

ITEM 6: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



Report to RWPG, 28th April 2022

This report provides an update on recent developments in radioactive waste management. It covers:

- NDA Group update;
- Decommissioning of AGR stations;
- Nuleaf news; and
- International news.

1. NDA Group update

1.1 **Nuclear Waste Services** was launched on the 31st January. This new body brings together the Low-Level Waste Repository Limited, Radioactive Waste Management Limited and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) group's Integrated Waste Management Programme. Adrienne Kelbie has been appointed as Chair to work alongside Chief Executive Officer Corhyn Parr.

The Nuclear Waste Services portfolio includes:

- Major Capital Programmes - Developing a permanent disposal capability for higher-activity UK radioactive wastes in a GDF.
- Waste Operations – Ensuring the continued safe, compliant, and effective management of the Low-Level Waste Repository Site.
- Waste Services - Managing contracts and relationships across the waste cycle.
- Integrated Waste Management Programme – Developing new opportunities and capabilities that help ensure that waste is managed in a more integrated way, from waste generation to disposal.

1.2 The NDA's **Business Plan 2022-25** was released in March¹ and sets out the key activities the Authority plans to undertake across all its sites over that time period.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-decommissioning-authority-business-plan-2022-to-2025>

1.3 The NDA has published its first **Sustainability Strategy**². This sets out their sustainability vision, namely *'to be recognised as a leader in transforming nuclear legacies into opportunities for local, regional and national sustainable development.'* It also outlines their planned sustainability legacies in terms of decommissioning, socio-economics, the environment and culture.

Nuleaf intends to invite Davide Stronati, NDA Director of Sustainability, to speak on the Strategy and planned work at a future meeting.

1.4 New figures show that the NDA's **gender pay gap** was 12.7% in 2020/21 a small improvement on the previous year when the figure was 13.1%. Women make up 80% of the lowest quartile of NDA pay³.

1.5 It has been suggested to the Dounreay Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) that Magnox is likely to take over responsibility for the decommissioning of the **Vulcan** site in Caithness⁴. This is the UK's naval reactor test establishment and has been operated by the Ministry of Defence for many decades. It has already been confirmed that the decommissioning of the nearby Dounreay site will be taken forward by Magnox.

1.6 Magnox and Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) have issued their latest **Joint Waste Management Plan (JWMP)**⁵. Its purpose is to demonstrate how Magnox is engaging with the National Low Level Waste (LLW) Programme to improve their implementation of and compliance with the UK LLW Strategy. This JWMP provides an overview of the waste management activities performed by the SLC over the previous financial year and highlights the main transformational activities to be undertaken either independently or in collaboration with NWS and other organisations.

1.7 Nuleaf's Executive Director attended and spoke at a meeting of the **National Waste Programme Delivery Overview Group** in Manchester on the 27th April. A verbal update on this will be provided to this meeting.

2. Decommissioning of AGR Stations

2.1 Nuleaf held a member meeting on the **Decommissioning of the AGR Stations** on the 9th February. This was very well attended by local authorities from

² https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nda-group-sustainability-strategy-2022?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=7dac7fe0-7ca9-4313-b878-fc4f43f09e7b&utm_content=immediately

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nda-group-gender-pay-gap-report-2020-to-2021/nda-group-gender-pay-gap-report-2020-to-2021>

⁴ <https://caithness-business.co.uk/article/16449>

⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069116/Magnox_JWMP_March_2022_.pdf

across England and Scotland, demonstrating significant interest in the issue. Following presentations by BEIS, EDF and NDA and Magnox a range of questions were raised, with a focus on socio-economic issues and the need for integrated working between A and B sites (and with new nuclear where that is occurring). A note of the meeting has been drafted and the presentations are available on Nuleaf's website⁶.

2.2 The **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** held an evidence session on the 7th February as part of their current enquiry into the Future of the AGRs. Nuleaf responded to the call for evidence and our submission was referenced by the Committee in their questioning of the panel. The evidence session can be viewed here⁷.

3. Nuleaf news

3.1 The next **Steering Group** meeting will be held in person on the 15th and 16th June. It is now anticipated that this will be in Gloucestershire and will involve a dinner and a site visit to Berkeley. Details will be circulated shortly.

3.2 A draft **Service Plan 2022-23** has been prepared and included in the RWPG papers. The document sets out Nuleaf's work programme for the year along with a diary of events. The Service Plan will be presented for approval at the June Steering Group meeting but members are invited to feedback comments in the coming weeks.

The Service Plan has been redesigned as part of a wider refresh of materials. A new style **Annual Report**, outlining work undertaken in 2021/22 will be circulated to members in the coming weeks; while Nuleaf's **Case Studies** and **Briefing Papers** are also being updated and refreshed.

4. International News

4.1 The International Atomic Energy Agency has released a new report on **Communication and Stakeholder Involvement in Radioactive Waste Disposal**⁸. The aim of the paper is to provide guidance for countries embarking on or revising a waste disposal programme.

⁶ <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/meetings-events/other-meetings/>

⁷ [Future of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

⁸ <https://www.iaea.org/publications/13590/communication-and-stakeholder-involvement-in-radioactive-waste-disposal>