

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 21 October 2011
Agenda Item:	8
Subject:	Progress Report
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on a range of developments relating to nuclear legacy management

Introduction

This progress report covers the following items:

- NDA Strategy and meetings with Local Authorities
- the process for siting a geological disposal facility
- the Submarine Dismantling Project
- MoD nuclear liabilities management strategy
- European Union radioactive waste directive

The report is for noting.

Strategic Objectives

The developments reported are relevant to the following strategic objectives:

NDA Strategy

- Encourage development of (a) an appropriate framework for handling new developments and (b) centralised and multi-site approaches where they are supported by affected LAs in light of the overall balance of benefits and disadvantages.
- Seek to ensure that proposals for new projects that may be simpler, faster or cheaper than current practices can be convincingly demonstrated to be the best practicable, taking into account a full range of life cycle, safety, environmental and socio-economic factors, and stakeholder views.

Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)

- to liaise effectively with any local authority that may wish to consider, or makes, an expression of interest in the GDF siting process and to provide assistance as appropriate
- to work with Government, the NDA, CoRWM, regulators and member authorities to help ensure that the approach based on voluntarism and partnership works robustly in practice
- to ensure member authorities are briefed and up-to-date on developments in the GDF siting process.

Submarine Dismantling Project (formerly ISOLUS)

- Encourage any member authority that may be affected by the management of the radioactive wastes from laid up nuclear submarines to participate in consultation on the proposed way forward.
- Encourage MoD to adopt clear objectives and good practices in the consultation on options for managing radioactive wastes from the Submarine Dismantling Project.
- Seek to ensure that the approach taken to the implementation of the Submarine Dismantling Project is consistent with developments in the civil nuclear industry.

1 NDA Strategy and Meetings with Local Authorities

Members will recall that the initial meetings with NDA, Magnox, RSRL and regulators to discuss key aspects of strategy implementation took place in late June (see the note of the meetings on the NuLeAF website at [Note of June engagement meetings](#)).

As a result of these meetings, local authority officers with appropriate expertise have been invited to participate in two key Topic Overview Groups (on Integrated Waste Management and Site Restoration), which are further developing these aspects of NDA strategy. The representatives are Andrew Smith from Lancashire CC and David Palk from Suffolk CC. The ED will maintain liaison with these officers to feed in views and receive report backs.

The next meeting with NDA, SLCs and regulators is on 11 November at Local Government House in London (for representatives from local authorities with or near Magnox or RSRL sites). The main agenda item will be a discussion of Integrated Waste Management, waste consolidation and material movements. The agenda for the meeting is attached as an annex to this report.

The outcome of the meeting will be reported to the January meeting of the Steering Group.

2 Process for Siting a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)

The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership is approaching the end of the assessment phase of its work programme and will consult in late 2011/early 2012 on its preliminary views on the issues that are relevant to a decision about participation in the next stage of the siting process for a GDF. Following consultation, these views will be reviewed prior to submitting a report to the principal local authorities, who are the local decision-making bodies in the process.

The Partnership has been shortlisted for a prestigious award for the work that it has undertaken on public communication and engagement (see the Partnership website at [Community Partnership in Cumbria shortlisted](#)).

The Government has consulted on how potential sites would be identified and assessed during the next stage of its MRWS programme. The consultation document is available at [Desk-based identification and assessment of potential candidate sites for geological disposal](#). The Partnership's response is broadly supportive of the Government's proposals (see the response at [Partnership response DECC Consultation](#)). The ED assisted with preparation of the Partnership's response. In contrast, the Nuclear Free Local Authority response is critical of the Government's proposals and is available at [NFLA RWB 30](#).

The Government has also published its first annual report to Parliament on implementing its GDF programme. This is available at [GDF Annual Report](#). The report is notable for reference to a Ministerial aspiration to accelerate the GDF programme so that first waste emplacement is able to take place in 2029, rather than the current assumption of 2040. The Government has asked NDA to look at "opportunities for optimising the process with the ambition to accelerate progress". Initial findings are to be presented to the meeting of the Geological Disposal Implementation Board on 6 December. The Partnership has registered concern with the Minister, highlighting the need to avoid a perception of being rushed (see [Letter to DECC regarding acceleration](#)).

3 The Submarine Dismantling Project

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has announced that it will be starting a 16 week period of ‘Submarine Dismantling Consultation’ on 28 October (ending on 17 February).

The feedback from the consultation will be used to inform three key decisions within the project:

- how radioactive material should be removed from laid-up nuclear submarines;
- where the radioactive waste should be removed; and
- which type of site should be used to store the resultant Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).

Based on its detailed assessment, MoD will be consulting on proposals relating to each of the three decisions.

MoD has already announced that the candidate sites for where the radioactive waste is removed are Devonport and Rosyth Dockyards, or a combination of the two. As a result, there will be a particular focus on consultation in the Plymouth and Rosyth areas, and in the neighbouring areas of Saltash, Torpoint and Edinburgh.

Interim storage options have been identified in generic terms as types of site owned by MoD, industry or the NDA.

MoD is also organising two national workshops on 31 January (Birmingham) and 6 February (Glasgow). The workshops are intended for stakeholders who have a strategic or specialist interest in the project, for example, from local authorities, industry and statutory bodies. Member authorities interested in attending a workshop can register by e-mailing MoD at DESSMIS-SDP@mod.uk.

A report setting out draft comments on the MoD’s proposals will be prepared for consideration at the Steering Group meeting on 25 January.

4 MoD Nuclear Liabilities Management Strategy

The MoD has published a new Nuclear Liabilities Management Strategy (see MoD website at [nuclear strategy](#)). MoD nuclear liabilities result from building and operating nuclear submarines and from the manufacture and management of nuclear weapons. The strategy considers four categories of liability: nuclear materials, irradiated fuel; sites, facilities and submarines; and radioactive wastes.

Although substantial, MoD’s liabilities are significantly smaller than the civil nuclear liabilities. MoD’s radioactive wastes account for less than 1.5% (by volume) and 0.1% (by radioactivity) of the UK total. MoD is committed to working closely with NDA and is exploring “the benefits of collaborate solutions”.

Some elements of MoD’s nuclear liabilities need to be addressed in the short term, as in the Submarine Dismantling Project. For others, strategy development is a long term activity, which will be influenced by the developments in the management of civil nuclear liabilities, and the design, availability and timing of storage and disposal facilities.

5 EU Radioactive Waste Directive

On 19 July, the Council of Ministers adopted the 'Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management Directive', which had been proposed by the Commission in November 2010 (see the press release at [Commission welcomes adoption of radioactive waste directive](#)).

Under the Directive, member states have to submit a national programme in 2015. The Commission will examine the programmes and can require changes. National programmes have to include plans with a timetable for the construction of disposal facilities, cost assessments and a description of financing schemes.

It is understood that the UK Government will produce an over-arching document explaining how it is implementing the Directive through already existing policies and strategies. No new policy development in the UK is anticipated in order to implement the Directive.

ANNEX: LOCAL AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

11 November 2011

Local Government House, London

11.00-15.00

AGENDA

1 Welcome and Introductions

2 Note and Actions from the June Meetings

The note and actions table will be circulated in advance

3 Updates

- a) NDA
- b) Magnox and RSRL
- c) Regulators
- d) NuLeAF and individual local authorities

Each organisation will be asked to provide a verbal update on any nuclear legacy management issue relevant to a local authority audience that is not covered by the actions from the last meeting or the main items for discussion. For NDA this is likely to include progress with on-going work on developing strategy for site restoration and on the Socio-Economic support.

4 Integrated Waste Management, Waste Consolidation and Material Movements

This is the main agenda item for substantive discussion. It will include presentations from NDA on IWM and Waste Consolidation Plans and, potentially, from the SLCs on any site-based case studies relevant to these topics. We would also ask those local authority representatives whose authority has had local experience of waste transfers to come prepared to talk about any issues that arose.

5 Next steps

- a) Follow-up actions
- b) Future meetings
- c) Meeting note