

**Minutes of the Steering Group meeting held online,
11th December 2024 10:00 – 14:00**

Attendees

Cllr David Moore	Cumberland Council (Chair)
Cllr Mike Caswell	Somerset Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Tom Daly	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Paul Thomas	Folkestone and Hythe Council
Cllr Aled Morris Jones	Isle of Anglesey/Ynys Mon County Council
Cllr Chris Davies	South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council
Eleanor Godesar	Dorset Council
Emma Devereux	East Suffolk Council
Amartya Deb	Gloucestershire Council
Claire Bromley	Gloucestershire Council
Edward Wright	Lincolnshire County Council
Richard Outram	Manchester City Council
John Burton	Somerset Council
Louise Martin	Somerset Council
Gillian Ellis-King	South Gloucestershire Council
Iwan Jones	Ynys Mon/ Isle of Anglesey Council
Philip Matthews	Nuleaf
Chloe Atkinson	Nuleaf

Speakers

Bill Hamilton	NRS
Steve Smith	Nuleaf Consultant
Doug Bamsey	Nuleaf Consultant
John McNamara	NDA

1.	Welcome and Apologies	ACTION
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	Apologies have been received from Terry Burns (Essex County Council) and Cllr Tracey Henry (Hull City Council).	
1.3	The Chair noted a change to the agenda. A presentation on the Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) review was not now possible as there had been delays in the process. Instead, John McNamara would provide a general update to members, following his return from a secondment at Great British Nuclear (GBN).	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 11th of September	
2.1	It was requested that the minutes should be amended to note that Gareth Pritchard was a Councillor. Minutes approved. CA to update minutes.	CA
3.	Matters Arising	
3.1	PM introduced the Matters Arising, noting that all actions have been completed or in hand.	
4.	Update from Nuclear Restoration Services: Bill Hamilton, Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS)	
4.1	<p>The Chair welcomed Bill Hamilton from NRS.</p> <p>Bill explained that he will be updating members on a range of issues, including an internal corporate restructure, AGR decommissioning, Dounreay, the Chapelcross Masterplan and also community engagement and site specific decommissioning strategies. He would also comment on funding and the spending review.</p> <p>NRS is undergoing a corporate restructure, the aim being to reduce the layers of management between the Executive and the site directors and to give site directors more power and accountability for their site, right through to the achievement of the site end state. The restructure will foster better collaboration across the company, enabling each site to enhance its focus and efficiency.</p> <p>Magnox operations will also be reorganized into two site-based businesses, each with its own Managing Director (MD). The first of these will be established around solo sites (without an AGR reactor) e.g., Chapelcross, Wylfa, Trawsfynydd, Bradwell,</p>	

Winfrith, etc. The second business will be where a Magnox station is partnered with Advanced Gas Reactors (AGRs) e.g. Hunterston, Hinkley, Dungeness. This structure aims to enhance accountability, streamline operations and better manage the unique challenges and requirements of each site.

There will also be a cross-business section with its own MD, called PM3. This will deal with:

- **Portfolio Management:** Managing funding allocations across sites.
- **Programme Management:** Overseeing site programs.
- **Project Management:** Managing projects and innovation initiatives, including the former Future Missions Directorate.

This directorate will provide support and guidance to the three site-based businesses while the site teams execute work on the ground.

Recruitment is underway for MDs of the new site-based businesses. The restructure brings no immediate changes for the majority of staff – it's aim is to improve leadership clarity, site-specific accountability, and operational efficiency. It should enhance leadership focus on site operations, empower site directors, and streamline decision-making, ensuring the sites—the core of the business—receive the attention and resources needed to succeed.

Next I want to update everyone on the Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors (AGRs). EDF has extended the operational life of certain AGRs:

- **Heysham 1 and Hartlepool:** to March 2027.
- **Heysham 2 and Torness:** to March 2030.

These extensions delay the timeline for site transitions to the NDA, as AGRs will transfer only after being defueled and verified fuel-free by the regulator.

Hunterston B will be the first AGR set to transfer to NDA, with approximately 500 days remaining until the handover. Significant progress is being made on the transition. There are detailed staffing plans with an assurance of no redundancies for those who wish to remain employed. Collaboration between the site directors of Hunterston A and B is ensuring a seamless transition.

Regarding Dounreay, while part of NRS, the site remains a separate entity with its own Managing Director (MD). Dave Smith, an experienced former Magnox site director, has been appointed as the permanent MD for Dounreay.

Over the summer, three unions took industrial action at Dounreay. The issues have since been resolved but highlighted workforce relations challenges. The action coincided with the departure of the former Managing Director. John Grierson, a former site director in Scotland and Chief Operations Officer, was temporarily brought in, and his strong union relationships and experience helped stabilize the situation.

I now want to update members on the Chapelcross Masterplan. Chapelcross is located near Annan in the Scottish Borders. It was the second Magnox reactor after Calder Hall. It was originally built for plutonium production and electricity supply but later transitioned to civil use. Its four-reactor design is unique and the site is extensive, presenting redevelopment opportunities.

The site is advanced in the decommissioning process relative to others, setting an example for site cleanup and land management.

Working with partners including the Scottish and UK Government (through the Borderlands Growth Deal), South of Scotland Enterprise and Dumfries and Galloway Council, we are developing an Energy Campus Vision to drive economic transformation by creating high-value jobs and skills in the green energy sector. This will include Hydrogen production and storage and advanced manufacturing.

NRS is also involved in the Beyond Chapelcross Initiative. This is initially focused on community and local improvements, such as supporting young entrepreneurs, building small business units for startups and arts and cultural projects that will enhance the surrounding area.

Next I want to mention some community engagement we are involved in, which seeks to reach out beyond the usual people we engage with. We have already done this at Wylfa and the results are fascinating. One key point is that many people on Anglesey are unaware of the decommissioning mission at Wylfa despite the fact it is a major local employer. We plan to undertake similar engagement around Oldbury/Berkeley and at Chapelcross.

Finally, I want to mention the budget settlement and the spending review which is likely to be announced in June and will set out funding for the rest of this Parliament. We are making the case that we need to continue decommissioning at a number of sites as the fabric of the structures is decaying badly – long term reductions in funding are therefore unsustainable.

4.2 The Chair thanked Mr. Hamilton for his comprehensive presentation and invited questions.

Question: What do you see as the major risks if the funding settlement is less than required?

Answer: Initially it would require that we delay some major projects. However that is not sustainable in the long run and could increase costs over time. In sites such as Dungeness some urgent action is required on the fabric of the buildings.

Question: Can local authority representatives participate in or observe the focus groups/local engagement that was mentioned?

Answer: This engagement is more aimed at the community and doesn't cut across the important engagement with local authorities. There may be some scope for local government involvement and there will be clear reporting of this work to councils.

Question: What are the options that you have considered in terms of site reuse and at what stage of decommissioning do you typically think about this?

Answer: The role of the NDA/NRS is to take the site to what we call an end state. The Nuclear Installation Act clearly states that any nuclear operator had to remove all radiation but the new approach under GRR allows the leaving of some radiation in the ground, properly managed. Our approach to this is driven by engagement with the community – we are testing this new approach at Trawsfynydd and Winfrith. Our role is not to deliver next planned use but we do engage with others on this.

Question: I would echo some of the concerns that have been raised about the need to involve local authorities and local town and parish councillors in promoting site-related initiatives.

My question regards the SSGs. Do you see the need for changes in how they operate and how do they fit in with the other initiatives you have mentioned?

Answer: Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) will remain of central importance but there is a benefit, including to SSGs, from broader engagement that gains a better understanding of local views.

Question: How will employment and the social impact of decommissioning efforts be included in the overall strategy, given the financial challenges ahead?

Answer: These topics—employment, skills, and social value—are being thoroughly discussed as part of the community engagement process moving forward at each site.

Question: How were sites selected for the community engagement that has been mentioned?

Answer: The selection of sites for community engagement was based on a variety of factors, including technical advice and the aim to capture different community perspectives. Sites like Wylfa (newest) and Chapelcross (oldest) were chosen to represent different stages of decommissioning. The inclusion of Oldbury and Barkley (Aubrey Barkley) was more opportunistic, as they are geographically close and allow for simultaneous engagement of both communities.

Question: I have concerns about misconceptions I hear regarding career opportunities. There is a belief that C stations offer more long-term career prospects compared to those that are closed or decommissioning. How can this be addressed?

Answer: I agree this is an issue and it is important that we communicate that young people could start an apprenticeship now and have a long-term career at A and B sites, potentially lasting 30-40 years or more. We need to raise awareness through local engagement and also through social value initiatives and investments being made in local communities.

Comment: Coordination and communication between NRS, local authorities, and entities like Great British Nuclear (GBN) is important and local engagement efforts should avoid silos. In sites such as Oldbury, there must be a joined up approach to ensure effective liaison.

	<p>Question: Are there any figures as to the likely job creation and economic value that will be created at Chapelcross through the new initiatives?.</p> <p><i>Answer: I don't have that information at present but will get you it.</i></p> <p>Action: BH to provide information to Nuleaf.</p>	BH
5	<p>Presentation on Nuleaf international engagement: Philip Matthews, Nuleaf</p>	
5.1	<p>Philip provided an update on Nuleaf's recent international engagement.</p> <p>Historically, participation was limited to a few individuals, funded by organizations like the IAEA or GMF, However, he was pleased that this year Nuleaf had been able to secure the funds to involve more of our members. He hoped that this would continue in future.</p> <p>Nuleaf's engagement with European events on waste management goes back many years, but there has been a step change since a decision was taken to affiliate to GMF Europe (a network of nuclear municipalities) in 2017. Nuleaf now participates in GMF meetings, with Philip serving as a Vice President of the network; and GMF has also opened doors to engage in other work, particularly that being led by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).</p> <p>More recently, Nuleaf has expanded its reach through being active in establishing a global partnership of nuclear communities. This has been set up by GMF, working with American and Canadian networks of local government (ECA and CANHC respectively). Engagement with bodies like the IAEA remains strong and continues to grow, with a global conference on local engagement in nuclear planned for May 2025.</p> <p>Philip briefly noted three recent meetings:</p> <p>He participated in a small GMF delegation that visited Oskarshamn, Sweden in September. Oskarshamn is one of 2 communities that has been engaged in the Swedish GDF siting process.</p> <p>While the other community (Osthammer) has been selected for the final repository, Oskarshamn was the recipient of the majority of community benefits and also hosts the encapsulation plant that will manufacture the copper canisters required for</p>	

	<p>waste emplacement. It is also the location of a rock laboratory, 450 metres underground, when the construction and management of a GDF has been tested. This closes in spring 2025 and so the visit was well timed.</p> <p>Philip was delighted that Vanessa Strange, Director of Infrastructure for Lincolnshire County Council was able to join the visit. There is clearly great value in enabling those involved in local siting processes to get an insight into similar projects in other countries.</p> <p>Learning from Sweden:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oskarshamn’s model demonstrates the importance of community benefits and ensuring tangible gains for all stakeholders, including communities not selected. • The visit highlighted the scale and infrastructure required for an effective GDF programme. • The UK must prepare for the greater scope of its GDF, learning from Sweden’s phased approach to planning and infrastructure development. <p>Philip also reported on a recent GMF General Assembly in Salamanca and an IAEA engagement meeting in Vienna. Nuleaf members and officers participated in both, and in Vienna the Nuleaf delegation attended alongside other UK stakeholders funded by NWS.</p> <p>The Salamanca meeting included a visit to a nuclear fuel fabrication plant which proved very informative.</p> <p>At the IAEA in Vienna, Nuleaf members were active in Chairing and presenting to delegates from across the world.</p> <p>Other attendees of the Vienna event added their comments:</p> <p>Cllr. Tom Daly noted that the Vienna conference was a global event with attendees representing local authorities, experts and stakeholders from diverse nations. It was useful to engage with local perspectives enriched the understanding of nuclear lifecycle challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>Cllr. Paul Thomas added that it allowed engagement with the first ever international conference on small modular reactors which was a real benefit. He requested that the slides of the presentation on SMRS made in Vienna be shared. Action: PM</p>	<p>PM</p>
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6.	Update on national developments in radioactive waste management	
6.1	<p>Philip presented Paper 6. He highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft version of the NDA’s 5-year strategy is nearing completion. Formal engagement will commence next year. • The NDA Business Plan is expected to go out for consultation in January 2025 for 6 weeks. • He was delighted that Louise Martin would be starting work as SCCORS Co-ordinator in February 2025 on a 12 month secondment from Somerset Council. Louise would work to re-establish SCCORS and would also be supporting Nuleaf’s policy work 1 day per week. Nuleaf was grateful to the NDA for providing some funding for the SCCORS post. <p>Question: When is the first SCCORS member meeting likely to be?</p> <p><i>Answer: This has not been agreed as yet. Soon after Louise starts we will be meeting with the SCCORS Convenor and NDA to confirm a work plan.</i></p> <p>Phil also highlighted the plans for Nuleaf’s Annual Gathering 2025 scheduled for 10th and 11th June next year in London. The first day will feature a Steering Group and AGM, and an extended seminar on the nuclear landscape in the UK.</p> <p>An evening dinner will be held with David Peattie, CEO of the NDA, and there are plans to invite some former colleagues. Attendees will stay in Stratford, with transport provided to Dungeness in Kent for a site visit on the 11th June.</p> <p>Question: Regarding the seminar, can it include a presentation on SMRs ?</p> <p><i>Answer: we are looking into getting a speaker from Government or elsewhere that can cover that issue.</i></p>	
7.	Update on the Geological disposal facility siting process	
7.1	<p>Philip tabled Paper 7. Due to the meeting over-running he noted that he would not highlight individual reports but was happy to answer any questions.</p> <p>Question: Are there any plans for nations to share GDFs, especially if they have smaller amounts of waste?</p>	

	<p><i>Answer: This is part of a live discussion. Its not currently permitted to export waste in that way but some nations with small inventories are keen to explore this. Examples include Slovenia and Croatia, which shared a nuclear station when both were part of Yugoslavia.</i></p>
8.	Date of next meeting
8.1	The Chair confirmed the date as the 12 th March 2025.
9.	Any other business
9.1	None discussed
10.	NDA update John McNamara Director of communities and stakeholder engagement.
10.1	<p>The Chair introduced John McNamara who has recently returned to his role at NDA after a 12 month secondment to Great British Nuclear (GBN).</p> <p>John thanked the Chair. He apologised for not being able to provide an update on the Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) research. He only returned to NDA at the start of the week and hadn't had time to get up to speed with the work. He would provide a full presentation to the March Steering Group meeting.</p> <p>John started by noting two changes in senior management. Euan Hutton has been confirmed as the permanent CEO of Sellafield, which is a popular appointment. Corhyn Parr has also announced she will be leaving her role as CEO of Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) at the end of March. Recruitment of her successor is underway.</p> <p>John then commented on a range of other issues.</p> <p>He was delighted that Louise would be taking up the post of SCCORS Co-ordinator. NDA has been keen to revive SCCORS but it has taken some time to get everything in place.</p> <p>The NDA's integrated graduate programme is welcoming 120 new graduates this year, contributing to the future leadership of the nuclear sector. This highlights the commitment to bringing fresh talent into the industry, potentially shaping the next generation of leaders.</p> <p>A major milestone has been achieved with the demolition of the turbine hall at Sizewell A. Like with recent skyline changes at Sellafield, these big projects are a good demonstration that progress is being made.</p>

The defueling of the AGR stations at Hunterston and Hinkley is on time which is very encouraging. The stations will transfer to the NDA in 2026 as planned so we are just 500 days away from that significant step. The recent announcement by EDF of the extension to the operation of some of the other AGRs means there will be a gap between the first stations transferring to the NDA and the last ones coming over. EDF are also working on a 20 year life extension at Sizewell B.

The Vulcan site next to Dounreay, which is a Ministry of Defence site, is expected to become part of the NDA estate.

In terms of sites, there is ongoing discussion about accelerating decommissioning at certain sites instead of the traditional care and maintenance approach and they are considering underground structures (e.g., vaults) for safely storing lightly irradiated material. The goal is to bury this material, which has low radiation levels, which would mean that the site could potentially be reused almost immediately after decommissioning.

This discussion is complex, balancing cost, environmental impact, and the logistics of moving radioactive rubble from one place to another. However, the potential to bury some material onsite and cap it could reduce the environmental footprint compared to transporting it elsewhere.

10.2

Question: I and some other Councillors from Suffolk recently had a tour of the Sizewell C site. The scale is huge as is the cost, with the ongoing financial risk borne by EDF until a final funding decision is made next spring. The decision keeps getting pushed back and it is likely that UK taxpayers will be bearing a considerable cost.

On Sizewell A, it is good news that the turbine hall is being demolished. I wanted to ask however about the Fuel Element Debris (FED). What are the plans for that?

Answer: I will have to come back to you on that.

Action: JM

Question: I noticed your job title appears to have changed and I know that there have been some other changes to the NDA Group engagement teams. Could you explain the changes that have been made?

Answer: The organizational structure for community engagement at NDA has not changed much despite the

JM

secondment. However, there have been some changes in reporting lines:

- *Alastair Findlay has joined the team, reporting to Sam Harris but also having a link into John's area for community work.*
- *David Wallace (reporting to John) is focussing on engagement with devolved governments (Scottish and Welsh).*
- *Jonathan Jenkin has rejoined the team and may take on longer-term roles related to engagement.*
- *Pip Hatt, who has been on secondment, continues to contribute to engagement efforts.*

Question: Can you provide an update on the stakeholder engagement research including the SSG review?

Answer: there are many positive aspects to the SSG review but it is important that the draft findings are properly discussed with the SSG forum to identify immediate actions. The review will continue early in the New Year, alongside broader local, regional, and international engagement, including work with Nuleaf.

The Chair thanked John McNamara and closed the meeting.

ACTION LIST

<i>December 2024</i>			
Item	Action	By	Outcome
2.1	Update minutes and upload to the website.	CA	Done
4.2	Bill Hamilton to provide information on estimated job creation and economic benefit from Chapelcross redevelopment.	BH	Requested.
5.1	PM to share slides SMR slides from IAEA meeting	PM	Requested.
10.1	Provide more information on FED issue at Sizewell A	JM	Requested