

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 25 January 2007
Agenda Item:	10
Subject:	Organisational Developments
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on organisational developments

Introduction

This report outlines recent and proposed organisational developments, including:

- appointment of the Project Officer
- responding to the output from the regional seminars
- budgetary developments
- links with the Scottish Steering Group and
- the first meeting of the European Project Group of the COWAM in Practice project.

Recommendations

- 1 That NuLeAF's information and advice service be developed in the light of feedback from member authorities.
- 2 That an updated financial statement and proposals for funding be considered at the Steering Group meeting on 19 April.
- 3 That plans for the development of the COWAM in Practice project be considered at the Steering Group meeting on 19 April.

Appointment of the Project Officer

Jill Sutcliffe has been appointed as the NuLeAF Project Officer. Jill has a PhD in Environmental Technology and previously worked for English Nature, where she had lead responsibility on radioactivity and wildlife. Jill starts work for NuLeAF on 5 February.

Jill's initial work programme will include:

- developing ways of enhancing the information and advice service that NuLeAF provides to member authorities (see below under regional seminars)
- developing NuLeAF's work programme on LLW management
- developing bids for funding from Trusts and other sources.

In addition to specific project work, Jill's job description includes research, document preparation, representing NuLeAF at meetings and deputising for the Executive Director.

Jill is formally employed by Suffolk County Council, but will be working from a home office. Arrangements are in hand to ensure effective communication between NuLeAF staff, including video-conferencing facilities.

Responding to the Output from the Regional Seminars

NuLeAF's role was addressed in the at-table discussions and in feedback forms. The main points made were that NuLeAF should:

- Ensure member authorities are kept informed about developments, including consultations by Government, the NDA and industry
- Explain issues, developments and processes for engagement to member authorities
- Track industry option assessments and feed back information to member authorities
- Provide guides to existing information
- Provide briefings that enable officers to respond to member and public enquiries
- Provide information about best practice and case studies from the UK and abroad
- Seek to engage with and brief member and officer leaderships in all local authorities
- Motivate and engage member authorities
- Provide fora for discussions between member authorities
- Undertake a consensus building role between authorities affected by the consolidation of waste management at a smaller number of sites
- Consider opportunities for twinning between nuclear site authorities and international counterparts
- Interface with national bodies
- Collate local authority views for input to national bodies
- Encourage national bodies to develop good processes for stakeholder engagement
- Establish a relationship with the Wales Local Government Association.
- Maintain independence and a balanced approach

- Ensure that all local authorities are aware that NuLeAF is not an anti-nuclear organisation

Although most of these points are already being acted upon, a number suggest a need to enhance the information and advice service that is provided to member authorities. Examples include producing guides to existing information, briefings to enable officers to respond to member and public enquiries and examples of best practice and case studies.

The strong response in questionnaire returns for greater access to independent expertise should also be noted (see annex to item 5).

It is proposed that these points be taken into account in developing the information and advice service that is provided to member authorities.

Budgetary Developments

The finance report approved at the AGM in October 06 estimated that income and expenditure for 06/07 would be £121,750 and £115,400 respectively.

Since the AGM, the NDA has authorised a contribution of £40,000 (£10,000 more than in the estimates) and DEFRA has indicated that a contribution of £10,000 will be forthcoming in the current financial year (£30,000 less than estimated as a result of severe financial cutbacks). There is a small possibility of a larger payment from DEFRA. It is anticipated that the reduction in income will be partially off-set by reduced expenditure arising from a delay in the appointment of the Project Officer. The deficit can be met from reserves.

Projections at the AGM for 07/08 were for an income of £130,000 and expenditure of £166,300, with the deficit being met by reserves.

Since the AGM, the Government has announced that Nirex is to be wound up. If the contribution for 07/08 that was anticipated from Nirex is not covered by the NDA or Government, projected income will fall to £105,000 or less, significantly increasing the projected deficit.

Against this background, work will be undertaken to increase the level of funding from existing sources, and to develop bids for funding from new sources. A revised financial statement and proposals for funding will be presented to the Steering Group at its meeting in April.

Links with the Scottish Steering Group

An inaugural conference of the Scottish equivalent to NuLeAF is being organised in March. The Executive Director is meeting with Rod Crawford - the officer from Dundee City Council organising the event – on 17 January to discuss NuLeAF input into the conference, including use of materials.

A verbal update of will be provided at the Steering Group meeting.

COWAM in Practice (7-8 Mar 07)

At its meeting in October 06, the Steering Group considered a report on involvement in the COWAM in Practice project, and delegated authority to the Executive Director to represent NuLeAF at Project Steering Group meetings.

COWAM stands for Community Waste Management and is a three-year project within the Research Frameworks of the European Commission. The aim of the project is to assess, from a local perspective, the governance approaches for radioactive waste management that are being developed in five participating countries.

The Executive Director is attending the 'kick off' meeting of the European Project Group meeting in Paris in March. It is anticipated that the first UK Project meeting will be held in July 07. The outcome of the 'kick off' meeting in Paris will be reported at the NuLeAF Steering Group meeting in April.