

**Minutes of the Steering Group meeting held online,
11th September 10:00 – 14:00**

Cllr David Moore	Cumberland Council (Chair)
Cllr Mike Caswell	Somerset Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Joseph Ghayouba	Cumberland Council
Cllr Tony Markley	Cumberland Council
Cllr Tom Daly	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Paul Thomas	Folkestone and Hythe District Council
Cllr Tracey Henry	Hull City Council/NFLA
Cllr Aled Morris Jones	Isle of Anglesey/Ynys Mon County Council
Cllr Gary Pritchard	Isle of Anglesey/Ynys Mon County Council
Cllr Chris Davies	South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council
Jonathan Cook	Cumberland Council
Eleanor Godesar	Dorset Council
Eren Balkir	Dorset Council
Bethany Rance	East Suffolk Council
Amartya Deb	Gloucestershire Council
Claire Bromley	Gloucestershire Council
Iwan Jones	Gwynedd Council
Diane Neville	Lancaster County Council
Richard Sharples	Lancashire County Council
Edward Wright	Lincolnshire County Council
Richard Outram	Manchester City Council/NFLA
Jonathan Holland	North Wales Councils
Louise Martin	Somerset Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Ross Walker	Suffolk County Council
Rachel Whaley	Westmorland and Furness Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Chloe Atkinson	Nuleaf
Matthew Buckley	NDA
Doug Bamsey	Nuleaf consultant
Steve Smith	Nuleaf consultant
Neil Crewdson	Sellafield Ltd.

1.	Welcome and Apologies	ACTION
1.1	The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He extended a particular welcome to Gary Pritchard (Gwynedd Council) and Diane Neville (Lancaster City Council), both of whom were first time attendees.	
1.2	It was noted that apologies had been received from: Darren Crossley (Cumberland Council); Matthew Winslow (Maldon Council); John Burton (Somerset Council); Terry Burns (Essex County Council); and Cllr Jonathan Brook (Westmorland and Furness Council).	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 18th June	
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate representation and will be posted on the Nuleaf website.	CA
3.	Matters Arising	
3.1	PM reported that all Matters Arising had been completed or were in hand. This included the amendments to the Nuleaf Constitution that were agreed at the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) in June. A revised Constitution had been posted on the website.	
4.	Update and discussion on stakeholder engagement research: Steve Smith and Doug Bamsey (consultants)	
4.1	The Chair welcomed Steve Smith and Doug Bamsey, who delivered a presentation that updated members on their ongoing review of stakeholder engagement.	
4.2	<p>Their presentation outlined the study and how they had engaged with local authorities. There had also been engagement with the NDA and a range of others in the UK and overseas as part of Phase 1 of the research.</p> <p>Drawing on their work to date they made a number of observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much nuclear engagement has tended to be reactive rather than proactive and could be viewed more accurately as communication. • The discussions with international representatives from Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Canada was very useful and highlighted a number of particular examples of good practice. • Municipalities in Canada expressed overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding their radioactive waste management company. The Canadians had also established legal Community Agreements between the municipality and radioactive management companies. These ensure accountability and can help support the long-term relationships that are required. GMF Europe is undertaking 	

further research on this topic that will be shared with Nuleaf members when ready.

- The Dutch example of storing art in their LLW store was also inspiring.
- In Sweden, an annual survey is conducted to gauge residents' satisfaction with the work of the radioactive waste management company. In some communities, support for the industry and its economic contributions exceeds 80%.

In terms of Nuleaf, there was a consensus that the organisation has fostered strong and meaningful relationships with the NDA, facilitating two-way conversations. It was felt that, without Nuleaf there would be a noticeable gap and lack of engagement, and that being part of the Nuleaf family helps members and officers share practice and overcome a feeling of isolation.

Meetings were valuable and the network was welcoming. It was also commented that there was an honest and open atmosphere within Nuleaf that encourages candid discussions. The site visits were appreciated for providing insights into the nuclear industry across the country.

It was suggested that there is scope for Nuleaf to raise its profile and gain greater recognition from a wider range of organizations and government bodies. Nuleaf's purpose could be articulated more clearly to enhance understanding among new members and the local community. Sometimes meetings can include an over-use of acronyms.

4.3 The Chair thanked Steve and Doug and invited questions and comments:

Comment: The Executive Director expressed his satisfaction with the progress made with the research and commented that a lot of useful findings for both the NDA and Nuleaf were emerging. He noted that one challenge for Nuleaf was the lack of staff and financial resources, which limits the ability to engage in certain areas.

Question: Could the international standard for stakeholder engagement (AA1000) be used as a benchmark?

Answer: Yes, AA1000 could serve as a reference point and is something we could look into more.

Question: Did you identify any examples of best practice in terms of long-term site engagement on decommissioning as opposed to geological disposal or operational nuclear stations?

Answer: Most examples of best practice did relate to disposal but there were some examples that went across the nuclear cycle. Many of the principles can be applied to any stage.

Question: Can the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) be viewed as a local government network or more as a Non-Governmental Organisation, given that it participates in the NDA NGO meetings?

Answer: (from Richard Outram, NFLA): Like Nuleaf we use a variety of means to get our voice heard, either through engaging directly or participating in forums such as those run for NGOs.

Comment: One of the big challenges in the UK is around resources. As we have discussed, the NDA has been scaling back on face-to-face meetings and travel, as has been seen with the Stakeholder Summits, when actually we need more engagement.

Comment: I wasn't aware of the AA1000 document, but it will provide a useful benchmark against which the NDA's approach can be assessed.

Comment: Thank you to Doug and Steve for their detailed report back. I want to support the comment made earlier about how disappointing it is for the NDA to scale back its stakeholder summits. I know David and Phil have made our concerns known to NDA and I hope we can continue to press them to maintain support for engagement in all its forms.

Comment: Like many local authorities we have undertaken a full review of all the outside bodies we engage with, to assess their value. I'm pleased to say that Nuleaf came out very strongly as an organisation we should continue to participate in. I would support the points made earlier about the need for NDA to properly fund Nuleaf and its wider engagement; and to benchmark its performance against international standards.

Comment: Authorities around sites such as Wylfa and Oldbury are engaged both with the NDA and with new nuclear build. It is therefore really important that we have joined up support. Closer working between Nuleaf and the New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG) would be welcome.

	<p>The Chair thanked the consultants for their presentation and noted that a number of useful comments and questions had been made which should be fed into the final report. It was commented that the final report should be out towards the end of the year.</p>	
5	Presentation on NDA Storage Strategy	
5.1	<p>The Chair welcomed Matthew Buckley of the NDA, who delivered an update on the work undertaken over the past couple of years regarding the Group Storage Strategy and the approach to storage across the NDA group. In his presentation he noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage is a critical issue for the NDA Group and something that is given a lot of thought at a strategic and operational level. The NDA stores waste safely and securely at Sellafield and a number of other sites, and also considers opportunities to consolidate waste. • Unlike the previous strategic review of storage, which primarily focused on consolidation, this current review is more comprehensive. • The review began with an assessment of the case for change. This recognised that there had been significant developments in the landscape, both in the approach to waste management and other issues such as the NDA acquiring responsibility for AGR decommissioning. • There have been significant changes in our understanding of the waste inventory and the schedule of when waste is expected to arise. • Also critical is to ensure we engage with other waste producers, such as the Ministry of Defence, and with regulators and other stakeholders including local authorities and communities. • We also conducted a study focused on the future of waste storage, aiming to enhance sustainability in the design, construction, and operation of storage facilities. Our goal is to explore ways to reduce the life cycle costs of these stores, with the intention of updating our storage industry guidance. The desired outcomes include developing a comprehensive understanding and creating a prioritized list of activities that will enable us to address real issues, risks, and opportunities identified through our engagement. • As we move forward, we will incorporate insights gained from experience into updating our guidance on storage practices, which may lead to the development of new requirements for designing, building, and operating storage facilities. It is crucial to understand the nature of 	

	<p>the waste and how it will be packaged to determine the best storage methods and assess whether consolidation remains a viable option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have also discussed transportation activities, including the availability of transport infrastructure and containers. • We plan to update the stores guidance document over the coming year and also develop a set of guiding principles. Gaining a better understanding of Nuleaf and its members' views is vital – we engage regularly with Phil and look forward to continuing the conversation with your wider membership. We are also looking to develop a communication strategy to effectively engage with local stakeholders, ensuring that our planning and management of these interactions are well thought out. <p>5.2 The Chair thanked Mr Buckley for his presentation and invited questions and comments.</p> <p>Question: You say you have had discussions on consolidation with 'the industry.' Can you define what you mean by the industry in this context?</p> <p><i>Answer: The industry is the NDA Group – Sellafield, Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS), Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), Dounreay and Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS). However, the policy includes a section that talks about how NDA should make its waste facilities available to others where a case can be made. So, we also speak to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), EDF Energy and others.</i></p> <p>Question: In terms of consolidation, what are the biggest challenges you face?</p> <p><i>Answer: These include the limited availability of routes for waste storage and also limitations in terms of cost, skills and the supply chain.</i></p> <p>Question: How do you manage your waste records and how does that fit with characterisation?</p> <p><i>Answer: The characterisation is a crucial part of the record – providing information on provenance of waste and its properties. The waste record should be viewed as an integral part of the waste characterisation and be amended throughout the waste journey.</i></p>	
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Question: Does the waste storage review include full consideration of the AGR sites? I certainly hope it does as, in locations such as Hinkley there is a live conversation between the A and B stations on storage.

Answer: Yes, the AGR stations are very much part of our thinking. The sharing of waste stores presents some real opportunities, but we also need to be careful to assess whether any changes of this sort are really the best option, as there can also be challenges. These are big and expensive decisions that need proper consideration.

Question: I was interested in your final slide which noted the possibility of developing a set of principles to apply when seeking approval of consolidation activity. Can you explain what that might involve? Is it for use by the operator?

Answer: It is important to have a mutual understanding of the rationale behind consolidation, its purpose and benefits. This is a national mission, and we need to apply the same approach and the same justifications. The principles are primarily for the operator, but such an approach will also be useful to e.g. regulators and in ensuring that the approach aligns with the objectives of local planning authorities.

Question: Your slides mention engaging with Sellafield over the use of national assets. I am guessing that one of those assets is Moorside?

Answer: In this context the national assets we are considering are the waste and storage facilities at Sellafield that are used by NDA and other waste producers.

Question: I work in waste and one of the challenges for the supply chain is the uncertainty about when NDA waste will arise. You mentioned the last storage review was done in 2009. Do we now have a better understanding of when waste will arise and are we engaging with the supply chain to give them the confidence to provide the facilities that are needed?

Answer: It's a very good question and I agree with the point you are making. It has proved challenging to ensure we have a clear picture of future waste arisings and that is a complex and ongoing piece of work. One thing I mentioned is work we are undertaking on 'accumulation for a purpose.' This essentially means we can consolidate material on sites to then be able to go

	<p><i>to the supply chain and demonstrate we have a specific quantity of waste to be managed.</i></p> <p>Question: Where are we now in relation to where we thought we would be in terms of waste management and storage?</p> <p><i>Answer: It's a complicated picture but I would refer you to our Mission Progress Report that provides information on this.</i></p> <p>Question: In terms of the waste principles, will these include anything on local authority and community engagement?</p> <p><i>Answer: Yes, these are very much a part of the principles.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Buckley for his presentation and the members for the interesting discussion.</p>	
6.	National developments in radioactive waste management	
6.1	<p>Philip Matthews presented the paper. As the meeting was behind schedule, he focussed on a limited number of items but indicated he would be happy to answer questions on any other report in the paper.</p> <p>In terms of the upcoming NDA Stakeholder Summit, he was seeking more information from NDA on some of the specifics of the event. Also, Nuleaf had received confirmation that David Peattie would be available for a meeting with members at the Summit. Attendance was lower than usual but the opportunity to meet Mr Peattie was welcome.</p> <p>A number of members commented that they had already booked their train home and so it would be difficult to amend this so as to be at the meeting with David Peattie. PM said he would approach NDA to see if the timing could be changed but was not optimistic that this would be possible.</p> <p>Phil then moved on to report on the new ministerial team at the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). Ed Miliband has been appointed Secretary of State with Lord Hunt having the nuclear portfolio. Michael Shanks MP will speak on nuclear issues in the Commons.</p>	PM

6.2	<p>He also noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The founding statement of Great British Energy included a commitment to engage with local authorities and with Great British Nuclear. • That Sellafield had received a substantial fine for its cyber security failings, in a case brought by the Office for Nuclear Regulation. • That recruitment was underway for a Co-ordinator for SCCORS (Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances), with this role sitting within the Nuleaf team. The deadline for applications was next week. • Nuleaf would be taking delegations to the upcoming GMF General Assembly in Salamanca and the IAEA Technical Meeting on engagement in Vienna. Phil noted that he was pleased to be able to support members participation. The limitation in the past had been financial. • The 2025 Nuleaf Annual Gathering would take place on the 10th and 11th June, with the meeting including a Steering Group and AGM followed by a site visit. A site visit to either Dungeness or Sizewell was under consideration. Full details would be provided at the December meeting, but Phil asked that members note the dates in their diary and invited comments. • Members voiced support for the Dungeness option as one that might be easier in terms of logistics and noted the scope for engaging with the Romney Marsh Partnership and the potential to look at Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). It was also suggested that a future Gathering could visit Sizewell and that a visit to Dounreay would be of great value, although challenging given its location. 	
7.	Update on the Geological disposal facility siting process	
7.1	<p>Phil gave a brief update on a few items in the paper. He noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper included a link to a 20-minute video that Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) has published on the geology of Copeland. • NWS has published guidance on their property value protection scheme. RO noted that the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) has put out a media release that criticises aspects of the scheme, most particularly in the involvement of NWS and NDA which some may feel limits the independence of decision making. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finland is trialling the emplacement of waste in their GDF and hopes to get the final go ahead for actual emplacement by the end of this year. • Two communities in Canada have voted yes in a Test of Public Support (TOPS). The Canadian process also requires consent from the First Nation communities in each area and this is still to be determined. 	
8.	Date of next meeting	
8.1	The next meeting will be on 11 th December 10.00 -15:00, online. Details to be sent in due course.	
9.	Any other business	
9.1	No AOB discussed.	
	LUNCH	
10.	Update on developments at the Sellafield site: Neil Crewdson site director, Sellafield.	
10.1	<p>The Chair welcomed Mr Crewdson, the Site Director at Sellafield.</p> <p>Neil explained that he has responsibility for the Sellafield site, its infrastructure, and safety. Mr Crewdson has worked at Sellafield since he was 16, starting as an apprentice before undertaking degree studies with their support. He had now worked there for 29 years.</p> <p>Sellafield has been a national asset for the last 70 years, delivering nationally important missions within the nuclear industry. There are around 12,000 employees of Sellafield Limited including 450 apprentices, graduates, and trainees. They employ around 4,000 contractors on site and have a mission to remediate Sellafield and to store much of the nation’s nuclear waste and spent fuel.</p> <p>It one of the biggest construction sites within the UK and will remain so for the next two decades. Sellafield spends around £2.8billion of taxpayers’ money per annum and accepts the responsibility to spend that money wisely and securely. While the NDA do recover some commercial revenues, most of that £2.8billion comes through the government.</p> <p>We also have a £1.5 billion supply chain programme which benefits Cumbria and the nation as a whole. Around £400 million</p>	

	<p>is spent on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and one of our objectives is to stimulate innovation.</p> <p>We look after 140 tonnes of plutonium and other nuclear materials that we manage safely and securely on behalf of the nation. There are only a few countries that still reprocess nuclear materials – our operations ended a few years ago. We have 1,500 cubic meters of high-level waste that we are turning into glass for safe storage. We also manage 350,000m³ of ILW that we need to retrieve from our facilities and store safely – this will grow to around 450,000m³.</p> <p>Sellafield's mission is now entirely about environmental remediation, and a particular challenge are the high hazard legacy ponds and silos. These is hugely complicated, and it was a massive achievement when we started to retrieve the waste last year.</p> <p>10.2 The Chair thanks Mr Crewdson for his presentation and invited questions.</p> <p>Question: What role will Sellafield play in handling new plutonium or spent fuel arising from new nuclear reactors?</p> <p><i>Answer: Neil clarified that no new plutonium will be created in the UK due to the end of reprocessing activities. Spent fuel from new reactors will remain on-site for decades before being sent directly to the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) once operational. Sellafield may handle minor consolidations of the existing plutonium stock.</i></p> <p>Question: Can you clarify the volumes of spent fuel expected to be stored at the Sellafield site, especially from AGR reactors?</p> <p><i>Answer: All spent fuel from current Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors (AGR) will be stored at Sellafield. I can't provide an exact tonnage figures but will supply detailed data later.</i></p> <p>Question: With limited space at Sellafield, is there a need to expand the site's footprint, and if so, where?</p>
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Answer: There is congestion on site and future expansions might be necessary. Adjacent areas, such as land near the AGR reactor and Yottenfews car park could be used, but no definitive plans exist. Any expansion would be coordinated with community support.

Question: What is Sellafield's role in managing waste from research reactors as they are decommissioned?

Answer: Spent fuel from research reactors is likely to come to Sellafield, but the volumes involved are negligible in comparison to the overall waste at the site. Most Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) from research reactors will be packaged for eventual disposal in the GDF.

Question: Can you discuss Sellafield's approach to near-surface disposal? Can you also say something of the challenges in aligning operations at Sellafield with the NDA's sustainability targets, including net zero by 2050?

Answer: Near-surface disposal is being explored as a faster, safer disposal route for some wastes but will be managed by Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), not Sellafield. On sustainability, we are involved in innovations in low-carbon concrete and decisions to phase out high-carbon steam systems. Balancing hazard reduction with sustainability goals remains a key challenge.

Question: If money were not a limiting factor, could the clean-up of Sellafield be accelerated?

Answer: Funding is only part of the issue. Clean-up speed is also limited by skill shortages, supply chain capacity, and the site's congestion. While additional funding could help, the pace is dictated by these broader constraints.

Question: How does Sellafield compare to US nuclear sites like Hanford in terms of cleanup challenges?

Answer: Sellafield has unique challenges, including its high density and complex facilities. These differ significantly from US sites like Hanford, which are spread over much larger areas. Some lessons from US practices are applicable, but Sellafield's situation also requires bespoke solutions.

	<p>Question: With increasing references to cost-efficiency, is safety still the NDA’s primary concern?</p> <p><i>Answer: Safety remains paramount. However, as a public entity, Sellafield must demonstrate wise stewardship of government funds, balancing cleanup speed, community benefits, and cost-effectiveness.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Crewdson for his useful presentation and closed the meeting.</p>
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ACTION LIST

<i>11th September 2024</i>			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
2.1	Upload previous minutes onto Nuleaf’s website.	CA	Done
6.1	Contact NDA to seek further information on the stakeholder summit.	PM	Done. Information circulated.
6.2	Speak to NDA to see if we can amend date of meeting with DP	PM	Done – it was not possible to reschedule.
10.3	Further information to be provided on volume of Spent Fuel from AGR Reactors	NC	