

## ITEM 6: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



### Report to RWPG, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025

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

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

#### 1. NDA Group update

1.1 The **Strategy 5 Development Group (S5DG)**, tasked by the NDA with developing a new 5-year Strategy, continues to work at pace. A full draft text of the Strategy has now been prepared along with a Scoping Report for the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIP) of the document. Nuleaf has fed back comments on both. After further revision, a public consultation is expected to begin in early summer.

1.2 Sellafield has published its **Annual Review 2023/24**.<sup>1</sup> Among the achievements it highlights are:

- retrieving the first zeolite skip from the First Generation Magnox Storage Pond and transferring it to one of the newest waste stores, the Interim Storage Facility.
- transferring the first box of waste from the Pile Fuel Cladding Silo into storage via the Box Encapsulation Plant Product Store/ Direct Inlet Facility – marking the final stage of its commissioning with the introduction of nuclear materials.

Also released is Sellafield's latest **Review of Environmental Performance**<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Review of the Year 2023/24 - Our Sellafield - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Sellafield Ltd Annual Review of Environmental Performance 2023/24 - GOV.UK](#)

1. A consultation on the **NDA Business Plan 2025-28** is expected to begin at the end of January 2025 and run for only 6 weeks. Because of Parliamentary Easter recess and pre-election period for council elections on the 1<sup>st</sup> May it is expected that the Plan will be formally published in early May next year, directly after the council elections.

1.4 The NDA has published its **Annual Report and Accounts 23/24**<sup>3</sup> and its **Mission Progress Report**<sup>4</sup>.

1.5 The **Egni Economic Impact Project**, based on Anglesey, has reported on the delivery of a range of low carbon projects<sup>5</sup>. Egni was created in 2021 with a £360,000 grant from the NDA and now has a full-time staff team.

Jamie Reed, Director of Socio-Economics at the NDA, said *'The creation of Egni in M-SParc has brought about a step-change in activity in the low carbon sector in North Wales. The project has secured over £7m in inward investment into the area, and generated carbon savings through interventions such as increased solar panels, efficiency measures and EV chargers.'*

Nuclear Restoration Services has now committed a further £389,000 in a second-phase funding package to the project.

1.6 A pre-application consultation for the proposed planning application for the demolition of the **Trawsfynydd** nuclear power station ponds complex ended on the 27<sup>th</sup> January. A full planning application will be submitted to Eryri National Park Authority in due course.

## 2. UK and Devolved Government update

2.1 **Cwmni Egino**, established by the Welsh Government to support the re-development of the Trawsfynydd site, has launched a Nuclear Prospectus for North Wales. It makes the case for bringing new nuclear development to North Wales and showcases what the region has to offer. Cwmni Egino held a stakeholder event in collaboration with the **Wales Nuclear Forum** on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November to stimulate a wider conversation around the themes presented in the document. The Prospectus can be viewed here<sup>6</sup>.

2.2 On the 13<sup>th</sup> December, Energy Secretary Ed Miliband published **Clean Power 2030**, its plan to decarbonise electricity by 2030<sup>7</sup>. The plan seeks to set out a

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<sup>3</sup> [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority: Annual Report and Accounts 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Mission Progress Report 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>5</sup> [NDA-funded project delivers low-carbon success across North Wales - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>6</sup> [cwmni-egino-north-wales-nuclear-prospectus.pdf](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Government sets out plan for new era of clean electricity - GOV.UK](#)

pathway for delivery of this objective, deliver a more effective planning regime and identify priority infrastructure projects that will take the UK towards this target.

While it is unlikely that new nuclear capacity beyond Hinkley Point C will be ready by 2030, the plan does envisage renewables and nuclear as forming the backbone of the electricity system by 2030 and looks to support new nuclear technology development beyond the end of this decade.

2.3 The UK Government is to establish a new AI Energy Council to look at the opportunities for '*renewable and innovative energy solutions, including small modular reactors*' to support the significant energy demand required by artificial intelligence (AI). The Government has committed to establishing 'AI Growth Zones', the first of these being at Culham in Oxfordshire, home of the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA)<sup>8</sup>.

### 3. Nuleaf news

3.1 Invitations have now been sent out for the Nuleaf's **Annual Gathering 2025**, which will take place in **London on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June**. The meeting will mark the 20th anniversary of both Nuleaf and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and we will be celebrating this over the two days.

The event begins at 1pm on the 10th, with lunch being followed by a Nuleaf Steering Group meeting and AGM. The second half of the afternoon will consist of a seminar on the nuclear landscape in the UK, where we hope to hear from Government and Great British Nuclear. In the evening, we will host a dinner, which will be addressed by David Peattie, CEO of the NDA. A range of people who have worked with and for Nuleaf over the years will be invited to join us.

On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> we travel to Dungeness where there will be a visit to the nuclear site and a meeting with the Romney Marsh Partnership. Following lunch members will make their way home.

The venue will be the Stratford Hotel, located next to Stratford International Railway station. All of Nuleaf's contributing member local authorities are invited to send two Members and/or officers to the Gathering, with all travel and catering costs, along with accommodation for the night of the 10th June, being met by Nuleaf.

Corresponding member local authorities are also welcome to attend but will have to cover their own costs.

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<sup>8</sup> [UK government considering role for SMRs in AI expansion - World Nuclear News](#)

If you would like to join the Annual Gathering, please let Chloe Atkinson know and note the dates in your diary.

3.2 Louise Martin will be joining the Nuleaf team in mid-February, having been appointed on a 12-month secondment to work as Co-ordinator of the Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances (SCCORS) and to also support Nuleaf's policy and strategy work.

3.3 A special Nuleaf meeting will be held, via Teams, on the 27<sup>th</sup> February from 10am until 12 noon, where the final conclusions of Nuleaf's consultancy research into engagement will be presented. An invitation to the meeting has been mailed to members and the level of interest has been high. If you haven't yet registered, but would like to attend, please let Chloe know.

In parallel the NDA is nearing completion of its review of Site Stakeholder Groups, and a research report on the use of deliberative democracy by the NDA is also due to be published soon. We hope to host a presentation on these studies at a future Steering Group meeting.

#### **4. Regulatory update**

4.1. The ONR has published its **Annual Report and Accounts 23/24**<sup>9</sup> and also its **Chief Nuclear Inspector's Annual Report**<sup>10</sup>. The latter concludes that overall performance of the nuclear industry remains satisfactory, while highlighting some issues of concern.

4.2 A consultation on EDF's **EIADR application for consent for Hinkley Point B** has been temporarily paused as the ONR awaits further details for the company on their Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report. The consultation was due to close on the 9<sup>th</sup> December but will now be relaunched for a further 90 days at an unspecified time<sup>11</sup>.

4.3 EDF and Trillium Flow Services Ltd have been fined a total of £633,333 after a scaffolder lost some of his toes in an accident at the former **Dungeness B** power station in Kent. Colin Dell, 62, was hit by a two-tonne counterweight which had not been properly secured. The prosecution was carried out by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> [Office for Nuclear Regulation Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Chief Nuclear Inspector's Annual Report on Great Britain's Nuclear Industry 2023/24](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Consultation on EDF Energy's EIADR application for consent for Hinkley Point B power station | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Dungeness B: Firms fined £63k over nuclear power station injury - BBC News](#)

4.4 Nuleaf has drafted a response to the current UK Environment Agencies consultation on the requirements for authorisation and regulation of radioactive waste disposal facilities<sup>13</sup>. If you have any feedback or suggested changes, please can you submit them to Nuleaf by **Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> February**. The consultation closes on **Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> February**.

## 5. New nuclear and fusion updates

5.1 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 to better explain its wider energy strategy. 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<sup>14</sup>.

5.2 It has been reported that the cost of building the **Sizewell C** nuclear power plan could now reach close to £40Bn, around twice the estimated cost in 2020<sup>15</sup>. The rise is attributed to increases in construction costs and the delays that have affected the Hinkley Point C project.

The Treasury is expected to confirm whether to back the project in the upcoming Spending Review. A government spokesperson said *'We do not recognise this speculative figure – discussions with investors are ongoing and commercially sensitive.'*

5.3 EDF Energy has announced that it is delaying a consultation on which fish protection measures to utilise at the **Hinkley Point C** power plant. The consultation was expected this month but will now be delayed to 'carefully evaluate the best approach' following local resistance<sup>16</sup>.

EDF is obliged to make environmental improvements like saltmarsh to compensate for the impact the power station will have on fish numbers when operational.

5.4 The **New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG)** has published research on the impact of the construction of Hinkley Point C, to help local authorities understand how a nuclear power station can affect their area. The report, undertaken by Oxford Brookes University, is intended to help local authorities better

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<sup>13</sup> [Guidance on the requirements for authorisation and staged regulation for the disposal of solid radioactive waste - Environment Agency - Citizen Space](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Claims Wylfa mega-nuclear site 'under-review' with potential switch to mini-nuke plants - North Wales Live](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Sizewell C cost 'has doubled since 2020 and could near £40bn' | Sizewell C | The Guardian](#)

<sup>16</sup> [EDF delays consultation over controversial plans for salt marsh for Hinkley Point C](#)

plan for and implement such projects in a way that maximises benefits and minimises negative impacts, to the advantage of all involved<sup>17</sup>.

## 6. EDF news

6.1 The BBC has published an article on work to defuel the **Dungeness B** reactor<sup>18</sup>.

6.2 Nuleaf's Executive Director met with EDF and Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) in mid-December to defueling and decommissioning of the AGR fleet. In the meeting it was noted that:

- **Hunterston B** power station in North Ayrshire has completed the defueling of Reactor 4. This makes Hunterston B the first of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor (AGR) stations to successfully defuel both of its reactors. EDF are pleased that 93% of staff have been offered acceptable career outcomes so far. Consent has been secured from the independent regulator, the ONR, to start decommissioning Hunterston B following an application under the Environmental Impact Assessment Decommissioning Regulations (EIADR). This consent followed several rounds of public consultation by EDF and the ONR.
- The team at **Hinkley Point B** has removed almost a third of the fuel from the station's second reactor and is on track to transfer both Hunterston B and Hinkley Point B to Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) in 2026.
- Progress at **Dungeness B** has been slower due to the more complex nature of the site. A quarter of the first reactor there has now been defueled.
- The lifetime extensions of the other AGR reactors means that EDF and NRS are able to focus fully on the three exiting sites undergoing defueling and transfer to the NDA estate.

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<sup>17</sup> [New Nuclear Local Authorities Group \(NNLAG\) - Suffolk County Council](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Dungeness: 'Long journey ahead' for nuclear plant clean-up - BBC News](#)