

# **Senedd Nuclear Energy Cross Party Group**

**18.03.2025**

## Government attendees

- Richard James, Welsh Government
- James Gibbs, Welsh Government

## Parliament attendees

- Vaughan Gething MS, Chair
- Samuel Kurtz MS
- Alun Davies MS
- Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
- Rhys Thomas (Office of Sam Rowlands MS)
- Rhys Hughes (Office of Rhun ap Iorwerth MS)

## Industry attendees

- Aled M Jones, Wylfa SSG
- Barry Lennox, CoRWM
- David Wallace, NDA
- Debbie Jones, M-Sparc
- Eiliw Williams, Cwmni Eginio
- Ffion Morris, NRS
- Helen Charlick, Ambition North Wales
- James Craig, NRS
- Jon Woodburn, NDA
- Robert Sedgman, Last Energy
- Sasha Wynn Davies, Wales Nuclear Forum
- Simon Napper, NWS
- Tom Hoyles, GMB
- Joseph Ridding, NIA
- Millie Beaver, NIA
- Iolo James, NIA

Vaughan Gething MS, Chair, welcomed industry, government, and parliamentary attendees to the first meeting of the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Nuclear Energy since the AGM in January. He explained that the meeting would focus on opportunities in North Wales, with presentations from Cwmni Eginio and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

Eiliw Williams, Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Communications at Cwmni Eginio, gave a presentation on the opportunities for nuclear development in North Wales and across the

country. She explained that Cwmni Eginio was established by the Welsh Government in 2021, initially focusing on the socio-economic opportunities for new nuclear development at Trawsfynydd.

She noted that while Trawsfynydd is not currently favoured by Great British Nuclear (GBN) for the first tranche of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), it remains a potential future option. Cwmni Eginio continues to explore opportunities related to the site. Cwmni Eginio's remit has since expanded to cover the whole of Wales, focusing on supply chain capacity, social value frameworks, and opportunities for events and engagement. This work takes a place-based, cross-sector approach to encourage nuclear investment in Wales.

Elliw Williams discussed Cwmni Eginio's Nuclear Prospectus, which focuses on opportunities for nuclear development in North Wales. The purpose of the prospectus is to support political advocacy for new nuclear in Wales, as advocacy is paramount to securing future investment. The prospectus is built on three foundational points, the first of which emphasises the scale of opportunity for nuclear in Wales. While it is not yet clear where, when, or how new nuclear opportunities will be realised, the potential is significant.

Elliw Williams highlighted that Welsh businesses are expected to benefit from £900 million in contracts linked to the Sizewell C project. More broadly, investment in nuclear power generation across the UK is projected to exceed £250 billion to meet the target of 24GW of nuclear power by 2050. By the early 2040s, annual nuclear expenditure could reach £1 billion for Wales, with £595 million for North Wales. At Trawsfynydd, small-scale nuclear could create over 400 long-term jobs, generating £600 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) for North Wales and £1.3 billion for Wales over 60 years. At Wylfa, large-scale nuclear could support 900 operational jobs for up to 80 years, attract £4 billion in inward investment, and generate £325 million in annual supply chain spending in North Wales, equivalent to 8% of the region's total GVA.

The second key point in the prospectus highlights Wales' strong foundations for nuclear development. With an industrial heritage, established nuclear sites, and a skilled workforce, Wales is well-positioned for growth. It benefits from world-class institutions, strong stakeholder support, and a coordinated regional skills infrastructure. A vibrant low-carbon energy sector, leading R&D capabilities, and a well-developed social value approach further enhance its appeal. Other strengths, such as a strong supply chain and cross-sector collaboration, make Wales an ideal location for investment in nuclear energy.

The third and final key point acknowledges the challenges ahead and the high stakes for Wales. While there is strong interest in the benefits nuclear can bring, it is crucial to celebrate and promote what Wales has to offer. A clear call to action was emphasised, support advocacy at both Senedd and community levels to ensure the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) delivers real, tangible benefits for Wales and the wider UK.

Elliw Williams handed over to Jon Woodburn, Public Affairs Manager at the NDA, who stated that the NDA's work is of both national and international importance. He emphasised the need to build public confidence in the nuclear industry, ensuring it is seen as safe, secure, and sustainable. Jon Woodburn noted that this year marks the 20th anniversary of the NDA, and over the past two decades, it has delivered one of the world's most significant environmental programmes.

He explained that the NDA receives £3 billion in government funding, alongside £1 billion in commercial revenue, which is allocated across Sellafield, Nuclear Restoration Services, Nuclear Transportation Services, and Nuclear Waste Services. The NDA employs over 17,000 people in high-value, highly skilled jobs, with thousands more benefiting through the NDA's extensive supply chain. He also pointed out the key challenge the NDA and the nuclear sector face: ensuring that the right skills and talent are in place to support the long-term, nationally important decommissioning mission. As a group, the NDA invests over £45 million each year in apprenticeships and graduate programmes.

Jon Woodburn then handed over to Ffion Morris from Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS), who is the Engineering and Maintenance Manager at Wylfa. Ffion Morris, a third-generation nuclear worker, discussed the lifecycle of nuclear sites, specifically Trawsfynydd, which operated from 1965 to 1991, and the ongoing decommissioning journey. She advocated for new nuclear development and highlighted the significant amount of work involved in decommissioning.

From a skills perspective, Trawsfynydd currently has 300 people working on-site, including 15 apprentices. At Wylfa, significant decommissioning work is being undertaken during its care and maintenance period. Ffion Morris noted the importance of both skilled and non-skilled roles in this process, with over 2,400 non-accident days achieved at Wylfa. She stressed that decommissioning must continue to operate safely to support new nuclear development and called for ongoing funding to ensure the decommissioning journey continues.

Ffion Morris then handed back to Jon Woodburn, who discussed the NDA's socio-economic strategy. He explained that under the Energy Act, the NDA has a legal duty to consider the impact of its activities on communities living near its sites. Since 2019, the NDA has made direct socio-economic investments in these areas.

Jon Woodburn then outlined the NDA's stance on and support for the current government's ambitions. He stated that the NDA regularly engages with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and GBN to explore how the NDA's expertise can be utilised. He concluded by emphasising that the NDA's ultimate aim is to free up land for reuse, delivering benefits to local communities and the wider economy.

Following the presentations, the Chair opened the floor to questions, with the first coming from Samuel Kurtz MS, directed to Elliw Williams. The question was about the potential for direct grid connections or opportunities for data centres. Elliw Williams explained that grid

constraints are often raised as an issue regardless of the project. She mentioned a grid connection agreement for Trawsfynydd had been secured, which is valuable for promoting the site for future investment, although the connection won't be fully available until 2037, highlighting the pressure on the grid.

Regarding Trawsfynydd, Eili Williams noted that an expression of interest, led by Bangor University, has identified Trawsfynydd as a potential site for data centres due to its proximity to a substation. She emphasised that nuclear power is not just for traditional power generation; it is a multifaceted solution. Cwmni Egin's prospectus, she stated, is technology and generation agnostic, and if data centres are the opportunity at the time, it is important to collaborate and promote that opportunity.

Following up, Samuel Kurtz MS used the example of Last Energy seeking a SMR. He highlighted opportunities elsewhere, suggesting that direct connections to projects, rather than the grid, could help unlock barriers to private investment.

The Chair stated that GBN has the authority on sites for new nuclear in Wales, and it would be beneficial to have further discussions with the organisation at the CPG. In response, Eili Williams mentioned that the UK government had previously conducted consultations on siting policy and alternative routes to market, with the latter being of particular interest as it is crucial to Wales' nuclear future.

On this point, Rhun ap Iorwerth MS noted that his focus is on the scale of nuclear in Wales, highlighting his connections in Ynys Môn.

Tom Hoyles, from GMB, stated that the opportunities are substantial, though there are many prospective challenges. Unions are exploring ways they can tangibly add value to initiatives such as those led by Cwmni Egin and the NDA. He asked how GMB could support in the short term.

The Chair emphasised the importance of creating good-quality jobs and suggested the possibility of a joint statement from unions on policy views and the scale of economic opportunities. This would help MSs better convey the work being done.

Iolo James, Nuclear Industry Association (NIA), highlighted that the scale of opportunity is clear but can often be overlooked. He explained that the work the NIA is doing, in collaboration with the Wales Nuclear Forum, is key to realising this potential. Iolo James noted that there have been too many false dawns and emphasised that we cannot afford to sit back and wait for things to happen. It is important to ensure that Welsh voices are strong and that Wales is at the forefront of the nuclear sector.

While Wales is part of the wider nuclear vision for the UK, Iolo James believes Wales could be at the vanguard of this development. He referred to Samuel Kurtz MS's earlier mention of data centres and pointed out that last week, companies like Google and Meta committed to tripling nuclear capacity by 2050.

Sasha Wynn Davies, Wales Nuclear Forum, emphasised the importance of closer collaboration between the UK and Welsh governments. She highlighted that it is crucial for the Welsh Government to take a more proactive role. From a Welsh perspective, the market needs confidence, and the Welsh Government could play a key enabling role in this process.

According to Sash Wynn Davies, Rebecca Evans MS, the Minister overseeing nuclear, agreed to consider taking a policy position on nuclear. Sasha Wynn Davies pointed out that the discussion currently only mentions Wylfa and Trawsfynydd, yet Last Energy is also present in Wales, for example. She stressed the need for Wales to do more and better position itself to seize these opportunities. She concluded by emphasising the need to be clear on what is being offered to Wales; it is inward investment.

Alun Davies MS agreed, stating that it would be useful for him and the Chair to discuss Labour's nuclear policy. He expressed concern that the Welsh Government is becoming too lethargic and not agile enough to seize these opportunities. He emphasised the need for the Welsh Government to do more to promote the business environment, describing it as an important conversation to have.

The Chair then highlighted the importance of the future of energy policy and stated that nuclear should be part of this discussion. The Chair suggested that the CPG should consider sending a letter to the Welsh Government about the opportunities for nuclear in Wales. He also mentioned that the CPG would be visiting Hinkley Point C next week.

Rhun ap Iorwerth MS pledged his support for the group acting as a whole but noted that while there is support for nuclear opportunities in Wales, there is less agreement on new nuclear. The Chair responded that the group would focus only on the areas of agreement.

Finally, Eiliw Williams stated that Cwmni Egin would appreciate more guidance from the Welsh Government, but acknowledged that it is government-funded, meaning the Welsh Government is supporting the nuclear sector in Wales and is eager to focus on upcoming opportunities.

The Chair thanked attendees and ended the meeting.