

LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING

Minutes of the Steering Group meeting held in the Smithy Room, Washington Central Hotel, Workington, 15:00 – 17:00

Present:

Cllr David Moore	Cumberland Council (Chair)
Cllr David Blackburn	Leeds City Council (NFLA Vice-Chair)
Cllr Mike Caswell	Somerset Council (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Mark Fryer	Cumberland Council
Cllr Joseph Ghayouba	Cumberland Council
Cllr Tom Daly	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Paul Thomas	Folkestone and Hythe Council
Cllr Martin Hill	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Chris Davies	South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Jonathan Brook	Westmorland & Furness Council
Cllr Neville Evans	Ynys Mon County Council
Jonathan Cook	Cumberland Council
Nik Hardy	Cumberland Council
Naomi Goold	East Suffolk Council
Bethany Rance	East Suffolk Council
Terry Burns	Essex County Council
Charlotte Rushmere	Essex County Council
Linda Marsh	Folkestone and Hythe Council
Linda Townsend	Gloucestershire County Council
Richard Outram	Manchester City Council
John Burton	Somerset Council

Louise Martin	Somerset Council
Gillian Ellis King	South Gloucestershire Council
Ross Walker	Suffolk County Council
Rachel Whaley	Westmorland & Furness Council
Iwan Jones	Ynys Mon County Council
Chloe Atkinson	Nuleaf
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf

Guest Speakers:

Andy Harper	NDA
Jamie Reed	NDA

1.	Welcome and apologies	ACTION
1.1	The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted the high level of attendance and that he was pleased to see three Council leaders and several new elected members present. This was a sign of Nuleaf's success. Everyone presents introduced themselves.	
1.2	Apologies were received from Tommy Judge – Manchester Council and Andrew Gutherson – Lincolnshire County Council.	
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th July 2023	
2.1	It was agreed that the previous minute was a true record of events.	
3.	Matters Arising	
3.1	All matters from the previous meeting have been dealt with. It was proposed that it would be useful to invite Sir Nigel Thrift, Chair of CoRWM (Committee on Radioactive Waste Management) to speak at a future meeting.	PM
4.	Consultation on NDA Socio-economic Strategy	
4.1	Jamie Reed, the NDA's Director of Social Value, delivered a presentation to members. He highlighted an upcoming consultation on a refresh of the NDA's Socio-economic Strategy.	

	<p>Mr. Reed welcomed this opportunity for pre-consultation engagement with Nuleaf, given the importance of local authorities as stakeholders and partners of NDA Group. He noted the value of Nuleaf as a forum that can bring together councils that have shared interested but also diverse local situations.</p> <p>He highlighted the changes within NDA Group over the last 2 years with the move towards 'One NDA', something that is now almost complete. There is now a core Socio-economic team of 4 staff including himself and Andy Harper. They are supported by 11 further staff working across Sellafield, LLWR, Magnox and Dounreay.</p> <p>The current Socio-economic Strategy was published in July 2020, near the start of the Covid pandemic. Originally the Strategy was intended to be in place for longer, but the rapidity of social and economic change post Covid means that it has been decided to refresh it on 3-yearly basis. This also helps link the Strategy more to evolving policies due to changing governments at UK and devolved level.</p> <p>Feedback from Nuleaf, local authorities and other stakeholders will help shape the approach to funding, decision making and governance and the approach to social impact across the NDA Group. In addition to Nuleaf, pre-engagement had been held with individual local authorities and SSGs. The formal consultation is likely to begin at the end of November 2023 and will run for 12 weeks.</p> <p>The Chair thanks Mr Reed for his presentation and welcomed the extension of the consultation to 12 weeks, something that he and others had been calling for.</p>	
4.2	<p>The meeting opened up to discussion:</p> <p><i>Do you think there will be much change with the strategy?</i></p> <p>The revised Strategy will not be radically different – what we have committed to do is to revise it every three years in case there is a need to respond to any significant changes in the wider landscape that occur. Funding for socio-economics will remain constant.</p> <p><i>The NDA estate is changing with the incorporation of the AGR fleet. How is that impacting on your future socio-economic plans?</i></p>	

	<p>We are in dialogue with Magnox about that. There will be engagement and socio-economic changes required as NDA operations expand.</p> <p><i>The last Strategy is called a Socio-economic Strategy, but it is very heavily weighted towards economic issues. With this refresh is there more scope to address wider social issues such as education and skills?</i></p> <p>I think this is a good point. However, the Strategy does have to follow obligations under the 2004 Act. It has been made clear to us that we should not stray into areas of strategic provision provided by other government departments.</p> <p><i>I know you are looking at a three-year horizon but are you also working with EDF to consider what the longer-term horizon might look like?</i></p> <p>We are speaking with EDF but there needs to be more engagement around future changes.</p> <p><i>There are huge contracts being awarded for work at Sellafield but how does the local community gain the maximum value from these, not just economically but also in terms of wider social impacts?</i></p> <p>It is a good point. If you look at Workington and Whitehaven, you would not necessarily feel that they are benefitting greatly from the huge investment at Sellafield.</p> <p>We will continue to work to deliver on our targets for Social Value and the Supply Chain. We intend to produce an investment report which will be publicly available. This will show the economic impact and challenges in our communities within the UK.</p> <p><i>When we talk about skills we often focus on graduates but apprenticeships are also of critical importance. Will more apprenticeships be offered by NDA Group in future?</i></p> <p>We have a successful Graduate programme, but we are looking more at apprenticeships and building partnerships with colleges. We should be engaging more with 12–16-year-olds to encourage them to consider nuclear careers.</p>	
4.3	The Chair thanked members for their contribution and thanked the NDA for their presentation.	

5.	Update on national developments in radioactive waste management	
5.1	PM introduced the paper, highlighting several items of note.	
5.2	There was interest in item 1.5 regarding NDA work on planning. It was requested that this be followed up with a meeting between Frank Wigley and the Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG). PM confirmed that he had already invited Frank Wigley to update the group at their next meeting at the end of October.	
5.3	It was requested that a meeting be arranged with Great British Nuclear (GBN), either as part of a Steering Group or as a stand-alone session. This would enable members to question GBN on their planned engagement with local government.	PM
6.	Update on the Geological Disposal Facility siting process	
6.1	<p>PM introduced the paper and highlighted several items of interest. He noted the joint announcement by the leaders of Lincolnshire and East Lindsey Councils that they would move to a test of public support in Theddlethorpe in 2027. Cllr. Martin Hill, the Leader of Lincolnshire County Council, commented on the background to this decision and the reasons it was felt important to set a clear date as this would help focus engagement and highlight the need to avoid drift within the process.</p> <p>It was commented that there had not been recent engagement with NWS on the GDF programme and a session would be welcome. PM responded that a presentation and discussion on the GDF siting process had been arranged for the December Steering Group meeting.</p> <p>A question was asked about the voting age for participation in the Test of Public Support. PM said that he assumed this would be 18 but was not sure if that was flexible. There was a case to make it 16 given the very long-time frame for the project and the impact it would have on future generations. He agreed to ask NWS and would report back.</p>	
7.	Date of next meeting	
7.1	This will be on the 14 th of December, via Teams. Invitations will follow.	PM

8.	Any other Business	
8.1	PM updated members on staffing. Following the recruitment of Chloe Atkinson in July he had been seeking to also recruit a Senior Policy Advisor. Five people were interviewed but none were considered suitable. He was now exploring other options and would be able to update members at the Next Steering Group.	PM

ACTION LIST

<i>7th September 2023</i>			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
3.1	Sir Nigel Thrift to be invited to a future Steering Group meeting.	PM	Noted in list of potential Steering Group guests. Discussed with Sir Nigel at CoRWM meeting in November. He indicated an interest in joining a future meeting.
5.3	GBN to be invited to speak to a future meeting of Nuleaf.	PM	Noted in list of potential Steering Group guests. Invitation to be extend at a suitable time.
6.3	PM to consult NWS on whether there is an agreed voting age for the GDF Test of Support.	PM	NWS contacted and has provided a response. This will be reported back to Steering Group.