

E-BULLETIN

**October 2012,
Issue 28**



Welcome to Issue 28 of the e-bulletin, which reports on:

- an update on national developments in radioactive waste management;
- an update on the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme, including the process for siting a Geological Disposal Facility;
- community benefits and radioactive waste management;
- the NDA Parent Body Organisation competition
- NuLeAF seminar 2013;
- the outcome of the NuLeAF AGM;
- report of the NDA National Stakeholder Event 29/30 October;
- joining NuLeAF; and
- dates for the diary.

1. **Developments in national low level radioactive waste management**

At its meeting on 24 October, the Steering Group received an update on developments in national [low level radioactive waste management](#). This included a report back from the NuLeAF/NDA/SLC engagement meeting on 25 September where Magnox Ltd gave a [presentation](#) on their 'Magnox Optimised Decommissioning Programme' (MODP). The note of the meeting is available on the NuLeAF [website](#).

During discussion it was agreed that NuLeAF would obtain or produce an overview of the various groups which have now developed around the issue of low level radioactive waste management to clarify the role and remit of each.

As part of on-going discussion with the Environment Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) regarding the Environmental Permitting Process, greater clarity is being sought on the criteria the agencies use in their evaluation process, and the reason why transport issues are not addressed ascertained.

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

The Steering Group received an update on the [Managing Radioactive Waste Safely](#) (MRWS) process. A decision was expected in October from the three councils for West Cumbria about their continued engagement with MRWS, but this decision has now been postponed until January 2013 at the earliest. The three councils are using this 'pause' period to obtain stronger reassurance from Government about a)

the decision making councils' rights of withdrawal b) delivery of community benefits (should MRWS continue) and c) the suitability of local geology.

DECC continue to canvass support for MRWS amongst local authorities in England and Wales but at the time of writing no further firm interest has been expressed.

NDA continue to prepare for desk based surface and sub surface potential candidate site identification work in West Cumbria, should they be invited in. The NuLeAF Executive Co Directors met with NDA's Radioactive Waste Management Directorate in August and September to discuss and give feedback on RWMD's proposed approach to site identification, and stakeholder communications.

3. Update on community benefits

The Steering Group received an [update on community benefits](#). At a meeting on 25 September NDA acknowledged that the work on a draft Community Benefits Protocol, initiated by NuLeAF, had been 'parked' pending the outcome of high level 'pathfinder' discussions with Cumbrian local authorities about the approach that may be appropriate in relation to the large number of developments that are likely to affect the Sellafield site over the next five years. It was reported that discussions in West Cumbria are now close to concluding.

The meetings attention was drawn to the statement by John Hayes, Minister of State at DECC, in an adjournment debate regarding Community Benefits in Infrastructure Projects ([Hansard](#), Westminster Hall debates, 18 October). It confirms that Business Rate Retention is to be regarded separately from Community Benefits Funds, and that "we may shortly be in a position to ... articulate a new paradigm for dealing with major infrastructural investments in the area of energy".

4. Stakeholder engagement and NDA site Parent Body Organisation (PBO) selection

The Steering Group meeting on 24 October received a report about stakeholder engagement and NDA site [Parent Body Organisation \(PBO\) selection](#).

The Steering Group noted that the current NDA Strategy 2011-2016 provides little detail about the role and expectations for PBOs. The Strategy document confines its remarks (p61) to: "We deliver our remit through others by employing PBOs to manage the SLCs on our behalf. Competitions for PBOs to deliver new ownership of our SLCs are Strategic Critical procurements for the NDA...". The issue of concern is the accountability of PBOs to NDA site host communities and the need for assurance about the social, economic and environmental commitment that these organisations bring to an area.

The meeting noted that with regard to the current competition for PBO management of NDA's Magnox and RSRL sites, the NDA had given welcome assurances about socio economic 'delivery' at a PBO Bidders' conference in July. However, the

baseline criteria that any PBO bidder would have to meet were not clear, and needed to be clarified.

Separately, concerns were also identified around the process for periodic review of PBO contracts and how decisions would be made to either continue or terminate a contract. Little was understood about the performance criteria against which PBOs would be judged and there is currently no role for NDA site host local authorities or other key stakeholders to participate in periodic review processes. This is not consistent with NDA's corporate commitments to openness and transparency.

The October Steering Group meeting therefore agreed that NuLeAF officers should assist member councils who were seeking to establish local accountability in both PBO competition processes and in PBO periodic performance review processes.

5. NuLeAF Seminar

A seminar will be held on 12 March, 2013 at Local Government House in London. The topics for discussion will continue on the theme of 'Radioactive Waste Management and Spatial Planning' and address issues such as: the Duty to Cooperate, the capacity gap analysis between low level waste arisings and disposal/storage/treatment facilities and approaches to low level waste management in other countries. Further information and registration will be available early in the new year.

6. The NuLeAF Annual General Meeting 2012

The main outcomes of the AGM were:

- the reappointment of Cllr Tim Knowles from Cumbria County Council as Chair, and the election of Cllr Richard Smith MVO from Suffolk County Council as Vice-Chair;
- the approval of the Annual Report;
- the approval, subject to a few minor additions, of a Service Plan for 2012-14; and
- the approval of the Finance and Funding report.

The AGM agreed to hold the level of membership contributions for local authorities for FY 2013-14 to the current rates.

The AGM recorded its thanks to Fred Barker who had retired as Executive Director in June, and to Cllr Neil Swannick who had completed his three year term as Vice-Chair.

7. Report from the NDA National Stakeholder Event, 29/30 October

NuLeAF chair Tim Knowles and Co-Director Philip Matthews attended the annual NDA Stakeholder meeting in Manchester on the 29th and 30th November. The meeting allowed the NDA to update stakeholders on progress with work on the GDF, skills development and the PBO process and also on the specific work on-going at Dounreay. There were also a number of presentations from NDA senior

management on strategy development and the changing context for their work. The NDA's engagement with the Japanese, post Fukushima, was highlighted as were the opportunities for future work with the Japanese, drawing on decommissioning expertise developed in the UK.

NuLeAF raised a range of issues of concern to local authorities, including concerns as to how the PBO process has operated and the need for it to be based on proper engagement and deliver adequate benefits for local communities in future.

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

12 December 2012: Radioactive Waste Planning Group, 12.30 – 3.30, Senate House, University of London

29 January 2013: NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00 – 13.00, Local Government House, Smith Square, London

12 March 2013: NuLeAF Seminar, 11.00 – 3.30, Local Government House, Smith Square, London

24 April 2013: NuLeAF Steering Group, 11.00 – 3.00, Room 113, Town Hall, Manchester.

A full calendar of meetings can be found on the [NuLeAF website](#).

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
E: catherine.draper@nuleaf.org.uk