

Welcome to Issue 56 of the e-bulletin, which reports on:

- Review of UK Radioactive Waste Policy
- Near-surface disposal of radioactive waste
- NDA Local Economic and Social Impact Strategy consultation
- NuLeAF Policy Statement and Briefing Paper on Community Benefits
- Accelerated decommissioning of Magnox reactors
- Update on Magnox activities
- Geological Disposal Facility siting process update
- Other news
- NuLeAF Steering Group meeting, 11th March 2020
- Dates for your diary

Review of UK Radioactive Waste Policy

Central government is undertaking a review of the UK Radioactive Waste Policies. Decommissioning policy was last updated in 2004 and there is a need to reflect significant changes to the policy landscape that have occurred in recent years or are in development, such as in-situ or on-site disposal of radioactive waste and the launch of a new GDF siting process. Work began on the review in 2019 and is consultation on a draft of the new policy is planned in the coming months. NuLeAF is keen that the revised policy drives an approach to decommissioning and waste management that reflects the needs of local government and the communities which provide a service to the nation by hosting the long-term storage or disposal of radioactive waste. The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy hopes to be able to engage further on this at the Steering Group meeting to be held on 10th June 2020. A short presentation by BEIS is available on the NuLeAF website <http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NuLeaf-Policy-presentation-v2.pdf>

Near-surface Disposal of Radioactive Waste

At the Steering Group meeting held on 29th January NuLeAF members heard an update from NDA on work that had been undertaken to consider the possible scope for the near-surface disposal of some of the radioactive waste inventory.

Near-surface disposal could provide a proportionate disposal approach for some of the Intermediate Level Waste inventory currently designated for disposal at a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF), but which does not require the full isolation and containment which a GDF would provide. It could also support accelerated decommissioning through providing a disposal solution for wastes, including early risk and hazard reduction. NDA undertook to engage further with NuLeAF and other stakeholders as work in this area progresses.

NDA Local Economic and Social Impact Strategy Consultation

NDA is currently consulting on its draft Local Economic and Social Impact Strategy (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/nda-local-economic-and-social-impact-strategy-2020-to-2026-draft-for-consultation>). The development of the strategy has been driven by a challenge the Public Accounts Committee gave to NDA in 2018 to improve the value its operations added to nuclear communities. From the work carried out in preparing the strategy NDA has concluded that each site needs to be dealt with on an individual basis and a one-size-fits-all approach would be inappropriate. Under the new strategy, NDA

hopes to be able to increase the level of socio-economic funding. Initially the strategy will be for a six-year period (2020-2026), but NDA recognises the need for it to remain fluid so it can reflect and accommodate changes in need. NuLeAF welcomes the development of the strategy and will submit a response to the consultation. We would encourage member authorities to also engage and comment. Slides from a presentation to the NuLeAF Steering Group are available on our website <http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Draft-Socio-economic-Strategy-presentation.pdf>

NuLeAF Policy Statement and Briefing Paper on Community Benefits

At the direction of members, the NuLeAF secretariat has prepared a Policy Statement and Briefing Paper on Community Benefits. These were approved at the Steering Group meeting on 29th January and the documents can be found on the NuLeAF website at <http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NuLeAF-Policy-Statement-7-Community-Benefits-final.pdf> and <http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Briefing-Paper-13-Community-benefits-final.pdf> respectively. The Briefing Paper contains a proposed framework (Annex A) setting out how NuLeAF would like to see government and the NDA address this issue. Members of the Steering Group directed the secretariat to take forward the actions outlined in the framework and we will report further on this in future communications.

Accelerated decommissioning of Magnox reactors

As part of his presentation to the Steering Group (see below), Bill Hamilton provided an update on proposals to accelerate decommissioning of Magnox reactors. Following agreement by NDA Board and government, Magnox is moving away from the strategy of fleetwide Care and Maintenance towards continuous reactor decommissioning.

This new approach has been driven in part by lessons learnt at Bradwell A station, the first NDA site to enter Care and Maintenance but also by a recognition that the building fabric at some NDA sites is decaying faster than predicted. More cost-effective robotics and new routes for waste and recycling have also been developed.

This new approach will provide opportunities for synergies between A and B stations, and for interim or re-use of sites. A lead and learn approach will be taken - initially one site will be decommissioned, but all the sites will remain part of a 'peloton' throughout, taking them in an agreed order to a stable interim state that will either enable continuous reactor decommissioning or a period of short to medium term quiescence with minimal intervention. It is proposed that sites will be taken to a 'Back to Bioshield' state which will reduce the reactor building to 10% of its current volume. This will significantly reduce maintenance costs and may offer the potential to release some land on the site at an earlier date. An announcement of the first site to go through this process is expected in March/April this year, along with the criteria used to make the selection. Following further assessment of the other sites an announcement will be made in 2021 regarding the proposed order of decommissioning, though this will remain flexible to accommodate developments.

Update on Magnox Activities

Bill Hamilton, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations at Magnox gave a presentation to the NuLeAF Steering Group on the transition to wholly owned subsidiary, progress in the decommissioning work programme and aspirations for the future. The slides from Mr Hamilton's presentation can be found on the NuLeAF website

<http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Magnox-NuLeAF-presentation-Jan20.pdf> .

Key points from the presentation were:

- Magnox is working hard to drive up safety standards following a 'blip' after the transition in Parent Body Organisations in 2016/17. Mr Hamilton was pleased to note that there had been no corresponding 'blip' when Magnox transitioned to wholly owned subsidiary of NDA in 2019.
- The Magnox Executive is looking at the opportunities which arise from its new status as a subsidiary, as opposed to a contractor. These would include utilising in-house skills and expertise for the benefit of UK plc.
- The Executive is also working more co-operatively with its staff, who are involved in working groups looking at developing a people strategy and improvements in the digital environment.

The Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process

Recent articles in the UK press have reported on a study carried out by researchers at Ohio State University which identified accelerated corrosion process in materials proposed for use in the long-term storage of high-level nuclear waste. The study was originally published in Nature magazine. RWM Ltd, the body responsible for delivering geological disposal of the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes, has commented that the study is based on a radioactive waste disposal system being considered for the proposed Yucca Mountain repository in the desert in Nevada, US, the conditions there being very different to those that would be found in any deep underground repository here in the UK. Furthermore, the authors of the research acknowledge that the conditions they studied would not apply in many other countries.

Any local authority wishing to have informal discussions or seeking further information on the Geological Disposal Facility siting process should contact the Executive Director, Philip Matthews on 07949 209126 or philip.matthews@nuleaf.org.uk.

And in other news...

In September 2019 Somerset County Council rejected an application by Magnox for the importation of ILW to Hinkley Point A for treatment. Although the officer's report had proposed the application be granted, elected members felt that Magnox had not successfully demonstrated a need to amend the existing permission. Magnox has until April to appeal the decision or could consider re-submitting the application at a later date after taking steps to address the concerns raised by Somerset County Council members. You will find the report and decision on Somerset County Council's website

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=133&MIId=807&Ver=4>

There is still time to submit a response to the consultation by **NDA on its Draft Business Plan 2020-23**. The deadline for the consultation is 14th February and you can find the consultation document here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/nuclear-decommissioning-authority-draft-business-plan-2020-to-2023>. Following consultation with members, NuLeAF has prepared a response which you can read here <http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NuLeAF-NDA-Business-Plan-2020-23-.pdf>.

NuLeAF Steering Group meeting, 11th March 2020

The next meeting of NuLeAF's Steering Group will take place on 11th March 2020 at the Central Library, Manchester. Among the discussions we will hear from RWM Ltd on the outcome of the Geological Disposal Facility siting process Site Evaluation consultation, and also from NDA on the stakeholder engagement and people and skills aspects of NDA Strategy 4. Members wishing to attend the meeting should contact us at catherine.draper@suffolk.gov.uk

Dates for the Diary

Here is the NuLeAF meeting timetable for the first half of 2020. Please note these dates in your diary for future reference. Meetings of the Steering Group are open to elected members and officers from NuLeAF member authorities. The Radioactive Waste Planning Group is officer only.

DATE	MEETING	VENUE
11 th March 2020	Steering Group and AGM	Central Library, Manchester
23 rd April 2020	Radioactive Waste Planning Group	18 Smith Square, London
10 th June 2020	Steering Group	Tba
29 th July 2020	Radioactive Waste Planning Group	Tba

Joining NuLeAF and participating in our work

Nuclear waste and legacy issues are major concerns for local authorities across the country. Critical issues include management of Low and Very Low-Level Waste to landfill, changes to planning guidance, considerations on the siting of a Geological Disposal Facility, the need to maximise community benefits from nuclear legacy operations and the impacts of the decommissioning of current and future 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, or find out more, then please contact Catherine Draper at the address below.

NuLeAF on LinkedIn and Twitter

NuLeAF has a group on [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nuleaf). We hope that members will use this as a forum to discuss issues and seek advice with other members. We also post regular items of news. Our Twitter account alerts members to consultations, news, and other items of interest as they happen. Our Twitter handle is [@nuleaforguk](https://twitter.com/nuleaforguk).

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