

Nuclear Positions Statement

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Summary

Originally produced in 2015 the Council's Nuclear Position Statements recognise the significant impact that the nuclear sector has on the communities, economic well-being and the environment of the Borough.

The statements aim to provide a consistent position for Members and officers for the Council's engagement with our nuclear partners, communities and the supply chain.

Recommendation

1. That members of the Board provide comments on the draft position statements in advance of the next meeting of the Board, where an updated set of statements will be presented for approval.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In recognition of the role that the nuclear sector plays in Copeland's economy, community and environment, since 2015 the Council has maintained a suite of Nuclear Position Statements. These statements ensure that the Council's interactions with nuclear sector partners consistently reflect the Council agreed position on nuclear matters.

2. Case for Change

- 2.1. A review of the statements is justified by a number of developments in international and national policy, publication of new and updated strategies by key industry partners and changes locally since the last iteration of the statements.
- 2.2. The developments that have potential implications for Copeland include:
 - In light of growing public concern over global heating, unsustainable use of resources, and ecological damage to wildlife and habitats, more than 70 local authorities across the UK have declared "climate emergencies", with the aim of galvanising support for the climate change agenda and setting a clear carbon-neutrality target;
 - In response, the Committee on Climate Change published a 2019 report, *Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming*, which recommended a net zero carbon target of 2050 for the UK, in order to meet international climate obligations;

- However, the International Energy Agency's 2019 report notes a "growing mismatch" between current trends in energy investment and the paths to meeting the Paris Agreement and other sustainable development goals. Likewise, the UK Parliament Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee launched an inquiry into financing energy infrastructure, in recognition of the hole in UK Energy Policy following investment decisions at Moorside and Wylfa. In late 2018, Toshiba announced the wind-up of NuGeneration Limited due to a failure to secure investment in the project, which had intended to deliver 3.4GW of large-scale nuclear capacity at the Moorside site;
- The formation of the Moorside Strategic Partnership demonstrates cross-party commitment from local and central government and business leaders to ensure the delivery of a project at Moorside that is crucial to the UK's energy future, and to the economic aspirations of the region;
- In 2019, BEIS is due to make a multi-million pound investment in commercialisation of a number of advanced reactor technologies that could offer an alternative, cheaper, quicker, more flexible low carbon energy solution either instead of or alongside large scale nuclear.
- Concurrently, a number of vendors are developing Small Modular Reactor technology in the UK and internationally, that could be commercially deployable on a similar timescale;
- Sitting under the UK Industrial Strategy, the Nuclear Sector Deal identifies a number of key targets for 2030:
 - 30% reduction in the cost of nuclear new build, through implementing a different approach;
 - 20% reduction in the cost of legacy waste management and decommissioning;
 - For the sector to deliver £2bn of UK and international contract wins;
 - To reach at least 40% women in nuclear.

The Sector Deal is being implemented by industry partners, with oversight from the Nuclear Industry Association and BEIS.

- Under a new governance structure, the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has aligned its Strategy Groups to the foundations of the Industrial Strategy, and its Sector Panels to the sectors that are relevant to Cumbria's economy. Membership of the Nuclear Sector Panel presents an opportunity to influence development of Phase 2 of the Nuclear Sector Deal and demonstrate how place-specific capability can help to tackle the Nuclear Sector "Grand Challenges";
- The LEP has developed a Local Industrial Strategy for Cumbria, due for final publication in Autumn 2019;

- In 2018 BEIS released the revised *Implementing Geological Disposal: Working with Communities* policy, which along with RWM Ltd’s Site Evaluation Process, will lead to the selection of a suitable site for geological disposal of radioactive waste in England;
- In 2018, the Public Accounts Committee published a report on the *NDA’s Progress on Risk Reduction at Sellafield*, which made a number of recommendation to BEIS, NDA and Sellafield Ltd in relation to improvement of performance in delivery and governance of risk reduction projects at Sellafield, and relating to the NDA’s local socio-economic contribution;
- Various developments in NDA Strategy, including:
 - Magnox Ltd is due to become a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NDA
 - A review is underway of Magnox Reactor Decommissioning Strategy across the fleet;
 - Alternative options are being considered for site remediation and site end states
 - An updated Integrated Waste Management Strategy has been published, following consultation
 - A *Progress on Plutonium* paper was published.
- The end of reprocessing at ThORP in November 2018 represents a change of scope at Sellafield, and also removes a major revenue stream for the NDA, while new scope will continue to be developed as new opportunities are explored to deliver the site’s mission safer, sooner;
- As the Sellafield Transformation programme progresses, more scope will be delivered by the supply chain, through new partnerships such as the Programme and Project Partners (PPP) framework and alternative delivery methods (“small Sellafield, big supply chain”);
- There have also been a number of regulatory changes that impact the nuclear sector and Copeland:
 - Update to Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations;
 - Publication of English, Scottish and Welsh Environment Agencies joint guidance on “Management of radioactive waste from the decommissioning of nuclear sites: guidance on the requirements for release from radioactive substances regulation” (also known as GRR);
 - The implementation of a domestic nuclear safeguards regime and other changes following the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union.

2.3. The Position Statements have been updated to reflect the need for the Council to agree a position on the above matters, either where they affect the current stated position, or where no position was previously stated.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. Members are requested to review the draft Nuclear Position Statements and provide input and comments to the Nuclear Sector Development Manager no fewer than seven days in advance of the next meeting of the Board, to allow time for comments to be incorporated.
- 3.2. At the next Board meeting, an updated set of statements will be presented for approval and a request made to escalate the agreed statements for consideration and endorsement by Executive Committee.