

## ITEM 9: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



### Report to the RWPG, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

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

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

#### 1. NDA Group update

1.1 Recent weeks have seen the departure of a significant number of NDA group engagement staff, including David Wallace, Gillian Elliot and Jonathan Jenkin from the NDA and Simon Napper from NWS. Other key staff including John McNamara will be departing in the next few weeks and months.

Philip Matthews is due to meet with Paul Vallance, NDA Group Chief Corporate Affairs Officer in London on the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup> January, immediately after this meeting. Philip and Paul will discuss progress on putting together the NDA engagement team and the role of Nuleaf and local authorities.

1.2 Costain has been awarded a £70 million contract to halve the height of the two reactor buildings at the **Trawsfynydd** nuclear site<sup>1</sup>. The contract was awarded by Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) and will reshape the skyline, lowering the reactor buildings from about 54 metres to 25 metres.

NRS CEO Rob Fletcher commented *'After years of careful planning and preparation, we're now moving into the delivery phase of one of the most complex and ambitious decommissioning projects in the UK. We're delighted to be working with our supply chain partners to shape this next stage in the site's journey, ensuring the work is undertaken safely, securely and sustainably for all our futures.'*

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<sup>1</sup> [Costain to reduce height of Trawsfynydd reactor buildings - World Nuclear News](#)

1.3 On the 14<sup>th</sup> November the NDA announced that it is making a £1million investment to develop a masterplan for **Pioneer Park<sup>2</sup>**, a clean energy development adjacent to Sellafield. The plan will be led by BEC, the local development company, with the aim of setting out how clean energy technologies and AI and data centre infrastructure could come together to drive long-term economic growth and jobs, taking into account Sellafield's existing requirements.

**Cllr Mark Fryer**, Leader of Cumberland Council, said *'This announcement shows that momentum is building behind Pioneer Park. The council has worked hard alongside BEC and our partners to make the case for new nuclear and AI investment, and today's funding gives us the resources to set out a detailed, ambitious plan for the site. It's a big step forward for our area and for the future of clean growth in West Cumbria'*.

1.4 **Sellafield** has published its **Annual Report and Accounts 24/25<sup>3</sup>**. It notes highlight of the year as including:

- hazard reduction: meeting the target of filling 18 boxes of waste from the Pile Fuel Cladding Silo and placing it into more secure and modern containers.
- decommissioning: successfully removing the first contaminated glovebox from one of the site's oldest and most challenging labs.
- security of energy supply: continuing to receive and store used nuclear fuel from the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor fleet, operated by EDF Energy, enabling them to continue to generate electricity.

1.5. The NDA has also published its **Socio-economic report 2024 to 2025<sup>4</sup>** and its **Mission Progress Report 24/25<sup>5</sup>**.

1.6 On the 13<sup>th</sup> January, it was announced that the NDA has contributed £351,000 of funding to support projects under the **North Anglesey Sites and Premises** programme, which is a £10.4m investment package driving economic growth in Amlwch, close to the former Wylfa nuclear power station<sup>6</sup>.

The projects in Amlwch being supported by NDA funding will create 95 jobs, attract inward investment, improve infrastructure and support community wellbeing in an area of high-economic need. They are:

- Refurbishment of the Marine Terminal building to create space capable of accommodating 19 businesses, with improvements to port welfare facilities

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<sup>2</sup> [NDA announces £1 million funding to accelerate clean energy in West Cumbria - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Sellafield Ltd Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>4</sup> [NDA socio-economic report 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>5</sup> [The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority mission progress report 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>6</sup> [NDA funding for North Wales regeneration projects - GOV.UK](#)

- Construction of 10 industrial units at Amlwch industrial estate, creating new business space.

Full details of the £10.4m investment package, which includes funding from the North Wales Growth Deal, Welsh Government, Isle of Anglesey County Council, and the NDA, was announced by Ambition North Wales<sup>7</sup>.

The BBC website has published an in-depth article on the history of the **Wylfa power station**, the work of decommissioning and plans for Small Modular Reactors (see below)<sup>8</sup>; and a similar in-depth piece on plans for the regeneration of the **Chapelcross** site<sup>9</sup>.

1.7 The NDA group has safely processing a can of plutonium residue into a stable waste form for the very first time<sup>10</sup>.

The achievement marks the start of a programme at the NDA group's Sellafield site to process around 400 cans of plutonium residue; a by-product from historic manufacturing processes of fuels and other materials. The residue will be processed and made ready for eventual disposal in a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Euan Hutton, Sellafield's CEO, commented *'Turning the world's largest stockpile of this extremely hazardous substance into a safe form and then disposing of it will dominate our work for decades. This achievement means we can deal with some of the more problematic plutonium now, making a start on putting the material beyond reach earlier, and underlines our commitment to deal with the legacy of decades of reprocessing work.'*

## 2. UK and Devolved Government update

2.1 On the 13<sup>th</sup> November it was confirmed that **Wylfa** on Anglesey will be the site of the UK's first Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), backed by Great British Energy – Nuclear (GBE-N). The reactors are being constructed by Rolls Royce SMR<sup>11</sup>.

The initial plan is for three SMRs at the location though this has the potential to grow to eight. Work is due to start in 2026, with 3,000 jobs and billions of pounds of investment being made during the construction phase. It is predicted that electricity generation will begin in the mid-2030s.

The decision means that the alternative site at **Oldbury-on-Severn** has lost out. The UK Government stated that Oldbury *'has great potential for new nuclear,*

<sup>7</sup> [Ambition North Wales | Funding for Amlwch £10.4 million regeneration project approved](#)

<sup>8</sup> [A decade on from when the Wylfa nuclear turbines fell silent on Anglesey - BBC News](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Chapelcross: Can an old nuclear power plant have a green future? - BBC News](#)

<sup>10</sup> [UK achieves first plutonium milestone - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Wylfa nuclear power plant plans go ahead, creating Anglesey jobs - BBC News](#)

*including the potential to support the privately-led projects being developed by the nuclear industry’.*

The Government has announced plans for another Gigawatt (GW) reactor project similar to Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C, with the potential to power up to six million homes. GBE-N has been asked to identify suitable sites, and a spokesperson for the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) confirmed that Oldbury could be among those considered.

2.2 The Parliamentary Statement on the 13<sup>th</sup> November also announced the creation of a **North Wales AI Growth Zone**, a partnership between Stena Line, Bangor and Aberystwyth Universities, Menai Science Park (M-SParc), and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai. It is predicted to create 1,200 jobs and has the potential to widen AI investment across the region, including at **Trawsfynydd**<sup>12</sup>.

2.3 The **Energy Security and Net Zero Committee** of the House of Commons has published a report on the new **National Policy Statement (NPS) for nuclear energy generation (EN-7)**<sup>13</sup>.

The report argues that the planning guidance for building Britain’s future nuclear energy generation brings a welcome ‘presumption of consent’ for low-carbon generation across a range of nuclear technologies.

However, it believed that the private development of new nuclear sites creates additional challenges. It concludes that new policy statement EN-7 *‘fails to present a truly joined-up approach across planning, safety, and environmental regulation’* and so risks undermining its own purpose.

2.4 **Great British Energy – Nuclear (GBE-N)** has announced that Simon Roddy has been appointed as its new Chief Executive Officer<sup>14</sup>. His background includes extensive experience in the management of energy infrastructure, and the delivery of complex energy projects. Most recently, as Senior Vice President for Shell UK, he has worked on the North Sea’s energy transition.

### 3. Nuleaf news

3.1 The **2026 Nuleaf Annual Gathering** will be held in Carlisle on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July. The agenda is in the process of being finalised but it is anticipated that the

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<sup>12</sup> [Written Statement: Wylfa announced as the site for the UKs first Small Modular Reactor \(SMR\) nuclear power station and North Wales confirmed as a location for an Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Growth Zone \(13 November 2025\) | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Committee calls for clear direction on Oldbury and Wylfa, and a “one-stop shop” to finally overcome excessive cost and delays in deployment of nuclear energy - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

<sup>14</sup> [GBE-N Appoints Chief Executive Officer - GOV.UK](#)

event will include a site visit to the Chapelcross nuclear site and a seminar on nuclear developments in Cumberland, as well as a dinner and opportunities for informal networking. Members living far from Cumberland will be able to travel up on the 13<sup>th</sup> July and stay over.

Please note the dates in your diary and more details will follow soon.

3.2 It has been confirmed that the NDA will continue funding of **SCCORS (Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances)** for another year, through to February 2027. This positive news means that Louise Martin is able to continue to work in support of both SCCORS and Nuleaf through an extension to her secondment from Somerset Council.

3.3 Nuleaf's Executive Director was invited to participate in an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) **Technical Meeting on Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships** in Vienna on the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December. During the meeting he spoke on Nuleaf's development over its 20 year history and was a panellist on discussions on the experience of nuclear host communities and the development of the Nuclear Communities Global Partnership. His involvement was funded by IAEA.

## 4. Regulatory update

4.1. On the 13<sup>th</sup> January the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) confirmed that **Hinkley Point B** nuclear power station in Somerset is officially fuel free<sup>15</sup>, meaning the site has been defueled on time and on budget. Over the past three years more than 4,900 elements of spent fuel have been removed and packaged into specially engineered fuel flasks which were then transported by rail to Sellafield for safe storage.

Rob Fletcher, Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) CEO, said *'We have been working alongside the Hinkley Point B team closely for several years as we move towards site transfer and have seen first-hand the skill and dedication of the teams who have been working towards this milestone. We look forward to continuing our close working relationship with the Hinkley Point B team as we move towards a seamless transfer and into the site's decommissioning journey.'*

The regulator has also granted formal consent to the decommissioning of the station<sup>16</sup>. This decision comes after a public consultation (which Nuleaf responded to<sup>17</sup>) and a detailed assessment by ONR specialist inspectors of EDF's environmental

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<sup>15</sup> [NDA group and EDF deliver successful AGR defueling milestone - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>16</sup> [ONR gives consent to decommission Hinkley Point B | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Consultation Responses - Nuleaf](#)

statement and Habitats Regulations Assessment. ONR's decision, and public consultation response can be viewed [here](#).

4.2 The ONR has undertaken a consultation on its draft Strategy, which closed on the 9<sup>th</sup> January<sup>18</sup>. Nuleaf submitted a response via the ONR's online portal.

## 5. New nuclear and fusion updates

5.1 A £10m grant scheme has been launched to support environmental enhancement projects along the Suffolk and Essex coast<sup>19</sup>. The **Natural Environment Improvement Fund (NEIF)** will be funded by Sizewell C as part of its Deed of Obligation, and is designed to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts of the new nuclear station.

Grants will be distributed throughout Sizewell C's construction phase, and during the first three years of its operation. An awards panel has been established to oversee the fund, comprising representatives from East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, Sizewell C, Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape, and Natural England.

5.2 The second reactor has now arrived at **Hinkley Point C**. The cylinder, which weighs 500 tonnes, was shipped from France to Avonmouth Docks and then transported by barge and finally by road for the last 4 miles.

Construction at the site is expected to reach its peak in the next 18 months, with around 15,000 worker involved. Hinkley Point C is expected to now open in 2031, a number of years later than originally planned<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> [Have your say on ONR's future strategy | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

<sup>19</sup> [New £10m Natural Environment Grant Fund launched in East Suffolk - Suffolk County Council](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Second nuclear reactor arrives at Hinkley Point C power station - BBC News](#)