

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 10th June 2025
Item: 4
Subject: Updates on national developments in radioactive waste management
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Introduction:

This paper updates members on recent developments in radioactive waste management and NDA operations. It covers:

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

Recommendation:

This report is for noting.

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 7th July to the 29th September. Nuleaf has been engaged through the Strategy 5 Development Group (S5DG) and will submit a response in consultation with members.

Nuleaf will be holding an online engagement event on Strategy 5 on the 16th July between 11.30 and 12.30am. Details have been sent to members.

1.2 The Chancellor of the Exchequer will present her Spending Review to Parliament on June 11th. This will set out the Government's spending plans for the next few years, including for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Following a challenging budget settlement in 2024, there are concerns that the financial provision for the NDA will remain difficult for the rest of the Parliament. Nuleaf will report the outcome to members when this becomes clear.

that's something that will continue to drive us forward over the next 20 years and beyond.'

1.7 The NDA has now concluded its review of **Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs)**. It is understood that the review will make a range of recommendations about governance, diversity and inclusion, accountability and the relationship of SSGs with the NDA. Full details of the recommendations will be released soon, along with updated Guidance on how Groups will work.

1.8 A new report has concluded that Scotland's £25Billion decommissioning programme could deliver long term economic and social benefits at a local and national level over the next 90 years and beyond⁶.

Stakeholders around Dounreay identified major challenges as being underinvestment in essential infrastructure, rural depopulation, and remoteness. At the same time, it was felt that the presence of the skilled workforce as well as the increased interest in the region's renewable energy resources meant that decommissioning could be a driver for building future skills and capacities for economic diversification and local resilience.

2. UK and devolved Government reports

2.1 Nuleaf submitted a response to the UK Government's consultation on a new **National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN7)**⁷. 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-6⁸; 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.

A response was also submitted 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 here⁹.

On the 22nd May, a series of new Energy **National Policy Statements (NPS)**¹⁰ were laid before the UK Parliament. These cover fossil fuels (EN-2), renewables (EN-3), gas supply and oil and gas pipelines (EN-4) and electricity networks (EN-5), sitting below an overarching energy NPS (EN-1).

2.2 It was also announced on the 22nd May that Baroness Curran would become the new Minister of State at the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ),

⁶ [New reports examine impact of nuclear decommissioning in Scotland - GOV.UK](#)

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

⁸ [UK Nuclear Power Planning Reforms: Impact on Data Centres](#)

⁹ <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/policy-communications/consultation-responses-2/>

¹⁰ [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

with responsibility for nuclear. She replaces Lord Hunt, who has announced his retirement and is leaving the Government.

2.3 On the 21st May, DESNZ published a working paper on **community benefits and shared ownership for local carbon energy infrastructure**¹¹ and invited views on the proposals. Nuleaf will be submitting a response by the July 16th deadline.

2.4 A **Planning and Infrastructure Bill** was laid before Parliament in March¹². The intention is to fast track decisions on new nuclear and renewable energy projects and grid infrastructure in support of the Plan for Change to deliver the decarbonisation of the grid by 2030.

3. Regulatory news

3.1. Following the announcement that the UK Government is setting up an **independent taskforce on nuclear regulation**¹³, a **Call for Evidence** was launched which closed on the 19th May¹⁴. 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.

3.2 The **Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)** has published its first report on international regulatory collaboration on SMRs and AMRs¹⁵. 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.

4. Nuleaf update

4.1 Nuleaf's Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Director, along with Cllr Paul Thomas, were invited to attend the **International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Global Conference on Stakeholder Engagement**, held in Vienna in late May. The event has a particular focus on Mayors and civic leaders and Nuleaf representatives addressed the conference across the week. Our members were also invited to meet the UK Ambassador.

The event also enabled further discussion around the developing **Nuclear Communities Global Partnership**; and included a site visit to the unique Zwentendorf nuclear power plant, which was completed in the 1970s but never opened following a national referendum against nuclear.

¹¹ [Community benefits and shared ownership for low carbon energy infrastructure - GOV.UK](#)

¹² [Planning revolution to fuel growth and make Britain energy secure - GOV.UK](#)

¹³ [ONR welcomes new government independent taskforce on nuclear regulation | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

¹⁴ [Nuclear regulation: input to the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce review - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ [ONR outlines international collaboration on SMRs | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

In April, Executive Director Philip Matthews was invited to attend and speak at the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) conference in Idaho Falls, USA.

Funding for all international engagement was provided by the IAEA and GMF Europe.

4.2 **SCCORS (Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances)** held their first meeting in a number of years at Glasgow City Chambers on the 7th May. The event, which was well attended both in person and online, heard presentations from the NDA and Scottish Government. A Co-ordinator for SCCORS, Louise Martin, was appointed in February 2025 and sits within the Nuleaf team. Louise has also been active in building up the membership of the group and engaging with Government and other important bodies such as CoSLA, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

5. New nuclear and fusion reports

5.1 **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 Natrium reactor in the UK¹⁶. The Natrium technology features a 345 MWe sodium-cooled fast reactor with a molten salt-based energy storage system, allowing a nuclear plant to integrate with renewable resources.

5.2 Nuleaf Executive Director Philip Matthews attended a meeting of the **New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG)** on the 28th 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.

5.3 **Holtec**¹⁷ has announced the selection of a site near Doncaster for a planned new UK factory to manufacture Small Modular Reactors for the UK, Europe and the Middle East. The £1.5 billion investment will create 3,600 construction jobs and 3,000 long term jobs along with more in the supply chain. Holtec has been shortlisted by Great British Nuclear along with Rolls Royce and GE Hitachi.

6. EDF news

6.1 **Hunterston B** power station was declared 'nuclear free' on April 24th¹⁸. 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.

¹⁶ [TerraPower Takes First Step Toward Regulatory Approval of the Natrium® Reactor¹ in United Kingdom](#)

¹⁷ [Thousands of jobs to be created as Doncaster chosen for £1.5 billion nuclear reactor factory](#)

¹⁸ [Hunterston B power station declared 'nuclear free' - BBC News](#)

The site is on schedule to be handed over to Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) for decommissioning in 2026. 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 authorisations¹⁹.

7. Defence

7.1 It was announced on the 1st June that the UK plans to build 12 new nuclear powered attack submarines²⁰. The submarines, SSN-AUKUS, have been developed with the Australian Navy under the **AUKUS agreement**, which also involves the United States.

The UK currently has 21 former nuclear powered submarines, stored at Rosyth and Devonport, which are awaiting defueling and decommissioning.

¹⁹ [Major application step brings Hunterston B closer to joining NRS - GOV.UK](#)

²⁰ [UK to build up to 12 new attack submarines - BBC News](#)