

# eBulletin.



Masterplan for the Chapelcross Green Energy Hub

## Welcome

Here is a summary of topics discussed at the September Nuleaf Steering Group meeting, forthcoming meeting dates and other items we hope will be of interest.

## Dates for your diary

The next **Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG)** will be held online on **Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> October**, between 10am and 12.30pm. Along with the usual papers and site updates we will hear from Matt Meldrum of Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS), and also receive a presentation from the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce on their current review.

The next **Steering Group** meeting will be held online on **Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> December**, from 10am until 3pm. The agenda will be confirmed nearer the time.

If you are interested in joining either of these meetings, please contact Chloe Atkinson [Chloe.Atkinson@nuleaf.org.uk](mailto:Chloe.Atkinson@nuleaf.org.uk).

## Keep up-to-date



# September Steering Group report

A lively and well attended Steering Group was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September. This saw the election of a new Nuleaf Chair, **Cllr Joseph Ghayouba** of Cumberland Council; and Vice-Chair, **Cllr Paul Thomas** of Folkestone and Hythe District Council.

Members extended their thanks to the outgoing officers, Cllr. David Moore and Cllr Mike Caswell, both of whom have served the network over many years.

The meeting considered a range of papers related to the further development of Nuleaf. These drew in part on the recommendations of a consultancy report on engagement best practice commissioned by Nuleaf and due for publication in the coming weeks.

A proposal to reform the current membership model was considered, and it was agreed that steps should be taken to better differentiate between the benefits of Contributing and Corresponding membership. Starting next year, Nuleaf meetings will only be open to local authorities that contribute financially, though new authorities will be able to participate for a year before being required to become full members.

A separate paper suggested a number of ways in which Nuleaf could further enhance its service to members and its influence, in response to a changing nuclear landscape in the UK. Members backed proposals to:

- Continue a dialogue with the New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG), the NDA and others with the aim of better supporting local government engagement across the nuclear cycle.
- Facilitate discussion with the NDA and other stakeholders on how to enhance local engagement processes.
- Build the Nuleaf network through engaging with potential member authorities that have recently undergone restructuring or seen the election of a new ruling party.
- Enhance our voice in the media and with politicians on issues of interest.

After lunch members heard from **Great British Energy – Nuclear (GBE-N)** and **Rolls Royce SMR** about plans for the siting of new nuclear installations. In discussions a range of issues were raised including:

- The need for a proper interface between NDA and developers where new facilities are to be developed next to decommissioning sites;
- The specific impacts that would be seen during construction, operation and decommissioning of SMRs; and
- The wider socio-economic and skills implications of such developments.

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GMF Europe members at the Bataapati Low and Intermediate Level Waste Repository, Hungary

## Speculation on the GDF process

Recent media reports have suggested that the UK Government may be considering making changes to the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process, including ending or amending the requirement for local consent before any such development could proceed. A review of the siting process is currently being undertaken by DESNZ (Department of Energy Security and Net Zero), but it is unclear when this will report.

This news follows the exit of Lincolnshire from the GDF process and the publication of a report by the **National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (Nista)** which concluded that expected costs of between £20Bn and £53Bn would make a GDF 'unaffordable' and noted that the Infrastructure and Projects Authority had dropped its confidence rating from amber to red.

Responding, **UK Energy Minister Michael Shanks MP** stated that the Government remained committed to delivering a GDF. He commented '*I know at times these things seem like they move very slowly, but we are making progress on this. When we're successful, this will bring thousands of skilled jobs, investment and economic growth to the local area.*' He added that Nista was part of the process to speed up decision making and he was hoping the GDF would be '*a very good example of that when we get it over the line*'.

The **Nuclear Industry Association (NIA)** later remarked that '*A functioning GDF is key to the credibility and sustainability of the UK's nuclear programme. Developers need confidence that the back end of the fuel cycle is being responsibly and sustainably managed....to secure investor confidence and public trust.*'

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# NDA site updates

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August a masterplan for the future of the **Chapelcross** site was unveiled, with a vision to turn the site into a Green Energy Hub (see front cover photo). The development includes plans for hydrogen production storage, advanced manufacturing, and energy and enterprise campuses.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) are now looking to identify a strategic developer to help deliver the vision for the site. NDA CEO David Peattie commented '*The masterplan marks tangible progress in making the hub a reality and is a testament to the value of partnership working. Selecting a strategic developer will enable us to build on this further and leverage the benefits of public and private sector collaboration.*'

Meanwhile, **Gwynedd Council** has heard that it is 'highly unlikely' that the Trawsfynydd site will host new nuclear development in the near future. At a Council meeting, Cabinet Member for Economy and Community Cllr Medwyn Hughes stated that due to uncertainty about the future, he was pleased Gwynedd Council was working with partners to establish a science park, to '*ensure the quality work continues in the Meirionnydd area for generations*'. The intention is to develop an Innovation Centre outside the boundary of the licensed site, to include opportunities for working and learning, and '*triggering new ideas and job opportunities for the future.*'

Energy Coast West Cumbria Ltd. has been commissioned by the **Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)** and **Cumberland Council** to undertake targeted market engagement around the potential development of clean energy on Pioneer Park, adjacent to Sellafield. This follows the Government's announcement back in June, asking the NDA and the Council to work together to explore how the land could support energy security while also creating new jobs and driving economic growth. The Leader of Cumberland Council, Cllr. Mark Fryer, commented '*This is early but important progress on our development of Pioneer Park. I look forward to hearing what the market thinks of our proposal and I will be very interested in the ideas that are brought forward to benefit our community. BEC is ideally placed to lead this work on our behalf.*'

Finally, it has been confirmed that responsibility for decommissioning the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Vulcan nuclear submarine reactor test site is to be transferred to Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS). Located next door to Dounreay, the site was built in the 1950s and supports about 280 jobs. It was used for prototype testing of nuclear propulsion plants for more than 50 years, before the last reactor was shut down in 2015.

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## GMF Europe celebrates 25 years

**GMF Europe** (the Group of Municipalities with Nuclear Facilities) has been acting as the voice of European nuclear communities for 25 years, and celebrated this anniversary at a General Assembly meeting in Paks, Hungary on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

The network has grown significantly over recent years and now includes host communities from 19 countries. GMF works closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the European Commission; and is a key partner in the developing Nuclear Communities Global Partnership.

The Assembly included discussion on debate on critical issues, including the impacts of decommissioning on the socio-economics of host communities. Also included were site visits to the existing and planned new nuclear site at Paks; and the Hungarian **Low and Intermediate Level Waste Repository** at Bataapati (see photo on page 2).

Nuleaf's Executive Director Philip Matthews is a Vice President of the network and attended the Assembly, speaking as part of a panel discussion. The meeting reaffirmed the value of such meetings in identifying and sharing good practice, and establishing dialogue around critical issues.

Nuleaf is also active in the Nuclear Communities Global Partnership and will be a participating in an IAEA meeting in December that will further the development of the network.

## Strategy 5 consultation closes

The consultation on the NDA's **Strategy 5** and the related **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIP)** closed on the 29<sup>th</sup> September.

Nuleaf submitted a detailed response, covering a range of issues including the need for more clarity on the decommissioning of each NRS site and joined up working with the wider UK nuclear enterprise. Action to enhance engagement, socio-economic support and sustainability was also highlighted, with strategic Master-planning identified as a key element of this at a site level. The final submission can be viewed on the Nuleaf [website](#).

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