

Lord Vallance of Balham

Minister for Science, Innovation, Research and
Nuclear
Department of Energy Security and Net Zero
55 Whitehall London SW1A 2HP

Enquiries to: Phil Watson Strategic Energy
Projects Manager

Email: phil.watson@suffolk.gov.uk

Date: 24/03/2026

BY EMAIL

Dear Minister of State,

The government response to the Fingleton Review – Recommendation 30

I'm writing to you on behalf of the New Nuclear Local Authorities Group (NNLAG) following the publication of the Government's response to the Fingleton Review.

I would like to thank you for your response to my letter of the 29th January. NNLAG is grateful that in its response to the Fingleton Review, published on the 13th of March 2026, the government did not perpetuate or support the view that Local Authorities use Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to delay and frustrate the delivery of new nuclear projects, as the Review suggested at paragraph 490.

It is noted that the government has agreed to take forward recommendation 30, setting up a new unit within the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, to discharge planning requirements for new nuclear projects, in consultation with the relevant local authorities.

In addition, NNLAG members would appreciate clarity as to if the Geological Disposal Facility would also be in the scope of the new unit, and look forward to engaging with a future consultation, in line with the government response to Recommendation 37, regarding an update the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Geological Disposal Infrastructure.

The New Nuclear Local Authorities Group is ready and keen to engage with the development of this unit, given that several of its members have current and relevant experience in this process. As well as experience dealing with the governance of construction, including, changes to the DCO during construction, and changes to schemes delivered through the Town and Country Planning Act.

Given the scale, duration, and complexity of delivering nuclear projects, it would be helpful to understand, as soon as possible, which parts of the existing process it is envisaged will be the principal responsibility of the new unit, and which parts will

remain principally the responsibility of local authorities. Current, practical, and relevant experience, is available within local authorities to assist the Department.

Local Authority officers representing NNLAG continue to engage with civil servants, and other regulators, through the Nuclear Regulators and Consenters Forum, the next meeting of which is due to take place in London on the 25th of March 2026.

I am sure it is the government's intention to set out an ambitious programme for delivery of the new unit, especially given the June 2026 target date suggested by Fingleton and that it is now to include energy connection projects in its scope, with several of these grid projects at currently in Examination.

Therefore, it would be helpful if your officials were able to provide greater detail as soon as possible, regarding the scope of the new unit, and the process and timeline for establishing it. The New Nuclear Local Authorities Group, despite its concerns about this proposal, looks forward to working constructively with government to establish the new unit.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Rout

Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reform, Environment and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects