

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 27 January 2010
Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	Submarine Dismantling Project
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To provide an update on the Project

Introduction

This report provides an update on the Submarine Dismantling Project (SDP). It covers:

- Background
- The meeting of the SDP Steering Group in November 2009
- Programme review, briefings and next steps.

Recommendation

It is recommended that NuLeAF offer to liaise with and brief member local authorities that may become involved in the SDP programme.

Contribution to Achieving Strategic Objectives

The work outlined in this report is relevant to the following NuLeAF objectives:

- to encourage MoD to adopt clear objectives and good practices in the consultation on options for managing radioactive wastes from the Submarine Dismantling Project; and
- to encourage any member authority that may be affected by the management of the radioactive wastes from laid up nuclear submarines to participate in consultation on the proposed way forward.

1 Background

The July 2009 meeting of the Steering Group (SG) 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. The October SG was informed that the consultation was unlikely to start until the Spring of 2010, so arrangements for the pre-consultation briefing had not been made.

2 SDP Steering Group

The Executive Director (ED) attended a meeting of the SDP Steering Group on 5 November, where it was reported that there were further delays to the project arising from: (a) the length of time needed to identify all credible potential sites for dismantling and/or storage of the submarine wastes and (b) a Ministerial decision that briefings for elected representatives should be organised in areas with potential sites.

It was also apparent that other issues were impacting on the project, including:

- Press stories about a 'secret list of sites' and perceptions that sites would be imposed on unwilling communities, generating significant local opposition to siting SDP facilities in some areas.
- No clarity in the public domain about the status of 12 credible potential sites, how they have been identified and how they will be assessed.
- Resignations from the Steering Group and Advisory Group by green NGOs, contributing to erosion of confidence in the SDP programme on the part of some stakeholders.
- Lack of clarity about the relationship between the planned Strategic Environmental Assessment and the way in which potential sites will be assessed in detail.

In order to address these issues, the ED suggested that MoD take a number of actions, including:

- Providing a clear explanation of how the 12 credible potential sites have been identified, how they will be assessed and how decisions will be taken about preferred sites.
- Publication of the main feedback from the initial programme of meetings with elected representatives, and how that feedback is being taken into account.
- Clarification about how stakeholder views about the acceptability or otherwise of using or siting facilities in their area will be addressed in option assessments and decision-making about preferred sites.
- Giving a clear commitment to involve representatives from the relevant local authorities and Site Stakeholder Groups in the assessment of potential sites, including participation in an assessment workshop/s (ie prior to formal consultation).

3 Programme Review, Briefings and Next Steps

It is understood that the SDP programme is currently under review within MoD, with the possibility that formal public consultation will not start until late 2010 or early 2011.

In the meantime, MoD is seeking to proceed with the briefings for elected representatives in the 12 areas (but declines to publish the 'list' of potential sites). MoD has written to elected representatives in 7 areas (thought to be MoD or commercial sites) and is seeking inter-departmental agreement to write to elected representatives in the remaining 5 areas (thought to be NDA sites).

Briefings have taken place in 2-3 areas, including Plymouth where Devonport is a potential dismantling and storage site (see [Western Morning News](#)). The ED met with officer contacts from Plymouth City Council following the briefing to discuss the Project and future liaison. The ED has also written to West Berkshire District Council which has the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites in its area.

The ED has also joined the Consultation Sub-Group of the Project's Advisory Group which will develop advice on how to move forward on pre-consultation engagement with stakeholders (including potential local authority involvement in assessment workshops) and on formal public consultation. This will provide opportunity to pursue the strategic objective highlighted on the top sheet of this report. The next meeting of the Sub-Group is on 12 February.

It is recommended that NuLeAF offer to liaise with and brief member local authorities that may become involved in the SDP programme.