

<b>Meeting:</b>	NuLeAF Steering Group, 28 April 2009
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	7
<b>Subject:</b>	Progress Report
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<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide updates on the GDF siting programme, reviews of interim storage arrangements, new nuclear build, international projects, and NuLeAF finances.

## **Introduction**

This report provides updates on:

- the siting programme for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)
- NDA and CoRWM reviews of interim storage arrangements for higher activity wastes
- new nuclear build
- European projects and
- NuLeAF finances

## **Contribution to Achieving Strategic Objectives**

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

### ***GDF***

- 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

### ***Radioactive Waste Management and New Nuclear Build***

- If Government continues to encourage the building of new nuclear power stations, to seek to ensure that its National Policy Statement is open and transparent about the interactions between new nuclear build and nuclear legacy management.
- To seek to ensure that proposals for radioactive waste management and decommissioning of new nuclear power stations do not prejudice effective management of the nuclear legacy.

## 1 GDF Siting Programme

The following developments have taken place since early February:

- West Cumbria MRWS Partnership: meetings took place on 19 February and 17 March (NuLeAF was represented by the Executive Director). Allerdale BC has recently joined the group, and Cumbria County Council is interested to explore how it could be developed to support the work of all three local authorities. The partnership's primary role is to advise the relevant local authorities about whether to take formal decisions to participate in the siting process for a GDF. To do this, it will work with the British Geological Survey (BGS), who will carry out an initial desk-based study to identify any areas within West Cumbria that are obviously unsuitable. It will also develop a programme of community engagement about possible participation in the siting process. The meeting on 17 March heard presentations from BGS on the initial screening process and from the Executive Director on public and stakeholder engagement (PSE). It also discussed local experiences of PSE (eg what works well). A sub-group has been formed to work up some preliminary PSE proposals for discussion in the partnership. The reports from the meetings can be found at <http://www.3kq.co.uk/#/cumbrianuclearwaste/4532599058>. The next meeting is on 14 May and will be attended by the Vice Chair, Councillor Swainson.
- Decision-Making Structures: parallel discussions have been taking place between Allerdale BC, Copeland BC and Cumbria CC to seek to identify decision-making structures and processes acceptable to all three authorities.
- A liaison meeting between NuLeAF, Government and NDA took place on 23 February to review developments, including the Government's communication plan, progress with the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership, and decision-making in two tier areas. The Government's communication plan includes writing to local authority CEOs with an update following the elections in June, and organising a stall at the LGA conference in late June. The next liaison meeting is on 27 May.
- 'Radioactive Waste, What Next?' was published in *Firstonline* on 18 March ([Radioactive waste – what next?](#)). This provides an update on developments.
- Guidance on Requirements for Authorisation – Geological Disposal Facilities: the guidance was published by the environment agencies in February. It explains the requirements that the developer or operator will have to fulfil and the regulatory process that will lead to a decision on whether to authorise disposal. The guidance also describes the environmental safety case that the agencies would expect from the developer/operator.

## 2 NDA Review of Interim Storage

The NDA review was published in early April ([NDA Storage Review](#)). It concludes that:

- In principle, CoRWM's '100 years or more' interim storage objective may be achievable.
- Latest and future waste stores are designed to align with GDF availability dates. They will also require appropriate maintenance and various levels of in-service refurbishment to meet the '100 years or more' objective.
- A number of existing packaged waste stores have shorter notional design lives and are likely to require relatively more extensive refurbishment to meet the objective. It is possible that in some cases it would be better to transfer wastes into a more modern store.

The NDA review outlines the following position on the opportunities for consolidating ILW storage at a smaller number of sites:

- Stakeholder engagement is a key activity throughout the optioneering programme
- NDA should encourage waste minimisation and decay storage to reduce the overall number of ILW packages and increase storage flexibility
- The main focus of investigating storage optimisation should be southern Magnox and UKAEA sites
- The current baseline plans for ILW stores should be pursued at Dounreay, Hunterston A, Sellafield, Hinkley Point A and Trawsfynydd
- Local site to site opportunities could be investigated for the relatively small quantities of ILW at Chapelcross and Wylfa
- Opportunities for consolidation at NDA sites with existing or committed stores could be pursued for ILW from Oldbury, Berkeley, Dungeness A, Bradwell and Sizewell A
- UKAEA could be encouraged to pursue opportunities for Harwell, Winfrith and Culham to consolidate 'Magnox store compatible' ILW at sites with existing or committed stores, or to consolidate storage at one or more of the three UKAEA sites.
- There may be opportunities to extend the study to include other waste owners eg it may be reasonable to consider a single ILW store for neighbouring NDA and British Energy sites.

The review states that Magnox is taking the lead in developing this programme for the southern UK sites, with 2013 the earliest time for a change of strategy. Magnox South is also considering the possibility of switching to a 'mini-store' concept, which would provide more robust packaging and less expensive storage buildings. This may also impact on the scope and case for consolidation of storage at a smaller number of sites.

Adam Meehan from Energy Solutions will be making a presentation on consolidation and the mini-store concept to the next meeting of the Steering Group meeting (15 July, Oxford).

### **3 CoRWM Review of Interim Storage**

CoRWM has also published its advice to Government on the interim storage of higher activity wastes and radioactive materials ([CoRWM Storage Review](#)). It makes recommendations on the need for better strategic coordination, public information and public and stakeholder engagement.

Although acknowledging that recent NDA work on its Strategy Management System goes some way towards achieving coordination, CoRWM argues a more strategic approach is required across all civil and military nuclear sites, including a coordination mechanism with strong regulatory involvement and identification of priorities across all sites.

CoRWM also recommends that more information is made available to the public on waste management practices and about security issues. It also calls for more coordination of PSE between the NDA and other UK nuclear organisations, at national, regional and local levels.

### **4 New Nuclear Build**

On 15 April, Government published a list of eleven sites that could be potential hosts to new nuclear power stations in England and Wales. Members of the public now have a month to comment on the proposed sites before the nuclear planning consultation later this year.

The accompanying press release states that the Department of Energy and Climate Change published the list after vetting all applications to ensure they were credible, that the sites could be operational by 2025 and that the nominator had raised public awareness of their intention to nominate.

The eleven sites are:

- Hartlepool nominated by EDF Energy
- Heysham nominated by EDF Energy
- Dungeness nominated by EDF Energy
- Sellafield nominated by NDA
- Kirksanton nominated by RWE
- Braystones nominated by RWE
- Wylfa Peninsula nominated by NDA and RWE
- Oldbury nominated by NDA and EON
- Hinkley Point nominated by EDF Energy
- Bradwell nominated by NDA
- Sizewell nominated by EDF Energy

Following the one month public comment window, views from the public will be used alongside the advice of regulators and other specialists. Sites which are judged to be potentially suitable will be included in the draft National Policy Statement (NPS) on nuclear power which will be published later this year for public consultation.

Further information is available at <http://www.nuclearpowersiting.decc.gov.uk/>.

The Office for Nuclear Development has also published a table setting out information about consultations relevant to new nuclear build ([OND consultation table](#)), including when they will take place, and how they feed into the Government's wider programme.

Key steps are:

**April – July 2009** Government undertakes consultation on (a) its cost model for the Funded Decommissioning Programme and (b) draft regulations to implement the waste and decommissioning funding arrangements for new build.

**Summer – Autumn** Government conducts strategic siting assessment and consults on a draft National Policy Statement (NPS) and Sustainability Appraisal.

**Autumn – Winter** Government consults on a Justification draft decision document.

**Before Spring 2010** Parliamentary scrutiny and revision of NPS.

**Spring/summer 2010** Consultation on the Environment Agency's views on reactor designs and a draft 'Statement of Generic Design Acceptability'.

**From 2010** Developers expected to apply for planning consent for new nuclear power stations on sites listed in the NPS. Applications considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

Draft consultation responses will be submitted to future Steering Group meetings as appropriate to NuLeAF's remit.

The SG will also wish to note that the NDA has published a position statement on the management of wastes from new nuclear power stations ([Management-of-wastes-from-new-nuclear-power-stations](#)). It includes the following statements:

- There is no indication from current information that new nuclear power station wastes will raise any disposability issues that have not been seen before.
- The requirements for underground space for the disposal of spent fuel from new reactors are thought to be broadly similar to those that would have been required for spent fuel used to generate an equivalent amount of electricity from an earlier design of pressurised water reactor.

Finally, the LGA is convening an officer-led technical group on new build on 5 May. It is intended to liaise with the group so that the implications for legacy management can be considered.

## **5 European Projects**

Updates are as follows:

- **COWAM in Practice (CIP)** (on radioactive waste governance): a meeting of the UK CIP stakeholder group took place on 12 March. This considered: the current governance position, including MRWS discussions in Cumbria; the project's draft research output on 'defining an affected community', the siting of a LLW disposal facility adjacent to the Dounreay site; and an early draft of the prospective UK case study. The final meeting of the project is likely to take place in early September.
- **CARL** (on stakeholder engagement in radioactive waste management): a Steering Group has been formed to oversee planning for an international workshop to take place in West Cumbria in October. The workshop will focus on four themes: updates on international programmes; regeneration and development opportunities; how to make technical issues open and accessible; and opportunities for promoting interactions between local stakeholders from different countries.
- **ARGONA** (on risk governance): NuLeAF was represented by Catherine Draper at an 'end-users' conference in Sweden (17-18 March) on the results of the project. The main points from the workshop are attached as an annex to this report.
- **NEA Forum on Stakeholder Confidence:** The Forum held a meeting at Bure in France from 6-9 April. NuLeAF was represented by Councillor Mike Davidson and Charles Holmes from Allerdale Borough Council. The meeting agenda included discussion of the French disposal programme, public information requirements, monitoring and retrievability. A verbal report will be given at the meeting.

## **6 NuLeAF Finances**

The un-audited out-turn for 08/09 includes an expenditure of £104,873 and income of £126,529. The surplus of £21,656 will be added to reserves to be carried forward.

It was agreed at the AGM in October 07 that NuLeAF's accounts be audited by Suffolk County Council on an annual basis. The second annual audit is currently underway. It is hoped to provide a verbal update at the Steering Group meeting.

The projections for 08/09 are an estimated expenditure of £117,800 and income of £110,500. The projected deficit could be met from reserves.

The projected income includes financial contributions from DECC, NDA and member authorities. Applications for funding are currently being considered by DECC and NDA.

## **ANNEX: ARGONA ‘END-USERS’ CONFERENCE**

### **Background**

The ARGONA project will submit its final report at the end of this year. The end-users conference was organised to provide an opportunity for the findings to be discussed, for the researchers to be “stretched” i.e quizzed on their work, and for the participants to draw their own conclusions about their respective needs for participation and transparency in the future.

ARGONA stands for “Arenas for Risk Governance”. The project looks at how transparency and participation relate to each other and to the political system in which decisions are taken. The project also looks at how good risk communication can be undertaken and how public consultation conducted.

### **Findings**

Preliminary conclusions reported at the conference include:

- early involvement [of communities] is important to avoid narrow framing and problems later
- it is important to ensure a “safe space” for open and meaningful dialogue
- differences in culture and legal requirements set the conditions for dialogue format, but there should be certain basic principles

Separate reports have been produced on the role of mediators [independent facilitators] in the communication process and on policy making structures in the EU and participating countries. The reports are available on the ARGONA [website](#).

### **Conference comment**

The stretching panel raised questions regarding the purpose of the project – was it research for research sake and did it represent value for money?

NuLeAF questioned the way in which the material was presented and its accessibility - the complexity of language did not assist transparency or stakeholder participation.

## **OBRA**

The findings of the OBRA project were also presented at the ‘end-users’ conference.

### **Background**

The OBRA project is now finalised and its findings reported. The project assessed the feasibility of establishing an Observatory (educational/information resource) on long term governance on radioactive waste management in Europe. Participants in the project were radioactive waste management agencies, stakeholders and the academic research community. Proposals have been submitted for OBRA 2 with the aim of creating a pilot observatory.

### **Findings**

The objectives of the Observatory have been defined as:

- To gather a multidisciplinary approach regarding radioactive waste management by bringing together technical and scientific expertise with the knowledge held by stakeholder groups and the public in general;

- To acquire the necessary knowledge to participate in an informed way to the governance of radioactive waste management;
- To develop a network for knowledge and experience sharing;
- To observe, compare and analyse stakeholder needs and governance practices of nuclear waste management in Europe;
- To build the information resources to support long term collaborative partnership;
- To provide a way for collecting and providing information on radioactive waste, taking in consideration context-specific aspects;
- To disseminate information regularly on governance and decision making processes in an understandable and accessible fashion.

A two day training course has been piloted and the feedback from participants will be reviewed to further refine the course.

### **Conference comment**

Whilst delegates were broadly supportive of the aims of the project, concerns were raised over its viability in terms of resourcing (who pays, who does the work?), impartiality and the sheer scale of the undertaking.

NuLeAF questioned whether the Observatory would be proactive or reactive i.e. would it actively reach out to communities who were involved in or affected by radioactive waste issues and offer its services. The response was that it was a resource and would not proactively approach communities. In such circumstances, it would be important for the Observatory to publicise its services to raise awareness of their availability.