

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Meeting:	Natural Environment Awards Panel
Date:	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2024, 10:00 -11:00
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	Steve Mannings
Attendees:	Steve Manning (Sizewell C), Chirs King (ESC), Cllr.Tom Daly (ESC), Tim De-Keyzer (SCC), Ed Boyle (Natural England), Simon Amstutz (National Landscapes), Paula Bartholomew (National Landscapes), Councillor Richard Rout (SCC), Nick Stayt (AECOM)
Apologies:	Eleanor Wright (Quod on behalf of SZC)

### Meeting Notes:

#### 1 INTRODUCTION AND ROLES

Steve Mannings (SZC)  
Nick Stayt (AECOM on behalf of SZC)  
Chris King (ESC – nonvoting participant)  
Tom Daly (ESC)  
Ed Boyle (Natural England)  
Councillor Richard Rout (SCC)  
Simon Amstutz ( National Landscapes)  
Tim De-Keyzer (SCC – nonvoting participant)  
Paula Bartholomew (National Landscapes)

#### 2 NOMINATION OF CHAIR

SM suggested that the group should nominate a chair for this meeting and then a nominated chair for the panel going forward.

PB suggested that prior to this nomination it would be pertinent for Sizewell C Limited to provide an overview of the fund and the Natural Environment Awards Pannel (NEAP) and the roles for member organisations. SM agreed that this would be covered in the agenda but provided a short overview for members present.

SA raised a query regarding the establishment of this panel in advance of ‘commencement’. SM confirmed that this is an agenda item and the agenda was altered to cover this as item 3.

CoRR raised a query around a selection of a chair. Suggested that it is important that there is stability in the early years and therefore should be someone outside the political realm. CoRR suggested that rather than a rotational chair the chair should provide some continuity.

No chair was appointed or selected during the Inaugural meeting and SM chaired. This will be covered in the second meeting of the NEAP.

#### 3 DCO FIRST COMMENCEMENT UPDATE

SM provided an update on ‘Commencement’, confirming that Sizewell C Limited has fulfilled the necessary actions that allow the DCO to be triggered. SM identified that this has been as a result of a collaborative effort between Sizewell Limited, ESC, SCC and other stakeholders. The actions taken include the establishment of the

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

governance groups listed within the Deed of Obligation (DoO) and the funds and payments also detailed in the DoO. At Commencement the Natural Environment Improvement Fund will be available to enable the NEAP to fulfil its role.

SM noted there will be a formal announcement of Commencement. This would include some media publication early next week to cover the commencement of the Project. SA identified that the National Landscapes (NL) team has very limited resource and Paula has been acting as the NEAP project officer/coordinator at the expense of the NL teams and are looking to recover some of the costs. SM confirmed that the fund would cover the relevant project officers once made available. SA raised that recruitment of the project officer for the NEAP will take time following the availability of the fund and recognised the benefits that the fund can bring.

CK asked if there is an opportunity to liaise with the Local authority comms team to make sure there is a joined up announcement of commencement. SM confirmed that a communications plan had already been shared with ESC and SCC.

#### 4 TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) / MEETING PURPOSE

SM noted that the draft ToR have been shared, but apologised that they were shared later than planned and therefore noted that it was unlikely members would have been able to review in advance of this meeting.

CoRR confirmed that it has not been possible to review in advance of the meeting. SA, seconded this.

SM stated that these draft ToR have been agreed in principle with the local authority but are being submitted to the relevant forums to ensure there is agreement and any necessary amendments can be made prior to their finalisation. The intention is to finalise these at the earliest opportunity. SM stated that Sizewell C Limited would be looking for comments to be provided within two weeks of this meeting so that an updated version could be circulated for formal endorsement.

SA requested a firm deadline. SM therefore suggested that comments are to be provided in writing (this could be tracked changes, or an email with reference to the text by the end of the day on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024. SM stated that Sizewell C Limited would like to provide the updated version for formal endorsement on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024, however this is subject to comments being provided on time. **Action – Panel members to review and provide commentary on the draft ToR by the end of the day on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

SM provided an overview of the ToR, confirming that the TOR reflects the scope of the DoO. This includes, details of the split of the fund (i.e. inside and outside of the National Landscape), the relationship between the members including voting and non-voting, the rotational chair and how Sizewell C Limited would provide resource for the secretariat role. Escalation and governance arrangements. SM also identified the ToR described the requirement for the NEAP to report annually to the Environment Review Group and how the format of such reporting is to be agreed in the future. In summary, SM stated that the draft ToR are aligned as close as possible to the DoO itself.

PB stated that an early observation would be the need to cover appeals and complaints that are made by applicants and a process for how this would be addressed if it were to occur. PB also queried the value of the contributions for the Fund, as the DoO states a maximum liability of £12M, but also states two other figures for allocation of the Fund during and post construction which add up to a total of £9,703,300. SM confirmed that there are other numbers that are within the £12 million which could be causing the confusion. (PB notes £12M is specifically referred to as the max liability for the NEIF) **Action – Sizewell C Limited to clarify what is included within the value of £12 million included with the ToR.**

TD further stated that the accuracy of the values within the TOR is really important so seconded PB's point. TD also questioned what the Environmental Review Group is? SM stated that the Environmental Review Group is an overarching environmental group that will be established and has responsibility for reviewing the environmental

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

performance of the project against the requirements on the premise of reports that are fed up from other groups, such as the NEAP. The primary review function if the Environment Review Group is to oversee the Ecology Working Group. However with reference to this group, it is to determine how the funds are drawn down and therefore the information to be submitted to the Environment Review Group is predominantly for information to ensure money is being spent appropriately and impacts are being managed.

CK identified that the ToR does not provide any details as to how the panel should be set up and queried if there should be more detail around how quickly the fund should be spent and the requirements for monitoring or proof of delivery. CK also stated that perhaps the ToR should include other reference to the RAMS fund and how it should work in its own entity. SM confirmed that this has been discussed with ESC and SCC and it was concluded that the ToR should be as close to the DoO as possible. SM further stated that this issue is included in the requirements of the DoO and it should be spent for purposes of the mitigation. The ToR also sets up its own administrative arrangements and therefore agree a strategy for how the NEAP should fulfil its role and how the funds would be drawn down and the frequency of the fundings. SM stated that it is for the group to identify and explain to landowner what a good application looks like and encourage that applications are made. This is the start of the process. CK questioned if the ToR is purely panel focussed and SM confirmed that this is the case.

SA raised three questions as set out below:

1 – is there a process of how we are going to appoint the three members specified in the ToR? SM clarified that this is for the member of this panel to determine.

2 – point 8, please could a definition of Quoracy? SM confirmed that this is set out in the ToR and that a quorate meeting is a meeting that is attended by at least three of the core members (ESC, SCC and Sizewell C Limited). SA then stated that the ToR suggest that NE and NL members would not be able to refer/escalate to the Environment Review Group. SM to confirmed that this would be taken away and agreed. **Action – Sizewell C Limited will provide clarification of the escalation process as defined in the DoO.**

3 – AG questioned can Environment Review Group members also be members of the awards panel? If there is not a unanimous decision it is referred to the ERG. SM confirmed that this is not clear and will need to be taken aware and legal opinion sought. **Action – Sizewell C Limited will clarify the position on dual membership on the NEAP and the Environment Review Group.**

### 5 DISCUSSION ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND FUNDING

TD stated that a partnership workshop has been set up for February 2024 and that there is reference to the Areen of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscape), but this is not just focussed on the AONB. SM stated that it is not only focussed on the AONB as identified in the funding split detailed in the DoO and ToR.

PB shared the Natural Environment Improvement Area Plan as identified in the DoO , totalling 617km<sup>2</sup>. PB then shared some details of the actions required to set up the NEAP. PB opened the floor and welcomed engagement on the proposals. PB is starting to explore opportunities that meet the criteria of the fund.

**Action – A short paper to be prepared and distributed to cover what the framework or strategy for the successful operation of the panel and delivery of the fund would comprise. This paper could then be discussed and agreed by the panel members.** PB to own, supported by Sizewell C Limited and all members of the NEAP. PB

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

stated that this has already been shared with various parties. EB confirmed that Natural England are able to support the development of the plan but stated that the NE officer is changing.

**Action - SM to confirm the Sizewell C Limited point of contact** (Post Meeting note - Sizewell C Limited contact will be Nick Stayt). TD and CK to be the point of contact for ESC. Timescales for the draft plan were indicatively set at 3 months from this meeting.

PB stated that there should be some uniformity around how this fund works against how the other funds to be established work and therefore ESC and SCC involvement/engagement would be welcomed. CK, stated that the recruitment is ongoing for the ESC project officer to support the role being resourced by the NL team as part of the NEAP.

TD-K suggested that the plan also needs to cover sequence and communications given the potential levels of interest. TD-K also noted that it is worth acknowledging that we are leaning on the National Landscape team that is not yet being funded through the fund, but is funded through the existing partnerships with the local authority. SA furthered this by suggesting a call with SM after this IM to discuss how SZC Limited could support the development of the plan.

SA suggested that a future agenda item in upcoming meetings should be on publication of award of funds.

### 6 AOB

SM clarified the Secretariat role to be fulfilled by Sizewell C Limited and that draft minutes of this meeting would be shared in 5 days. Final minutes would be issued in due course and also uploaded on to the ESC portal for public view.

No further AOB raised.

### Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
10th January 2024	1	Panel members to review and provide commentary on the draft ToR by the end of the day on 24th January 2024.	NEAP members	Action closed
10th January 2024	2	Sizewell C Limited to clarify what is included within the value of £12 million included with the ToR.	Sizewell C Limited	Action closed
10th January 2024	3	Sizewell C Limited will provide clarification of the escalation process as defined in the DoO.	Sizewell C Limited	Action closed

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
10th January 2024	4	Sizewell C Limited will clarify the position on dual membership on the NEAP and the Environment Review Group.	Sizewell C Limited	Action closed
10th January 2024	5	A short paper is to be prepared and distributed to cover what the framework or strategy for the successful operation of the panel and delivery of the fund would comprise. This paper could then be discussed and agreed by the panel members.	NEAP members	No due date set
10th January 2024	6	SM to confirm the Sizewell C Limited point of contact (Post Meeting note - Sizewell C Limited contact will be Nick Stayt).	Sizewell C Limited	Action closed

**Author: Nick Stayt (AECOM)**