ITEM 8: UPDATE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Report to the RWPG, 9th September 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;
- New nuclear and fusion updates; and
- Nuleaf and local government news.

1. NDA Group update

1.1 The NDA will hold its annual **Stakeholder Summit** in Manchester on the 15th and 16th September. Nuleaf members have taken up allotted places at the Summit, which will run from lunchtime until lunchtime and includes a dinner and overnight stay in the Midland Hotel. Executive Director Philip Matthews will speak as part of a panel discussion on socio-economics.

1.2 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 here[1].

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

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

[1] Economic Impact Assessment of NDA Sites - GOV.UK
[2] Socio-economic infographic 2025

oversight and regulation of nuclear decommissioning sites through the planning system[3]. Nuleaf was actively involved in the preparation of this guidance.

1.4. Also published on the 16th of July was the **NDA Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26.** This notes achievements including the processing of the first can of plutonium residue into a form suitable for disposal; the continued retrieval of material from Sellafield's legacy ponds and silos; the demolition of the turbine hall at Sizewell A; and the transfer of the first Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR) site, Hunterston B, to the NDA Group. The report can be viewed here[4].

1.5 Nuleaf's Director has been invited to join a small focus group to test and advise on the developing **NDA Sustainability Strategy**. The group will meet in the coming weeks.

1.6 Cavendish Nuclear and Amentum are planning to build a facility at the port of Workington, Cumbria, to support the decommissioning of the Monju Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR), in Fukui Prefecture, Japan[5].

Cumberland Council, which owns the port, said the plant would support skilled jobs directly and across the supply chain. Leader Mark Fryer said*: 'This is fantastic news for the port as this new development, subject to the necessary approvals, will bring good quality jobs to Workington.'*

A Cavendish Nuclear and Amentum spokesperson said *'We are fully committed to adding real social value to west Cumbia and this new venture will contribute to the regeneration on the Port of Workington and support the local economy.'*

1.7 A large wildfire in Suffolk briefly caused concerns about potential risks to the **Sizewell** nuclear site which incorporates the decommissioning A station managed by Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS), the operational B station operated by EDF and the new C station, which is under construction.

Though no threat to Sizewell materialised, the incident has raised concerns about the increased risk of wildfires and other extreme weather to the operation of nuclear sites. Elsewhere in Europe, Romania's only nuclear plant has had to shut because of very low water levels in the Danube, with concerns also expressed about the operation of nuclear plants in Hungary[6].

A discussion on climate change and nuclear is on the agenda for this RWPG meeting.

[3] How we manage waste more sustainably guidance - GOV.UK
[4] Nuclear Decommissioning Authority: Annual Report and Accounts 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK
[5] New development planned for Port of Workington | Cumberland Council
[6] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqlxpq5q799o

2. UK and Devolved Government update

2.1 The UK Government launched a consultation on a new **Draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation (EN-8)**[7], this closing on the 17th August. Nuleaf's final response can be viewed here[8].

2.2 A new **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**[9] for England was published on the 17th August. This sets out the policies for plan making and for making decisions on development proposals and how these should be applied. It is supported by **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** for a range of particular issues[10].

Key changes made in the new NPPF are related to the separation of Plan Making and Decision Making, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and links to Nature Recovery Strategies.

The new NPPF does not directly address nuclear power or nuclear decommissioning and waste management, but instead defers these to the Energy National Policy Statements (EN-1 to EN-8) and the National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal. Other relevant documents include NDA Strategy (Strategy 5).

2.3 **Great British Energy -Nuclear (GBE-N)** has published a commercial pipeline of activities with a total value of up to £4.6Bn, including an SMR delivery partner contract with a value of over £1bn[11] that relates to the ongoing development on the Wylfa site.

GBE-N has also published a technical study for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) looking at potential sites in Scotland for the future delivery of nuclear technologies. This concludes that there is high potential for such development at a number of locations including the existing sites at Dounreay, Torness and Hunterston. The Scottish Government is currently opposed to new nuclear developing in the country[12].

2.3 Prime Minister Andy Burnham, and Defence Secretary Wes Streeting, visited BAE systems in Barrow on the 30th July and used the visit to announce £8.4Bn of investment in the development of the new Dreadnought Class submarines that will form the basis of the UK's nuclear deterrent[13]. The investment will support and create jobs in Barrow, at Rolls Royce in Derby, and elsewhere.

[7] Draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation (EN-8) - GOV.UK
[8] Consultation Responses - Nuleaf
[9] National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK
[10] Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK
[11] Great British Energy - Nuclear Commercial Pipeline - GOV.UK
[12] Potential future nuclear power plant siting in Scotland - GOV.UK
[13] Major £8.4bn investment advances UK nuclear deterrent and backs British industry - GOV.UK

2.4 Following Andy Burnham's appointment as Prime Minister a new ministerial team has been announced for DESNZ.

The **Rt. Hon. Miatta Fahnbulleh MP** has been appointed the Secretary of State, with **Michael Shanks MP** the Minister for Energy with an expanded portfolio that covers nuclear matters. The previous nuclear minister, Lord Patrick Vallance, has now left the Government. Nuleaf has written to the new Secretary of State and Minister for Energy to highlight the important role of nuclear and local government in nuclear matters.

3. Regulatory update

3.1. The **Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)** is undertaking a consultation on its updated **Safety Assessment Principles (SAP),** which will run until the 18th September 2026[14]. The SAPs provide inspectors with a framework for making consistent regulatory judgements on nuclear safety cases. More information is available on the ONR website[15].

3.2 A lifetime extension of the **Sizewell B** nuclear plant until 2055 has been granted, 20 years later than the previous planned closure date. The move will support 900 jobs in the area and ensure continued generation of enough electricity to power 2.5 million homes[16]. A spokesperson for the ONR commented *'Although their plant life extension decisions do not need formal regulatory assessment or permissioning by ONR, it is a requirement of the site licence that operations be carried out under a valid safety case. Our regulatory activity evaluates the adequacy of both the safety case, the security plan and their implementation.'*

Lifetime extensions also mean that **Heysham 1** and **Hartlepool** nuclear power stations will remain operational until March 2030, two years longer than previously planned. The move will support 1,000 jobs in the local communities and maintain generation that will power 8.4 million homes[17].

4. New nuclear and fusion updates

4.1 **Last Energy**, a US nuclear developer, has been holding local engagement events in communities close to the proposed site of Llynfi Clean Energy Project in Bridgend, South Wales. The project would involve the development of four 20MWe.

[14] Safety Assessment Principles consultation 2026 | Office for Nuclear Regulation
[15] Safety Assessment Principles consultation 2026 | Office for Nuclear Regulation
[16] Sizewell B power plant given lifetime extension to 2055 - GOV.UK
[17] UK energy security supported by further nuclear power station life extensions | EDF

Last Energy has begun conducting site surveys and initiated the planning documentation as part of the Development of National Significance (DNS) process. They hope to build the plants on a vacant site that housed the coal-fired Llynfi Power Station from 1951 to 1977. If constructed, the four micro modular reactors will deliver power to mid-size manufacturers throughout the region. Last Energy aims to deliver the first plant by 2027, contingent on a successful outcome on licensing and planning.

4.2 Meanwhile, **X-Energy** has formally submitted its XE-100 High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactor (HTGR) to the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process, through which new nuclear technologies are licensed[18]. The GDA application builds on USA licensing, following agreement on collaboration between US and UK regulators. It is expected that the process will be concluded by 2029, and X-energy, working with Centrica, has expressed interest in developing up to 12 reactors at a site in Hartlepool. That proposal is currently moving through the UK Government's **Advanced Nuclear Pipeline[19]** assessment.

4.3 **Cambridge Atomworks** has signed a letter of intent with Chiltern Vital Berkeley (CVB), the owner of the Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park, to build a prototype of its Odin microreactor[20]. The Park comprises a parcel of land which formed part of the former **Berkeley** nuclear power station and which has been earmarked for nuclear and clean energy research and development.

The Odin reactor is molten salt cooled and designed for standalone electricity supply. The plan is to have an operational prototype by 2030.

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. The meeting will also include a site visit to Trawsfyndd, and formal invitations have been sent to Welsh local authorities and other partners.

5.2 Nuleaf's Chair Cllr Joseph Ghayouba attended and spoke at an **IAEA Technical Meeting on engagement in decommissioning** in Vienna, held on the 20th to 24th July; while Philip Matthews joined parts of the event online. An update on this

[18] X-energy Submits Xe-100 HTGR for UK Generic Design Assessment - X-energy
[19] United Kingdom advanced nuclear pipeline: guidance and expectations for project proposers (accessible webpage) - GOV.UK
[20] Agreement could see prototype microreactor built at Berkeley - World Nuclear News

and other recent international engagement will be presented at the October Steering Group meeting.

5.3 The NDA hosted a dedicated meeting for Nuleaf members on the 20th August, to explore their **Group Action Plan (GAP): Consolidation of waste treatment and storage.** The GAP aims to establish clear guidance and principles for waste storage consolidation and waste treatment capabilities, and aligns with the NDA's long-term mission to reduce high-hazard risks and modernise storage arrangements for Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).

Particular drivers for the development of the GAP are the recent Fingleton Review on the regulatory landscape, and the growth of new nuclear developments.

The NDA recognises the important role of local planning authorities around waste treatment and storage and the need to address wider economic, social and environmental concerns. The meeting was well attended and prompted a lively discussion, the main points of which will be shared.