

<b>Meeting:</b>	NuLeAF Steering Group, 18 October 2007
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	6
<b>Subject:</b>	Management of Low Level Radioactive Waste
<b>Author:</b>	Fred Barker
<b>Purpose:</b>	To report on developments, including the outcome of the first meeting of the LLW Officer Working Group

## **Introduction**

This report covers:

- Establishment of the LLW Officer Working Group
- Initiatives on LLW management and community benefits
- A pilot study on non-nuclear industry LLW
- Addressing LLW management in Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks
- Overview of NuLeAF initiatives

## **Recommendations**

That the Steering Group:

- 1 Welcomes the establishment of the LLW Officer Working Group and endorses its role as set out in this report.
- 2 Authorises the Executive Director to work with member authorities to take initiatives as appropriate to:
  - promote the case for provision of community benefits in association with development of LLW management facilities;
  - develop advice on how to address LLW management in Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks; and
  - engage in the development of the NDA's LLW strategy.
- 3 Agrees 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.

## **Establishment of the LLW Officer Working Group**

Following the decision of the last meeting, a LLW Officer Working Group – LLW OWG - has been established. This group had its first meeting on 3 October.

The meeting was attended by officers from Copeland BC, Cumbria CC, Essex CC, Oxfordshire CC, Sedgemoor DC, Somerset CC, Suffolk CC, Suffolk Coastal DC and Vale of White Horse DC. This included officers 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.

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 noted that NuLeAF initiatives should include engaging with the NDA in development of its strategy for managing LLW, and disseminating examples of best practice.

The main discussion and proposals from the first meeting of the group are set out below.

## **Initiatives on LLW Management and Community Benefits**

The OWG 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 OWG 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. It was agreed that the NuLeAF Executive Director (ED) and Sedgemoor Chief Executive should seek to facilitate these discussions. A verbal update will be given at the Steering Group meeting.

## **Pilot Study on Non-Nuclear Industry LLW**

Government has stated that a UK-wide strategy for managing non-nuclear LLW will be developed, following further work to estimate the amount and distribution of waste arisings (which will be undertaken by Government with support from the NDA and input from Regional Technical Advisory Bodies).

This further work will build on a pilot study undertaken in the South East region. The report of the pilot study was published in May 07. It shows that:

- No central record is kept of the scale, nature and geographic distribution of non-nuclear LLW arisings;
- In order to address the provision of non-nuclear LLW management facilities in regional and local waste strategies, a more comprehensive picture of waste arisings is needed.
- Concerns identified in the pilot study include: some wastes are transported over considerable distances for disposal; the future of the LLWR near Drigg is uncertain; the availability of landfill for the controlled burial of LLW is very limited; the capacity for incineration is very limited (alpha wastes) or run by one company (gamma/beta wastes).
- For non-nuclear radioactive wastes in the SE, it is estimated that 40% of Very LLW (VLLW) currently goes to landfill and 60% to incinerators. For LLW, it is estimated that 58% goes to incinerators, 24% to the LLWR, 14% to storage and 4% to controlled landfill burial.

The OWG 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 and will impact one upon the other, for example, through the potential development of facilities that will take nuclear and non-nuclear LLW, 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.

## **Addressing LLW Management in Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks**

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

The OWG 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 and their appraisal. 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. It was suggested, however, that a comparison of Government LLW Policy and Planning Policy Statement 10 would highlight some issues that should be addressed in NDA guidance.

### **Overview of NuLeAF Initiatives**

Following the decisions at the last SG meeting, the following initiatives have been undertaken:

- The policy statement on LLW management has been published (PS4, July 07)
- LLW strategy development and key case studies feature in the programmes for the NuLeAF regional seminars in November/December
- An application for funding has been made to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for a project to identify and address public concerns about LLW management.

The ED also meets regularly with the NDA LLW Strategy Manager. The next meeting is taking place on 16 November and will provide opportunity to discuss the role that NuLeAF and member authorities might play in arrangements for developing the NDA's LLW Strategy.