

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 15th December 2022
Item: 10
Subject: Local authority representation at Steering Group meetings
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Introduction

At the September 2022 Steering Group meeting a paper was presented that noted the ongoing process of local government reform in England and the implications this presented for representation at Nuleaf meetings. These implications are summarised in Appendix 1.

The paper contained a number of recommendations. Members supported these recommendations subject to amendment to reflect a clarification that the current rule of one vote per elected authority would remain, and that would sit with the elected member nominated by the member authority or with their designated representative who would have their voting rights.

As is the case at present, it was agreed that more than one officer from each member authority will be able to attend Steering Group and other meetings (though this may not always be possible at in-person meetings). It was confirmed that officers would not have voting rights.

The revised recommendations are presented below for approval.

Recommendations:

1. That more than one Elected Member from each member local authority be able to receive information and participate in the Steering Group and other Nuleaf meetings.
2. That Article 10 of the Nuleaf Constitution be amended to clarify this. It is proposed that the new Article 10 should read: *"Member authorities will have one vote at Steering Group meetings. This vote will be held with the Elected Member nominated by the member authority. If the nominated Elected Member is unable to attend a meeting, then they will be able to send a designated representative who would have their voting rights. Other Elected Members and officers from member authorities will also be able to receive communications and to attend meetings. Those wishing to do so should notify the Nuleaf Secretariat."*

Appendix 1: Local authority representation at Steering Group

Recent years have seen major changes in local Government in England, with a reduction in the number of local authorities through the creation of unitary structures in many areas. This process is continuing.

In terms of active Nuleaf members, new unitary councils have been formed in Dorset and Northamptonshire, with unitary authorities in Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness and Somerset due in 2023.

This trend presents challenges for Nuleaf. Issues for our network include:

- The UK's nuclear decommissioning and waste management infrastructure will be covered by fewer councils, meaning that Nuleaf may have fewer contributing member authorities.
- New local authorities will often be larger in area. This could mean that the centre of power and decision making may be more removed from nuclear communities.
- Some local authorities will host a considerable number of nuclear facilities. As an example, the new Cumberland authority will host Sellafield, the LLWR and three of the four GDF Community Partnerships. These facilities may cover a number of electoral wards and it will be the responsibility of more than one Elected Member to represent the views of those impacted by these facilities.
- Some of Nuleaf's most long-standing Elected Members are unlikely to be selected as the Nuleaf representative of their new authorities. Thus, the organisation will lose a lot of experience and insight.

Appendix 2: Nuleaf Constitution

With regard to meeting attendance, our current Constitution states the following:

Article 8. Contributing and corresponding member authorities are entitled to attend (a) Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and (b) quarterly Steering Group (SG) meetings. Only contributing member authorities are entitled to vote at AGMs and SG meetings.

Article 10. Member authorities will nominate councillor and officer contacts for receipt of information and invitations to meetings.