

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 15 July 2009
Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Submarine Dismantling Project
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on MoD plans for consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment of dismantling and storage options

Introduction

The Steering Group will recall that Project ISOLUS has been re-named the Submarine Dismantling Project (SDP). A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is currently being undertaken, with plans for consultation towards the end of 2009. This report outlines the MoD's proposals and recommends that NuLeAF arrange, or assist with, a pre-consultation briefing for potentially affected local authorities.

Recommendation

That the Steering Group agree in principle to arrange, or assist with arranging, a pre-consultation briefing for potentially affected local authorities and delegate authority to the Executive Director to make the necessary arrangements.

Contribution to Achieving Strategic Objectives

The recommendation is intended as a step towards achieving the following NuLeAF objectives:

To 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.

To seek to ensure that the approach taken to the implementation of the ISOLUS project is consistent with developments in the civil nuclear industry.

1 Background

The Executive Director (ED) attended a meeting of the SDP Steering Group on 2 June.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of dismantling and storage options is currently being undertaken, with plans for consultation towards the end of the year. It is anticipated that potential sites for dismantling and storage will be named in the SEA, so local consultations in the affected areas are planned.

Following consultation, it is anticipated that decisions will be taken about the site/s for dismantling and storage. It is likely that potential sites will be existing licensed nuclear sites from within the MoD or NDA estates. In response to a request from the MoD, NDA is currently reviewing which of its sites may be suitable for storing the ILW from the SDP.

At the time of the SDP Steering Group in early June, the specific objectives of the consultation had not been decided and discussions were underway about how consultation outputs might inform decision-making about sites.

A presentation to the SDP Steering Group by the MoD's engagement consultants – Green Issues Communications - anticipated that the consultation could include:

- A consultation document for comment
- Web-based consultation
- Local exhibitions
- Local workshops and stakeholder fora
- Engagement with elected members

2 Proposal for a Pre-Consultation Briefing for Local Authorities

Following the SDP Steering Group meeting, the ED contacted MoD to suggest that there would be value in providing a pre-consultation briefing for local authority officers from areas with sites that will be named in the consultation.

This could:

- enable the affected local authorities to understand where the consultation fits into the project's overall decision process;
- give the affected local authorities time to comment on or contribute to the planning of consultation activities in their areas;
- enable elected members to be brought up to speed, ensuring there are no surprises when the actual consultation starts; and
- help lay the ground for development of a working relationship between MoD and the local authorities concerned.

The MoD has welcomed the suggestion and thinks it should be possible for a briefing to take place in October. At the time of writing it is not known how many potential sites might be involved.

It is recommended that the Steering Group agree in principle to arrange, or assist with arranging, a pre-consultation briefing for potentially affected local authorities, and delegate authority to the ED to make the necessary arrangements.