

ITEM 8: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT



Report to the RWPG, 29th April 2026

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

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

1. NDA Group update

1.1 The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) published its new **Group Strategy**¹ on the 23rd February. The Strategy sets the long terms direction for the NDA Group and it is a requirement of the Energy Act (2004) that it is renewed every 5 years. 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 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. Activity is supported by a range of Critical Enablers including around Socio-economics and Engagement.

The **NDA Business Plan 2026-29** was published on the 16th March and can be viewed here².

1.2 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** site³.

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 cap⁴. The liner is intended to be in place for up to 100 years.

¹ [The NDA group Strategy Effective from March 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

² [NDA Business Plan 2026 to 2029 - GOV.UK](#)

³ [First containers of waste from Dounreay reach permanent disposal - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [Work begins on final liner for southern legacy waste trenches at Cumbria nuclear repository | New Civil Engineer](#)

1.3 **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.

1.4. A major milestone was achieved in April with the transfer of the first Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR), **Hunterston B**, to Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS)⁵. Following Defueling by EDF, the site will now move forward with decommissioning. Defueling was achieved on time and on budget, using funds from the **Nuclear Liabilities Fund (NLF)**, established in 1996 to finance the decommissioning of the current nuclear fleet.

NLF Chief Executive Melissa Hope said that '*NLF is proud of its role in supporting EDF's successful defueling following the end of generation at Hunterston B. The NLF funding model provides certainty that funds are now available to support safe and secure site remediation. We look forward to working with the station, NRS, the NDA and HM Government going forward to ensure that NLF funds are used to support planning for and innovation in the decommissioning programme, with the aim of this important national task being delivered efficiently and cost-effectively.*'

1.5 **Cumberland Council's** audit and risk committee met on the 13th April to discuss the community funds provided by the NDA Group⁶. A variety of funding streams have been provided through agreements with previous local authorities, but the Council believes there is a need for a review of these, and their governance arrangements, following the creation of the Unitary Authority.

Funding streams include Social Impact Investment Funding (SIIF); a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA); Mid and South Copeland Community Partnership funding under the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) programme; the Copeland Community Fund associated with the Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR); and Strategic Alliance funding, used on three council capital projects.

Separately, it was announced in March that **Cumberland's Nuclear Future Board** have now launched the £1m masterplan phase, funded by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), to explore how the site could support nuclear and clean energy opportunities.

⁵ [Hunterston B becomes first AGR power station to transfer to government ownership | New Civil Engineer](#)

⁶ [Council's report into Sellafield funding set for committee | Whitehaven News](#)

Engineering and advisory firms Mott MacDonald and WSP will lead on the six-month project looking at developing next-generation nuclear technologies and supply chain facilities, including how to attract funding.

1.6 It was announced on the 15th April that **Peter Hill CBE** would be stepping down as Chair of the NDA⁷. Catriona Schmolke CBE, has been appointed as Interim Chair and The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero will now launch a competitive external search process to find Peter's successor.

2. UK and Devolved Government update

2.1 The UK Government has launched 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 will be guided by an independent panel of experts and is intended to provide assurance on NDA performance and governance. The last such review was undertaken in 2021.

Nuleaf Executive Director met with the lead civil servant on the review in mid-April to offer a Nuleaf perspective, and we will continue to feed into the review as it progresses. It is expected that the report will be published this autumn.

2.2 The UK Government has also launched **Building a nuclear nation**, their response to the Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025 (the Fingleton report). The proposed response represents the biggest change in nuclear regulation for many years and covers a wide range of areas. These include streamlining environmental assessments, creating a lead regulator (the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)), and taking a range of steps to facilitate nuclear development. The review includes some areas that impact on local government, with a need to understand new frameworks and undertake faster assessments.

DESNZ will be giving a presentation on the Government's response at this RWPG meeting.

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*

⁷ [Change of Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Chair - GOV.UK](#)

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.'

2.3 On the 4th February the UK Government published its **Advanced Nuclear Framework**⁸, 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 update

3.1. The **Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)** has launched a public consultation for a scoping report assessing the environmental impact for the decommissioning of **Dungeness B** Nuclear Power Station. This outlines EDF's intended scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the decommissioning of power station, submitted under the Nuclear Reactors (Environmental Impact Assessment for Decommissioning) Regulations (EIADR). The consultation was due to close on 16 April but has been extended until 1 May.

Separately, EDF ran a consultation on their plans for decommissioning of Dungeness B which closed on April 23rd. Two approaches are currently being considered:

- Early safestore - the baseline approach (approx. 90 year timeframe)

⁸ [Government to unlock advanced nuclear to grow economy - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-unlock-advanced-nuclear-to-grow-economy)

- Prompt decommissioning - the alternative approach (approx. 40 year timeframe)

Both options are being taken forward for detailed consideration (by EDF in consultation with NRS) as part of further decommissioning planning work, including the EIADR application. The final choice of decommissioning approach is likely to be made by Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) once the site transfers to them.

4. New nuclear and fusion updates

4.1 Work began on the UK's first **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** on the 13th April. This follows on from the agreement between Rolls Royce SMR and Great British Energy – Nuclear (GBE-N) to develop reactors at the Wylfa site in Anglesey. It is claimed that the project will create 3,000 local jobs and an additional 5,000 across the UK⁹.

The plan is to develop 3 SMRs, though there is scope for further development at the site at a later stage. The three units will generate enough electricity to power 3 million homes for 60 years, with the plant expected to become operational from the mid-2030s.

Ed Miliband, Secretary of State at the UK Government Department of Energy security and Net Zero (DESNZ), commented *'Our clean energy mission is the only route to getting off the rollercoaster of fossil fuels and take back control of our energy independence.'*

Christian Branch, from Ynys Mon/Isle of Anglesey County Council, welcomed the announcement, but said local residents must *'remain central'* in the project, highlighting the need to manage potential impacts on communities, infrastructure and the environment. He added *'We look forward to continuing our constructive partnership to secure lasting and positive outcomes for Anglesey and future generations.'*

The announcement that construction was beginning follows the signing of a **Collaboration Agreement**¹⁰ between GBE-N and Isle of Anglesey County Council in March 2026. The aim of this is to establish how the two organisations will work together to support delivery of the UK's first Small Modular Reactors at Wylfa.

⁹ [Wylfa power station can begin that promises 8,000 new jobs - BBC News](#)

¹⁰ [GBE-N Sign Collaboration Agreement with IACC - GOV.UK](#)

The agreement is intended to support a transparent and positive partnership, aimed at delivering positive outcomes for the Island's community while enhancing economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

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 here¹¹.

4.3 Sizewell C has agreed to be the first funder of a new independent **Community Interest Company (CIC)** to deliver additional long-term environmental, social, and cultural benefits for communities across Suffolk with an initial annual commitment of up to £5m per year¹².

The CIC, an independent organisation, aims to work with other nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) to raise additional funds for local projects. It is designed specifically to attract additional funding from other infrastructure developers, philanthropic organisations and grant-making bodies—enabling the CIC to deliver benefits well beyond any one project.

Nigel Cann, CEO of Sizewell C, said *'The CIC presents a big opportunity for Sizewell C to support an additional vehicle to get positive benefits to Suffolk for decades to come. This is about adding to the work we already do in this region and widening the positive impact we can have here. With our current projects like the College on the Coast, our Site Social Benefits Forum, and our ambitious plans for biodiversity, we're already delivering benefits well beyond our planning commitments.'*

4.4 Centrica and X-energy, together with **Hartlepool Borough Council**, Hartlepool College of Further Education, and the Hartlepool Development Corporation, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Hartlepool to establish a new Nuclear and Electrical Trades Academy aimed at equipping local people for high value careers in the clean energy sector¹³.

This initiative forms part of a wider collaboration between Centrica and X-energy to deploy X-energy's advanced high-temperature gas-cooled reactor (HTGR) technology across the UK, with the preferred first site in Hartlepool. In March, Centrica and X-energy submitted their formal proposal for entry into the Government's **Advanced Nuclear Framework (ANF) Pipeline**.

¹¹ [Parliamentlive.tv - Energy Security and Net Zero Committee](#)

¹² [Sizewell C agrees to be the first funder of a new Community Interest Company - Sizewell C](#)

¹³ [Delivering the next generation of nuclear skills and jobs](#)