

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 25 January 2007
Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	NDA Review of Arrangements for Stakeholder Engagement
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on the review and member authority views

Introduction

The NDA has initiated a review of its stakeholder engagement arrangements. This report outlines member authority views and invites further Steering Group comment.

Recommendation

That the Executive Director enter into discussions with the NDA to identify ways of delivering a more systematic and consistent approach to engagement with local government, building on the views of member authorities.

Previous Steering Group Comments

At the meeting of the Steering Group in October, members expressed concern about the NDA's current arrangements for stakeholder engagement, suggesting that a fundamental review was required.

The Steering Group's concerns were conveyed to the NDA in comments on the NDA's draft Annual Plan (10 November 06):

“Whilst agreeing that progress has been made in developing stakeholder relationships (Executive Summary), the NDA's commitment to “support the development of the Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) as the *primary* vehicle for engagement with local communities” is viewed with some concern. This concern arises because in many cases the SSGs do not provide an effective or consistent mechanism for engaging all tiers of local government in an area that contains an NDA site. This difficulty has been highlighted by a lack of engagement with a significant number of NuLeAF member authorities containing NDA sites in the current consultation on site end states.

As part of the development of SSGs, we suggest that close attention be given to the need for these bodies to communicate and engage with all levels of local authority in their areas, including district/borough councils and county councils.

In addition, we recommend that NDA Site Programme Managers and Site Licensee Company staff be encouraged to meet regularly with representatives from district/borough and county councils to ensure that those authorities are able to engage in discussions and consultations in a timely manner.

The importance of developing a systematic and consistent approach to engaging with local authorities should be not be underestimated given the Government's commitment to strengthen their community leadership role, and in the light of local authority responsibilities for environmental health, community safety, community engagement, local development plans and development control.”

Member Authority Views

Member authority views on current arrangements are available from two sources:

- Responses to the questionnaire sent to member authorities with nuclear sites.
- Points raised at the regional seminars.

The questionnaire asked two questions relating to the operation of SSGs. First, how effective are they in relation to specific functions and, second, what would increase their effectiveness. The responses are set out in the annex to this report.

The discussion at the regional seminars covered the NDA's National Stakeholder Group (NSG), in addition to the SSGs. The main points raised at the regional seminars can be summarised as follows:

- Neither the SSGs nor NSG are fully representative. In particular, some SSGs do not have active involvement from both tiers of local government in their area.
- Attendance at SSGs by councillors cannot always be taken to mean that their local authority will be briefed about developments and discussion. Additional steps may need to be taken to ensure that local authorities are informed and engaged.
- SSGs are no substitute for direct engagement with local planning authorities.
- A more systematic approach needs to be taken to engaging key local stakeholders on strategic issues.
- A review of SSGs is needed to ensure more consistent representation and outreach.
- Regular meetings with officers from local authorities should be held, either on a site basis or regional basis.
- Inter-site engagement of SSG representatives is unlikely to involve all the key stakeholders that need to be involved in regional or national discussions.
- The NSG working groups are self-selecting and do not involve representatives from all relevant organisations.
- The NSG working groups are not effective at communicating the output of their discussions to SSGs and local authorities with sites.
- For some areas there is a disconnection between local (SSG) and national (NSG) engagement.

NDA Review

Following appointment of a new Convenor for NDA stakeholder engagement (3KQ and Dialogue by Design), the NDA has initiated a review of current structures and mechanisms of engagement.

The questionnaire responses and seminar report have been drawn to the attention of the NDA so that they can be taken into account in the review.

The Executive Director is meeting with Richard Griffin from the NDA on 2 February to discuss the review. A priority will be to explore ways for the NDA to deliver a more systematic and consistent approach to engagement with local government.

Extract from Summary of Questionnaire Returns from NuLeAF Member Authorities with Nuclear Sites

September/October 2006

The following 13 authorities took part in the survey:

Allerdale Borough Council (ABC) – West Cumbria
 Chester City Council (ChCC) - Capenhurst
 Copeland Borough Council (CBC) – West Cumbria
 Cumbria County Council (CCC) – West Cumbria
 Dorset County Council (DCC) - Winfrith
 Gwynedd County Council (GCC) - Trawsfynedd
 Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) - Wylfa
 Lancashire County Council (LCC) – Springfields and Heysham
 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)- Harwell and Culham
 Plymouth City Council (PCC) – Devonport
 Purbeck District Council (PDC) - Winfrith
 Somerset County Council (SCC) – Hinkley Point
 Suffolk County Council (SuCC) – Sizewell

Is the Local Liaison Committee (LLC) or Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) effective judged against the following aims?

	Yes	No
Informing the operator about your authority's views	1 (ChCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (OCC) 1 (PCC) 1 (DCC) 1 (ABC) Total: 6 (46%)	1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (PDC) 1 (SCC) Total: 5 (38%)
Representing the views of communities local to the site	1 (ChCC) 1 (CCC) 1 (GCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (OCC) 1 (SCC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (DCC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) Total: 10 (77%)	1 (CBC) 1 (PCC) Total: 2 (15%)
Providing effective scrutiny of proposals and developments relating to the site	1 (ChCC) 1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (GCC) 1 (PCC) Total: 5 (38%)	1 (IACC) 1 (SCC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) Total: 5 (38%)

Influencing the site operator/owner	1 (ChCC) 1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (GCC) 1 (PCC) 1 (DCC) Total: 6 (46%)	1 (IACC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) 1 (SCC) Total: 4 (31%)
Facilitating wider consultation	1 (ChCC) 1 (CBC) 1 (GCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (PCC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (DCC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) Total: 9 (69%)	1 (CCC) 1 (SCC) Total: 2 (15%)

Other comments:

As CBC is the democratically elected representative of the community it is qualified to represent its views at these meetings. (Copeland)

SSGs are open to the public, but despite the meetings being advertised they do not attract many genuine members of the public. (Copeland BC)

Re 'informing the operator', we tend to use ad hoc meetings with them (Cumbria County Council)

New SSG is in its infancy, with a worthy attempt being made to set foundations to carry out its future work. The SSG was formed at a time of structural changes within the industry itself, and within the local authority, and during a time when site decommissioning was already underway and progress was being made towards establishing an interim ILW store. (Gwynedd)

A Sub group have been formed where the focus is on end uses that will support the creation of sustainable employment, to replace the relatively high quality jobs that were once available, when the power station was operating. (Gwynedd)

Winfrith SSG has not got to the stage of scrutinising detailed proposals (Dorset County Council)

Some doubts personally about the effectiveness of the SSG, but it is early days (Allerdale Borough Council)

There is a perception to date of lead and management by UKAEA to the detriment of open debate and effective involvement. It all seemed a bit staged and one sided, with no independent expertise to call upon. The revised stakeholder group is seeking to move away from that approach, with an independent chair and more flexibility concerning content. There

are currently inadequate support mechanisms in place to develop the capacity of the community to be involved in such debates. (Purbeck District Council)

The SSG deals with the views of local communities almost to the exclusion of organisations with a wider remit. I have serious reservations about this group and their willingness/ability to tackle the very big issues that are knocking at their door. You are firmly stuck with the *status quo* unless NDA shifts them. (Somerset County Council)

Local coordination of the site end-state consultation was generally ineffective and demanded a wider view than was obtained by the approach of the SSG Chairman. Other SSGs have adopted a more rigorous approach. As this is the primary route for local stakeholder consultation, the NDA should have insisted on at least a minimum level of engagement to be applied across all SSGs. (Somerset County Council)

What would increase the effectiveness of the LLC or SSG?

	Yes	No
Better use of main meetings	1 (SCC) 1 (ABC) Total: 2 (15%)	1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (GCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (PCC) 1 (SuCC) Total: 6 (46%)
Better use of sub-groups	1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) 1 (SCC) Total: 7 (54%)	1 (GCC) 1 (PCC) Total: 2 (15%)
Changes to membership	1 (CCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (PCC) 1 (ABC) Total: 4 (31%)	1 (CBC) 1 (GCC) 1 (SCC) 1 (SuCC) Total: 4 (31%)
More resources	1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (DCC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) 1 (SCC) Total: 7 (54%)	1 (IACC) Total: 1 (8%)

An independent secretariat	1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (DCC) 1 (ABC) Total: 4 (31%)	1 (IACC) 1 (SCC) 1 (PCC) 1 (SuCC) Total: 4 (31%)
Access to independent expertise	1 (ChCC) 1 (CBC) 1 (CCC) 1 (GCC) 1 (IACC) 1 (OCC) 1 (PCC) 1 (SuCC) 1 (ABC) 1 (PDC) 1 (SCC) Total: 11 (85%)	Total: 0

Further comments:

Better engagement with the public in local communities covered by the SSGs ie more than just advertising in the press that the meeting is taking place. (Copeland)

1. Proliferation of groups and acronyms can cause problems. (Cumbria CC)
2. Sub-groups could be better used by efficient reporting back (Cumbria CC)

Try to encourage greater representation from the local community (Chester City Council)

SSG should be given the opportunity to “bed down” as continuous structural changes can lead to uncertainties, affect the necessary continuity of work planning and may indeed lead to general apathy. (Gwynedd)

Although existing membership is adequate, more specialist expertise is required on the sub-groups to better inform the main meetings. (Isle of Anglesey County Council)

Access to independent expertise would ensure all discussions are more effectively informed, thus ensuring decisions are made with full knowledge of all issues/ consequences on the locality. (Isle of Anglesey County Council)

Very early to assess effectiveness only after 2 meetings (Dorset County Council)

Funding for the local parish plan group or groups to build their capacity and hence capacity for engagement would help. (Purbeck District Council)

Although membership is available to all local organisations, some minority groups are effectively excluded through the majority’s lack of willingness to vary venues and times of meetings. (Somerset County Council)