

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 3 February 2009
Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	NDA Strategy Review and Developments
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on progress with the NDA strategy review and other NDA-related developments

Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress with the NDA strategy review and other NDA-related developments. It covers:

- The meeting of NuLeAF's Strategy Review Group on 5 January
- Output from the NuLeAF seminar on 2 December 08
- An update on NDA topic reviews
- Plans for the meeting of NuLeAF's Strategy Review Group on 23 March
- NuLeAF comments on the draft NDA Business Plan
- Representation at the NDA's National Stakeholder Group, 17-18 June.

Recommendation

That the Steering Group consider:

- 1 Attendance at the Strategy Review Group meeting on 23 March
- 2 Representation at the National Stakeholder Group on 17-18 June.

Contribution to Achieving Strategic Objectives

Attendance at these meetings provides opportunity to promote the following NuLeAF objectives:

- To encourage development of NDA funding models and asset optimisation in ways that enable real and timely progress to be made in programmes of nuclear legacy management across the portfolio of NDA sites (dependent upon pursuance of: an open and transparent approach; effective engagement with local authorities; robust regulation; and due regard being paid to the long term)
- To encourage development of a robust, transparent and participative process for informing NDA decisions about prioritisation of spending across sites.

1 Meeting of the Strategy Review Group (SRG)

The second meeting of NuLeAF's SRG took place on 5 January. The draft note of the meeting is attached as Annex 1.

The meeting considered:

- Issues arising from the NuLeAF seminar on 2 December (see below)
- Strategic choices in Low Level Waste (LLW) Management (see agenda item 4)
- Approaches to community funds (see agenda item 5)
- NDA topical strategy reviews (see below)
- Comments on the NDA's draft Business Plan (see below).

2 Output from the NuLeAF Seminar, 2 December

The NuLeAF Seminar on the 'Future of Nuclear Legacy Management in the UK' discussed key strategic issues, as identified in NuLeAF's strategic objectives for 2009. Speakers from the NDA talked about: prioritisation of spending; geographic approaches to radwaste management; and the commercialisation of nuclear legacy management. A report on the seminar is on the NuLeAF website ([Seminar Report](#)).

Discussion at the seminar has been taken into account in developing (a) an input to the NDA LLW strategy review, (b) a discussion paper on community funds, and (c) comments on the NDA draft business plan.

3 Update on NDA Topic Reviews

An update is attached as Annex 2. This covers the topics likely to be of most interest to NuLeAF and its member authorities during 2009, including: funding, asset optimisation, land quality management, uranium, site end states, non-NDA liability management, magnox fuel, an estate wide 'people plan' and treatment and disposal of reactor decommissioning waste.

4 Meeting of the Strategy Review Group, 23 March

The next meeting of the SRG will take place in Manchester Town Hall between 11.00 and 3.00 pm on 23 March. Members of the NDA strategy team will attend the meeting to provide an update and discuss progress in key topical strategy reviews. It is recommended that any representative from a NuLeAF member authority that wishes to attend should contact the NuLeAF secretariat.

5 Comments on the draft NDA Business Plan

As agreed at the SRG, comments have been submitted to the NDA (see [Comments on NDA Business Plan](#)). These cover:

- Consultation period and basis for site funding allocations
- Value framework
- Safe Secure Sites contingency
- Best practice conferences
- Maximising income from sale of assets

- THORP and SMP
- 'Flexible solutions' for VLLW
- Interim storage of higher activity wastes
- Socio-economic support and development

6 Representation at the NDA National Stakeholder Group (NSG)

The next meeting of the NDA NSG is taking place on 17-18 June. NuLeAF has four places at the NSG. Julian Swainson, Fred Barker and Stewart Kemp are attending, with one place currently unallocated. Any member of the Steering Group that wishes to attend should inform the NuLeAF secretariat at the SG meeting.

Annex 1: Draft Note of Strategy Review Group meeting, 5 January, 2009, Manchester

In attendance:

Fred Barker (FB) – NuLeAF
Catherine Draper (CD) – NuLeAF
Cllr Allan Holliday (AH) – Chair and Copeland Borough Council
Stewart Kemp (SK) – Cumbria County Council
Cllr Tony Markley (TM) – Cumbria County Council
Sean Morris (SM) – Manchester City Council
Cllr Bill Risby (BR) – Manchester City Council
Cllr Julian Swainson (JS) – Suffolk County Council
Cllr Bernard Whittle (BW) – Lancashire County Council

Apologies: Fergus McMorrow, Copeland Borough Council

1. Welcome and introduction

AH welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a happy new year.

2. Note of the meeting on 29 September, 2008

It was agreed that the Note was a true record and a copy would be placed on the NuLeAF website. All actions point had been completed, excepting the letter to NDA regarding NSG outcomes as these had been posted on the NDA website soon after the meeting.

Action: CD

BR asked if in future acronyms and abbreviations could be spelt out for those members who are not so familiar with the terminology.

Action: FB/CD

3. Issues arising from the NuLeAF seminar on 2 December, 2008

The meeting reviewed the outcome of the seminar. It was agreed that:

- *NDA funding arrangements:* FB would continue to monitor developments in light of the on-going review.
- *Justification for NDA spending decisions:* include in comments on current draft Business Plan request for more detailed material to be published that provides transparent and robust justifications for spending decisions across sites.
- *NDA 'Value Framework':* include in comments on current draft Business Plan request for clarification on (a) the lessons learnt from applying the Value Framework to the site funding process, (b) the programme for developing the Value Framework and (c) how stakeholders will be involved in development and application of the Value Framework.

On the links between new build and legacy management, Adrian Simper, Strategic Director of the NDA, has been invited to the Steering Group on 3 February for further explanation of what he sees as the potential synergies and interactions. The discussion will inform the group's future consideration of the issue.

It was also agreed that FB should write to the NDA Chief Executive upon appointment to highlight NuLeAF's role and current issues of concern.

Action: FB

4. Strategic choices in Low Level Waste (LLW) Management

The meeting reviewed the way the NDA's strategy for LLW management is developing and noted with concern the emphasis being placed on dispersed approaches (away from existing nuclear sites). In the context of those concerns, and support for implementation of the waste hierarchy, the meeting agreed to promote discussion of a proposed 'hierarchy of siting preferences':

- I. Development of 'local' facilities on or adjacent to an existing (or proposed) nuclear site that deal with LLW from that site or from neighbouring stations at multi-station sites
- II. Development of 'regional' facilities on or adjacent to an existing (or proposed) nuclear site that also takes LLW from other nuclear sites in the region (requires local agreement that benefits outweigh detriments)
- III. Development of local, regional or national facilities at new sites (as with GDF siting this would require an approach based on voluntarism, partnership and benefits packages)
- IV. Use of facilities at off-site locations that manage non-nuclear wastes (the use of such facilities should not be imposed on unwilling communities).

The intention of adopting such a hierarchy in LLW strategy would be encourage concentration of LLW facilities at or adjacent to licensed nuclear sites, whilst not ruling out other sites, including the possibility of using dispersed facilities at existing off-site locations (as long as such an approach has the consent of the local community and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is preferable in specific circumstances).

The following actions were also agreed:

- Submit preliminary comments to the NDA team undertaking the Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal of LLW strategy options, so that strategic choices on the 'where' of LLW management are addressed in that assessment
- Seek a meeting with the waste portfolio holders on the LGA Environment Board to brief them on developments and seek their views.
- Brief the Planning Officer's Society Waste Advisory Group and seek their views.
- Produce supplementary NuLeAF guidance for planners on addressing LLW management in MWDFs.
- Organise NuLeAF seminars on LLW strategies during the consultation period on NDA and NNI LLW strategies. Timing to take local elections into consideration.

Action: FB/CD

5. Approaches to Community Funds

The meeting reviewed previous initiatives and agreed that FB should draft a paper for discussion with Government covering the use of Section 106 Agreements and the Local Government Well-Being Powers. This would be circulated to the Low Level Waste Officer Working Group for comment and would be discussed at the Steering Group on 3 February.

Action: FB

6. NDA Topical Strategy Reviews

The group reviewed the current position and agreed that FB should invite the NDA to its next meeting so that a more detailed discussion could take place, covering current option assessments and key topics, including asset optimisation, site end states and the treatment and disposal of reactor decommissioning waste.

Action: FB

7. Comments on draft NDA Business Plan

The meeting reviewed a draft response to consultation on the draft Business Plan. This was approved subject to amendments concerning asset optimisation and 'flexible solutions for VLLW management'.

Action: FB

8. Date of next meeting

FB would liaise with NDA regarding speakers and advise members accordingly. The meeting has subsequently been arranged for 23 March, 2009.

Annex 2: Update on NDA Topical Strategy Reviews

This note provides an overview of publicly available information about the work the NDA intends to undertake on topical strategy reviews during the course of 2009. The information has been gleaned from the NDA website ([Topics Overview](#)) and the report of the NDA's November 2008 National Stakeholder Group ([NSG report](#)).

The NDA review of each topical strategy is divided into 5 stages:

- Research
- Assess and select options
- Credible options
- Approve strategy
- Implement strategy

For most topical strategies, the NDA website states which quarter of which year each stage of review will occur. This is summarised below for the topics likely to be of most interest to NuLeAF and its membership during 2009.

1 Funding – credible options (first quarter 2009). The NDA website states that NDA is committed to maximising revenues from assets to reduce the burden on Government finances. It adds that “NDA produces strategic options for Government based on a variety of funding scenarios. Strong business cases will help Government to make informed decisions on the costs and benefits associated with each scenario.” NDA is continuing to work with Government on the “evolution of the current funding model”. Stakeholders are to be kept informed through the next draft strategy and updates to the NSG.

2 Asset optimisation – approve and implement strategy (first quarter 2009). NSG71 states that NDA has embarked on a review of many of its assets to determine the level and nature of market interest, including a potential role in new nuclear build. As a result, non-designated land around Bradwell, Oldbury and Wylfa has been put to the market through an open sale process. It is the NDA's intention to release the land to the market as soon as practicable ([NSG71](#), p5-6). This topic was discussed at the November NSG meeting. Participants recognised that market conditions are right for the sale of non-designated land because of the potential for new nuclear build. NDA confirmed that the capital raised would be put into decommissioning and clean-up ([NSG Report](#), p38-44).

3 Land quality management – assess and select options (last quarter 2008), credible options (first quarter 2010). The NDA is reviewing the strategic options for the characterisation and remediation of contaminated land and groundwater. The strategy is likely to focus on identifying and promoting good practice, as SLCs will need to develop approaches specific to the nature and extent of contamination at each site. NDA will also sponsor R&D where needed, and can influence when resources are allocated to characterisation and remediation. NDA's current strategic position is to characterise and remediate land according to hazard/risk. Other options are deferral for as long as possible, prioritisation on the basis of reducing NDA landholding, or characterisation and remediation as soon as possible ([NSG71](#), p2-3). This topic was also discussed at the NSG. Key points were agreement that deferral for as long as possible is not acceptable, and support for “prioritisation of characterisation to inform national strategy and reduce uncertainties in assessment and decision making” ([NSG Report](#), p27-32).

4 Uranium – assess and select options (first quarter 2009). The UK has significant quantities of uranium materials, including from enrichment, fuel manufacture and reprocessing. The NDA website states that its strategic objective is to optimise the safe, secure and environmentally responsible management of these materials (see [Uranium](#)). It adds that some of these materials may have strategic value as a future energy source, and that the long-term storage of some material is not sustainable (‘hex tails’). The NDA is therefore exploring options and states that it will be providing evidence-based advice to Government. This topic review was not discussed at the November NSG.

5 Site end states – assess and select options (first quarter 2009). The NDA website indicates that following the consultation on site end states in 2007, the NDA is now considering how to integrate the findings into its strategy review. It states that credible options are to select the end state based on (a) the preferred end use expressed by stakeholders, (b) existing conditions of land and structures, or (c) national solutions for waste management (see [Site End States Background](#)). The meanings of ‘credible options’ (b) and (c) are not explained further on the NDA website. This topic review was not discussed at the November NSG.

6 Non-NDA liability management – research and assess and select options (second quarter 2009). NDA requires a strategy to manage interactions with the MoD, British Energy and DEFRA (small users) liability management. It states that credible options are: (a) develop a programme for NDA liabilities only; (b) develop a programme for all UK nuclear liabilities; or (c) optimise a programme for all UK nuclear liabilities. NDA considers that it should develop an integrated strategy and programme to avoid programme risks and optimise scheduling and costs (see [NSG71](#), p4-5). This topic was discussed at the November NSG. Key points included that NDA should: provide increasing scope for ‘national’ solutions; address the long-term requirements for national facilities; and consider the impact of new build ([NSG Report](#), p45-48).

7 Magnox fuel – assess and select options (second quarter 2009). The NDA website states that it wishes to ensure that reprocessing of spent Magnox fuel is carried out in line with the MOP8 programme. However, it is also exploring contingency options in the event of a failure of reprocessing capability. It states that credible options are (a) use of alternative reprocessing facilities or (b) interim storage prior to conditioning for disposal. With regard to the latter option, NDA aims to deliver a report on the drying of wetted spent fuel in March 2009 (see [Magnox fuel background](#)). This topic review was not discussed at the November NSG.

Two further issues are under discussion, which relate to the ‘skills’ and ‘higher activity waste’ topics respectively:

8 Estate wide ‘people plan’: NDA sees the need to enable collaboration across its estate to manage the risks associated with possible major changes in staffing levels at sites. It wants to address the scale of the issue, the barriers to mobility of staff across sites and opportunities for job creation in a ‘people plan’ (see [NSG71](#), p3-4). The following key points arose from discussion at the November NSG: there should be honesty and transparency with the workforce about threats and opportunities; there is a need for a vision to help people see a future beyond the site; and innovation is needed in use of technology and socio-economic support ([NSG report](#), p33-37).

9 Treatment and Disposal of Reactor Decommissioning Waste (RDW): The current baseline strategy for ILW from reactor decommissioning involves geological disposal. NDA and SLCs have identified potential opportunity to pursue an alternative approach for reactor graphite, concrete and steel, using on-site or near site storage and near-surface disposal in a ‘LLW-type’ facility. NDA is to explore the benefits of pursuing alternative strategies using a BPEO approach. It notes that separating RDW disposal from the GDF programme could allow earlier reactor decommissioning and significant cost savings in disposal. NDA intends to engage with stakeholders via the NSG and will engage with SSGs if some site specific opportunities are highlighted¹.

¹ The reference for this information – paper NSG74 - does not currently appear on the NDA website.