

Update from NIA Chair

Dear Member,

As you may be aware, and I know some of you will have taken part in interviews as part of it, I commissioned an independent review of the scope, work and structure of the NIA in the context of changes in the sector – the advent of Great British Nuclear, the anticipated (and now reality of the) election of a new government, the development of greater international and direct industrial interest in nuclear – and a health check of what we do to support our members and their aspirations. The NIA were heavily involved in the creation of GBN and I wanted us to build on all these opportunities for the industry.

The NIA membership is broad – we have some large members who provide the majority of our subscription income, but we also have many smaller, growing and specialised members operating in the supply chain across decommissioning, waste management, operations and new build. We have always recognised that our members have different needs and expectations of us, and have strived to avoid a situation where our activity is dominated by one set of demands to the exclusion of the interests of others. In considering our approach to the future, the NIA Board has been clear that we should continue to serve the interests of all of our members, large and small.

Earlier this week, a Special General Meeting of the NIA took place. The membership unanimously agreed to adopt amended Articles of Association, which will enable the NIA Board to be expanded to include up to ten members, and for the establishment of a Member Consultative Council to provide a better way for the NIA to ensure our members are engaged with the work we do and, for the first time, that our successful and popular Business Groups place in our governance is formalised.

There are three broad areas arising from the review that the NIA Board has discussed and agreed to implement changes to address – the focus and activities of the NIA itself as the trade body, the governance of the organisation, and the future direction for a reconstituted Nuclear Sector Council in place of the previous Nuclear Industry Council.

### **Focus and Activity of the NIA**

You told us that you wanted the NIA to do more to explain, promote and expand on opportunities for NIA members in adjacent sectors, including defence nuclear.

We have recently run events in partnership with AWE to help engage the wider supply chain in opportunities there, and are co-ordinating some activity both with ADS and Make UK Defence (defence trade bodies) to broaden understanding, with some exciting initiatives under development aimed at simplifying work across the sector. However, our advocacy and policy work remains focussed on civil nuclear.

You told us that on areas such as cybersecurity and international opportunities, that the NIA should be providing guidance and insight as well as presenting the UK industry offer more widely as interest in nuclear develops around the world.

We will work with World Institute for Nuclear Safety, government officials and others to produce more up to date guidance and information. We have changed our international work with counterpart organisations to be more outcome focussed – with initial activity being undertaken in UK-Canada and UK-France, with the nuclear forum in Canada House feeding directly into government-to-government discussions on regulation, financing and provision of fuels.

You told us that there needs to be a greater focus on delivery, and addressing the barriers that exist both in the supply chain currently and in growing that supply chain.

We have made the economic opportunities in the supply chain a core part of our messaging, including in providing training for members in engaging with their local political stakeholders. We have also taken on the work arising from the previous government's 'hackathon' into specific recommendations on regulation and related issues to the new government. We will look to update previous supply chain capability and capacity exercises, which are now out of date.

You told us that there are many regional nuclear groups forming, and there should be better co-ordination and consistency of approach

We have put more time into helping to signpost and provide support and information to groups, and where possible aligning activity and jointly undertaking events.

You told us that there needs to be greater clarity about what the NIA's priorities and approach is, and more information to members about what the NIA is doing.

We have revamped the weekly update we send out, increased our presence and activity on LinkedIn and other channels to provide information to members, and we will send to members our progress against the Operating Plan, which is approved by the Board each year.

## **NIA Governance**

You told us that the NIA Executive Board is not diverse nor representative enough, and there should be more independent representation on the Board in the future.

We have, as we were able to under the previous Articles, added three new members to the Board, two of whom are female and we now have two independent members. This is an interim arrangement, and with changes to the Articles of Association now made, this will allow a new, larger Board to be recruited.

You told us that members do not feel involved in the governance of the NIA, and that it is currently drawn from too narrow a group of people/organisations.

We will replace the Strategic Advisory Board, which ultimately did not prove to be a successful innovation with a Membership Consultative Council which will meet at least twice a year and be drawn from members outside of the Board, include the elected Chairs of the NIA Business Groups, and include balanced representation from large and small companies. It will act to provide a formal channel of dialogue and communication between the NIA Board and members, and share information and seek feedback on NIA activity and priorities.

## **Nuclear Sector Council**

You told us that since the previous Nuclear Industry Council ceased to function, there is a lack of a strategic body bringing industry, government and relevant public and other bodies together. This is needed, but with a real delivery focus based on what other sectors do, to avoid it becoming another talking shop.

We have looked at the infrastructure which already exists, at what other sectors do effectively and discussed the concept of a new sector council – properly incorporating defence and medical alongside energy – with Ministers and officials. To avoid duplication, then it would be logical for this body to incorporate the cross-sector initiative on skills which already exists, so there is one forum. It is clear that for such a body to be effective, then it will need industry support from larger companies, including the resources to enable the delivery focus to be effective.

## **What happens next ?**

Changes in relation to the scope and activity of the NIA have been or are being implemented, and are reflected in the Operational Plan 24-25 which was approved by the NIA Board earlier this year, with progress monitored and reported to Board meetings (and as it is established to the Member Consultative Council, in due course).

The formation of the Nuclear Sector Council and the level of support that can be provided to it will be discussed with larger member companies next week, with a view to taking a proposal to Ministers and officials for consideration and implementation.

With new Articles of Association now adopted, the current (interim) NIA Executive Board will begin the process to recruit and form a new Board and the first of the Membership Consultative Council.

In parallel to this, you may well be aware that the NIA is currently recruiting a new Chair, with my term of office coming to an end at the end of the calendar year. The Board has taken the understandable view, with which I fully agree, that an incoming Chair will likely want to have some input into the detailed arrangements for the recruitment of a new Board. I therefore anticipate that this will be amongst the first things they will do on taking up their position early next year.

Dr Tim Stone, CBE

Chair, Nuclear Industry Association

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