

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



### Report to RWPG, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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

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

#### 1. NDA Group update

1.1 It has been confirmed that the consultation on the NDA's **Strategy 5** and the related **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIP)** will run from the 7<sup>th</sup> July to the 29<sup>th</sup> September. Nuleaf has been engaged through the Strategy 5 Development Group (S5DG) and will submit a response in consultation with members.

We are in discussion with holding an online engagement event on Strategy 5 for members in July. Details will be confirmed shortly.

1.2 The NDA Group continues to consider the implications of the 25/26 funding settlement it received in the 2024 Budget. The award is similar to that allocated in the current year, but rises in construction, labour and energy costs have been significant, and the provision made is seen as challenging. Further concerns have been expressed about the likely level of financial support over the lifetime of this Parliament.

**Sellafield**, responsible for the majority of NDA spending, stated in late February that the £2.8Billion allocated in next financial year '*would not be enough*' for planned operations and some planned works would have to be slowed down or paused<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Sellafield warns £2.8bn budget is 'not enough' for planned work - BBC News](#)



## 2. UK Government update

2.1 The NDA has welcomed the UK Government's announcement of its policy decision to **immobilise the UK's inventory of civil separated plutonium** (Pu)<sup>6</sup>. The UK holds 140 tonnes of civil Pu, the world's largest stockpile. Immobilisation puts the material beyond reach, reducing the long-term safety and security risks and ensuring it is suitable for final disposal in a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). The written ministerial statement can be viewed here<sup>7</sup>.

Following the announcement, the **GMB Union** has called for the Pu stockpile to be recycled into new nuclear fuel<sup>8</sup> rather than being put 'beyond reach'.

2.2 Nuleaf submitted a response to the UK Government's consultation on a new **National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN7)**<sup>9</sup>. EN-7 will allow developers more freedom in choosing locations for new nuclear projects, a move away from the pre-identified locations set out in EN-6<sup>10</sup>; and also supports the development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) along with conventional Gigawatt stations. It is expected the final policy will be launched before the end of 2025.

Nuleaf also submitted a response to a recent **Call for Evidence on Revisiting the Nuclear Roadmap** made by the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee of the UK Parliament. Both submissions can be viewed here<sup>11</sup>.

2.3 On the 28<sup>th</sup> February, **Great British Nuclear (GBN)** announced that it has entered the final stage of the selection process for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and plans to make a final decision in summer 2025<sup>12</sup>. Three vendors, GE Hitachi, Holtec and Rolls-Royce have submitted final tenders, with GBN having already identified potential development sites at Wylfa and Oldbury-on-Severn. Westinghouse announced on April 26<sup>th</sup> that it is dropping out of the competition<sup>13</sup>.

GBN has also published its **Annual Report and Accounts** for 2024<sup>14</sup>.

2.4 A **Planning and Infrastructure Bill** was laid before Parliament in March<sup>15</sup>, The intention is to fast track decisions on new nuclear and renewable energy projects

---

<sup>6</sup> [NDA group welcomes Government decision on plutonium disposition - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Recycle Sellafield nuclear waste don't store it, union says - BBC News](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Draft National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation \(EN-7\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>10</sup> [UK Nuclear Power Planning Reforms: Impact on Data Centres](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/policy-communications/consultation-responses-2/>

<sup>12</sup> [GBN at final stage of Small Modular Reactor selection process - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>13</sup> [US nuclear giant pulls out of race to build Britain's first mini-nukes](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Annual Report and Accounts 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Planning revolution to fuel growth and make Britain energy secure - GOV.UK](#)

and grid infrastructure in support of the Plan for Change to deliver the decarbonisation of the grid by 2030.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband commented *'By taking on a broken planning system that puts the brakes on growth, this Government is driving forward with our clean energy superpower mission and Plan for change. Every turbine, every solar panel, every cable we connect helps protect families and paves the way for a new era of clean energy for our country.'*

### 3. Nuleaf news

3.1 The programme for Nuleaf's Annual Gathering has now been finalised. Following a Steering Group meeting and AGM, a seminar on the current and future nuclear landscape in the UK will be held. Members will hear from four speakers:

- Lord Hunt will give an overview of the Government's current and future plans for the nuclear sector.
- Clive Nixon, NDA Chief Nuclear Strategist, will update members on Strategy 5 and the challenges presented to the NDA by current financial pressures.
- Josh Buckland, Strategy Director for EDF will provide an overview of EDF's plans for decommissioning and new nuclear within the UK.
- Meritxell Martell, Executive Director of GMF Europe, will present the findings of research on the scope for the use of Community Hosting Agreements to help support local engagement between nuclear operators, local authorities and communities.

In the evening a members dinner will be addressed by David Peattie, CEO of the NDA and Gerben Dijksterhuis, President of GMF Europe, the European network of nuclear municipalities. Next morning we travel to Dungeness where there will be a visit to Dungeness A 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. The level of interest from Nuleaf members has been high and all places are now taken.

3.2 Nuleaf's research report on local government engagement in nuclear has been finalised and will be published in June. The report considers the current local government landscape for engagement and looks at best practice examples from other industries and internationally.

3.3 Executive Director Philip Matthews spoke at the **Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) Annual Forum** in Idaho Falls, USA on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April. Philip visit was funded by GMF Europe, with the aim of further developing the Nuclear

Communities Global Partnership. He spoke as part of a panel on international experiences of nuclear engagement.

#### 4. Regulatory update

4.1. The UK Government is setting up an **independent taskforce on nuclear regulation**<sup>16</sup>. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> April a **Call for Evidence** was launched, with this running until the 19<sup>th</sup> May<sup>17</sup>.

The review covers civil and defence nuclear regulation and will also consider health and safety, environmental and planning regulation as it applies to nuclear matters.

4.2 The **Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)** has published its first report on international regulatory collaboration on SMRs and AMRs<sup>18</sup>. This follows the signing of a trilateral memorandum of cooperation with the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) in March 2024, establishing a framework for streamlined regulation while maintaining each nation's independent regulatory authority.

#### 5. New nuclear and fusion updates

5.1 Equilibrion consultancy has been appointed by Midlands Net Zero Hub and Midlands Nuclear to explore the potential for new nuclear production in the region. The **Midlands Nuclear Siting Project**, set to report in Spring/Summer 2025, will assess the region's nuclear energy opportunities, which include electricity production, hydrogen, sustainable fuel and direct heat<sup>19</sup>.

5.2 **Viaro Energy** and US company Terrestrial Energy are in discussions around the feasibility of a new Integrated Molten Salt Reactor (IMSR) at various sites in the UK including the former Bacton Gas Terminal in Norfolk. These small modular reactors produce thermal energy at high temperature for direct industrial use and to generate electricity, including powering data centres for artificial intelligence (AI)<sup>20</sup>.

5.3 **TerraPower**, established by Bill Gates, announced in April that it is entering the UK Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process that, if successful, will enable it to deploy their Sodium reactor in the UK<sup>21</sup>. The Sodium technology features a 345

---

<sup>16</sup> [ONR welcomes new government independent taskforce on nuclear regulation | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Nuclear regulation: input to the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce review - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>18</sup> [ONR outlines international collaboration on SMRs | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Consultancy to explore nuclear energy potential in the Midlands | TheBusinessDesk.com](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Plans for Nuclear power plant in Norfolk handed boost | Eastern Daily Press](#)

<sup>21</sup> [TerraPower Takes First Step Toward Regulatory Approval of the Sodium® Reactor<sup>1</sup> in United Kingdom](#)

MWe sodium-cooled fast reactor with a molten salt-based energy storage system, allowing a Natrium plant to integrate with renewable resources.

5.4 Nuleaf Executive Director Philip Matthews attended a meeting of the **New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG)** on the 28<sup>th</sup> March and gave a presentation on Nuleaf's current work. The meeting also discussed the EN-7 consultation and provided updates on new nuclear at Hinkley, Sizewell and other sites across England and Wales.

## 6. EDF news

6.1 It has been reported that the UK Government is in talks with EDF regarding the purchase of the three nuclear stations at Bradwell B, Heysham and Hartlepool<sup>22</sup>. While a spokesperson for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero has disputed this, it has been suggested that discussions could continue at a UK/France summit in July.

6.2 **Hunterston B** power station was declared 'nuclear free' on April 24<sup>th</sup><sup>23</sup>. A total of 4,880 elements of Spent Fuel were removed from the two reactors and packed into 350 large flasks for transportation by train to Sellafield for long term storage.

The site is on schedule to be handed over to Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) for decommissioning in 2026 with NRS submitted applications to ONR and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in March, seeking approval to become the duty holder for the site and to transfer the site's environmental authorisations<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> [UK in talks to buy back nuclear sites from French firm EDF – POLITICO](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Hunterston B power station declared 'nuclear free' - BBC News](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Major application step brings Hunterston B closer to joining NRS - GOV.UK](#)