

Parliamentary Inquiry update

House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee - “Nuclear Energy in Wales”

May 2023

Inquiry

The House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee undertook an inquiry into the future of nuclear energy in Wales over several months leading up to February 2022. The scope was wide-ranging, given the context of public policy on nuclear energy, energy security and Net Zero across the UK, as well as Welsh Government policies and specific developments around the sites at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa.

The Nuclear Skills Strategy Group submitted written evidence to the inquiry¹, which in summary gave information relating to the following priorities for a skilled nuclear workforce in Wales:

- Certainty of nuclear programme
- Volume of recruitment
- Competition from other sectors
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

NSSG’s Head of Skills, Beccy Pleasant, also gave evidence to the Committee in person in December 2022.

The outcome of the inquiry was published at the end of April 2023², and the recommendations sent by the Chair to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, and the Secretary of State for Wales.

Key elements of the Inquiry's findings

- The place for nuclear energy
 - The inquiry supports the use of nuclear power in Wales as part of the mix to achieve Net Zero targets and provide domestic energy security
 - The committee welcomed the UK government's announcement that nuclear energy will be included in the green taxonomy
- Nuclear sites in Wales
 - Wylfa should be the location of the next gigawatt-scale nuclear generation plant after Sizewell C. UK government should encourage Hitachi to sell the site or take part in future developments.
 - Trawsfynydd should be included in the Nuclear National Policy Statement as a potential site for Small Modular Reactors
- Financing
 - The Regulated Asset Based model is a better alternative to Contracts for Difference, however important issues still remain regarding financial commitment
- Economy
 - There would be significant economic benefits from new nuclear development at Wylfa and Trawsfynydd

¹ <https://www.nssguk.com/media/2849/welsh-affairs-committee-aug-2022-nssg-inquiry-response-issue-v1.pdf>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/39362/documents/193324/default/>

- There should be investment in scaling up the Welsh nuclear supply chain, and the requirement on local employment, to maximise benefit to the local labour market
- Skills issues
 - The committee believes that serious work needs to be done on how the required skills can be developed for the future of the sector in Wales
 - It recommends the production of a nuclear skills strategy for Wales in collaboration with UK Government and Welsh Government. A key aspect of this is to provide certainty to the sector and to training providers, to enable the plan for investment in training in Wales.
- Certainty about future investment of the nuclear programme
 - The committee recommends to government that it publishes a medium long term programme for nuclear generation, for the whole of the UK and in particular for Wales. This should contain details of which technologies should be built, where, and on what time scale, with specific reference to the Welsh sites.
- Great British Nuclear
 - The Committee welcomes the launch of GBN, and recommends that it is given a mandate to plan and deliver a programme for nuclear sites to provide clarity. The committee recommends to UK government that it should address the issue of the lack of developers in the UK other than EDF.

Nuclear Skills Strategy Group action

The NSSG welcomes the Committee's recommendations on the importance of a skilled workforce to the future of the nuclear sector in Wales. It is already heavily involved in working with government on developing new skills strategies for the sector, and will ensure that these include appropriate discussion with Welsh Government to plan for the particular needs of developments in Wales.