

EXECUTIVE REPORT

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

COUNCILLOR MISS E WOODBURN – PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1 Key Issues – Progress Report

1.1 Nuclear Issues

NDA Draft Strategy: - The Draft Strategy was launched on the 12th August in Copeland. The strategy covers de-commissioning, waste management, operations, nuclear materials, competition & contracting, innovation, finance and socio-economic considerations. I was involved in the official launch itself emphasising the kind of partnership approach we hope to continue to develop with the NDA.

They have attempted to capture the key issues and their proposed approach to tackling them.

The NDA should be commended for the openness and transparency of the document and we will through the Nuclear Working Group then onto Full Council be making an informed and considered response before the consultation end date of 11th November. The NDA board will agree the strategy in early December and it will be submitted to Government by the 19th December, the deadline for Government approval is the 31st March 2006.

There are areas of positives within the strategy particularly in the skills and knowledge areas. They include the NDA looking at the feasibility of a “National Nuclear Skills Academy”, a “National Laboratory” and the willingness to pursue the concept of a “Nuclear Institute”. The commitment to the establishment of a National Stakeholder Group and their assurance to allow access to information to allow effective stakeholder engagement. Particularly interesting was the statement “The facilities at Drigg can no longer be regarded as the long term NATIONAL LLW repository”. We can all individually make of this what we will but it should be seen as a positive.

Their firm commitment to give the highest clean up priority to the highest hazards, most of which are located at Sellafield should be done alongside the work needed to improve the perception and marketing of the area.

As not unexpected there are negatives within the strategy and some surprises that will raise a few eyebrows within the local community. These include the amount of contaminated land on the Sellafield site that will have an impact on the site end options and the interim storage options for ILW. The NDA's plans to accelerate the de-commissioning and reduce the time taken will need to be monitored carefully and more information will be needed to monitor the impact on the workforce.

All of these and others will need a lot of communication and consultation it is imperative that the NDA take the community with them when they make these decisions. We will have a continued major role to help communicate the communities feelings and it is with that thought that we have sent the strategy to all the Parish councils asking them to let us know of their response, which we can consider when we make ours.

All Members have been provided with a copy of the strategy and I would welcome all views.

1.2 **Thorp**

British Nuclear Group has been working to recover from the fractured pipe in the Feed Clarification Cell in THORP, which resulted in a leak of 83m³ of liquor into a purpose built contained cell. BNG have identified their preferred repair option as isolating the affected accountancy tank and pipe work and using only the other unaffected tank. This solution has been subject to rigorous safety assessment and NII consultation and assessment work for the preferred option has now commenced.

1.3 **Site Security**

As Members know following the bombings in London Sellafield was placed on a higher state of alert. As a consequence a restriction was placed on parking on site near buildings. At the same time the number of cars on site was reduced (through the single occupancy principle) to enable both more thorough police checks and to ensure they had sufficient car parking space on site especially during the peak period (morning to back shift handover).

The site security status has recently been reduced. However to comply with security advice and guidelines many of the on site car park restrictions will become permanent. This means that there will not be sufficient car parking space on site to enable them to return to the arrangements pre 7 July 2005. Therefore the single occupancy principle will continue to apply indefinitely.

A project team has been created to manage both these changes and the longer-term improvements. This team includes British Nuclear Group and UKAEA personnel, as well as employee representatives.

The specific arrangements are as follows: -

A permanent parking exclusion zone is to remain in place around nuclear inventory plants and sensitive areas.

Car parks sitting totally within the 25-meter exclusion zone around buildings will have a red cross marked on all entrances indicating that the car park must not be used under amber alert.

Car parks partially within the 25 meter exclusion zone will have the excluded parking bays painted with red lines. Red lined parking bays must not be used while the site is under amber alert.

1.4 **Environment Agency – LLW Consultation**

The nuclear working group has had a presentation on the Review of Authorisations at Drigg from the Environment Agency and some Members benefited from a tour of the LLW facilities late August. The presentation raised some critical issues for the site including its acceptability as a permanent repository for Low Level Waste due to the potential of the site to be affected by coastal erosion and rising sea levels. A response to the consultation has been agreed and is available for information on request.

Following the Council's decision at the last meeting regarding the issues of "Offset" packages to mitigate against the impacts of hosting LLW at Drigg : the NDA, County Council and British Nuclear Group have now been informed of the Council's policy.

1.5 **NuLeaf Consultation Study**

The Council is partners in a study looking at practice and policy in relation to appropriate 'offset' package and veto arrangements for local communities affected by the presence of radioactive waste in general. This work is being led by the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeAF). The latter is the Local Government Association Special Interest Group for Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste that was established after work by this Council and the County Council to initiate it last year. It now has 83 members secure funding and is about to appoint its own co-ordinator; Cllr Blackwell currently chairs it. It is intended that the study will produce options and recommendations for 'offset packages'. The work will be timed to feed recommendations to Government from the Local Government Association before the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management reports to Government and before any site selection process begins. The intention is to make the recommendations the definitive view of Local Government representing their local communities.

1.6 **West Cumbria Strategic Forum**

The next meeting of the Forum is due to take place on the 19th September in London and will be Chaired by Alan Johnston Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The agenda for the meeting will include a presentation on the HE proposals, West Cumbria proofing and the Chair of the LSP and myself will be giving a presentation on the present economic situation and identifying transformational projects we want the Government to lead on.

These are:

- Higher Education / Research & Development
- Infrastructure (Road, Rail, Air and Sea)
- Sustainable Diversification

These projects have been agreed by the Local Forum Members and they also agreed that further discussions would be had with Cumbria Vision to discuss the projects we would want them to lead on.

These projects were further supported by a workshop we held with our key partners to discuss the updating of the Community Strategy and were seen as key to the future success of West Cumbria.

1.7 **NWDA – Consultation -A strategic Approach to the Nuclear Sector in the Region**

The North West Development agency has developed a Draft Strategy of how best it can support the nuclear sector in the context of the aims of the Regional Economic Strategy. It suggests that the region works towards the following Vision for the industry –

A world class centre of excellence in nuclear technology through demonstrable achievement in decommissioning, radioactive waste management, and research into nuclear power generation.

It proposes to achieve this vision action needs to be taken in 6 specific areas which are –

1.Strategic Relationships

As a region the NW needs to fully engage with all aspects of central Government nuclear policy. The NWDA has already established an excellent working relationship with the NDA and has a good dialogue with DEFRA and DTI. All these relationships must be maintained and strengthened and new relationships established especially in the areas related to waste management.

2.Attracting Investment

The NDA has established its headquarters in West Cumbria and many potential contractors are establishing in the vicinity. The region must continue to support these inward investments and relocations and for the longer term seek to attract companies from outside the nuclear sector to areas such as West Cumbria. The NWDA will also seek to support the development of a National Nuclear Laboratory, which would act as a focal point for UK R&D in civil nuclear power generation.

3.Skills and Research

A great deal of preparatory work has already been completed in developing the concept of a National Nuclear Skills Academy in West Cumbria. The NWDA will continue to support this key project, which will address many of the issues surrounding skills shortages. Higher level skills shortages will be addressed through the proposed National Nuclear Laboratory and the Dalton Institute and other initiatives such the development of the Westlakes Research Institute.

4.Supporting Supply Chains

The NWDA will build upon the existing business support activities (e.g. Business Link) and develop programmes that address the specific problems associated with the restructuring of the nuclear decommissioning supply chains. In the short term SMEs will require assistance with the new NDA tendering procedures and guidance on how they should enhance their business development activities. For the medium to long term, companies will be assisted in diversifying into new markets outside nuclear and into decommissioning work in other parts of the World.

5. Enterprise and Innovation

There could be significant socio-economic impacts associated with the falling employment levels at Sellafield. Many of those leaving the industry will be highly skills and well qualified. The entrepreneurs in this group must be encouraged to and supported in starting up new businesses. Innovation must also be supported and companies assisted in developing new opportunities for technologies and services developed for nuclear applications for new markets. Equally, companies must be assisted to innovate new products and solutions for the nuclear.

6. Influencing Infrastructure

Reviewing the regional infrastructure associated with the nuclear sector is outside the scope of this strategy. However, the importance of the road, rail and sea links for the transport of materials in and out of Sellafield are recognised and communication links between West Cumbria and the rest of the region are a key concern. In this area the NWDA's role will be indirect via lobbying and influencing to ensure the needs of the nuclear sector are acknowledged in the regional spatial strategy.

Due to the time constraints of only receiving this strategy and the short timescale we have had to respond a response was made and I will make this available to the NWP Members.

1.8 **Budget Strategy**

As reported to the last Full Council Meeting the budget and policy framework within the Councils constitution includes a requirement to publicise a timetable for consultation. The process for doing this will be similar to the process followed last year, which proved very successful and helpful in informing the BWP to aid their recommendations to Full Council. The consultation this year will include all members at different stages of the process and BWP members have agreed to give a presentation to all Copeland Neighbourhood Forums. Alongside this will be a questionnaire all forum members will be asked to complete, based on the Simalto exercise we carried out last year, this is a first for the BWP which I am sure will be successful and one which we can build on annually.

2 **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

3 **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Subject: New Initiatives Budget
Date of Decision: 26 July 2005
Decision Reference: EXE/05/0044

Context:

To notify Members of the New Initiatives Budget for 2005/06 and the earmarked reserve available and to recommend the process for approval for 2005/06

Decision

That the apportionment of the revised total budget as shown in paragraph 3 be approved.

Subject: Urgent Actions
Date of Decision: 26 July 2005
Decision Reference: EXE/05/0048

Context: To note actions taken on grounds of urgency under Executive Procedure Rules.

Decision

That action taken by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council in authorising the Head of Business and Finance to attend and taken such action necessary on behalf of the Council at a meeting of the West Cumbria Groundwork Trust pursuant to section 98 of the insolvency Act.

Subject: Whitehaven Civic Hall – Audit Report
Date of Decision: 26 July 2005
Decision Reference: EXE/05/0052

Context: This report informs members of the key findings of an audit report into the cash and banking procedures at the Whitehaven Civic Hall and submits a proposed action plan for approval.

Decision

That a) the report and action plan be noted; and

b) the action plan be monitored in three months.

Subject: Monitoring of Revenue Expenditure for the 3 Month Period to 30 June 2005 – Exceptions Report

Date of Decision: 16 August 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0058

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 3 month period 1 April to 30 June 2005

Decision

That the report be noted.

Subject: Budget Strategy 2006/07 – 2008/09

Date of Decision: 16 August 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0059

Context: This report recommends the budget strategy to be followed for the three years 2006/07 to 2008/09

**Decision
That**

- 1) **the strategy be approved;**
- 2) **the process detailed in the report be followed; and**
- 3) **a further report be brought to Members regarding proposals for consultation with the public**

Subject: Treasury Consultancy Services

Date of Decision: 16 August 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0062

Context: This report advises members of the results of the tender evaluation recently carried out for Treasury Consultancy services and seeks approval for the appointment of Butlers

Decision

That Butlers be appointed to provide consultancy services for the next three years.

Subject: Procurement of and E-Payment Solution

Date of Decision: 16 August 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0063

Context: This report advises members of the results of the tender evaluation recently carried out for the procurement of an e-payment solution and seeks approval for the appointment of CIVICA to provide the solution

Decision

That

1. **that CIVICA be appointed to provide a full e-payment solution for a five year period; and**
2. **additional funding of £20,937 be allocated from within the existing approved IEG programme**