

MINUTES

Title of Meeting:	Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG)	
Date:	29 th April 2026	
Place:	Microsoft Teams	
Times:	10:00 – 12:30	
Attendees	Heather Morrison Cumberland Council Jonathan Cook Cumberland Council Eleanor Godesar Dorset Council Bethany Rance East Suffolk Council Terry Burns Essex County Council Jo Wynn-Carter Folkestone and Hythe District Council Amartya Deb Gloucestershire County Council Chadernnay Glenn Gloucestershire County Council Bryan Geake Kent County Council Marianne Keen Maldon District Council Jon Severs South Gloucestershire Council Tessa Bond Somerset Council Ross Walker Suffolk County Council Christopher Raison AtkinsRéalis Oliver Johnson AtkinsRéalis Louise Martin Nuleaf/Somerset Council Chloe Atkinson Nuleaf Philip Matthews Nuleaf	
Speakers	Katie Mills NWS James Pearson NWS Frank Wigley NDA Matthew Buckley NDA Matt Verlander Avison Young Matthew Meldrum NRS Khalid Hasan DESNZ Joseph Thomson DESNZ	
Minute-taker:	Chloe Atkinson	

1.	Welcome and apologies
1.1	The Chair welcomed attendees and noted the addition of Maldon District Council and Dorset Council as new contributing members Apologies were received from Rachel Whaley- Westmorland & Furness Council.
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2026
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record, with confirmation that outstanding actions had been completed. This included the submission of Nuleaf's response to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation, which has been published on the website.
CA to add minutes to website	

3.	Matters arising
There were no substantive matters arising.	
<i>Actions Agreed, Target Date (s), Lead Officer (s):</i>	

4.	Update from NRS- Matt Meldrum
4.1	Matt Meldrum (Nuclear Restoration Services – NRS) provided an update on planning and decommissioning activities across the NRS estate. He highlighted the transfer of Hunterston B into the estate on 1 April and confirmed that Hinkley Point B is expected to transfer in the autumn, with Dungeness to follow in future years. Updates were provided on key sites, including ongoing reactor height reduction works at Trawsfynydd, progression of a comprehensive decommissioning planning application at Winfrith now under consideration by Dorset Council, approval of the Boilers Down application at Dungeness, and forthcoming projects at Oldbury including turbine hall demolition. Question: Can you provide more information on what NRS is doing in relation to the habitat bank and how it will operate? <i>Answer: Matt provided a detailed explanation of plans to establish a private habitat bank using wider NDA land holdings, to support Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements for developments where delivery on the nuclear licensed site is constrained.</i>
<i>Actions Agreed, Target Date (s), Lead Officer (s):</i>	

5.	Fingleton Review – Government response (Joe Thomson, DESNZ)
5.1	The Chair introduced the Government’s response to the Fingleton Review of Nuclear Regulation and welcomed DESNZ representatives. DESNZ outlined the review process and conclusions. The review had identified systemic regulatory issues causing delay and inefficiency and proposed a ‘radical reset,’ with 47 recommendations to streamline regulation while maintaining safety. The Government response, <i>Building Our Nuclear Nation</i>, published in March, commits to implementing all recommendations by December 2027 and includes measures such as the establishment of a lead nuclear regulator, reforms to environmental processes, and new governance arrangements. Members welcomed the strategic direction but noted potential impacts on local authority resources. Questions were raised on application to existing schemes, operation across devolved administrations, and the proposed lead regulator model. DESNZ confirmed ongoing engagement with devolved bodies and regulators, emphasising coordination, cultural change and respect for regulatory independence.
5.2	Question: Does the review support the provision of community benefits for nuclear projects? <i>Answer: No, community benefits won’t be mandatory or part of planning decisions. Instead, the Government will encourage them through policy and guidance.</i> Question: What does ‘avoiding gold plating’ mean in planning and decision-making? <i>Answer: It means avoiding overly cautious or excessive requirements, to reduce unnecessary cost and delays while still maintaining proper standards.</i> Question: How will the reforms apply across England, Wales, and Scotland? <i>Answer: Some reforms will start in England, with ongoing engagement to adapt them appropriately for devolved administrations.</i> Question: What is the ‘one stop shop’ approach, and how will regulators work together? <i>Answer: A lead regulator will act as a single point of contact to simplify coordination, reduce duplication, and streamline processes.</i> Question: The response refers to Environment Agency implications — how would this work in Scotland, particularly in relation to SEPA? <i>Answer: SEPA is being engaged by ONR. Reforms are not intended to undermine SEPA’s independence or statutory role.</i> Question: What is proposed regarding the stockpiling of demolition materials on NDA sites to enable reuse, and is this supported? <i>Answer: This is supported in principle as a sustainable approach where risks are low, with further work, engagement and consultation planned.</i>

	Question: How will Nuleaf and local planning authorities be engaged as reforms are developed? <i>Answer: Nuleaf is a key stakeholder forum, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will be engaged through consultations and targeted discussions as proposals develop.</i>
<i>Actions Agreed, Target Date (s), Lead Officer (s):</i>	

6.	NDA update – Frank Wigley (NDA) and Matt Verlander (AY)
6.1	Frank and Matt provided updates on a range of relevant issues, namely national policy, NDA Strategy 5, progress on individual , leadership changes, and an independent review of the NDA. New nuclear developments were noted, including the go ahead for an initial three SMRs at Wylfa (operation expected to operate mid-2030s) and wider SMR/AMR ambitions. Collaboration opportunities were highlighted, particularly learning from the Isle of Anglesey model with Great British Nuclear. Following on from item 5, the speakers commented on progress with Task Force recommendations and in particular the work that is being conducted on Permitted Development Rights (PDR). They also noted the impacts of the review on work around biodiversity, statutory undertaker status and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). They concluded by stressing the need for early engagement on local plans and improved sector collaboration.
6.2	Question: How does Statutory Undertaker status relate to permitted development rights (PDR) and ongoing planning pressures near sites? <i>Answer: Statutory Undertaker status is separate from PDR but works alongside it. PDR helps streamline decommissioning, while SU status manages risks from nearby development, with issues being addressed in Scotland.</i> Question: Does the proposed scope of PDR rights include the defueling phase, or only full decommissioning once sites transfer to the NDA? <i>Answer: Current PDR proposals apply to NDA land and Energy Act 2004 activities, which may limit their use during the defueling phase as that is being conducted by EDF. This gap has been recognised and will be reviewed as sites transition.</i> Question: Will the proposed PDR provisions apply to future transfers such as Hinkley Point B? <i>Answer: In principle, PDR provisions would apply once sites transfer to the NDA. However, clarification is needed on how the defueling transition period is treated, and further discussions are required.</i> Question: Have operating companies been involved in drafting the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), particularly in relation to site master plans? <i>Answer: Yes. Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) has been involved in drafting the PPG, with support from operating companies and the NDA. The guidance aims to clarify the role, ownership and status of site master plans.</i>

	Question: Is the draft PPG intended to clarify responsibilities and planning status for master plans? <i>Answer: Yes. The PPG is intended to provide clarity on control, use, status and updating of master plans to improve consistency and certainty.</i> Question: What are the next steps following this discussion? <i>Answer: Further discussion will take place on PDRs during the defueling phase, and members will be invited to engage further on the draft PPG. The presenters expect to return to future meetings as work progresses.</i>
<i>Actions Agreed, Target Date (s), Lead Officer (s):</i>	

7. Storage and Treatment- Matt Buckley (NDA)	
7.1	Matt Buckley (NDA) outlined work to increase consolidation of radioactive waste treatment and storage across the NDA estate. The aim is to reduce hazard, cost and environmental impact in the absence of final disposal. While consolidation is not new, it is being given greater strategic emphasis to optimise shared facilities, avoid duplication and improve delivery. Existing examples at Sellafield, Harwell and Bradwell were highlighted. The work aims to capture lessons learned, understand local authority perspectives, and consider whether clearer, more consistent guidance is needed, potentially linked to Planning Practice Guidance. Members were invited to engage further on key issues including community impacts, transport, sustainability and fairness, and it was noted that a further session on these issues would be welcome.
7.2	Question: How will accountability be maintained under the more streamlined system? <i>Answer: existing accountability frameworks remain. The reforms focus on improving clarity, consistency, and transparency rather than introducing new accountability measures.</i> Question: Does the waste consolidation strategy apply across the UK, and what is the timeline? <i>Answer: It covers England, Wales, and Scotland, with engagement planned before summer, guidance by year-end, and implementation continuing as an ongoing programme.</i> Question: Does this work go beyond earlier consolidation strategies, or build on them? <i>Answer: It builds on existing approaches. A-to-B site consolidation continues but is separate from this specific guidance.</i> Question: Does the strategy consider supply chain issues and investing in UK capability? <i>Answer: Yes, supply chain impacts are considered, but funding constraints limit investment. Alternative approaches like standardisation and new delivery models are being explored.</i>

	Members also made offered some comments on the proposals • There are economic, social value and resilience implications of NDA waste treatment and storage decisions and these need to be fully factored in to decision making. • Local capability and community engagement are important considerations, particularly in Cumbria. • Supply chain autonomy and long-term resilience were emphasised considering global uncertainties. It was agreed these themes should be explored further in future discussions.
Action: Nuleaf and NDA to set up a further meeting on these issues.	

8	Update on developments in radioactive waste management
8.1	Philip Matthews presented the paper and highlighted a number of items. He invited questions.
8.2	Question: Does the Advanced Nuclear Framework allow plutonium-based fuels? <i>Answer: The UK policy does not support plutonium-based fuels, aligning with plans to immobilise the Sellafield stockpile.</i> Question: How can local authorities learn more about the GBN–Anglesey collaboration agreement? <i>Answer: Details will be shared at a forthcoming Welsh authorities meeting, with potential wider sharing, including a presentation from Isle of Anglesey highlighting positive outcomes.</i> Question: What work has begun at Wylfa in relation to SMRs? Does this relate to design work under the Rolls-Royce and Great British Energy contracts? <i>Answer: Work to date relates to early site-specific and preparatory activity rather than detailed design, with first reactors expected to operate in the mid-2030s.</i> Question: What has changed practically following the SMR announcement at Wylfa? <i>Answer: Contracts are now in place, enabling decisions on site-specific works, funding, procurement and early construction preparation.</i> Question: Are there any updates relating to Dungeness B decommissioning consultations? <i>Answer: There are no new updates at present. An economic strategy has been developed with NDA, NRS and EDF input, and further updates will be provided at future meetings.</i>
Action: Nuleaf to liaise with Isle of Anglesey County Council to explore the scope for a presentation on the collaboration agreement signed with GBE-N	

9	Update on the GDF siting process
9.1	The Executive Director presented the update paper, highlighting that there was currently a pause in the process pending a decision later this summer on whether to proceed with site characterisation in West Cumbria. Cumberland Council and Nuleaf’s correspondence with government were noted, emphasising the need to maintain momentum, ambition, and resourcing.

	Discussion highlighted uncertainty around timescales, political factors, and security considerations. It was reiterated that the primary purpose of a GDF is permanent underground disposal, with policy retaining flexibility to review alternative approaches over time.
<i>Actions Agreed, Target Date (s), Lead Officer (s):</i>	

10	Local site updates
10.1	PM invited local authorities to provide updates on issue of note in their area. Essex County Council: There are ongoing transfers of radioactive waste from Dungeness to Bradwell, with one recent delivery completed and three more expected. Engagement with Sizewell needs to be re-established. Gloucestershire County Council: Planned transport of six Type B ILW packages from Aldermaston to Berkeley (Nov 2025–Jun 2026) was noted. Development of a Local Growth Plan may influence future policies on energy, renewables and SMRs. Cumberland Council: Ongoing activity includes new Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) with Sellafield and NWS, and implementation of the Sellafield Travel Plan. Pre-application discussions were noted across minor and major proposals, including a new railhead and activity around Pioneer Park at Moorside. On the latter, concerns has been raised about limited early engagement with the local planning authority, particularly on master planning and proposed data centres that may conflict with policy. Kent County Council: The Council had recently adopted a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan. No new site-specific issues were reported. Somerset Council: Detailed updates were provided on activity at Hinkley Point A, B and C, including defueling, the ILW store, workforce uplift and current planning applications. Suffolk County Council: Construction at Sizewell C and progress on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan review were highlighted. Comment: Members raised concerns that proposals (e.g. Pioneer Park) could become influenced by short-term political priorities, rather than plan-led, evidence-based decision making. It was emphasised that local planning authorities must retain control of decisions, ensuring outcomes are policy-compliant and deliver long-term economic and social value. The Chair acknowledged the complexity of site options and confirmed these issues will be explored further at the Annual Gathering seminar in July where there would be a presentation on Pioneer Park.

11	Date of next meeting
11.1	The Chair noted that the next RWPG would be held on the 9th September 2026. He also noted that the Annual Gathering would take place in Cumberland on 14–15 July 2026, and looked forward to seeing many RWPG members there.
<i>Actions Agreed, Target Date (s), Lead Officer (s):</i>	

12	Any other business
12.1	No AOB was recorded.

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	4. Related to criminal proceedings	
	5. That might prejudice law enforcement	
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12. Other Please describe		

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