

## ITEM 5: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



### Report to RWPG, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024

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

- NDA Group update;
- UK Government update;
- Nuleaf news; and
- New nuclear and fusion updates.

#### 1. NDA Group update

1.1 The NDA has commissioned Baringa to undertake an independent review of the **Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs)**. The work began last month and is due to report in late summer 2024. Nuleaf's Executive Director has been interviewed as part of the research, and there have also been conversations with SSG Chairs and a number of other interested parties.

Nuleaf is also undertaking research, looking at engagement with local government and communities. As a first stage of this work a discussion with members was held at the Nuleaf Annual Gathering.

Separately, the **University of Aberdeen** has been commissioned by the NDA to investigate the scope for the use of deliberative democracy approaches within a nuclear context.

1.2 The **NDA Stakeholder Summit** will take place in Manchester on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September. Nuleaf has been invited to participate in the opening panel discussion of the event and has also invited NDA CEO David Peattie to meet with our members, as has occurred at previous Summits. The full agenda is being finalised and is expected to be released soon, along with information on travel and accommodation.

1.3 Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) has published its **Socio-economic funding report 2023-24**<sup>1</sup>. The paper outlines how the £1million plus allocated to supporting

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nrs-celebrates-community-growth>

the Magnox sites was allocated. By far the largest grant was to Menter Mon, who will receive £500,000 to help support their community development work in North Wales over the next two years. The report claims that every £1 invested by NRS and the NDA leveraged another £10.47 in match funding.

Rob Fletcher, NRS CEO, commented: *'I'm proud of our commitment in delivering transformational projects aimed at securing sustainable futures for our communities. By investing in training, skills, infrastructure, and the environment, we're laying the groundwork for lasting change. Our focus isn't just on short term fixes, but on building robust foundations that empower individuals and communities. Through strategic socio-economic funding, we're not only addressing immediate needs but also paving the way for growth and well-being.'*

1.4 Workers at **Dounreay** have suspended planned strikes while GMB and Unite members are balloted on a new pay offer<sup>2</sup>. More than 500 workers at the Dounreay site went on strike on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May. Another union, Prospect, was involved in the first strike day before accepting a revised deal.

1.5 Philip Matthews and Jonathan Cook attended a **Site Decommissioning and Remediation (SDR) Theme Overview Group (TOG)** meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

The meeting heard the perspectives of regulators, government, Ministry of Defence and local authorities on the proposed development of SDR Strategy within Strategy 5.

Philip and Jonathan made a number of comments including that:

- The focus on Critical Enablers (CE) was welcome as was the emphasis on engagement, but the challenge would be delivery. In terms of critical enablers such as sustainability, carbon and social value, it was important to have the tools to properly integrate these concerns and report on progress to stakeholders. Regarding engagement the SDR Strategy should draw on the current engagement research being undertaken by NDA and Nuleaf.
- There were lots of opportunities for partnership working with local government on issues such as Biodiversity Net Gain, transport, interim uses and added value outcomes.
- Many local authorities and communities are still lacking clarity about what the timeline is for their sites.
- Non-rad waste is a significant issue around which there has not been enough dialogue to date.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9ee8jrv1j1o>

1.6 On behalf of Nuleaf, Doug Bamsey attended a **Critical Enablers (CE) TOG** meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> July while Steve Smith participated in a **Joint SDR and IWM TOG** on the 12<sup>th</sup> July. A verbal update on both meetings will be provided.

## 2. UK Government update

2.1 A joint Nuleaf/NNLAG meeting with **Great British Nuclear (GBN)** will take place this afternoon between 1pm and 3pm. Members will hear from GBN's Head of Stakeholder Engagement John McNamara on emerging plans for new nuclear development. There has been a high level of interest in this meeting.

2.2 The election of a majority Labour Government on July the 4<sup>th</sup> is not anticipated to lead to any significant changes on policy around new nuclear or decommissioning and waste management. An update will be provided to the RWPG on ministerial appointments and any departmental changes.

## 3. Nuleaf news

3.1 Nuleaf's **Annual Gathering** took place in a warm and sunny Llandudno on the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June. It was well attended by members from across England and Wales as well as by colleagues from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS).

The Gathering included a Steering Group and Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), but also provided space for a range of important issues to be explored in more depth.

CEOs and senior officers from Gwynedd Council, Menter Mon and Cwmni Egino spoke on their work in promoting positive socio-economic and environmental outcomes around former nuclear sites, this being followed by a lively and engaged discussion.

Earlier in the day, consultant Steve Smith facilitated a group discussion on stakeholder engagement and how this could be enhanced in future. This will feed into a consultancy study commissioned by Nuleaf, due to be published in the autumn. Members were then able to network over drinks and dinner, with the evening brought to a close with an address from Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn, Leader of Gwynedd Council.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> members visited the former Trawsfynydd nuclear power station, an NDA 'Lead and Learn' site which is taking forward a range of new and innovative approaches to decommissioning and waste management.

Feedback from RWPG members on the event is welcome. A proposal will be put to the September Steering Group regarding the Gathering for 2025.

3.2 We are able to provide funding for two of our members to attend the **GMF General Assembly** meeting in Salamanca on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October. The Group of Municipalities with Nuclear Facilities (GMF) is a network of nuclear host communities stretching across the continent. The General Assembly will include presentations from member countries, a focussed discussion on the situation in Spain, and a visit to a nuclear fuel fabrication site. An email has been sent to members asking them to express their interest in attending.

We will also be providing support for some members to participate in the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** Technical meeting on local engagement in nuclear, being held in Vienna on the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October. More information on that will be provided soon.

3.3 Technical issues prevented Avison Young (AY) and the NDA speaking to members at the April RWPG meeting, and they have been unable to attend today. They would like to set up an online meeting in September, to provide an update on current and planned work around land use and waste planning and have proposed the 6<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> September. We will seek member preferences on a date at this RWPG.

3.4 Nuleaf is supporting the further development of the **Nuclear Communities Global Partnership**, launched last year. As part of this work, Phil Matthews joined a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> June with **Zengenkyo**, the association of Mayors representing nuclear communities in Japan. The Partnership currently involves American, Canadian and European communities but it is hoped to expand it to incorporate Japan, Korea and some South American countries. Eventually other nations may also join.

3.5 Nuleaf's Director was also invited to join the advisory group developing the programme for an IAEA Technical meeting on the local dimensions of nuclear, being held in Vienna in October this year. The Group met online on two occasions during June.

#### **4. New nuclear and fusion updates**

4.1 A Manchester-based company, Circular Refining and Products, has unveiled plans to build small modular reactors (SMRs) on an industrial estate in Deeside, north Wales. The proposal is to construct a 100MWe nuclear plant alongside a 100Mwe electrolyser to produce hydrogen. The initial phase will see a 20Mwe reactor and equivalent sized electrolyser built. The company plan to submit a pre-planning

application to Flintshire Council to see if it is a project they would support; and to seek a nuclear license from ONR.

The company claim that the production of 'ruby' hydrogen has a significantly lower carbon footprint than the fossil fuels it would replace. If approved, the site could be operational by 2028, creating between 50 and 150 jobs<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [Plans for nuclear park in Deeside to produce 'ruby' hydrogen | The Leader \(leaderlive.co.uk\)](https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/18742211/plans-for-nuclear-park-in-deeside-to-produce-ruby-hydrogen/)