

E-BULLETIN

October 2006,
Issue 3



Welcome to Issue 3 of NuLeAF's e-bulletin. This issue covers:

- the long-term management of radioactive wastes, including a new briefing paper on 'siting' partnerships and a policy statement on 'implementing institutions';
- the work of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), including consultations on its Annual Plan, socio-economic strategy and site 'end states', and a review of options for rationalising the storage of intermediate level wastes;
- competition for the operation of the Low Level Waste repository near Drigg and Copeland Borough Council's Community Prospectus;
- assessments of options for managing Low Level Wastes from nuclear sites;
- the Energy Review and implications for nuclear legacy management;
- feedback from member authorities with nuclear sites; and
- the outcome of the NuLeAF AGM.

Long-Term Management of Higher Activity Radioactive Wastes

As reported in e-bulletin 2, the UK Government and devolved administrations have welcomed CoRWM's recommendations on the long-term management of higher activity wastes (www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/060731e.htm). It is expected that a full response will be made to the respective Parliaments and National Assembly for Wales by the end of this month.

At its meeting on October 12, the NuLeAF Steering Group endorsed two new papers about key aspects of how Government is expected to move forward with the implementation of CoRWM's recommendations:

- The first is a policy statement on institutional arrangements for implementation, which outlines the pros and cons of three models for implementing institutions. The statement highlights that Government should show clearly how it intends to overcome, reduce or manage the disadvantages associated with its preferred model. [http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/nuleaf/documents/2006-10-12_Implementing_Bodies_Policy_Statement_2_12_Oct_06.pdf]
- The second is a briefing paper that reviews international and UK experience on partnership working to inform future discussions on the potential nature of 'siting' partnerships in the UK [http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/nuleaf/documents/2006-10-02_Partnerships_Briefing_Paper_2_October_06.pdf].

Special Interest Group on Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Management

Arrangements have been made for NuLeAF officers to meet with DEFRA officials on 13 November to discuss how the Government intends to move forward. A special meeting of the NuLeAF Steering Group will take place in early December to review the Government's plans and NuLeAF initiatives.

If your authority has concerns about the way in which policy for the long-term management of higher activity radioactive wastes will be implemented, please let us know. The issue will be addressed in NuLeAF's regional seminars on nuclear legacy management and reported in future issues of the bulletin.

NDA Consultations and Engagement

The NDA is currently consulting on three issues:

Draft Annual Plan

This was published on 1 August with a request for comments by 10 November (www.nda.gov.uk/documents/nda_draft_annual_plan_2007-08_for_consultation.pdf). The draft plan sets out the NDA's proposed priorities for 2007/8. Overall the draft plan is a clear and helpful summary of how the NDA intends to proceed, but would benefit from more information about Site Stakeholder Group activities and socio-economic initiatives at different sites.

If your authority has comments on the draft annual plan, please let us have copies by November 9, so they can be taken into account in preparing NuLeAF's response to the NDA.

Draft Socio-Economic Policy

This was published on 5 October with a request for comments by 19 January (www.nda.gov.uk/documents/nda_socio_economic_policy_draft_for_consultation_2006.pdf). The draft policy sets out how the NDA intends to work with partners to help mitigate the impacts of decommissioning programmes. It seeks to provide the framework within which organisations near NDA sites will be able to bid for funds for projects that will bring long lasting benefits to communities.

If your authority has comments on the draft socio-economic policy, please let us know by 12 January, so they can inform NuLeAF's response to the consultation.

Site End States

The NDA is reviewing site End States with stakeholders. The review aims to identify the physical condition that a nuclear site should be left in when the NDA has finished its business. The End State (or states) will influence the end uses that are possible on a site. The outcome of the review will be incorporated into revised NDA strategy during 2008. NuLeAF has produced a briefing paper to encourage member authorities with NDA sites to get involved in the review

Special Interest Group on Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Management

www.nuleaf.org.uk/nuleaf/documents/End_States_Briefing_Paper_1_1_September_06.pdf).

NuLeAF is interested in feedback from Member Authorities about involvement in the site end state review, including views on strengths and weaknesses of the process. We will also consider requests for further briefing materials.

Interim Storage of ILW

The NDA is also developing plans for engaging stakeholders in its review of options for rationalising the interim storage of intermediate level wastes (ILW). This review could impact on the location of the site or sites for storing operational ILW from Berkeley, Bradwell, Culham, Dungeness, Harwell, Oldbury, Sizewell, Winfrith and Wylfa, which amounts to about 5% of the NDA's ILW inventory. It is likely that four basic options will be assessed:

- Building stores at each or most of the listed sites
- Building an enhanced store at one of the existing sites in the south
- Building enhanced stores at two of the existing sites (one in the SW and one in the SE/East)
- Taking a centralised approach (eg storage of the wastes at Sellafield)

The NuLeAF Steering Group received a NDA presentation on the ILW storage review at its meeting on October 12. The SG stressed that the NDA should involve potentially affected local authorities in the options assessment at the earliest opportunity. NuLeAF is liaising with the NDA about next steps and will keep member authorities informed.

Community Prospectus and Competition for NDA Sites

Competition is underway for a contract to manage the operation of the Low Level Waste (LLW) repository near Drigg and for the longer-term development and implementation of a strategic plan for LLW arising from NDA sites. Copeland Borough Council has developed a Community Prospectus that the NDA has agreed to issue to bidders. The purpose of the prospectus is to act as guidance to bidders on local community aspirations and expectations for engagement and socio-economic support. Commitments that bidders make to these activities will be an important factor in the evaluation of tenders.

The competition process for other NDA sites is scheduled to start as follows: Magnox south and Dounreay (2008); Magnox north, Harwell and Winfrith (2009); Sellafield and Windscale (2012); and Capenhurst, Culham and Springfields (subject to further review).

Member authorities that wish to obtain copies of Copeland Borough Council's Community Prospectus should contact fduffy@copelandbc.gov.uk

Assessment of Options for Managing LLW from Nuclear Sites

Magnox Electric is undertaking a project to determine the most appropriate means of managing and disposing of decommissioning LLW, focusing on the LLW at the lower activity end of the range. The 20% or so of higher activity LLW might be disposed of at the LLWR near Drigg or to a geological repository.

The options being considered for the lower activity LLW are:

- disposal on existing Magnox sites
- near-surface disposal at a site-specific facility near to site
- near-surface disposal in a national or regional facility appropriate for LLW
- near-surface disposal in a national facility designed to accept wastes suitable for the repository near Drigg

Site-specific workshops took place at Bradwell, Dungeness, Hinkley Point and Sizewell earlier in the year to weight the criteria used in assessing the options.

More recently, feedback workshops have been held at Hinkley Point A and Dungeness A with stakeholders including members of the Site Stakeholder Groups and representatives of Local Planning Authorities. Magnox Electric states that at both Hinkley Point A and Dungeness A, the option assessments point toward some form of On-site Disposal as the preferred option from a technical perspective. The company reports that there was a warm reception from stakeholders to the studies at both sites.

Similar feedback workshops are planned in October/ November with stakeholders from Bradwell and Sizewell A.

The UKAEA is undertaking consultation to produce a recommendation for the management of 'High Volume Low Activity' Wastes arising from the clean-up of the Harwell site. It has also carried out a Multi-Criteria Assessment, using comments from stakeholders to inform the creation of weightings for each of the assessment criteria. A preliminary recommendation report has been produced that is now the subject of local consultation.

The preliminary recommendation is that a new engineered near surface disposal facility be developed at the Harwell site. This is considered to be the Best Practicable Environment Option, subject to a period of public consultation and the Government's policy review. According to the UKAEA, this option performs well against the attributes under a wide range of stakeholder attribute preferences and has no significant weak scores against the attributes.

The Energy Review and Implications for Nuclear Legacy Management

The NuLeAF Steering Group has considered a report on the conclusions of the Energy Review and the implications for nuclear legacy management [http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/nuleaf/documents/SG_Item_8_Energy_Review.pdf].

Special Interest Group on Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Management

The Steering Group agreed that the following comments should be submitted to DTI in response to its draft framework for new nuclear build:

- The Government should consult a wide range of stakeholders, including NuLeAF, on the proposals that will be developed for arrangements to meet the costs of decommissioning and radioactive waste management.
- The Government should accept CoRWM's recommendation that any substantive increase to the radioactive waste inventory for geological disposal will require an additional step in the negotiation process with host communities to allow them to take a decision to accept or reject any additional waste. The spirit of this recommendation should also be applied to the siting and operation of any new regional or national facilities for LLW disposal or ILW interim storage.
- Changes to the planning system for major energy projects should not be allowed to set a precedent for pushing through the siting of radioactive waste management facilities. Commitments must be provided that siting processes for these projects will allow adequate exploration, scrutiny and resolution of all issues of concern to potential host communities.

The DTI has requested comments on the draft framework for new nuclear build by 31 October. Member authorities may wish to consider supporting the comments that will be submitted by NuLeAF.

Feedback from Member Authorities with Nuclear Sites

Thirteen members authorities have completed the NuLeAF questionnaire survey (22 authorities were asked). The returns will be used to inform the development of services to Member Authorities over the coming months. Feedback will also be provided to the NDA on the views expressed about the effectiveness of Site Stakeholder Groups. Although the questionnaire returns revealed a mixed picture on the latter, a large majority of the responses said that there should be a higher level of resourcing and access to independent expertise.

Outcome of NuLeAF AGM

The NuLeAF AGM was held immediately after the SG meeting on October 12. The AGM re-appointed Councillors Blackwell (Copeland Borough Council) and Risby (Manchester City Council) as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. It also agreed that the level of payments for contributing authorities in 2006/2007 should be increased by 10% to reflect inflation and an increased level of service to member authorities.

Corresponding member authorities are reminded that NuLeAF needs to increase the number of members that contribute financially. Contributing Members form the NuLeAF Steering Group and are eligible to vote on issues and represent the Group on outside bodies.

The e-bulletin highlights current developments in nuclear legacy management and NuLeAF initiatives, including services to Member Authorities. If you haven't already done so, please contact us to make an annual payment.

Special Interest Group on Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Management

Dates for the Diary

Wed 25 October	Regional Seminar, 9.00am, Endeavour House, Ipswich
Mon 30 October	Regional Seminar, 9.00am, LGA House, London
Thur 9 November	Regional Seminar, 9.00am, County Hall, Taunton
Wed 15 November	Regional Seminar, 9.00am, County Hall, Preston
Thur 25 January	NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00am, Endeavour House, Ipswich.
Thur 19 April	NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00am, Town Hall, Manchester.

Contacting NuLeAF

NuLeAF can be contacted via the Secretariat c/o Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX, Tel: 01473 264833 e-mail: christine.delcorral@nuleaf.org.uk.