

# E-BULLETIN

April 2010,  
Issue 18



Welcome to Issue 18 of the e-bulletin, which contains news about:

- radioactive waste management and new nuclear power stations
- developments in Low Level Waste Management
- the process for siting a Geological Disposal Facility
- NDA developments
- the Submarine Dismantling Project
- international projects
- membership fees for 2010-11 and
- dates for the diary.

## **Radioactive Waste Management and New Nuclear Power Stations**

At its meeting on 20 April, the Steering Group (SG) considered a wide ranging report on radioactive waste management and new nuclear build. This is available on the NuLeAF website at [SG item 4 report](#).

The report covered:

- CoRWM's comments on the draft Nuclear National Policy Statement
- the views of the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee
- guidance from the Infrastructure Planning Commission on local impact reports
- NDA high level feasibility studies on options for managing new build spent fuel
- Government consultation on the 'Financing of Decommissioning and Waste Handling Regulations' and a 'fixed unit price methodology and updated cost estimates'
- staffing levels and recruitment to new build projects and
- the outcome of preliminary discussions with officers of Somerset County Council about potential further work on the radioactive waste management implications of new nuclear build.

Following discussion, the SG agreed:

- to ask CoRWM for clarification about how and when it intends to take forward work on ways of achieving greater integration in planning for the long-term management of existing, committed and new build wastes;
- to ask NDA about a briefing for potentially affected local authorities on the outcome of the feasibility studies on spent fuel management options, and about the potential role of local authorities in decision-making on preferred options;
- to delegate authority for submitting comments on the Government's consultations on the financing of decommissioning and waste management to the Chair and Vice Chair;

- to include within those comments the need for openness and transparency about the extent to which it is assumed that the management of new build wastes is integrated with the management of legacy wastes; and
- that the Executive Director should enter into further discussion with officers at Somerset County Council to identify how NuLeAF might input into a work package on radioactive waste management and decommissioning, and to delegate authority for approving that input to the Chair and Vice Chair.

Attention is also drawn to a Seminar being held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September on the handling of proposals for new nuclear power stations. The seminar is being organised by the three most impacted upon Councils across Somerset, which are “trail blazing” in terms of arrangements for financing the very substantial pre-application work that local authorities need to undertake and addressing the challenges that applications will bring. The seminar will discuss these arrangements, and the possibility of joint working to influence the Infrastructure Planning Commission and the Secretary of State for Energy as to how “as of right” local communities should benefit from nuclear power stations in their community. The seminar is open to representatives of NuLeAF member authorities and is taking place in Bridgwater, Somerset. For details and how to register [contact Kim Rogers](#).

## Developments in Low Level Waste (LLW) Management

The SG also received a series of updates on LLW management. These are set out in [SG item 5 report](#). Key points include:

- **LLW strategy** – the final version awaits Ministerial approval which will not be possible until after the General Election. On publication, a NuLeAF Briefing Paper will be prepared to highlight key points from the strategy and to provide a commentary on the implications for planning.
- **Article 37** – the Government has taken the view that those companies applying for permits to dispose of LLW to landfill will have to make an Article 37 submission to the EC to show that no member states would be affected. The process for gaining Article 37 approval could delay the issue of permits for between 6-12 months.
- **Combustible wastes** - LLWR Ltd has received bids from 5 suppliers to treat segregated combustible LLW at plant in the UK, Europe and USA. Successful bidders will be announced in the near future. It is understood that LLWR have sought bids from incinerator operators already authorised to treat radioactive waste, but it is not clear whether the additional business could be done under their existing authorisations, or whether variations would be required. If variations are required the Environment Agency would need DECC's advice on whether the change is sufficient to trigger an Article 37 submission.
- **Update on Local Developments** - an updated overview of the development of LLW disposal facilities is available on the NuLeAF website at [Spreadsheet overview](#). When information becomes available about the development of other types of LLW management facility these will be added to the overview.

- **Refusal of planning permission for disposal of LLW to the landfill site near King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire** - The reasons for refusal included that the proposal is contrary to the Waste Local Plan as it will not satisfy the minimisation of, and balance in, the movement of waste across waste planning authority boundaries, and the perception of harm from the proposed development held by a significant number of residents. It has subsequently been reported that the operator – Augean – will appeal the decision (see [BBC News - Appeal over radioactive dump plan for Northamptonshire](#)).
- **Regional Approaches** - at NuLeAF's initiative, a meeting between NDA and regional planners took place on 5 March. This reviewed a high level regional breakdown of LLW arisings, and involved exploratory discussions about the implications for regional planning. NDA is now considering how best to assist in providing a more detailed breakdown of regional radioactive waste arisings and management facilities. It is anticipated that this breakdown – and the implications for regional and Waste Planning Authorities – will be discussed at a NuLeAF seminar in mid November.

### **Siting a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)**

Meetings of the **West Cumbria MRWS Partnership** took place on 28 February and 31 March. The February meeting agreed a specification for research on the impacts of hosting a GDF, held an initial discussion about the NDA's preliminary proposals for Stage 4 of the siting process, and heard a presentation from two Cumbrian environmentalists. The March meeting reviewed the outputs and proposed responses to the Partnership's first round of public and stakeholder engagement. The next meeting (on 13 May) will continue that review and consider whether to give the go ahead for initial geological screening by the British Geological Survey (BGS). A formal decision about participation in the siting process is not expected until autumn 2011. Further information is available on the Partnership website at [westcumbriamrws](#).

The **House of Lords Science and Technology Committee** has published an update on radioactive waste management (HL Report 95, March 2010, available at [HoL S&TC Report HL95](#)). The Committee makes a number of recommendations designed to strengthen CoRWM, enabling it to better hold the Government to account on their progress in developing a GDF. Also, the HoL Committee recommends that the Government publishes clear policy milestones for the MRWS programme and reports progress annually.

### **NDA Developments**

The NDA has published the final version of its **Business Plan**, which confirms expenditure of £2.8 billion for the next year. £1690m will be funded by Government and £1150m by income from commercial operations. NuLeAF submitted comments on the draft Business Plan in January (available at [Comments on NDA Business Plan 2010-13](#)). It suggested that the Plan should include: a high level explanation of how key deliverables and site activities have been identified; clarity on the role of the Public Value Programme (PVP); further explanation of the role of the Value Framework; and re-instatement of socio-economic support to previous levels.

The NDA has sent a document explaining how these and other comments have been addressed in the final version of the Business Plan (a copy is available on request from the secretariat). The following changes relate to NuLeAF's comments:

- An explanation of the criteria used in NDA's PVP submission to Government has been included;
- The funding section now includes a brief outline of the Value Framework process and how it informs the PVP submission; and
- A budget of £10m for socio-economic support has been re-instated.

At its meeting on 20 April, the SG agreed to write again to the NDA seeking an explanation for how work on key elements of R&D would be carried forward in the light of financial cutbacks.

NDA **funding for 2011 onwards** will be agreed at the next spending review following the general election. In advance of this, the NDA has engaged with Government to identify options for improving effectiveness and affordability. At the National Stakeholder Group in mid-March, the CEO, Tony Fountain, reported that the 'broad headlines' of the NDA PVP submission were that there were some proposed programme deletions, but that the main emphasis was on being more efficient. The submission also includes proposals for accelerating decommissioning at a couple of lead Magnox sites. If these proposals are approved, NDA anticipates discussing them with the relevant local authorities by the end of 2010.

Formal consultation on NDA's proposed revised **Strategy** is anticipated to start in early September and end towards the end of November.

### **Submarine Dismantling Project**

The SG's attention was drawn to the statement made by the Secretary of State on 24 February in response to Parliamentary PQs:

"There are currently four regions where there are MOD or defence-related commercial sites that are likely to be considered for submarine dismantling project activities. These regions are Devon, Fife, Argyll and Bute and Berkshire. A number of briefings to elected representatives in these regions have already been carried out, including to the hon. Member, and others have been scheduled.

The project is at an early stage in the process to develop an effective public consultation and associated strategic environmental assessment. This work has included identification of existing nuclear sites, both defence and civil, that are technically capable of submarine dismantling or storing the resultant radioactive waste. At this stage, two sites have been identified that could be technically capable of carrying out dismantling activities and 12 sites have been identified that could be technically capable of carrying out waste storage. Technical capability is only one aspect and the wider suitability of sites has not yet been assessed.

Further analysis work is still required and, until the public consultation is complete, no decisions will be taken on sites for either submarine dismantling or waste storage. I am withholding details of the individual sites identified at this time, as the MOD intend to publish this information in the future as part of the planned public consultation and strategic environmental assessment.

No technical barriers have been identified that would prevent either submarine dismantling or radioactive waste storage from taking place. Most technical aspects of the work have already been demonstrated elsewhere, either in other industry sectors, particularly the civil nuclear sector, or through other countries' work on dismantling nuclear submarines."

It is anticipated that further information about the timetable for key steps in the programme will become available at some point after the General Election.

### **International Projects**

The SG received a verbal report about a European Roundtable on 'Application of the Aarhus Convention to the Field of Radioactive Waste Management'. Slides from presentations at the roundtable are available on the European Projects page of the NuLeAF website (under the 'Research' tab). It also received an overview of recent, current and proposed European projects on the societal aspects of radioactive waste management (see [SG item 6 report](#)).

### **Membership Fees for 2010-11**

All corresponding member authorities are asked to consider becoming contributors. Financial support from member authorities is essential if NuLeAF is to continue its work in informing and advising local authorities and in representing its members' views to Government, the NDA and regulators.

As reported in e-bulletin 16, the NuLeAF AGM agreed to hold the level of requested payments from contributing authorities in 2010-11 to the current rates. This means that the levels will be:

<b>Population</b>	<b>Annual Contribution 2010-11</b>
Up to 100k	£665
100k-200k	£995
200k-500k	£1330
500k-1m	£2035
Above 1m	£2660

**Please contact the secretariat (details below) to become a contributing authority.**

### **Dates for the Diary**

8 June LLW Officer Working Group, Local Government House, London (12.30 – 3.30)  
14 July Steering Group, Venue TBC (11.00 - 3.00)  
20 October Steering Group and AGM, Local Government House, Smith Square, London (11.00-3.00)

### **Contact Points**

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.

NuLeAF can be contacted via the Secretariat c/o Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX, Tel: 01473 264833 e-mail: [catherine.draper@nuleaf.org.uk](mailto:catherine.draper@nuleaf.org.uk).