

NDA ESTATE SME STEERING GROUP – SOUTH

Meeting 8: 12th May 2015

HR Wallingford

Present:

SMEs: Chair: Neil Foreman (NF) – Centronic Mark Liddiard (ML) – HR Wallingford Wes Harford (WH) – AM Sensors Steve Spencer (SS) – Priory Construction Mark Sharpe (MS) – Oxford Technologies Michael McCormack (MM) – Portsmouth Aviation Steve Jenkins (SJ) – Force One Ltd	Tier 2s: John Bloodworth (JB) – KDC, Mike O’Neill (MO) – Interserve Other/Support Organisations: Chris Squires (CS) – EdF, SLCs: NDA: Sam Dancy (SD)
Apologies: Dave Barker (DB) - Aquila Nuclear Engineering, Ron Gorham – NDA, Doug Price – Magnox Ltd, Stephen Bennett - AWE	

Notes:

1 Welcome and Introductions

- Members to the group were welcomed and Portsmouth Aviation thanked for hosting the meeting.
- Brian McConnell had indicated that workload prevented him from continuing with the group, and the Chair expressed his thanks for Brian’s input to the group.

2 Update from NDA

Feedback from Steering Groups

- The Northern Region have been particularly active in producing two booklets and a map of key organisations in the region and were now considering their direction going forward.
- The Scottish Region were actively engaging with Scottish Enterprise’s Nuclear Supply Chain project, and were continuing to look at a document/map to demonstrate where information/support/funding can be found in the Scottish region.
 - There was a discussion on availability of funding information across the UK and SD highlighted that there was a government web-site available that gathered this information. See “Finance and support for your business” on www.gov.uk
- The Welsh Region had held their last meeting at Wylfa with an update on the Magnox position going forward and a site tour.
- The Cumbrian Region were considering whether they should run another event similar to the Cumbrian Excellence day.

General Updates

- SD reported that work continued on the new management arrangements at Sellafield, and the procurement for the ‘strategic partner’. There was a discussion on procurement practices at Magnox and Sellafield, particularly where large frameworks had been placed on the basis of a consortium proposal including SMEs, but the framework holders were then required to compete work downstream to demonstrate VfM rather than be able to use their proposed partners – this could mean that the amount of work going to the proposed

team members was less than anticipated, and it added cost to SMEs in terms of continued bidding for downstream work. It was considered that there were better ways to demonstrate VfM than just downstream competition.

- SD also reported that Magnox were continuing work on their consolidation phase following the PBO competition, and NDA had encouraged them to publish information on their procurement plans as soon as possible as it was acknowledged that there was a concern in the market about what any changes would mean. There was disappointment that no one from Magnox was able to make the meeting [due to clash with a Magnox Executive Meeting] as there was sometimes no communication coming out even when procurement staff had been emailed direct. MO reported that he had seen changes to the FM requirements being implemented have an impact on SMEs within their supply chain. [Post meeting note: Magnox have published their interim supply chain strategy. See the Magnox website for more information.
- Cyber Essentials – government requires all suppliers bidding for certain sensitive and personal information handling contracts to be certified against the Cyber Essentials scheme. The scheme advises on basic cyber controls that can be implemented to reduce the risk of compromise of information from common internet-based threats. SMEs in particular needed to be aware of the requirements as it could apply to a significant number of contracts. Details of the scheme were on www.gov.uk (search for “Cyber essentials scheme: overview”), and NDA were running an awareness session. Suppliers needed to be pro-active.
- The new Public Procurement Regulations were in force and have some specific SME recommendations from Lord Young included, particularly around below threshold contracts and the requirement to publish on Contracts Finder. The SLCs were working with the Cabinet Office team to set up a direct link from CTM to Contracts Finder but it was taking some time to implement. Some suppliers had had issues with Contracts Finder as they had to re-input data into the revised version as there did not seem to be carry over of information from the previous version. The Regulations also included payment requirements on all public sector contracts that the contracting authority pays the contractor no later than 30 days from the date on which the invoice is “valid and undisputed”. There was a lot of information available on the changes if anyone interested did a search on ‘public procurement regulations 2015 summary’.

3 Update from National SME Steering Group Meeting

- NF reported that one of the main focus of the meeting had been the changes to the Sellafield contract. NDA had emphasised they were keen to continue with the SME Agenda whether they were mandated to or not with the new government. They had discussed whether there was a good reason to hold the steering group meetings – don’t change if not broken, but challenge if things could be done a different way.

4 Update from EdF

- CS gave a presentation on the Hinkley C nuclear new build, current status (awaiting final investment decision and so on-site work was slowing down as they approached the next stage of planning permission), and routes to market. Links had been made to Somerset Chamber of Commerce which also supported the existing fleet. ‘Local’ was deemed as any business in Somerset but they were also going into surrounding regions, with work ongoing to look at South West development opportunities for the support structures and services. Fit for Nuclear was also supporting businesses on the manufacturing side.

5 Sharing Best Practice

- Success Stories and case studies were shared with the group.
- MS reported that Oxford Technologies had been invited to a robotics exhibition for Japan and with the right proposition had been able to get support from UKTi as well as working with INSJ as their appointed agent. They had also been successful in winning work at Dounreay.

6 Feedback :

- There was a discussion on the NDA Estate Action Plan progress and whether members of the group were seeing a difference?
- It was felt that progress was patchy on the SME agenda and the key to success was seeing a difference at Sellafield. Although their contracts were promoted as 'collaborative' and supported SMEs their T&Cs seemed punitive e.g. the SME targets proposed in bids were hardwired into frameworks and would be measured, but with only supplier fee at risk with no positive incentives to balance.
- JB highlighted that a large number of staff had gone through the triple bar process at a Magnox site to gear up ready for work that had then been put on pause – that workforce had now been scattered and there would be a need to re-train a new team when the programme recommenced which was a waste of time and resources.
- MO highlighted that the impact of pauses could vary significantly depending on the size of company. The Southern region were hardest hit by the change in PBO at Magnox as the majority of sites were here. Where work is pause, suppliers had turned their attention elsewhere.

Action: MO to look at impact of Magnox changes to programme on SME spend at Interserve as an example

7 AOB

- MS highlighted that BECBC would be holding a meeting at their premises in July, and members of this group were invited to attend – it would be a good opportunity for Southern based SMEs to meet Cumbrian companies.
- WM16 – the Waste Management conference in Phoenix was a potential export opportunity. UK would be the featured country and NNL and UKTi were supporting the event. If suppliers were interested in attending and being part of the UK exhibition stand they should contact Keith Miller for details and costs - keith.x.miller@nnl.co.uk
- SD noted that the NDA Estate Supply Chain event would be held on 4th November 2015 at Event City – anyone can register online, see NDA website for more information. Those present at the meeting requested that there be no SLC bidder conferences on that day or either side of it.

Action: SD to email SLC event contacts with request for no bidder days around the conference

Date of Next Meeting: planned for late September 2015