

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 11th March 2026
Item: 6
Subject: National updates on 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;
- New nuclear and fusion reports; and
- Nuleaf and local government news.

Recommendation:

This report is for noting.

1. NDA Group update

1.1 The NDA Group is working to put together a new engagement team. following the departure of a number of staff in recent months. The transition is being managed by John McNamara, who will now be staying on past the end of March to oversee the changes.

As members requested at the December Steering Group meeting, Nuleaf wrote to both Lord Vallance at the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and Paul Vallance, NDA Group Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, to stress the need for a new and properly resourced team to be put in place, and to highlight the scope for Nuleaf to support future engagement.

Responses to both letters have been received, and Philip Matthews met with Paul Vallance and John McNamara in London on the afternoon of the 28th January to discuss forward plans.

1.2 The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) published its new Group **Strategy (Strategy 5)** on the 23rd February. The Strategy sets the long term direction for the Authority, and it is a requirement of the Energy Act (2004) that it is

renewed every 5 years. Nuleaf was a member of the Strategy 5 Development Group (S5DG) and fed back detailed comments on the draft during the recent consultation.

The document identifies strategic priorities for the Group as being around site decommissioning and remediation, consistent and effective waste management and the development of long term plans for the management of nuclear materials (plutonium and uranium). The Strategy also commits the NDA to act as a strategic partner for Government around climate change and in the management of non-NDA nuclear liabilities; and establishes sustainability as a strategic principle that is embedded across the mission.

Looking forward:

- NDA is awaiting ministerial approval for its Vision 2050, which is aimed at delivering an end state at most Magnox sites by that date.
- Strategy 5 will be taken forward by an new NDA Group Strategy and Planning Group, Chaired by Clive Nixon.

Koulis Efkarpidis of the NDA will give a presentation on the new Strategy at this meeting.

1.3 Nuleaf submitted a response to the consultation on the **NDA Business Plan 2026-29**¹. The consultation closed on the 2nd February and the final Business Plan is expected to be published at the end of March.

1.4 **Gwynedd** Councillors has approved the next steps in the proposed Innovation, Business and Skills Centre at the former **Trawsfynydd** nuclear power station site. The multi-use centre, estimated to cost around £20 million, is designed to create high-value jobs and strengthen the regional economy by supporting growth in sectors including nuclear decommissioning, low-carbon energy, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

Sponsored by Cyngor Gwynedd, the hub will provide flexible office, laboratory, training and collaboration space to support research, skills development, business growth and innovation. The proposal represents the first phase of a wider masterplan for the Trawsfynydd site, which sits within the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone and the North Wales AI Growth Zone.

1.5 On the 13th 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 station².

¹ <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/policy-communications/consultation-responses-2/>

² [NDA funding for North Wales regeneration projects - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nuclear-decommissioning-funding-for-north-wales)

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
- 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 Wales³.

The BBC website has also published an in-depth article on the history of the **Wylfa power station**, the work of decommissioning and plans for Small Modular Reactors⁴; and a similar in-depth piece on plans for the regeneration of the **Chapelcross** site⁵.

1.6 The NDA group has safely processing a can of plutonium residue into a stable waste form for the very first time⁶. The achievement marks the start of a programme at the 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.*'

1.7 Nuleaf's Executive Director participated in a joint **Sustainable Decommissioning and Remediation (SDR)/ Integrated Waste Management (IWM) Theme Overview Group (TOG)** meeting on the 26th January.

At the meeting, he delivered a presentation on the consultation on a new National Planning Performance Framework (NPPF), which closed on the 10th March. Nuleaf has drafted a response to the consultation and circulated this to members, and the purpose of the session was to understand the implications of the NPPF for decommissioning and waste management. It was proposed that a longer discussion on land use and waste planning be held at a future TOG, reflecting the range of potential changes to the framework for planning that are being considered.

³ [Ambition North Wales | Funding for Amlwch £10.4 million regeneration project approved](#)

⁴ [A decade on from when the Wylfa nuclear turbines fell silent on Anglesey - BBC News](#)

⁵ [Chapelcross: Can an old nuclear power plant have a green future? - BBC News](#)

⁶ [UK achieves first plutonium milestone - GOV.UK](#)

The meeting also held from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on their developing Nuclear Liabilities Strategy. This is now expected to be published at the end of 2025.

1.8 Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS) and nuclear technology company **Westinghouse** have signed a strategic agreement to work together on the development of **Pegasus** – designed as the world’s leading transport package for High Assay Low Enriched Uranium (HALEU), a more efficient type of nuclear fuel that will power many of the next generation of advanced reactors. The signing took place at the British Embassy, in Washington DC, as part of an event celebrating the UK and US commitment to advancing nuclear energy generation.

1.9 It has been announced that the first 200 containers of Low Level Waste (LLW) have been permanently disposed of in the underground vault at the **Dounreay** site⁷.

At the same time, preparatory work is underway to lay a new liner over historic trenches and vaults at the **Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR)** in Cumberland, prior to installation of a permanent cap⁸. The liner is intended to be in place for up to 100 years.

Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) will update members on these and other aspects of LLW management at this Steering Group meeting.

2. UK and devolved Government reports

2.1 On the 26th January the UK Government announced that it was launching an **Independent Review of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority**, led by Dr Tim Stone. Tim is the Chair of Nuclear Risk Insurers and a Non-Executive Director of Great British Energy – Nuclear. He was previously Chair of the Nuclear Industry Association.

The review, the first since 2021, will be guided by an independent panel of experts and is intended to provide assurance on NDA performance and governance. Nuleaf has been in contact with the team in the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) that are supporting this work, and will feed into the review as it progresses. It is expected that the report will be published this autumn.

2.2 Great British Energy – Nuclear (GBE-N) has announced that Simon Roddy has been appointed as its new Chief Executive Officer⁹. 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.

⁷ [First containers of waste from Dounreay reach permanent disposal - GOV.UK](#)

⁸ [Work begins on final liner for southern legacy waste trenches at Cumbria nuclear repository | New Civil Engineer](#)

⁹ [GBE-N Appoints Chief Executive Officer - GOV.UK](#)

2.3 At a Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) event in Cardiff on the 26th February, it was announced that the **Welsh Government** is preparing a proposal for Rolls-Royce SMR to develop a modular manufacturing facility in Deeside, Flintshire.

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning in the Welsh Government Rebecca Evans commented *'The Welsh Government and I have supported new nuclear at Wylfa for many years – we regard it as a major low-carbon infrastructure project and as a long-term industrial opportunity. We want Wales to reap all the benefits that modern nuclear can bring, and intend for Wales not only to host nuclear generation, but to help build it, maintain it and supply it for decades to come.'*

She added *'Deeside is recognised as an advanced manufacturing cluster with established heavy industry, logistics connectivity, a skilled workforce and supporting infrastructure, further strengthened by its designation within a £160 million investment zone. An SMR factory in Deeside would not simply support one site – it would anchor a repeatable build programme and a long-term supply chain for many decades to come.'*

2.4 On the 4th February the UK Government published its **Advanced Nuclear Framework**¹⁰, the aim of which to stimulate private investment in innovative nuclear technologies across the country, providing a clear route to market and support for credible projects to get them off the ground.

Minister for Nuclear Lord Patrick Vallance commented *'Advanced nuclear technology could revolutionise how we power industry and propel the AI data centre boom – delivering more clean energy and jobs. We are seizing the opportunity to become a frontrunner in this space as part of our golden age of nuclear, creating the conditions for the industry to flourish.'*

3. Regulatory news

3.1. On the 13th January the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) confirmed that **Hinkley Point B** nuclear power station in Somerset is officially fuel free¹¹, 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*

¹⁰ [Government to unlock advanced nuclear to grow economy - GOV.UK](#)

¹¹ [NDA group and EDF deliver successful AGR defueling milestone - GOV.UK](#)

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 station¹². This decision comes after a public consultation (which Nuleaf responded to¹³) and a detailed assessment by ONR inspectors of EDF's environmental statement and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

3.2 The ONR has undertaken a consultation on its draft Strategy, which closed on the 9th January¹⁴. Nuleaf submitted a response via the ONR's online portal.

3.3 The ONR along with the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, have begun the **Generic Design Assessment (GDA)** for Terrapower's Sodium reactor design¹⁵. Terrapower, backed by Bill Gates, has designed a 345 MW sodium fast reactor which is combined with a molten salt energy storage system, intended to integrate the reactor with renewable generation¹⁶.

4. New nuclear and fusion reports

4.1 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 planned¹⁷.

4.2 Cllr Richard Rout of Suffolk County Council, the Chair of Nuleaf's sister organisation the **New Nuclear Local Authority Group (NNLAG)**, appeared before the Energy Security and Net Zero (ESNZ) Committee of the UK Parliament on the 28th February in a session on Revisiting the Nuclear Roadmap. A video of the discussion can be viewed here¹⁸.

5. Nuleaf and local government news

5.1 The **Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA)** ceased operations at the end of January 2026, following a decline in membership. Founded in 1981, the network had an important role in the foundation of Nuleaf in 2005, and has continued to be engaged in our work.

¹² [ONR gives consent to decommission Hinkley Point B | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

¹³ [Consultation Responses - Nuleaf](#)

¹⁴ [Have your say on ONR's future strategy | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

¹⁵ [TerraPower's Sodium reactor enters UK GDA process - World Nuclear News](#)

¹⁶ [TerraPower Sodium | Advanced Nuclear Energy](#)

¹⁷ [Second nuclear reactor arrives at Hinkley Point C power station - BBC News](#)

¹⁸ [Parliamentlive.tv - Energy Security and Net Zero Committee](#)

Despite the demise of the NFLA at a UK and Ireland level, an in principle decision has been taken to form a Scottish NFLA network. There are also plans to relaunch the Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance (WANA). We wish outgoing NFLA Secretary Richard Outram all the best for the future. As a broad Forum, Nuleaf will continue to welcome all local authorities across England and Wales, regardless of their views on nuclear power.

5.2 The agenda for the **2026 Nuleaf Annual Gathering**, being held in Carlisle on the 14th and 15th July, is being finalised. If you haven't already done so, please note the dates in your diary and more details will follow soon.

5.3 Nuleaf's Executive Director participated in an **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Technical Meeting on Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement** and Partnerships in Vienna on the 10th to 12th 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.