



Agenda

Nuclear Issues Board

Thursday, 7 March 2024 at 10.30 am

Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle, CA1 1RD

The press and public are welcome to attend for the consideration of any items which are public.

**Enquiries and requests for supporting papers to: Rose Blaney
Email: rose.blaney@cumberland.gov.uk**

Membership

Cllr M Fryer, Leader of the Council

Cllr L Brown, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Executive Member - Adults and Community Health

Cllr B Cannon, Executive Member - Financial Planning and Assets

Cllr Dr B Kelly, Executive Member - Cumberland Policy and Regulatory Services

Substitutes:

N/A

Access to Information

Agenda and Reports

Copies of the agenda and Part A reports are available for members of the public to inspect prior to the meeting. Copies will also be available at the meeting.

The agenda and Part A reports are also available on the [Cumberland Council website](#).

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by Councillors of disclosable pecuniary interests, personal interests, other registerable interests and any other interests in respect of items on the agenda

3. Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items of business on the agenda.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 10)

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting on 8 January 2024.

5. Nuclear Issues Update (Pages 11 - 28)

To receive a written update regarding Nuclear Sector Developments from the Nuclear Policy Advisor.

6. Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2025 (Pages 29 - 34)

A report from the Nuclear Policy Advisor on implications and consultations.

7. Sellafield Ltd People Strategy

To receive a presentation from the Sellafield HR Team.

8. Future Frequency of Meetings

To discuss and agree the frequency of Nuclear Issues Board meetings for 2024/25.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Nuclear Issues Board to be confirmed.

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Nuclear Issues Board

Date: Monday, 8 January 2024

Time: 10.30 am

Location: Council Chamber, Allerdale House,
Workington, CA14 3YJ

Present: Cllr M Fryer (Chair), Cllr L Brown, Cllr B Cannon and Cllr Dr B Kelly

Also Present: Cllr D Moore, Cllr A Pratt, Cllr S Pollen, Cllr J Ghayouba, Senior Policy Advisor GDF Programme (NWS), Stakeholder Lead – Cumbria (NDA), Regional Affairs Manager (Sellafield Ltd) and Executive Director (NuLeaf).

In Attendance Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport, Nuclear Policy Advisor, Nuclear Industry Advisor, Principle Planning Officer and Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny).

NIB43/23 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

NIB44/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

NIB45/23 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED - that the items in Part A be dealt with in public and the items in Part B be dealt with when the Public and Press are excluded.

NIB46/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a true and accurate record of the meetings held on Tuesday 7 November 2023.

NIB47/23 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 the responses from Sellafield, the Office for Nuclear Regulation and Cumberland (included within the report) to the series of articles published by the Guardian on nuclear safety and workplace culture at Sellafield and the Council Leader's response to a letter from the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) to Parish and Town Councils in West Cumbria (included within the report) about public views on a GDF

A Member asked if there had been any response to the letter the Council Leader sent to the NFLA. The Nuclear Policy Advisor noted that the NFLA had published their response on 2 January 2024. The Chair highlighted that the NFLA press release had actually been quite helpful to those seeking information on the issue as it had included the Council's letter as well as weblinks to the appropriate page on the Community Partnership websites with information about the latest public opinion monitoring work undertaken by the Partnerships.

Four Members of the Council were in attendance as observers and during discussions the Chair invited the Members to ask questions and make comments. One of the observers, as Chair of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership and a representative of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) said that the Community Partnerships and were happy with the response the Council Leader had provided to the NFLA's letter and noted that none of the Parish and Town Council's approached by the NFLA currently planned to undertake their own opinion surveys both due to the cost of doing so and because it is unclear what substantive action they could take in response to its results.

Another Observer commented on the Council's appropriate response to the Guardian articles, noting that changes had been implemented on the site with Union involvement and that the behaviours and cultural issues referred to in the article had already been challenged and addressed. The Chair highlighted that it was the local community and those who worked on the site who would be the first to speak up should there be any safety issues or concerns affecting the operator's social license to operate.

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.

NIB48/23 NDA Socio-Economic Strategy consultation

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Nuclear Policy Advisor provided the Board with an overview of the report, highlighting that the consultation was still ongoing with a draft response to the NDA Socio-Economic consultation due to be drafted over the coming days before going to the Chair for approval.

A Member asked if any of the proposed changes to the strategy were seen as a surprise and whether those changes aligned with the Cumberland Plan. The Nuclear Policy Advisor noted that the changes being proposed were not a surprise due to conversations being had throughout its development on how those improvements could be made. The Nuclear Industry Advisor noted that the NDA's strategy was working to align with Sellafield's strategy which

would in turn align and work with the Council's priorities. The Chair highlighted that all the organisations within the area with a corporate social responsibility, including Cumberland, were working to align their strategies to invest in the community and help lift local people up.

A Member asked if consultation on the draft response could extend beyond the Portfolio Holder for Nuclear, which both the Nuclear Policy Advisor and the Chair agreed to extend to the Board as a whole.

A Member noted positively the intention to include a reference in the Council's response to the potential scope for NDA to work with the Council on its Nature and Climate Strategy as well as on its Economic Strategy.

An Observer commented on the importance of informing people within the community about the social impact funding available and the NDA's commitment to local towns and communities, raising awareness about the opportunities available. The Chair highlighted the strong community groups within the area and the need of the Executive, Sellafield and the NDA to work together to critique and not criticise. The Nuclear Policy Advisor noted that improved visibility about the social impact funding and resources available would be beneficial.

Alternative Options:

Cumberland Council could not respond to the consultation having already made an input during earlier discussions with the NDA about it.

DECISION:

That the Nuclear Issues Board noted the draft updated NDA socio-economic impact strategy and that officers would clear a draft response with Board Members before submission.

Reason for Decision:

Recognising the significant impact NDA activities have on the economy of Cumberland, it is appropriate for the Council to engage with the NDA about how best to ensure its mission in West Cumbria delivers lasting socio-economic benefits to local communities and is aligned with the Council's own priorities.

NIB49/23 NDA Business Plan consultation

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Nuclear Policy Advisor provided the Board with an overview of the report, highlighting that the consultation was still ongoing with a draft response to the NDA Business Plan consultation due to be drafted over the coming days before consulting the Board for approval.

A Member noted the ambitious 2029 timeline for return of foreign owned High Level Waste (HLW) and queried whether there would be an income stream for Sellafield holding the waste for an extended period. The Regional Affairs Manager acknowledged that the target date is stretching. He went on to note that the schedule of returns is partly dictated by whether foreign customers have in place the facilities and infrastructure to receive the materials and also by operational issues around licensing and dealing with foreign governments. The Board were

assured that the proportion of HLW at Sellafield that is foreign owned is relatively small and is being stored safely pending return to its owners. The Regional Affairs Manager also noted that the income from storing the HLW forms part of the original contract and that any discussions around further income would need to be held at a government level.

An Observer queried whether there would be a benefit to Sellafield if the customer can't take the waste and whether there was enough storage capacity. Another Observer noted that HLW was represented a small percentage of the waste stored at Sellafield and that progress in managing Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) was of a higher concern with the supply chain needing confidence that Sellafield will meet scheduled project deadlines to commit the necessary investment in resources and people.

A Member asked if there was a process in place to insist that foreign countries take their waste back. The Chair and Nuclear Policy Advisor answered that there was a process in place to ensure that the contract is upheld, and the waste taken back as they are contractually obliged to with a working relationship in place between the UK Government and the respective governments to help deal with this.

Alternative Options:

Cumberland Council could choose not to respond to the annual consultation on the NDA's rolling three-year business plan, but this would represent a missed opportunity to engage on the detail of the NDA's programme of work and express views on it.

DECISION:

That the Nuclear Issues Board noted the draft NDA Business Plan and that officers would clear a draft response with Board Members before submission.

Reason for Decision:

To provide a brief response is appropriate identifying certain detailed matters on which the Council will wish to engage further with the NDA.
The Council will wish to engage further with the NDA.

NIB50/23 Sellafield Showcase Report

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Chair highlighted the report and the showcase held at Lilyhall before inviting Members and Observers to ask questions.

An Observer noted that two issues for Sellafield were the lack of skills and recruitment issues, highlighting the need to use local people and provide opportunities for all. They also commented on the competition with Barrow for staff rather than working with them and how the creation of a 'Nuclear Passport' might help improve that relationship. The Nuclear Industry Advisor noted that recruitment was a priority for the Council, to look at how to get the most out of those in the area and how to bring more people in.

Another Observer noted that the current vetting period for Sellafield was averaging around six to nine months, compared to the three months for Barrow, which was causing a recruitment issue and highlighted that the 'Nuclear Passport' would be a bonus if it would help speed up the process. The Nuclear Industry Advisor agreed to follow up the issue with the Sellafield HR department and the Regional Affairs Manager suggested to have someone from HR/Recruitment present an update to the Board, which the Board agreed would be beneficial.

The Board and Observers discussed the multiple avenues that would help break down the barriers to help increase recruitment. The Chair noted that recruitment was an issue for more than just Sellafield, but also Cumberland, and that the focus for Cumberland would be on investing in people and the correct areas of the community to help build up the workforce as a whole.

Alternative Options:

To not note the Sellafield Showcase Report.

DECISION:

That the Sellafield Showcase Report be noted.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Nuclear Issues Board was fully briefed on the forward pipeline of major projects that Sellafield Ltd. are producing.

NIB51/23 NuLeaf Presentation

(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Holder: Leader's Portfolio

Subject:

The Executive Director of Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeaf) provided the Board with a presentation on the role of NuLeaf and on forthcoming changes in government policy on radioactive waste management and potential impacts of this with a Cumberland focus.

The Board thanked the Executive Director (NuLeaf) for the presentation.

An Observer queried the merits of Drigg as a potential site for a Near Surface Disposal (NSD) facility for ILW and also whether communities in West Cumbria were receiving an appropriate level of benefit from the amount of waste being stored at sites in the region. The Executive Director noted that the NDA may have an aspiration for more than one ILW NSD facility but there seems reason to expect they will consider the Drigg Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) site as a potential location. NuLeaf has submitted views to the Government on the proposals and has successfully pressed for the policy to include provision for a Performance Planning Agreement with relevant Local authorities. On the community benefits associated with storage of radioactive waste, the Executive Director highlighted that NuLeaf were currently investigating comparable international systems for community benefit to help inform arguments around appropriate community benefits and noted that there are comparisons also with community benefits related to renewable energy projects.

Another Observer noted the great success that had been achieved in diverting waste from the LLWR, extending the site's operating life and enabling the prospect of using it also for a NSD facility but queried how local communities in West Cumbria would receive such a development, noting the cumulative impact of hosting existing waste management facilities and also being considered as a potential location for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). The Executive Director agreed that diversion of waste from LLWR showed good progress in sustainable waste management and noted that NuLeaf also recognised the need to consider the combined effect on communities of multiple nuclear sector projects in one area.

A third Observer, the Chair of NuLeaf, highlighted that NuLeaf was seeking funding from Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) to carry out research into international best practice on community benefits geological disposal facilities to help inform UK policy on benefits to local communities. The Executive Director noted that this was part of Nuleaf's role to help inform policy making.

Alternative Options:

To not note the NuLeaf presentation.

DECISION:

That the NuLeaf presentation be noted.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Nuclear Issues Board was fully briefed on NuLeaf and the work that can be done with them in Cumberland.

NIB52/23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held Thursday 7 March 2024 at 10.30am in Conference Room A&B, Cumbria House, Carlisle.

NIB53/23 Public and Press

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business of the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph Number 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Local Government Act.

[A 10 minute break took place to allow for members of the press and public to leave as the meeting entered Part 2]

NIB54/23 Nuclear Planning - Verbal Update

(Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraph 3)

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Board with a verbal update on the current Nuclear Planning situation and allowed the Board to ask questions and receive clarifications.

The meeting finished at 12.51 pm



Report to Nuclear Issues Board

Meeting Date – 7 March 2024
 Key Decision – No
 Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Nuclear
 Directorate – Place
 Lead Officer – Darren Crossley

NUCLEAR ISSUES UPDATE

Summary: This Report is a summary of current developments on nuclear matters relevant to the Board’s remit and includes data contributed by Sellafield Ltd and Nuclear Waste Services.

Recommendations: That the Nuclear Issues Board should routinely receive a written update on a range of nuclear sector topics relevant to Cumberland.

Tracking

Executive:	Not Applicable
Scrutiny:	Not Applicable
Council:	Not Applicable

1. Sellafield Ltd

- 1.1. **PFCS retrievals:** Waste retrievals due to restart imminently following modifications to the crane’s grab.
- 1.2. **MSSS retrievals:** Silo retrievals continue with 15th skip now filled & awaiting consignment to interim store. Silo Emptying Plant machine currently retrieving waste into Skip 16.
- 1.3. **First Generation Magnox Storage Pond:** In February six skips were exported from the FGMSF to the skip size reduction facility: the first skip exports in two years and another step towards returning to full retrieval operations after an 18-month retrievals operations standdown. ONR recently granted licensing permission to commence transferring skips of

zeolite from the pond to of the new Interim Storage Facility where they will be stored in self-shielded boxes for up to 10 years ahead of storage in the Box Encapsulation Plant.

- 1.4. **Pile Fuel Storage Pond:** The Skip Handler machine returned to full service in January allowing the pond microdigger to be removed for repair and maintenance. Project work has progressed to create access in Bays 3 & 4 ahead of next phase of retrievals. Historic fuel consolidation within the pond continues, achieving circa 900kg of fuel into skips.
- 1.5. **Highly Active Liquid Waste Vitrification Plant:** Vitrification Line 1 – in operation, processing highly active liquor stocks into liquid glass and filling storage containers. Vitrification Line 3 – unavailable. In planned outage – return to service scheduled for June. 107 units/waste containers filled and placed in store. 115 year end forecast.
- 1.6. **High Hazard Reduction/Remediation:** Pile 1 Chimney dismantling – load testing completed on tower crane. Assembly of the mobile demolition platform continues at Leconfield Industrial Estate. AGR Windscale Turbine Hall - waste removals and soft strip has commenced. Calder Turbine and Blower Houses - asbestos surveys have started: will facilitate future demolition activities. Waste Monitoring & Compaction Plant (WAMAC) – skip size reductions operations continue: 25 skips processed this financial year. Chemical collections, loading and dispatch to off-site facility continues. Special Nuclear Materials can repackaging - Finishing Line 4 successfully re-packed the last of the 916 cans ahead of the 2023/24 financial year key target/milestone. This represents the conclusion of a decade of work in preparation and delivery of the re-packaging programme and a significant risk reduction achievement for the site.
- 1.7. **VRR (Vitrified Residue Returns) programme:** Preparations continue ahead of the second return to Germany in early 2025. 4 flasks, out of 7 have been packaged for delivery, with 28 containers placed in each flask.
- 1.8. **Media activity / Stakeholder issues:**
- While The Guardian's Sellafield investigation remains open, coverage has reduced significantly since the turn of the year.
 - SL is continuing to seek opportunities to engage proactively with the media to build more positive portrayals of the Sellafield mission.
 - BBC Radio 4's PM programme will broadcast live from Sellafield on 29 February, featuring news reports on decommissioning and spent fuel management.
 - Filming for the BBC's One Show feature on robotics at Sellafield took place on 1 March. The content is due for broadcast during March / early April.

2. Low Level Waste Repository

2.1. Cumberland Council visit: The Leader / Nuclear Portfolio Holder visited the LLWR site in January, accompanied by senior officers, and received a detailed briefing on current and planned operations at the site including progress on the project to cap the trenches and vaults.

2.2. Capping Project: The Environment Agency (EA) has issued an Action Required warning letter to LLWR Ltd over the continued delay in completing closure of previous disposals at the LLWR site on the basis that this represents a failure to apply Best Available Techniques. In response, NWS is reviewing the schedule and funding of the capping work. The NWS CEO provided a presentation to the September meeting of the Nuclear Issues Board on the LLWR capping project in which he explained the background to the delay to the original schedule for the work. NWS aims to appoint a main contractor for the next phase of the project in May with work starting in July.

2.3. Grout Campaign Completion: The LLW Grout Campaign concluded early February with 251 containers grouted and ready for disposal at the Repository - the first grouting campaign in almost four years providing stock to fill the last remaining spaces in Vault 8.

2.4. TRS Drums: The final shipment of the Treated Radwaste Store (TRS) Drums from Nuclear Restoration Services' Winfrith site was received on 25 January and all of the 1068 drums are now emplaced in Vault 8 – the conclusion of an eight year programme of work.

3. Geological Disposal Facility Programme

3.1. The UK Government announced on 25 January that a further community (South Holderness) had joined the GDF siting process, establishing a Working Group to consider whether to move to the next stage of forming a Community Partnership. Cumberland Council's position on that development was to welcome it and be ready to engage with the relevant local authority involved (East Riding of Yorkshire Council) to share information about our own experience of participating in the GDF siting process. However, following opposition from local influential stakeholders, including the local MP, a motion was tabled calling on the Council to immediately withdraw from the GDF siting process. The motion was debated and voted on at a meeting of full council on 21 February with the result that the Council decided to withdraw. NWS is now winding down the South Holderness Working Group. Further information is provided in this BBC article. NWS also issued a statement on the matter.

3.2. The Leader has provided a "view from the Council" opinion piece for publication in forthcoming editions of the Mid and South Copeland GDF Community Partnership newsletters. The text has been posted on the Community Partnership websites and a copy is attached to this Report as a background document.

3.3. On 1 February, Millom Town Council responded to the Nuclear Free Local Authorities group's letter of December which had urged them and other Parish & Town Councils in the GDF Search Areas to undertake a ballot of residents on the GDF issue. Millom Town Council copied its response to the Leader of Cumberland Council and kindly agreed to our including their letter as a background document to this Report to the Nuclear Issues Board.

3.4. On 11 December, Cumbria Crack published an informative article reporting on a visit to the deep geological disposal facility currently under construction in France. The article is well worth a read for anyone interested in the technical aspects of geological disposal of radioactive waste and provides a helpful insight into what a UK GDF might look like.

3.5. Community Partnerships (CPs) updates:

South Copeland

- Two film nights were held in November to help the community understand the GDF siting process (Millom 24th Nov, Drigg 25th Nov).
- Two geology events were held to help the community understand the latest findings from the seismic surveys (Millom 31st Jan, Drigg 1st Feb).

Mid Copeland

- In February, two Partnership events were held in Beckermeth and Gosforth to help people find out more about Community Investment Funding and meet successful applicants who have already provided new facilities. GDF drop-in events also continued in February with 3 events in Beckermeth, Seascale and Gosforth.
- Youth engagement continues with a programme which includes Seascale Scouts.
- Partnership members are to visit the British Geological Survey (BGS) headquarters in Nottingham in March.

Mid and South Copeland

- The NWS engagement team held GDF drop in events in the areas of Whitehaven, Egremont and Cleator Moor in January - 44 people attended. A further event in Whitehaven is planned for a Saturday, June 1, at The Beacon Portal.
- In February, NWS commissioned Yonder to carry out a telephone survey across Cumbria aimed at obtaining information about levels of awareness, understanding and support for the work of NWS with 525 telephone interviews over a 2-3 week period.
- Aerial surveys off the coast continue (five so far since October) to capture information on the presence and numbers of birds and marine wildlife in the area helping to provide necessary baseline environmental data.

4. NuLeaf Update

4.1. Nuleaf submitted a response to the NDA consultation on their Business Plan 2024-27 and to the NDA Social Impact and Communities Strategy.

4.2. Nuleaf's Radioactive Waste Planning Group meeting on January 31st included discussion with DESNZ on possible reform to Environmental Impact Assessment for Decommissioning Regulations (EIADR); discussion with Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) on the Master planning approach adopted for the Winfrith site; and discussion with NWS on the planning aspects of the GDF process.

4.3. Nuleaf's Annual Gathering will be held in North Wales on the 18th and 19th June 2024 and will include a site visit to the NDA's Trawsfynydd site and presentations on socio-economic projects.

5. Future Nuclear

5.1. The Government published its Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2050 on 11 January along with two associated consultations on the proposed revised approach to siting new nuclear power stations and on alternative routes to market. See separate Report for more detailed analysis of the Roadmap and advice on the two consultations.

5.2. It was announced in early February that Community Nuclear Power and the Westinghouse Electric Company had signed an agreement to develop a project in Teesside aimed at constructing 4 Westinghouse AP300 design SMRs. Community Nuclear Power stated that it will continue to engage with stakeholders, including Rolls Royce SMR, about a potential SMR project in Cumbria. The Westinghouse press release on the Teesside project can be found [here](#).

5.3. A body called the Chiltern Vital Group has agreed to buy a section of the former Berkeley Magnox power station site in South Gloucestershire from current owners, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and plans to create a hub for businesses involved in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) working in partnership with Rolls Royce SMR. For further details, see the [BBC news article of 29 January](#).

5.4. On 25 January, the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero announced that it had awarded a grant to the value of £33.6 million to GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy under the Future Nuclear Enabling Fund (FNEF). The grant funding will support GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy take its BWRX300 SMR design through the UK nuclear regulators Generic Design Assessment process and develop it for deployment in the UK. In December, it had announced a similar FNEF grant of £30.05 million to Holtec Britain to support development of its SMR160 design based on Mitsubishi and Hyundai technology.

5.5. On 20 January, the Daily Telegraph carried an article suggesting AMR developer Newcleo was withdrawing "plans" for an AMR project in Cumbria and is instead

concentrating on plans for a similar project in France, suggesting this decision was prompted by the UK Government's Civil Nuclear Roadmap ruling out considering AMR proposals that involve fuel made using UK stocks of civil plutonium. As the separate Report on the Roadmap says, the Government has indeed make clear to market participants it will not support proposals that involve fuel made using UK civil plutonium. Newcleo is not one of the six SMR / AMR developers shortlisted by Great British Nuclear (GBN) to bid for Government contracts and it is not clear to what extent it may have previously developed any specific plans for a project in Cumbria.

5.6. A group called Britain Remade held a public meeting in Whitehaven in January to examine and promote the prospect of new nuclear power developments in West Cumbria. The meeting was attended by Trudy Harrison, MP and by prospective candidates for the Parliamentary seat of Penrith and Solway. The Council did not attend the event.

6. NDA / UK Policy / Regulatory Developments

6.1. The Council submitted responses to the consultations on the NDA's updated Business Plan and Social Impact & Communities Strategy. The responses are attached to this Report as background papers. The Council also contributed to development of the separate responses from NuLeaf and the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group.

6.2. Other developments include:

- UK Government's updated consolidated policy on Radioactive Substances & Nuclear Decommissioning is due to be published in final form shortly;
- NDA is beginning to develop its Strategy 5 and is engaging on it through the Critical Enablers Theme Overview Group;
- NDA is holding a national supply chain event on 27 June in Telford;
- ONR guidance on site delicensing is due to be finalised and published later this year - reflecting legislative changes introduced by the Energy Bill;
- The process to establish Nuclear Waste Services Ltd as a single legal entity is due to complete at the beginning of April 2024.

Implications: None.

Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities – The Council has a responsibility to monitor nuclear sector developments relevant to Cumberland and to engage on these matters with the Government and nuclear sector participants, supporting the economic development and environmental sustainability priorities in the Cumberland Plan.

Relevant Risks – No risks arise from the proposals.

Consultation / Engagement – No other parties need be consulted about the proposals.

Legal – The proposals raise no legal issues.

Finance – The proposals have no financial implications.

Information Governance – No restrictions apply to this information.

Impact Assessments – No impact assessment is required.

Contact details:

Contact Officer: Jonathan Cook Ext: 01946 598472

Appendices attached to report:

- None

Background papers:

- Council Leader article for GDF Community Partnership newsletters.
- Millom Town Council response to letter from Nuclear Free Local Authorities group.
- Council response to NDA Business Plan.
- Council response to NDA Social Impact & Communities Strategy.

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A view from Cumberland Council – by Leader, Mark Fryer

February 6, 2024

Cumberland Council is participating in the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process as the Relevant Principal Local Authority for both the Mid and South Copeland Community Partnerships: a role established in the Government’s Working With Communities Policy and that gives the Council certain powers and responsibilities.

The primary purpose of the Community Partnerships is to give people credible information about what a GDF is, about why it is considered the right way to manage the UK’s higher activity radioactive waste and about what it might mean if a GDF were in fact constructed here. Cumberland Council fully supports that work and our representatives on the Partnerships are keen to play an active role.

The Council fully appreciates there are differing views about whether it would be a good thing for our area to host a GDF and we remain neutral on the matter. But we do recognise there is a real need for a permanent solution to managing the waste concerned – ongoing surface storage is not a longer-term solution.

Participating in the GDF siting process means the question of whether West Cumbria might or might not be a suitable location for a GDF can be properly resolved once and for all while allowing us all to examine in detail what the implications of siting a GDF here might be and whether it is something that could fit with our own ambitions for this area.

Given that much of the waste intended for a GDF is held at the Sellafield site, Cumberland will be affected by the GDF project regardless of where the facility itself is located so it makes sense for our community to be part of the conversation.

The task of examining the geology off our coastline and assessing whether it might provide a suitable site for a GDF is challenging and could take the developer some years to conclude.

During that process, I hope people will continue to engage positively with the Community Partnerships, take an interest in the site evaluation work as it progresses and help us to ensure any concerns and questions people may have about the project are properly examined and addressed.

Mark Fryer, Leader Cumberland Council

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MILLOM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk
Mrs Cath Jopson
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E-mail: theclerk@millomtowncouncil.co.uk



Millom Council Centre
6 Newton Street
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Cumbria
LA18 4DR

Letter sent Via email to: richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk

Councillor David Blackburn
Chair of Nuclear Free Local Authorities
Nuclear Policy Section
Policy & Partnerships, City Policy
Level 3, Town Hall Extension,
Library Walk, Manchester M60 2LA

1st February 2024

Dear Cllr Blackburn

Thank you for your letter dated 6th December 2023 and for your interest in the work of Millom Town Council.

Regarding your request that Millom Town Council (MTC) consider undertaking a local opinion survey of our community about the possibility that the area could become the long-term home for the country's Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Millom Town Council discussed your letter and the response that you received from Cumberland Council at our meeting on 30th January 2023 and are of the opinion that conducting such a survey would be premature and have little value for the following reasons:

- MTC has always declared its neutral position in the debate as ultimately it will be the community who will have the final say should the possibility of the area becoming the host community become more likely
- There needs to be much more credible information available to enable the community to balance both the positive and negative effects of such a development to make an informed decision that will impact on the community future generations
- Currently the community has not made an application or voiced an opinion requesting MTC to carry out such a survey
- The results of such a survey could only be taken as a snapshot in time on a process that will take many years to complete and could not be considered a definitive decision of the community

Millom Town Council will continue to listen to the voices within our community and should the situation change and when further information become available, we will continue to review our position on this matter and MTC's position on a GDF development locally.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Cath Jopson
Millom Town Council Clerk

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON DRAFT NDA BUSINESS PLAN 2024 - 2027

1. Cumberland Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) Business Plan for 2024 - 2027. This response has been developed by officers in consultation with elected Members on the Council's Nuclear Issues Board.
2. With a significant proportion of the NDA's mission located in Cumberland, including many of its most challenging and hazardous facilities and materials, Cumberland Council engages with the NDA on all aspects of its work and welcomes the NDA's ongoing commitment to transparency and engagement with local communities.
3. The Business Plan is one of a number of documents the NDA publishes to explain what it is doing and how it goes about it. Providing clear information about its work to as wide an audience as possible is a key part of the NDA's engagement activity and the Council welcomes introduction of the NDA's new Mission Progress Report as a helpful contribution to this aim.
4. We note page 14 of the Business Plan discusses prioritisation and allocation of funding and includes the statement that the NDA will focus on reducing its highest hazards and risks. Cumberland Council strongly supports this position. Achieving progress with remediating high hazard legacy facilities at Sellafield as quickly as possible must be the NDA's priority. Where Sellafield forms part of plans for decommissioning facilities at other NDA sites (such as consolidation of Dounreay Fast Reactor fuel at Sellafield), such plans should not have a negative impact on the speed of progress with recovering spent fuel and waste from those priority legacy facilities at Sellafield.
5. The draft NDA Business Plan contains helpful information about anticipated timescales for the completion of different programmes of work. From this we would make a number of points and observations. We note from page 21 of the document that all fuel from the AGR power station fleet is scheduled to be in interim storage by 2035 and that some enhancement of capacity is required at Sellafield to facilitate bulk

defueling of AGR power stations. Presumably this data will be amended if AGR fleet operator EDF intends now to extend the operating lifetime of the four operating AGR power stations. We look forward to receiving more information about how any revised plans for operating those stations may affect the extent to which the envisaged enhanced fuel management capacity at Sellafield is needed.

6. We note also from page 21 that all remaining Magnox fuel is scheduled to be in interim storage by 2042. We will continue to engage with the NDA and Sellafield Ltd about progress in delivering this outcome and about what risks might affect achievement of that target date.
7. We note from page 23 that all legacy Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) should be retrieved by 2060 and would again stress the need to prioritise recovery and treatment of waste from high hazard legacy facilities at Sellafield. There appears to be a typing error on the date attached to outcome 34. We assume this date should read 2134. We note also that all UK owned High level Waste (HLW) is expected to be in interim storage by 2039 and that repatriation of HLW to foreign owners will be completed by 2029 in accordance with contractual commitments. We will continue to engage with the NDA about progress with the waste return programme and about any operational obstacles to achieving these target dates.
8. Page 24 indicates all new NDA buildings will be operational by 2090. As the Local Planning Authority, Cumberland Council will continue to engage constructively with Sellafield Ltd about proposed new buildings expected to be constructed at the Sellafield site.
9. As a member of the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeaf), Cumberland Council will contribute to NuLeaf's separate response to this consultation. As a member of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG), we will also contribute to their separate response.

Ends

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON DRAFT NDA SOCIAL IMPACT & COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

1. Cumberland Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) Social Impact & Communities Strategy. This response has been developed by officers in consultation with elected Members on the Council's Nuclear Issues Board.
2. With a significant proportion of the NDA's mission located in Cumberland, including many of its most challenging and hazardous facilities and materials, Cumberland Council engages with the NDA on all aspects of its work and welcomes the NDA's ongoing commitment to transparency and engagement with local communities. We expect the UK Government to continue to prioritise and fund the NDA's mission to make Sellafield safer sooner and enable beneficial new developments in Cumberland where appropriate.
3. The NDA's draft Social Impact & Communities Strategy expresses the NDA's commitment to achieving maximum positive social impacts for communities near its sites and to working closely with Local Authorities about how to ensure its work is delivered in a way that aligns with local objectives and ambitions.
4. With such high levels of investment going into projects at the Sellafield site, the most significant impact the NDA can have in Cumberland is by ensuring its expenditure on day to day operational activities supports development of a strong local supply chain and contributes to sustainable economic development in the region. We therefore welcome the NDA's recognition on page 4 of the draft Strategy that scope exists to generate beneficial social value through activities that fall outside the scope of the Strategy itself including:
 - Recruitment, skills and training;
 - Buildings, accommodation and land use;
 - Social value delivery through the supply chain & procurement; and
 - Bespoke planning agreements.

5. Given that much of the work and expenditure at Sellafield is delivered through the Programme and Project Partners (PPP) Framework, the NDA must ensure those enterprises operating under that Framework demonstrate a similar commitment to achieving social value for local communities from their activities. This is consistent with the six strategic themes of the Strategy set out on page 6 of the draft document, (notably Social Value Chains and Collective Impact) and with the expectation expressed on page 7 that social value contributions from activity at NDA sites, including supply chain enterprises, must align with the aims set out in this Strategy.
6. Cumberland Council welcomes the commitment stated on page 10 of the draft Strategy to the success of the Industrial Solutions Hub project at Cleator Moor. We believe this project represents precisely the type of initiative that can deliver long term benefits and help create a more sustainable and diverse local economy in West Cumbria.
7. Finally, we welcome the NDA's offer to assist Cumberland Council with development of an Economic Strategy for Cumberland. The NDA and Cumberland Council have a shared interest in making Cumberland a thriving and attractive place to work and live and it makes sense to work together in this area. There may be scope for similarly beneficial collaboration on development of the Council's Nature & Climate Strategy and we hope to engage further on that.
8. As a member of the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeaf), Cumberland Council has contributed to and supports NuLeaf's separate response to this consultation, noting in particular:
 - the proposed further dialogue with NDA about NuLeaf undertaking a review of how NDA approaches community benefits;
 - the suggestion that total social impact funding levels should be doubled from £15m to £30m with a view to getting the figure up to 2% of total NDA budget;
 - the suggestion that NDA sets out more clearly its approach to achieving social impact through operational activities which fall outside the scope of this strategy;
 - the call for NDA's commitment to achieving "maximum positive social impact" from its activities to be embedded in Strategy 5;

- the call for a better approach to measuring the outcomes and impacts of social impact activities.

9. As a member of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG), we have also contributed to development of their separate response. We note in particular the point the WCSSG makes about the scope for Cumberland Council and the NDA to work co-operatively on “long term workforce planning/recruitment and procurement/supply chain activities at Sellafield and LLWR”. We agree these represent areas of mutual concern in which there seems scope for beneficial co-operation between the Council and NDA.

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Report to Nuclear Issues Board

Meeting Date – 7 March 2024
Key Decision – No
Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Nuclear
Directorate – Place
Lead Officer – Darren Crossley

UK GOVERNMENT'S CIVIL NUCLEAR ROADMAP TO 2050

Summary: The UK Government has published its Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2050 along with two associated consultations. The Roadmap includes proposals for a revised approach to siting new nuclear power stations which will form the basis of a proposed new National Policy Statement (NPS) for nuclear power developments for the period after 2025 (EN7). The revised approach would move away from the approach whereby a limited number of sites are designated as suitable for nuclear development over a specified period. In future, developers will have the scope to apply the established siting criteria to any site they consider likely to meet them with the expectation being that brownfield and former industrial sites are most likely to be considered. Those sites such as Moorside that have already been designated under the current nuclear NPS for nuclear power (EN6) will remain potential options but will no longer represent the only locations available to developers. Cumberland Council's planning team is leading on a Council response to the siting consultation. As a member of the New Nuclear Local Authorities Group (NNLAG), Cumberland Council is also contributing to the response NNLAG will make to this consultation which will include comments about the need to ensure EN7 provides clarity about the continued status of sites already designated under EN6. There appears no need for the Council to respond to the consultation on alternative routes to market for new nuclear.

Recommendations: That the Nuclear Issues Board notes the Roadmap and;

- agrees the Council's planning team should lead on a response to the consultation on a revised approach to siting;
- agrees the Council should participate in development of the NNLAG response to that consultation - specifically in relation to the future status of sites designated under EN6.

- agrees there is no need for Cumberland to respond to the consultation on alternative routes to market for new nuclear;
- agrees the text included at paragraph 1.6 below represents an appropriate summary of the Council’s approach to potential nuclear developments within Cumberland.

Tracking

Executive:	Not Applicable
Scrutiny:	Not Applicable
Council:	Not Applicable

1. Background

1.1. In January, the UK Government published its Civil Nuclear Roadmap to 2050 along with two associated consultations. The proposals involve a revised approach to siting new nuclear power stations that moves away from the previous approach of undertaking a strategic siting process that results in a specified number of designated sites at which new nuclear power stations may be sited. Instead, a more flexible approach is proposed whereby developers may propose development at any site they consider meets the Government’s established siting criteria. The suggestion is made that former industrial or brownfield sites may represent appropriate sites. The revised approach reflects the conclusion that the previous approach did not result in the hoped for number of proposals, that the number of sites required to meet the target of 24GW of nuclear power by 2050 will be much larger and will include the need for sites for Small Modular Reactor (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR) facilities in addition to sites for large scale nuclear power stations.

1.2. The position of sites previously designated under EN6 as suitable for large scale nuclear power stations is addressed in sections 2.3.7 – 2.3.11 of the consultation document. This states that the previous designation under EN6 would be a material consideration in any decision on a Development Consent Order for a power station on those sites as would the provisions of the overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1) which sets out the need for nationally significant energy infrastructure and designates low carbon energy development (including nuclear) as a Critical National Priority. Given that the intention of the proposals appears to be to provide that a much wider range of sites can potentially be proposed, it seems reasonable to consider the Government is not seeking to reduce the prospect of developments being proposed at previously designated sites. However, there is some concern about the risk of ambiguity on this matter and NNLAG proposes to address this concern in its response to the consultation.

1.3. The Roadmap goes on to address the question of scope to site new nuclear developments on land owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and states that the NDA will in future periodically publish information about landholdings

that will soon be made available for reuse. In doing so, the Roadmap also makes clear that the NDA's primary responsibility is the cost-effective delivery of its mission to decommission legacy nuclear facilities indicating that making land available for beneficial reuse is a desirable secondary outcome. This suggests the NDA's first duty must be to consider whether land it owns could be used in a way that helps achieve cost effective clean-up of legacy facilities before considering its release to potential developers which appears to reflect the NDA's existing approach. The Roadmap includes the following conclusion on this matter:

“The NDA will periodically publish a prospectus stating which of its land holdings will soon become available for reuse. Where there is commercial interest in available land, the NDA and the government will run fair and transparent processes to lease or option land, with the assumption being that sites go first to new nuclear projects, where that is feasible and represents value for money.”

1.4. Other key points to note about the Roadmap are:

- Through the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023, Environmental Impact Assessments are being replaced by Environmental Outcome Reports which the Government believes will provide for a more streamlined and outcomes based approach to the assessment process and providing information for decision makers;
- The Government will consult on classifying nuclear energy as “environmentally sustainable” within the UK’s Green Taxonomy giving it access to the same investment incentives as renewable energy projects. This will also make it easier for mainstream finance providers and investors to participate in nuclear projects since they can do while continuing to meet their commitments to invest only in environmentally sustainable projects;
- A clear statement that “The UK will not support the use of plutonium stored at Sellafield by advanced nuclear technologies, whilst high hazard risk reduction activities are prioritised at site” providing clarity that proposals for AMR designs based on fuel made using UK civil plutonium stocks are not being sought;
- An emphasis on promoting careers in the nuclear sector within communities at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum; and
- A recognition of the unique value of the Cumberland based National Nuclear Laboratories (NNL) and a commitment to conclude a strategic review of NNL’s future role by the end of Financial Year 2023/24.

The Two Consultations

1.5. Cumberland Council has the option to submit a response to each of the two consultations that accompany the Roadmap. The consultation on the revised approach to siting new nuclear developments is the first step towards developing a new National Policy Statement (NPS) for nuclear (EN-7) which establishes the national needs case for new nuclear power stations and provides the framework against which development consent applications are considered. The Government

intends to consult on a draft of EN-7 later in 2024 with a view to formally designating it in 2025. The consultation asks respondents to consider the extent to which they agree with the Government's conclusions about the proposed revised approach to siting and on the siting criteria that should apply. Given the technical nature of these questions, the Council's planning team is considering what points Cumberland might wish to make in response. Separately, our concerns about ensuring the status of sites previously designated under EN6 remains unchanged under EN7 will be raised in the consultation response being made by NNLAG.

1.6. On the consultation on alternative routes to market for new nuclear, while views from local authorities and local communities are specifically invited, it is not clear what particular contribution a local authority would have to make on the matters dealt with in the consultation questions. The issues raised appear ones more appropriately addressed by industry parties, developers and investors although any private individual could of course also choose to submit views about those issues. The Council could similarly choose to submit its own observations but it is not obvious what specific points we could make that would add value. The Council's broad position of being open to the prospect of new nuclear power developments within Cumberland has been expressed previously and need not be reiterated in this context. The Council's approach to potential new nuclear power developments in Cumberland is summarised in the text below which was developed in discussion with the Nuclear Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive, Director of Place and the Council's Communications team:

- Cumberland Council is open to potential new nuclear developments within Cumberland provided these contribute to a more resilient economy, provide a positive legacy to the local community and that any adverse social, environmental and economic impacts are mitigated appropriately.
- Any proposed development must be examined on its merits with conclusions based on a rigorous assessment of benefits and costs.
- A new UK nuclear programme presents an opportunity for Cumberland irrespective of where new facilities may be located. We have a strong existing nuclear skills base and supply chain and could help provide the workforce and the engineering and construction capabilities that will be required.

2. Proposals

2.1 That officers in the planning team be delegated responsibility for preparing a Cumberland response to the consultation on a revised approach to siting and that the Nuclear Policy Adviser works with NNLAG on the text of its separate response.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 Cumberland Council could choose to respond additionally to the consultation on alternative routes to market rather than concluding that the questions raised fall outside its area of responsibility and expertise.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 In view of the potential for new nuclear developments in the UK to have implications for Cumberland, the Council has reason to monitor strategic policy developments in this area and to respond to consultations where this appears appropriate.

Implications: None.

Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities - The proposals support the economic development and sustainability priorities in the Cumberland Plan.

Relevant Risks – No risks arise from the proposals.

Consultation / Engagement – No other parties need be consulted about the proposals.

Legal – The proposals raise no legal issues.

Finance – The proposals have no financial implications.

Information Governance – No restrictions apply to this information.

Impact Assessments – No impact assessment is required.

Contact details:

Contact Officer: Jonathan Cook Ext: 01946 598472

Appendices attached to report:

- None.

Background papers:

The Government's Civil Nuclear Roadmap document and links to the two associated consultations can be found [here](#).

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