

## **NuLeAF Policy Statement 5**

June 2019

### **1. Introduction**

In cleaning up the UK's nuclear legacy, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) spends around £3.3 billion of public money every year, with the total cost of the clean up mission estimated at £121 billion over 120 years.

Around three-quarters of NDA expenditure is allocated to the clean up of the Sellafield site, with the rest divided between Magnox sites and other infrastructure. Significant funds will also be required to develop a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) once a suitable host community has come forward.

NDA expenditure delivers employment and economic benefits to the communities that host nuclear legacy sites and related infrastructure. However, NuLeAF does not believe that, to date, the NDA has developed a coherent approach that maximises the positive social, economic and environmental outcomes of the public money it spends.

Our view is supported by the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** which concluded in October 2018 that '*We are not convinced that the NDA is achieving the wider economic benefits that would help justify the vast amounts of public investment*<sup>1</sup>' at Sellafield and across the NDA estate.

The Committee recommended action on education and skills, stimulation of the supply chain and that NDA enhance expenditure on the local, regional and national economy. It also recommended that the NDA develop a **Socio-economic Strategy** to lend coherence and ambition to its approach.

NuLeAF supports the PAC's recommendations and is engaging with NDA as it develops its new Strategy. This Policy Statement sets out our view on the context and priority areas for action that the new Strategy should address. It has been developed through discussion with our members at Steering Group and Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG); and in specially convened meetings held with the NDA in Bristol, London and Penrith.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/1375/137505.htm>

## 2. The NDA and Socio-economics

The **Energy Act 2004** established a clear duty on the NDA *to 'support and encourage activities benefiting the social and economic life of local communities'*<sup>2</sup>, while the **Industrial Strategy**<sup>3</sup> and the **Nuclear Sector Deal**<sup>4</sup> set clear objectives for delivering wider economic benefits through decommissioning activities.

Other legislation also mandates all public bodies to deliver added value. The **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012** places a duty all those who commission public services to secure wider economic, social and environmental benefits; while the UK Government is currently consulting on how to enhance **Social Value in Government Procurement**<sup>5</sup>. In Wales, the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**<sup>6</sup> requires public bodies to consider the long-term impact of their decisions, to work with communities, and to address issues such as poverty and climate change.

The NDA currently allocates around 1% of its budget to socio-economic projects and community funds. It also has targets for its wider spend, for example that by 2022, 33% of supply chain budget will be spent with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The NDA is a member of the **Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG)**<sup>7</sup> which is working to develop a skills plan for the sector, augmenting the NDA's own **People and Skills Strategy** published in 2014<sup>8</sup>.

The NDA's **Strategy**<sup>9</sup> states that their socio-economic mission is to *'support the maintenance of sustainable communities'*. It sets out four objectives which are to:

- Enhance the opportunity for local people to be involved in decommissioning work or other economic activity through education, retraining and skills development;
- Support the diversification of local economies into other sectors – reducing the reliance of communities on nuclear sites for employment – by increasing the number, variety and vibrancy of local businesses, promoting entrepreneurship and taking steps to attract new enterprises;
- Increase the attractiveness of areas near NDA sites as places to live, work and invest in, with particular emphasis on achieving environmental, social and infrastructure improvements; and
- Work with nuclear new build and neighbouring site organisations to work cohesively on socio-economics and maximize potential benefits to the community.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/20/notes>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-sector-deal/nuclear-sector-deal>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/social-value-in-government-procurement>

<sup>6</sup> <http://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://nda.blog.gov.uk/2018/03/12/ready-to-deliver/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://tools.nda.gov.uk/publication/people-and-skills-strategy/>

<sup>9</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609601/Extract\\_from\\_NDA\\_Socio-Economic\\_Strategy\\_III.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609601/Extract_from_NDA_Socio-Economic_Strategy_III.pdf)

**Social Impact Strategy**<sup>10</sup> and a **Transformation Plan**<sup>11</sup> for Sellafield has recently been published. Magnox has also prepared a **Socio-economic Plan**<sup>12</sup>.

More widely, recent or planned developments in the NDA's approach will have significant implications for local economies and communities. These include:

- Changes in NDA corporate structures, particularly the new operating model for Magnox and moves to support closer working under 'One NDA'
- The closure of the THORP plant at Sellafield, moving the NDA's largest site to one that will be focussed solely on decommissioning
- Proposals to move away from the Care & Maintenance approach to the accelerated decommissioning of some Magnox reactors, which will impact on employment and local economic activity
- Plans for the application of a more 'risk based' approach to the management of all nuclear wastes, with implications for storage and disposal routes
- The launch of the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process and consideration of the potential for Near Surface Disposal of some Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).

### **3. The Socio-economic context for Local Government**

Local authorities have a central role in supporting and enhancing the economy and delivering wider social and environmental benefits. They are therefore an important partner for NDA in delivering better socio-economic outcomes.

Directly, and through the 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local government sets the strategic vision and the objectives designed to deliver a better economy and more sustainable communities. Critical to this are **Economic Strategies** and **Local Development Frameworks** (LDFs) and, through the LEPs, the preparation of **Local Industrial Strategies** and **Local Growth Strategies**.

Financial support is provided through **Local Growth Funds** and **City Deals**. Looking forward there are plans to replace finance previously provided by the European Union with a new **Shared Prosperity Fund**.

Councils also have an important role in education and skills as statutory bodies with responsibility for schools and colleges; in land use and waste planning; and in the development of infrastructure.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sellafield-ltd-launches-social-impact-strategy>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transformation-plan>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/magnox-socio-economic-plan-2016-19>

#### **4. NuLeAF's position**

NuLeAF believes the NDA should use the development of a Socio-economic Strategy as the basis for a significant overhaul of its approach to supporting local economies.

A clear, ambitious, effective and integrated Strategy should be prepared, built on partnership with local authorities, LEPs and communities. Better reporting is needed, enabling an understanding of how the NDA is working to maximise positive outcomes for communities. Clear linkages must be established between commitments in the Socio-economic Strategy and wider NDA work e.g. on skills. The overall approach should address the following:

##### **a. Engagement with local authorities and LEPs**

To date, the NDA, Magnox and Sellafield have only had limited engagement with local authorities and LEPs in the development of economic plans. A more regular dialogue is required, leading to greater collaborative working and the development of shared priorities.

##### **Desired outcomes:**

- Better communication and more regular meetings between NDA and host local authorities and LEPs to discuss socio-economic and planning issues and to provide oversight of progress with the decommissioning mission.
- Engagement by the NDA in the development of Local Industrial Strategies, Local Growth Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and other socio-economic plans. The NDA should seek to identify how its activities could contribute to wider economic objectives e.g. on energy, infrastructure or skills
- Greater involvement by NDA in increasing the resilience of local economies and supporting the process of economic diversification. Given the dependence of the West Cumbrian economy on NDA operations, the effective delivery of the Sellafield Social Impact Strategy and Transformation Plan, in collaboration with local government, is a particular priority in this region. NDA and Magnox must also engage more effectively around Lifetime Plans for sites
- More collaborative working between the NDA and other nuclear site operators to develop a joined-up approach to activity where more than one site is in close proximity
- Better engagement between NDA and BEIS to connect work being undertaken on decommissioning with wider socio-economic priorities. The Industrial Strategy and Nuclear Sector Deal provide a clear underpinning for this.

##### **b. Employment**

The NDA currently employs around 16,000, with more than 50% of jobs being located in and around Sellafield. Employment at Sellafield has declined, and this process will continue as site remediation and decommissioning progresses. For Magnox sites, planned changes to the approach to decommissioning will impact on the employment profile over coming decades.

**Desired outcomes:** The Strategy should underpin an approach that best maintains direct employment and maximises indirect employment across the estate. Critical areas for action are:

- Sellafield – work with local authorities and staff to build on the commitments in the Sellafield Social Impact Strategy and Transformation Plan
- Magnox – clarify plans for accelerated decommissioning of Magnox stations and ensure that proposals protect, as far as possible, employment on sites over the longer term.
- Across the estate - act to support the supply chain and local businesses and thus enhance indirect employment.

### **c. Investment in projects and infrastructure**

The NDA commits around 1% of spend (£31 million per annum) to socio-economics. This has helped fund some significant infrastructure projects around certain sites, but our members feel that greater value could be delivered through better co-operation with local and national organisations.

**Desired outcomes:** That NDA:

- Increases its direct spend on socio-economics and ensures that decisions about investment are transparent, fair and meet the NDA's environmental and social objectives.
- Develops a more collaborative approach, working with local authorities, LEPs and other government agencies to help take forward new investment in critical infrastructure, for example enhancements to the local transport network, that supports the wider economic health and development of communities.

### **d. Support for the supply chain**

Much of the NDA's expenditure flows to private sector contractors including large international consortia, but also Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The NDA has a commitment to support local businesses around its sites but as the PAC has shown more needs to be done.

**Desired outcomes:** That the NDA's procurement and investment processes optimise opportunities for local businesses and meet the commitment to enhance the social impact of their supply chain. Critical areas for action are:

- To use the Sellafield Social Impact Strategy and Transformation Plan, and changes in the governance arrangement for Magnox, to drive forward action that better supports local businesses and SMEs. NDA should work with stakeholders to review procurement processes and identify how to overcome barriers to local suppliers and SMEs winning contracts. Better monitoring and reporting of progress against targets should be established.
- To ensure that local businesses and SMEs included in framework agreements and consortia actually receive a fair and appropriate amount of work when individual contracts are awarded.

- To take on board in full the requirements of upcoming legislation on Social Value in Government Procurement

### **e. Education and Skills**

The Nuclear Sector Deal places a strong emphasis on skills with a commitment to significant investment in increasing apprenticeships and STEM engagement. Co-ordination of effort is supported by the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG) involving Government, the NDA and the wider industry.

**Desired outcome:** That, through the NSSG and other mechanisms, the industry delivers on the commitment to significant investment in apprenticeships and skills at every level. A critical area for action is to establish clearly how local government can contribute to this work and help support its outcomes through their role in supporting schools, colleges and LEPs.

### **f. Community benefits and socio-economic funding**

Current levels of community funds and benefits paid by the NDA are small, and the basis on which decisions are taken about which projects to support are not clearly understood. Over the last decade other, comparable industries, from new nuclear to fracking and renewables, have established community benefit protocols and more generous funding commitments.

Communities in West Cumbria and elsewhere currently host Higher Activity Waste (HAW) and this will continue for many decades. In some other nations a package of community benefits is paid to each community hosting such material. In the UK a community fund has been established in West Cumbria, though this is not specifically related to waste storage on the Sellafield site. Other communities do not receive payments.

**Desired outcomes:** That the NDA should:

- Conduct a review of community benefits and socio-economic funding. This review should:
  - Involve NuLeAF and local authorities
  - Benchmark NDA performance on community funds against (a) comparable industries in the UK and (b) international best practice in nuclear decommissioning operations
  - Establish a consistent approach to such funds along with better reporting of outcomes
  - Recognise the important national role that communities play in hosting the long-term storage of radioactive waste. This should be reflected in the establishment of a Community Fund for waste storage that would provide support based on the quantities and types of waste received.

### **g. Geological disposal**

The GDF siting process is now 'live'. NuLeAF has been active in working Government and RWM on the financial package on offer to communities, with this having many aspects. These include employment, infrastructure investment, supply chain support, skills, business rates and mineral rights.

**Desired Outcome:** The socio-economic offer to communities and local authorities that enter and remain within the GDF siting process should be significant and integrated. Decisions on how funds are spent must be driven by local authorities and the wider community.

### **h. Governance, Indicators and Reporting**

Local government and community understanding of the impact of the NDA on local economies is limited and steps must be taken to improve reporting, both in terms of the range of information available and its accessibility to local authorities and the wider public.

The Socio-economic Strategy should be properly embedded within the NDA and the wider industry with clear governance structures. NuLeAF should be involved in governance, and the NDA should also improve its direct engagement with individual local authorities and LEPS.

**Desired outcomes:** The Strategy should set out clearly:

- Governance structures for taking forward and monitoring socio-economic work at a national and local level. These should involve NuLeAF. At a community level there should be better working between NDA/Magnox and individual local authorities and LEPS
- Proposals for enhanced reporting on the NDA's socio-economic programme. This should include (a) a breakdown of how the 1% of NDA funds specifically allocated to socio-economics is spent and (b) details of all projects that were in receipt of NDA funds. NDA should present annually to NuLeAF on its socio-economic work and the success of its delivery in line with the objectives set in the Strategy
- Indicators to measure progress against all objectives should be established. These should be SMART and be reported on regularly and in an accessible way
- Better benchmarking of performance with comparable industries within the UK and overseas.