

## **EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **LEADER'S REPORT**

#### **COUNCILLOR MISS E WOODBURN – PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

##### **1. Nuclear Issues**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> March the Council jointly hosted, with County and Allerdale Councils, a nuclear issues seminar in Kendal. Members of the Copeland Nuclear Working Group, other Councilors and Nuclear Officers joined the other delegates from Central, Regional and Local Government along with members of environmental groups, NDA, nuclear site licence contractors, nuclear regulators and consultants for a day of information sharing and discussion.

Topics ranged from radioactive waste management to nuclear new-build along with presentations from Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. The delegates also took part in workshop breakout sessions to discuss:

- What would your vision be for West Cumbria's Future?
- Cumbria's Future Role in Radioactive Waste Management. Where do we go from here?

The day was a success and showed continued progress in working together in understanding the many issues facing the local community with regards to the nuclear industry.

##### **2. Energy Review**

On 23 January 2006, Government issued a consultation on a major review of its Energy Policy; *"Our Energy Challenge – Securing Clean Affordable Energy for the Long-Term"*. First developed in the 2003 White Paper *"Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy"*. The consultation concentrates on the major changes and government concerns since the 2003 White Paper, these include:

- More evidence of the adverse impacts of climate change;
- The UK's rapid move to a net import position of gas and oil,
- Concerns about energy security;
- The sharp rise in energy prices.

The review notes that, “As the prime Minister has said, this includes looking again at nuclear power”.

Response is required by 14 April 2006. The Council’s response was discussed at the Nuclear Working Group on the 12 April and it was agreed if any Members would like to see a copy its now available on the Council’s website.

Central issues will include:

- The UK’s growing dependence on oil and gas imports, high-energy prices, energy security and commitments to tackle climate change. The consultation includes projections of rising carbon dioxide emissions, which put the UK far off track for its goal to cut emissions by 60% by 2050.
- The Government aims to use the review to help establish a ‘sufficiently durable’ market framework for companies to invest in the UK ‘in a way that reflects public policy goals, particularly for the reduction of carbon.’
- The review specifically addresses the case for building new nuclear stations, although any decision to do so would require a subsequent White Paper.

Malcolm Wicks, the Secretary of State for Energy, said it would look at options to deal with nuclear waste from new plants and whether recent energy price changes make the economics of nuclear more

- Palatable than at the time of 2003 energy White Paper.
- In contrast, the document highlights the cost to consumers of renewables and their ‘intermittent’ production.
- Progress with energy efficiency and renewables has been faltering since 2003, and the review will examine “what further measures, if any, might be desirable to foster both”.
- Explore the potential of carbon capture and storage, clean coal technology and micro-generation.

### **3. LLW Review**

This consultation paper was published on 28 February 2006 and responses need to be made by 31 May 2006. It includes specific questions, a section for other comments and a Regulatory Impact Assessment upon which comments are also invited.

It is a consultation by Defra and the DTI about clarifying and reviewing the options for the long-term management of solid Low Level Radioactive Wastes (LLW). It is intended to lead to a new policy that will update the 1995 White Paper “Review of Radioactive Waste Management Policy: Final Conclusions (Cmnd 2919)”.

The review parallels and complements the review of the long-term management of higher activity wastes which is being carried out by the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM). That review should report to Ministers in July 2006 before Parliamentary recess.

After the Government and the devolved administrations have considered the consultation responses it is intended to present a new policy and supporting documents to the relevant Parliament and Assemblies.

Summary of the main points in the consultation paper:

- LLW contains relatively low levels of radioactivity.
- Most of it arises from the operation of nuclear power stations, nuclear fuel reprocessing and the decommissioning and clean up of nuclear sites.
- It is estimated that 98% of the wastes will be from nuclear sites including power stations.
- Whilst LLW is forecast to constitute about 90% of future radioactive waste arisings by volume it will contain less than .0003% of the total radioactivity.
- It is estimated that 2 million cubic metres of LLW will need long-term management. **However, this excludes an estimated 18 Million cubic metres of contaminated land at Sellafield.**
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#### **4. BNG – Approval to sell**

On the 30th March BNFL gained Government approval to sell its specialist nuclear clean-up business, British Nuclear Group, including British Nuclear Group Sellafield Limited (BNGSL).

Both BNFL and BNG welcome the approval saying:

- BNFL's Chief Executive Michael Parker said: "The sale is a positive strategic move for both the business and our employees. It gives the business the opportunity of increased performance and at the same time gives our employees increased career opportunities and the chance to earn a better future.
- Lawrie Haynes, British Nuclear Group's Chief Executive, said: "A strong British Nuclear Group means strong competition and that can only be good news for the NDA and the UK taxpayer. The stronger we are, the better placed we are to safely deliver what I call 'Big V', that is the value we can create for UK taxpayer by reducing the overall lifetime bill for cleaning up the UK's nuclear legacy.

Following the announcement BNFL will start in earnest to ensure that an open and transparent sales process is conducted as swiftly as possible. This will commence with a review of the incumbent contracts, development of pre-

qualification criteria and preparation of sales material. It is expected that the sale process will be completed by autumn 2007, earlier if possible.

## **5. NDA Strategy approved**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> March the NDA's approved Strategy was relaunched, it was subject to a three month public consultation last year. It sets out a comprehensive plan for the decommissioning and clean up of the NDA's 20 civil nuclear sites.

Key principles established in the Strategy include:

- Prioritising safety, security and the environment by making the reduction of high hazards a key focus.
- An aspiration to deliver accelerated decommissioning wherever feasible.
- A competition schedule to create a strong competitive market that will achieve value-for-money for the taxpayer.
- Maintenance and development of skills.
- Effective stakeholder engagement.
- The provision of socio-economic support for communities directly affected by decommissioning and clean-up.
  
- The new owner of BNG will continue to run the contract for managing and operating the Sellafield site until 2012.

## **6. GMF visit**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March the Council jointly hosted a two-day fact finding visit by members of a European group representing municipalities with nuclear facilities (GMF). The visit was informative and included the sharing of interests and best practice on nuclear issues relating to local communities. The Council is considering becoming a member of GMF in order to benefit from stronger links with Europe.

The visit included a business meeting with Council and NuLEAF officers and members. Presentations from UKAEA and BNGSL were given along with guided tours of the Windscale and Sellafield site as well as a visit around the Low Level Repository at Drigg.

We have also hosted a visit from over 50 Swedish delegates recently, which included meeting with local politicians, a tour of Sellafield and a full day meeting with presentations from NuLeaf, the Council and others. The feedback was that they enjoyed their visit and found out lots of valuable information that will be helpful in the work they are doing. As I have said previously we need to forge links with other European countries that have faced or are facing similar issues as ourselves and there are lots of lessons we can learn from each other.

## **2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

None

## **3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Subject: Capital Programme Monitoring

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/154

Context: This is a progress report that advises Members of expenditure to the end of December 2005, and any amendments needed to the Capital Programme for 2005/06.

### **Decision**

**a) That Members note the spend to date and project managers comments as at Appendix A;**

**b) That members note and approve the amendments to the Capital Programme totalling;**

**c) That Members note the approved programme as at Appendix B.**

Subject: Monitoring Of Revenue Expenditure For The 9 Month Period To 31 December 2006 – Exception Report

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision made by:

Decision Reference: EXE/05/155

Full Executive

Context: This report informs Members in detail of the variations in actual and expected revenue based expenditure and income over £10,000, or more than 10% of budget, for the 9 month period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005

### **Decision**

**1. The report be noted,**

**2. approve the return of £30,000 to Contingencies and £37,000 of the £55,000 to MPF for funding previously requested and approved as an Urgent Action at 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005 Executive not now required,**

**3. approve the use of the £18,000 balance to resource the delivery of the recovery plan for the backlog of benefits cases, and**

**4. approval be given to vire £3,700 from Civic and Mayoral Members Allowances to Electoral Registration Postages, and, £5,104 from Members Allowances to Civic and Mayoral Transport Running Costs.**

Subject: Guidelines for the award of Discretionary Rate Relief for Charities and Other Bodies

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/164

Context: To consider new applications and review the existing arrangements for the award of discretionary rate relief.

## **Decision**

- 1) **granting of discretionary rate relief and hardship relief in accordance with Appendix A**
- 2) **review of all existing discretionary rate relief cases to inform a further report to decide whether to change the criteria for eligibility to discretionary rate relief**
- 3) **once criteria agreed, that future applications where the criteria are met authorisation to grant relief be delegated to the Head of Customer Services**

Subject: National Association of Councillors

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/176

Context: This report considers Councillor Membership of the National Association of Councillors

**Decision: That the NAC be asked to make a presentation to Members prior to a final decision being made**

Subject: Cleator Moor Credit Union – Loan Guarantee Scheme

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/180

Context: The Cleator Moor Credit Union is seeking to expand its work in the community through the development of a loan guarantee scheme, to assist in reducing the reliance of the most vulnerable in the community on very high interest rate loans. Support has been requested in the form of a grant to cover office costs for one year

**Decision:**

**That the Executive agrees to support Cleator Moor Credit Union in the development of a loan guarantee scheme by providing a grant of £2,000 to cover the cost of renting an office in which the project can be based for one year, to be drawn from the Employment Support Fund.**

Subject: Non Domestic Rate Write Offs Over £1000

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/165

Context: To approve the writing off of various Non Domestic Rate debts over £1000.

**Decision The Executive approve the writing off of the debts shown in Appendix 1 totalling £41,744.44.**

Subject: Council Tax Write Offs Over £1000

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/166

Context: The Executive approve the writing off of various Council Tax debts over £1000.

**Decision That Executive approve the writing off of the debts shown in Appendix 1, and 1 additional case.**

Subject: Sundry Debtor Write Offs Over £1000

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/167

Context: This report asks Executive to consider the writing off of various Sundry Debts over £1000.

**Decision That Executive approve the writing off of the debts shown in Appendix 1.**

Subject: Economic Collaboration Agreement – Kosloduy, Bulgaria

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/184

Context:

Seeks Members' agreement to enter into an economic collaboration agreement with Kosloduy, Bulgaria.

**Decision: That Executive agree to:**

- 1. Support the co-operating agreement.**
- 2. Sign and finalise the draft Agreement put forward within the report in draft with final approval delegated to Fergus McMorrow, Corporate Director in consultation with the Leader.**
- 3. Establish a Management Group of relevant West Cumbrian Partners.**
- 4. Develop a manageable programme of activity with resource input identified.**