

# Cross-Party Group on the Civil Nuclear Industry

**Date:** Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025

**Time:** 6.00pm

**Venue:** Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 5

## Minutes of Last Meeting

These were approved.

### Present

#### MSPs

Oliver Mundell MSP

Convenor

Craig Hoy MSP

#### Invited guests

Robert Orr

Skills Development Scotland

Debbie Joce

Scotland Skills Hub (Co-Chair)

Faith Simpson

Scotland Skills Hub

Heather Hannam

Scotland Skills Hub (Co-Chair)

Sam Long

Decom Mission

#### Non-MSP Group Members

Mark Rouse

DESNZ

John Grierson

NRS

Andy Aston

North-West RH Lead

Ann-Marie Copperthwaite

ARUP

Arwed Wenger

Tor Justad

Highlands Against Nuclear

Power

Emily Kearl

SEPA

Malcolm Stone	University of Aberdeen
Peter Faccenda	Focus North
Gail Ross	NRS Dounreay
Dave Wilson	NRS Dounreay
Ann Campbell	
Pete Roche	
Cllr Stewart McDonald	SCCORS
Cllr Norman Hampshire	SCCORS
Louise Martin	SCCORS
Rob Thompson	SFNL
Kenny Taylor	Zero Waste Scotland
Kimberley Jones	NDA
George Baker	CPG (Secretariat)
David Wallace	CPG (Secretariat)

## **Apologies**

**Emma Harper MSP** – due to other Parliamentary business.

**Other MSP members** attending to other Parliamentary business.

## **Opening Remarks**

**The Convenor** apologised for the delay to the start of the meeting due to Chamber business.

He drew attention to significant developments at the Chapelcross site, acknowledging the hard work of some CPG members including Helen Emberson (present) from Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Convenor invited members to views various communications around the recent announcement and noted it as a good example of the commitment the nuclear industry in general and the NDA in particular to the local site communities they serve. It was also an example of job creating opportunities across the NDA estate in Scotland.

## **Election of Office Bearers**

There were no nominations received from MSP members, therefore, **Oliver Mundell MSP** proposed to continue as Convenor with **Emma Harper MSP** remaining as Vice-

Convenor. There were no objections, and this was accepted and approved by the Group members.

**The Convenor** pointed out this was the last meeting before the Scottish Parliamentary elections in 2026. There would be a process after the election for CPGs reforming with new Convenors being elected. The Convenor drew attention to his plans to stand-down as an MSP at the next election. A new Convenor would consider the remit of this CPG going forward. He acknowledged the role of the retiring Secretariat (David Wallace) and his contribution to the CPG. DW thanked all members for their support of the Group, and the Convenor for his tireless efforts to establish the Group over the last two years. **The Convenor** noted his intention to lodge a motion in Parliament before the Christmas break acknowledging the work of the Mr Wallace.

### **Substantive Business – ‘Skills Update’**

**Robert Orr** from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) set the context for more detail on the Scotland Skills Hub (SSH) to follow.

The previous CPG on ‘skills’ had highlighted a presentation on the Nuclear Skills Plan. Since then, SDS, the Scottish Funding Council, and Colleges had engaged fully with that Nuclear Skills Team considering “cross-borders” working e.g. Destination Nuclear, Early Careers Starters with the support of various date gathering exercises. Much of that work being taken forward by the SSH, which will also include academic and skills representation. Mr Orr also highlighted that Universities plus three colleges were also considering new provision picked up at last CPG skills session, particularly regarding bespoke provision happening in Scotland.

SDS has now monthly strategic updates with SSH Co-Chairs to ensure SDS full engagement. A workshop held in Autumn 2025, highlighted strong commitment from participants to contribute to the work of the SSH as it goes forward. Mr Orr highlighted commitment from FE sector showing strong relationships in all regional areas across Scotland. Examples included Borders

College site visits to Torness Power Station, Ayrshire College's recognition of NDA funding to build the Willie Mackay Skills Hub and the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) long-standing relationship with Dounreay that engages both FE and HE levels as well supply chain training support. Mr Orr pointed to critical challenges that remained including engineering, fabrication and welding as well as STEM related activities across a range of sub-sectors such as Offshore Wind, Shipbuilding and wider construction jobs. He highlighted the difficulties in being able to work with "pace and agility" on the scale required – FE and HE funding difficulties were well documented. There was a keenness to look at co-investment models with industry.

There remained high demand for recruitment in apprenticeships – recruitment was now meeting pre-pandemic levels but still falling below growth demand levels. A study by Scottish Engineering in 2025 identified 20% unmet demand in apprenticeship take-up due to financial restrictions – he emphasised SDS's keenness to look at how they fill these critical skills gaps.

Mr Orr referred to the Engineering Skills Leadership Group's call to double investment in modern and graduate apprenticeships. He encouraged CPG members to join this group and contribute their nuclear expertise. The challenges highlighted above made it difficult for longer-term skills planning.

Mr Orr finished his session.

**The Convenor** thanked Robert Orr for his presentation and invited Debbie Joce from the SSH to give her presentation.

**Debbie Joce** highlighted the UK's ambitious targets for growth in the nuclear sector across civil and defence.

**83,000** – current nuclear workforce number

**40,000** – number of new roles to be filled by 2030

**100%** - required increase in graduates and apprentices entering the nuclear workforce.

**35%** - of nuclear workforce are over age of 50.

**Heather Hannam** outlined the Nuclear Skills Plan Scotland Regional Skills Hub:

### **A Multi-Generational Opportunity for High-Quality Employment:**

Scotland plays a pivotal role in the UK's Defence Nuclear Enterprise and civil nuclear programmes. With nuclear identified as a key growth sector, industry modelling shows a need to grow the **Scottish nuclear workforce** by **8,855** roles by **2035**. This presents a **multi-generational** opportunity for **high-quality employment** across the Central Belt, Highlands, and Islands.

### **Driving Social Mobility and Developing Skills for Life:**

- Nuclear careers offer **high-income, long-term roles** in rural and economically challenged areas such as Caithness, Dumfries & Galloway, and North Ayrshire.
- Scotland's workforce is developing **globally exportable expertise** in decommissioning and environmental remediation.
- The sector **builds future skills** and **resilience** in remote communities.

### **Uniting Cross-Sector Collaboration:**

- Deliver targeted, **high-quality training** and **recruitment** tailored to Scotland's nuclear needs.
- Support **early careers** and **mid-career** upskilling.
- Connect training **providers, employers, and supply chain partners** to maximise impact.

She highlighted membership including NRS/NDA, Babcock, EDF, Ayrshire College, UHI, Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, West College Scotland, Rolls Royce etc. (A full list is included in the presentation pack sent to members after the meeting)

**Faith Simpson** from the Hub team outlined what the Scotland hub is delivering:

**Destination Nuclear** – supporting delivery of a nuclear ‘clearing house’ for surplus applications.

**Career Switchers** – a training solution for safety case authors.

**Regional Demand Data** – understanding and evaluating demand data to support decision-making and focus.

**Stakeholder Engagement** – engaging industry and Government.

Developing a **Hub Operating Framework**

**Hub Strategy** – developing and delivering a long-term Scotland Hub Strategy.

**Launch date** – June 2026

She highlighted how they were working with academia to co-design and deliver targeted training interventions and asked the Group for future input, advice and active support and engagement.

After the presentation it was agreed slides would be distributed to all CPG members after the meeting.

**The Convenor** opened the meeting up to questions from members.

**Cllr Norman Hampshire** from East Lothian Council highlighted the shortage of skills in the nuclear industry referencing in particular Torness Power Station. He emphasised the importance of strengthening links between schools and industry. The Convenor agreed mentioning that perhaps the benefits of apprenticeship were not recognised as well as they should be.

**Debbie Joce** (SSH and Babcock International) agreed more needed to be done at an earlier age. The SSH would retain STEM on its programme and, in addition, working with academia was key.

**Heather Hannam** (SSH and NRS Dounreay) said NRS Dounreay was increasing its number of apprentices from 15 to 25 this year – focusing on craft skills in anticipation of demand for the future. NRS Dounreay was also working closely with local schools and pointed to occasional, well-intentioned resistance from teachers as they desire to push students towards University places. Dounreay could show proven “multi-generational” apprentice programmes as well as a well-recognised STEM programme.

**Debbie Joce** referred to the Babcock ‘pre-apprenticeship’ programme working alongside West College Scotland and SDS where 15-16 year-olds are being admitted. This acts as a ‘feeder’ into their apprenticeship programme and serves young people who would have not got through the standard recruitment process. Year 1 success includes a 90% conversion into Modern Apprenticeship programme, Year 2 87% (10% females). This work will come into the SSH as an good practice.

**The Convenor** acknowledged these as really positive examples and asked what was being done to encourage the supply chain.

**Debbie Joce** acknowledged more needed to be done and this would be looked at in greater detail in 2026.

**Mark Rouse** from DESNZ added their engagement had begun last week with Supply Chain - recognising its importance.

**The Convenor** also asked about Local Authority involvement as part of the SSH’s Stakeholder Engagement process.

**Debbie Joce** said this would begin in 2026 on a quarterly basis.

**The Convenor** pointed to the departure of Ann Campbell who asked that it be noted that the ‘pre-apprenticeship’ programme could have been filled 10 times over had there been adequate funding.

**Tor Justad** said he was heartened to hear of the work going on with schools. He asked what cooperation there was between the nuclear and renewables industries as regards workforce recruitment.

**The Convenor** added his thoughts on wider work and collaboration across sectors and the potential streamlining of qualification.

**Debbie Joce** reflected on the intention of Scottish Engineering’s intention to organise a skills summit in 2026 bring together a cross-section of industry to consider more collaborative working.

**Heather Hannam** mentioned the work she was doing with DESNZ on a ‘skills passport’ which was still at the early stages. This would allow transfer from more traditional energy sources such as Oil and Gas to nuclear and the Green industries. Meetings with Offshore Energy UK were considering ‘mid-career opportunities’ which would satisfy more immediate needs.

**The Convenor** pointed to the Vice-Convenor’s interest in ‘skills passports’. He said he was encouraged to see the range of early but good work that was progressing.

**Faith Simpson** highlighted that many of the core skills were easily transferable across industries and only 20% included more specialised nuclear skills.

**Andy Aston** (NW Regional Skills Hub) highlighted collaboration with DWP in England for upskilling. He pointed to

the importance of 'signposting' e.g. welders' to different sectors where their skills will be appropriate widening their potential job horizons. These learnings are being share with the SSH.

**Louise Martin** from SCCORS, offered SSH a 'connection point' with SCCORS members (32 Scottish Local Authorities)

**The Convenor** welcomed the intervention and highlighted the link with LAs given their important connection to schools.

**The Convenor** also asked about what was being done for those that could be 'lost' in the search for jobs. For instance rejection on first interview etc.

**Faith Simpson** highlighted the SSH 'Career Portal' where any unsuccessful candidates were captured on their database and directed to a 'clearing house' for organisation to consider and feedback – this was appropriate to both early and mid-careers opportunities.

**Rob Orr** added the pilot the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland was doing linked to a pre-apprenticeship talent scheme to capture potential 'lost' candidates. SDS also met regularly with DWP and DYW and Careers Advisers in schools to outline cross-industry opportunities. SDS recognised the importance of working with SSH to make Nuclear Decommissioning in Scotland more attractive to young people.

**The Convenor** acknowledged the clear progress being made and that the right people were connecting.

He introduced Sam Long from Decom Mission.

**Sam Long** introduced his organisation and its cross-industry working approach, working already with a wide range of organisations including the NDA, Zero Waste Scotland,

Academia, the Nuclear Industries Association, and both UK and Scottish Governments.

He gave the CPG a sense of scale of the decommissioning industry in Scotland. Combined spend of decommissioning was £6.5bn – NDA £4bn, O&G over £2bn. Decommissioning was a £15bn market globally and its export potential should not be underestimated. Current policy was causing an “unmanaged” decline in O&G with 1,000 jobs being lost every month in the North-East. Not all jobs being lost will transfer over to decommissioning. He pointed to the importance of skills and the future of the energy transition. The pace of jobs creation is nowhere near the pace of job collapse in O&G. Renewable jobs emerging in a far weaker trend than many would hope. We need mechanisms like SSH to secure pathways to work. How can we get people coming out of O&G in to nuclear decommissioning – that is a pathway worth chasing. We need to be mindful of what the Scottish economy is going to look like and how we distribute those skills as a result. This is why the work we have heard about today is so important. SL agreed about working with schools and made reference to a charity called ‘Career Ready’ working with schools to get S5/S6 pupils in to industry. Mapping skills and being realistic will be key going forward. We must talk more about decommissioning and its contribution to both the Scottish economy and Net Zero targets.

**The Convenor** thanked Mr Long for his presentation and giving the group a ‘reality check’.

**Cllr Stewart McDonald** commented on the complexity surrounding much of the discussion around Scotland’s energy future and expressed his concern about ‘investor confidence’ given the debate on new nuclear, longer term waste policy and differing long-standing policy approaches.

**The Convenor** accepted the complexity of the issues and agreed many of these outstanding questions would not be

answered at this meeting. He drew attention to the Scottish Government's 2026 public consultation on High Activity Waste Policy and the chance for local communities to express their views on the long-term options for consideration. He also highlighted how future meetings of the CPG into 2026, may be able to tackle some of these important issues and that the CPG existed in order to raise these important issues and seek answers.

## **AOB**

**Kenny Taylor** highlighted that Zero Waste Scotland's Circular Economy Strategy was out for public consultation. A link to the consultation would be sent to members after the meeting.

**Date of Next meeting:** The Convenor mentioned that the next meeting would be post the Scottish Elections in May 2026. Meantime he stressed the importance of members staying in touch with either MSP members of the CPG, or their local MSP about any issues they wish to raise locally or relating to the CPG business. The email address for this CPG is [CPGScotland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:CPGScotland@nda.gov.uk)

The Convenor thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a happy festive season.

The meeting was closed.

**ENDS**

The 'transition phase' was made up of a number of workstreams:

- People
- Licensing and Permitting
- Land
- IT
- Commercial Contracts
- Funding
- On-site activities

Partners were 'on-plan' for April 2026 handover. Testing and Assurance reviews currently underway between UK Gov/NDA/NRS and EDF – these would help re-assure stakeholders partners were ready for transfer.

**PM** reported some more detail as regards the 'workstreams': People – there was now a defined structure with the number of people required confirmed as 246. 96% of people would get the outcome they wanted with the lion share choosing to stay on site. PM reported morale was "in a good place".

Funding – for AGR decommissioning would come from the Nuclear Liabilities Fund (NLF). The fund was made up of contributions from UK Government and EDF. **PM** highlighted the importance ring-fenced funding to meet timescales.

Permitting and Licensing – EDF and NRS had been working closely with Regulators over the last 2 years. Regulators were confident all timescales for handover could be met.

On-Site Activities – no Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) on site. The Site Team would be reduced from 300 to 246 by

March 2026. The Control Room numbers had been reduced from 15 to 3.

After HNB handover in April 2026, Hinkley B is planned to follow 6-8 months later.

In general, Life extensions to EDF stations were still on the agenda in order to support UK Gov climate change targets.

**Sohail Ashraf (NRS)** expressed excitement at having a group of people keen to be part of the NRS decommissioning mission. Cultures were aligned and there had been great Regulatory support between SEPA/ONR and Scottish Government. He added that the funding model gave some additional certainty to the Supply Chain in terms of 'multi-year funding' vs 'annualised' funding model. This was also good news for innovation and development. Taking learning from the HNB transfer would help future transfers.

**OM** opened the meeting up to **questions from CPG members.**

**Cathryn Walley (Amentum)** – asked about the partner's assessment of 'skills and capability', and whether they had thought about work that will be done 'in-house' and work they intend to offer to the Supply Chain- in addition to their timings for engagement with the Supply Chain.

**PM** – reported they were retraining and upskilling people currently which was a big part of the 'transition' programme. It was positive to have HNA next door in order to gain advice and guidance. Both EDF and NRS were engaging with suppliers - EDF looking to novate across some of their contracts and NRS making use of incumbent suppliers. He stressed a significant amount suppliers will be required to supplement the 246 staff.

**SA** repeated that much work was going on as regards 'skills and capability'. 'Deliverability Reviews' were underway with Site Team understanding the need for a longer-term Supply Chain strategy. He stressed how instrumental and critical the supply chain would be to mission delivery. He also felt there was a great opportunity to highlight just what the UK can deliver in the decommissioning sector.

**CW** stressed the need to engage the supply chain “sooner rather than later”.

**Cllr Norman Harrington** introduced himself as the Leader of East Lothian Council and asked about the timeframes for the Nuclear Site Licence (NSL) , and at what point during the decommissioning process does it not remain a nuclear site. He also asked about the future use of the site given Torness had consents for another 8 reactors – and whether this had been taken into consideration going forward?

**SA** said the NSL would exist until they achieve final site clearance, however, working alongside Regulators, they can always give consideration to boundaries and exploit potential opportunities for land-use. CPX was a good example of this where land out-with the NSL is being utilised for development of a ‘Green Energy’ park.

**OM** pointed out that NSL will likely remain for decades, with SA pointing to around 80 years of a journey towards Care and Maintenance of stations.

**PM** highlighted the work currently going on between EDF and NRS as regards land boundaries and land that will be required transfer to NRS to carry out decommissioning work.

**Kenny Taylor** (Zero Waste Scotland) expressed importance of ‘granularity’ in the process of engaging on a visible and accessible strategy for the supply chain. He also asked for consideration of ‘materials management’ and how this helps learning and projects already progressing with materials management in Scotland.

**SA** agreed and said he was keen to produce a medium to longer term strategy which would give the supply chain time to consider and innovate going forward.

**OM** stressed the importance of maximising the value of the supply chain in Scotland and was sure this view was reflected by all MSPs on the CPG. He was also keen to express this view in the forthcoming CPG submission to the NDA’s S5 consultation. He highlighted the importance of North Ayrshire

and the many companies working in this area – particularly in the Engineering space. OM also linked this to work already between NRS/NDA and Ayrshire College.

**Rita Holmes (RH)** – Chair of Hunterston SSG, expressed concern about different funding streams with **PH** clarifying that there was only one funding source being NLF.

**RH** asked about whether there was a cap on NLF funding since this was the first AGR decommissioning. **PH** stated both EDF and NRS had to predict ‘forward liability’ for the whole fleet – this allows for sufficiency of funding. This has to be done annually. He said doing this promptly was a good way of driving efficiency – defueling ahead of schedule was good for the fund! SA said having two funding streams if you include HNA, allowed both HNA/HNB to work closer together to identify synergies that result in cost savings for both.

**Cllr Stewart McDonald** from East Dunbartonshire Council asked for clarity in terms of current waste policy in Scotland and long-term plans for transporting waste from Scotland to England.

**OM** drew attention to the intention of Scottish Government to go out to public consultation next year on the subject of their current waste policy. He also stressed the cost of transporting waste was minimal compared to the storage of the waste. He highlighted the assurances he had been given by Scottish Government to conduct an extensive public consultation on Waste Policy, particularly with people who live and work around the sites. OM also referred to NDA’s commitment to running all their sites safely and securely and to respect and work in line with devolved policies across the United Kingdom.

**Cllr McDonald** stressed the need for a longer-term waste solution.

**CW** asked if timelines for waste solutions could slow any AGR transfer progress. OM responded that in order to avoid this forward planning was key.

**Bill Hamilton** (NRS) highlighted that there are waste solutions currently being applied and we have storage plans for over 100 years, therefore, time was on our side.

### Agenda item 3

AOB

**OM** thanked Gail Ross and her Dounreay Team for their contribution to the Festival of Politics held in August at the Scottish Parliament.

**Sam Long** (Decom Mission) mentioned the importance of the CPG in raising and discussing such important topics facing the wider decommissioning industry. He asked that the CPG consider widening the discussion to embrace Cross-Industry decommissioning – including Oil and Gas.

**OM** said he would welcome that approach and referred to members of the CPG who may have links to other (O&G) CPGs for Cross-Party Group further discussions. He highlighted that sharing and learning also provided best value for the taxpayer. He also thanked staff and leadership of both HNA and HNB for their time at the sites visit earlier in the day.

OM thanks members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

### Agenda item 4

**Date and time of next meeting:** Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 6pm

**Venue:** Scottish Parliament

**Ends**