

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 14th December 2023
Item: 7
Subject: Review of Annual Gathering 2023 and proposal for 2024
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Introduction:

This report provides a review of the Nuleaf Annual Gathering held in Workington in September 2023 and puts forward a proposal for the 2024 Gathering.

Recommendations:

1. That members provide any further reflections on the 2023 Annual Gathering in Workington.
2. That the proposal for the Annual Gathering 2024 is approved subject to any amendments agreed at the meeting.

1. Review of Annual Gathering 2023

1.1 Nuleaf held its second **Annual Gathering** in Workington on the 6th to 8th September. The meeting included:

- A Steering Group which heard from Jamie Reed, NDA Director of Socio-economics.
- Site visits to Sellafield and the Low-Level Waste Repository (LLWR).
- A networking dinner which was addressed by **Cllr Mark Fryer**, Leader of Cumberland Council, **Martin Walkingshaw** of Nuclear Waste Services (NWS); and Nuleaf Chair **Cllr David Moore**.

The Gathering was the best attended Nuleaf event for many years with almost 40 members participating in at least one element of the programme. Also welcome was the attendance of a number of local authority leaders and Chief Executives and of many Elected Members and officers from across England and Wales who were joining a Nuleaf meeting for the first time.

Feedback on all aspects of the Gathering was requested and received. This was very positive with comments including:

- The event was well organised with a varied programme that was co-ordinated in an efficient way.

- Given the long distances that many had to travel, the offer of a second nights' accommodation helped to make what was a busy programme less tiring with more opportunities for networking.
- The booking of Nuleaf members on to the same trains meant that it was possible to catch up with colleagues during the journeys to and from Cumberland.
- The accommodation and catering was of a decent standard.
- While train delays impacted on the journey of a number of participants, Nuleaf dealt well with the situation and was able to ensure that those arriving late into Carlisle were provided with appropriate transport to Workington.
- The opportunity to spend time with colleagues was very beneficial. While online meetings have many advantages in terms of time and convenience, there is a definite need to provide an opportunity for face-to-face engagement and to socialise with colleagues from other local authorities.
- The event was valuable in demonstrating to the NDA the high level of support for Nuleaf. It was also useful in engaging with the leadership at Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Councils.

Members also made a few comments on what they felt could be improved or done in a different way:

- There was disappointment that some who wished to attend the LLWR visit were not able to do so due to the limit on numbers imposed by the Repository operator.
- The inclusion of a 'top table' at the members dinner was not in the spirit of Nuleaf meetings.
- It was suggested that future Gatherings could include a short presentation introducing members to the area in terms of its socio-economics and demographics. It was felt this would be valuable in helping understand the context for nuclear decommissioning and waste management.
- It was suggested that a Whatsapp group be set up in advance to enable any transport issues to be communicated and addressed efficiently.

2. Proposal for 2024 Gathering

2.1 Planning is already underway for next years' Annual Gathering.

It is proposed that this is held in mid-June as the 2022 event was. The change to an autumn event in 2023 was driven by the need to manage the changeover in Nuleaf staff caused by the retirement of the previous Director's Assistant.

It is suggested that North Wales would be a suitable location. The reasons for this are:

- The meeting could include a site visit to the Trawsfynydd site. Traws is one of the three NDA 'Lead and Learn' sites and is pioneering work on Magnox decommissioning and on issues such as disposal or radioactive waste on site.

A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) is in development, and the site hosts a significant store for Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).

- North Wales is designated as a priority area for NDA socio-economic funding. Projects of note include the Trawsfynydd Transition Programme developed with Gwynedd Council and the Morlais tidal energy project off Anglesey. In addition, Cwmni Eginio has been set up as a development company to facilitate the transition to next planned use including the potential for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).
- Members could be based in Llandudno or Conwy with good mainline train connections and reasonable journey times to most parts of the country.
- There is scope for hosting a Nuleaf Welsh members meeting, for Welsh member authorities, alongside the main Gathering.

2.2 Members views on this proposal are invited.