



Nuclear Issues Board

Date: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Time: 10.30 am

Location: Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle,
CA1 1RD

- Present:** Cllr M Fryer (Chair), Cllr L Brown and Cllr Dr B Kelly
- Also Present:** Cllr D Moore, Cllr A Pratt, Cllr S Pollen, Senior Policy Advisor GDF Programme (NWS), Stakeholder Lead – Cumbria (NDA), Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) and Chief Operating Officer (NWS).
- In Attendance** Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport, Assistant Director of Thriving Place and Investment, Nuclear Policy Advisor, and Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny).

NIB55/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Barbara Cannon.

NIB56/24 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

NIB57/24 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public not be excluded for any items of business on this occasion.

NIB58/24 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 8 January 2024.

NIB59/24 Nuclear Issues Update

Nuclear Issues Update

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Nuclear Policy Advisor provided the Board with an overview of the report detailing the Nuclear Sector Developments within the Cumberland area and highlighted some key aspects including conclusion of the work to repackage special nuclear materials.

Four Members of the Council were in attendance as observers, during discussions the Chair invited the Members to ask questions and make comments. One of the observers queried the lessons learnt from South Holderness withdrawing from the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process. The Nuclear Policy Advisor noted the outcome in South Holderness demonstrated the importance of ensuring there is sufficiently robust political support in place to withstand opposition to a decision to participate in the siting process. The difference between South Holderness being only at the Working Group stage rather than at the Full Community Partnership stage was also noted.

A discussion was also had regarding GDF community benefits for all surrounding areas, and the Nuclear Policy Advisor noted that the GDF community benefit funding was intended to benefit people within the specified Search Areas whereas other parts of West Cumbria were eligible to benefit from other funding mechanisms associated with operation of the nuclear industry in West Cumbria. [The Chair noted that a review of the policy would be welcome] *[I would recommend we delete this sentence. I don't think the Chair did suggest the Council would welcome a review of the Community Investment Funding established under the Working with Communities Policy. If he did, I didn't spot it and I am not sure he would want to commit to recording that as our position.]*

An Observer queried why Cumberland appeared to be losing out on nuclear sector opportunities. The Chair agreed this was a concern and said the reasons for this were being discussed by all parties to understand fully.

Alternative Options:

To not note the Nuclear Issues Update.

DECISION:

That the Nuclear Issues Update report be noted.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Nuclear Issues Board was fully briefed on the Nuclear Sector Developments within Cumberland.

NIB60/24 Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2025

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Nuclear Policy Advisor provided the Board with an overview of the Government's Nuclear Roadmap, highlighting the proposed move away from the former approach of designating specific sites as suitable for nuclear development towards a flexible approach where developers may propose any site, they consider meets the Government's nuclear power siting criteria. Cumberland is responding to the consultation on the proposed revised approach to siting and will echo points being raised in the separate responses being made by the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeaf) and the New Nuclear Local Authorities Group (NNLAG) about the need to maintain the status of sites such as Moorside that have already been designated under the current approach to siting.

A discussion was had regarding the need for innovation and new nuclear projects within Cumberland. While acknowledging the importance and value of the waste management and decommissioning sector, there was a desire to build and improve on the region's nuclear sector capabilities so it was not seen as being concerned solely with the waste and decommissioning aspects of nuclear. The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) noted the need to avoid language that could suggest waste and decommissioning is not also an attractive sector in which to work as this could negatively impact on staff recruitment and retention.

An Observer requested further clarity on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) approach to release of NDA owned land for purposes such as new nuclear power. The Nuclear Policy Advisor highlighted that the Nuclear Roadmap document refers to this matter and makes clear NDA's primary consideration must be effective delivery of its own decommissioning objectives while also stating that the NDA will in future publish a prospectus of land it may be willing to release for other purposes. The Director for Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport then noted that Cumberland were working with the NDA to reflect and have conversations on strategy, the challenges faced though the lack of skills, workforce, and an aging population to help inform and fashion a way forward. The Stakeholder Lead – Cumbria (NDA) reiterated the importance of the ongoing conversations to all the NDA to explore all opportunities with Cumberland. The Chair agreed that the way forward needed to be clear to deliver for the community.

Alternative Options:

To not note the Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2025.

DECISION:

That the Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2025 report and the summary of the Council's approach to potential nuclear developments within Cumberland be noted.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Nuclear Issues Board was fully briefed on the consultation on the Government's Civil Nuclear Roadmap and the Council's response to the consultation.

NIB61/24 Sellafield Ltd People Strategy

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) provided the Board with an overview of the position on Sellafield recruitment issues, noting that this issue was raised briefly at the Board's previous meeting. A member of the Sellafield HR Team had planned to present the information but unfortunately was unable to attend. The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) then highlighted that the Sellafield Capability Plan 2024/25 to 2034/35 was currently being created and, once available, would be shared with the Board and further information could be provided upon request.

A Member highlighted some positives from the overview provided, such as recruitment reaching people within target estates, the large recruitment campaigns, and the addition of apprentices. The Member asked for clarification as to whether the 300 apprenticeships was included within

the 1100 recruitment figure. The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) noted the need to make sure the entry requirements highlighted functional skills and were fit for the role and agreed to check to see whether the apprenticeship figures were included within the overall recruitment figure or separate.

An Observer queried if there were future opportunities in Sellafield to follow the Cumberland apprenticeship framework to all for vocational skills to be part of the apprenticeship. The Chair noted that Cumberland were working with Sellafield on that, to invest more in the scheme, especially the work being undertaken with care leavers. The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) also highlighted the educational outreach work being undertaken with schools to help promote the attractiveness of the industry, something which hadn't been required historically, but with the change in culture was now necessary.

Another Observer questioned whether there was a move away from qualification requirements, instead using assessments as part of the recruitment process, and whether this would help improve the number of those with mechanical jobs such as fitters. The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) noted that vocational skills and relevant on the job skills were in much more demand than qualifications with large numbers applying when jobs for the shop floor and mechanical areas were advertised. The Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) also commented that there were struggles in all areas regarding recruitment, but that through the capacity of a number of issues, such as coping with the large numbers applying, would be addressed.

A discussion was regarding welfare within Sellafield, with it being noted that there are a number of groups driven by the workforce and supported by HR to look at welfare, mental health and events taking place. The Director for Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport commented that joint collaboration between Cumberland Council and Sellafield to understand the full complexity of workforce issues and create the appropriate way forward as part of a strategy.

Alternative Options:

To not note the Sellafield Ltd People Strategy Update.

DECISION:

That the Sellafield Ltd People Strategy Update be noted.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Nuclear Issues Board was fully briefed on the Sellafield Ltd People Strategy.

NIB62/24 Future Frequency of Meetings

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Leader noted that this discussion would be deferred until further conversations could be had with the relevant partners on appropriate timeframes for reports which would work with the frequency of meetings.

Alternative Options:

To make a change to the proposed frequency of meetings without all the information required and need to amend the frequency again at a later date.

DECISION:

That the frequency of meetings would remain as currently planned within the draft 2024/25 Calendar of Meetings.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Nuclear Issues Board had the correct frequency of meetings required within the calendar of meetings.

NIB63/24 Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be confirmed once the 2024/25 Calendar of Meetings was agreed at the Cumberland Annual General Meeting in May 2024.

The meeting finished at 11.30 am