



Nuleaf Service Plan 2025-26: Executive Summary

Introduction

Nuleaf (the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) is the Local Government Association's (LGA) representative body on radioactive waste and nuclear decommissioning. We are directly supported by over 100 local authorities and national parks across England and Wales and speak for the wider LGA network on these issues.

Our mission is to deliver the '*best economic, social and environmental outcomes for nuclear communities*'. We do this through:

- Acting as the voice of our members to the UK and Devolved Governments; the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), regulators and other stakeholders; and
- Building the capacity of our member local authorities to engage at site level.

Our Service Plan 2025/26 details our planned work over the course of this year. It has been developed in consultation with our members and the NDA Group. Measurable Outputs and Outcomes are included which we will report on at the end of the year to demonstrate delivery against our objectives.

Below we provide a short summary of our core work and priority areas for engagement this year.

Our Core Work

As our name suggests, Nuleaf is a forum for discussion of nuclear matters. Our focus is to create a space where local authorities, and the communities they represent, can engage with Government and the nuclear industry. Our Steering Group and Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG) are the central platforms for this engagement, though we also host a range of other groups, such as on geological disposal, and arrange ad hoc meetings on specific topics.

Beyond this, our Executive Director and staff act as a conduit between Nuleaf and our key stakeholders. We sit on a range of Government and industry advisory bodies, acting as the voice of local government and reporting back to our members.

Areas of focus in 2025/26

Beyond our Core Work we have a range of priorities that we will take forward this year, guided by dialogue with our members and NDA Group. These are:

Support for local and regional engagement

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of both the NDA and Nuleaf. The NDA had undertaken a review of its Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) and the potential for new engagement techniques; while Nuleaf has commissioned research on international best practice on engagement. During this year we will work with NDA Group to further enhance engagement processes. This will include:

- Supporting a creative dialogue between the NDA and our members on local and regional engagement. Drawing on their expertise, local authorities can advise the NDA on particular issues such as engagement with seldom heard groups.
- Exploring the scope for playing a more active role at a local level, for example in relation to planned NDA work on participative engagement.
- As required, facilitating dialogue between the NDA Group and the Local Government Association.
- Supporting local authorities engaged in or interested in the Geological Disposal Facility Siting Process.

Land use and waste planning

As Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), councils regulate the nuclear industry. We will continue to work closely with Government and the NDA Group on planning matters, with the aim of addressing barriers to decommissioning and waste management; supporting the ability of LPAs to engage; and delivering the most sustainable outcomes. Areas of focus will include:

- Contributing to the NDA's Landfill study.
- Supporting NDA work on Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- Engagement with NWS on issues including Near Surface Disposal (NSD), Low-Level Waste Management, non-radioactive waste and geological disposal.
- Ongoing dialogue with Government and industry on Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs); Master-planning; Biodiversity Net Gain and potential reform of Permitted Development Rights (PDR) and EIADR.

Strategy 5 and revision of site level plans

The 2025 Spending Review and projected funding for the NDA Group is leading to the revision of plans for Sellafield and the NRS sites. At the appropriate time, we will support engagement between NDA Group and our members to discuss the proposed approach to decommissioning and the implications for individual sites.

Underpinning this, we will engage fully in the consultation process around the NDA's Strategy for the next 5 years (Strategy 5). We will convene an engagement event for members and use this to inform our response to the Strategy 5 consultation. We will continue to play an active role in the Strategy 5 Development Group (S5DG).

Manifesto for action

Drawing on the recommendations of an independent consultancy study commissioned by Nuleaf, we will work with our members to draft a short 'manifesto' setting out a number of key asks we wish to see to enhance engagement and support for nuclear host communities. We will use this to support dialogue with Government, the industry and others.

Development of SCCORS

Nuleaf now hosts the secretariat for the Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances (SCCORS). Over this year we will work to reinvigorate the network through member meetings and engagement with the Scottish Government and Parliament and other key partners. We will seek opportunities for running joint Nuleaf/SCCORS events where appropriate.

New nuclear and local government

This is a time of rapid development in the nuclear sector, with Government ambitions to expand nuclear power and promote new types of generation and new locations for nuclear facilities. We will engage in all relevant consultations run by Government and use our meetings as a forum for discussion of new nuclear issues. We will work to promote an effective interface between industry and local authorities and to maximise the economic, social and environmental value delivered. Where appropriate, we will act in partnership with our sister organisation, NNLAG (New Nuclear Local Authority Group).

Review of our membership and funding

This is a time of change in local government, with reorganisation of local authorities and alterations to local political leadership. The financial challenges facing councils continue. Against this backdrop, and informed by our independent consultancy research, we will undertake a review of our membership and funding model. Working with our members we will:

- Review our membership fees and structures; in particular we will consider whether there is scope to differentiate further between the benefits of Contributing and Corresponding membership.

- Evaluate the potential to draw in new funding, either for our core operations or for project or partnership work.
- Reach out to our wider Corresponding membership base to encourage local authorities, particularly those with nuclear facilities, to become full Contributing members.
- Review the breadth of our work across the nuclear cycle and consider the potential for further engagement around new nuclear and on specific topics of value to members.

Building our media presence

Nuleaf's website and social media channels are well supported and used. Building on this, we will develop a new media strategy that will consider the scope for Nuleaf to enhance its presence in the mainstream media and be identified as a valuable contributor to the debate around nuclear. We will look to:

- Generate more original content on social media, focussed on Nuleaf's activities.
- Draft comment pieces and articles for the mainstream and local government media.
- Actively engage in social media discussion, offering our perspective on important issues.
- Overhaul and update our Briefings and communications materials; and review our overall website content.

Continuing to build our international work

Nuleaf plays a leading role in international networks. Our Executive Director sits on the Board of GMF Europe and has been active in contributing to the development of the new Nuclear Communities Global Partnership. Nuleaf is a key contributor to the UN International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) work on local engagement and we are regularly invited to speak at international conferences and seminars. All this work is valuable in helping inform Nuleaf members on international developments and best practice, while providing an international platform for the UK nuclear decommissioning sector. During this year we will build on this further through:

- Playing an active role in the IAEA Global Conference on Stakeholder Engagement held in Vienna in May 2025.
- Work with international partners to further develop the Nuclear Communities Global Partnership. Our Executive Director has been appointed to the first Board of the Partnership, as one of only two European representatives.
- Continue to sit on the Board of GMF Europe and work to support their engagement work.
- Engage with the UK Government and NDA to discuss the scope for Nuleaf to support their engagement through, for example the Tripartite arrangements with the USA and Canada.