

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 15th July 2026
Item: 4
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 Significant changes to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) engagement teams have been announced.

Pip Hatt has joined the NDA from NRS to take up a position of **Head of Stakeholder Engagement, UK Regions**. Pip will focus primarily on relationships with NRS sites and the NRS teams in England, Scotland and Wales. Meanwhile, **Rob Ward** will join the NDA from Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) to take up the position of **Head of Stakeholder Engagement - Cumbria**. Rob has extensive experience of working in local government and for the NDA group in stakeholder roles.

John McNamara will stay on until 31 December to work with Pip and Rob and the wider team to assist the new working arrangements as they are bedded in. After that, Pip and Rob will report into **Lindsay Woodcock, the NDA's Director of Strategic Communications**. Responsibility for stakeholders will transfer over to Lindsay's current portfolio and there will be a gradual handover from John McNamara over the coming months.

For NRS Sites, Site Directors, NRS Regional Communications Leads and Site Stakeholder Group (SSGs) secretariats remain in place and will continue to act as the primary contact with SSGs and other local groups. NRS is also in the process of changing some of its senior Communications positions as it takes on additional responsibilities on behalf of the NDA group.

Two **Head of Stakeholder Relations** positions will report to the NRS Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations; one for Scotland and one for England and Wales. **Gail Ross**, currently Head of Communications for Dounreay, will become **Head of Stakeholder Relations for Scotland**, while the Head of Stakeholder Relations for England and Wales will be appointed soon.

1.2 The NDA will hold its annual **Stakeholder Summit** in Manchester on the 15th and 16th September. Nuleaf has been offered 8 places at the Summit, which will run from lunchtime until lunchtime and includes a dinner and overnight stay in the Midland Hotel. Participants will be required to cover their own travel costs to the event.

We are in the process of considering how to allocate places among members and will be in contact soon.

1.3 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)¹. 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.'*

1.4 Costain had been appointed as principal contractor to reduce the height of the **Trawsfynydd** reactor buildings from around 54m to 29m. The project, valued at up to £70 million, is expected to take up to four years to deliver, with more than 100 people employed at the peak of the programme².

This represents the next phase of the decommissioning of the site, following the completion of the Higher Activity Waste (HAW) programme³. That involved retrieving

¹ [Hunterston B becomes first AGR power station to transfer to government ownership | New Civil Engineer](#)

² [Trawsfynydd nuclear site readies for £70m transformation - Place North West](#)

³ [Landmark decommissioning milestone reached at Trawsfynydd - GOV.UK](#)

legacy material, processing it safely and placing it into secure long-term storage on site. In total, almost 2,300 individual waste packages were completed.

1.5 Cumberland Council's audit and risk committee met on the 13th April to discuss the community funds provided by the NDA Group⁴. 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.

1.6 The NDA has published a new **Economic Impact Assessment of NDA sites**, with the research undertaken by PwC UK. It covers 17 NDA sites though not the three Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR) stations that have or are in the process of transition to the NDA estate. The report calculates that the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the NDA sites was £4.1bn in 2025, and that the NDA's employment impact is around 56,000FTE jobs. Of this, Sellafield contributed £3.1Bn and supports around 41,000FTEs. You can view the report here⁵.

On the 14th May, NRS also published a infographic on its socio-economic support, totally almost £2 million across its sites⁶.

1.7 Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Director of Sites and Operations, Mike Pigott, and Head of Waste Services Howard Falconer have launched a podcast on the history and future plans for the Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) in Cumberland. The LLWR is approaching its 70th anniversary and is thought to be the oldest operational site of its kind in the world⁷.

LLWR has also submitted a major update to its **Environmental Safety Case (ESC)** to the Environment Agency⁸.

1.8 The NDA has published Guidance on '**How we manage waste more sustainably**' aimed at communities, and covering the local authority role in the

⁴ [Council's report into Sellafield funding set for committee | Whitehaven News](#)

⁵ [Economic Impact Assessment of NDA Sites - GOV.UK](#)

⁶ [Socio-economic infographic 2025](#)

⁷ [Podcast: Sustainability and the UK's Low Level Waste Repository - World Nuclear News](#)

⁸ [LLW Repository 2026 Environmental Safety Case - GOV.UK](#)

oversight and regulation of nuclear decommissioning sites through the planning system⁹. Nuleaf was actively involved in the preparation of this guidance.

1.9 The NDA held a workshop on **Site End States (SES) Guidance** on the 9th July, and Louise Martin attended on behalf of Nuleaf and SCCORS. A verbal report will be provided to the meeting.

2. UK and devolved Government reports

2.1 The UK Government is undertaking 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 a panel of experts and is intended to provide assurance on NDA performance and governance. The last such review was undertaken in 2021.

Nuleaf's 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 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.

2.3 On the 8th June the UK Government launched a consultation on a new **Draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation (EN-8)**¹⁰. The aim is to align decision making processes around fusion with that for other energy infrastructure. Nuleaf will be drafting a response and circulating to members for comment. The consultation closes on the 17th August.

3. Regulatory news

3.1. The ONR along with the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, have begun the **Generic Design Assessment (GDA)** for Terrapower's Sodium reactor design¹¹. Terrapower, backed by Bill Gates, has designed a 345 MW sodium

⁹ [How we manage waste more sustainably guidance - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁰ [Draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation \(EN-8\) - GOV.UK](#)

¹¹ [TerraPower's Sodium reactor enters UK GDA process - World Nuclear News](#)

fast reactor which is combined with a molten salt energy storage system, intended to integrate the reactor with renewable generation¹².

4. New nuclear and fusion reports

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 UK¹³. 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**¹⁴ 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.

Finally, following a public competition, it has been announced that the new SMR development will be known as **Gwyndod Power Station**¹⁵. GBE-N commented *'The name was chosen because it honours the specific identity, resilience, and unique character of the island's people, placing the local community directly at the heart of the project's identity. The name is derived from the old name for the region's dialect, Gwyndodeg.'*

4.2 GBE-N has announced that Jacobs Solutions have been selected to help assess the suitability of their **Oldbury-on-Severn site**, building on earlier characterisation work¹⁶.

¹² [TerraPower Natrium | Advanced Nuclear Energy](#)

¹³ [Wylfa power station can begin that promises 8,000 new jobs - BBC News](#)

¹⁴ [GBE-N Sign Collaboration Agreement with IACC - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ [Name revealed for new Anglesey nuclear power plant | North Wales Live](#)

¹⁶ [Oldbury site assessment work begins - Nuclear Engineering International](#)

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 year¹⁷.

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.

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 sector¹⁸.

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**.

5. Nuleaf and local government news

5.1 Nuleaf is hosting a **Welsh member meeting** at Portmerion in Gwynedd on **Monday the 19th October**. The meeting will hear from the Welsh Government and Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils; with other presenter covering the North Wales Growth Deal, the Wales Nuclear Forum, the NW Nuclear Arc and the work of M-Sparc, while the option of a site visit to Trawsfynydd is also being explored with NRS. Formal invitations will be sent out to Welsh local authorities and other partners in the near future.

5.2 On behalf of GMF Europe, Nuleaf's Executive Director was invited to participate in the **Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) Forum** on The Business of Nuclear – Communities and Industry Working Together, held in Augusta, USA on April 21st to 24th. The event included a session on the international landscape for nuclear in which Philip Matthews spoke alongside Stefan Mayer of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Also of interest was discussion on the developing US policy towards the management of High Level Waste (HLW) and Spent Fuel (SF). Progress towards geological disposal at the Yucca Mountain site has stalled, and the current administration is looking to a 'multi-site, multi-technology' approach encompassing

¹⁷ [Sizewell C agrees to be the first funder of a new Community Interest Company - Sizewell C](#)

¹⁸ [Delivering the next generation of nuclear skills and jobs](#)

regional sites (in accepting host communities) alongside the use of alternative treatments and management solutions.

It is planned to cover this policy shift in more detail as part of a presentation at the October Steering Group meeting on recent Nuleaf international engagement.

5.3 Nuleaf has been in discussion with the NDA around their plans to develop new guidance on **Storage and Treatment Consolidation**.

The Guidance is intended to support engagement with a range of stakeholders across the UK, with an initial focus on England and Wales. Nuleaf will host an online workshop in August to enable our members to feed their views in to the NDA as the Guidance is developed. More information on this will be sent out once the date is finalised.