APPG on Small Modular Reactors

13:30 – 14:30, 29th June, Room Q, Portcullis House, Westminster, SW1A 0AA

Minutes of the North Wales Nuclear Round Table

Attendees:

- Virginia Crosbie (VC)
- Alastair Evans, Rolls-Royce (AE)
- Michael Drury, Terrestrial Energy (MD)
- Louis Plowden-Wardlaw, Terrestrial Energy (LPW)
- Debbie Jones, Executive Director of the North West Nuclear Arc (DJ)
- John Idris Jones, Cwmni Egino (JIJ)
- Alan Raymant, CEO, Cwmni Egino (AR)
- Ieuan Williams, Nuclear Industry Association (IW)
- Piers Baker, Office of Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Browne MP)PB)
- Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Browne MP (GCB)
- Liz Saville-Roberts MP (LSR)
- Robin Millar MP (RM)
- Philip Eastment (Robin Millar MP's Office) (PE)

Apologies:

- Ivan Baldwin, Bechtel
- Baroness Hayman
- Chris Green MP

VC opened the meeting and set the scene:
North Wales is at the epicentre of the UK's nuclear renaissance with several firms vying to build new plants and invest in the supply chain and workforce. With prime nuclear sites on Anglesey and at Trawsfynydd, North Wales is well placed for nuclear investment.

Could other parts of the UK learn the lessons from North Wales and supercharge their nuclear future too and how could the SMR APPG drive forward this work?

North Wales' Potential Nuclear Sites – there was a discussion of the strengths of Wylfa and Trawsfynydd.

JIJ: set out Cwmni Egino's remit to create and sustain local jobs in North Wales. It was 100% owned by the Welsh Government. It worked with MSpark and others.

AR: echoed these aims and added that his remit was to drive forward the aims of Cwmni Egino as the new CEO. They had already started working with the Nuclear Delivery Authority (NDA) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). He looked forward to working with Great British Nuclear (GBN) which had a parallel and helpful role. Cwmni Egino was technology agnostic. It was focussed on sites rather than anything else.

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AE: One of GBN's roles was identification of where the gaps existed and to promote the technology. What industry needed was certainty so that it could deliver consistently especially given the collapse of previous nuclear projects.

DJ: set out how North Wales offered green energy opportunities and the low carbon focus provided by not just nuclear technology but also wind and marine and tidal technology too.

VC: asked what the UK could offer on the global stage?

AR replied that Wylfa was a prime site and of global significance to the nuclear sector.

VC: also flagged the possibility of conjoined industry such as data centres which could be co-located on the site saving grid transmission costs.

Technology

LSR: Asked what was needed to unlock the potential of Trawsfynydd. It was the only inland site with limited water access.

AE: flagged that limited water was not necessarily an issue, as different SMR designs had different water requirements. The new Rolls-Royce SMR used 15% of the water requirement of Hinkley for example.

AR: asked how cheaper electricity could be delivered.

DJ: suggested the answer was market reform coupled with intelligent demand use and the right mix of power sources. North Wales could be a pilot for this as there was space for two large reactors three or four SMRs and the accompanying technology.

Supply Chain

MD: set out how Terrestrial Energy was looking at people in college and training in the workforce. It took eight years to train someone from scratch to be an operator of a nuclear plant. There was a need to look at more than one site when planning the workforce. There was a need to look at the whole supply chain and at the facilities which would be producing reactors.

Historically, the Harwell and Winfrith campuses developed both reactors and trained the personnel to operate them.

JIJ: there was a need to look at those who were still in school for the next generation of nuclear workers.

LSR: it has been a similar situation in north wales. Many apprentices had been trained only for the nuclear developments not to go ahead.

AR: agreed and it had resulted in many of these trainees going to work on Hinkley

VC: Likewise, there were many from Anglesey and Gwynedd in Sizewell.

RM: In Aberconwy the community had seen the benefit of *Awel y Môr* and the *Gwynt y Môr* wind farms. Llandrillo College was generating a throughput of skilled technicians. Therefore, there was a strong interested in seeing how the benefits of energy projects could help communities.

VC: believed that there was a strong issue here on skills. There was a need for manufacturing clusters. The UK remained the world's 9th largest manufacturer but productivity levels were low.

AE: there was a need for more consistent development of projects and the training and skills to support them. The stop start nature of the UK's programmes to date meant that there was not a constant supply of skilled staff.

Funding

LPW: was concerned that unlike the US the UK lacked staff in its embassies who could sell domestic technology. The sales pipeline needed to start much earlier if the funding was going to come through to develop technology for export. The French had a nuclear sales staff member in every embassy. The other issue was that it needed to be easier for investors to support nuclear with greater certainty as to how the projects would proceed.

AE: there was a difference between the polite diplomacy of the UK and others and the American bear hug which featured in US promotion of its industry.

Conclusion:

VC: thanked the attendees for what had been a very productive meeting

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