

PRESS RELEASE

Government announces Energy Security Strategy with enhanced commitments to new nuclear

The North West Nuclear Arc (NWNNA) welcomes publication of the UK Government's Energy Security Strategy yesterday which includes renewed and enhanced commitments to new nuclear to boost the UK's energy independence following rising energy prices and volatility in global markets.

NWNNA is a unique nuclear ecosystem, forming a cluster across north Wales and northwest England. It incorporates all the facilities and capabilities across the whole nuclear lifecycle (fuels, generation and decommissioning) and is committed to enabling next generation nuclear technology to help meet our national net-zero ambition.

The Energy Security Strategy aims to establish a new body, Great British Nuclear, to accelerate new nuclear opportunities and help deliver 24GW of nuclear powered electricity by 2050. This is positive news for the UK and in particular the NWNNA region with Wylfa, Moorside and Trawsfynydd all acknowledged as potential sites for new nuclear investment. The Strategy will also have a positive impact across the nuclear fuel supply chain, helping maintain capabilities and skills at centres of excellence in the NWNNA geography – particularly Capenhurst and Springfields – as well as providing opportunities for other national facilities.

Rebecca Weston, Chief Operating Officer at Sellafield Ltd and NWNNA Co-chair said ““We're extremely proud of the nuclear capability, supply chain and skills, built up over decades, that's part of the backbone of Cumbria's economy. We've also a track record in delivering first-of-kind nuclear energy facilities. With the North West home to over 40% of the nuclear workforce nationally, we can propel delivery of future nuclear facilities., and The strategy recognises the critical role nuclear can and should play in providing an abundant source of low carbon energy, increasing our resilience.”

Chief Executive of Cwmni Eginio Ltd, Alan Raymant said: “We welcome the UK Government's commitment to accelerating its nuclear programme, including the deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMR). We believe that the site of the former nuclear power station in Trawsfynydd offers unparalleled opportunities for the fastest deployment of SMR technology.”

Skills is also an essential part of the nuclear industry and NWNNA hosts two of the largest nuclear research groups in the UK, The University of Manchester and Bangor University in North Wales.

Prof Francis Livens, Director of the University of Manchester's Dalton Nuclear Institute said “This statement can really energise nuclear. Accelerating new nuclear like this is a huge challenge for everyone involved and will require serious focus, which will drive fundamental change across the sector.”

Prof Bill Lee, Director of the Nuclear Futures Institute at Bangor University said: “This is great news for the NWNNA region, accelerating developments at our nuclear licensed sites at Wylfa, Trawsfynydd & Moorside and hopefully of the National Thermal Hydraulics Facility slated for North Wales in the Nuclear Sector Deal. Bangor University has ambitious plans to provide graduates with the skills needed to support this through its new undergraduate programme in General Engineering and its Powering the Future MSc, both starting in 2023”.