

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 15 October 2009
Agenda Item:	8
Subject:	Progress Report
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on developments in GDF siting, Scottish Government policy on higher activity wastes, the Submarine Dismantling Project, plutonium management and COWAM in Practice

Introduction

This progress report provides updates on developments in:

- Siting a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)
- Scottish Government policy on higher activity wastes
- The Submarine Dismantling Project
- Government policy on plutonium management
- COWAM in Practice

The report is for noting.

1 Siting the GDF

The following developments have taken place since the Steering Group (SG) meeting in July:

- West Cumbria MRWS Partnership: a meeting took place on 4 September – see the meeting report in the document library at westcumbriamrws. Cumbria CC attended the meeting as a ‘participating observer’, pending the outcome of discussions about decision making structures. Preparations are now well advanced for the first stage of public and stakeholder engagement (PSE) in West Cumbria. This will seek to build understanding of the MRWS process and gain feedback on the Partnership’s work programme, criteria for a decision about participation in the siting process and future plans for PSE. The next meeting of the Partnership is on 14 October, so a verbal update could be provided to the SG if requested.
- Decision-Making Structures: a Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared to set out agreement between Allerdale BC, Copeland BC and Cumbria CC on MRWS decision-making structures and processes. Once adopted Cumbria CC will become a full member of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership.
- Liaison meeting between NuLeAF, Government and NDA: this took place on 2 September. Topics included international experience of managing late expressions of interest in a siting process, and potential applicability of the Community Infrastructure Levy (see earlier SG item).
- Response to CoRWM draft report on R&D: comments about the extent of the need for underground R&D, discussion about retrievability and the treatment of uncertainties were sent on 1 September (see [Comments on CoRWM R&D](#)).
- Environment Agency workshop on assessing the characterisation of geological environments for repository implementation: the Executive Director attended this workshop on 29-30 September. The workshop discussed progress in a study being undertaken for the Agency by Quintessa. This study is examining the regulatory requirements for assessing a site characterisation programme, covering desk-based, surface-based and underground investigations.

2 Scottish Government Policy on Higher Activity Wastes

At its July meeting, the SG considered a report on the Scottish Government’s proposals for developing a more detailed policy (based on its initial statement of support for long-term, near surface, near site storage). Following discussion the SG agreed to write to the Scottish Government to suggest that the forthcoming consultation on the policy should include a question about whether Vitrified High Level Waste from reprocessing spent fuel from nuclear power stations in Scotland should be included within the scope of its policy. A letter was sent following the SG meeting. It is now anticipated that consultation on the draft policy will start by the end of October.

3 The Submarine Dismantling Project

The July meeting of the SG also considered a report on the MoD’s Submarine Dismantling Project. At that time, consultation on a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and potential sites was anticipated to begin by the end of the year. The SG agreed in principle to arrange, or assist with arranging, a pre-consultation briefing for potentially affected local authorities and delegate authority to the Executive Director to make the necessary arrangements.

It is now anticipated that the consultation will not start until the Spring of 2010, so arrangements for the pre-consultation briefing have not yet been made.

4 Government Policy on Plutonium Management

The Government is intending to launch a formal consultation on policy by the end of the year. In the meantime, it has published a pre-consultation document on the criteria that could be used to assess the options for managing plutonium. These criteria are similar to those used in previous assessment of options. A second pre-consultation document on potential decision-making methods is expected shortly.

5 COWAM in Practice (CIP)

The CIP project is a collaborative research project on radioactive waste governance, involving the UK and 4 other European countries.

The final meeting of the UK CIP stakeholder group took place on 24 September. This considered: the project's draft research outputs on defining affected communities, and on benefits packages; and the key themes emerging from the project and the way they might be built into EU level guidelines.

It is anticipated that the final report from the project will be published in the New Year and that the UK stakeholder group will be represented at an international workshop in March 2010 to discuss the findings.