

NDA launches UK strategy for managing low level radioactive waste

The **Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)** has published the UK Strategy for the Management of Solid Low Level Radioactive Waste (LLW) from the Nuclear Industry.

Low level waste covers a wide variety of lightly contaminated material that arises as scrap and redundant equipment in both nuclear and non-nuclear industries. It generally comprises plastic, paper, clothing, wood, metal and building rubble.

Managing this waste effectively is vital for nuclear decommissioning and power generation operations and for other LLW producers, such as hospitals and universities.

Publication of the final strategy follows a consultation on the draft, which ran from June to November in 2009. 74 responses were received on the draft strategy and its accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment. These were provided from a wide range of parties, including Regulators, Local Authorities from across the UK, supply chain companies and other interested groups. This process provided valuable feedback to NDA that helped to develop the final strategy.

The strategy targets better application of the waste hierarchy to reduce the amount of solid low level radioactive waste generated and reduce reliance on disposal. It was developed in response to Government's 2007 policy for the management of solid Low Level Waste. The objective is to ensure continued capability and capacity for the safe, secure and environmentally responsible management and disposal of LLW in the UK.

Analysis of the consultation responses indicated general agreement with the main principles set out in the draft. These were that waste should be managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy; that NDA should make the best use of existing LLW management assets; and that there is a need for new fit-for-purpose waste management routes. The LLW Repository, where the majority of solid LLW waste is disposed of, is central to the strategy. It is important that this asset is used wisely.

A number of responses emphasised the need for early dialogue with stakeholders and local communities where LLW management initiatives may affect people. It was emphasised that transparency of the decision making processes, based on robust information, will be the cornerstone of successful implementation.

Joanne Fisher, the NDA's Head of Lower Activity Waste, said: *"We are very pleased to be publishing the final strategy. A great deal of work has gone in to this – and we are grateful for all the consultation responses received, which have helped us to strengthen the final strategy.*

The consultation told us that people want to reduce the environmental impact of LLW management, reflecting the way other waste producers manage wastes, by reducing reliance on disposal in the ground.

Based on stakeholder feedback, we are confident that the final strategy better addresses peoples concerns, and provides guidance on how to make effective waste management decisions".

The principles outlined in the UK Nuclear Industry LLW Strategy are being actively employed by waste producers across the UK and the benefits of applying the waste hierarchy are being realised. The NDA will continue to provide strategic leadership with regard to its implementation.

Ends

**For further details please contact Rachael Collins on 01925 802255 or
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Additional notes:

You will be interested to know that the UK Nuclear Industry LLW Strategy has been published. You can find it at the link below:

<http://www.nda.gov.uk/news/llw-strategy.cfm>

This includes links to the final document and also to the consultation pages, where you'll find our consultation response as well.