



NDA Monthly Update

September 2019

Summary

- History made as iconic plant completes defueling
- Magnox Ltd becomes NDA subsidiary
- Daily grind foiled at Chapelcross
- Special delivery marks Sellafield milestone
- Sellafield's tallest stack cut down to size
- Successful start to repackaging plutonium
- Suppliers invited to R&D event
- Scottish event celebrates diversity
- NDA's £495,000 pledge to Anglesey plan
- NDA publishes annual report and accounts
- New approach to reporting on NDA mission
- RWM Managing Director to retire
- NDA Chairman to step down
- Latest from £8.5 million R&D competition

Diary Dates

18 September: NDA supplier day for R&D contracts, west Cumbria

18 September: NDA Group Safety and Wellbeing Awards

19 September: Sellafield Game Changer robotic day, Energus, Cumbria

8-9 October: Integrated Waste Management Forum, Penrith

10 October: World Mental Health Day

5 December: Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) annual conference, London

History made as last fuel leaves iconic plant

Defueling operations are complete at the world's first full-scale nuclear power station, Calder Hall in Cumbria. Back in 1956 when The Queen opened the power station, located on the Sellafield site, the nation celebrated and hailed the event as the dawn of the atomic age. Its Magnox design was the template for the UK's first fleet of nuclear power stations and made the country a world leader. The technology was exported around the world. Electricity generation stopped in 2003 and defueling began in 2011.

[Weblink: Calder Hall completes defueling](#)



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Magnox becomes NDA subsidiary

Magnox Ltd has become a wholly owned subsidiary of the NDA after ownership transferred from the Parent Body Organisation, Cavendish Fluor Partnership, on 1 September. The transfer follows the announcement in July 2018 and marks a new approach to managing the UK's 13 Magnox sites - 10 former nuclear power stations, two nuclear research sites and a hydroelectric plant. The change in management structure follows a similar change at Sellafield in 2016, where the new model is facilitating progress and providing increased value for money for the taxpayer.

[Weblink: Ownership of Magnox Ltd transfers to NDA](#)

Daily grind foiled at Chapelcross

The daily grind is looking up after foil bags were deployed to prevent radioactive gases escaping during work to decommission Chapelcross site. The packets are based on technology designed to keep coffee aromas locked in, an idea brewed by experts at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, Oxfordshire. It is now being trialled during the dismantling of the Chapelcross former processing plant that became contaminated with radioactive tritium during its operational years. Workers still have to wear protective suits and breathing equipment when closing up the bags of contaminated waste, but once sealed, can handle them without breathing equipment.

[Weblink: Coffee bags inspire Chapelcross innovation](#)

Special delivery marks Sellafield milestone

One of the most important construction projects at Sellafield took a major step forward when two huge vessels arrived at Sellafield's Box Encapsulation Plant (BEP). BEP will play a vital role taking nuclear waste retrieved from original waste plants, primarily the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, and boxing it up for safe storage in a modern building. The complex vessels, manufactured in Carlisle, will collect and sample highly active effluents before transfer to a specialist facility that manages the material.

[Weblink: Vital vessels to help deal with waste](#)

Tallest stack cut down to size

The demolition of Sellafield's tallest stack is almost complete. A nine-metre stub is all that remains of the First Generation Reprocessing Plant stack after a 30-month project to painstakingly remove 52 metres by hand. Its proximity to hazardous nuclear buildings on the site meant traditional explosive techniques were out of the question. Instead, workers cut away the concrete and steel stack while standing on a platform which clung to the chimney using friction alone. Before demolition could start, the platform had to climb to the top of the chimney, like a monkey shinning up a tree. It took 10 months to inch its way to the peak: 122 metres above the ground.

[Weblink: Demolition nears completion](#)



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Successful start to repackaging plutonium

One of the most important risk reduction tasks in the UK nuclear industry has achieved its first milestone. Experts at Sellafield opened and repacked a historic plutonium can for the first time as part of a £1 billion programme to address a degradation risk identified in a small proportion of the canisters, which date from about 50 years ago. The highly skilled work requires operators to deftly manoeuvre the package inside a sealed glovebox. The material was originally placed in an inner can wrapped in a plastic casing and placed into an 'overpack' can. But in a small proportion of packages, the outer can has shown signs of degradation. The task is to take the inner can out of the 'overpack', clean off as much plastic as possible, then reseal it in a modern robust outer can. The first successful repackaging kicks off a 5-year work programme.

[Weblink: First milestone in risk reduction task](#)

Suppliers invited to R&D contracts event

A process is under way to award new NDA R&D framework contracts, with suppliers invited to find out more at an information day on 18 September in Cumbria. The contracts are part of the NDA's Direct Research Portfolio (DRP) work, which focuses on finding innovative solutions to technical challenges, developing high-level technical skills and influencing strategy.

[Weblink: Event for R&D suppliers](#)

Scottish event celebrates equality and diversity

This year's Mey Highland Games, sponsored by the NDA, celebrated equality and diversity, and were the first of their kind to welcome adaptive athletes. NDA Chief Executive David Peattie presented three new trophies to the top female, male and adaptive athletes. STEM ambassadors from Dounreay were on hand to promote their work to inspire young people into science, technology, engineering and maths.

[Weblink: Equality takes centre stage at Scottish games](#)

£495,000 pledge to North Anglesey economic plan

The NDA announced funding support of £495,000 to help support the County Council's North Anglesey Economic Regeneration Plan and create new economic opportunities on the island. Chief Executive David Peattie made the announcement at the third annual NDA Stakeholder Summit, which was held Coleg Menai in Llangefni. Around 200 visitors from across the UK and overseas attended the two-day event. The funding will contribute to measures aimed at boosting business activity, the supply chain and employment, increasing tourism, improving transport and infrastructure and reviving the High Street.

[Weblink: NDA's pledge to Anglesey plan](#)



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NDA publishes annual report and accounts

The NDA's annual report and accounts for 2018/19 reviews a year of progress towards the mission of cleaning up and decommissioning the UK's 17 oldest nuclear sites. The report shows good progress continues to be made, while spending has remained below the annual budget set by government. The NDA exceeded revenue targets, generating income of £1 billion to supplement the £2.2 billion government allocation.

[Weblink: Annual accounts published](#)

Mission progress reporting

The NDA has also launched a new approach to reporting on the progress of its mission, demonstrating how much has been achieved since 2005, and how much further remains to complete over the next 120-plus years.. The focus is on the four themes outlined in the 2016 Strategy that are common across all NDA sites and enable achievements to be measured.

[Weblink: Mission progress reporting](#)

RWM Managing Director to retire

Bruce McKirdy, the Managing Director of NDA subsidiary Radioactive Waste Management, has announced that he will retire and leave the organisation in March 2020. Bruce has worked in the NDA since 2006, and became the first MD of RWM when it was established in 2014.

[Weblink: Retirement announced](#)

NDA chairman to step down

NDA Chairman Tom Smith has decided not to seek a further term on the NDA Board when his term ends in February 2020. Tom will step down after seven years on the Board, with three of those as Chairman. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has started the recruitment process for his successor.

[Weblink: Chairman to step down](#)

Fascinating to see research projects become reality

As the £8.5 million Integrated Innovation in Nuclear Decommissioning (IIND) competition heads into the final stages, NDA Head of Technology Melanie Brownridge invited the five collaborative projects to outline their work. The competition, organised jointly with Innovate UK, was launched in 2017 and aims to find a single, seamless solution to access some of the most radioactive hotspots at Sellafield, then retrieve and package the waste contents.

[Weblink: Projects move from drawing board to reality](#)