



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP
Secretary of State

Department for Energy Security
& Net Zero
55 Whitehall
London

Paul Davies MS, Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs
Committee
Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd,
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10th April 2024

Dear Paul,

Welsh Parliament, Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee – Report on Nuclear energy and the Welsh economy

I am writing in reply to your letter seeking a response from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to a recommendation in the Senedd Trade and Rural Affairs Committee report into Nuclear Energy and the Welsh Economy. The report recommended that the UK Government set out “when it will confirm the designated sites for future nuclear projects, the kinds of technology to be deployed, and the timeframes for implementation.”

You rightfully noted the publication of the ‘Civil nuclear: Roadmap to 2050’ on 11 January 2024, which set out the Government’s overarching strategy for the deployment of new nuclear reactors in the UK and how government intends to work with the nuclear sector to deliver this ambition. The Roadmap establishes the Government’s vision for a vibrant nuclear sector, providing detail on the policies we are pursuing to enable delivery, covering areas such as siting, regulation, financing, nuclear skills and supply chain, and decommissioning and waste management.

The Roadmap also sets out our long-term ambition for new nuclear in the UK, providing high-level timelines and key decision points for a wide range of nuclear technologies over the next decades, including Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs), and Gigawatt (GW) scale projects. In particular, the Roadmap sets out our intention to explore a further GW-scale project after Sizewell C and our plans to make investment decisions concerning 3-7GW of nuclear generation every five years between 2030 and 2044.

In the time since your letter was received, the Government has made significant progress on siting for future nuclear projects. On 6 March, we announced that GBN is buying the sites at Wylfa (Ynys Mon / Anglesey) and Oldbury-on-Severn (Gloucestershire), both of which have hosted nuclear power stations in the past. Nuclear sites are essential building blocks of the UK’s civil nuclear programme, which includes both the SMR programme and the Government’s Civil Nuclear Roadmap

commitment to explore a further large-scale plant after Sizewell C. The UK Government notes the strong interest and support for nuclear power at the Wylfa site. North Wales and Ynys Môn have a proud history in the nuclear industry, and it is a great example of a community that has benefited from the jobs and investment that come from nuclear.

Eight sites have previously been designated as nuclear sites in the UK, including the sites at Wylfa and Oldbury-on-Severn. As such, the acquisition of these two nuclear sites by Great British Nuclear will help progress plans to build potential new nuclear power stations of all sizes. No decision has been taken on the projects to be deployed at these or any other sites, and any future decisions will be made in due course, as site characterisation work and the Government's broader nuclear programme develops. GBN is also working closely with the local communities at these sites to consider how future new nuclear projects will benefit their communities, with further updates expected over the coming months.

I welcome the work being undertaken by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Cwmni Egino to look at supporting a new nuclear development at Trawsfynydd. My department is also developing a new nuclear National Policy Statement (NPS), which will set out the policy framework for developing new nuclear power stations in England and Wales beyond 2025. As a first step, we have recently concluded a consultation on a new approach to siting new nuclear power stations.

The new NPS aims to support the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies as well as GW-scale projects and seeks to ensure there is sufficient flexibility in site selection to enable increased deployment of civil nuclear power. The new NPS will provide clear guidance on future siting of nuclear power stations to give industry and investors the confidence they need to deliver projects at speed. My department aims to publish a response to the consultation in the summer.

This Government is committed to ensuring the UK nuclear sector has the required skills to deliver on its existing decommissioning requirements together with supporting our proposed programme of new nuclear. The Nuclear Skills Taskforce was launched by the Minister for Nuclear and Renewables and the Minister of Defence Procurement in August 2023, to ensure the UK's defence and civil nuclear sectors have the right people with the right skills to seize growth opportunities.

In this context, I welcome the Prime Minister's recent announcement of significant investment in developing the nuclear skills pipeline, helping the sector to fill 40,000 new jobs by the end of the decade by supporting plans to double the number of nuclear apprentices and graduates and quadruple the number of specialist science and nuclear fission PhDs.

This Government is fully committed to a programmatic approach to the delivery of new nuclear projects beyond Sizewell C and will continue to engage with all interested Welsh-based parties on these issues at both Ministerial and official level. By publishing the Roadmap and acquiring the sites at Wylfa and Oldbury-on-Severn, the

Government is now making a concerted effort to support development decisions, improve investor confidence, and provide the greater certainty needed to deliver net zero by 2050 and to meet our energy and national energy security requirements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Coutinho".

RT HON CLAIRE COUTINHO MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero