

# Minutes of the Meeting of the Cross-Party Group for North Wales in the Welsh Senedd Friday 1st July 2022

## Present

### **Senedd Members:**

Mark Isherwood MS (Chair), Gareth Davies MS, Llyr Gruffydd MS, Sam Rowlands MS, Janet Finch-Saunders MS, Rhun ap Iorwerth MP, Dan Rose for Carolyn Thomas MS

### **Members of Parliament:**

Mark Tami MP

### **Local Authority Leaders:**

Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd), Cllr Mark Pritchard (Wrexham), Cllr Ian Roberts (Flintshire), Cllr Jason McLellan (Denbighshire), Cllr Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy)

### **Officials:**

#### WLGA

Lucy Sweet (new Secretary), Stephen Jones (outgoing Secretary), Chris Llewelyn (Chief Executive), Daniel Hurford (Head of Policy, Improvement and Governance), Dilwyn Jones (Public Affairs and Communications Manager), Glesni Haf Parry (Communications Officer, Social Media).

#### Welsh Government

Bryn Richards

Wyn Roberts

## **1. Welcome from the Chair and Introductions**

## **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 19th May 2022 and Matters Arising**

Group members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting provide an accurate record.

Lucy Sweet (WLGA) was elected as the new Secretary for the group, as Stephen Jones will take up a secondment opportunity outside of WLGA. Group Members thanked Stephen for his support with to the group.

## **3. Small Modular Reactors for Trawsfynydd – Briefing from Rolls - Royce SMR**

Mark Salisbury of Rolls Royce SMR Ltd. gave a presentation on Small Modular Reactors and the potential to locate a pilot reactor in Trawsfynydd. ([To Deliver Clean, Affordable Energy For All - Rolls Royce SMR \(rolls-royce-smr.com\)](#))

## Discussion

### **Experience of RR building and operating other SMRs (apart from for the military)? (Mark Tami MP)**

Mark Salisbury talked about how RR is focusing on shrinking the footprint of the plant. A lot of plants today have expanded footprint because of security regulations, the RR plant would be secure by design.

### **Supply of enough water? (Mark Tami MP)**

RR proposing using low cooling water towers, which use a very small amount of water.

### **Engagement with Welsh Government? (Mark Isherwood MS)**

Mark Salisbury said he was not 100% sure and will check with the Corporate Affairs Manager who has been responsible for WG engagement, although he said Welsh Government has had a lot of dialogue with RR for a number of years now (Mark Isherwood MS pointed out that WG has had engagement with all technology vendors interested).

RR will be in the Senedd on Weds 6 July and would welcome the chance to see the members of the Cross Party Group for North Wales and answer any further questions.

### **How sustainable is the uranium supply? (Mark Isherwood MS)**

Uranium is one of the most abundant resources. Nuclear Energy Agency 'Red book' details known resources and tracks world trends in production and demand. It looks at the next 75-100 years.

### **Engagement with communities? (Mark Isherwood MS)**

Don't yet have a site earmarked so community engagement would be a bit premature. At this stage of the project, want to ensure the right level of engagement without setting too high expectations. Currently looking at possible sites, as sites are selected, they will ramp up community engagement. SMRs have slightly different feel than large scale nuclear but community engagement still extremely important.

### **Waste storage?**

Recent news story (Mark to circulate the paper the story is based on) claiming Rolls-Royce SMR would produce more waste. Story is misleading and RR are in discussions with journalists. Mark happy to provide further information.

Re waste, RR in the design assessment process, following strict regulation from the Environment Agency. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) also part of this process. RR will have to prove they will produce as little waste as possible and demonstrate they have a plan for dealing with any waste that is produced.

RR have calculated that the SMR would produce a tennis court of waste up to 1.5 m high over 60 year lifetime.

RR will use existing framework in UK for waste storage.

Mark also referred to the waste being subsequently converted into a glass-like ceramic for storage in a deep geological repository.

### **Jobs- is there anything MSs/MPs and Leaders can do to see jobs created in North Wales? (Sam Rowlands MS)**

Rolls-Royce wrote to LEPs and Welsh Government a few months ago regarding sites for factories, over 100 responses received.

RR will soon announce more advanced studies of sites.

### **Comments in the public sphere about unsuitable sites (Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn)**

Mark said he was not aware of any statements on suitability of sites

## **4. Update from Ambition North Wales**

### Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn update

Cllr Siencyn will ask the Programme Office to send a briefing to all on the most recent situation re the Growth Deal.

15 year programme of investment for 4 programmes (digital, low carbon, land property and food & agriculture).

Frustrating period for politicians- the work involved in preparing business cases is onerous but some projects are progressing (Digital Signal Processing Centre, Bangor and Connecting the last %)

Working well with the Welsh Government Programme Office, bodes well for future economic development for the North.

Working well with Regional Skills Partnerships.

### Discussion

### **When do you anticipate some of the ambitions on employment etc will be achieved? (Mark Isherwood MS)**

Difficult question, must get projects up and running to assess affects.

### **How best to reconcile regional vs local approach? (Mark Isherwood MS)**

Levelling Up- could create tensions which would undermine strong partnership in North.

Working well together at the moment.

Gwynedd Lead LA on the Shared Prosperity Fund, funding goes to them then paid out to LAs.

Complex picture which cuts across strong partnership in North Wales.

Wherever funding comes from, just want it to continue to come in to North Wales  
(Cllr Mark Pritchard)

## 5. AOB

### Future of the Group

Next meeting of the group is 12 November.

Lucy Sweet and Stephen Jones will organise an officer meeting with the Chair, Carolyn Thomas MS and Mabon ap Gwynfor MS to discuss the future work programme.

### Distributor Roads (WG pilot of 20mph speed limits)

Cllr Ian Roberts raised this issue and asked if other members of the group have received communication about the A548 through Buckley in particular. He asked colleagues to look at pilots. Mark Isherwood MS responded that he has received a huge amount of communication on this issue.

### Children's Services

Cllr Mark Pritchard raised the pressure in children's services. £10.5 million extra has been put towards this issue in Wrexham.

If LAs collectively or individually want children's services to be included as a topic for a future meeting, please let Lucy Sweet (Secretary) or the Chair know.