

# **Cross Party Group on Civil Nuclear Industry**

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – 18:00, Scottish

Parliament and on Teams

Minute – Scottish Councils Committee on  
Radioactive Substances (SCCORS)

Present

## **MSPs**

- Oliver Mundell MSP - Co-Convener CPG
- Colin Smyth MSP – Co-Convener CPG
- Emma Harper MSP – Deputy Co-Convener CPG

## **Non-MSP Group Members**

- David Wallace - NDA (CPG secretariat)
- Eve Pearson – NDA (CPG secretariat)
- Robert Orr – Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
- Ian Park – CPX
- Michael Ward – University of Strathclyde
- Bethany Sherry – NDA
- Richard Murray – CPX
- Mark Rouse – DESNZ
- Louise Martin – SCCORS
- Kenny Taylor – Zero Waste Scotland
- Malcolm Stone – University of Aberdeen/National Decommissioning Centre

## **On Teams**

- Hazel Cannon
- Philip Carson
- Paul Dale
- Derek Lacey
- James Craig
- Fiona McCall
- Michelle Campbell
- Pete Thompson
- Philip Carson
- Ann-Marie Cowperthwaite

- Daniel Couldridge
- Gail Ross
- Stewart MacDonald
- David Calder

## Apologies

- Phil Matthews – Nuleaf
- Paul Sweeney MSP

## Agenda item 1 – Welcome and introduction

- **Oliver Mundell MSP**– Thanks for joining. We are going to start with a video tonight which marks 20 years of the NDA and the Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs). I will then give some updates, and we will get into the body of the meeting.
- **Video plays**
- **Oliver Mundell MSP**- I was keen to play that video as it connects to that localised angle that we are going to talk about tonight. I've welcomed, as I know all MSPs have, those SSG and community voices within this forum. It's only by having all of those voices that we can make sure we are properly doing our job and holding everyone to account.
- There's been a few developments that I want to flag up since our last meeting. The first is that I represented the CPG at Decomm week in Aberdeen last week. It was great to see the cross-industry collaboration, and people talking about skills and the use of technology. It was significant to have nuclear voices at that event.
- We've had a further approach, for a joint meeting with the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), which is set to happen at the UK Parliament. We are pinning down the exact details, and the NIA and NDA are working together to deliver a meaningful event. It will be a chance to get that UK perspective on what's happening in the nuclear sector.
- I should say we are joined by Colin Smyth MSP and Emma Harper MSP who continue to support the group and these meetings.
- For future meetings we are still looking at plans between now and the Scottish Parliament elections, so if you have ideas for future meetings, now is the opportunity and contact David (CPG Secretariat). In September, we're looking to visit Hunterston A and B, furthering the CPG's intentions to engage with local site communities.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - We've also got a few items of correspondence, but we've not been able to attach these letters to the minutes of the last meeting as promised. They are available in the room and can be emailed to anyone who's keen to see them. We had a positive engagement from the Cabinet Secretary, Gillian Martin MSP, she specifically mentioned her recent engagement with the NDA and the input of this group. We also had a positive response from Skills Development Scotland, who are looking to bring current education providers together and work more closely with the sector and the industry. This is an improvement from where we were at the last meeting.

- Final thing to flag up is that in August, as part of the Festival of Politics, the CPG is supporting an event marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dounreay. Details should shortly be on the Scottish Parliament website, and anyone interested is welcome to come along.

## Agenda item 2 – Apologies and minutes of the previous meeting

- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - Asks if there are any objections to the minutes of the previous meeting. There are no objections, so the minutes are agreed.
- Asks if anyone is aware of additional apologies, there are none.

## Agenda item 3 - Presentation: The Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances (SCCORS)

- **Oliver Mundell MSP**- Introduces Louise Martin from SCCORS, who has recently come on board and Councillor Michelle Campbell, from Renfrewshire Council, who is the Chair of SCCORS.
- **Louise Martin**: Thanks for the opportunity to join in person and introduces Councillor Campbell who is joining online.
- **Councillor Michelle Campbell** – Introduces herself. Mentions it's been a huge effort to get SCCORS up and running. I want to put a thanks on record to the NDA and Nuleaf for their efforts.
- **Louise Martin: presents slides**
- Provides context of local government in Scotland. 32 unitary local authorities - different in size, population and needs. Councils provide a range of public services which are relevant to the civil nuclear industry, such as roads and transport, economic development, environmental protection and waste management. Local authorities are made up of Elected Members (Councillors) and Officers. Councillors are directly elected by the residents of the area they represent and make decisions on their behalf.
- Provides overview of radioactive waste across Scotland. Radioactive waste is managed at more than 30 sites around the UK, including a number of sites in Scotland:
  - Operating power generating site: Torness
  - Defueling/decommissioning power generation sites: Chapelcross and Hunterston A and B
  - Nuclear energy Research and Development (R&D) site - Dounreay (including a Low-Level Waste disposal site)
  - Defence sites – Clyde, Rosyth and Vulcan (Dounreay)
  - Other sites manage radioactive substances including Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM) produced from industrial activities (mining, oil and gas) e.g. Stoneyhill Landfill, Aberdeenshire
- Some radioactive substances and waste generated in Scotland are transported to sites in England for management/disposal.
- The management of radioactive substances and waste and nuclear decommissioning is of interest to Scottish local authorities and the communities who live and/or work in their area.

- LM provided an overview of SCCORS remit. The aim of SCCORS is to give independent, factual advice to Scottish local government on radioactive substances so it has interest in both radioactive materials and radioactive waste.
- LM provided an overview of operating sites, defueling and decommissioning sites in Scotland.
- LM provided overview of stakeholder engagement for Q1 – they held a SCCORS meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025, including 28 representatives from 22 local authorities and presentations from Scottish Government and NDA.
- LM gave an overview of SCCORS forward plan for next 3 months, including, continuing engagement with local authorities and elected member representatives, understand need of local authorities, develop social media presence and continue stakeholder engagement, including:
  - CPG meeting, May 2025 – “SCCORS – Engaging Scotland’s Local Authorities”
  - The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), 19th May
  - Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA), date to be confirmed
- **Councillor Michelle Campbell** – Highlights they are having an issue getting local elected members on the committee. When she became the Chair, the governance was lacking and she’s glad they now have that. There are still some local authorities that need to engage and her next step will be writing to Chief Executives and council leaders to press the importance of representation. There is still a lack of interest – as councillors are split in many ways – especially if it’s not in their local authorities, there is a bit of a dismissive attitude, and she wants to try and change that.
- To get a true representation we need a fuller room of represented members. Of course, site groups will have more interest, but even if it’s not in your local of authority, the movement of waste may affect many local authorities so there is that interest.
- One other point is elected members had an interest in skills and development, especially apprenticeships and planning in their last meeting and she is excited to see these topics discussed further.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - Thanks Louise and Michelle for that presentation.

### Agenda Item 3 - Questions

- **Gail Ross** – Thanks convener – thanks for presentation. Michelle is this something we can take to COSLA?
- **Councillor Michelle Campbell** - I’ve previously attempted to engage with them and I don’t feel that the correspondence back has been particularly strong. I think it would be in COSLA’s and the Scottish Government’s interests to engage. If anyone is having those conversations, please feel free to mention SCCORS.
- **Louise Martin** - We had a recent meeting with COSLA and we agreed to meet at a frequency that aligns with SCCORS. They were keen to see how the second meeting goes in November and what matters come out of that meeting.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP**- I would be happy to if it’s appropriate and helpful, and if Colin and Emma agree, to write to COSLA and to those local authorities that

don't have a representative on SCCORS. I will say that it came up at the meeting and we are interested to be better understand their engagement.

- What concerns me is the around cooperation between local authorities, and when you look at the geographical placement of these sites there is obviously opportunity beyond the boundary. I don't want to be critical but often local authorities are concentrated on that localised aspect and I think they have to be willing to look a bit wider. When you look at Scottish and UK Government economic initiatives, they are looking for collaboration and projects that aren't just focused on one area.
- **Councillor Michelle Campbell** – I would really appreciate it if that could be written, and I think it's a cultural shift that needs to happen, it's been a historic thing to just ask what the site groups are saying. I think having some correspondence from yourselves as the CPG would be very much appreciated.

**Action point – CPG to write to COSLA and local authorities that don't have a representative on SCCORS**

- **Councillor Stewart MacDonald** – I'm a Councillor from East Dunbartonshire. It's a comment about how individual local councils feel about how it affects them. When you look at a map, there looks like there are very few nuclear sites in Scotland. My interest in this is employability in my area. Some of my constituents work in the nuclear industry and there's transportation through East Dunbartonshire. One of the other bits, which Louise touched upon, is landfill of very low-level waste. I would be interested to know how many landfill sites are licensed for that material and how that, albeit very low-level waste, is being managed. So, there is skin in the game for all authorities and I'm not sure that's entirely appreciated.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - We can go away and look at landfill arrangements, I myself am not clear on that.
- **Louise Martin** – It hasn't come up since I have been in post.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP**- There is certainly a research team at Scottish Parliament who we can ask to get some basic information.
- **Kenny Taylor** – Introduces himself as from Zero Waste Scotland. One route into local authorities is we sit on a number of other statutory committees and public bodies; we meet quarterly and are always looking for agenda items relevant. We would be interested, I think, for SCCORS could come along and present.

**Action – SCCORS to engage with ZWS to agree appropriate engagement plan with these bodies/committees.**

- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – Thank you and I was going to mention that Zero Waste Scotland were present. That is helpful.
- **Emma Harper MSP**– Just going back a step and thinking about when I visited Chapelcross there was lots of widely needed skills, such as physicists. So, I'm interested as a topographical map of the nuclear industry, where are these people, where do they go to school and university, and it could be a hook for other local authorities to participate.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – That's really good point and there's lots of these maps being produced all the time, where the nuclear workers are based, who's in the supply chain and academia. It's a good point in terms of SCCORS trying

to show that - I'm thinking of Strathclyde University, the National Decommissioning Centre in Aberdeen. There's lots of people in lots of little pockets who have an interest in this stuff. I think people think if they don't have one of these sites close to them, then there is no interest or there's no one working in the nuclear sector. But between supply chain and academia and medical application, there's a huge amount of people who're affected by these policies.

- **Colin Smyth MSP** – I remember SCCORS being established when I was a councillor way back. I'm interested in what are the main areas of advice you will be able to provide local authorities and where do they go at the moment I guess if you guys are going to be filling the gap?
- **Louise Martin** – It could be environmental health, emergency planning, economic development. It's quite a broad mix of member representatives but at the first meeting in May, we were trying to understand what subject and what elements are they interested in, so that SCCORS can bring forward a plan of meetings with relevant speakers. We are still trying to understand that breadth of interest, in order to bring the relevant people to come and speak to the committee. At the minute, lots of things came out of the first meeting so it's about prioritising. The funding for my post is 12 months, so we're looking at that forward programme being 12 months, but we're also looking at other topics that will form that slightly further ahead programme. We are trying to understand what the immediate areas of interest are and bring in the relevant people.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP**- I'm interested on building on that point of advice. I think that is one of the hard thing for councillors, the space around nuclear can be quite a charged debate, especially around energy generation, policy, waste and planning on sites. What support does SCCORS offer, as a lot of councillors are left on the front line in relation to some of these things when decisions are taken elsewhere. It is often councillors who are most active in SSGs and public facing in relation to sites. When you talk about support and advice, we would all want to see evidence-based approaches, but that can be difficult if you are in these local and charged spaces.
- **Louise Martin** – Let me draw on some of my experience. I'm employed by Nuleaf, they have a steering group, which is made up of their elected members, they also have radioactive waste policy planning group, made up of officers. If there are matters of interest, or upcoming policy or strategy, Nuleaf would bring speakers to come and present and we're looking for that same format for SCCORS. Trying to ensure local authorities understand how and when they can engage in those processes and if local authorities decide they want to know more, we can invite local authorities to come and present so we can enable those local authorities to participate in that process.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP**– My other point would be on early engagement and I'm sure that's what you are trying to do. I think sometimes - and it's not meant in a political way; you see these consultations start before there's been that quality engagement with local authorities, and the opportunity to have that engagement has been missed. That would be one of my hopes as an individual MSP, that there would be a chance for councils to help shape the consultation and policy process.

- **Louise Martin** – The NDA will be looking to launch a consultation on strategy 5, which will then set that programme for them for that 5-year window. SCCORS looking to set up joint engagement on Nuleaf for that.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – Asks if there are any other questions around SCCORS or local authorities.
- **Councillor Michelle Campbell** – From my perspective as the convener, I hope for a proactive approach in terms of engagement, so I can reassure you that aspiration is aligned.
- The convener of the SCCORS committee needs to be able to provide that support to any elected member that contacts them, regardless of if our politics align or not – there was a sizeable gap because of COVID, because priorities changed but now we are up and running I'm hoping we will be able to build that confidence over time.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – That's positive to hear, it sounds like you are off to a good start and great you've built the interest so far.
- **Tor Justad** – Thank you. I'm chair of an NGO campaign group called Highlands Against Nuclear, and I'm a member of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group. As NGOs we're quite lucky we have access to NDA, DESNZ and Ministers. Our campaign was initially about the transport of nuclear waste from Dounreay to Sellafield, 400 miles on a rail line, declared as unfit for purpose, and also by sea and by air. So, lots of concerns and we continue to have concerns about nuclear particles on the beach. So, we've heard about SCCORS over the years, but we weren't sure of its purpose and what it does. How does SCCORS intend to interact with NGOs over Scotland and those that have a different view and have concerns? This has to be part of SCCORS work.
- **Councillor Michelle Campbell** – Tor thanks for the question. The answer is the door is open to every and all NGOs that want to engage. It can't be just about one-way questions, and even if it's just asking a question, it's about making sure we're asking those questions when we are considering things. More than happy to be contacted to have meetings. We're obviously in the infancy of this committee but we are happy to have open and frank conversations.
- **Tor Justad** – I will pass that onto other NGOs thank you.
- **Ian Park** – I'm a Trade Union convener and I work in encapsulating nuclear waste, the people I work with believe in what we do. The point is, if we don't do what we do, waste will just sit there. If SCCORS can do anything for us, it's about telling people what we do. We just deal with waste, and we encapsulate it and make it as safe as we can. I don't do it for me, I do it for my grandkids. The jobs are there now and will exist for a number of years and we need colleges and universities to run courses. If you can separate the nuclear power argument – we need to work together and find a way. 12 months in nuclear is nothing – if SCCORS can help promote what we do – all the better.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – That's really positive and again speaking more widely to all local authorities, including trade unions is another good voice to motivate interest.
- **Kenny Taylor** – Raises a point about the classification of waste and that a lot of the waste will be low-level and construction waste. We need to ensure there is strict compliance, and this waste is managed responsibly.

- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – That is a good point, there's big issues with asbestos at a number of these sites.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – Thanks Louise, Councillor Michelle Campbell and Councillor Stewart Macdonald. For councillors it's a huge pull-on people's time, thanks for taking time to join and giving us the extra insight.

## Agenda item 5 - AOB and Date of Next Meeting

- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - We will come back at the various points mentioned at the start, the joint meeting in London and also the visit to Hunterston A and B. I want to encourage anyone if you have something you want to put on the agenda before the Scottish Parliament elections this is the time to do it.
- **Emma Harper MSP** – When we had the CPG meeting on skills, I volunteered to draft a possible motion on skills, but I had staff changes in my office. It might be something we pick up with David and the timing for the Dounreay anniversary might be when we target. I am offering still to do that.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - It would be really positive if you were willing to do this, as it would be good to demonstrate the truly cross-party nature of this group.
- **David Wallace** – I'm happy to support that offline and also involve Gail Ross.
- **Gail Ross** – Happy to help, we were going to be launching a skills hub, around about the same we spoke about getting a motion debate in Parliament. It's been put back but if we aimed for Sept/Oct/Nov, after recess that would good timing.

### Action: Emma Harper MSP to draft possible motion on 'skills'.

- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - Happy to sign as long as there's nothing unusual in the motion.
- **Malcom Stone** - I'm from the National Decommissioning Centre, I want to say thanks for attending Decomm Week last week, I hope you got enthusiasm for all things Decomm. There's a massive opportunity out there and all credit to NDA for driving opportunities around the nuclear sector. The NDA have some things they can teach to other sectors. There's a lot of people who want to engage on the skills piece and decommissioning is here forever and it's about how we do it right and in the correct way for future generations.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** – That's really important and I fed back informally. I would be keen to hear more about that work as there's something for the taxpayer and the public – particularly for oil and gas and renewables – it seems crazy we've spent so much money on technology, skills and on these processes, and they stay inside the parameter of these sites. Where there is obvious cross over, it's easy to do that knowledge exchange, and if there's tech that can be employed, we should be doing it. We will have a much louder voice if we can bring together different areas of the economy and country. Once you get passed that skepticism you understand that the cross over is a lot more than you think.
- **Oliver Mundell MSP** - Closes the meeting and thanks everyone for joining. I look forward to seeing you in September and I strongly encourage everyone to come to Festival of Politics - it's great we have been able to get it as an item on the programme.
- **Date of next meeting:** Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, Hunterston,



**Venue:** TBC