

NULEAF LOW LEVEL WASTE OFFICER WORKING GROUP

3 October 07, LG House

Present:

Fred Barker	NuLeAF
David Davies	Copeland BC
Peter Day	Oxfordshire CC
Richard Greaves	Essex CC
Barry James	Somerset CC
Stewart Kemp	Cumbria CC
David Palk	Suffolk CC
Clive Pink	Suffolk Coastal DC
Kerry Rickards	Sedgemoor DC
Jill Sutcliffe	NuLeAF
Tim Williams	Vale of White Horse DC
Mark Woodger	Essex CC

1 Role of the Group

It was agreed that the primary role of the Group should be to: exchange information about developments in LLW management; review and discuss developments as they affect local government; and advise on initiatives that NuLeAF should take to (a) assist member authorities and (b) represent their views to national bodies. It was also recommended that NuLeAF initiatives should include engaging with the NDA in development of its strategy for managing LLW, and disseminating examples of good practice.

Action: Prepare note of meeting for approval by group and publication on NuLeAF website.

2 Membership of the Group

It was noted that attendees include those with development control, plan preparation, environmental health and policy responsibilities. The authorities represented cover the three sites where applications have been made, or are in the pipeline, for additional LLW management facilities (the repository near Drigg, Hinkley Point and Harwell). The group also includes officers that sit on the Planning Officer Society's Minerals and Waste Topic Group and its Waste Planning Advisory Group.

Action: It was agreed to invite additional participation if relevant to items under discussion.

3 Update on Developments at Specific Sites

The group reviewed the position at the LLWR near Drigg, Hinkley Point and Harwell:

- LLWR – a planning application has been submitted to Cumbria CC for development of vault 9 (to be operated as an interim store pending resolution of

long-term safety case issues). Copeland BC and Cumbria CC are involved in discussions with the NDA about an appropriate approach to community benefits.

- Hinkley Point – a scoping report about development of a LLW disposal facility has been submitted to Somerset CC. Sedgemoor DC is involved in discussions with the site licensee’s parent body (Energy Solutions) about community benefits. A planning application is expected towards the end of the year.
- Harwell – UKAEA have developed proposals for a ‘High Volume Low Activity’ waste disposal facility, following a programme of option assessment and consultation. It is not known when a planning application will be submitted. Oxfordshire CC and Vale of White Horse DC have not addressed the issue of potential community benefits.

The group considered that there would be advantage in joint discussions between the local authorities at the three sites, with a view to a joint meeting with the NDA.

Action: It was agreed that FB and KR should make the necessary arrangements for a meeting of the local authorities from the three sites.

4 LLW Issues arising from the NDA Review of Site End States

FB reported that the review of site end states had cast a spotlight on the possibility of on-site LLW disposal. Some Site Stakeholder Groups (Bradwell, Sizewell and Trawsfynydd) had formulated site end state recommendations that were intended to preclude on-site LLW disposal. Others were prepared to discuss the issue further. In some cases, the outputs from LLW option assessment workshops had not been fed effectively into the site end state review.

The group noted that the extent to which LAs had been involved in the site end state review varied from site to site, often reflecting the relationship between a Site Stakeholder Group and the relevant LAs. In some areas, there was a need for more effective engagement between the site operator, the SSG and the LAs.

5 Management of Non-Nuclear Industry LLW

Government has stated that a UK-wide strategy for managing non-nuclear LLW will be developed, following work to estimate the amount and distribution of waste arisings (which will be undertaken by Government with support from the NDA and Regional Technical Advisory Bodies). This further work will build on a pilot study in the South East region. The report of the pilot study was published in May 07. The group was concerned that the results of the pilot study and plans for a UK-wide study are not widely known amongst those responsible for planning at local authority and regional level.

The issue was also raised of whether NuLeAF should seek to address issues associated with the management of non-nuclear industry LLW, when its focus is on nuclear legacy management. The point was made that the two are connected, for example, through the potential development of joint facilities, the joint use of existing facilities and the need to consistently address nuclear and non-nuclear LLW management in strategy and plan development at national and local levels.

Action: to seek confirmation from the NuLeAF Steering Group that it is appropriate to consider developments in the management of non-nuclear LLW in so far as they may impact on nuclear legacy management.

6 Addressing LLW Management in Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks

Participants from county councils reported on the extent to which development of their Minerals and Waste Development Framework was addressing radioactive waste management. Different authorities were at different stages in MWDF development and some had not yet decided how to address radioactive waste management.

Action: It was agreed that it would be useful for NuLeAF to collate relevant material for consideration at the next meeting of the group. There may be scope for NuLeAF to develop further advice.

7 National Guidance for Planning Authorities on LLW Management

The group noted Government's intention that the NDA's Strategy and Annual Plans will provide guidance for national, regional and local planning authorities as necessary in the preparation of planning strategies. NDA had informally asked NuLeAF for its views on what LAs would expect this guidance to cover. In the absence of a clear picture of the scale and nature of the management task, and the underdeveloped nature of NDA LLW strategy, the OWG considered it difficult to give clear feedback to the NDA at this stage.

Action: FB agreed to consider whether a comparison of Government LLW Policy and Planning Policy Statement 10 helps identify issues that should be addressed in NDA guidance.

8 Proposals for NuLeAF Initiatives

It was noted that:

- LLW strategy development and key case studies feature in the programmes for the NuLeAF regional seminars in November/December
- NuLeAF had made an application for funding to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for a project to identify and address public concerns about LLW management
- FB is meeting with the NDA LLW Strategy Manager on 16 November, which provides opportunity to discuss the role that NuLeAF and member authorities might play in arrangements for developing the NDA's LLW Strategy.

9 Future Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in December in London, with the same timings as the first meeting. The location for subsequent meetings would be kept under review.

Action: to arrange the next meeting of the group in December.