

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 3 February 2009
Agenda Item:	8
Subject:	Progress Report
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To provide updates on the GDF siting programme, reviews of interim storage arrangements, coverage of radioactive waste in regional and local plans, ISOLUS and international projects

Introduction

This report provides updates on:

- the siting programme for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)
- CoRWM and NDA reviews of interim storage arrangements for higher activity wastes
- coverage of radioactive waste in Regional Spatial Strategies and Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks
- the Ministry of Defence's ISOLUS programme
- European projects

Contribution to Achieving Strategic Objectives

The work outlined in this report is intended to contribute to the achievement of the following NuLeAF objectives:

- To liaise effectively with any local authority that may wish to consider, or makes, an expression of interest in the GDF siting process and to provide assistance as appropriate
- To work with Government, the NDA, CoRWM, regulators and member authorities to help ensure that the approach based on voluntarism and partnership works successfully in practice
- To ensure member authorities are briefed and up-to-date on developments in the GDF siting process
- To encourage waste planning authorities to develop policy in Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks on the management of LLW (and VLLW) in their area

1 GDF Siting Programme

The following developments have taken place since the last Steering Group (SG):

- The first meeting of the shadow siting partnership established by Copeland Borough Council has taken place (see [Copeland and GDF siting](#)). The first meeting discussed options for the form of partnership, and draft terms of reference. Future meetings are taking place on 19 February and 17 March.
- Cumbria County Council has made an expression of interest to Government (see [Expression of Interest](#)). Allerdale Borough Council is making a decision on whether to express an interest at the end of January.
- The question of whether to express an interest in the siting process has been debated by Cornwall County Council (see ['Nuclear waste site could bring billions'](#) and [People power sees nuclear waste invitation scrapped](#)).
- A liaison meeting with Government has been held (15 December). This discussed issues associated with decision-making in two tier areas, the recent hearings on Cumbria CC's Minerals and Waste Development Framework, a draft Government briefing on GDF benefits packages and ways of stimulating wider interest in the siting process. Following the meeting the Executive Director made a number of comments on the draft briefing on benefits packages which have been accepted by Government. The next liaison meeting is on 23 February.

By the time of the SG meeting two additional meetings will have taken place:

- the GDF officer working group on 21 January
- the Regulatory Interface Management group on 30 January

A verbal update will be provided at the SG meeting.

2 Reviews of Interim Storage

Both NDA and CoRWM are undertaking reviews of arrangements for the interim storage of higher activity wastes.

NDA is holding a workshop on 11 February to discuss the conclusions of its draft review and to enable stakeholders to input to the next phase of its interim storage programme.

CoRWM released an outline report for comment in December with a request for comments by 14 January. The Executive Director submitted the comments at Annex 1 to this report. CoRWM has subsequently invited NuLeAF to participate in a workshop on its interim storage review on 19 February. NuLeAF will be represented at the meeting by Gerald Hudd from Somerset CC and Gordon Buchanan from South Gloucestershire District Council.

3 Radioactive Waste in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks (MWDFs)

The SG will recall that Briefing Paper 13, published in March 2008, sought to provide guidance to local authority planners on the radioactive waste management issues that should be taken into account in preparing or updating MWDFs (see [BP13](#)).

More recently, two additional pieces of work have been undertaken:

- publication of a case study on how Suffolk CC is addressing radioactive waste management issues in preparation of its MWDF (see [Case Study 4](#)); and
- preparation of compendiums of coverage of radioactive waste management issues in RSSs and MWDFs across England and in the equivalent plans in Wales.

The purpose of preparing and publishing the compendiums is to:

- ensure NuLeAF is well informed about coverage of radioactive waste management in local planning policies;
- allow other LAs to see what others are doing and where there is good practice emerging; and
- if appropriate, to enable a targeted approach to encouraging development of appropriate local planning policy.

At the time of writing, a draft of the RSS compendium has been completed. The only RSSs that currently contain policy on radioactive wastes are in the North West and South West. A study is being undertaken in the SE to inform preparation of appropriate policy. The compendium of MWDF extracts is currently in preparation.

Two other initiatives to encourage coverage of radioactive waste issues are in the pipeline:

- preparation of an article in Waste Planning
- preparation of a revised and updated version of BP13.

4 The MoD ISOLUS Programme

Project ISOLUS was set up in 2000 to determine the means of managing radioactive wastes and other material from laid up nuclear submarines. The project is overseen by the MoD ISOLUS Steering Group (MISG), of which NuLeAF is a member. The project is advised by an Advisory Group (IAG) made up of a wide range of stakeholders.

Latest developments include:

- the project is being re-named the ‘Submarine Dismantling Project’
- a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being undertaken of dismantling and storage options
- public consultation on the SEA will be undertaken towards the end of 2009
- a ‘technology demonstration’ project is being developed to establish the industrial processes for dismantlement
- options for interim storage of Intermediate Level Waste are being explored with NDA.

5 European Projects

Updates are as follows:

- **COWAM in Practice (CIP)** (on radioactive waste governance): as reported to the AGM, the most recent meeting of the UK CIP stakeholder group in September discussed

progress to date with the project's research on definitions of community, benefits packages and retrievability. The next meeting is on 12 March.

- **CARL** (on stakeholder engagement in radioactive waste management): discussions are taking place between Cumbria County Council and NDA about the possibility of a further meeting to enable effective networking between stakeholders from Belgium, Finland, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK. The main report from the project is available at www.carl-research.org.
- **ARGONA** (on risk governance): NuLeAF has been invited to send two representatives to a workshop that will feedback on the results of the project (17-18 March). A verbal update on attendance will be provided at the meeting.

ANNEX 1: COMMENTS ON CoRWM OUTLINE REPORT ON INTERIM STORAGE

----- Original Message -----

From: [Fred Barker](mailto:Fred.Barker@corwm.org.uk)

To: contact@corwm.org.uk

Cc: catherine.draper@nuleaf.org.uk

Sent: Wednesday, January 07, 2009 9:41 AM

Subject: Comments on outline storage report, 2500

Dear CoRWM,

Thanks for opportunity to comment on the outline report. The comments below are officer comments, as your deadline for comments does not allow time to take a report through the NuLeAF Steering Group.

Our comments are as follows:

1 CONTEXT

The comment about the potential need for more than one GDF is timely (p7). Government's preference for a single GDF is becoming embedded as a firm assumption in the industry's forward planning (see for example use of the assumption in the NIA application to justify new nuclear power stations, Ch 5).

Specifically with regard to potential new build wastes it should be remembered that there is a decision process to be gone through with local host communities about whether new build wastes should be disposed of in the GDF. There may, for example, be spatial constraints on the potential size of a repository in the volunteer area that militate against the disposal of new build spent fuel to a GDF in that location.

2 STORAGE SYSTEM APPROACH

The comment about the need for a 'storage system' approach is welcome (p12). The linkage between storage and disposal systems must also be considered. It is important, for example, that assessments of the 'mini-store' concept pay due regard to the requirements of disposal to a GDF.

3 STRATEGIC APPROACH

The call for a more strategic approach is welcome in principle (p12), but would benefit from further elaboration, taking into account the latest thinking in the NDA's topical strategy review on development of a strategy to manage interactions with the MoD, British Energy and small users. We understand that NDA wishes to develop a more integrated approach to avoid programme risks and optimise scheduling and costs.

It would be helpful if CoRWM could clarify whether it envisages that a more strategic approach would necessarily involve a move towards consolidating treatment and/or storage at a smaller number of sites.

4 TRANSPORT

The commitment to examine transport issues in CoRWM's 09/10 work programme is welcome (p14). Issues around transport modes, infrastructure, regulation and scheduling will be of considerable interest to NuLeAF and its member authorities.

5 PSE ON STORAGE AND TRANSPORT

There is no doubt that engagement through the NSG and SSGs will need to be supplemented to ensure adequate engagement with local authorities when proposals are being developed to move wastes for processing, storage or disposal (p15).

6 PSE

The call for a coordinated PSE approach may be welcome in principle (p22), but would benefit from further elaboration about what this might mean in practice. For example, does CoRWM think that NDA should assume a greater coordination role, covering its own PSE initiatives and those by SLCs, MoD and BE? If so, how might this work in practice, and how might it be adequately managed and resourced?

I hope these comments are of use.

Fred Barker
Executive Director,
NuLeAF