

Meeting:	NuLeAF AGM, 15 October 2014
Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Review of NuLeAF meetings and member support
Author:	Philip Matthews and Catherine Draper
Purpose:	To gain the view of the AGM and NuLeAF members as to whether there is scope to improve meeting format and member support

Introduction:

This paper is intended to inform a discussion on the format and location of Steering Group meetings. The aim is to determine whether changes could be made that would improve the usefulness of meetings and enable more people, particularly Elected Members, to attend. The views of members on the other services NuLeAF provides, such as the website and seminar, are also sought.

Recommendation:

The report is for noting. The comments of AGM members will be used to inform future meetings.

Contribution to 2013/15 Service Plan:

This paper contributes to the commitment in the Service Plan to consult NuLeAF members on their views on how NuLeAF meets their needs.

1. Introduction

NuLeAF has a steady membership, with 110 local authorities and 3 National Parks currently affiliated as corresponding or contributing members. Within this network, a smaller number of local authorities are actively involved in NuLeAF's work.

Attendance at Steering Group and Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG) meetings is healthy, averaging around 22 for the former and 15 for the latter. There is therefore no immediate concern. However, it is important to engage with members on a regular basis to identify whether there are barriers that prevent some attending meetings; also if there are ways in which meetings could be made more useful or interesting.

On this basis it has been decided to consult members. This consultation has two elements:

- A series of brief phone interviews have been conducted with those contributing members who are not regular attendees at Steering Group. This has covered both those authorities who do not send any representation, and those where an officer but not an Elected Member attends; or vice-versa (reported at section 3 below).
- A discussion at this Annual General Meeting with those who do attend regularly, to explore their views on aspects of current meetings and whether they could be improved. This discussion was carried over from the July Steering Group meeting.

Below, at section 4, is a series of questions and issues for discussion at Annual General Meeting.

2. Current participation in Steering Group

As noted above, there is no immediate issue around participation in the Steering Group – attendance is good and three Elected Members contested the last Vice-Chair election.

However:

- Attendance of Elected Members could be improved. There have been occasions when low attendance has caused meetings to be in-quorate, meaning that votes cannot be taken. It also raises a potential issue with regard to filling any future vacancies for the Chair and Vice-Chair roles.
- A number of contributing members do not regularly attend. Contributing members account for around a quarter of NuLeAF's income and it is vital that members continue to feel their subscription represents good value.

It is also the case that some local authorities with nuclear licensed sites are only corresponding members. There may thus be scope for increasing the contributing membership through enhancement of 'the offer'.

3. Feedback from phone interviews

NuLeAF secretariat carried out phone interviews with 7 officers from contributing member authorities who currently attend NuLeAF meetings, but who do not have regular elected member representation. A set of standard questions were asked and a synopsis of the responses are at Annex A.

4. The views of AGM members

The views of AGM members are sought on the following issues, through a facilitated discussion lasting around 20 minutes. Please consider your views on the following questions in advance of the meeting.

A. NuLeAF is keen to encourage more Elected Members to participate. Are there ways in which more councillors can be encouraged to attend?

B. The standard meeting format involves reports from officers on the various papers prepared, followed by discussion. The afternoon session takes the form of a presentation and discussion by a guest on a pertinent topic. In terms of the materials and structure of the meeting:

- Could the papers be more useful? i.e. are they either lacking in the detailed information required or alternatively are they too complex and 'jargon heavy'?
- Is the length of meetings appropriate?
- Are there ways in which papers could be presented in clearer or more interesting ways?
- Are the guest presentations useful?
- Are there organisations/presenters which NuLeAF should invite over the coming year?

C. In terms of other communications and resource provided by NuLeAF, does your local authority (a) use the following resources and (b) find them useful:

- website
- briefing materials
- newsletter
- e-bulletin
- annual seminar

D. Do you have any other comments?

Annex A

Questions:

1. Do you use the NuLeAF website? Never/Sometimes/Regularly

The majority of respondents said they use the website sometimes. They see it as an information resource.

2. Do you read NuLeAF briefings, Steering Group papers, E-bulletin etc? Never/ Sometimes/Regularly

NuLeAF Briefings: There was about a 50/50 split between sometimes and regular reading. It would depend on whether it was felt the topic was pertinent to them.

Steering Group papers: As above.

E-bulletin: All the respondents, except one, read the E-bulletin regularly.

3. At present only an officer from your authority attends the NuLeAF Steering Group meetings. We are keen for more Members in particular to attend. Could NuLeAF change the meetings in ways that would make you/the Elected Member more likely to attend? For example:

- **Changing meeting location**
- **Changing meeting times**
- **Offering a different format to meetings (e.g. more presentations, guest speakers, etc)**

Please note that any alternative meeting location would have to be accessible to members from across England and Wales.

The general feeling was that change of location/timing/format would have no bearing on member attendance.

Several respondents felt that legacy wastes were not a priority topic for their elected member as they were more focused on local rather than national issues. They were content for officers to represent them at the Steering Group. Most officers fed back information from meetings as appropriate.

4. Do you have any other comments on how NuLeAF could improve its support to your local authority? For example in terms of other types of meetings/engagement events, online resources, etc

Two respondents asked whether there was the possibility for a joint NuLeAF/NNLAG meeting.

The issue of teleconferencing was also raised.

One suggestion was that NuLeAF could facilitate the peer review of policies and plans, though it was felt this would be more appropriate to the Radioactive Waste Planning Group rather than the Steering Group meetings.

The overall feedback was that NuLeAF was a credible body, with good standing in the industry and local government. It provided a useful service and that they would continue to support NuLeAF.