

Forum.



Nuleaf and other UK delegates, IAEA Vienna October 2024.

Welcome

Here is a summary of what has been hitting the headlines, recently issued reports, consultations in progress, forthcoming meeting dates and other items of note. This is a monthly service which we provide to those of our members who financially support our work.

On the international stage

A Nuleaf delegation participated in the **IAEA Technical Meeting on Stakeholder Engagement** in Vienna on the 16th to 20th October. Nuleaf members were joined by a number of other UK participants representing the three GDF Community Partnerships and Nuclear Waste Services (NWS). Over the course of the week delegates from around the world discussed local government and community engagement around waste management and in relation to proposals for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).



Welcoming Argentina to the growing Global Partnership of Nuclear Communities

The meeting also saw the further development of the **Global Partnership of Nuclear Communities**, with Argentina and the Republic of Korea committing to joining the network.

Our members also engaged in the **GMF General Assembly** meeting in Salamanca on the 8th and 9th October. The event included presentations from member countries, a focussed discussion on the nuclear situation in Spain, and a visit to a nuclear fuel fabrication site.

New nuclear news

Ynys Mon MP **Llinos Medi** has called on the UK Government to provide clear commitments and timelines on the future of the Wylfa site and wider energy strategy for Wales. This follows reports that Secretary of State Ed Miliband has asked his department to review all nuclear plans. It is suggested that Wylfa may host four Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) rather than a large Gigawatt facility.

US Company **Last Energy** has announced plans to develop four micro modular reactors at Bridgend in South Wales. The 20MW reactors would be constructed on the site of the former coal-fired Llynfi Power Station which closed in 1977. The plant would serve local industrial customers, and if given the go ahead, the first reactor could be operational by 2027. The company claims that this will translate into a £30 million investment in the local area and support at least 100 local full-time jobs.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have announced that **Holtec International's** Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design has successfully completed Phase 1 of the Generic Design Assessment (GDA).

Dates for the diary

The Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG) will meet (online) on **Wednesday the 6th November** from 10am to 12.30pm. The meeting will include discussion of the draft findings of our independent research on local government engagement. There will also be updates from the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) on their work on Proportionate Regulatory Control (PRC); from the Environment Agency on their upcoming consultation on Guidance on Requirements for Authorisation (GRA) for a geological disposal facility; and from Nuclear Restoration Services on recent land use and waste planning work.

The next Steering Group meeting will be held online on **Wednesday the 11th December** from 10am to 3pm. Along with meeting papers we will receive presentations on our final report on local government engagement in nuclear, and on recent international engagement. There will also be an update from Nuclear Restoration Services on their strategic and site level work.

The date of the **2025 Nuleaf Annual Gathering** has been provisionally set for Tuesday the 10th and Wednesday the 11th June next year. Please note these dates in your diary.

The Gathering, which will also mark Nuleaf's 20th Anniversary, will involve a day of meetings and a dinner in London, followed by a site visit to Dungeness, which hosts two decommissioning nuclear power stations. It is hoped that NDA CEO David Peattie will be able to attend the London dinner.

NAO report on Sellafield

On the 23rd October, the National Audit Office (NAO) published its latest [report on Decommissioning Sellafield: managing risks from the nuclear legacy](#)¹. This recognises the exceptional challenges at Sellafield and that the mission will take until 2125 to complete. It notes that progress has been made since their last report (2018) in retrieving the most hazardous waste from aging facilities and that the site is more willing to confront and resolve difficult issues, drawing on expertise in the wider NDA Group.

However, the NAO believes that Sellafield has not made sufficient progress in reducing site risks, is not demonstrating value for money, and needs to address the deteriorating condition of key assets. This means that 'intolerable' risks are likely to persist for longer.

David Peattie, the NDA's chief executive, commented '*Sellafield is one of the most complex environmental programmes in the world. We're proud of our workforce and the achievements being made, including the unprecedented retrieval of legacy waste from all four highest hazard facilities. But as the NAO rightly points out there is still more to be done.*'



Geological Disposal news

Both the Canadian communities that could potentially host a geological repository have voted in favour of the proposal.

In **Ignace**, northern Ontario, of approximately 1,035 eligible voters, 660 registered to participate. Of those, 640 actually cast a ballot, with 495 voting yes (77%).

The margin of victory was much closer in the other potential community, **South Bruce** in southern Ontario. With a turnout of 69% of the local electorate, fifty-one percent said yes with forty-nine percent opposed. To progress, a positive vote is also required from the Saugeen and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nations, representing indigenous people in South Bruce and Ignace respectively. Engagement between these communities and the waste management organisation (NWMO) continues.

The Swedish GDF siting process in the country took a major step forward on the 24th October after the national **Land and Environment Court** granted an environmental permit for the construction and operation of the repository and encapsulation plant. The repository will be located at Forsmark/Osthammar, while the encapsulation plant is located at Oskarshamn.

This decision enables preparatory work to start, although tunnelling cannot commence until the Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) provides an approved safety report. It is expected the facilities will become operational in the mid-2030s. The permit applies to all Sweden's past and current nuclear reactors but does not apply to any nuclear waste or spent fuel from a new nuclear programme.

Regulatory updates

The ONR has published its **Annual Report and Accounts 23/24** and also its **Chief Nuclear Inspector's Annual Report**. The latter concludes that overall performance of the nuclear industry remains satisfactory, while highlighting some issues of concern.

Sellafield Ltd. has issued an apology after pleading guilty to charges related to cybersecurity failings that were brought by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). A fine of £332,500 was imposed on the company – details of that and the issues that arose are provided here.

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