

**July 2014,
Issue 34**

Welcome to Issue 34 of the e-bulletin, which reports on topics and discussions at the NuLeAF Steering Group held in Preston on 24 July and other items:

- the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme,
- NuLeAF engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- update on NDA strategy and operations
- report on NuLeAF 2014 seminar
- joining NuLeAF; and
- dates for the diary.

The siting process for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)

On 24 July the UK Government published the White Paper setting out the revised approach to the siting process for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for the disposal of Higher Activity Radioactive Wastes.

The White Paper has been informed by the previous siting process which arose from the 2008 White Paper, and the Call for Evidence and formal public consultation which took place as part of the review of that process.

It provides information on:

- what geological disposal is and how it became UK government policy; and
- the potential inventory for the GDF and how those wastes are currently managed.

It goes on to set out the implementation framework which includes:

- an upfront process of national screening based on known geological information;
- in England, bringing GDFs, and borehole investigations that support their development, within the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) planning regime; and
- developing the process for working with communities.

Points to note from the White Paper are:

- Formal discussions between interested communities and the developer (Radioactive Waste Management Ltd) will not commence until around 2016, after initial actions within the White Paper have been completed.
- The Welsh Government's position remains unchanged to that stated in the 2008 White Paper, although the Welsh Government has recently consulted on whether their position should change. Should a community in Wales wish to engage in formal discussions with the developer, it should contact the Welsh Government, which would at that point consider its current policy and the progress of any discussions between the community and developer.
- The Scottish Government policy on Higher Activity Wastes is that they should be managed in near-surface facilities. It does not support geological disposal.
- UK Government has not ruled out the possibility of building 2 GDFs should the inventory make this a desirable solution.
- A community representation working group will be established to look at the issues around representation and engagement at potential GDF sites.

- UK Government is currently of the view that no one tier of local government should be able to prevent the participation of other members of that community.
- Community Investment Funds, over and above engagement costs, will be made available to those communities who engage in the siting process.

The White Paper was published on the morning of the NuLeAF Steering Group meeting held on 24 July 2014. Discussions at the meeting were based on the verbal briefing which had been given to the Executive Director by Government the previous day.

Whilst it was felt that Government had addressed many of the issues raised by NuLeAF in response to the earlier consultation, a number of concerns were highlighted around the lack of a definition of a community; the mechanism by which any community funds would be distributed and the possible exclusion of local government from this role; the lack of clarity over where decision making powers would sit within local government and where responsibility would lie within two tier areas. The Steering Group welcomed Government's reaffirmation of its commitment to a volunteerist approach, but felt that failure to address these issues would be a barrier to many communities expressing an interest in engaging in the process.

NuLeAF will seek clarification from Government on its timetable for the development of policy detail to enable NuLeAF to establish a timetable for engagement and influencing opportunities. NuLeAF will also produce a Briefing Paper for its members.

NuLeAF has contacted all its member authorities alerting them to the publication of the White Paper. We would encourage all local authorities to consider the opportunity to engage in the GDF process.

NuLeAF will continue to work to inform and advise both central and local government on the pertinent issues around this complex process. **Any local authority wishing to have informal discussions or seeking further information should contact the Executive Director, Philip Matthews on 07949 209126.**

NuLeAF engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships

The Steering Group considered a paper on the [role of Local Enterprise Partnerships](#) (LEPs) and the potential for NuLeAF to engage with these organisations, particularly around the GDF siting process.

The Steering Group felt that NuLeAF potentially had an important role to play in providing advice and guidance to LEPs, who would be largely unaware of the GDF process, and that it would be appropriate for an initial approach to be made to the Chief Executive and Chair of the 39 LEPs.

NDA strategy and operations

A paper on [NDA strategy and operations](#) reported on developments in the Low Level Waste Strategy Review and Gap Analysis and gave updates on discussions at the NDA Theme Overview Group meetings.

Members of the Steering Group commented that NDA must be open and transparent in its work on site restoration. Communities had been promised that decommissioned sites would be returned in many instances to greenfield status, yet now proposals were indicating that waste would be stored on sites to permit radioactive decay in order to facilitate disposal at

an appropriate facility. It was queried whether this process was being undertaken because NDA did not have the means to dispose of the waste in its current form, or whether it was purely a cost saving exercise. If the latter, was it intended to share the cost benefits with the community which was being asked to host the waste?

Concerns were also raised about the impact of coastal erosion on sites where it had been proposed waste should now be stored until 2130, and of the potential impact of a policy review by the new Parent Body Organisation on current work plans.

NuLeAF will seek to engage with NDA on the issues raised and will report back through the Steering Group. We will remind NDA of the need for timely engagement with local authorities before plans are finalised.

UK Strategy for the management of NORM (Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials) wastes.

Following public consultation (you can read the NuLeAF response on our [website](#)), UK Government has now [published](#) its strategy for the management of NORM wastes in the UK. These wastes arise predominantly from decommissioning in the oil and gas industry, both on and off-shore.

Report of NuLeAF 2014 seminar

The annual NuLeAF seminar took place at Local Government House in London on 16 June. The theme of the discussions and presentations was local government and regulation. Speakers came from the Environment Agency, the Office for Nuclear Regulation, Magnox Ltd, Augean Ltd, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, the Department for Energy and Climate Change, and NuLeAF. Presentations from the seminar are posted on the [NuLeAF website](#) along with a brief report. This event continues to be an important part of the service NuLeAF offers to local authorities, and offers an opportunity for those who do not participate in the regular meeting programme to engage with topical issues.

Other consultations

ONR are running two public consultations. The first is on updating the Safety Assessment Principles for Nuclear Facilities – the closing date for responses is 11 August. The second is on ONR's five year strategy for which the closing date is 6 October. You can view the websites and respond to the consultations via the [ONR website](#).

Joining NuLeAF and participating in our work

Nuclear waste and legacy issues are major concerns for local authorities across the country. Critical issues include decisions about disposal of Low and Very Low Level Waste to landfill, changes to planning guidance, considerations on the siting of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF), the need to maximise community benefits from nuclear legacy operations and the impacts of the decommissioning of many nuclear power stations.

NuLeAF continues to be an effective voice for local authorities on all these issues. We welcome new member authorities and the active participation of Elected Members and officers in our Steering Group and in the officer Radioactive Waste Planning Group. If your authority would like to join NuLeAF, if you would like to participate in the work of the organisation, or find out more then please contact Catherine Draper at the address below.

NuLeAF on LinkedIn

NuLeAF has a group on [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com). We hope that members will use this as a forum to discuss issues and seek advice with other members. We also post regular items of news.

Diary dates

The next meeting of NuLeAF Radioactive Waste Planning Group (an officer working group) will take place on 3 September, at Local Government House, Smith Square, London, 12.30 – 3.15. Environment Agency and ONR will be giving a presentation and discussion on coastal erosion and flooding at nuclear licensed sites.

The next Steering Group meeting will be held on 15 October at Local Government House, Smith Square, London, 11.00 – 12.30, it will be followed by the AGM, 12.30 – 13.00. Representatives from the new Parent Body Organisation (PBO) have been invited to attend the afternoon session to discuss their approach to socio-economics and other issues.

A full calendar of meetings can be found on the [NuLeAF website](http://www.nuleaf.org.uk).

Contact point

All member authorities are asked to ensure that NuLeAF is kept informed of any changes to officer or councillor contacts. It is important that these are kept up-to-date, so that the right people receive e-bulletins, invitations to NuLeAF meetings and other information.

The NuLeAF Secretariat can be contacted at *T*: 01473 264833 *W*: www.nuleaf.org.uk
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