

# National SME Steering Group meeting

13 November 2013 12:00 – 13:15, Event City, Manchester

## MINUTES

### Attendees

<p><b>Chair :</b> Baroness Verma, Parliamentary Under Secretary for DECC</p> <p><b>Government Representatives :</b> David Gigg, Office of the Crown Representative for SMEs Wyn Roberts, Head of Energy &amp; Environment, Welsh Government Oonagh Gil, Business Directorate, Scottish Government</p>	<p><b>Regional Chairs :</b> Mark Beirne (MB), North Region Kurt Canfield (KC), Cumbria Region Neil Foreman (NF), South Region Peter Murphy (PM), Scottish Region Matt Tuck (MT), Welsh Region</p>
<p><b>NDA:</b> David Batters (DB) Ron Gorham (RG) Sam Dancy (SD) Pippa Kelly (PK)</p>	<p><b>Shared Services Alliance :</b> Peter Walkden (PW)</p>

## 1. Welcome and Introductions – David Batters

David Batters welcomed everyone to the second meeting SME Steering Group Meeting and thanked Baroness Verma for taking the time to Chair the meeting.

Baroness Verma thanked the committee for the opportunity to attend and to lend her support to the work of the Group which is vital not just for the NDA Estate but also to her Department and the wider Government. The Baroness was keen to hear the views of the Group and to explore areas where more could be done particularly at a Government level..

## 2. Feedback from Regional Groups

### a) Cumbrian Group chair : Kurt Canfield

Main subjects concerning Cumbrian region are:

- Contractual issues
- Training, shortage of skilled engineers coming through training
- Exporting skills out of Cumbria and importing other skills into county
- Identifying SME's in the region – difficult to locate

What works well :

- Honesty – good discussions on true issues for the region
- SME's happy to approach committee members with questions, comments and views
- Creating a database of SME's in the area
- PQQ discussions created a good outcome, work ongoing with Tier 2 on application and dissemination

Created a sub group creating a Cumbria Excellence Event in May for the Energy Sector

### b) Introduction by Scotland Group chair : Peter Murphy

Challenges currently facing the Scottish supply chain are:

- The Dounreay 'cliff' – knowledge that the work flow will cease by 2025
- The need to diversify including SME members not being wholly nuclear and looking at the UK market as a whole, not only Scotland.
- UK and Scottish governments to work together on nuclear supply chain policy

Early engagement with the North Sea Decommissioning team to provide a market beyond the Scottish NDA Sites.

c) Introduction by Welsh Group chair : Matt Tuck

Focus of Welsh Steering Group :

- Commercial issues such as insurance
- Communication and visibility of new business
- Engage with south Wales SMEs

What works well:

- Good access to information from Welsh Government with member on committee and support of Energy Island (similar to British Energy Coast in Cumbria)
- Created two sub groups to tackle communications and create a fact sheet.
- Long term decommissioning job prospects give stability to SME supply chain

d) Introduction by South Group chair : Neil Foreman

Concerns of the Central/Southern Group:

- SMEs will not always work solely in the nuclear industry – discussions on how/whether to differentiate
- Pressure on supply chain from new build – initial focus on Hinkley Point C, more to follow

Future focus of Southern Group:

- 'Good Company' to the NDA
- Consider creating an SME Supply Chain Map to compliment the map created by the North group.

e) Introduction by North Group chair : Mark Beirne

Focus of Northern Group:

- Better Practice Innovation Guide for SMEs – launched at the NDA Supply Chain Event
- NDA SME Steering Group map – an entry points map for SMEs in the North region to the Decommissioning industry

Concerns for future in North region:

- SMEs need to be fit and lean to survive
- Bring academia and R&D together into commercial businesses
- Consider how to spot SMEs with potential and support their growth
- Encourage initiatives that create a culture of excellence

### 3. Updates from the three Governments

#### Government Updates - David Gigg

Aspirational figure of 25% of value of Government contracts to be channeled to SMEs is not about counting numbers but is a measure to support the driving force for change.

Recently published the 2 year on report. SME statistics for whole Gov at end of 2012/13 are 19.9% but this is a yearly figure and not cumulative, need to keep focus on this agenda.

BIS will be publishing a Small Business Strategy before end of 2013. Also being published is Lord Young's report on supporting SMEs in Business and Public Procurement.

### Government Updates – Wales, Wyn Roberts

Approach to nuclear SMEs is similar to that of the rest of the market.

Business Wales is a central site for supporting SMEs in Wales. Includes information on funding available, help with tendering for contracts and opportunities. System is simple but effective.

### Government Updates – Scotland, Oonagh Gil

Local enterprise business support comes from two regional bodies, Highlands and Islands and the Scottish Enterprise plus colleagues with the Local Government community

Of the c£9.7bn annual public sector procurement spend in 2011/12, 46% went directly to SMEs, with almost £2bn of that going to firms employing fewer than 50 people.

Scottish Government also have their own procurement portal, Public Contracts Scotland.

## 4. Key Estate updates – Ron Gorham

Following the presentations from each of the Government representatives, it was noted that all three have a portal advertising opportunities. Future opportunity presents itself to either combine the offerings or have a system to direct enquires to each site. .

**Action. OG, WR, DG and RAG to consider the options**

Launch of the NDA SME Mentoring Scheme to take place in the next few months. Request for the Chairs of each region to support the launch and look for potential mentors and mentorees, currently 22 people have registered an interest to be a mentor. Scheme will be a pilot initially but should it add value, scheme will be extended.

**Action. SME Chairs to publicise and direct any potential candidates to SD and PK in the 1<sup>st</sup> instance**

NDA hosted an event in April bringing together CEO's of Tier 2 companies, SLCs and NDA Directors to raise awareness of the SME Agenda. Follow up meeting being organised for 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Meeting will promote an updated Contracts Finder and asking Tier 2s what their plans for increasing SME use and what NDA can do to support the plans.

There was brief discussion on the difficulties facing SME's who work across multiple sites associated with Site access and induction. The Triple Bar as it matures will help but questions remained over whether security arrangements could be further harmonised across the NDA Estate.

**Action. RAG to sponsor a discussion with the NDA security community to understand the opportunities the output of which will come back to the next National meeting.**

## 5. Open discussion and close

Chair concerned that Nuclear Sector and Britain as a whole do not sell themselves. Great stories of successes should be publicised.

**Action. SME Chairs have a standing action to bring forward good news stories on a quarterly basis.**

Mark Beirne asked that good news stories be added to LinkedIn as a way of promoting awareness within the industry.

Date of next meeting to be agreed

**Action. PK will set up a system to try to co-ordinate all the Regional dates and the National ones for the whole of 2014.**

The Baroness closed by thanking everyone for the time, honesty and passion and by confirming that she would continue to take an active interest in the achievements of the SME groups and the wider NDA initiatives.