

Nuclear Projects Update

LEAD OFFICER: John Groves
REPORT AUTHOR: Denice Gallen

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 Toshiba has acquired, in principal, the 50 per cent stake of Spanish energy company Iberdrola and 10 per cent of the stake owned by the French energy company GDF Suez, giving it a 60 per cent holding in NuGen. GDF retains the remaining 40 per cent.

Toshiba aims to complete the overall transaction within the first half of calendar year 2014.

After the closure of the deals to acquire the stake, Toshiba and its group company Westinghouse Electric Co. LLC, plans to go ahead with the construction of three AP1000 nuclear reactors on the Moorside site, in partnership with GDF Suez, a leading European nuclear operator. GDF Suez will own the remaining 40 percent stake in NuGen.

Toshiba noted that the three AP1000 units to be built on the site will have a combined capacity of 3.4 gigawatts.

The Council has welcomed the news that Toshiba have bought into the project and believe that having one majority shareholder will help to drive the project forward.

NuGen have been to Copeland earlier this month to meet with the Council and members of County Council to discuss the potential opportunities and implications for infrastructure development in the area to support the nuclear new build mission.

2. NORTH WEST COAST CONNECTIONS PROJECT

Late last year the National Grid had announced it had decided to pause the consultation process due to potential decisions being made regarding the nuclear reactor design which could directly affect the National Grid NWCC project.

Since this decision and the announcement Toshiba is going to buy into the Moorside development and build 3 AP1000 reactors it is apparent why the NWCC project needed to be paused.

Following this announcement National Grid are continuing to meet with senior managers and directors from NuGen and its parent companies to discuss the programme for construction of the Moorside project to ensure that the National Grid programme for the NWCC Project is aligned so they can deliver a more focused and informed public consultation moving forward.

As a result of these discussions National Grid propose to hold a Stakeholder Reference Group workshop on the 3rd April where they will be in a position to update stakeholders 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 Development Consent Order (DCO) is currently undergoing examination. The first of the issue specific hearings was held in Lancaster on the 27th Jan 2013.

Site visits and a further issue specific hearing are due to take place in March. For full examination timetable and deadlines see:

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

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

4. Geological Disposal Facility

The Council responded to Governments consultation on the proposed revised GDF siting process which came to a close on the 5th Dec 2013.

The Government is now involved in reviewing all the feedback received and reviewing the proposed new process accordingly.

Copeland Borough Council and West Cumbria remain committed to trying to find a final disposal site for High Level Waste which is currently stored in out dated ponds and silos on the Sellafield site.

5. Reviewing The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Planning Regime

The Department for Communities and Local Government ran a consultation reviewing the NSIP regime which closed on the 24th Jan 2014.

We provided a response to the consultation calling for a funding mechanism such as Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to be incorporated into the structure to insure that Local Planning Authorities (LPA) are not out of pocket when responding to DCO screening, scooping and consultation advice and generally working with the developer on their DCO submission (see Appendix one).

We also highlighted the need for greater linkage in planning policy in relation to low level nuclear waste and the need for joined up policy across government.

Appendix One: Copeland Borough Council response to DCLG consultation on NSIP review



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Copeland Borough Council
The Copeland Centre,
Catherine Street, Whitehaven,
Cumbria CA28 7SJ

tel: 0845 054 8600
fax: 01946 59 83 03
email: info@copeland.gov.uk
web: www.copeland.gov.uk

Matt Prior
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Dear Mr Prior

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 'Reviewing the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Planning Regime' consultation. Copeland Borough Council is a relatively small rural borough Council which has within its boundary the Low Level Waste Repository, the only national facility to store and dispose Low level Radioactive Waste (LLW) and Sellafield which stores 70% of the UK High Level Waste and is one of the most challenging decommissioning projects in Europe.

In addition to these existing major industries Copeland has been chosen as one of the 8 sites to host a new nuclear power station. In order to facilitate a new nuclear power station the electricity network needs to be upgraded, a major project known as the 'North West Coast Connections' therefore we are currently at the preliminary stages of dealing with two NSIP simultaneously one of which Copeland will be the lead Authority for.

Types of developments classed as NSIP

As previously stated this area is host to over 70% of the UK HLW it is therefore with keen interest that we are awaiting the Governments revised proposal to find a suitable location to build a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). You may be aware that Copeland (along with Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council) was the only area to previously express an interest in finding a suitable location to build a GDF known as the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme.

Throughout the MRWS process it was unclear whether the GDF would be a NSIP. The Council welcomes the changes in the revised approach which propose to deal with any application for a GDF as a NSIP.

The Council would argue that within the current planning system the contentious issue of Radioactive Waste is not adequately addressed. We would urge that radioactive waste and the development of facilities to manage such waste should be determined under the NSIP, this would include the storage and disposal of LLW, Intermediate Waste and High Level Waste, with the exception of Low Activity Low Level Waste (LALLW) which can be disposed of at a suitable permitted municipal waste site and could be dealt with effectively by the relevant Planning Authority.

Resourcing and funding pre-application DCO discussions

The Council welcomes the front loading and pre-application design and delivery of NSIP however, as previously stated Copeland Borough Council is a small Authority and is currently undergoing major restructuring due to the financial cuts. We currently do not have the capacity or resources to deal with the level of involvement required to undertake an adequate pre-application consultation. The Council has managed to fund the

resourcing of the current on-going NSIP's through Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) with the developer. It would greatly facilitate and expedite the process if PPAs were formally incorporated into the NSIP regime. In the Councils experience excessive amounts of time and resources have been applied to securing and designing an adequate PPA. If it was a required part of the NSIP process then it would negate the need for Local Authorities to negotiate such contracts with developers and to focus their limited resources on managing, influencing and informing pre-application discussions.

Whilst the Council anticipates that there will be a sharp increase in workstreams and in turn Council resources, we cannot proceed with securing resources to deal with the anticipated work as there is no certainty that the developer will be willing to cover all reasonable costs incurred by the Council in dealing with the pre-application work associated with preparing a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Community Benefits

An area of contention which is currently dealt with outside the NSIP is Community Benefits (CBs). Community Benefits are becoming common place with renewable energy projects and potentially with the relatively new Fracking. Community Benefits should be awarded to a community that contributes to infrastructure which is for the good of the nation but where the negative impacts are felt locally.

Copeland Borough Council is also a non-prescribed consultee on the Walney Windfarm Extension NSIP. We, along with the other directly affected Authorities, are currently in negotiations with the developer to provide some form of CBs for the effected communities. We feel that if the principle of CBs were incorporated into the NSIP regime that it would give credence to our argument that the areas most affected be recognised locally for the national contributions they are making.

The Council hopes that the above comments will be taken into consideration when reviewing the NSIP regime and look forward to receiving a revised process that will enable Local Authorities to fully participate in the process and instil confidence in stakeholders and the local community.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Groves', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Groves
Head of Nuclear Energy and Planning