

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 10th September 2025
Item: 6
Subject: Membership benefits and costs
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Introduction:

This paper considers the current membership model for Nuleaf and proposed changes to encourage local authorities to become full Contributing members.

Recommendations:

That members approve the proposed changes, that create a clearer differentiation between Contributing and Corresponding memberships. These are that:

1. The Nuleaf Constitution is amended so that only Contributing Member local authorities be able to attend Nuleaf Steering Group and Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG) meetings. In relation to other events, including the Annual Gathering, Corresponding members will be able to attend on payment of a fee, to be determined by the Secretariat.
2. In order to encourage Corresponding members to engage in Nuleaf, it is proposed that any Corresponding authority considering becoming a Contributing member be able to engage in Nuleaf for one year without charge.
3. These changes will come into force from the start of the next Financial Year i.e. from 1 April 2026.

1. Introduction

1.1 Nuleaf currently offers two forms of membership:

- **Contributing** – where members pay an annual fee based on the population of their local authority area. There are currently 12 Contributing members, all of which host NDA sites.
- **Corresponding** – where members affiliate to Nuleaf at no cost, though there is provision in the Constitution for Corresponding members to be charged for

services provided by Nuleaf¹. There are currently 93 Corresponding members, comprising county, district and unitary authorities; Nuclear Free Local Authorities; and National Park Authorities.

Only Contributing members are able to stand for office (Chair or Vice Chair) and to vote at Nuleaf meetings. They also receive a regular newsletter and are able to represent Nuleaf at external meetings. Since 2022, Nuleaf has held an Annual Gathering. This is open to Contributing members, who are able to send two Members or officers, with all costs covered by Nuleaf.

1.2 Contributing members thus receive additional benefits though in reality, with the exception of funded places at the Annual Gathering, these are limited. For example, Nuleaf meetings usually operate on a consensus basis with no need for voting.

1.3 The number of Contributing member authorities has remained broadly constant over recent years, despite local government re-organisation that has led to mergers of Contributing authorities in Somerset and Cumberland/Westmorland and Furness. Membership fees have not increased since 2009, in recognition of the financial constraints that local government is facing.

1.4 A number of Corresponding authorities are regular attendees at Nuleaf Steering Group and Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG) meetings, and other events. Some additional support and advice is also provided to Corresponding members, at no cost.

1.5 Nuleaf offers a central resource that member local authorities can draw on, helping reduce their costs and increase their ability to engage and have their voice heard.

1.6 The income Nuleaf receives from its Contributing members is critical to our on-going viability as an organisation and strengthens our ability to engage the Government and NDA on behalf of our members. Member contributions are likely to become more significant in coming years as our core funder, the NDA Group, manages the constraints imposed on its budget by the UK Government's recent Spending Review.

1.7 It is therefore vital that we offer a clear incentive for local authorities to become Contributing members. Recent independent consultancy research undertaken for Nuleaf, and due to be published later this month, supported this conclusion. It recommended that Nuleaf:

'Undertakes a review of its membership model to encourage more local authorities to become full 'Contributing' members. It is recognised that raising additional revenue from local authorities in the current financial climate is likely to prove challenging, but there may be opportunities to create a more sustainable membership base and also to explore the scope for new funding streams'.

¹ <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/about/how-we-work/>

1.7 An analysis of other Local Government Association (LGA) Special Interest Groups (SIGs) suggests that Nuleaf is unusual in offering two types of membership – in general it is only possible to engage in other SIGS through payment of a fee.

This is the case for the New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG) and other SIGs such as the County Council Network. Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA), which is not a LGA SIG, also requires councils to pay a fee if they wish to participate in its work.

2. Proposed Changes to membership

3.1. The above analysis suggests that a clearer distinction should be made between Contributing and Corresponding membership.

3.2 It is therefore proposed that:

- The Nuleaf Constitution is amended so that only Contributing Member local authorities be able to attend Nuleaf Steering Group and Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG) meetings. In relation to other events, including the Annual Gathering, Corresponding members will be able to attend on payment of a fee, to be determined by the Secretariat.
- In order to encourage Corresponding members to engage in Nuleaf, it is proposed that any Corresponding authority considering becoming a Contributing member be able to engage in Nuleaf for one year without charge.
- These changes will come into force from the start of the next Financial Year i.e. from 1 April 2026.

3.3 Nuleaf will also undertake a review of the support provided to Contributing member authorities, and will engage with members over the coming year to identify if there is scope to further enhance the service. Some proposals on this are set out in Steering Group Paper 5.