

Nuclear Projects Update

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Summary and Recommendation:

This paper provides a summary update of key projects relating to the Councils nuclear activities and Members are asked to note the current position and way forward.

1. NUCLEAR NEW BUILD

Since the last SNEB meeting the Government has agreed a strike price with EDF on the price to be paid for electricity produced from the generation of nuclear energy. The price was agreed at £92.50 MW/H over duration of 35 years.

This agreement gives other nuclear developers, such as NuGen, confidence to proceed with their investment in nuclear new build.

The Council held a meeting with NuGen last month and the developer was keen to stress their continued commitment to the development at Moorside and is expecting to progress their plans rapidly in the new year.

In conjunction with this Copeland Borough Council officers have met with Cumbria County Council officers to discuss the spatial and logistical impacts of building a nuclear power plant and to develop a proposal that will offer viable solutions to the developer and leave a positive legacy for the area.

A further meeting is scheduled with NuGen on the 17th December to progress the project and to sign off on the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) which will reimburse the Councils for all expenses involved in working on the Moorside Project.

2. NORTH WEST COAST CONNECTIONS PROJECT

In mid-September National Grid announced that they were not going to proceed with the second stage public consultation on the North West Connections Project in the autumn as anticipated.

This decision was made following meetings with senior managers and the new directors at NuGen. It was disclosed that NuGen is making good progress and is likely to be in a position to confirm key aspects of its programme in the near future. It was decided not to go ahead with an autumn public consultation, allowing National Grid to continue detailed discussions with NuGen regarding technology choice and programme.

These on-going discussions, and NuGen's own positive approach, about the outcome of choice of technology should enable National Grid to make an announcement on the start of the public consultation early in the New Year. This should allow for a more focused and informed consultation as the Project moves forward, and provide for easier understanding of all necessary works.

National Grid remain committed to undertaking a thorough and extensive public consultation exercise and, in the coming months, they will continue to work closely with NuGen, as well as all those organisations they have been working with on the Project over the past four years, to ensure this vital project can move forward in a timely manner.

Full details and information is also available on the project website: www.northwestcoastconnections.com

3. WALNEY EXTENSION OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

The Local Impact Report (LIR) was agreed and signed off at planning panel on the 09th October it was also agreed to delegate authority to sign off on the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) to the Head of Nuclear Energy and Planning.

On Tuesday the 12th November the Planning Inspectorate held a Preliminary meeting to discuss the examination procedure. The Council requested that the inspectorate hold an issue specific meeting or open floor meeting in Millom. However, it is at the inspectorates discretion were to hold issue specific meetings and what on and if they feel that all the issues such as Shore line Visual Impact (SLVIA) have already been adequately addressed in written representation then they will not hold a meeting specifically on this subject.

The examination authority will confirm date, time and place of Issue Specific hearings on the DCO by Friday the 20th December.

There has been no progress made on the issue of community benefits.

4. Geological Disposal Facility

Members will be aware that the previous siting process for a national Geological Disposal Facility ended in January of this year with the decision by Cumbria County Council not to continue to stage 4.

Government have since published a consultation document (in September) outlining the background to and the proposals for changes to the siting process.

Following the launch of the consultation a Members workshop was arranged for Tuesday 15th October when Members had an opportunity to provide comments to help shape the Council's final consultation response.

In addition the Government has arranged a number of consultation events across the UK, one for the North West held on 12th November in Penrith and a similar event for local authorities held on 14th November in London. Government/DECC officials also attended an informal Members briefing on 12th November to provide Members with an opportunity to find out more about the proposals. It is proposed that the output and feedback from these events will be used to help finalise the consultation response, which will be submitted to Government on 5th December.

A meeting of the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeaf) held on 23rd October also discussed the consultation process when local authority members were able to raise concerns regarding the proposals which are to be used to help shape the NuLeaf response. Feedback from this meeting has also been used to help shape the Council's response.

At a meeting of Executive on 19th November it was agreed that the final submission will be submitted following agreement by the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition Group. A copy of the final submission will be circulated to all Members.