

## **STRATEGIC NUCLEAR AND ENERGY BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2021**

**Present:** Councillors Steven Morgan, in the Chair; David Banks, Gwynneth Everett, Gemma Dinsdale, David Moore and Sam Pollen.

**Officers:** Pat Graham (Chief Executive), Steve Smith (Interim Nuclear Projects Manager), Robert Ward (Nuclear Sector Development Manager), Mitchell McCombe (Nuclear Sector Development Officer), Heather Morrison (Principal Planning Officer), Clive Willoughby (Democratic Services Officer) and Rose Blaney (Electoral and Democratic Services Officer).

#### **SN 20/31     Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Felicity Wilson.

#### **SN 20/32     Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Steven Morgan declared a potential interest due to being an arbiter which supports the board of directors at the Hinkley Point Nuclear Project. This was relevant for this meeting as EDF are part owners of that plant.

#### **SN 20/33     Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2020**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020.

Councillor Sam Pollen referred to minute SN 20/21 and the Nuclear Position Statements.

The Chair agreed to discuss this further with Councillor Pollen outside of this meeting.

Councillor Pollen also referred to minute SN 20/25 and requested that that the Sellafield and NDA socio-economic plan was not forgotten.

The Chair pointed out that this was on the Forward Plan and would be discussed later in this meeting.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair as soon as practicable.

**SN 20/34      Moorside Clean Energy Hub - Presentation by EDF**

Shekhar Sumit (Program Manager, Sizewell C Financing and Economic Team) was introduced to the board and continued to deliver a presentation on the Moorside Clean Energy Hub, which was the aim of a consortium of the UK nuclear industry.

This would deliver clean energy to decarbonise power, heat and transport and support the growth of a clean energy supply in the north. The Copeland vision drives the growth of an industrial cluster powered by and benefitting from the blended clean energy capability as a project of regional and national significance.

Shekhar provided the Board with some background, then took them through the action plan for 2021. This included establishing the project locally, taking early steps for planning and environmental consent, and taking further steps regarding engineering, building on their feasibility study showing that the Moorside site was suitable for UK EPR and on key technical issues such as grid line and infrastructure needed for construction.

Also this year it was hoped to develop the Energy Hub, including direct linkages with UK EPRs such as hydrogen and DAC, and the potential co-location options such as SMRs, AMRs and fusion.

EdF is also hoping to develop local outreach plans, including Apprenticeships and links with schools, universities, local charities and organisations.

The Chair thanked the EdF representatives and restated the Council's support for assisting the setting up of an EdF base in the borough.

During the discussion that followed;

Councillor Pollen welcomed the presentation and the opportunities for local residents. He also suggested a number of properties in Egremont that might be suitable for an EdF office.

He then asked for clarity regarding the project funding.

Councillor Banks also welcomed the presentation, which gave him hope for the future. At this point Councillor Banks declared an interest, due to being a Director of Phoenix Enterprise Centre at Cleator Moor, which was also able to offer office space if required. The Industrial Solutions Hub was also noted as a possible site that could be ideal for a local EdF hub.

Councillor Moore agreed with the previous councillors and would welcome an EdF hub in any part of Copeland. He also welcomed the prospect of EdF visits to schools and universities communicating to the young people of the borough. On behalf of the Council, he offered any help possible to assist in getting young people engaged with EdF and the supply chain.

The Chair echoed the comments of previous councillors and the development of a clean energy hub. He then asked about EdF's relationship with Rolls Royce and was advised that EdF would welcome a collaboration with Rolls Royce or any other SMR company, that would bring in investment.

The Chief Executive advised that Julia would be speaking to a meeting of the recently formed Cumbria Alliance, consisting of local MPs, Copeland and Allerdale Councils and the business cluster. Copeland's support for green energy and the EdF vision was also given.

Councillor Pollen emphasised that to move this forward, Government support and money was essential.

The EdF representatives were thanked for their attendance.

## **SN 20/35     Energy White Paper**

The Nuclear Sector Development Manager introduced this item to the Board, and advised that the summary document had been circulated to members. The document drew out the opportunity areas and the areas of particular relevance.

Members were asked to read the document and make themselves familiar with it as it is touch upon in other items on the agenda at this meeting and meetings going forward.

During the discussion that followed Councillor Pollen commented on the offshore wind opportunity, which he believed should be discussed further by this Board.

**SN 20/36      UKAEA STEP siting process**

The Nuclear Sector Development Manager introduced this item to the Board and stated that the STEP programme was a UKAEA and UK Government initiative to accelerate progress towards commercially-viable fusion power, through design and construction of a prototype fusion reactor by 2040.

The Board was advised that prior to Christmas 2020, the Cumbria LEP launched a mini competition to select the Cumbria nomination to go forward into the national process. The Copeland nomination for the Moorside site and other suitable NDA-owned land around Sellafield has been selected by the LEP and work was now being undertaken with the LEP, Consultants and the NDA to ensure the information is completed by the submission date of 31 March 2021.

The Chief Executive added that fusion was not large scale and any reactor would sit within an Energy Park.

It was emphasised that this was a competition and was being fiercely contested with other areas of the country.

Councillor Moore agreed with the Chief Executive and also thanked the Nuclear team for the work they undertook at very short notice. He was also confident that the team would submit a first class bid before the deadline date.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Banks and seconded by Councillor Moore.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

**RESOLVED** – that

- a) The report be noted, and
- b) A recommendation be forwarded to Executive asking them to support the nomination of the Moorside site and other suitable NDA-owned land around Sellafield into the national siting process.

**SN 20/37      The Nuclear Decommissioning & Radioactive Waste Management Policy**

The Nuclear Sector Development Officer introduced this item to the Board, which introduced the review of the UK Nuclear Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Policy. It was noted that the expected launch of the formal consultation had been delayed and was now expected to start in summer 2021.

Members of this Board would be consulted when the consultation begins and the consultation papers are available.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be noted

**SN 20/38      The UK Government's approach to identifying a site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher-activity radioactive waste.**

This item was introduced by the Nuclear Projects Manager, which provided Members with an update on the Government's search for a suitable site and a willing community to host a GDF for the disposal of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste.

The Board was advised that since 4 November 2020 the Copeland Working Group, with independent Chair Mark Cullinan, had met on a number of occasions and their reports are available on the working group's website. The Group's three specific aims being

- Engage with local people to begin to understand their views, based on achieving the twin aims of finding a suitable site and a willing host community;
- Identify and propose a Search Area (or Areas) for further consideration;
- Recruit initial members for a Community Partnership, that could take the process forward beyond the Working Group.

It was noted that Cumbria County Council had declined an invitation to join the working group at this stage and that the working group was expected to exist for up to twelve months.

Three sub-groups had been established to take forward the three main workstreams.

- Communications and Engagement sub-group
- Search Area sub-group
- Community Partnership sub-group.

During the discussion that followed Councillor Pollen asked that it be made clear that Copeland had a neutral position on GDF at present.

He also believed that a connection should be made between the siting of a Clean Energy Hub and GDF and that if the Clean Energy Hub was not sited in Copeland, we should not be considering hosting a GDF.

The Chair agreed and suggested that more lobbying in London was required.

The Nuclear Projects Manager agreed and pointed out that the Nuclear Prospectus has already pulled together the major nuclear projects affecting Copeland into one document.

Councillor Moore confirmed that at present Copeland does not pre-suppose that the GDF will be in the borough. If Copeland knew the GDF was to be coming here, it could be used as a bargaining tool, but at present that is not the case.

The Chief Executive agreed with the comments made.

It was further stated that when the GDF was last being considered, it was unclear that there was any future nuclear industry in the UK. This was not the case now and the amount of nuclear waste would be increased.

The prospectus sets out what Copeland wants – nuclear investment, opportunity and clean growth.

Councillor Pollen stated that a solution to the UK's nuclear waste issue was required, but that this should be looked at together with the Clean Energy Hub and Copeland should be looked on favourably.

**RESOLVED** – that the update be noted

Note: Councillor Dinsdale left the meeting at this point.

**SN 20/39     Industrial Solutions Hub (ISH)**

The Nuclear Projects Manager provided a brief summary of the Industrial Solutions Hub and progress to date.

This included the acquisition of the Leconfield Industrial site on 14 January 2021 and the Cleator Moor Town Deal was also submitted at the end of January 2021. It was also stated that the ISH would be ideally sited for the EdF project, as covered in the first agenda item of this meeting.

**RESOLVED** – that the update be noted.

**SN 20/40     Strategic Nuclear and Energy Board (SNEB) Forward Plan**

The Nuclear Sector Development Manager shared a draft Forward Plan with the Board, which included topics that will probably be coming to the Board in the future.

Members were asked to comment and also if there were any subjects they wished to have included.

The Chief Executive suggested that this be shared with all Councillors. A suggestion was made that Martin Walkinshaw, Chief Operating Officer be invited to address the Board with an update from the Low Level Waste Repository and also that the Holliday Report be added to the forward plan.

The Chair asked that wind energy be included.

The Nuclear Projects Manager suggested that the Nuclear Position Statements were also added.

**SN 20/41      Exempt Information**

Consideration was given to a motion proposing that the remainder of the meeting be held in private.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

**RESOLVED** – that the press and public be excluded for the remaining items of business in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**SN 20/42      Planning Update**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Board with an update of developments at Sellafield Limited.

**RESOLVED:-** That the Update be noted.

**SN 20/43     Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Strategic Nuclear and Energy Board will be held on Thursday 29 April 2021 at 2:00pm. This will be a virtual meeting.

**The Meeting closed at 4.10 pm**

Chair