defence project assessment reports

Last quarter, ONR produced a number of project assessment reports (PARs) to explain regulatory decisions in relation to activities at AWE Burghfield, Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd and BAE Systems Marine (Barrow).

One such PAR covers ONR's agreement to AWE's proposal that they modify the existing designs for the construction of their new weapons assembly and disassembly facility ('Mensa') at Burghfield, to use steel columns rather than reinforced concrete columns.

An assessment of AWE's proposal concluded that the safety documentation provided the necessary justification that the risks associated with the proposed design change had been reduced so far as is reasonably practicable. ONR's decision was supported by DNSR and by HSE's Hazardous Installations Directorate from an explosives perspective.

Another report covers ONR's assessment of a periodic review of safety (PRS) submitted by Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd (DRDL) for their Low Level Refuelling Facility (LLRF). The report concludes that there had been an adequate review of safety by DRDL, that the resulting conclusions and forward actions were appropriate, and that there was no reason for ONR to object to continued operation of the LLRF through to its next PRS.

This followed assessment of DRDL's submission against ONR's Technical Assessment Guide, and was the first PRS of the LLRF, since the facility became operational in 2002. The LLRF is a facility used for the receipt, temporary storage and dispatch of new and used fuel from the refuelling of submarines at Devonport.

All project assessment reports are available on ONRs website [here](#).
Radioactive Materials Transport

Regulating the safety of radioactive materials transported by road and rail in Great Britain

**Regulators confirm prosecution of Sellafield**

In November, ONR and the Environment Agency confirmed that Sellafield Limited is to be prosecuted over a waste disposal incident in 2010.

The regulators’ joint action follows an extensive investigation which has led to allegations that the company sent and disposed of four bags of low-level radioactive waste from its site in West Cumbria to Lillyhall landfill site, in nearby Workington, Cumbria, in 2010.

The company faces nine charges; eight charges have been brought by the Environment Agency and one by ONR. Read more online [here](#).

**Integration into ONR**

As reported last quarter, since its transfer from the Department for Transport (DfT) to ONR, the Radioactive Materials Transport team has been reassessing its overall work plan and aligning more closely to ONR’s corporate procedures and objectives.

A new work programme has now been produced, which aims to provide the most effective service with the resources available. The team is also using more ONR procedures to ensure consistency and better management of resources for permissioning activities, inspection work and incident investigation.

**Inspections**

Transport inspections are divided between the nuclear and non-nuclear sectors.

This quarter, the team carried out a ‘quality management system’ inspection of Nuvia, a nuclear specialist company, and closed-out inspections of Magnox Limited’s headquarters, Research Sites Restoration Limited and Capenhurst. The team carried out four inspections in the non-nuclear sector, including the medical sector.

**Questionnaire of small users in the non-nuclear sector**

A questionnaire has been sent to ‘small users’ - small companies in the non-nuclear sector that transport radioactive material - asking what they consign/carry and how often. This information will help the team to understand how many companies are currently transporting radioactive material and target inspections more effectively.

**Package assessment**

The transport team is responsible for assessing and permissioning certain types of packages used in the transport of radioactive material.

Each month, the team receives applications for new package designs and modifications to existing designs and this quarter, the team has produced 20 permissioning documents, split between nuclear and non-nuclear organisations.

The team also approved a special form of radioactive material for use in a medical gamma knife. Gamma knives are used in the treatment of medical conditions such as brain tumours and the material used in them needs to be approved for transport by ONR. Read more about the transport team’s role in assessment of medical radioactive materials [here](#).
This quarter was a significant one for ONR as it took two important steps towards ensuring a safe future for proposed nuclear new build plans in the UK.

We issued the first new nuclear site licence for an operating station in 25 years and, with the Environment Agency, accepted the generic design of a new nuclear reactor for the UK.

Steve Gibson, head of the new build team and Dave Watson, who leads ONR’s generic design assessment work, explain ONR’s role in ensuring a safe and secure future for new nuclear in the UK.

Steve Gibson
On 26 November, ONR issued a nuclear site licence to NNB Generation Company (NNB GenCo), which wants to build a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset.

Granting a nuclear site licence enhances our regulatory control of the activities associated

Site licence in numbers
This is the first time in 25 years that the UK has granted a nuclear site licence for a power generating station.

- It involved 6000 days of assessment involving up to 60 people over more than three years.
- NNB GenCo applied for a nuclear site licence in July 2011. Up to this point ONR was in a phase of early engagement with the prospective licensee.
- The process has cost £8 million to date, which NNB GenCo is obligated to pay.
- Four cornerstone assessment reports and one final ‘project assessment report’ published. ONR will publish all assessment reports in due course.
with designing and constructing nuclear facilities.

It represented a significant amount of work by my team of expert assessors and the result of more than three years and the equivalent of 6000 days spent engaging with and assessing NNB GenCo’s suitability, capability and competence to hold a nuclear site licence.

Although a significant step, it is important to note that granting a nuclear site licence does not constitute permission to start construction of nuclear safety-related plant. That requires permission from ONR, permits from the Environment Agency and planning consent from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

But with the licence comes certain requirements; NNB GenCo will now be required to comply with 36 conditions attached to a nuclear site licence. These conditions provide ONR with the necessary regulatory powers to ensure the protection of people and society from the hazards associated with such nuclear power generation.

Read more about site licensing [here](#).
It is important to remember though that there remain site-specific issues that must be addressed before we’ll approve its construction on any site and planning permission must be obtained from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Read more on the joint regulators’ website where we have published several documents relating to the UK EPR reactor design.
Spotlight 2

Being open and transparent – handling requests for information

Steve Newman, from ONR’s Secretariat and Parliamentary Business Team, has been providing advice about answering requests for information since the Freedom of Information Act was first introduced in 2005.

Here Steve explains how ONR handles requests for information from the public.

ONR has a declared aim to be open and transparent about our work. Our website is full of information about ONR’s regulatory work, including specific regulatory reports, general information about the industry, regular news items and bulletins and information about ONR Board business.

We regularly look to identify opportunities to publish more information and we are always happy to receive requests for information which is not already published. We will aim to deal with such requests as quickly and efficiently as we can. However, disclosure of information in response to such enquiries may be subject to legislation, such as the Data Protection Act (DPA), the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

The majority of these type of requests fall under the umbrella term ‘FOI’, but in effect most requests are answered under EIR. All of these disclosures are considered to be a general release, because anyone, anywhere in the world, making the same request, would get the same response.

My team and I regularly receive requests for information and they can be complex. In 2012, we handled 77 FOI requests and 504 general

Steve Newman

...cont
ONR will always try to disclose as much information as possible, but when we have to withhold something, we will provide a clear explanation why.

Visit our website for the latest information about ONR’s work.

If you can’t find the information you’re looking for and would like to submit a request for information please email ONRenquiries@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

Personal information – where release would contravene the Data Protection Act;

National security – where release would be useful to someone who wanted to commit a malicious act;

Commercial sensitivity – where release would harm the commercial interests of an individual or body;

Manifestly unreasonable – where the request places a substantial and unreasonable burden on the resources of ONR or an unreasonable diversion of resources from the provision of the public services for which ONR is mandated.

Other reasons include: confidentiality; international relations; the right to a fair trial; information still in the course of completion and volunteered information.

In all EIR cases, apart from for personal information, a test is undertaken to decide whether the public interest favours disclosing or withholding the information, and in all cases, requesters have the right to ask for a review of ONR’s decision if they are unhappy with it.

Factors we consider as being in favour of disclosing include: openness and transparency; demonstrating that procedures are being followed; contribution to public knowledge and debate and to public understanding of health and safety issues; and enhancing the ability of the public to participate more meaningfully in debates about nuclear issues.

enquiries. We have a small team who identify which part of ONR should answer them and we offer help, support, guidance and training to ensure requests are answered on time wherever possible.

Due to the nature of our business, and because we rely on specialists to provide a robust response, it can sometimes take time to answer requests. If it looks like a deadline isn’t going to be met, we will keep the requester updated on the situation.

Whilst we try to be as open and transparent as possible, there will be times when information might be withheld. The most common reasons are:

- Personal information – where release would contravene the Data Protection Act;
- National security – where release would be useful to someone who wanted to commit a malicious act;
- Commercial sensitivity – where release would harm the commercial interests of an individual or body;
- Manifestly unreasonable – where the request places a substantial and unreasonable burden on the resources of ONR or an unreasonable diversion of resources from the provision of the public services for which ONR is mandated.
- Other reasons include: confidentiality; international relations; the right to a fair trial; information still in the course of completion and volunteered information.

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Looking ahead Q4

NGO forum April 2013

ONR is planning its fourth non-governmental organisations forum in April 2013. The aim of these events is to discuss issues arising in nuclear safety and security.

You can read the notes from our previous NGO forums online here.

Site Stakeholder Groups and Local Liaison Committees

Our inspectors attend site stakeholder groups and local liaison committee groups each quarter. You can find out where and then these are happening on our website here and read our inspector’s reports to these groups here.

Emergency exercises

Licensees of UK nuclear installations and local authorities in which the sites are situated have legal responsibilities to plan for emergencies. These fall under the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (4), also known by its acronym ‘REPPIR’.

ONR formally assesses the adequacy of arrangements through emergency exercises. Emergency exercises are being held at various sites next quarter including Sizewell A, Heysham 2 and Hinkley Point B.

Read the full list of dates for emergency exercises here.

Recruitment of inspectors

Starting in January, ONR will be recruiting a number of nuclear inspectors including specialist roles like control and instrumentation, human factors and transport.

Find out more and apply here.
And Finally

Sometimes ONR’s work doesn’t fall naturally into one particular programme, but involves teams from across the business.

Here’s a snapshot of some of the other activities ONR has been involved in between October-December 2012.

Emergency arrangements update

We have a team in ONR dedicated solely to nuclear emergency arrangements in the UK, ensuring regulations are followed and that dutyholders always seek to make enhancements.

- Review of detailed emergency planning zones

A review of how we set detailed emergency planning zones (DEPZ) for some sites is ongoing. DEPZ is the radial distance in kilometres that local authorities are required by law to prepare plans for responding to an off-site nuclear emergency. The size of DEPZ differs depending on the site and they are routinely reviewed at regular intervals.

We are considering the merits of introducing a minimum and maximum range of DEPZ for certain categories of nuclear sites in the UK. This review work continues and we will publish our decision in due course, most likely early in 2013.

We have published a new webpage on the ONR site that lists all of the site-by-site DEPZ distances in the UK.

Our inspectors have provided a regulatory view to the Department of Energy and Climate Change on proposals to improve national guidance on the principle of ‘extendibility’, which provides guidance to local responders on the planning for emergencies when the release of radiation may extend beyond the boundary defined by the DEPZ.

- Local authority consultation on off-site Sizewell emergency plans

ONR has supported Suffolk Resilience Forum in its preparations towards launching, on 7 January 2013, a three-month public consultation on its emergency plan relating to Sizewell’s nuclear installations. We have welcomed the public consultation, which will offer local people the opportunity to input and enhance a plan that has direct impact on them. We are aware this consultation proposes that the local authorities extend the current planning distance by 1.6km, from 2.4km to 4km. ONR has the statutory responsibility for setting a minimum distance planning zone - the local authority can choose a larger distance if it sees fit to do so.
Emergency exercises

Our ‘emergency preparedness and response’ team’s inspectors routinely attend nuclear emergency exercises in the UK to ensure, as regulations require, that each one is a demonstration of the plan that is in place. A calendar of emergency exercises is online.

Among dozens of exercises held across the UK in Q3 was the national ‘level 3’ exercise, called Heron 5, in Lancashire, which related to a test of the emergency plans for Springfields nuclear site near Preston. One exercise is chosen from the calendar every year to act as a national level exercise for civil sites, to involve participants up to national government level. ONR inspectors concluded that this exercise met the regulatory requirements.

ONR was involved in the organisation and observation of another exercise held in Lancashire, which, for the first time, tested local emergency responders’ capability to deliver a ‘reassurance monitoring unit’ (RMU). An RMU would be an expected part of the response to a radiological incident and would involve the monitoring of persons suspected of being exposed to contamination. Two hundred volunteers went through the processes, such as contamination screening, that would be followed in the event of a real incident. The learning from this exercise will inform work being undertaken on RMU across the UK.

Annual nuclear materials balance

ONR recently published the annual nuclear materials balance figures.

Nuclear materials such as uranium and plutonium must be accounted for throughout the UK nuclear industry. Nuclear materials balance figures show the difference between the nuclear material inventory recorded in these accounts and the inventory as measured at periodic physical stock takes.

The 2011/2012 figures conform to the pattern of previous years and do not give rise to concerns over either the safety or security. You can read more online here.

Fukushima Implementation Report and UK National Action Plan

ONR’s Fukushima ‘implementation report’, published in October, confirms that UK nuclear industry and other stakeholders have responded well to the lessons learned from Fukushima Dai-ichi, but there is always more work to do.

The report summarises a review of progress made in responding to the recommendations made by the UK Chief Nuclear Inspector, Mike Weightman, in his report to Government, and to the outcomes of ‘stress tests’ reviews.

Read more on the ONR website here.

UK National Action Plan

As part of ONR’s ongoing commitment to examine the Fukushima Dai-ichi incident, we prepared a report in December for the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group outlining how the UK will continue to implement lessons learned from the incident in 2011.

ENSREG produced an action plan in July 2012 that required all national regulators to provide country specific action plans to outline current status and, where appropriate, the planned completion time for each recommendation.
NGO Forum – 6 November 2012

ONR held its third non-governmental organisations (NGO) forum in November. The aim of these forums is to meet expectations of openness and transparency and discuss issues arising in nuclear safety and security.

Topics discussed included Fukushima and generic design assessment of a new nuclear reactor for the UK.

Read the notes on ONR’s website here.

ONR’s senior representatives’ conference – 23 November

Facing the challenges of the nuclear sector was the theme of the day at ONR’s annual conference with heads of the nuclear industry. The event took place in London, and was attended by many of the most influential members of the nuclear sector.

Guest speakers, included Wendy Barnes, Chief Operating Officer at DECC and Richard Coakley, Immediate Past President of the Institution of Civil Engineers. In addition Alan Brandwood of the Safety Directors Forum and Paul Thomas, Chair of the Railway Safety Standards Board led round-table discussions that challenged attendees to ask questions of what they needed to do to be in the best position to face the future challenges of the nuclear sector.

In spite of the range of groups represented, some common themes arose during the day. These included the need for communication and openness and transparency, the need to be open to challenge, the need to look at the culture in organisations and recognition that there had to be a collective responsibility for nuclear safety and security.

The day was acknowledged as one of the key dates in the nuclear sector’s calendar, providing a vital opportunity for regulators and industry to discuss strategic issues to ensure ongoing nuclear safety and security.