

Welcome and Introduction Session (Joanne Fisher, NDA)

Joanne provided an introduction to the day, outlining what was going to be covered and what the aims of the day were. The session also included an outline of Government's LLW policy, its implications and the way NDA will execute its responsibilities in relation to the policy.

Questions:

Dick Raaz (LLW Repository Ltd) asked Jo to elaborate on the relationship between this group and other waste programmes?

To a certain extent the LLW STRATEGY GROUP will report to the National Waste Management strategy Group, which is the forum for developing a National Integrated Waste Strategy that includes ILW and HLW as well as LLW. There are also further interplays within the NDA with other parts of the Strategy and Technology Division. There is also a Strategy Review Panel, which will ensure that the strategy is integrated with other strategic planning activities at the NDA.

Laurence Cook (Sellafield Ltd) asked for clarification on the difference between the UK nuclear industry LLW Strategy and the UK LLW Management Plan?

In simplest terms the LLW strategy will cover "what" needs to be achieved and is likely to include strategic objectives and guidance. The management plan will cover "how" these strategic objectives will be achieved. It will be more detailed than the strategy and may even include location specific information.

Jim Cochrane (SEPA) queried whether the UK LLW Management Plan would therefore be a roll-up of all of the site IWSs?

Because the site IWSs cover all waste, then a straight roll-up will not be appropriate. However the information within them is critical to development of both the strategy and the management plan, so they will directly influence the management plan.

Richard Evans (Cumbria County Council) noted that the strategy and the plan include the "whats" and the "hows" but do not include "where". He also noted that there were references to investigating the need for a replacement repository and queried why this was not an "additional" repository?

Development of the strategy and the management plan will look at all reasonable alternatives and therefore will consider a "multi-stream" approach to LLW disposal, and not necessarily a replacement. It is worth noting that extending the life of the existing facility is considered key to the management of LLW in the UK.

Alan Fisher (UKAEA) queried how this process would relate to the review of RSA exemption orders?

The process is underway, with the review due to be completed October 2009. Early indications are that there is a move towards a more European approach with different limits for different radionuclides. The NDA is supporting the approach, which could lead to more flexibility.

Chris Halliwell (Sellafield Ltd) noted that the indicative timescales for development of the strategy and the management plan, the strategy ("whats") came after the management plan ("how") and that this did not seem to make sense.

The Strategy and the Management Plan will be developed in parallel. The Management Plan will be a live document and will undergo an annual review process and can therefore respond to changes in the strategy following consultation. It will underpin the strategy so will be useful to have available for consultation on the strategy.

Bav Thacker (Sellafield Ltd, Capenhurst) queried whether the strategy would be “fixed” when completed?

The strategy will be part of the NDA overall strategy and therefore will be part of the NDA strategy review process. As discussed earlier the management plan will also undergo annual reviews.

Environment Agency Expectations, Juliet Long (Environment Agency)

Juliet provided information on the Environment Agency’s role in LLW management and also in the development of strategy. Some of Juliet’s key messages included: the need to develop “buy-in” to the process with all stakeholders through full engagement not just consultation; the need to ensure that all parties were focussing on the same output from the process; and, the need for clear links to other strategic planning activities. Juliet also indicated that the Environment Agency was willing to consider the need for change in order to respond to developing LLW strategy.

NDA National Perspectives, Ian Roxburgh (CEO, NDA)

Ian reflected on the energy and enthusiasm demonstrated at both this event and the LLWR Forum the previous day. Ian highlighted the importance of the relationship that NDA has with the regulators and also the developing partnership with LLWR. He also indicated that strategy should be developed by looking forward and based on evidence and analysis, not history, prejudice etc. Ian confirmed the NDA’s commitment to the process.

New LLWR contract, Dick Raaz (LLW Repository, Ltd)

Dick outlined the role of the Parent Body Organisation at LLW Repository and how the PBO will integrate into the organisation with the secondment of some key people into the operation. Dick noted how important the management of LLW is to supporting decommissioning programmes across the board and also highlighted the challenge the industry faces in managing LLW and the consequent need for change. Dick indicated the need for the industry to focus on strengths by use of the supply chain. His final message was with regard to ensuring only the appropriate use of the disposal capacity at LLWR.

Providing assured storage and disposal of the UK’s LLW, Paul Pointon (LLW Repository, Ltd)

Paul provided an overview of the Repository’s proposed operational response to the challenge set out in previous presentations. These can be divided into short, medium and long term activities and included: enhanced consignor support; information on maximising the use of Vault 8; an update on progress with Vault 9; potential for VLLW storage in the medium term; resolution of PCSC issues; and, change from a disposal service to a full waste management service.

Plan for developing and implementing a new UK LLW Strategy, Chuck Conway, (LLW Repository, Ltd)

Chuck focused on stakeholder engagement in the development of strategy and provided further detail on the steps involved in the strategy development. This will involve building on existing relationships with regulators and also effective engagement with stakeholders and ensuring that this feeds into the decision making process. Chuck detailed the opportunities for people to get involved in the process, noting that there are those outwith the LLW STRATEGY GROUP. He gave some further detail on the steps for delivering the strategy, particularly the Strategic Review process and development of a robust LLW baseline to work from.

Questions:

Fred Plum (Ministry of Defence) noted that the MoD still has work to do on the minimisation of waste, but is making progress. There is a need for encouragement and incentivisation and also more flexibility from Regulators and Defra to enable longer term planning and ease implementation of the waste hierarchy. In particular Fred noted then need for flexibility around allocations.

Juliet Long (Environment Agency) responded that the Environment Agency want to be challenged. She outlined how the rigid approach to allocations came from the regular cycle of review of authorisations. The new approach will be to address authorisations as live issues, with annual reviews. Juliet noted the need to work together to ensure implementation of the waste hierarchy. The Environment Agency are open to reviewing how regulation is undertaken, but will not however drop standards.

Bav Thacker (Sellafield Ltd, Capenhurst), noted that the regulatory process was not necessarily a restriction so long as you open up lines for communication early. He also noted that the proposed customer support organisation at LLWR was a great opportunity and it would good if representatives from the repository were able to visit the sites and provided training.

Martin Robb (NDA), queried whether the strategy work at the LLWR would cover the possibility that some ILW could be driven down to LLW and how this would impact on radiological capacity of the repository?

The strategic planning part of the new contract is about LLW, however, there is a remit for understanding the impacts of decay storage. It was noted that the LLW STRATEGY GROUP is the place to raise such issues and that they need to be included in discussions. There will be important economic drivers associated to this issue.

Alex Anderson (Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd), noted how declaring waste as “exempt” is both difficult and expensive to achieve and that this works against the process. There is a need to work with the Clearance and Exemption Working Group, noting that time is often as much of an issue as cost.

Alan Fisher (UKAEA, Harwell and Winfrith), noted that the Nuclear Industry Code of Practice on the issue is under review. A workshop was held in February to look at what needs to change. There is a good opportunity for all members of the LLW STRATEGY GROUP to get involved.

Jim Cochrane (SEPA) wished to concur with Juliet Long's comments and include SEPA in the statement of intent to be involved in the process. Jim outlined a Memorandum of Understanding between SEPA and the Environment Agency noting commitments on both sides. Jim raised the issue of Exempt Waste being shipped from Dounreay to the NW of England, noting that the LLW STRATEGY GROUP would be a good forum to be used to address such issues by achieving early involvement.

Tim Hedahl (LLW Repository Ltd) noted that in the future the LLW STRATEGY GROUP would in future have a more functional than information giving to achieve this kind of engagement.

Steve Whittingham (Department for Transport) noted the importance of considering these issues at a national level, breaking away from focussing on sites only. He noted the importance of the proximity principle, given that application of the waste hierarchy will lead to more diverse transport activities. National standards will be important for confidence in the process.

Phil Davies (NDA) raised three points for consideration: the model of the LLWR contract, including a national strategic role (Element 2), was being considered for use in a Geological Disposal Facility contract; the “reach back” and “outreach” provided by the keen attendance at the LLW STRATEGY GROUP was great to see; and the importance of the LLW strategy, which Government are very keen to see developed, noting that there are some big steps including SEA, sign-off by Secretary of State and full consultation.

LLW Topical Strategies, David Rossiter (LLW Repository Ltd)

David set out thinking to date on what would be the key strategy topics for consideration in the LLW strategy and management plan. There are: the waste management hierarchy, waste packaging, waste transportation, and inventory / waste tracking. The presentation covered in detail some of the key areas for consideration under each of these headings. David referred to the Topical Strategies report that will be distributed to the LLW STRATEGY GROUP for comment in the following few days.

LLWR Ltd Consignor Support Strategy, Martin Walkingshaw (LLW Repository Ltd)

Martin provided an overview of the repository consignor support strategy, with a focus on developing a strong relationship between the repository and consignors in order to deliver on extending the life of the repository and reducing the NDA's overall LLW liability. Martin highlighted how consignor support had to respond to LLWR's new responsibilities at a UK level. He outlined the structure of a new consignors support organisation that would deliver waste treatment options, inventory management and real support in addition to service development and oversight seen in the past. Martin highlighted the key focus on increased segregation at source that will be need to support application of the hierarchy and short term aims to consolidate segregated waste at LLWR in order to increase opportunity for treatment.

Questions and Answer Session

To start the afternoon Q&A session the members and participants were asked to introduce themselves and indicate what they were looking for from the LLW STRATEGY GROUP. These are recorded below:

- Opportunity to represent wider views
- Develop opportunities to work with each other
- Communication to wider groups with respect to engaging on what could be controversial projects
- Interface with regulators
- Develop a structure for who does what, when and where
- Start initiatives
- Effective prioritisation of the issues
- Work towards sustainable long term solutions
- Quick move from strategy to implementation
- Implementation and implementation soon
- Common end point and objectives
- Not a talking shop and with a focus on delivery
- Transparent understanding of cost, value and impact on carbon footprint
- Feedback on proposals
- Consideration of all factors affecting strategy
- Learning and working together
- Recognition that people are busy
- To be involved, have a voice, bring something to the table
- Change
- Open arena for moving ILW to LLW where possible
- Turning theoretical plans into reality
- Keep in touch with the ideas being generated
- Outputs in line with policy
- Share information between projects
- Keep up momentum
- Clear understanding of what people want from transport
- Working together
- Ability to speak to other representatives with own organisation
- Incorporate national planning framework considerations
- Keep a focus on the national perspective, remembering all who are involved, particularly with respect to transport
- Feedback
- Clear direction to the LLWR site
- Support from all parties
- Endorsement / Breaking down of barriers
- A communications plan
- Implementable strategy
- Well informed advice, continued positivism, tolerance, patience
- Joint ownership of the strategy

Comments on the Topical Strategies

Richard Evans (Cumbria County Council), noted that some of the issues discussed could prove controversial in the wider public forum. Richard proposed including sustainability appraisal as a topical strategy to ensure that proposals are defensible.

Juliet Long (Environment Agency), noted the need to manage attitudes and also knowledge transfer and retention.

Shaun Gorman (Cumbria County Council), noted that there could be a barrier to delivery around public perception of risk. Ensuring the public fully understand the implications and context of the issues will be key.

Jim Cochrane (SEPA), reminded the group of the importance of engaging local authorities who could be recipients of waste, in addition to the supply chain organisations who will get involved.

Laurence Cook, (Sellafield Ltd), proposed a fifth topical strategy around funding, financing and incentivisation. Laurence noted that there could be perception that the new PBO at LLWR will reap the benefit of other people's hard work.

Steve Whittingham (Department for Transport), noted a need for wider engagement outside of the nuclear industry and proposed a topical strategy around communication.

Group Discussion on LLW STRATEGY GROUP logistics and principles of operation

Various issues were discussed with the following points noted:

- Electronic media acceptable over paper based
- Meeting location should vary throughout the UK, using membership sites and locations if / where possible
- There was a request to plan meetings as far ahead as possible, with a request for an indication of the content of meetings and how they tie into the programme for delivery of strategy
- There was a request for a document register that is electronically linked to document files
- Friendly reminders for responses to documents etc are acceptable
- There is a need to determine how the group can demonstrate progress
- There was a general acceptance of the idea of having sub-committees on specific issues that could convene between LLW STRATEGY GROUP meetings, although needs to be accepting of people's availability; opportunity to use video conferencing
- A programme of other engagement activities would be useful, for example NDA National Stakeholder Group
- There was a request for a generic presentation that members and participants can use at their own sites
- Presentations should be published as PDF to the web
- Goals and objectives of the LLW STRATEGY GROUP should be clearly stated
- There may be need to consider the acronym "LLW STRATEGY GROUP"

There was a brief discussion on the LLWR review of the UK's LLW inventory, noting that it would look at both LTP's and IWS's. There was a call to include non-NDA sites in the inventory. Other on-going activities were raised, such as the UK radioactive waste inventory, which will be published soon, and a Defra project on the UK wide nuclear liaison group.

The members and participants were reminded of their actions resulting from this meeting:

1. Review Topical Strategies and provide comments by 16 May 2008
2. Provide feedback on LLW STRATEGY GROUP ToR by 16 May 2008
3. Provide response to plan for LLW Strategic Review by 30 May 2008
4. Provide any other feedback on overall NDA LLW Programme