

**October 2013,
Issue 31**

Welcome to Issue 31 of the e-bulletin, which reports on:

- the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme,
- developments in Low Level Waste (LLW) management;
- developments in NDA strategy and operations,
- fracking and radioactive waste management;
- the Submarine Dismantling Project;
- the outcome of the NuLeAF AGM;
- joining NuLeAF; and
- dates for the diary.

As part of the re-launch of the MRWS process, DECC is hosting an event for local authorities in London on 14 November. The letter of invitation is below¹ and to register for the event email radioactivewaste@decc.gsi.gov.uk.

NuLeAF would encourage member authorities to attend and ensure the voice of local government is heard on this nationally important issue.

The Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) process

In September, government published a [consultation paper](#) proposing changes to current policy towards the siting of a geological disposal facility (GDF) (closing date 5 December). A [Briefing Paper](#) was circulated to NuLeAF members in early October, and views were sought at the Steering Group meeting on 23 October ([Item 6](#)) to inform NuLeAF's response to the consultation.

A number of concerns were raised during discussion which included:

- the lack of clarity regarding the definition of a community;
- whether a single repository is the correct approach and whether a suitable host geology exists in one location to accommodate such a large facility;
- whether proposed decision making arrangements will be widely supported;
- a lack of clarity regarding the timing of both the right of withdrawal and the demonstration of community support;
- a lack of information on how government would seek to build consensus;
- whether the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime is sufficiently community focused and capable of ensuring public confidence and community support; and
- that government must undertake to provide the resources needed at all levels to address siting issues adequately.

However, it was also recognised that it was important for local authorities to support central government in their efforts to improve the process and get it right. It may be challenging to



Invitation to Local
Authorities Sector Eve

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get the appropriate balance to ensure that a voluntarist approach is maintained whilst the process also moves forward.

The Steering Group agreed that a draft NuLeAF response should be circulated to the Group before the DECC workshop on 14 November (see above for details). There will then be a short period (until 22 November) in which member authorities could comment on the proposed response. The final response will be submitted to DECC following approval from the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Developments in Low Level Waste (LLW) management

The NuLeAF Steering Group (SG) on 23 October considered a report highlighting updates on development in LLW management (see website at [Item 4](#)). The report covered DCLG consultations on the Waste Management Plan for England and PPS10 revision, feedback from meetings of the LLW Delivery Overview Group and the LLW Regulators; and an update on NuLeAF's work on the Duty to Cooperate and its implications for radioactive waste management.

The Steering Group welcomed the Environment Agency's challenge to the Low Level Waste Repository regarding their assumption that planning permissions for operating life extensions to other LLW disposal sites would be granted, and their failure to provide a back-up plan should this not be the case. It was also noted that diversion of waste away from the repository increased the likelihood that applications for disposal of radioactive waste at other sites around the country would rise. It remains NuLeAF's preferred approach that radioactive wastes should be disposed of as near to the point of arising as possible, either on site or at an adjacent location, where supported by the Local Plan.

NDA strategy and operations

A report was presented to the meeting which gave brief updates on the Magnox Parent Body Organisation (PBO) competition process and the Sellafield PBO contract; plutonium management; plus feedback on discussions at the NDA Theme Overview Group and a report on the [IPPA](#) Conference in Prague.

The meeting noted that NDA had decided to continue the contract with Nuclear Management Partners at Sellafield. It agreed to maintain a close watch on decommissioning progress at the site and to seek opportunities to engage at the earliest possible point before the next break point is reached in the contract. A representative from Sellafield will be invited to give a presentation on the work plan for the next five years at the April Steering Group meeting.

Concerns were again raised that there seems to be a lack of communication and cooperation between the operators of existing stations at combined sites, both those in decommissioning and in current operation, and those wishing to build new power stations.

A verbal report was given by Cllrs Richard Smith and Mark Hackett and Executive Co-Director Philip Matthews who attended the Euradwaste conference in Vilnius the previous week. This conference had been organised by the European Commission looking at various aspects of radioactive waste management in the EU. Copies of the presentations given can be found on their [website](#). One item of particular interest was the level of public and stakeholder engagement carried out during the Swedish search for a geological disposal facility host site. It had been calculated that at least 11,000 local people had been engaged in the process in Oskarshamn, and this was based only on meetings that lasted at least one hour in duration (the total population of Oskarshamn is under 100,000).

The full report can be found on the website at [Item 5](#).

Fracking and radioactive waste management

A short paper on fracking and its implications on radioactive waste management was presented to the Steering Group ([Item 7](#)). The Steering Group agreed that whilst fracking was not a topic which fell within NuLeAF's remit, its potential to impact on current radioactive waste disposal facilities warranted continued monitoring of developments. The paper would be published as a Briefing Paper and posted on the NuLeAF website.

Submarine Dismantling Project

In December MOD expects to publish a provisional list of sites for the interim storage of Reactor Pressure Vessels. This will be followed by a period of engagement with statutory bodies and local authorities. Once the shortlist is finalised full public consultation will be carried out both locally and nationally. It will be a few years before the first submarine is dismantled at Rosyth and subsequent dismantling will take place at both Rosyth and Devonport dockyards. More information on the project can be found in the autumn update provided by the MOD project team².

The Annual General Meeting 2013

The main outcomes of the AGM were:

- the appointment of Cllr Richard Smith, MVO from Suffolk County Council as Chair, and the election of Cllr Brendan Sweeney from Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council as Vice-Chair;
- the approval of the Annual Report;
- the approval of a Service Plan for 2013-15; and
- the approval of the Finance and Staffing report.

The AGM agreed to hold the level of membership contributions for local authorities for FY 2014-15 to the current rates.

The meeting was joined by John Clarke, CEO of NDA, who confirmed his support for NuLeAF. He hoped that NDA and NuLeAF could continue to work together in an open dialogue. Professor Andy Blowers and Pete Wilkinson of Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates delivered a presentation in the afternoon on their views about the way forward for a geological disposal facility siting process.

Joining NuLeAF and participating in our work

Nuclear waste and legacy issues are major concerns for local authorities across the country. Critical issues include decisions about disposal of Low and Very Low Level Waste to landfill, changes to planning guidance, considerations on the siting of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF), the need to maximise community benefits from nuclear legacy operations and the impacts of the decommissioning of many nuclear power stations.

NuLeAF continues to be an effective voice for local authorities on all these issues. We welcome new member authorities and the active participation of Elected Members and



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officers in our Steering Group and in the officer Radioactive Waste Planning Group. If your authority would like to join NuLeAF, if you would like to participate in the work of the organisation, or find out more then please contact Catherine Draper at the address below.

NuLeAF on LinkedIn

NuLeAF has a group on [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com). We hope that members will use this as a forum to discuss issues and seek advice with other members. We also post regular items of news.

Diary dates

The Steering Group will next meet on 21 January at the Town Hall, Manchester, by kind invitation of Manchester City Council. Dr Anna Clarke, of NDA, is scheduled to give a presentation on Site Restoration.

A full calendar of meetings can be found on the [NuLeAF website](https://www.nuleaf.org.uk).

Contact point

All member authorities are asked to ensure that NuLeAF is kept informed of any changes to officer or councillor contacts. It is important that these are kept up-to-date, so that the right people receive e-bulletins, invitations to NuLeAF meetings and other information.

The NuLeAF Secretariat can be contacted at *T*: 01473 264833 *W*: www.nuleaf.org.uk
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