



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Andrew Bowie MP
Minister for Nuclear and
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**Department for Energy Security
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Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
Chair of the Energy Security & Net Zero Committee
House of Commons
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16 May 2024

Dear Angus,

The UK Government and devolved governments have just published a UK-wide policy framework for nuclear decommissioning and the management of radioactive substances, including radioactive waste. Alongside this we are also publishing a Government response to the consultation on the policy that ran for 12 weeks in Spring 2023. The documents can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-radioactive-substances-and-nuclear-decommissioning>.

The UK-wide policy framework updates, clarifies and consolidates a number of policies, aiming to facilitate speedier and more cost-effective decommissioning and radioactive waste management. This creates clearer and more consistent policy objectives across the UK, reducing unnecessary burden, unlocking more innovative and sustainable ways of working. This will support the realisation of significant savings for industry and the taxpayer, whilst maintaining high standards of safety, security, and environmental protection. The policy has also been refocussed around the new challenges for nuclear - including the implications of the increased nuclear ambition and the need to deliver nuclear decommissioning quicker and cheaper.

As well as consolidating radioactive substances and nuclear decommissioning policy into a single policy framework we are also introducing policies to achieve more proportionate and cost-effective waste management and disposal routes for some less hazardous intermediate level radioactive waste, without compromising environmental or public health safety. The previous policy of the UK Government and Devolved Governments of Wales and Northern Ireland was to place this waste in a geological disposal facility which on current estimates is expected to be operational in the 2050s. We have amended this policy to allow less hazardous intermediate level waste to be disposed of in near surface disposal facilities where it is safe to do so. Developing an alternative disposal route which could be available within the next 10 years, has the potential to achieve significant savings without compromising safety and security, though a geological disposal facility will still be necessary for the most hazardous radioactive waste.

Yours aye,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small hook.

Andrew Bowie MP
Minister for Nuclear and Renewables