

NuLeAF: NUCLEAR LEGACY ADVISORY FORUM

LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING

Draft Minutes of the Steering Group held on 14 May 2015, Local Government House, Smith Square, London

Present:

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council (Chair)
Cllr Brendan Sweeney, Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Anne Fraser, Sedgemoor District Council
Cllr Mark Hackett, Manchester City Council
Robin Carton, Plymouth City Council
Trevor Brown, Oxfordshire County Council
Richard Conway, Purbeck District Council
Rachel Cutler, Kent County Council
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
Denice Gallen, Copeland Borough Council (telephone)
Andrew Goodchild, West Somerset Council
Caroline Green, Local Government Association
Richard Griffin, Cumbria County Council
Dave Illsley, Shepway District Council
Sean Morris, Manchester City Council
Clive Pink, Suffolk Coastal District Council
John Pitchford, Suffolk County Council
Guy Robinson, Somerset County Council
Lesley Stenhouse, Essex County Council
Philip Matthews, NuLeAF
Catherine Draper, NuLeAF

1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
1.1	Cllr Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting especially those were attending the meeting for the first time. Participants introduced themselves.	
1.2	Apologies were received from: Kevin Kerrigan – Allerdale Borough Council, Cllr David Southward – Cumbria County Council, Mike Garrity – Dorset Borough Council, Adrian Hurst – Hartlepool Borough Council, Cllr Marcus Johnstone & Richard Sharples – Lancashire County Council, Juliet Staples – Liverpool City Council, Alistair Stewart – Shepway District Council, Cllr Matthew Riddle – South Gloucestershire Council, Matt Meldrum - West Berkshire Council.	
2	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY, 2015	
2.1	The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January, 2015 were held to be a true and accurate record and will be posted on the website.	CD

3	MATTERS ARISING	
3.1	5.2 Invitations had been sent to Paul Foster and John Clarke to join NuLeAF for supper on 22 July. Paul Foster was unlikely to be able to attend because of prior commitments. John Clarke had not yet confirmed.	
3.2	6.2 A response was received from Kim Baines on 13 May and will be circulated.	PM
3.3	All other actions from previous meetings were in hand or completed.	
4	UPDATE ON THE GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY (GDF) SITING PROCESS	
4.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent developments in the siting process; • Wider NuLeAF engagement on the GDF; and included • Short biographies of the members of the Communities Representation Working Group (CRWG) 	
4.2	In response to a question PM confirmed that the invitation for him to participate in the CRWG was addressed to him as an individual, but he did so fully aware that he was representing NuLeAF, even if that status was unofficial.	
4.3	Hopes were expressed that the new Siting Director fully appreciates the political issues involved in the GDF siting process, as failure to do this could stall or derail the project.	
4.4	It was agreed that there had been no 'sleight of hand' in the timetable for getting the NSIP legislation through parliament, despite media reports to the contrary.	
4.5	PM confirmed that the Call for Evidence (CoE) which will take place in June will only address issues around the building of an evidence base around the key questions related to the communities work. The geological guidance will not form part of the CoE.	
4.6	NuLeAF will alert its members to the CoE as soon as the consultation period opens	CD
5	NuLeAF AND THE LGA	
5.1	The Chairman welcomed Caroline Green from the LGA. Ms Green had been invited to attend the meeting to speak on the relationship between the Local Government Association (LGA) and its Special Interest Groups (SIGs).	
5.2	Ms Green introduced herself and outlined her role within LGA as lead officer on environment and housing issues for the Environment Housing, Economy and Transport Board. A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting outlining the governance arrangements LGA has for its SIGs.	

5.3	Ms Green advised the meeting that LGA had been undergoing some restructuring, and that following the election in May 2015 there would be further changes, with the appointment of a new Chairman. Priorities for the main boards would be set in September.	
5.4	LGA values the role that SIGs play, and the opportunity they present for local government to have a strong voice in areas where LGA would otherwise struggle to be represented.	
5.5	LGA's vision is that SIGs should have a clear mandate, priorities and objectives. They should feel that they have the vires to speak on behalf of local government on the issues they tackle, with central government and a wider audience.	
5.6	SIGs need to recognise that LGA itself has resource constraints. It would be beneficial if they could find correlations in the LGA work programme.	
5.7	In terms of raising awareness of the GDF siting process, then use could be made of the e-bulletins, First magazine, and include in updates which go to board when timely.	
5.8	It was suggested that the Chair and ED should seek a meeting with the Chair and Lead Members when they are appointed.	CG/CD
5.9	With regard to support to NuLeAF, CG offered to find out if there were other forms of support which NuLeAF was currently not aware of.	CG
5.10	The Vice-Chair drew Ms Green's attention to a number of issues, such as community benefits, which would be of interest to a number of the LGA SIGs and asked if LGA would consider assisting in developing 'one-voice' approach, and in asking Cabinet Office to come to speak to LGA on the topic. Other issues would include planning for waste disposal and NSIPs. The latter of these issues affected communities mostly outside cities, often in 2 tier local government areas who would not necessarily have the resources to deal with the issues. They would perhaps be of interest to the Rural and Coastal Issue SIGs. CG undertook to consider this both with a view of the EHET Board, but also People and Places Board.	CG
5.11	The Chair drew Ms Green's attention to the work NuLeAF had already done on Community Benefits. The ED will forward a copy of the Briefing Paper 26 to Ms Green.	PM
5.12	Ms Green undertook to ensure that Minutes for NuLeAF meetings were read and issues noted.	CG
5.13	In response to a suggestion from a member authority the ED undertook to review the LGA work programme and that of other SIGs to see what issues we could work on together.	PM
5.14	NuLeAF secretariat will circulate a list of the new Board members when it is convened, with their political affiliations. NuLeAF members to alert secretariat of any contacts they might have.	CD

6	NuLeAF FUNDING	
6.1	The Chair drew the meetings attention to the ongoing problems with recurring deficits at the end of the financial year. Whilst at present these could be met from reserves, this could not continue and NuLeAF would cease to be financially viable in 2-3 years.	
6.2	There are also concerns about maintaining the level of current contributing membership, converting corresponding members to contributors and attracting new membership.	
6.3	There is an important role for NuLeAF over the next 6 – 10 years and possibly beyond it is vital that steps are taken to ensure its longevity.	
6.4	PM advised the meeting that funding of £75K from NDA and RWM had been secured for the financial year, but a further deficit of £10K was expected unless further funding could be found. There was a possibility of additional funding for discrete projects on behalf of RWM, but nothing had yet been identified. Consideration was also being given to approaching Cavendish Fluor Partnership, Magnox, Sellafield and Low Level Waste Repository. It was agreed that an approach to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation was unlikely to be successful, as they rarely supported local government applications.	
6.5	Concerns were raised that NuLeAF maintained its neutrality and that this should be taken into account when seeking funding from commercial operators.	
6.6	Members were keen that the benefits of membership should be communicated to all local authorities.	
6.7	It was suggested that consideration should be given to a category of membership between corresponding and contributing which paid a reduced contribution.	
6.8	A member asked if areas of consultancy could be identified and circulated. This would enable member authorities to identify possible candidate companies for commissioned work.	PM
6.9	The Steering Group agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chair should: 1. Write to all contributing member authorities highlighting the importance of their continued financial support. 2. Write to all corresponding member authorities asking if they would consider taking contributing membership in order to ensure NuLeAF's work continues at this important time. 3. That the Executive Director explores opportunities for securing additional funding through commissioned work.	RS/BS/ PM/CD
7	UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN NDA STRATEGY & OPERATIONS	
7.1	PM introduced the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Updates were provided on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDA Strategies; • NDA Theme Overview Group meetings; and • Consultation responses 	

7.2	In response to a question, the ED advised the meeting that he felt that the forthcoming NDA Strategy 3 would be fairly high-level with less in the way of specific deliverables.	
7.3	Questions were raised about whether or not there was any policy supporting the issues being raised in the afternoon presentation by SEPA. The ED said that his understanding was that these were exploratory discussions which would enable SEPA/NDA to understand the implications or viability of any proposals they may bring forward later.	
8	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
8.1	The next meeting will be held in the offices of NDA in Whitehaven on Thursday 23 July.	
8.2	The meeting will be preceded by a visit to the Low Level Waste Repository on 22 July. Details will be circulated shortly.	
9	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
9.1	The draft response to the consultation by Cumbria County Council on their Minerals and Waste Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting. A number of member authorities had raised issues about the timing which because of purdah had meant that they had been unable to have discussions with their elected members. Concerns were also raised about the phraseology around the use of the proximity principle, and whether Cumbria CC had discharged its Duty to Cooperate responsibilities.	
9.2	It was agreed that NuLeAF would ask for an extension to the submission deadline in order for members to consider the issues fully.	PM
9.3	PM will review the NuLeAF draft response in light of the comments made and circulate a new draft early the following week.	PM
9.4	It was noted that the consultation was carried out under Regulation 18 and so there would be a further opportunity to comment at a later stage.	
10	PRESENTATION BY JIM COCHRANE, SEPA, ON THE ROLE OF THE PLANNING REGIME IN THE CLEAN UP OF FORMER NUCLEAR LICENSED SITES	
10.1	The Chairman welcome Jim Cochrane, SEPA, John Garraway and Bob Smith of the Environment Agency and Kim Baines of NDA to the meeting.	
10.2	JC outlined the focus of the presentation and discussion: the handshake between environmental and land-use regulation in respect of the clean-up of former nuclear licensed sites. This presentation and discussion is the start of the engagement process and there will be a consultation later.	

10.3	The meeting was assured that there was no intention to alter site-end states, and should a site seek a restricted use during interim state, then an appropriate regulatory framework would be put in place. A permit would not be surrendered unless the regulatory agencies were confident that there was a means of controlling the site. The regulatory agencies were interested in establishing whether or not the planning regime could provide that means of control.	
10.4	Further concerns were raised about the implications of subsequent change of use of sites and for planning authorities to monitor and control use over an extended period of time. It was felt that there was a lack of resources and expertise.	
10.5	The planning process would only allow conditions to be imposed on a site when an application for planning permission was sought. This could mean that there would be change of uses implemented on the site which would not require planning permission, but which may result in the disturbance of the radioactive waste left on site.	
10.6	PM undertook to draft a response to the questions which had been circulated prior to the meeting. This would be circulated amongst members for comment and then fed back to JC.	PM
10.7	The Chair thanks JC and colleagues for identifying NuLeAF as the right body to discuss this issue with, and dialogue should be ongoing.	
11	PRESENTATION BY BEN BRIDGEWATER, MAGNOX, ON ILW STRATEGY	
11.1	The Chairman welcomed Ben Bridgewater, Val Drake and Pip Hatt of Magnox.	
11.2	BW reviewed the process to date, highlighting that as part of the award of the new Parent Body Organisation contract, a review of the strategy was required.	
11.3	Following the review, there were some changes to the plans which had been previously communicated and 2 new waste streams (pond skips and filters) had been included. Changes had been informed by greater experience of handling the waste and applying learning from work already undertaken. A co-ordinated approach across the sites is being taken in order to avoid unnecessary work/construction.	
11.4	There had also been changes to the acceptance criteria at the Low Level Waste Repository which had opened up new disposal routes.	
11.5	Plans at Harwell, Winfrith or Culham were considered to be well developed and no changes were anticipated.	
11.6	The meeting stressed the importance of continued engagement with both local authorities and the communities affected. Councils understood their communities and could assist Magnox with their engagement.	
11.7	Magnox appreciated the help given, especially by Site Stakeholder	

11.8	Groups. A position paper will be published shortly. The Chairman thanked Magnox for attending.	
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ACTION LIST

Steering Group, 14 May, 2015			
2.1	Post Minutes of meeting held on January 29 th on website	CD	Done
4.6	Alert members to the GDF siting process Call for Evidence consultation.	CD	Circulated 1 July
5.8	Seek meeting with LGA Chair and Lead Board Members	CD/CG	Awaiting appointment of board (September)
5.9	Find out if there are other forms of support for NuLeAF not currently utilised	CG	Response received. Nothing additional offered.
5.10	Consider cross SIG issues such as NSIPS and developing an LGA approach to central government to move issues forward.	CG	CG now moved on. Will follow up with replacement
5.11	Send copy of Briefing Paper 26 to CG	PM	Done
5.12	Check NuLeAF Minutes are read.	CG	
5.13	Look at LGA work programme and that of other SIGs for common interests	PM	Information requested from LGA. No response to date.
5.14	Circulate list of LGA Board members and political affiliation (when new Board formed)	CD	Awaiting appointment of board (September)
6.8	Identify topics for commissioned work	PM	
6.9	Write to contributing members highlighting importance of maintaining membership	RS/BS/CD	Done
6.9	Write to corresponding member asking if they would consider moving to contributing membership	RS/BS/CD	In-hand
6.9	Explore opportunities for securing additional funding through commissioned work	PM	Proposals made to RWM. Response awaited.
9.2	Ask Cumbria CC for extension to deadline for Waste Plan consultation	PM	Done
9.3	Circulate updated draft response to Cumbria consultation	PM	Done
10.7	Circulate draft response to questions by SEPA for comment.	PM	Done.
Steering Group, 24 July 2014			
6.10	Ask DECC for clarity on its timeline (GDF) in order to assist NuLeAF in timetabling internal discussions	PM	Raised with DECC. Timeline not yet agreed