

E-BULLETIN

April 2007,
Issue 6



Welcome to the 6th edition of NuLeAF's e-bulletin, which reports on:

- Government policy on Low Level Waste (LLW) management and plans to develop LLW disposal facilities;
- NuLeAF input to Government on the implementation of policy for the management of higher activity wastes;
- discussion amongst District Councils in the south of England about the scope for local communities to benefit from financial savings in nuclear legacy management;
- NDA programme developments, including site end states, Magnox decommissioning and its review of stakeholder engagement arrangements;
- plans for the UK input to the COWAM in Practice project;
- developments in the MoD's ISOLUS programme; and
- dates for the diary.

The Management of Low Level Wastes

Government published its policy on 26 March 07, setting out what it describes as a more flexible and pragmatic approach to the management of LLW. The policy heralds a greater emphasis on local approaches for managing LLW from nuclear and non-nuclear industry sectors, including disposal to new facilities on existing nuclear sites and landfill. This raises important issues for local government, not least because Government expects local Waste Plans to be developed or revised to take into account its policy and emerging strategies for LLW management.

The NuLeAF Steering Group (SG) meeting on 19 April considered a report on LLW developments. This covered Government policy, NDA strategy, the Low Level Waste Repository near Drigg, the potential for LLW facilities at existing nuclear sites, plans for a LLW disposal facility at Hinkley Point in Somerset, and implications for the development of new regional or national facilities. The SG report is available at [Management of Low Level Radioactive Waste](#).

The SG agreed that further discussions should be held - for example with the NDA and Planning Officers Society - so that NuLeAF can develop policy guidance and briefing materials on LLW management that take into account the pressing need for new facilities and the issues associated with their development.

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Implementation of Policy for the Management of Higher Activity Wastes

Meetings with Government

A series of pre-consultation meetings have been held with Government to present and discuss NuLeAF proposals for the implementation framework for siting a geological repository. These proposals are set out in a series of four Briefing Papers:

[Briefing Paper 3 - Partnerships](#)

[Briefing Paper 4 - Initial invites and responses](#)

[Briefing Paper 5 - Funding participation and enhancing well-being](#)

[Briefing Paper 6 - Siting Planning Requirements and Rights of Withdrawal](#)

Government officials have welcomed NuLeAF's input. Further meetings are being held, for example, to discuss any areas of significant difference of view prior to the launch of formal consultation, currently expected in the second half of the year. NuLeAF has argued that the consultation should run for six months to enable proper participation and consideration of the issues.

Briefing with NDA and the Environment Agency

NuLeAF has held a briefing on implementation with the NDA and Environment Agency. Discussion with the NDA went a considerable way to clarifying how many of the key questions about the NDA's role in the siting process will be addressed. Discussion with the EA focussed on four issues: the EA role in the siting of a repository; R&D needs; building stakeholder confidence in a repository safety case; and the phasing of geological disposal. Key points from the discussions are set out in Annexes 2 and 3 of [SG Report Item 4 - MRWS NuLeAF Initiatives](#)

House of Lords Oral Evidence

NuLeAF's Executive Director presented oral evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee on 19 February. The transcript of the session is available at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/lduncorr/s&t190207.pdf. The Committee is expected to publish a report on the long-term management of higher activity wastes in late May or early June.

Southern Councils Initiative

Sedgemoor District Council has recently convened meetings of Leaders and Chief Executives from District Councils in the south of England to discuss the scope for local communities to benefit from financial savings from new approaches to nuclear legacy management. British Nuclear Group considers that there is considerable scope for making savings from developing treatment, storage or disposal facilities at specific sites for wastes from more than one site.

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NuLeAF has accepted an invitation to participate in a sub-group which will develop proposals for (a) processes of engagement for addressing the potential for financial savings and (b) developing the case for funding community benefits from those savings. For further information see [SG Item 6 - Sedgemoor District Council Initiative](#)

At its meeting on 27 June, the NuLeAF Steering Group will consider ways of involving its wider membership in discussion of the group's proposals.

NDA Programme Developments

Site End States

An overview of local authority involvement in the recent local consultations on site end states confirms the picture emerging from the NuLeAF regional seminars that there is a very wide variation in the level of involvement from site to site. The overview is contained in Annex 1 of [SG Item 7 - NDA Programme](#)

A lack of involvement in some areas appears to have arisen for a number of reasons (which vary from site to site). The reasons can include:

- Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) contacting the relevant local authority very late in the process
- Local authority representatives on SSGs not reporting back to their authorities
- Concern on the part of some local authorities that the SSG is not the appropriate body to oversee a consultation process of this nature
- A lack of a genuine culture of engagement between a local authority and the site and/or SSG
- A lack of capacity within a local authority to respond in the light of other priorities.

Next steps include: inputting learning points about the review ***process*** to the NDA stakeholder engagement review; and identifying the main themes in member authority comments on the ***content*** of the review (eg preferred end uses/states) for use in further discussion with the NDA.

On process learning, preliminary discussion has already taken place with the NDA about the need in the future for more joint working in the planning stage of similar consultation processes to develop an approach that can secure wide local authority involvement. On the content review, it is proposed to table a report at the next meeting of the SG.

The NDA's site end states project leader, Sara Johnston, made a presentation to the SG meeting on 19 April. This provided an overview of the consultation undertaken at each site. For further information see: [dialogue NDA stakeholder newsletter March 2007](#)

Magnox Decommissioning

The NDA's current strategy for decommissioning the Magnox stations after defuelling involves:

- 20-25 years to reach 'care and maintenance'
- 80-100 years in 'care and maintenance'
- dismantling and final site clearance after 80-100 years.

The NDA believes that there may be benefits from accelerating decommissioning, including: better use of existing workforces, not leaving final site clearance to future generations, earlier availability of sites for other uses, and fewer ILW interim stores needed. However, it adds that there are a number of issues to address, such as availability of waste management routes and the implications of processing wastes of higher activities.

The NDA has started an evaluation of the case for accelerated decommissioning, with a view to developing a business case that will inform development of its next Strategy (08/09). As part of this evaluation, BNG recently convened a workshop (15 March) to contribute towards a Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) of decommissioning options. NuLeAF was represented at the workshop, which provided a useful step in options assessment. However, it was not clear:

- how the workshop fitted into an overall process of appraisal and decision-making
- when local authorities around Magnox sites would be involved, or
- how the results of the MCA and stakeholder views would be used to inform NDA decision-making.

NuLeAF has fed these concerns into the NDA's review of stakeholder engagement.

NDA Review of Stakeholder Engagement

The NDA will present proposals arising from the review to its National Stakeholder Group on 5-6 July. Before that, preliminary findings will be discussed at a new 'reference group', being set up to provide stakeholder feedback on process issues. The first meeting of the group is being held on 10 May. NuLeAF's Executive Director has accepted an invitation to be a member of the group.

At its meeting on 19 April the SG agreed that:

- The NDA be invited to make a presentation on its review of stakeholder engagement arrangements at the SG on 27 June.
- A meeting of member authorities concerned about the effectiveness of Site Stakeholder Groups be convened in liaison with the NDA and its stakeholder engagement contractors [date to be confirmed].

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COWAM in Practice (CIP)

COWAM (Community Waste Management) in Practice is a three-year project within the Research Framework of the European Commission. The aim of the project is to assess, from a local perspective, the governance approaches for radioactive waste management that are being developed in five participating countries (France, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the UK). In each participating country a national group of stakeholders will assess, from a local perspective, the governance approaches developed in their country. This group will be supported by a National Facilitator whose role is to organise the national work programme. In the UK, Westlakes Scientific Consulting (WSC) are fulfilling the role of National Facilitator and NuLeAF's Executive Director will chair the UK stakeholder group (UKCIPSG).

An international expert group (the Methodological Task Force, MTF) will give further support by providing research to each national group on issues the national group consider most relevant to analyse its experience. In the second part of the project, the MTF will analyse the case studies and develop guidelines for others to use.

At the time of writing WSC is in the process of inviting stakeholders to participate in the project. Invites are being sent to stakeholders around Dounreay, Hinkley Point and Sellafield sites and to a small group of national stakeholders. It is anticipated that national meetings will be held in July 07, Jan 08, Sep 08, Jan 09 and July 09.

It is likely that the first meeting of the UKCIPSG will identify participant views on what are the priority radwaste governance issues in the UK, and how they should be addressed within the project.

ISOLUS

ISOLUS is a Ministry of Defence project concerned with the management of laid-up nuclear submarines. A workshop was held on 8 February to seek views from a range of stakeholders on how to:

- Ensure the most suitable means for maintaining stakeholder involvement as the project proceeds
- Build on the work and learning accrued so far
- Conduct independent assessments of initiatives and outcomes from stakeholder involvement
- Provide a conduit for advice to the MoD ISOLUS Steering Group

The workshop agreed to set up a mixed, broadly representative Advisory Group to act as a sounding board for the MoD Steering Group and project team, including giving feedback on content proposals and advising on stakeholder involvement processes.

A further meeting is taking place on 15 May to finalise proposals for the Advisory Group. The ISOLUS Steering Group meets the following day. NuLeAF will be represented at the meetings.

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Dates for the Diary

27 June NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00am, LGA House, London
18 October NuLeAF Steering Group and AGM, Town Hall, Manchester.

Contacting NuLeAF

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