

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 19 April 2007
Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Sedgemoor District Council Initiative
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on a meeting of District Councils with NDA sites in the south of England

Introduction

Sedgemoor District Council has taken an initiative to promote discussion about the scope for local communities to benefit from financial savings resulting from new approaches to nuclear legacy management. This report outlines the key points arising from a meeting of District Council Leaders and Chief Executives covering NDA sites in the south of England. These points have important implications for NDA stakeholder engagement arrangements, the potential for inter-site movements of radioactive wastes and socio-economic support around NDA sites.

Recommendations

That the Steering Group:

- 1 Endorse the Executive Director's participation in the Working Group to develop proposals for: (a) processes of engagement for addressing the potential for financial savings in legacy management, and (b) development of the case for funding community benefits from those savings.
- 2 Consider a report at its next meeting proposing ways of involving NuLeAF's wider membership in discussion of the Working Group's proposals.

Chief Executive/Leaders Meeting, 5 April

This was the second meeting convened by Sedgemoor District Council to discuss the potential for local communities to benefit from efficiency savings from new approaches to nuclear legacy management. The meeting was attended by the Leaders and Chief Executives (or their nominees) from Sedgemoor DC and West Somerset DC (Hinkley Point), Maldon DC (Bradwell), Shepway DC (Dungeness), Stroud DC (Berkeley), Suffolk Coastal DC (Sizewell) and Purbeck DC (Winfrith)¹, and by senior representatives from the NDA and BNG.

The Executive Director attended on behalf of NuLeAF, following an invitation that arose from a preliminary meeting with the Chief Executive and Leader of Sedgemoor DC. The ED gave a short presentation on NuLeAF's work, indicating that there was a considerable overlap of interests between NuLeAF and local authority participants in the meeting.

Presentations were made by NDA and BNG, setting out, respectively, current arrangements for socio-economic support, and potential for financial savings in nuclear legacy management. This was followed by discussion.

The following points were made:

- The NDA is shortly to publish its socio-economic policy, which focusses on providing support for initiatives that help to ameliorate the economic impacts of decommissioning in the worst affected areas. The policy does not address the potential for enabling local communities to directly benefit from agreements that lead to financial savings in nuclear legacy management. The scope for doing this is uncertain, as there are likely to be a range of demands on such savings.
- BNG considers that there is considerable scope for efficiency savings from developing treatment, storage or disposal facilities at specific sites for wastes from more than one site. However, such approaches would need community support and many would require planning permissions.
- Current arrangements for stakeholder engagement do not provide effective mechanisms to enable discussion of ways of reaching agreement about the achievement of efficiency savings. The NDA is currently reviewing its stakeholder engagement arrangements and is open to proposals for ways of engaging local authorities, to complement engagement through Site Stakeholder Groups. One possibility may be to develop a Memorandum of Understanding, setting out how the NDA and Site Licensee Companies are expected to engage with the local authorities around each major nuclear site. This might be accompanied by a protocol that sets out a procedure for involving local authorities in discussions about the inter-site movement of wastes for treatment, storage or disposal.
- The case for providing community benefits from efficiency savings needs to be developed and promoted. One possibility is for the NDA to develop a supplementary socio-economic policy specifically to address this. Government would need to be persuaded that this is an appropriate way forward.

¹ Of these authorities, Stroud DC and West Somerset DC are not currently members of NuLeAF. However, as a result of the meeting, invitations will be extended to these authorities to join NuLeAF.

The meeting agreed to:

- Set up a working group to develop more specific proposals. The Executive Director has provisionally agreed to participate in this group. BNG and NDA both offered to assist the work of the group.
- Arrange a meeting with MPs to explain the nature of the discussions that are taking place.
- Meet again in September.

This initiative has potentially important implications for: NDA stakeholder engagement arrangements, inter-site movements of radioactive wastes and socio-economic support around NDA sites. As such it is recommended that the SG endorse the Executive Director's involvement in the working group.

There is also a need to consider the implications for NuLeAF's wider membership, including county councils with NDA sites in the south of England, member authorities with Magnox sites in the 'northern bundle' (Calder Hall, Oldbury, Trawsfynydd and Wylfa) and member authorities with other major BNG sites (Sellafield, the LLWR, Springfields and Capenhurst).

Once the nature of the proposals emerging from the Sedgemoor initiative become clearer it may be appropriate to convene meetings of member authorities in these other areas.