

Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum

The Local Government Association Special Interest Group on Radioactive Waste Management & Nuclear Decommissioning

North Ayrshire Council Offices, Cunninghame House, Irvine, Scotland
Thursday 6 April 2006, 11.00 am

Present:

Cllr Bill Risby, Manchester City Council
Cllr Julian Swainson, Suffolk County Council
Sue Crisp, Cumbria County Council
Adrian Hurst, Hartlepool Borough Council
Fred Barker, NuLeAF Executive Director

Stewart Kemp, Manchester City Council
Cllr Tim Heslop, Cumbria County Council
Kevin Thomas, North Ayrshire Council
Rod Crawford, Dundee City Council

		Action
1	WELCOME	
1.1	In the absence of the Chair, Geoff Blackwell, Councillor Bill Risby acted as Chair. Kevin Thomas, Protective Services Manager at North Ayrshire Council, welcomed everyone to Irvine and went through fire drill and other housekeeping procedures.	
1.2	The Chair welcomed everyone and began introductions around the table. Notably, Rod Crawford of Dundee City Council was present - he would be acting as Secretary for the newly-formed Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) nuclear legacy Special Interest Group. Also attending for the first time was Fred Barker, the recently appointed Executive Director for NuLeAF.	
2	APOLOGIES	
2.1	Apologies were received from: David Martin, Allerdale Borough Council ; Sandy Taylor, Argyll & Bute Council ; Cllr Norman Dingemans, Arun District Council ; Cllr Alan Matthews, Bury Metropolitan Borough Council ; Cllr Geoff Blackwell, Copeland Borough Council ; Cllr Tim Knowles and John Hetherington, Cumbria County Council ; Rob Tripp and Donna George, Dorset County Council ; Cllr Mike Rumney, Fife Council ; Cllr Bill Thompson, Fylde Borough Council ; Alison Quant, Hampshire County Council ; Cllr Don Yates, Lancashire County Council ; Richard Griffin, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority ; Jamie Woolley, Nuclear Free Local Authorities ; Cllr Brian Gregson, Shetland Islands Council ; John Parfitt, West Berkshire Council .	
2.2	John Parfitt had been due to attend the meeting in his last official engagement before taking early retirement from Head of Public Protection at West Berkshire Council, but last minute travel arrangements had thwarted him. A letter of thanks for his contributions to the work of NuLeAF would be sent.	
2.3	Happily, Councillor Brian Gregson was unable to attend the meeting, as he was getting married today.	
2.4	Richard Griffin of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority had been due to attend the meeting, to give an update of the NDA's work. Unfortunately, he had to send last minute apologies, due to a family illness.	

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 26 JANUARY 2006

3.1 It was agreed that the words 'way forward statement' be inserted into 9.1, fourth bullet to replace 'set of questions as a consultation'. Reference to Gordon MacKerron in this section was also removed. The minutes were then accepted as a true record.

3.2 (a) With reference to item 8.3, a response had been submitted to the Trade & Industry Select Committee on their inquiry about the NDA. To date, nothing had been heard concerning their use of the submission, nor on whether a report had been issued to Government yet.

(b) In item 11.2, Stewart had informed everyone of the CARL workshop to be held in Troon during November 2006. Nirex had proposed sponsoring 10 places for NuLeAF, but Stewart had so far received 13 applications. It was agreed that Stewart go back to Nirex and ask for an upper limit on sponsored places, which would include representatives from the CoSLA nuclear legacy Special Interest Group ('Scottish NuLeAF').

(c) Kevin Thomas pointed out that Troon was in fact in Ayrshire, and not part of Glasgow. The misunderstanding arose when the CARL workshop was originally advertised as being held in Glasgow.

4 NuLeAF STAFFING

4.1 (a) Fred clarified that he had taken up his post as Executive Director, part-time initially, but would become full-time by 1 September. A press release, to announce his appointment, had been drafted. He would liaise with Suffolk County Council on the date of its release.

(b) Interviews for the PA post had been held earlier in the week and a verbal offer had been accepted by the preferred candidate – Christine Del Corral. Subject to references, she would start in May.

5 NuLeAF FUNDING

5.1 (a) Stewart explained that NuLeAF had set themselves a target of £170,000 income for the Financial Year 2006/07 – it was hoped that this would comprise: £60,000 from NDA, £40,000 from DEFRA, £25,000 from Nirex, £20,000 from contributing Local Authorities and £25,000 from research generation.

(b) From the balance sheet for the Financial Year 2005/06, it could be seen that there was a carry forward of some £93,000. Much of this was already identified to cover the Executive Director and PA wages and costs.

5.2 Fred stated that there needed to be a formal report to the NDA and Nirex on how their funding had been used over the last financial year, plus a projection of how any future funding might be used. It was agreed that Fred would contact both organisations and arrange meetings.

5.3 Fred had received informal feedback from DEFRA on the possibility of funding to NuLeAF. A submission on funding would most likely be successful if linked to a project that had some significance to DEFRA's work – such as the implementation study. It was agreed that Fred would write again once there was a clearer view on the development of NuLeAF's implementation policy.

6 WORK PROGRAMME AND TARGETS

6.1 (a) A paper had been circulated on this topic, proposing a work programme and early

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targets for the Executive Director, up to the point when he became full-time. Fred explained that it identified five work strands, which related to NuLeAF's aims, and he was seeking agreement on the key targets within each strand. He would bring an update on progress to the October meeting.

(b) The proposed work programme was agreed by the Steering Group, subject to the following additions and clarifications:

- ensuring good liaison with the 'Scottish NuLeAF'
- clarifying the role and benefits to NuLeAF of involvement in European initiatives, e.g. CARL and COWAM
- preparing a promotional brochure about NuLeAF.

7 COMMITTEE on RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

7.1 (a) Fred gave an update on CoRWM's work. Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) had been applied to the 14 short-listed waste management options against the criteria (such as safety, security and environment), in order to explore their strengths and weaknesses. Specialist workshops had 'scored' each option against the criteria, and stakeholders and members of the public had been involved in generating information about the 'weighting' to apply to each criterion. The MCDA used Hiview software to combine scores and weights, giving an overall ranking of options. At CoRWM's March plenary, 'sensitivity tests' were carried out; the most severe test was based on trends in the views of NGO's on criteria weighting plus the reduction of scores for geological disposal against the burden on future generations.

(b) Stewart said that in order to gain a NuLeAF view of CoRWM's draft recommendations, which would be issued during their plenary meeting at the end of April, the NuLeAF Steering Group would meet to discuss them in Kendal on 9 May. On 16 May, Wynne Davies of CoRWM would meet the Steering Group in Manchester, so that NuLeAF views on the draft recommendations could be discussed with a CoRWM member.

8 IMPLEMENTING POLICY ON LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF RADWASTE

8.1 (a) Fred explained that the findings of the Enviro study had been presented to DEFRA, and other members of the Government's Implementation Working Group, on 3 March, and then to the MoD ISOLUS Steering Group on 17 March. None of the meeting officials had fundamental challenges to the study recommendations, although there was concern over how to 'operationalise' the process in a UK setting.

(b) Fred went on to present a draft outline policy statement, which drew on the findings from the Enviro study. The following points were made during discussion of the draft outline policy:

- for both the 'willingness to participate' and 'right to withdraw' principles, it would be difficult to pin down who should be the decision-taker at a local level, especially within a 2-tier Local Authority structure. Decision-making responsibilities should be set out in a Memorandum of Agreement
- partnerships should involve the wider range of authorities around a site, including neighbour LAs
- Kevin Thomas added that if a planning decision were involved, it may be 'called in', which means that the decision-taker is the Scottish Minister and it is taken out of the LAs hands
- there was also some scepticism on the work currently being undertaken by ODPM on 'streamlining' the planning process
- the 'benefits packages' concept had some precedent in the UK, but there was a need to identify how it could be applied fairly.

It was agreed to circulate the draft outline policy to member authorities for comment.

(c) A series of further steps were agreed for action at the appropriate time, including setting up an officer working group, submission of the outline policy to the LGA for endorsement, further discussion with the Interdepartmental Liaison Group, and further circulation of the study and outline policy.

9 NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

9.1 In the absence of Richard Griffin, Fred gave a short update on the NDA. The next National Stakeholder Group would take place in Edinburgh on 20/21 April – Fred would represent NuLeAF. The NDA Strategy had been published at the end of March, and a letter had been received in response to NuLeAF's submission to the Strategy consultation. It was agreed that Fred would report to the next meeting on how NuLeAF work on NDA issues could be carried forward.

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10 NuLeAF MEMBER AUTHORITIES AND SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

10.1 Fred explained that towards the end of 2005, the NuLeAF Secretariat had contacted each of the Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs), asking for their views on their transition from Local Liaison Committees. There had been a disappointing response to this request, so Fred had proposed a way forward for developing active engagement with NuLeAF member authorities on SSGs. It was recommended that a telephone survey of the relevant members is undertaken. It was agreed that Fred take on the responsibility for this and that subsequent steps would be considered at the next NuLeAF meeting.

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11 LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN SCOTLAND

11.1 (a) Rod Crawford gave a progress report on the CoSLA nuclear legacy group, which is still in the process of establishment. The Chief Executives and Leaders of each Scottish LA had received a letter, inviting them to provide group representatives – it was unclear at this stage whether all 32 LAs would join the group.

(b) There was some discussion on the exchange of information between the CoSLA and LGA groups and Fred offered a NuLeAF presentation at the first Scottish group meeting. Rod agreed to take this offer back.

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12 LGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, BOURNEMOUTH

12.1 Stewart reported that the time and venue were now booked for Wednesday 5 July, 6.45 - 9.00pm in the Gladstone Suite of the Royal Bath Hotel. It was important to discuss the content of the meeting. It was agreed that it should focus on long-term policy issues, as by then CoRWM's draft recommendations would be known and NuLeAF's implementation recommendations would be developed. Stewart agreed to work up the content.

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13 ISOLUS UPDATE

13.1 In previous ISOLUS engagement phases, Stewart had attended the Steering Group meetings as a NuLeAF and NFLA representative. Now that Fred had taken up post, it was decided that he should take over as NuLeAF representative. At present, the ISOLUS process, of identifying the long-term management practice for the MoDs redundant nuclear-powered submarines, was in abeyance until CoRWM had reported. However, in readiness for the next stage, studies were being undertaken on approaches to managing the radioactive wastes from the submarines.

14 NEW NUCLEAR BUILD and RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

14.1 Stewart explained that if nuclear new build went ahead, there would be resultant waste management issues. NuLeAF had given a short text to the LGA, in order to flag that these issues would require consideration as the Energy review moved forward.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 (a) Stewart advised that the Health Protection Agency had approached NuLeAF concerning the issue of long-term rehabilitation after a nuclear incident, and had invited a representative to take part in their EURANOS project. After some discussion, it was agreed that Stewart write back and ask if NuLeAF could initially maintain contact with the project's progress through correspondence.

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(b) It was agreed by all present to record thanks for the retiring John Parfitt, for his work with NuLeAF, and to record best wishes for John Hetherington, who was on long-term sick leave.

16 FUTURE BUSINESS MEETINGS

22 June 2006 LGA House, London

12 October 2006 County Offices, Kendal (including 2006 AGM)

It was agreed that the Secretariat look at dates and venues for 2007.

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17 PRESENTATION and DISCUSSION ON LLW POLICY CONSULTATION

17.1 See Annex 1

18 NuLeAF RESPONSE TO THE LLW POLICY CONSULTATION

18.1 (a) Stewart talked through the key points in a draft response to the current consultation, based largely on work done by Cumbria County Council officers and the NFLAs.

(b) From the list of proposals in the consultation document, Stewart outlined those for which NuLeAF were recommending support, plus those to which there were objections. Further recommendations were proposed: such as expressing concern that there was not a stronger emphasis on the need for progress on providing further disposal facilities; and urging the inclusion of community benefit packages to offset the impacts of hosting LLW facilities. Despite this latter point being raised and supported at one of the DEFRA workshops, it had not been included in the consultation document.

(c) The deadline for response to the consultation was 31 May. It was agreed that the draft be circulated to NuLeAF members for both comment and to inform their own responses. Stewart also recorded thanks to the Cumbria officers, for their input.

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(d) Elizabeth Gray added, that much of the planning information in an earlier version of the consultation document had been removed, as it was thought too orientated to the English planning system. She also said that the NDA Strategy was not providing policy for Government, but would reflect the policy from Government.

ELIZABETH GRAY, SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

UK Government and Devolved Administrations Policy for the Long-term Management of Low Level Radioactive Waste

Presentation

- England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are working jointly to develop long-term policy for the management of LLW, currently being consulted upon by DEFRA, and for ILW and HLW, currently being explored through the CoRWM process
- the majority of wastes that the UK has to deal with, are a legacy of past UK Government activity, not privately arising
- the original Liabilities Management Unit (LMU) within the DTI realised that there was going to be a problem with managing LLW, so the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) was set up
- the NDA is a cross-border public authority
- the Secretary of State has asked the NDA to look at the business case – cost, benefits, disbenefits - for accelerated decommissioning
- the site end states debate is currently under way, and the NDA are talking to the local communities, who will be affected the most
- the NDAs 2nd Annual Plan was issued on 30 March
- the Scottish Executive took the decision last year, to advise the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to refuse the authorisation to send LLW from Dounreay to the LLW Repository at Drigg
- as part of the LLW Policy consultation process, DEFRA held two stakeholder workshops in 2005 – these looked at various issues, such as;
 - waste arises from non-nuclear industry sources too, e.g. medicine, academia, oil rigs, etc.
 - waste minimisation
 - safety must include environmental safety
 - where and how many LLW waste management facilities may be needed
- the Government's Energy Review is due to report this summer and a number of important questions will arise from this;
 - is it right to have one or more waste management facilities?
 - do we transport large amounts of waste?
 - we must do better to minimise or not create waste
 - we must do better to segregate waste

Discussion

1. Waste minimisation

- minimisation, recycling and re-use are interesting areas – 2 million tonnes of steel need to be decontaminated at Sellafield and it has been mooted to use decontaminated asbestos in road beds during construction
- at the nuclear facility near Barcelona in Spain, there were a lot of examples of recycling
- dedicated use and dedicated smelters were discussed at the DEFRA metals workshop last year
- re-use of decontaminated materials on nuclear licensed sites is more acceptable than in public areas
- public perception is a material issue
- the identification of the borderline – acceptable vs not acceptable – can only be undertaken through public discussion

2. When are new sites needed?

- the DEFRA workshops showed that stakeholders are coming round to the idea of having more than one LLW management facility

- the crunch time for needing new sites is now
- what are the expectations for the following to happen?
 - develop LLW disposals on those nuclear licensed sites that will accept them
 - try to increase use of landfill for Very Low Level Wastes (VLLW)
- flexibility and more than one option are what come out of the review
- start by making as little waste as possible, then look at the proximity principle
- the higher stacking planning permission at the LLW Repository near Drigg, is only temporary storage
- there is a need to minimise waste going to the Repository
- there are 18 million cubic metres of contaminated soil at Sellafield, plus more at other sites – if this is dug up, it will fill the existing Repository and leave a big hole – so there is an issue with leaving some LLW/VLLW in situ

3. Dounreay LLW facility

- Dounreay will build their own LLW Repository
- should all Scottish waste go there?
- Chapelcross, in Annan, is actually closer to the existing Repository than to Dounreay
- perhaps Scottish non-nuclear industry waste could go to Dounreay?
- it is hoped that issues such as these will be resolved in the current consultation
- the public attitude to radioactive health wastes is more favourable than other sources – radioactive isotopes for cancer treatment are viewed well and people know that there must be a disposal route
- it was attempted to send some conventional (non-radioactive) waste from Dounreay to landfill in Falkirk, but it was turned back because of the Dounreay name

4. Non-nuclear industry waste

- there are no nuclear free LAs – medicine, research, etc., is carried out in many places
- we should manage the wastes that are created in our communities
- tritium is an integral part of smoke detectors
- radioactivity within the rocks of Aberdeen and Cornwall, is higher than radioactive emissions from Sellafield

5. Site end states

- how will SSG discussions on end states look at the potential for LLW Repositories on existing sites? has this been considered?
- some decommissioned sites will never return to greenfield and this is recognised in the SSG discussions
- some sites are closer to reaching a decision on preferred end state

6. Incineration

- has there been any consideration of nuclear power stations having incinerators? Hunterston, for example, burns waste oil
- incineration has a bad public perception
- however, this is a way of minimising waste