Minutes of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority ("NDA") Board meeting held on 12-13 November 2025 at Caxton House, London/Teams

PRESENT:	Peter Hill	Chair of the Board ("Chair")	
	David Peattie	Chief Executive Officer ("CEO")	
	Kate Bowyer	Chief Financial Officer ("CFO")	
	Alex Reeves	Non-Executive Board Member	*(via Teams on 12.11.25)*
	Neil Bruce	Non-Executive Board Member	
	Kathryn Cearns	Non-Executive Board Member	
	Harriet Kemp	Non-Executive Board Member	
	Francis Livens	Non-Executive Board Member	
	Catriona Schmolke	Non-Executive Board Member	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Alan Cumming	Group Chief Assurance and Performance Officer ("CAPO")	
	Paul Vallance	Group Chief Corporate Affairs Officer	
	Matthew Shaw	Group General Counsel & Company Secretary	
	[redacted]	Deputy Company Secretary	
	[redacted]	Health, Safety & Environment Director	*(part only – via Teams)*
	Frank Rainford	Group Chief of Staff & Security Officer	*(part only)*
	Clive Nixon	Chief Nuclear Strategy Officer	*(part only – via Teams)*
	[redacted]	Chief R&D Officer	*(part only)*
	[redacted]		
	[redacted]	Group Risk Director	*(part only– via Teams)*
	Seth Kybird	NWS CEO	*(part only)*
	[redacted]	NWS Deputy General Counsel	*(part only)*
	Liz Peace	NWS Chair	*(part only)*
	[redacted]	Unity Programme Director	*(part only – via Teams)*
	[redacted]	Group Director of Financial Planning & Analysis	*(part only – via Teams)*
	David Vineall	Group Chief People Officer	*(part only– via Teams)*
	[redacted]	Group People Development Director	*(part only)*
	John Vickerman	NRS Chief People Officer	*(part only)*
	[redacted]	Head of Diversity and Inclusion	*(part only – via Teams)*
	Dave Wilson	Managing Director, NRS Dounreay	*(part only – via Teams)*
	[redacted]	Chief Sustainability Officer	*(part only)*
	[redacted]	Sustainability Advisor	*(part only – via Teams)*
	Angharad Rayner	EHSS&Q Director, NRS	*(part only – via Teams)*
	James Riddick	Chief Supply Chain Officer - SL	*(part only – via Teams)*
APOLOGIES:	None		

	Agenda Item	Action Owner
1	**Introduction**	
1.1	**Apologies**	
1.1.1	There were no apologies for absence. The Chair reported that D Peattie would need to leave Day 1 of the meeting temporarily for a meeting [redacted]	
1.2	**Conflicts of Interest**	
1.2.1	The Board considered the Register of Board Members' Interests. There were no conflicts of interest in respect of the business of the meeting and the Board **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** that all Board Members present could participate fully in the meeting.	
1.3	**Chair's Observations and Meeting Objectives**	

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1.3.1	The Chair highlighted the agenda items that required particular attention and discussion. The Board noted the update it was to receive the following day on the decision due to the DESNZ Secretary of State in March 2026 on progressing to deep borehole investigations and had a preliminary discussion on the options under review.	
	[redacted] *joined the meeting*	
2.	**Safety**	
2.1	**Safety moment**	
2.1.1	D Peattie shared photographs detailing NTS' support to the transfer to a depot for inspection and repairs of the Avanti West Coast Pendolino train that derailed near Shap earlier in the month. D Peattie highlighted the unique capability of NTS' locomotives to assist in the operation and praised the work of the NTS staff involved.	
2.1.2	With insight from her involvement with the Department for Transport, K Cearns shared details of the actions and behaviours of the staff of the London North Eastern Railway that had helped in the response to the recent incident on the Doncaster to London King's Cross service.	
	D Peattie left the meeting	
2.2	**Health, Safety, Security, Sustainability & Environment Committee (HSSSE) Report**	
2.2.1	The Board noted the summary of the proceedings and key matters discussed by the Health, Safety, Security, Sustainability & Environment Committee (HSSSE) at its meeting on 15 October 2025. Retrievals at the Magnox Swarf Storage Sile (MSSS) had restarted following the repair of a key tool and the team were demonstrating good control of the liquid level in the silo, which had been well received by the ONR. The HSSSE Committee had discussed climate resilience across the estate and appreciated the requirement for different parts of the organisation to consider the challenge against varied timescales. There was more work to do in this area, and the Board would be kept up to date.	
2.3	**Latest statistics, trends, incidents, near misses and health & wellbeing**	
2.3.1	The report on P5 – P6 health, safety, and environment statistics and trends, significant events, and near misses was taken as read and [redacted] outlined the key matters for the Board to be aware of. [redacted]	
2.3.2	In response to the action taken from the last meeting (Action 2134) for more detail to be provided on the volume of near misses and associated trend analysis, [redacted] presented the additional information appended to the report. The Board agreed that this must remain an area of focus. Action 2134 could be closed. The Board noted progress on the development of the group Golden Safety Principles and Life Saving Rules. Graphics had been produced for use across the OpCos and [redacted] described the roll out. It was anticipated that OpCo specific guidance would also be produced. It was noted that the first phase of the Investigation Assist was nearing completion, and an early finding was the need for more timely, effective and consistent event investigation and reporting.	
2.3.3	The Board discussed the finding from the Investigation Assist that EHS resource at NTS was of concern. [redacted] confirmed that the Safety Directors Peer Group that had offered support was a group internal to the NDA. External support was also being explored.	
2.3.4	[redacted] responded to the Board's enquiries on matters of significant concern currently. [redacted]	

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	[redacted]	
	s40 [redacted] *left the meeting*	
3.	**Administration**	
3.1	**Minutes of previous meeting**	
3.1.1	The Board considered the minutes of its recent meetings and **RESOLVED TO APPROVE**: (i) The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2025 with no amendments. (ii) The minutes of the meeting held across 22 – 24 September 2025 subject to the correction of some minor typographical errors and the addition of one post meeting note. (iii) The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 subject to the correction of minor typographical errors and two clarifications.	
3.2.	**Decision Log**	
3.2.1	The Board noted the Decision Log.	
3.3	**Actions Review**	
3.3.1	The Board considered the actions arising from previous meetings and: (i) Noted that actions 2121, 2133 and 2136 were to be addressed during the meeting. (ii) Agreed Action 2140 (letter of congratulations to F Rayment) could be closed. (iii) Discussed the information obtained since the last meeting on the number of Non-Executive Members it was possible to have on the NDA Board. The position required further clarity and the Board requested that **the documented position on the quota applicable to the number of Non-Executive Members on the NDA Board be shared with it.** Action 2141 would be updated and remain open.	**M Shaw**
	D Peattie rejoined and F Rainford joined the meeting	
4.	**Reports/Updates**	
4.1	**CEO's Report**	
4.1.1	The Board noted the Report from the CEO including the OpCo CEO summaries prepared for the Accounting Officer Review (AOR) meetings earlier that month.	
4.1.2	D Peattie reported that ongoing industrial action at Sellafield remained amongst his top concerns and confirmed that the situation was being closely monitored. Cyber resilience across the group, despite increased expenditure, was also of significant concern to him and, as the Board was aware, had been for some time. Such concerns were not unique to the NDA and were shared across government. The Board noted that replacing ageing assets must be prioritised and be the first recipient of any additional funding that could be identified. D Peattie announced that in response he had commissioned Project Delta to be led by the Group Chief of Staff & Security Officer. s36 [redacted]. F Rainford provided a high-level overview of what Project Delta would involve; a detailed update would be provided to the Board in January. K Bowyer outlined the potential source of the additional funding. The Board was supportive of the launch of Project Delta and highlighted that risk in the supply chain must not be overlooked.	
	F Rainford left the meeting	
4.1.3	D Peattie discussed his meeting with s40 [redacted]; the government's announcement that Wylfa would host the UK's first SMRs; and his upcoming engagements with the Department and government officials.	

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4.2	**CFO's Report**	
4.2.1	The Board noted the Report from the CFO on the 2025/26 financial performance of the group and progress against the 2025/26 GKTs. K Bowyer highlighted the additional update on RDEL income and expenditure expectations for 2025/26 to 2028/29. s36 s43 [redacted] the Board acknowledged the significant work of the Sellafield CEO that had resulted in now strong vitrification operational performance.	
4.2.2	K Bowyer provided an update on progress on implementing the 2025 Spending Review commitments. A schedule of the outcomes expected to be delivered during the Spending Review period had been produced and the OpCos were working on corresponding plans.	
4.2.3	The Board noted the work ongoing to present a view to Treasury of the nuclear provision as at 31 March 2026. s43 [redacted] A workshop was taking place with the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee at the end of November to ensure its thorough comprehension of what would be a significant audit matter.	
4.3	**Performance and Project Delivery Report**	
4.3.1	The Board noted the Performance and Project Delivery Report on matters related to the Major Projects Portfolio and Operations. A Cumming corrected a statement in the report clarifying that the Sellafield were close to finalising the third and final shipment of vitrified residues to Germany, which would conclude activities with the country related to reprocessing after a partnership of over 50 years. A Cumming expanded on several points in the report providing a view on performance across each of the OpCos as at the end of the year. s40 [redacted] s43 [redacted] The Board discussed the upcoming NDA Annual Parliamentarian Dinner and briefing materials that would be prepared to support it in delivering updates on mission delivery.	
4.3.2	A Cumming discussed the impact of the ongoing industrial action at Sellafield. The Board explored how well understood the impact on projects was and noted that A Cumming was content with how this had been recorded in project plans. s43 [redacted]	
	C Nixon, s40 [redacted] *joined the meeting*	
4.4	**Research, Development and Innovation**	
4.4.1	The Board noted the annual update on Research and Development (R&D) activity and s40 [redacted] highlighted key points around groupwide progress, successes, issues and opportunities as well as the team's future ambition. s40 [redacted] explained that short-term actions taken in response to the Spending Review challenge would impact the team's ability to achieve medium to long-term gains. The Board noted that the building blocks (governance, community, groupwide demonstrator projects) were in place to embed a	

	more functional groupwide approach where R&D could play a pivotal role in how the group delivered for the future within the fiscal and other constraints currently faced. The Board noted the frequency with which the team was asked to share its progress externally and the respect it had internationally.	
4.4.2	The Board explored several points in detail including the portfolio approach taken to R&D to which improvements since the last update were attributed; the programmes covered within the R&D budget; the outcomes s40 [redacted] was most proud of; the contribution the group's R&D programme made to attracting, developing and retaining skills, and the blocks to further progress.	
4.4.3	s40 [redacted]	
4.4.4	F Livens thought piece had been produced in September 2025 and that at the Chair's request he had subsequently authored an additional discussion paper responding to the urgent need for continuing innovation and the challenges that were impacting this. F Livens presented the proposed establishment of a 'Group RD&I Committee' and adaptation of the current RD&I governance arrangements to enhance continuity and coherence of RD&I across the group, to position the group better to respond to the increasing need to innovate, and to deliver better value from its RD&I, particularly over the medium to long term. The Board noted that RD&I was included in Phase 2 of the Functional Excellence (FE) plans and there was a focus on giving the NDA more control over spend.	
4.4.5	There was consensus amongst the Executive that RD&I spend should be an executive responsibility with varying views on the requirement for non-executive oversight and influence over prioritisation. The Board discussed F Livens proposal and agreed with the rationale for taking a different approach to achieve more. The Board was prepared to revisit the approach to risk and alternative approaches to managing the interface between risk and RD&I but cautioned that not all the identified issues should be attributed to risk management. F Livens clarified that it was the approach to risk that was impacting RD&I, and it was about rebalancing the RD&I portfolio and how it balances risk. The Board acknowledged that whilst some elements of RD&I should be discharged by the OpCos, there were evident aspects that could be centralised under s40 [redacted]. There was support for Board oversight of RD&I spend at a strategic level, ensuring alignment to strategic aims unconstrained by individual OpCo funding.	
	s40 [redacted] *left the meeting*	
4.4.6	s36 s40 [redacted]	

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	[redacted] The Chair requested that F Livens produce a more detailed proposal on the group governance arrangements for RD&I for Board approval. The proposal should reflect the feedback given at the meeting and document the support of the Executive, as appropriate. The Board would revisit risk appetite more generally.	
	C Nixon left the meeting	
4.5	[redacted]	
4.5.1	s36 [redacted]	
4.5.2	The Board reviewed the draft letter and requested that **its feedback be incorporated and the final version shared with it before submission.**	**A Sellar**
	S Kybird, s40 [redacted] *and L Peace joined the meeting*	
5.	**Main Board Topics**	
	A. STRATEGY	
5.1	**NWS Strategic Review and GDF Update**	
5.1.1	The Board noted the update on the progress of the Strategic Review of NWS and S Kybird provided further detail on the context of the review, the findings to date and plans for implementation of the response, some of which were underway. s36 [redacted]	
5.1.2	The Board discussed the update and requested that a **further update be provided including the future of the Integrated Waste Management Programme (IWMP) and the Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR).**	**S Kybird**
5.1.3	S Kybird provided an overview of progress on the key siting decision to be made on which GDF community/ies would progress to deep borehole investigations, which was to be submitted to the DESNZ Secretary of State for approval by the end of FY2025/26. The Board noted the potential decisions that could be submitted and the governance that would apply to them. The Board discussed the options in detail, the immediacy of the requirement to make the submission, and need for careful consideration of the political landscape surrounding the GDF. S Kybird assured the Board that NWS was acutely aware of the sensitivities and were preparing carefully for engagement with government to mitigate the potential for any reputational risk. The Board requested that an **update be provided to its meeting in January on the development of the submission.**	**S Kybird**
	s40 [redacted] *and L Peace left and* s40 [redacted] *joined the meeting*	
	B. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS	
5.2	**Unity**	
5.2.1	S Kybird took the Board through the presentation on Unity, and the Board explored several areas in detail, including: • How the Executive were comfortable to progress with Phase 1 of Functional Excellence without having defined an end state. It was noted that in contrast to a defined end state, the group faced a continuing pressure to demonstrate ongoing efficiency and effectiveness. • The possibility of dual reporting within the group functions.	

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	[redacted]	**D Vineall**
5.2.2	The Board noted that it would receive an update on Unity at each scheduled Board meeting [redacted]	
	S Kybird, [redacted] *left the meeting*	
5.3	**Cambridge**	
5.3.1	P Vallance updated the Board on the progress made on Project Cambridge, including the formation of the project team and appointment of a project manager. The project team were looking at the full scope of work and developing an implementation plan that would be presented to the Board for approval in January. The focus currently was on identifying 'early wins', those aspects of the projects that could be achieved without undertaking a Management of Change (MoC) assessment thereby contributing to the earlier achievement of the MoC process. P Vallance had met with each of the OpCo Chairs, and all were committed to ensuring the successful implementation of the project. [redacted]	
5.3.2	D Peattie reported that with immediate effect P Vallance would take over from S Kybird as SRO on Unity. Given the linkage between the projects, there was a strong rationale for the same SRO on each. It was noted that the Unity Steering Committee had not been stood up and a proposal was being developed for a combined group that would oversee both Unity and Cambridge.	
5.3.3	The Board discussed the update and expressed some caution as to the number of significant initiatives currently underway across the group.	
5.3.4	The Board reviewed a draft of the letter it had been agreed at its last meeting would be sent to the Department outlining the Cambridge construct in more detail. **The Board requested that its feedback (including any subsequently provided offline) be incorporated and the final version shared with it before submission.**	**P Vallance**
5.4	**Civilian Guard Force (CGF) Contract Extension**	
5.4.1	The briefing note on the Sellafield Civilian Guard Force (CGF) Contract Extension was taken as read and M Shaw provided an update on the procurement process. K Bowyer explained that although the briefing note had been positioned as for noting, approval from the Board was required to seek a delegation from HMG to the NDA Accounting Officer for approval of the second extension to the existing CGF contract. The Board discussed the updated position and noted that the value of the contract extension required finalising. The Board **RESOLVED TO APPROVE IN PRINCIPLE** that the delegation be sought **subject to the briefing note being updated and recirculated to reflect the ask that had been made of it at the meeting.** The Board requested a **lessons learnt report on the Sellafield Civilian Guard Force (CGF) Contract Extension.**	**K Bowyer** **E Hutton**
	D Vineall [redacted] *joined the meeting*	
	C. ONE NDA AND CULTURE	
5.5	**Employee Engagement Update**	
5.5.1	The Board noted the update on the NDA Group Employee Engagement Survey Results 2025, actions being taken in response, and future Employee Engagement Survey arrangements. The Chair asked D Vineall to provide additional insight into the challenges	

	identified by the survey and how these were being responded to. The most significant challenge was the group's response to the Spending Review and supporting staff through the change environment and inevitable concerns over workload, uncertainty and job security. It was anticipated that the next iteration of the Survey in February 2026 would help to identify management's success in meeting this challenge. s43 [redacted] D Vineall confirmed that the comments were being analysed and highlighted the range of opinions being shared.	
5.5.2	The Board noted that the 2025 survey had the highest participation rate since 2021 and discussed that whilst this was testament to the work of the Executive to support engagement, it was not necessarily a sign of increased morale. The Board enquired as to the range of questions posed by the survey. The final draft questions for the Employee Engagement Survey 2026/27 would be shared with the Board as part of its January Board pack to ensure they met its expectations of being 'hard hitting' enough. It was suggested that an insightful question would be whether leaders were sufficiently clear with staff on what was going on in the organisation, and about change.	
5.5.3	The Chair suggested that when the 2026/27 survey results were presented to the Board, it would be helpful to focus on the key areas of concern. In addition, displaying some of the data in charts e.g., showing how trust has evolved over time, would be useful.	
	s40 [redacted] *left and J Vickerman and D Wilson joined the meeting*	
5.6	**NRS Culture Summary**	
5.6.1	The Board noted the update on the evolving cultural landscape at NRS. The Chair asked J Vickerman to provide additional insight into the current culture and how that measured against NRS expectations. s36 [redacted]	
5.6.2	The Board explored how NRS was managing its skills challenge against the pressures of the response to the Spending Review and launch of MAVE schemes. The Board suggested that upskilling managers to understand the expectations of graduates and apprentices was a key part of retaining younger generations. J Vickerman raised the status of the Trade Union landscape, and the Board noted its interest being kept up to date on this.	
5.6.3	The Board requested that the next update on NRS' culture address the points it had raised during the discussion and provide more insight on what a high-performance culture meant organisation and whether it had reached the state sought by the Executive or there remained work to do. Further insight into the behaviours that were valued, or were prevalent but not valued would also be expected.	
	J Vickerman and D Wilson left and s40 [redacted] *joined the meeting*	
5.7	**GSR003 Deep Dive**	
5.7.1	The Board noted the supporting materials prepared for its annual deep dive of Group Strategic Risk (GSR) 003 that looked at the current capability and capacity risk landscape across the group. GSR003 was currently rated 'High'. This position had been maintained since the previous deep dive in March 2024. A target position of Moderate was sought by 2035. s40 [redacted] discussed the factors that were impacting GSR003 – the nuclear	

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	renaissance that was placing additional demand on scarce skills; the challenging fiscal environment in which the group was operating; the group's geography; the time taken to develop specialist and SQEP skills, and the ageing demographic of its workforce. [redacted] explained that it was common for this risk to be at this level; there were systemic constraints that made significant progress difficult. The Board noted that employee attrition was declining and [redacted] discussed the potential contributing market and cultural factors. The Board noted the greater emphasis that had to be placed on elements of its reward packages and the Group's value e.g., family friendly policies and investment in people. [redacted] attested to the Risk team's positive engagement with the HR community and the mitigations implemented on GSR003.	
5.7.2	The Board reflected on the 'Red' risk rating for GSR003 [redacted] The Executive would determine the appropriate time at which to submit the letter.	**D Vineall**
	D Vineall, [redacted] left and [redacted], A Rayner and J Riddick joined the meeting.	
5.8	**Climate change and adverse weather hazards on sites and associated mitigation of risks**	
5.8.1	The Board noted the update on the climate resilience of the group in response to its request to consider climate change and adverse weather hazards on sites and the associated risk mitigation. The Board noted that the recent ONR Chief Nuclear Inspector's Themed Inspection on Climate Change had identified that climate change did not pose an immediate threat to nuclear safety and security. Work was required however for sites to be resilient in the medium and long-term. [redacted] highlighted that although focus and action on climate resilience was a relatively new area for the NDA, and the associated governance was still developing, good progress was being made with appropriate levels of oversight. The HSSSE Committee had agreed that climate resilience must be considered across the group over a range of different timescales. Responsibility and accountability for climate resilience in each time frame must be developed and implemented. [redacted] emphasised that climate change would need to be considered fundamentally in the definition of site end-states and embedded in Strategy 5 and Group Strategic Planning. D Peattie supported this and emphasised the stronger group approach in this area, evidenced by the attendees to the meeting.	
5.8.2	The Board explored the impact of accelerating degrading assets on vulnerability to climate change and weather hazards [redacted]	
5.8.3	The Board noted that the HSSSE Committee had requested a list of the group sites which were most vulnerable to climate risks including timescales of risk realisation and specific asset vulnerabilities. [redacted] The log would be presented to the HSSSE Committee in January. The Board was content for the HSSSE Committee to receive regular updates on this topic and for it to receive an update as part of an annual update on Sustainability.	
	[redacted] *A Rayner and J Riddick left the meeting.*	
	D. GOVERNANCE	
6.	**Other**	
6.1	**Reading pack items**	
6.1.1	The Board noted the Reading Pack items. No material points were raised.	

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	N Bruce and F Livens left the meeting	
6.2	**Forward Agenda**	
6.2.1	The Board noted the Forward Agenda. No material points were raised.	
6.3	**Board Reflections**	
6.3.1	The Chair requested a focus in Board papers on the issues most important to raise with the Board. Paper authors should take a less anodyne approach.	
6.3.2	M Shaw reported that the Governance team would consider how the efficiency of offline business required of the Board could be improved. The Board indicated its willingness to hold short calls on specific topics as required.	
6.4	**Any Other Business**	
6.4.1	M Shaw reminded the Board of the imminent closure of the NDA's London office and move to new premises shared with the NAO. Building passes were in the process of being arranged for Board members.	
6.4.2	There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting.	