

## April 2013, Issue 29

Welcome to Issue 29 of the e-bulletin, which reports on:

- the position of NuLeAF Chairman,
- the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme, including the process for siting a Geological Disposal Facility;
- Parent Body Organisation competition and performance review at NDA sites,
- developments in NDA strategy and operations,
- developments in Low Level Waste (LLW) management;
- progress on other Key Tasks in the NuLeAF Service Plan 2012-14
- NuLeAF seminar 2013;
- joining NuLeAF; and
- dates for the diary.

### 1. **Position of NuLeAF Chairman**

Following the decision by Cumbria County Council to withdraw from the Government's MRWS process, Cllr Tim Knowles resigned his County Cabinet seat and indicated his wish to stand down as NuLeAF Chair with immediate effect. The Steering Group (SG) meeting on 27 February was chaired by NuLeAF Vice-Chair, Suffolk County Councillor Richard Smith MVO. The meeting decided that Cllr Smith should act as Interim Chair until the AGM in October and consideration would be given to appointing a Vice-Chair after the local elections in May.

### 2. **The Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) process**

The SG considered a [report](#) on developments in the MRWS process, which has been halted in West Cumbria following the decision by Cumbria County Council Cabinet on 30 January not to support Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) site identification and assessment work. Although the decision was called in, it was later upheld by the Cumbria CC Scrutiny Management Board. The borough councils in Copeland and Allerdale both voted firmly in favour of continuing with MRWS.

Following these decisions, Secretary of State, Ed Davey, made a [statement](#) in which he said:

*'The Government will now embark on a renewed drive to ensure that the case for hosting a GDF is drawn to the attention of communities, and to encourage further local authorities to come forward over the coming years to join the process.'*

*The Government will also reflect on the experience of the process in west Cumbria, and will talk to the local authorities themselves and others who have been involved to see what lessons can be learned. No changes to the current approach will be introduced without further public consultation.'*

The SG considered ways in which NuLeAF could participate in the future MRWS process. It was agreed that NuLeAF could make a valuable contribution to keeping the process alive by acting as an 'honest broker' between central and local government. To that end, NuLeAF has written to DECC highlighting areas of work which can be continued despite the absence of a potential host community (e.g. refining the scope of the inventory, the scope for waste

retrieval and other issues identified by the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership) and offering to assist in discussions in these areas. A meeting with DECC and NDA has been arranged for 16 May to explore NuLeAF's views further.

### **3. Parent Body Organisation competition and performance review at NDA sites**

NDA is currently running the [Parent Body Organisation competition](#) for the contracts for the Magnox and RSRL sites. At the direction of the October SG meeting, the Executive Co-Directors wrote to Sean Balmer, NDA Commercial Director seeking clarification regarding opportunities for local authorities to engage in the PBO process. Sean Balmer's response can be read in the progress [paper](#) to the February SG. The meeting agreed that NuLeAF officers would liaise with NDA to arrange a briefing for member authorities about NDA criteria for PBO selection and the NDA approach to PBO contract performance. This will take place in Manchester on 19 June and details will be circulated shortly.

The February SG also decided that members would benefit from seeing for themselves the magnitude of the operation at Sellafield. A site visit for interested elected members and officers will take place on 10 July and details will be circulated shortly.

### **4. NDA strategy and operations**

A proposed response to the Draft NDA Business Plan 2013-16 was agreed by email before the February SG in view of NDA's deadline for comments. The [final response](#) can be viewed on the NuLeAF website.

NuLeAF submitted a response to the NDA online Stakeholder Survey (see Annex 2 of the [report to the Steering Group](#)). NuLeAF officers are concerned that the format of the survey provides insufficient resource for participants to provide quality feedback to NDA, and are also unclear as to how information provided is used to develop NDA's Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) programme. The establishment of an independent advisory panel or 'stakeholder council' were suggested as ways in which NDA could signal the value it attaches to stakeholder engagement. Officers will seek clarification from NDA on the above points.

### **5. Developments in Low Level Waste (LLW) management**

Defra will be publishing the National Waste Management Plan for England towards the end of this year. At present planning guidance omits reference to radioactive waste planning policies. NuLeAF has written to Defra asking that this oversight be addressed. At the time of writing no response has been received. This issue was discussed at the NuLeAF seminar (see item 7 below) on 12 March where NuLeAF members pressed government speakers for clear guidance on how Waste Planning Authorities should address radioactive waste issues in their Waste Local Plans. NuLeAF has been revising its Briefing Paper on planning and radioactive waste. This will be published at the end of April and further revised following the publication of the National Waste Management Plan.

### **6. Progress on other Key Tasks in the NuLeAF Service Plan 2012-14**

NuLeAF officers, in consultation with the then Chair, Vice-Chair and Suffolk County Council officers, responded to [EDF Energy's Sizewell C Stage 1 Pre Application Consultation on Initial Proposals and Options](#).

The Submarine Disposal Project (SDP) has now moved to the next stage, screening potential ILW storage sites, having spent the last few months completing its post-consultation analysis of the strategic options for the project and submitting its Business Case for approval

by the MOD. On 22 March, MOD published their response to the outcome of the public consultation, saying:

*"It has been decided, that subject to the process being successfully demonstrated in several years time, initial dismantling of the submarines will take place at both Devonport and Rosyth Dockyards and the Reactor Pressure Vessel from each submarine will be removed and stored in its entirety.*

*It has also been decided that the process for selecting a specific site for the interim storage of Intermediate Level radioactive Waste (ILW) should now start. The MOD will consider all existing nuclear sites in the UK, including those owned by the MOD, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and industry for storage of the waste."*

## 7. **NuLeAF Seminar**

NuLeAF hosted a very successful seminar at Local Government House in London on 12 March, with the largest attendance to date. Presentations were given on the Duty to Cooperate and Radioactive Waste Issues in Planning from both a central and local government perspective. An update on the Low Activity-Low Level Waste Capacity Gap Analysis was also presented. Copies of the presentations can be found on the NuLeAF [website](#) along with a note of the questions and discussions.

## 8. **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.

## 9. **Diary dates**

5 June – Radioactive Waste Planning Group, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, 12.30 to 3.30

19 June – Seminar: NDA's Approach to Competing PBO Contracts and Reviewing PBO Performance, Manchester Town Hall 11.00 to 1.30

10 July – Site visit: Sellafield (timings tbc)

11 July – Steering Group (location and timings tbc)

A full calendar of meetings can be found on the [NuLeAF website](#). The above meetings are open to elected members and officers from NuLeAF member local authorities.

## 10. **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](http://www.nuleaf.org.uk)  
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