

Meeting: Nuleaf Steering Group
Date: 7th October 2026
Item: 9
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 reports; and
- Nuleaf and local government news.

Recommendation:

This report is for noting.

1. NDA Group update

1.1 The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) has begun a refresh of its **Social Impact and Communities Strategy**¹. The Strategy was last updated in 2024 and Jamie Reed and Andy Harper of NDA are joining this Steering Group meeting to present and discuss the refresh with Nuleaf members.

The NDA has also published updated guidance documents on the **NDA group socio-economic grant funding programme**². These provide details for applicants and practitioners on the NDA group grant application process, decision making criteria and governance. The guidance covers three categories of funding:

- Large projects – NDA contribution over £200,000
- Medium projects – NDA contribution between £10,000 and £200,000
- Small, also called good neighbour, projects – NDA contribution up to £10,000

¹ [NDA Social Impact and Communities Strategy April 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

² [NDA group socio-economic grant funding programme: guidance - GOV.UK](#)

1.2 The NDA held its annual **Stakeholder Summit** in Manchester on the 15th and 16th September. A number of members attended the event and Nuleaf's Director spoke as part of a panel discussion on social impact.

1.3 Nuleaf's Director has been invited to join a small focus group to test and advise on the developing **NDA Sustainability Strategy**. The group met on the 1st October.

1.4 A large wildfire in Suffolk briefly caused concerns about potential risks to the **Sizewell** nuclear site. 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 Hungary³.

1.5 **Euan Hutton**, the CEO of Sellafield Ltd. has announced that he intends to stand down in summer 2027 to pursue a non-executive career and spend more time with his family.

Euan stated 'I first walked through the gates of Sellafield in October 1991 and I could not have dreamed of the opportunities that this special place has given to me. To lead Sellafield has been the greatest honour and privilege of my professional life. What we do is world leading, but it's the people that make it happen. I have nothing but admiration and gratitude to each and every one of them that work so hard to deliver our shared mission.'

Chris Train, Chair of Sellafield Ltd, said *'Euan has made a huge contribution to the operation of this business for many years, and in particular, for the last three years as CEO. On behalf of the Board and Executive team I would like to thank Euan for his dedication and commitment to our important work.'*

1.6 Investment of almost £10million to improve Egremont in Cumberland has been announced. Egremont Town Team and Cumberland Council had already secured £3 million from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Fund. Now, Sellafield Ltd, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), the Decommissioning and Nuclear Waste Partnership (DNWP) and Copeland Community Fund have provided more support. This brings the total investment to £9.8 million⁴.

2. UK and devolved Government reports

2.1 The UK Government has completed a consultation on a new **Draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation (EN-8)**⁵, this closing on the 17th August⁶.

³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqlxpg5q799o>

⁴ [Sellafield Ltd helps unlock £9.8 million investment for Egremont - GOV.UK](#)

⁵ [Draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation \(EN-8\) - GOV.UK](#)

⁶ [Consultation Responses - Nuleaf](#)

The UK also hosted a **Global Fusion Policy Summit** in London on the 14th September. At this, the UK and USA signed two new agreements intended to bring fusion power closer to reality and to create 10,000 jobs in the sector by 2030⁷.

2.2 **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 £1bn⁸ 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 development⁹.

2.3 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.

2.4 The NDA has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the implementation of the **Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce Review**. The letter outlines the NDA Group's support for the acceleration of hazard reduction and mission delivery and for culture change and proportionate regulation. It notes that Clive Nixon, NDA Group Chief Strategy Officer will provide executive oversight of the Group response as it is taken forward. The NDA's letter can be read here¹⁰.

2.5 The UK Government has announced that plans for **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** in many areas of England have been paused or withdrawn or are under review. This includes in Nuleaf member areas such as Suffolk and Essex, and means that local government elections will proceed on existing boundaries in May 2027¹¹.

The Government has committed to publish a **Rewiring the State White Paper** setting out its revised approach to devolution and local government structures; and

⁷ [UK and US fusion strike partnership to accelerate clean energy - GOV.UK](#)

⁸ [Great British Energy - Nuclear Commercial Pipeline - GOV.UK](#)

⁹ [Potential future nuclear power plant siting in Scotland - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁰ [NDA Group response to the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding implementation of the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce Review - GOV.UK](#)

¹¹ [Local government reorganisation: programme review and decisions withdrawal letter to council leaders - GOV.UK](#)

the outcome of the **Local Government Reorganisation Review**, which will determine whether structural reform continues, changes direction, or is scaled back. Plans for Combined/Mayoral authorities will proceed as planned.

2.6 The **Nuclear Industry Association (NIA)** has published its latest update on UK civil nuclear jobs. This shows that employment in the sector has exceeded 100,000 for the first time, an increase of 67% since 2021. The primary driver for the increase has been new nuclear projects at Hinkley C and Sizewell C, as well as around the planned SMR development on Anglesey. The report notes that 86% of nuclear jobs are outside London and the South-East, with areas including North Wales and the North West of England reaping local benefits¹².

3. Regulatory news

3.1. Nuleaf has commented on and endorsed a response from SCCORS (Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances) to a recent consultation by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) on **Safety Assessment Principles (SAP)** for nuclear facilities. The consultation closed on the 18th September 2026¹³. Shane Turner of the ONR will give a presentation on the regulators current work to this Steering Group meeting.

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 homes¹⁴. 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 homes¹⁵.

3.3 In July, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) published its new **Strategy**¹⁶. This sets out how it will regulate an expanding and diverse UK nuclear sector over the coming decades. The strategy introduces a mission of 'Ensuring safe nuclear for a secure and sustainable future' and a vision to be 'a modern, agile and productive regulator enabling innovation and growth'.

¹² [Nuclear jobs in the UK tops 100,000 for the first time](#)

¹³ [Safety Assessment Principles consultation 2026 | Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)

¹⁴ [Sizewell B power plant given lifetime extension to 2055 - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ [UK energy security supported by further nuclear power station life extensions | EDF](#)

¹⁶ [Office for Nuclear Regulation strategy 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

4. New nuclear reports

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. 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 licensed¹⁷. 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**¹⁸ 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 microreactor¹⁹. 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.

4.4 **Terrapower**, backed by Bill Gates, has stated that its first Sodium reactors will be operational in the UK by 2034, making them the first such plant to open outside the United States²⁰. The technology has cleared regulatory requirements in the United States, where the first plant is being constructed in Wyoming and is currently being assessed under Britain's **Generic Design Assessment (GDA)** process.

The company has yet to select a site for its first UK station, but has indicated that its British subsidiary is likely to be located around Liverpool, close to the Office for Nuclear Regulation's (ONR) offices in Bootle.

¹⁷ [X-energy Submits Xe-100 HTGR for UK Generic Design Assessment - X-energy](#)

¹⁸ [United Kingdom advanced nuclear pipeline: guidance and expectations for project proposers \(accessible webpage\) - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁹ [Agreement could see prototype microreactor built at Berkeley - World Nuclear News](#)

²⁰ [Gates-backed TerraPower targets British nuclear power plant start by 2034 | Reuters](#)

4.5 Rolls Royce SMR has stated that around £1.4Bn of supply chain investment will be generated in relation to the **Gwyndod** SMR development on Anglesey. It hopes that around 70% will be spent within the UK and that opportunities for companies based in Anglesey can be maximised. The island will host a joint supplier conference with **Rolls-Royce SMR** and **Great British Energy-Nuclear** on October 22 and 23 to provide more information to potential suppliers²¹.

5. Nuleaf 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 event will also include a site visit to Trawsfynydd, 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 and other recent international engagement will be presented at this 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.

²¹ [£1.4bn nuclear opportunity opens for Anglesey businesses | North Wales Chronicle](#)