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

Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council continue to work closely with the developer (NuGen Ltd.) of the proposed new nuclear power station at the Moorside site to the north of Sellafield.

NuGen are in the final legal and commercial stages of formalising their new partner Toshiba who acquired Iberdrola's 50 per cent share holdings and 10 per cent of GDF Suez earlier this year.

The Council met with the developer earlier this month to discuss the revised programme and the strategic implications and opportunities that this significant development will bring to west Cumbria.

2. NORTH WEST COAST CONNECTIONS PROJECT

Due to an issue with the booking at the Castle Green the next Stakeholder Relations Group (SRG) workshop has been rescheduled. The meeting is now proposed as taking place on the morning of Friday 4th April at the Castle Green Hotel, Kendal not the 3rd April as reported at the last SNEB meeting.

National Grid has continued to meet with senior managers and directors from NuGen and its parent companies to discuss the development programme for Moorside project to ensure that their programme for the NWCC Project is aligned so they can deliver a more focused and informed public consultation.

As a result of these discussions they anticipate that at the SRG workshop on 4th April they will be able to provide us with an update on the key aspects of the development and consultation programme for the NWCC Project.

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

3. WALNEY EXTENSION OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

The Walney wind Farm offshore extension Development Consent Order (DCO) is currently undergoing examination by the planning inspectorate. As part of this examination process the Examining Authority (ExA) have decided that given the location of the proposed wind farm, it would be appropriate to hold two open floor hearings, one on the Isle of Man and one in Millom on the Cumbrian coast.

An Open Floor Hearing (OFH) will be held on Thursday 20 March 2014 at Millom Network Centre, Salthouse Road, Millom, Cumbria LA18 5AB. The venue will open at 9.30am and the hearing will commence at 10.00am.

The ExA has had no indication of issues that might be raised at the OFH in Cumbria. They have sought prior notice of interested parties who wish to speak, and propose to allocate a time limit for them to do so. Therefore if you are interested in attending the OFH and making representations I would recommend you register your interest. They have also asked that you can confirm your attendance even if you do not wish to speak by emailing Nicholas Coombes at: WalneyExtension@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk

For Further information on this application, timetables and supporting evidence please refer to:

http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/projects/north-west/walney-extension-offshore-wind-farm/?ipcsection=exam

A hard copy of the DCO and Environmental Statement (ES) are also available for inspection at the Copeland Centre.

There has been no further development on the issue of community benefits.

4. Geological Disposal Facility

DECC has now issued a series of documents which summarise responses to the consultation into the revised process, the consultation took place in September 2013. The Document summarises the issues which have been raised. A summary of the main findings is attached as Appendix one.

Appendix One: REVIEW OF THE SITING PROCESS FOR A GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY

Exec Member: Cllr Elaine Woodburn

Lead Officer and Report Author: John Groves - Head of Nuclear Energy and Planning

Introduction

1.1 Members may recall that following the decision not to proceed to stage 4 of the MRWS GDF siting process in West Cumbria in January 2013, DECC issued a call for evidence over views of the MRWS process. The Council responded to that request in June 2013. Subsequently, in September 2013 DECC launched a public consultation on the geological disposal siting process. Through a series of workshop and member engagement events, the Council's response was formulated and sent to DECC in December last year.

1.2 DECC has now issued a series of documents which summarise responses and the issues which have been raised. The documents provide access to all the responses received.

1.3 The document now published is not a Government response. It draws no conclusions but does explain that the next steps will entail the publication of a Government Response and White Paper later in 2014.

1.4 The DECC paper seeks to draw key themes from the 719 responses received from individuals, local authorities, NGOs, MPs, political parties and trade unions

Respondent Category	**Number of Responses**	**Percentage of total**
Academia and Learned Societies	11	3%
Individuals and Society	530	74%
International Governments and Crown Dependencies	2	<1%
International Organisations;	1	<1%
Local Government	94	13%
Local NGO (Non-Governmental Organisations);	22	3%
National NGO (Non-Governmental Organisations)	7	1%
Not Stated	3	<1%
MPs, Councillors and Political Parties	12	2%
Regulators, CoRWM and other public sector organisations	7	<1%
Trade Unions	2	<1%
UK Business	28	4%
Total	**719**	**100%**

1.5 The paper also makes reference to a series of engagement events and workshops, including events held in Penrith and London which were attended by officers and members of the Council.

Summary of Responses

2.1 The consultation process posed a series of questions. The responses to each of the questions raised in the consultation are summarised. The summary here is brief - the full report better assesses the scale and degree of consensus over issues

Question 1: Do you agree that a test of public support should be taken before the representative authority loses the Right of Withdrawal? If so, what do you think would be the most appropriate means of testing public support, and when should it take place? If you do not agree with the need for such a test, please explain why.

- Consensus that there should be a test of public support before a potential host community gives up the right of withdrawal but no consensus as to how that test should be carried out.
- Some suggestions that public support should be sought early in the process to provide authority to proceed – but no clear view on timing
- Referendum an option but risk of bias and low turnout. Opinion polls less prone to impact of low turnout – scope for consultative or deliberative events given complexity of the subject.
- No consensus as to the area over which consultation should take place. Some suggestion that this should be driven by impacts rather than administrative boundaries

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposed amendments to decision making within the MRWS siting process? If not, how would you modify the proposed phased approach, or, alternatively, what different approach would you propose? Please explain your reasoning.

- Half respondents disagreed with proposed amendments to the process
- Mixed views over the benefits of a continuous process with no predetermined milestones
- A great deal of comment on roles within the process rather than the process itself. Opinions divided on where local decision making should lie.
- Questions of possible conflict of interest between government and representative authority roles as developer and decision making body but also with a seat on the Steering Group
- Scope for an independent chair of the Steering Group and potential to involve regulators
- Need for a broader, national awareness raising campaign

Question 3: Do you agree with this approach to revising roles in the siting process set out in the White Paper? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

- Majority of respondents disagreed with the proposed approach to revising roles. Districts should not have the sole responsibility for exercising the right of withdrawal
- Greater role for Government in raising awareness
- Regulators should have a more proactive role with greater independence and peer review of technical issues such as geology.

- Geological assessment should come prior to local community involvement

Question 4: Do you agree with this proposed approach to assessing geological suitability as part of the MRWS siting process? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

- Discussion over approach to geology. Geological suitability should be most important issue and a national screening process should be undertaken to focus on potential suitable areas before seeking volunteers.
- Should rule out national parks and AONB
- Cumbria should be excluded as geology already shown to be unsuitable.
- Some support over proposal to provide early assessment of suitable geology

Question 5: Do you agree with this proposed approach to planning for a GDF? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

- General agreement over the proposed spatial planning process and designation of a GDF as an NSIP
- Potential conflict of interest for the Secretary of State for Energy to propose and permit the GDF
- Planning decision should make provision for consideration of alternatives to GDF.

Question 6: Do you agree with this clarification of the inventory for geological disposal – and how this will be communicated with the volunteer host community? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

- No consensus over the approach to clarification of inventory
- Comment over the inclusion of new build wastes
- Concern that GDF would be used for waste from overseas or devolved administrations
- Questions raised over retreivability

Question 7: Do you endorse the proposed approach on community benefits associated with a GDF? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

- Disagreement with the proposed approach with concern that benefits prompted response from otherwise unsuitable locations
- Some recognition that host community benefit should reflect the role a community would be fulfilling for the rest of the nation.
- Benefits should not be administered by local authorities – benefits should be provided across wider areas with potential impact.
- Benefits should reflect longevity of GDF.
- If GDF safe and brought its own economic benefit why would community benefits be required

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposed approach to addressing potential socio-economic and environmental effects that might come from hosting a GDF? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

- Some agreement over the approach to addressing socio-economic and environmental benefits.
- Support to the early provision of balanced and impartial information to enable positive and negative aspects to be considered
- Information should be provided by independent bodies not the NDA or RWMD

Question 9: Do you have any other comments?

- Considerable focus on local issues, particularly relating to Cumbria, were considered to be out of the scope of a national consultation.
- A number of respondents took the opportunity to highlight issues relating to other consultation questions – for example, calling for geological screening to identify sites, the need for clear communication, advocating a decision making role for county councils in two tier areas in England, the importance of local consultation and that environmentally sensitive areas should be excluded from any siting process.

3. Next Steps

3.1. Later in the year, the Government will set out its formal response to the evidence submitted to the consultation. Informed by this, the Government also aims to publish a White Paper, setting out a revised siting process for a GDF.

3.2. Next steps beyond publication of the White Paper will be closely linked to the policy decisions which have yet to be taken in response to the consultation. Those further next steps will therefore be set out within or in conjunction with the White Paper.

3.3 It is suggested that this report be tabled as an update on GDF, to the next meeting of the Strategic Nuclear and Energy Board on 21 March 2014

The full report can be viewed via the attached link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/285444/2014-02-07_Summary___Consultation_on_Review_of_the_Siting_Process_for_a_Geological_Disposal_Facility_-_Final.pdf

A copy of the Council's response to consultation can be found at:

http://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/gdf_consultation_response_041213.pdf