Invitation to Tender

PIONEER PARK
Master Planning & PMO Services

Send any clarification questions by 12:00, Wednesday, 17 December 2025.
Submit proposals by 23:59, Friday, 23 January 2026 to be considered.

1. Contents

2. Introduction

Welcome to this tender opportunity. We invite you to learn about our mission and the values that drive us as we work to build extraordinary communities in West Cumbria. Through innovative development projects and strong partnerships, we aim to support local regeneration, foster economic growth, and create lasting positive impact for people, places, and businesses.

This document provides all the information needed to guide your application and contribute to our shared vision for a prosperous future in West Cumbria.

2.1 BEC

We are a values-driven organisation committed to developing exceptional communities that deliver positive outcomes for people, places and partners. We're here to transform places and create opportunities. As a profit for purpose developer, every penny we earn goes straight back into projects that help West Cumbria thrive.

We manage and reimagine spaces like Westlakes Science Park, The Bus Station in Whitehaven, and Blencathra Business Centre; turning them into hubs for business, innovation, and community life. Guided by our "Golden Thread" of sustainability, we're working towards net zero. Our commitment to excellence and continuous improvement is demonstrated through our ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), and ISO 45001 (Occupational Health and Safety Management) accreditations.

Owned by Cumberland Council and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) but operating independently, our focus is simple: build extraordinary communities where people and businesses can flourish. We combine our knowledge in the arena of sustainable development with a responsible business approach and a drive to build extraordinary communities and deliver valuable local regeneration.

By working in partnership with local, national and international stakeholders to support projects that will bring sustained transformation, we are able to take on challenging sites that require strategic and creative thinking to turn them into viable developments for our communities.

2.2 Pioneer Park

In June 2025, the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), announced that hundreds of acres of land around the Sellafield site in West Cumbria will be explored for a clean energy development, including new nuclear power generation. This includes land that was part of the Moorside site, designated under EN6 as being suitable for nuclear generation.

To be known as Pioneer Park, the purpose of the development will be to diversify and strengthen the local economy in West Cumbria, which has historically been heavily reliant on the Sellafield nuclear site, located adjacent to Moorside.

The vision for Pioneer Park is to create a prosperous and diverse economy in West Cumbria, built on the strengths of the nuclear industry.

This vision is supported by four primary objectives:

- To diversify the West Cumbrian economy away from over-reliance on nuclear decommissioning so that it is more vibrant and resilient.
- To regenerate towns in West Cumbria so that they are attractive places for people to live and to visit.
- To ensure that the nationally important mission of nuclear decommissioning has the people, skills, supply chain and infrastructure to succeed.

- To produce clean energy to support the local economy and community.

Pioneer Park will boost Cumberland and northern England's economy by driving clean energy innovation and establishing an AI Growth Zone. It will create skilled jobs, attract leaders in clean energy, and support small-scale nuclear development at Britain's nuclear centre, benefiting local communities.

After focused market engagement, we're moving forward to define Pioneer Park's scale, scope, and community impact. We are now seeking the right people to join us for the next phase.

3. What we're tendering for

If you wish to submit a tender, review this pack, confirm you meet our requirements, and provide all necessary evidence. Please send a complete response for consideration.

3.1 Overview

BEC is the trading name for Energy Coast West Cumbria Limited (ECWC), a private company limited by guarantee. ECWC has two Members, the NDA and Cumberland Council.

BEC's primary purpose is to deliver place-based economic development in West Cumbria. Working in partnership with local and national stakeholders it supports and delivers projects that bring sustained social and economic transformation across West Cumbria. Through its three companies, BEC also owns and operates business parks and commercial premises across West Cumbria.

We are seeking one consultant partner to create a Project Management Office (PMO) for the development of a Master Plan for the Pioneer Park site. The Park will host clean energy generation technology vendors, clean energy generation developers and green industrial and technology-based organisations that would benefit from a dedicated clean energy power supply.

Initial, targeted market engagement has been undertaken, coordinated and managed by BEC. The purpose was to engage with interested parties to further shape and define the scale, nature and community benefits of the planned development at Pioneer Park.

The winning vendor will have access to the outputs of the market engagement process to assist in the master planning development process.

We seek a reputable organisation with a proven track record in master planning, as well as the establishment and management of a Programme Management Office (PMO).

Demonstrated experience in the energy sector, including nuclear and clean energy, will be advantageous.

3.2 Objectives

The primary goals of this commission are as follows:

1. Creation of a development master plan for the new Pioneer Park.
2. Set up and running of an experienced PMO to deliver the master plan.

4. Details of the commission

To enable you to provide a thorough and detailed response to our tender specification, we have outlined below all aspects of the work we would like you to address. However, as specialists in this field, your expertise may identify additional elements that we have not considered. If you believe any relevant aspects are missing, please include them in your proposal.

The specific output we expect from the delivery of this work is:

1. A **master plan** for the development of Pioneer Park that:
    a. provides a route map for the development of the park
    b. identifies clear opportunities for clean energy generation and attracting innovative green energy businesses including those related to SMRs development and the proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) Growth Zone.
    c. provides a prioritised implementation plan for investment, and
    d. identifies financial and funding options for implementing the identified opportunities, taking into account the current economic landscape, with the objective of securing future investment to ensure successful realisation.

2. A **skilled PMO** that will interface and report to the relevant parties and oversee the development of the master plan.

4.1.1 Master Plan

The initial market engagement has highlighted a range of potential technologies and key considerations pertinent to the development of Pioneer Park. In light of these findings, the project partners; comprising the NDA, Cumberland Council, and BEC, intend to commission comprehensive site analysis and spatial master planning to evaluate a variety of future development scenarios. This work will underpin the evolution of the delivery model for Pioneer Park and help shape forthcoming engagement with prospective development partners.

Pioneer Park is to be situated on the Moorside site, which is currently designated for new nuclear power generation in accordance with the National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN6). The spatial master plan must address both the anticipated scope of development within Pioneer Park and the land requirements necessary to meet the ongoing operational needs of Sellafield Limited.

The NDA has identified the land to be explored, as depicted in Figure 1 below. In total, this represents over 400 acres, being referred to as Pioneer Park. It should be noted that some of this may not be suitable for substantive development, though it may have alternative uses e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain.

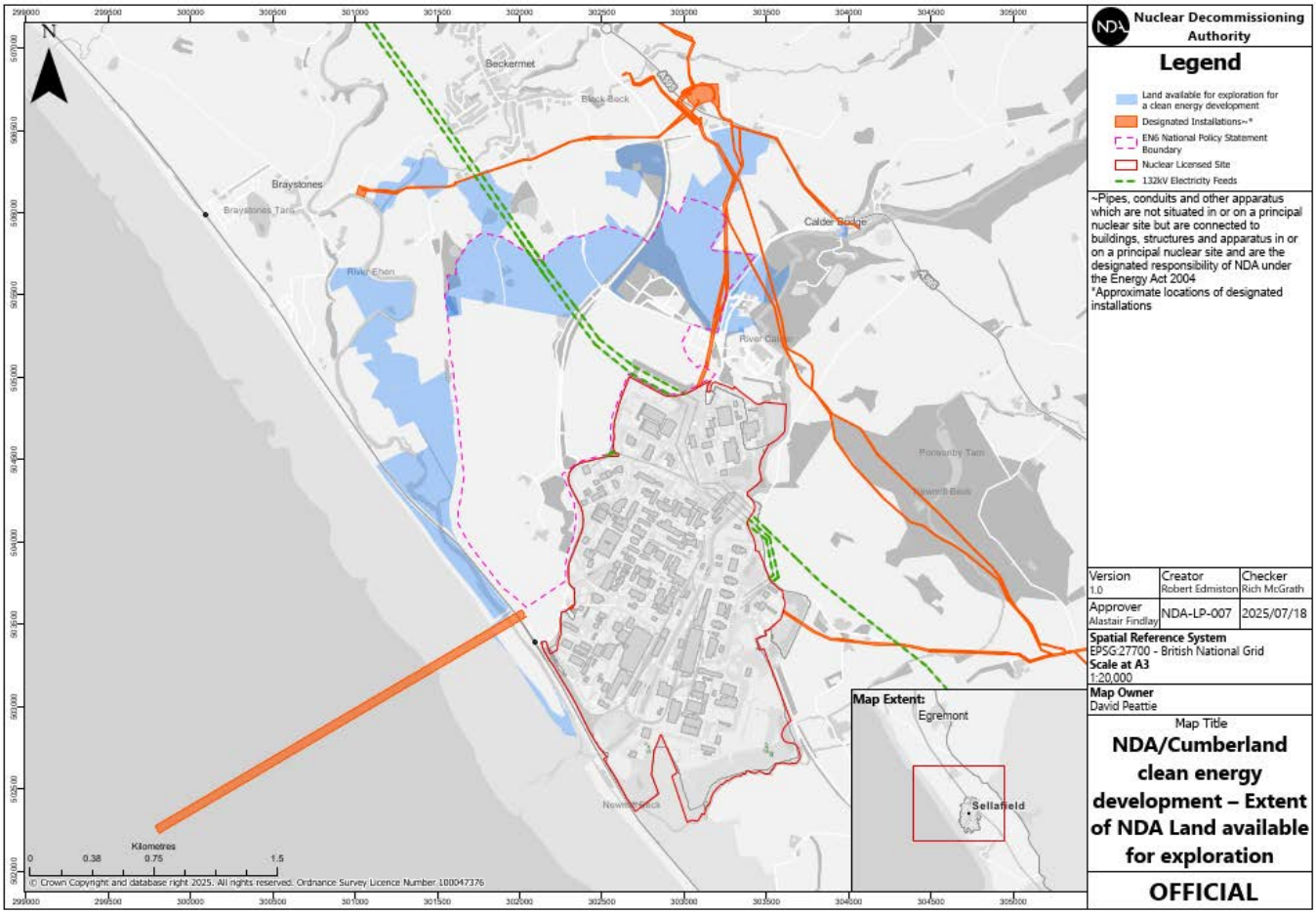
The commissioned site analysis and master plan are to be informed by the development criteria set out in the forthcoming revision to the National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN7). The master plan should provide a thorough assessment of the proposed development's alignment with these criteria, as well as with the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1) and other relevant national and local planning policies.

A primary objective for Pioneer Park is to facilitate clean power generation, particularly through the deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). However, the master plan must also explore the potential for accommodating other clean energy technologies, including hydrogen production, sustainable aviation fuel, and developments that would benefit from a secure site, such as those related to defence technologies. This should encompass a range of energy supply and demand scenarios reflecting the array of technologies under consideration.

Any development at Pioneer Park providing nuclear generating capacity exceeding 50 MW will be classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, necessitating a Development Consent Order (DCO) supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment. The master plan should set out recommendations for the consenting process applicable to other proposed developments, including but not limited to, applications under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA). Requirements for further site investigations, technical assessments, and detailed design work to support future consent applications must be clearly identified.

The master plan is expected to articulate a clear vision and provide a structured plan for advancing the development of Pioneer Park, including an indicative timeline for delivery. An assessment of the readiness of SMR technology to achieve full licensing and operational status by 2035/36 should be undertaken, with appropriate consultation with GBE-N to inform this analysis.

Figure 1 *– Land Available for Exploration*



The NDA holds significant information on the site, gained from previous studies, including Ecological and Environmental Assessments, Utilities & Transport Baseline Assessment, Planning Baseline Assessment, Land Baseline Assessment, Transport Baseline Assessment, Geological Information, Meteorological conditions (historical values, current figures, meteorological parameters) and site drainage characteristics.

This information can be made available to credible interested parties by the NDA through Non-Disclosure Agreements.

4.1.1.1 Development Criteria

Informed by feedback from the initial market engagement and land availability commitments from the NDA, the spatial master plan for Pioneer Park should be based on a circa 200-acre development site and accommodate the development required to deliver up to 1GWe of nuclear generated power.

Factors to be considered include:

- AI Growth Zone criteria of a guaranteed 24/7 supply of at least 500MWe direct line power 365 days of the year. Consideration must therefore be given to redundancy of supply during refuelling and engineering shutdown of reactor units
- Limited capacity for off-load to the local grid network
- Road and 132kV cables that bisect the EN6 designated land
- All ancillary equipment and infrastructure associated with the SMR development including transmission infrastructure and land required for associated development to support the proposed nuclear infrastructure, including safe and secure construction, operation, decommissioning, and storage of radioactive waste and spent fuel
- Other potential development opportunities that would support the AI Growth Zone aspirations or alternative clean energy technologies e.g. hydrogen/sustainable aviation fuel production. Consideration should be given to facilities that would benefit from a high security environment e.g. development related to defence related technologies.
- Interim, smaller scale, power generation (nuclear, renewable or hydrogen enabled gas generators) with direct line power supply to AI data centre facilities (on or off Pioneer Park site), to be operational by 2030.
- Other land required to mitigate impacts, which may be conjoined to the land on which energy would be generated, or separate.

4.1.1.2 Site Assessment Criteria

The site analysis and master plan should include an assessment of the site and proposed development in relation to the criteria set out in the draft National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN7) and other relevant considerations:

- Population Density
- Proximity to Military Facilities
- Flooding
- Coastal and other Landform Change
- Proximity to Major Hazard Sites and Major Accident Hazard Pipelines
- Proximity to Civil Aircraft and Spacecraft Movements
- Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Areas of Amenity, Landscape Value and Heritage Significance
- Access to Suitable Sources of Cooling
- Site Access and Connectivity
- Infrastructure and Energy
- Site Context

4.1.1.3 Information to be provided

The master plan should take account of and benefit from the data already gathered on the site, currently held by the NDA and Sellafield Ltd. This can be made available to the authors of the master plan under Non-Disclosure Agreement(s).

4.1.1.4 Outputs required

The following outputs are required from this commission:

i. A spatial master plan for the land at Moorside to identify:
   - the development boundary for Pioneer Park and the area of land at Moorside to support the future operational requirements of Sellafield.
   - the location and extent of land required to support SMR development including ancillary development and transmission infrastructure
   - the type, site requirements and proposed location of other appropriate uses that could form part of the overall development mix for Pioneer Park
   - the extent and location of land required for landscaping and environmental mitigation
   - an overall site plan for Pioneer Park providing indicative development areas, building footprints and cross-sections.
   - a proposed access strategy for Pioneer Park
   - energy supply and demand scenarios for the development proposed at Pioneer Park.
   - an infrastructure strategy for Pioneer Park to include water, power and communications

ii. Site assessments to address the site criteria set out in Section 4 above

iii. Recommendations for further surveys and assessments required.

iv. An assessment of the proposed development at Pioneer Park in relation to the National Policy Statements for Energy and Nuclear Power Generation as well as relevant national and local planning policy.

v. An analysis, and recommended approach to the consenting regime for the development of Pioneer Park to include DCO, TCPA and any other relevant consents required.

vi. An indicative development timeline for the delivery of Pioneer Park.

vii. An assessment in relation to the readiness of SMR technology to be fully licenced and operational by 2035/36.

4.1.1.5 Timeline

This project is of significant importance, leveraging established industry expertise and local history. The objective is to advance operations on this site efficiently and at pace. Please ensure your proposed timeline spans 6 to 9 months maximum, culminating in the delivery of a master plan that is capable of secure the requisite funding for accelerated progress.

4.1.1.6 Project Governance and Reporting

The use of public funds must be clearly justified, demonstrating that they are being allocated responsibly and in full compliance with public requirements.

At a minimum, you will be expected to provide monthly reports to the project governance board, which includes BEC CEO, as well as attend regular meetings with the Cumberland Nuclear Future Group to present progress.

4.1.1.7 Documents Attached

The following documents are included for information:

i. Pioneer Park Development Prospectus

ii. AI Growth Zone Proposal

4.1.2 Project Management Office

The selected tenderer will be responsible for setting up and managing a comprehensive Project Management Office (PMO) as part of this commission. This PMO will be essential in supervising every aspect of project delivery and making sure that workstreams and stakeholders are well-coordinated.

We expect the PMO will adopt a hybrid working model. To support this, office accommodation at Ingwell Hall, Westlakes Science Park, will be made available by BEC without charge. Please ensure that your proposed costs comprehensively cover all travel, accommodation, and related expenses.

Tenderers are requested to address the primary responsibilities outlined below within their proposals. Each submission should provide a comprehensive explanation of how these responsibilities will be managed, including references to relevant experience and established best practices to demonstrate effective project management and ensure successful delivery.

In addition, tenderers may, where appropriate, subcontract specialist expertise - such as engaging an AI data center partner, to inform and enhance the overall master planning process. However, any such subcontracted activities will remain under the direct management and coordination of the tenderer to ensure alignment with project objectives and maintain accountability for all deliverables.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and tenderers may include additional responsibilities as appropriate.

i. **Project Planning and Oversight:** Develop and maintain comprehensive project plans, proactively manage risks and issues, monitor progress against key milestones, and provide regular status updates to the project governance board.

ii. **Quality Assurance and Communication**: Implement robust quality assurance procedures, facilitate clear and effective communication between project partners, and ensure that all deliverables are completed within agreed timeframes and budgetary constraints.

iii. **Relevant Experience:** Demonstrate the team's experience in successfully delivering complex, multi-disciplinary projects, including examples of adaptability and responsiveness to changing project requirements.

iv. **Documentation and Compliance**: Maintain accurate and up-to-date project documentation, and ensure compliance with all applicable regulatory and funding obligations.

4.1.3 Social Impact

The selected tenderer will be expected to integrate social impact considerations throughout all elements of this commission. This includes clearly demonstrating how project activities will benefit local communities, support economic growth, and advance environmental sustainability by addressing West Cumbria's unique challenges with sustainable solutions. It is essential to align with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Social Impact and Communities Strategy, which supports Sellafield Ltd's SiX (Social Impact Multiplied) Strategy.

Tenderers are requested to address the following, as a minimum, within their proposals.

i. **Social Impact Integration**: Clearly outline how social impact will be incorporated into project delivery, including targeted strategies to maximize positive local impact. These strategies should be informed by a comprehensive understanding of West Cumbria's unique needs and priorities.

ii. **Community and Economic Benefits**: Specify measures such as local employment opportunities, skills development and training, community engagement initiatives, and responsible procurement practices that will be adopted to enhance social value. All measures should be designed with sensitivity to the economic, social, and environmental challenges facing West Cumbria, ensuring that project activities directly benefit the region's communities.

iii. **Measurement and Reporting**: Detail the approach for measuring and reporting on social value outcomes, ensuring that activities are aligned with relevant national and local priorities, and that progress is monitored against the particular challenges identified in West Cumbria.

iv. **Relevant Experience**: Share examples of past projects that delivered social impact and demonstrate the team's capability to understand and address West Cumbria's distinctive challenges. This should include evidence of adaptability and responsiveness to changing local circumstances.

v. **Stakeholder Engagement**: Outline plans for ongoing consultation with stakeholders and local communities to identify needs and monitor progress, ensuring responsiveness throughout the project lifecycle. Engagement should be structured to capture the voices and concerns of residents and organizations in West Cumbria, enabling the project to remain attuned to local issues and aspirations.

Proposals should draw on past experience and best practices to ensure a robust approach to social impact delivery, with a clear framework for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

4.1.4 Cost

Tenderers must supply a comprehensive list of expected costs and payment timelines connected to fulfilling the commission.

i. The total budget available for this project is £750,000 to £900,000 (exclusive of VAT).

ii. Proposals must justify costs, show value for money, ensure expenses match project scope and complexity, and include contingency provisions.

iii. All costs should be presented in a transparent manner, including but not limited to staff costs, travel and subsistence, materials, external consultancy fees, and any other direct or indirect expenses anticipated during the course of the commission.

iv. Tenderers are reminded that cost proposals exceeding the stated maximum of £900,000 will not be considered.

The cost proposal should also identify any opportunities for cost efficiencies or innovative approaches to maximise the impact of the available budget, without compromising quality or delivery of the specified outcomes.

Please ensure that all figures are clearly itemised and supported by appropriate assumptions or justifications.

5. How to apply and what to expect

We invite you to submit a detailed proposal describing your intended approach to this commission. Your submission should reference the requirements outlined in this document and demonstrate clear alignment with the Vision and Objectives presented in the Pioneer Park Prospectus, as well as other documents provided within the tender package.

Send any clarification questions via the portal by midday, Wednesday, 17 December 2025.
Submit proposals by 23:59, Friday, 23 January 2026 to be considered.

For any additional inquiries, contact sam.burrows@discoverbec.com.

5.1 Criteria

Please use the following criteria to ensure that you provide us with the information that we are looking for. We reserve the right to disregard any application that is either late or incomplete.

SUBMISSION CRITERIA Requirement	Description
Alignment with Vision and Objectives	Clearly demonstrate how your approach aligns with the Vision and Objectives outlined in the Pioneer Park Prospectus and other tender documents.
Measurement and Reporting of Social Impact	Detail your approach for measuring and reporting social value outcomes, ensuring alignment with national and local priorities. Explain how progress will be monitored, particularly regarding challenges in West Cumbria.
Relevant Experience Demonstrated Capability	Please demonstrate your experience in managing comparable projects within the same sector, highlighting similarities in scale, complexity, and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, provide comprehensive information on your quality management systems, including any ISO 9001, ISO 45001, and ISO 14001 certifications issued by a UKAS-accredited body.
Stakeholder Engagement	Outline your plans for ongoing consultation with stakeholders and local communities. Describe how the voices and concerns of residents and other interested parties will be captured and addressed throughout the project lifecycle.
Team Information	Introduce the proposed team, providing CVs, roles, day rates, relevant experience, and a description of each member's contribution to the project.
Track Record and References	Detail recent, relevant projects, including testimonials and contact information for references willing to speak about your work.
Insurance	Provide evidence that you hold, or are willing to obtain, Professional Indemnity insurance (£5 million) and Public Liability insurance (£10 million) as a minimum.
Project Delivery Plan	Explain your approach to delivering the brief, including detailed timescales, milestones, and deadlines for each phase of the project.
Cost Breakdown	Submit a clear estimate of costs (net of VAT), broken down by project phases or deliverables, including contingency and employee expenses, showing the total amount payable if your proposal is selected.
Submission Requirements	Ensure your application is complete and submitted by the deadline. Incomplete or late submissions may be disregarded.

6. Our values and behaviours

At BEC, our values are foundational to all aspects of our operations, guiding both our professional conduct and personal interactions within the community. We consistently pursue collaborations with contractors, partners, and agencies who share our commitment to maintaining the highest standards.

Please include evidence that you and your company reflect our values and behaviours, as this will strengthen your application. These principles shape how we work and interact.

6.1 Our Values

- **Self-Worth** We know our value and that we can all make a difference.
- **Support** We assist and enable others to 'stand on their own'.
- **Kindness** We think and act with care and consideration.
- **Respect** We give to others what we want to receive.
- **Integrity** We are truthful and honest in all we say and do.

6.2 Our Behaviours

- **Working with integrity:** The only way to do business is the right way. We do the right thing for our reputation, the right thing for business and communities and the right thing for our employees and partners.
- **Being commercially astute:** We will have BEC's best interest at heart in all business transactions. We will treat the business and its resources as if they were our own.
- **Leadership – courage to shape a better future:** We are all leaders with the ability to transform and shape the future. We have the courage to shape a better future.
- **Responsible for our actions:** We take ownership of the situations we're involved in. We see things through and take responsibility for the result – good or bad. We don't blame others when things go wrong, we do our best to make things right.
- **Driven to make a difference:** We are serious about committing to and getting results by putting in the effort and working smart. We never settle for 'good enough'.
- **Environmentally responsible:** We are committed to delivering a greener, sustainable future. Consideration of the environment will be demonstrated in our individual actions.
- **Partnering people and change:** We value partnering people – people who bring talent, expertise, energy and passion to our organisation.

7. Scoring

Your proposal will be scored using the criteria below, technical, cost and social impact. In addition to meeting our stated needs, showcase your expertise and creativity, consider how you might add value in ways we haven't anticipated. Be creative and innovative to give us a compelling reason to engage with you.

7.1 Criteria

Criteria			Weight %
1	**Strategic approach / understanding of brief**	A response should clearly articulate a concise understanding of the project scope, outline preliminary objectives for the site, and demonstrate alignment with BEC's core values and behaviours. Additionally, any relevant experience on comparable programmes should be comprehensively detailed.	20
2	**Methodology**	Provide your approach to the delivery of the commission, including any working arrangements and key milestones.	15
		Provide evidence of your experience in establishing a short life PMO within an organisation. Relevance to GBE-N and SMR delivery will be helpful.	15
		Explain how you will establish the PMO and develop the master plan, including timescales and how you'll deliver within the specified timeframe.	15
3	**Deliverability**	Provide evidence of your proposed delivery team, showing availability timescales and highlighting relevant experience. Provide CVs and day rates. These should include the following areas of expertise: a) Land Management b) Business Case c) Master plan d) PMO e) Assurance f) Commercial g) Programme/Project Delivery h) Project Controls i) Nuclear Regulatory and Technical	15
4	**Social Impact**	Evidence that your social impact commitments are realistic, actionable, aligned to SIx priorities and are supported by robust plans for delivery and monitoring. Proposals should outline clear metric, milestones and reporting mechanisms to track progress and outcomes.	10
5	**Pricing**	Provide the total fixed price, with a clear cost breakdown and coverage of all requirements. Proposals with realistic budgets, quality standards, and deliverability will be rated higher. Include provision for any additional needs which may be required.	10
		Sub-Total	100

Pricing submissions will be individually assessed based on the price submitted as set out below.

The submission offering the lowest technically compliant price shall receive a score of 5. The scores of the remaining technically compliant submissions will be factored so that they are awarded a percentage score which considers their scores relative to that of the lowest priced submission.

The calculation that will be performed in factoring the price scoring of the other tenderers is as follows:

Financial Score = 5 – [(Tenderers price – Lowest Price) / Lowest Price) x 5]

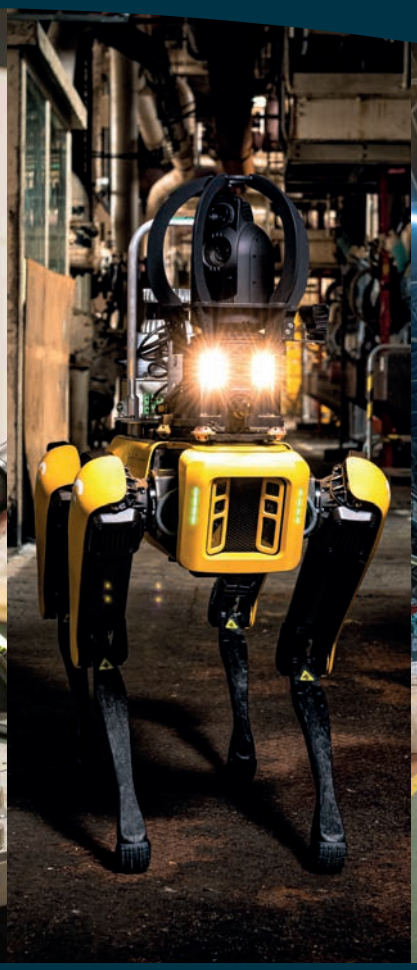
Let’s get things started

Thank you for your interest in working with us, we look forward to receiving your proposal.

Pioneer Park, Cumberland Development Prospectus

August 2025






cumberland.gov.uk

1. Introduction

In June 2025, the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), announced that hundreds of acres of land around the Sellafield site in West Cumbria will be explored for a clean energy development, including new nuclear power generation. This includes land that was part of the Moorside site, designated under EN6 as being suitable for nuclear generation.

To be known as Pioneer Park, the purpose of the development will be to diversify and strengthen the local economy in West Cumbria, which has historically been heavily reliant on the Sellafield nuclear site, located adjacent to Moorside.

2. Vision and Objectives

The overall vision associated with Pioneer Park is:

A prosperous and diverse economy in West Cumbria, built on the strengths of the nuclear industry.

This vision is supported by four primary objectives:

- To diversify the West Cumbrian economy away from over-reliance on nuclear decommissioning so that it is more vibrant and resilient.
- To regenerate towns in West Cumbria so that they are attractive places for people to live and to visit.
- To ensure that the nationally important mission of nuclear decommissioning has the people, skills, supply chain and infrastructure to succeed.
- To produce clean energy to support the local economy and community.

A team has been established from across the NDA, Sellafield Ltd, Cumberland Council and BEC, with representation from the Cumberland MPs' teams to deliver the objectives.

3. What We Are Looking For

The partners are seeking the views and proposals of clean energy generation technology vendors, clean energy generation developers and green industrial and technology-based organisations that would benefit from a dedicated clean energy power supply.

Through this market engagement process, we are seeking organisations that would be willing to invest in our community to help us to drive forward our aspirations.

Initial, targeted market engagement is being coordinated and managed by BEC. The purpose of this targeted market engagement is to engage with interested parties to further shape and define the scale, nature and community benefits of the planned development at Pioneer Park.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact BEC at **pioneerpark@discoverbec.com**

4. BEC

BEC is the trading name for Energy Coast West Cumbria Limited (ECWC), a private company limited by guarantee. ECWC has two Members, the NDA and Cumberland Council.

BEC's primary purpose is to deliver place-based economic development in West Cumbria. Working in partnership with local and national stakeholders it supports and delivers projects that bring sustained social and economic transformation across West Cumbria.

Through its three companies, BEC also owns and operates business parks and commercial premises across West Cumbria.

5. The Land Available for Exploration

All the land that is available to be explored is owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by DESNZ.

With the support of the Secretary of State for DESNZ, the NDA committed to working with Sellafield Ltd and Cumberland Council to consider what land might be made available for a clean energy development, enabling access and sharing information where it is able. Any plans for development will consider the requirements of existing major programmes at Sellafield, including plutonium disposition.

The Prime Minister, in June 2025, said: "Whether it becomes home to a fleet of SMRs or another major clean energy project, [Pioneer Park] will be led by a local development corporation – working with industry, unions, and the community to deliver jobs, growth, and energy security".

The NDA has now identified the land to be explored, as depicted in Figure 1 below. In total, this represents over 400 acres, being referred to as Pioneer Park. It should be noted that some of this may not be suitable for substantive development, though it may have alternative uses e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain.

The available land includes at least 170 acres of land (with the potential for more) that was designated for new nuclear power generation in the EN6 National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN6). A new approach to nuclear siting is being implemented, but the Government has recognised that sites nominated as part of the EN6 will retain inherent positive attributes that make them attractive for consideration within the new regime.

We are not limiting options to nuclear and engagement from other clean energy developers is welcome. However, the site is likely to retain inherent positive attributes for new nuclear development and the community of West Cumbria is very supportive of nuclear power.
The key consideration will be the contribution the proposal makes to delivering the Vision and Objectives for Pioneer Park.

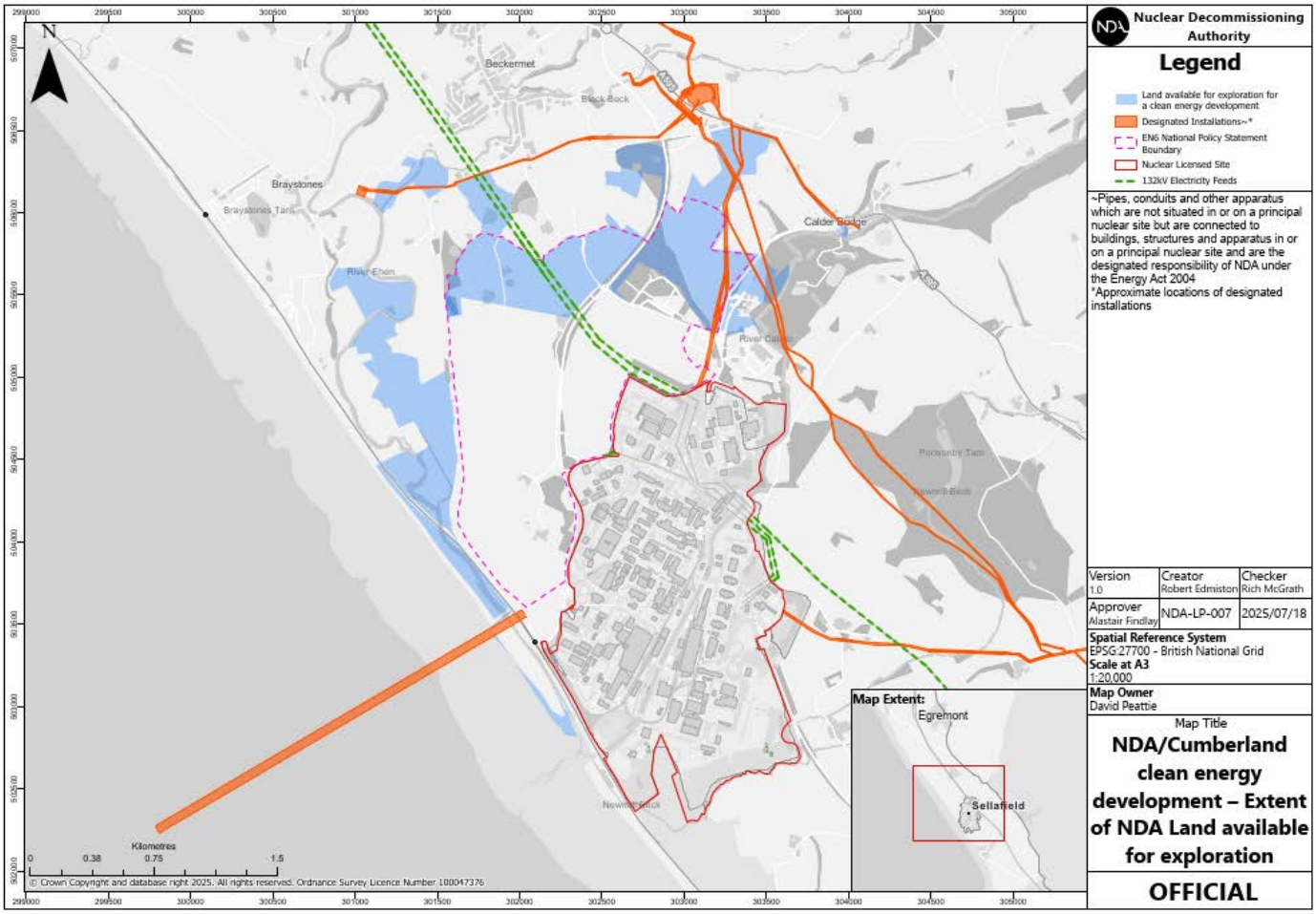


Figure 1 - Land Available for Exploration

The NDA holds significant information on the site, gained from previous studies, including Ecological and Environmental Assessments, Utilities & Transport Baseline Assessment, Planning Baseline Assessment, Land Baseline Assessment, Transport Baseline Assessment, Geological Information, Meteorological conditions (historical values, current figures, meteorological parameters) and site drainage characteristics. This information could be made available to credible interested parties by the NDA through Non-Disclosure Agreements.

Road and Rail Access

The land available for exploration is located off the A595 which is the main road through West Cumbria, linking the broader region from Carlisle in the north to Barrow in the south of Cumbria. It links to the A596 costal road and the A66, which runs to the M6 motorway at Penrith.

The Cumbrian Coast Rail Line connects to the West Coast mainline at Carlisle and Lancaster and, in conjunction with the Furness Line, links the two cities via Workington, Whitehaven, Sellafield and Barrow-in-Furness. The rail line runs through the West of the available land site, providing a vital link to Sellafield and Pioneer Park.

An Outline Business Case for improvements to the Cumbrian Coast Line, known as the Energy Coast Rail Upgrade (ECRU), was submitted to the Department for Transport in 2022 and has since been refreshed and resubmitted. The Department for Transport and HM Treasury are engaging with Cumberland Council on the detail and a decision will be made shortly to progress it to Full Business Case.

NDA Developments on Land Outside the Sellafield Site Boundary

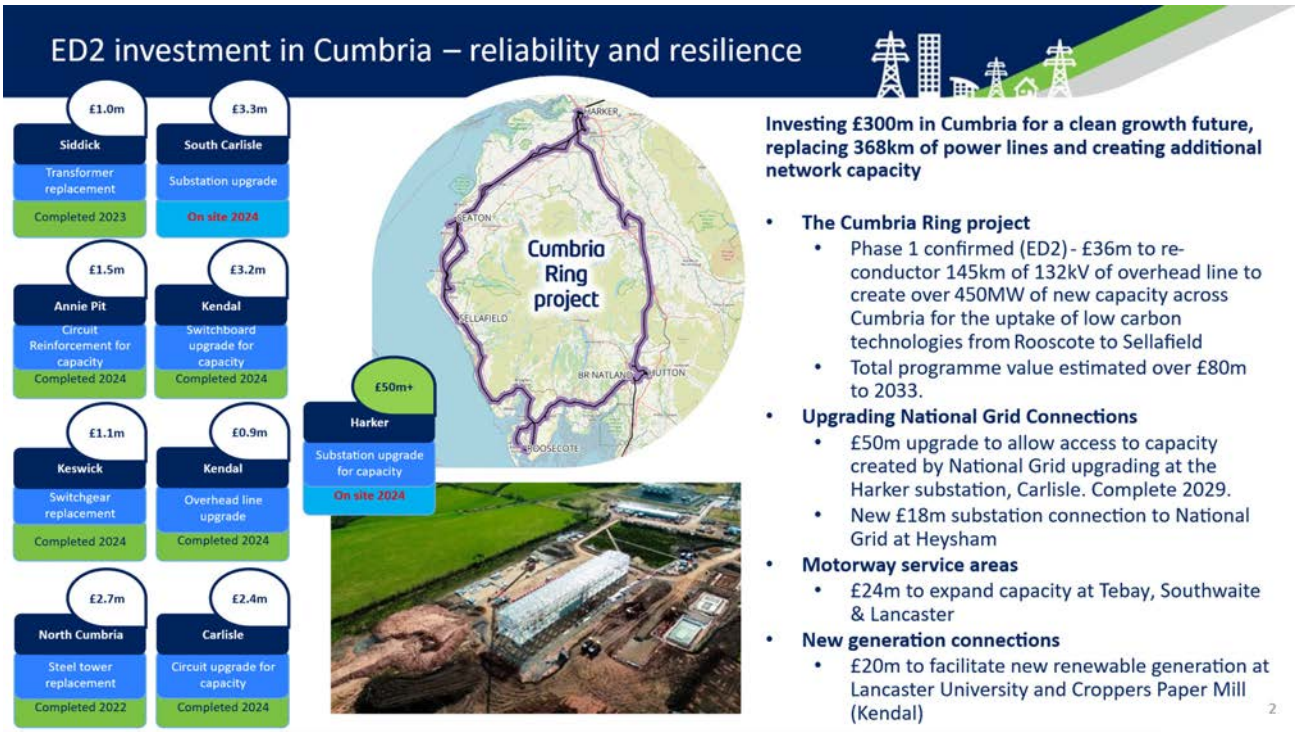
As part of its future construction requirements, the NDA is currently investigating potential infrastructure developments on the site that may be of interest to prospective Pioneer Park developers. Details will be made available through the market engagement process.

Electrical Distribution Network

Electricity North-West (ENW) is responsible for operating and maintaining over 57,000km of electrical network and thousands of substations across the North-West region, distributing electricity to 2.4 million homes and businesses.

Over the period April 2023 to March 2028, ENW is investing £2bn in the region's infrastructure to improve resilience and meet the increasing electrification needs to transition from fossil fuels.

As part of its ED2 investment, the improvements being delivered in Cumbria are aimed at increasing capacity, reliability and resilience as well as investing in innovation across the North-West. These plans include the Cumbria Ring and by 2033, ENW will create 450MW of new capacity across Cumbria for the uptake of low carbon technologies, including the proposed clean energy development at Pioneer Park.



Port of Workington

The Port of Workington is a strategically important intermodal port with a dedicated rail handling capability that provides direct access to the Cumbria Coast Rail Line. Access to the national road network is provided via the A596/A66 and onto the M6 Motorway. The Port is well equipped to handle a wide range of cargo types including timber, steel, aggregates and other construction materials. There has been significant recent investment in the port's infrastructure and a large area of land is available for development, including 20 Ha of allocated employment land immediately adjacent to the Port.

6. Current Clean Energy Industrial Developments in Cumbria

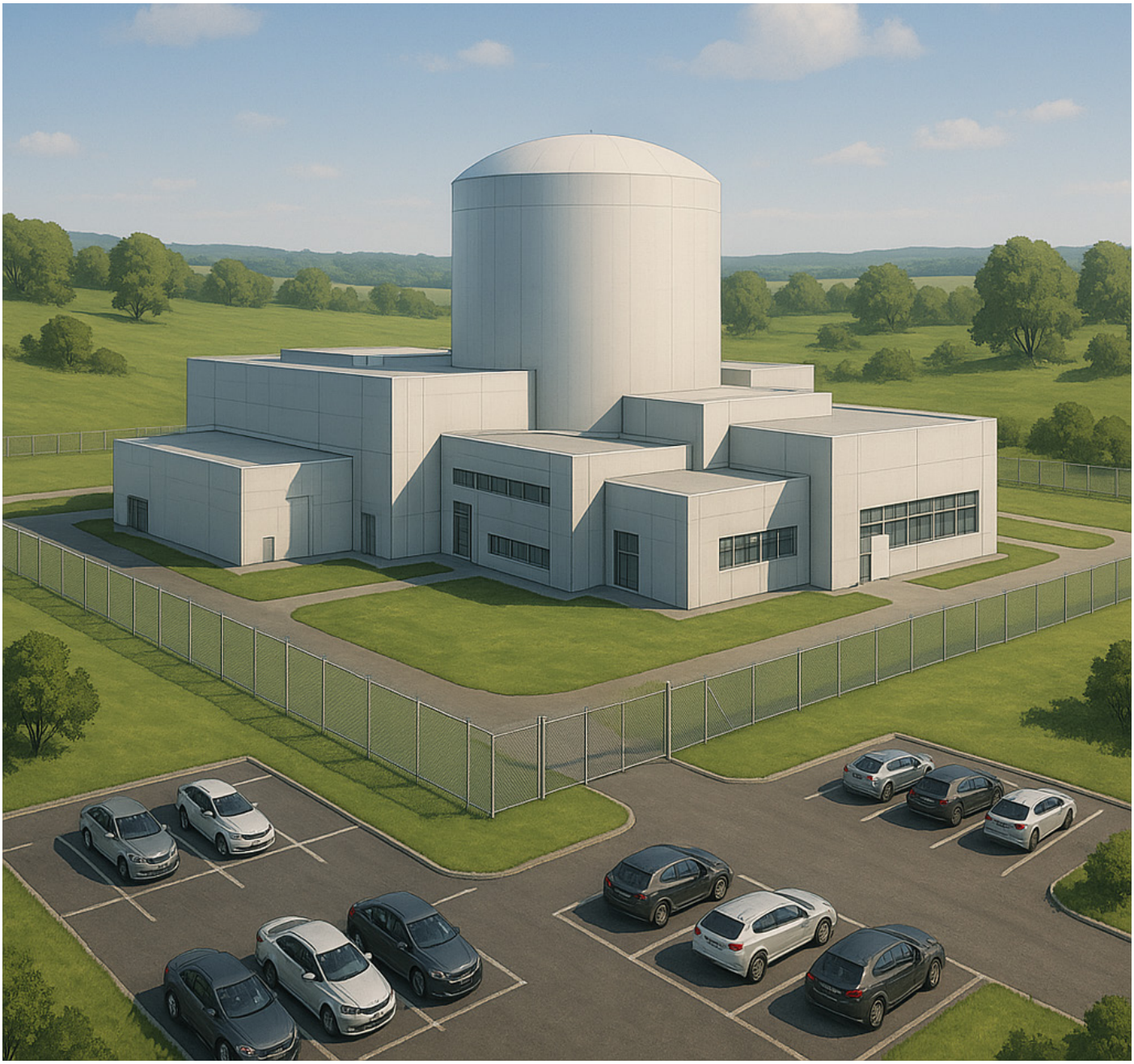
We already have experience of Low Carbon Energy developments in Cumbria, which is advancing a bold clean energy agenda, as outlined in its 2022 Clean Energy and 2024 Distributed Energy Strategies and further reinforced by the Going for Growth Strategy. These plans position the region as a testbed for renewable energy technologies and aim to establish Cumbria as a national hub for clean energy generation, storage, and innovation.

Central to this vision is the development of key energy hubs, including Pioneer Park, the Port of Workington Energy Hub (focused on hydrogen and offshore energy) and Barrow (a hub for hydrogen, carbon storage, and offshore wind). The strategy emphasises the importance of targeted investment and collaboration, particularly in maximising the role of the ports of Barrow, Workington, and Silloth to support energy logistics, manufacturing, and exports—anchoring the region's Clean Energy Coast Cluster.

Offshore wind energy remains a cornerstone of Cumbria's clean energy strategy. Flagship developments like the Walney Extension, West of Duddon Sands, and Barrow Offshore Wind Farms contribute significantly to the UK's renewable energy mix and provide a strong foundation for local economic growth. These assets are being integrated into wider regional plans to expand local manufacturing, maintenance, and export capabilities, supported by infrastructure investments such as the proposed expansion of the Port of Workington. Cumbria is also exploring a Cumbria-Wide Rural Test Bed to foster innovation in hydro, tidal, bioenergy, and geothermal technologies—solutions tailored to the rural and coastal character of the county.

Hydrogen and nuclear energy are critical pillars in Cumbria's transition to a low-carbon economy. The Barrow Green Hydrogen project aims to produce 3,500 tonnes of green hydrogen annually, serving both industrial and transport needs. In parallel, the Morecambe Net Zero project is advancing plans for a major carbon capture and storage (CCS) facility, which will play a pivotal role in reducing emissions from regional industries while supporting the UK's wider decarbonisation targets. Cumbria's participation in the North West Industrial Cluster (NWIC)—a £207 billion investment initiative—further strengthens its role in national clean growth.

To underpin these developments, Cumbria is scaling up green skills training and workforce development. Institutions like Lakes College are delivering education in solar PV, battery storage, hydrogen systems, and advanced manufacturing, aligning local talent pipelines with industry needs. The region is working closely with NWIC partners to align training provision with key technical requirements, addressing skill shortages while creating high-quality employment opportunities. By investing in a skilled workforce and strategic energy infrastructure, Cumbria is well-positioned to lead the UK's clean energy transition while delivering lasting economic and environmental benefits to its communities.



7. Artificial Intelligence and Technology

Cumberland Council, supported by its partners, BEC, the NDA and Sellafield Ltd, has submitted a proposal to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to host an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Growth Zone. We are proposing to be the UK's first dedicated clean energy powered AI Growth Zone, based on the future development at Pioneer Park.

Whilst the proposed AI Growth Zones have a particular focus on "data", the Government AI Opportunities Action Plan also references the importance of "embodied intelligence" (EI) to maximise UK ambition and deliver economically and strategically important capabilities.

Cumberland is ideally placed to exploit nationally critical EI development, deployment and commercialisation through the existing robotics and AI (RAI) expertise and need within the region. Substantial inherent end user pull from both Sellafield and BAE Systems for EI solutions is wholly evident given their ownership of complex and unstructured real-world environments that could also serve as national and international testbeds.

The demand for EI solutions will only continue to grow to support mission delivery, creating considerable additional market potential including cross-sector technology transfer into, for example, space, mining and subsea. This will ultimately position Cumberland to become a leading region for EI in challenging environments, further attracting and retaining talent whilst securing inward private investment.

8. Potential to Supply Power to Sellafield

The neighbouring Sellafield site is dependent upon a secure electricity and steam supply for its daily operations. Electricity is currently supplied by a resilient grid connection. Sellafield Ltd will provide details regarding its expected electricity needs going forward to credible interested parties, through suitable Non-Disclosure Agreements.

It may be possible for Sellafield Ltd to purchase power from any future operator at Pioneer Park through a Power Purchase Agreement, however such arrangements would clearly need to demonstrate Value for Money to the taxpayer and be in-line with Government procurement rules.

Next Steps

Once the initial targeted market engagement has been completed (expected to be in October 2025), BEC, with the NDA, Cumberland Council and its other partners will assess the information gained and create a site-masterplan. We expect that open market engagement, alongside local stakeholder consultation, will then be initiated in early 2026, with the ambition to move at pace to a preferred solution.

For further information, contact **pioneerpark@discoverbec.com**

Cumberland Council

ENTERPRISING Cumbria
PROMOTING LOCAL AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Sellafield Ltd

NDA

Cumberland - The UK's First Nuclear Powered AI Growth Zone and Technology Hub

cumberland.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

This is Cumberland's proposal for the UK's first nuclear powered AI Growth Zone and Technology Hub.

We are confident that we can power such a hub using SMR nuclear technology on land which could be made available in line with a request from the DESNZ Secretary of State to support green energy development. Key technical feasibility considerations around water availability & discharge, planning, and connectivity have been initially assessed as favourable.

The development will represent a positive impact to the existing and planned grid capacity and will not have any adverse effects on regional power availability. There will be contingency capacity and storage backup and there will be no issue with respect to grid congestion. In fact, the SMR development will be looking to provide power to the grid as an outlet for over capacity.

With the direct support of the Secretary of State for DESNZ, a delivery team is being formed, under the auspices of Energy Coast West Cumbria Ltd (also known as BEC), with resources being provided by the NDA, Sellafield Ltd and Cumberland Council. We also have strong support from the public, and all local constituency MPs.

Cumberland is ideally placed to exploit nationally critical AI and EI development with significant existing robotics and AI (RAI) expertise within the region, and substantial inherent end user pull from both Sellafield and BAE Systems. There are numerous associated skills and training facilities already operating and further facilities being planned. A new clean energy/nuclear development at Moorside, coupled with AI Growth Zone status could be the catalyst to diversifying the economy from nuclear decommissioning which currently dominates. It could also provide a significant opportunity to address the generational unemployment that has endured for many decades in some of the deprived parts of our community.

Working with partners in the nuclear industry and our local MPs, we have formed the Cumberland Nuclear Futures Board, chaired at a national level by the Secretary of State for DESNZ. At this early stage, our request of DSIT and other Government Departments is simple - to join and support the Cumberland Nuclear Futures Board and to work towards our vision for the Moorside site and the associated AI, technology and industrial regeneration that this would bring to our community.

We can support the Government's ultimate AI goals and lead the way on new nuclear technology.
With Government support, we are confident we can achieve this by the mid 2030s.

2. Introduction

Cumberland Council (in partnership with the Enterprising Cumbria, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Energy Coast West Cumbria Ltd. and our local MPs), and with the support of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, is proud to be in a position to propose to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, the potential for the UK's first nuclear powered AI Growth Zone and Technology Hub.

The Moorside site, directly adjacent to Sellafield in West Cumbria is one of only eight sites in the UK that are currently designated for new nuclear build under the extant National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6). With Hinkley Point and Sizewell well progressed in the development of Giga Watt scale reactors and Great British Nuclear (GBN) being likely to reserve two other EN-6 designated sites for the purposes of Small Modular Reactor (SMR) developments designed to serve the national grid, Moorside becomes one of only four remaining sites that can offer the potential of direct, dedicated, resilient and exclusively clean energy generated and privately funded power supply for an AI Growth Zone development.

There is sufficient land on the Moorside site itself to host both a SMR development of up to 1Gw capacity and the 100 acres of land required by DSIT for growth zone purposes. Extensive Government (via the NDA) and privately owned land gives additional opportunity for the construction of AI infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the power supply. We believe that this makes Moorside a unique opportunity for the UK Government to demonstrate the UK's capability in both advanced nuclear and AI technology.

While this proposed development cannot be achieved by the 2030 date requested for the initial tranche of Growth Zones, Cumberland Council and its partners invites DSIT to work with us to actively pursue this world leading opportunity, which we understand from established developers, could be operational in the early 2030s.

3. Technical Feasibility

a. Power Availability

It is not feasible for Cumberland to offer 500Mw of capacity by 2030. However, on advice from prospective developers we believe that a dedicated capacity of around 1000Mw could be available before 2035.

While Sizewell, Hinkley Point and future GBN publicly funded developments are designed to deliver power to the National Grid, the model we are pursuing is one of an exclusively privately funded community development, delivering direct off-take power (and heat) with associated inward investment of high energy demand industries.

We understand that the circa. 220 acres of land being made available to us by the NDA (with the direct support of the Secretary of State for DESNZ) is more than sufficient to host up to four Westinghouse AP300 SMRs or up to three Rolls Royce SMRs for example.

To ensure continuity of supply to the AI infrastructure and datacentres, we would be proposing a significant over-capacity, over a number of units, to allow for redundancies through planned and unplanned outages.

The land being made available to us would be sufficient to support battery storage and grid back-up would also be available (both of which would also facilitate off-load of excess power production at peak outputs or periods of lower demand).

The ability for SMRs to potentially provide heat (for cooling) in addition to power for data centres and AI infrastructure is an attractive differentiator within this proposal.

b. Water Availability and Discharge

The Moorside site is directly adjacent to the Sellafield site (which draws its water supply from Wast Water) and is located directly on the west Cumbrian coastline.

It has previously been assessed for the construction of a multi Gigawatt nuclear development on the scale of Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C which had a much higher water demand than a SMR development or datacentre.

The adjacent Sellafield site discharges directly to the Irish Sea, as could a SMR/AI development, but our preference would be to utilise as much of the heat as possible for community heating, smart farming and other clean energy purposes.

This infrastructure does not currently exist at the Moorside site but would be an essential component of the proposed development, funded within the SMR project.

c. Land Availability

The Moorside site is owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by DESNZ. Most of the land has been reserved for support facilities to the decommissioning work at Sellafield for the next 20 to 25 years. The NDA also owns several hundred hectares of land to the east of the Sellafield licensed site. The land is not currently designated for new nuclear generation build, but a large proportion of it is reserved for a potential Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

With the support of the Secretary of State for DESNZ, the NDA has committed to working with Sellafield Ltd and Cumberland Council to consider what land might be made available for green energy development, enabling access and sharing information where it is able. The NDA has now identified that land and is in the process of providing access to Cumberland council to the information it holds about the land.

It is anticipated that a new nuclear development at Moorside would involve two to four mid-range capacity Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), providing a total of around 1Gw, which would require a security bound footprint of around 80 acres. This would leave up to 140 acres available for the construction of AI infrastructure.

While this would involve using nuclear designated land for AI infrastructure (including energy storage capacity) there may be benefit to be gained from a shared site security infrastructure.

As the Sellafield decommissioning mission progresses, NDA anticipates that further land at Moorside will become available as the support facilities currently planned for it will no longer be required by Sellafield or the NDA. Again, future release of this land would need to be agreed with DESNZ and it is possible that other NDA needs might emerge.

Finally, the Moorside site is surrounded by extensive privately owned rural/agricultural land that may also become available for AI Growth Zone purposes.

In summary, we are exploring the opportunities for potential development on land owned by NDA in the vicinity of Sellafield Ltd, recognising both the current limitations on availability and the potential greater extent of land availability that may arise in the future.

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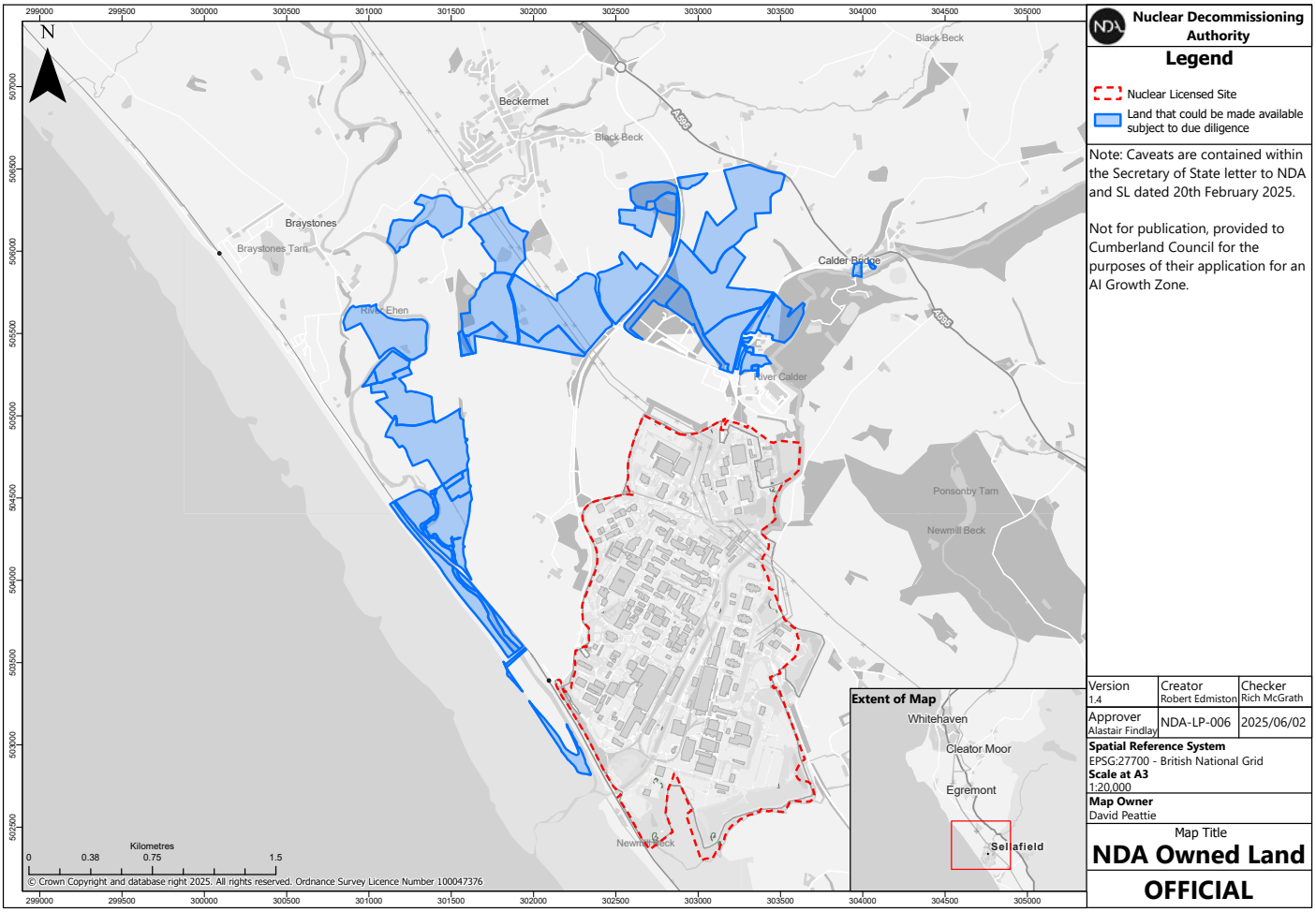


d. Planning

Existing planning policy provides a supportive policy framework for the development of new nuclear power generation. As the Local Planning Authority, Cumberland Council is committed to working with a future developers, including through the use of Planning Performance Agreements, to ensure a clear plan to work towards securing full planning consent is agreed.

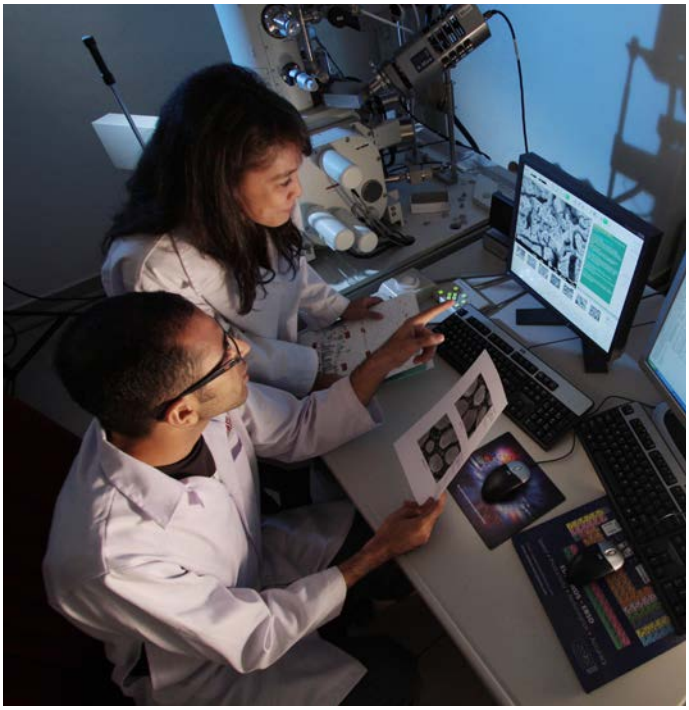
Through the preparation of the new Cumberland Local Plan, commencing in Summer 2025, the Council would have the ability to align the opportunity an AI Growth Zone presents through Local Plan Policy.

The proposed changes to national planning policy will further support development at Moorside. As a previously designated site under EN6, Moorside is positively advantaged with regards other potential sites (who will need to undertake work to demonstrate compliance with EN7).

e. Connectivity

A grid connection can be delivered to support the site. While there is currently no connectivity at the Moorside site itself, there is of course excellent connectivity at the immediately adjacent Sellafield site. Connectivity would be a fundamental requirement of the SMR development, so there are synergies to be gained by the AI infrastructure side of the project.

Additionally, in December 2023, following a competitive bid process, the Borderlands Region was awarded £3.8m of funding by DSIT to deliver a programme to demonstrate the commercial opportunities for advanced wireless technology in a rural tourism setting. The funding is managed by Cumberland Council on behalf of the Borderlands Partners. During the lifetime of the initial programme the Borderlands Partners will explore opportunities for follow on funding or other options to expand the programme. The programme is run and managed by Connecting Cumbria.



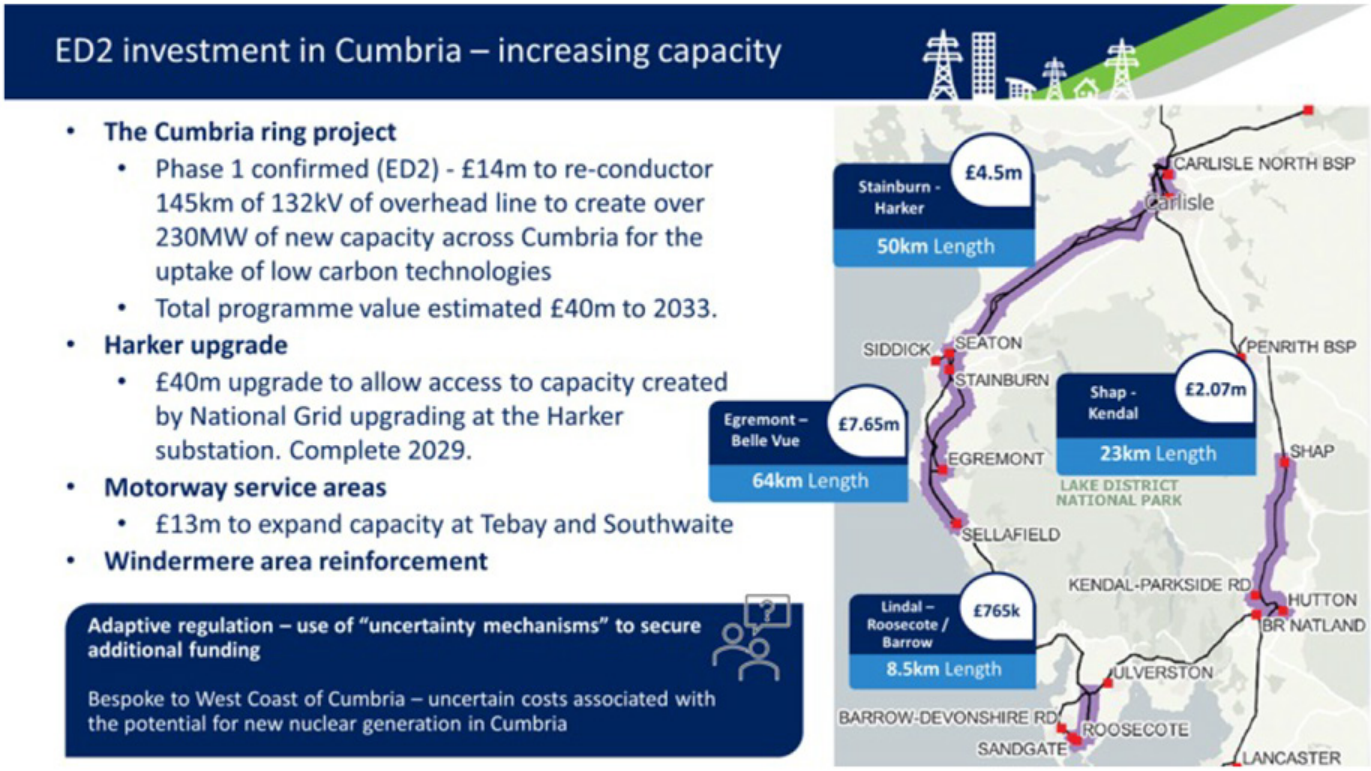
4. Delivery Feasibility

a. Regional Power Impact

Because this proposal is for a dedicated direct line supply (with contingency capacity and storage backup) there will be no issue of grid congestion. In fact, the SMR development will be looking to provide power to the grid as an outlet for over capacity. The overall development will therefore represent a positive impact to the existing and planned grid capacity, which is independently being upgraded by Electricity North-West Limited (ENWL) which is responsible for operating and maintaining over 57,000km of electrical network and thousands of substations across the North-West region, distributing electricity to 2.4 million homes and businesses.

Over the period April 2023 to March 2028, ENWL is investing £2bn in the region's infrastructure to improve resilience and meet the increasing electrification needs to transition from fossil fuels.

As part of its ED2 investment, the improvements being delivered in Cumbria are aimed at increasing capacity, reliability and resilience as well as investing in innovation across the North-West. These plans include the West Cumbria ring and by 2033, ENWL will create 230Mw of new capacity across Cumbria for the uptake of low carbon technologies, including the SMR development at Moorside.



b. Delivery Team and Execution

With the direct support of the Secretary of State for DESNZ, a delivery team is already being formed, under the auspices of Energy Coast West Cumbria Ltd (also known as BEC), with resources being provided by the NDA, Sellafield Ltd and Cumberland Council. The SoS chairs the national
level partnership Board and has empowered his department to support the development of the Moorside site.

The Council and BEC are also consulting with established SMR developers to understand what resources and capabilities it needs to act as an intelligent client.

c. Local Support

Support from Cumberland Council

Cumberland Council is a new local authority, which was established as part of Local Government Reorganisation in April 2023.

It has a real commitment to supporting its business community and operates a Key Account Management service for its larger businesses, which means that these businesses have access to a senior decision-maker within Cumberland Council. This senior lead will be able to troubleshoot any issues and advise on wider support available within the organisation, opening doors and saving time for each business.

The Council would also commit to providing a dedicated Planning Case Officer and Education/ Skills lead to any AI Growth Zone programme in the region.

Cumberland Council also now houses the Enterprising Cumbria Team, which manages economic activity and business support across Cumbria, following the transfer of functions from the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. Enterprising Cumbria has been a key partner in delivery of this proposal.

Public and Political Support

West Cumbria has a proud history of pioneering projects in the nuclear industry, with the world's first commercial scale nuclear reactor being opened on the Sellafield site in 1956. In the 70 years that have followed, the nuclear industry has been the mainstay of employment in the local community and enjoys significant public support (at Sellafield and the Low Level Waste Repository, 7 miles south). There is a particularly high level of public support for new nuclear build at Moorside.

The MP for Whitehaven and Workington, Josh MacAlister, OBE, is fully supportive of this proposal for the Moorside SMR and AI Growth Zone and is personally promoting the opportunity in Government to gain further support at a national level as part of a Northern Nuclear Growth Corridor spanning from Carlisle to Barrow-in-Furness. The MPs of the neighbouring Solway and Penrith, Carlisle and Barrow in Furness constituencies are also supportive of the proposed Moorside development.

Following discussions with Government, the Secretary of State for DESNZ wrote to the CEO of the NDA, the Leader of Cumberland Council and the MP for Whitehaven and Workington, in February 2025, requesting them to work together under the auspices of a newly formed Cumberland Economic Development Forum (to be chaired by the SoS and to include other Government departments), with a focus on exploring opportunities for clean energy projects (including nuclear) on the surplus land at the Moorside site. This group is now well established at a local level (including the MP for Whitehaven and Workington) and the first Ministerial level meeting was held in April, with four local MPs being members of this Ministerial level body.

5. Local Impact

a. Regional Ecosystem Impact and Development Plans

AI and EI Opportunities in Cumberland

Whilst the proposed AI Growth Zones have a particular focus on "data", the Government AI Opportunities Action Plan also references the importance of "embodied intelligence" (EI) to maximise UK ambition and deliver economically and strategically important capabilities. EI is where AI is coupled with physical machines with the resulting "smart machines" taking many forms, such as quadrupeds and drones, to hospitals or nuclear fission and fusion reactors.

Whilst recent developments in large language models have demonstrated impressive activities, such as automated video generation and text reasoning via user dialogue, such models will need to perform whilst embedded within physical systems to become increasingly autonomous and able to make decisions independently (unleashing the potential of EI). As referenced in the Government's recently published Smart Machines Strategy 2035 (**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smart-machines-strategy-2035/smart-machines-strategy-2035#executive-summary**), access to high performance computing capabilities will be necessary for the UK to deliver against these EI ambitions that will ultimately position the UK as world-leading in this evolving field.

Cumberland is ideally placed to exploit nationally critical EI development, deployment and commercialisation through the existing robotics and AI (RAI) expertise and need within the region. Substantial inherent end user pull from both Sellafield and BAE Systems for EI solutions is wholly evident given their ownership of complex and unstructured real-world environments that could also serve as national and international testbeds.

The demand for EI solutions will only continue to grow to support mission delivery, creating considerable additional market potential including cross-sector technology transfer into, for example, space, mining and subsea. This will ultimately position Cumberland to become a leading region for EI in challenging environments, further attracting and retaining talent whilst securing inward private investment.

The following link demonstrates how EI is already being used to great effect at Sellafield
Createc demonstrates Boston Dynamic's Spot with robot arm at Sellafield. - YouTube

RAICo

Current robotics development and deployment, within Cumberland, is supported via the Robotics and AI Collaboration (RAICo, https://raico.org/). This is a multi-million-pound programme between the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Sellafield and the University of Manchester with a base at RAICo1, Whitehaven and a "twinned" facility at UKAEA, RACE, Oxfordshire. In addition, the recently announced UKRI £4.9 million funding award to create a nuclear RAI cluster linking Cumbria and Oxfordshire focuses on underpinning RAI research and early-stage technology development that will enable engagement with the supply chain for onward development and commercialisation linking with the RAICo outputs. The consortium leading this Cluster involves UKAEA and the Universities of Cumbria, Oxford and Manchester. Together, these RAI programmes form the foundations for EI development that can be amplified via the proposed AI Growth Zone.

Furthermore, these initial links between Cumbria and Oxfordshire, to leverage shared knowledge and accelerate opportunities, could be additionally expanded through the proposed AI Growth Zones. UKAEA's Oxfordshire site has already been confirmed, by Government, as the first AI Growth Zone and, if successful, Cumbria's AI Growth Zone could be further "twinned" to avoid duplication and enable cross benefits and value add.

To fully deliver against the potential of EI, and the commensurate benefits that it will bring, an associated skilled workforce will be necessary. Whilst Cumberland contains a solid underpinning of RAI SQEP capability, due to the existing RAI programmes, the AI Growth Zone and EI prospect represents a significant opportunity to further develop a locally skilled workforce capitalising upon existing talent in the region.

Skills Overview

Cumbria's 'Heart of the UK' location means that it can draw upon a significant workforce from across the wider North West of England, the North East and the South of Scotland.

Cumbria itself benefits from strong performance in vocational education and training, with a well-functioning apprenticeship system with strong employer engagement. During the 2022/23 year Cumbria delivered 3,990 Apprenticeship resident starts.

It is home to four Further Education Colleges, three of which are rated Good in Ofsted terms, alongside the University of Cumbria. The area also enjoys strong links with the Universities of Lancaster and Central Lancashire, with the University of Manchester having its specific nuclear facility, the Dalton Institute, based in West Cumbria, as outlined below.

National College for Nuclear (NCfN) - Northern campus, one of two nationally, is based at Lakes College and forms a cornerstone of the Government's response to growth and unprecedented levels of opportunity in the global nuclear sector.

National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) - is a world leader in nuclear innovation and provides technical support across the whole UK nuclear industry from its bases in Workington, Sellafield, Preston, Warrington, Stonehouse and Culham. The NNL Central Laboratory is a £250m state-of-the-art nuclear research facility at Sellafield. As one of the most advanced nuclear facilities in the world, it is also regularly used by academic teams from the University of Manchester and the University of Liverpool.

The Dalton Nuclear Institute - was established more than 10 years ago, with an investment of over £20million and has now grown into a world class radiation science facility. As highlighted previously, RAICo, their nuclear robotics programme, a £multi-million collaboration with UKAEA, is also based in Cumbria.

Project Academy - established in 2016 as a joint working arrangement between the University of Cumbria and Sellafield Ltd to deliver project management short courses, professional qualifications and degree programmes to prepare and educate Sellafield employees in West Cumbria for the changing landscape of project management in nuclear. It now collaborates with other employers including BAE Systems, the BBC and the NHS to deliver a wide-ranging portfolio of project management programmes. Its products range from short courses focusing on the fundamental principles of project management, to undergraduate and postgraduate courses that equip participants to deliver successful projects and lead high-performing teams.

Energus - a dedicated centre of excellence offering a range of training, education and business support services geared to providing and enhancing skills within both the local and national nuclear workforce. It is home to the award-winning nuclear graduates programme, developing the industry leaders of tomorrow, as well as the cyber graduates and apprentices programmes.

Nuclear Decommissioning Research Centre

There is an initiative emerging from the University of Manchester for a Nuclear Decommissioning Research Centre (NDRC), which would consist of six facilities across the UK, three of which would be in West Cumbria:

- A redevelopment of NNL Workington, also housing an NAMRC presence to research non-radioactive materials, chemistry, engineering and manufacturing.
- An academic campus built around the RAICo robotics facility in Whitehaven, also housing an NPL presence to further develop AI, Data, Sensors and Measurement.
- A further facility to provide research and development on Environmental End Points.

The other NDRC facilities would be based in the north of Scotland and Wales.

b. Local Benefits

Employment and the Local Economy

The heavy industries associated with West Cumbria (mining, steel works, chemical works) have now largely ceased operating, and the recent planning permission for a new coal mine in Whitehaven by the previous Secretary of State has been quashed.

This has left west Cumbria heavily dependent on Sellafield for employment, both as a direct employer and also for the many local supply chain companies, many of which are developing innovative and advanced manufacturing processes to meet the solutions of decommissioning and cleaning up the Sellafield site.

According to the recent Oxford Economics publication "The Economic Contribution of the NDA to the West Cumbrian Economy", Sellafield and the Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) supported £1.3bn of GVA in West Cumbria (the former boroughs of Copeland and Allerdale) in 2021 (40% of its total GVA). In total, the sites supported over 21,000 jobs in 2021 (28% of total employment), including their local supply chain organisations.

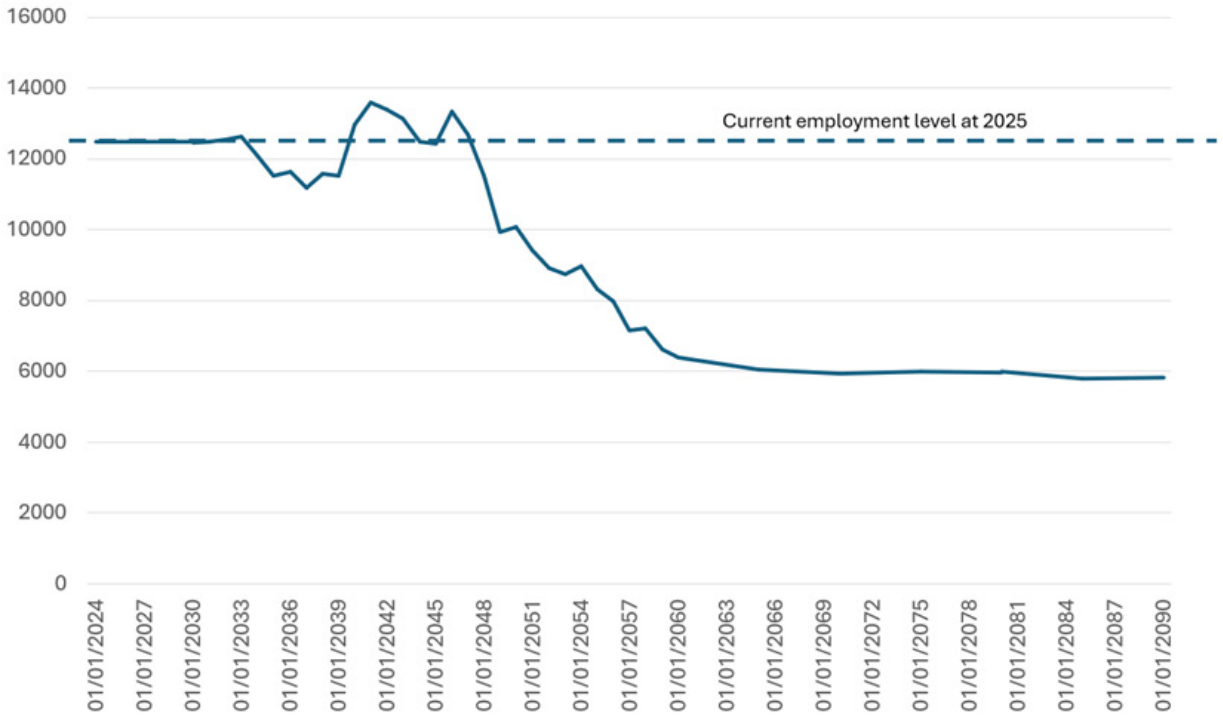
However, West Cumbria is home to Cumberland's most notable communities of generational unemployment that have endured for many decades in some of the less privileged parts of our community.

Over recent decades, as traditional mining and manufacturing industries have all but ended in West Cumbria, the unhealthy dependency on employment provided by Sellafield is fast becoming a major risk to the long-term sustainability of the West Cumbrian economy.

Within 10 years, it is anticipated that the employment levels at Sellafield will start to decline, with only half of the current number of jobs remaining in the 2060s, based on current work scope.

Figure 1 below shows indicative employment levels in West Cumbria associated with Sellafield, including staff, agency workers and contractors working directly on major projects that are currently included in the Lifecycle Baseline, with forecasts for the recently announced Plutonium Disposition facility added in.

As can clearly be seen, we are forecasting a significant dip in employment levels, relative to the current status, through the mid to late 2040s.



Without significant diversification of the economy and sources of employment in West Cumbria, the future prospects beyond the next 25 years are looking particularly bleak.
A new clean energy/nuclear development at Moorside, coupled with AI Growth Zone status would be the catalyst to diversifying the economy from nuclear decommissioning and provide a significant opportunity to address the generational unemployment that has endured for many decades in some of the less privileged parts of our community.

It is anticipated that a two to four SMR development would attract up to 800 local jobs in the construction phase, with around 300 jobs being supported throughout the operational lifetime.

We are estimating that a significant data centre would provide up to 1000 permanent operational jobs in addition to those in the construction phase, based on similar sized UK projects.

As highlighted previously, the SMR development at Moorside will provide a power and heat capacity in excess of the requirements of the AI Growth Zone Infrastructure and the intention is that the direct off-take model being proposed will attract further high energy consuming industries to west Cumbria, including Synthetic Aviation Fuels (SAF) and Hydrogen Generation and Storage.

Previous discussions with a SAF producer indicated around 4000 jobs in construction and just under 1000 operational jobs locally.

From estimates elsewhere in the North of England, it is anticipated that a Hydrogen Generation and Storage facility could provide over 600 jobs in construction and 100 permanent operational jobs locally.

Community Heating

It is intended that the heat generated from both the SMRs and the data centres would be used for community heating purposes for the neighbouring communities of Cleator Moor and Egremont, two of the most deprived towns in west Cumbria.

Smart Farming

West Cumbria is a rural community and the Moorside site is surrounded by farmland. It is intended that the heat generated by the SMRs and data centres could be used for the purposes of Smart Farming to further boost the local economy.

Potential for Powering Other Communities

While the intention would be that any over capacity from the SMR development would serve the local Cumbrian grid network, it is not inconceivable that the power could be delivered by undersea cabling to the Isle of Man, located just 34 miles off the coast of the Moorside site.

Investment in Local Infrastructure or Community Assets

Geological Disposal Facility

Cumberland is just one of two communities that are engaging in the siting process for a future Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for intermediate and high active nuclear waste, the other being Lincolnshire.

If Cumberland is selected as the host community for the GDF, then there will be a clear need for significant infrastructure investment exclusively from public funds. Any improvements that are funded through a private investment at Moorside would obviously off-set some of that public funding demand in the future.

Cumbrian Coast Rail Line

The Cumbrian Coast Rail Line connects to the West Coast mainline at Carlise and Lancaster and in conjunction with the Furness Line links the two cities via Workington, Whitehaven, Sellafield and Barrow-in-Furness. The rail line provides a vital link to the Sellafield and Moorside sites for construction traffic as well as passenger services providing commuter access for employees.

An Outline Business Case for improvements to the Cumbrian Coast Line known as the Energy Coast Rail Upgrade was submitted to the Department for Transport in 2022 and is currently being updated. This proposes a programme of enhancements including signalling and infrastructure improvements to enable increased freight and passenger movements and is intended to unlock development and growth opportunities related to the cluster of nuclear related activity around Sellafield including at Moorside, the future development of a Geological Disposal Facility and development at BAE Systems in Barrow-in-Furness.

Port of Workington

The Port of Workington is a strategically important intermodal port with a dedicated rail handling capability that provides direct access to the Cumbria Coast Rail Line. Access to the national road network is provided via the A596/A66 and onto the M6 Motorway. The Port is well equipped to handle a wide range of cargo types including timber, steel, aggregates and other construction materials. There has been significant recent investment in port infrastructure and a large area of land is available for development including 20 Ha of allocated employment land immediately adjacent to the Port.

Sellafield Ltd. Railhead at Moorside

As part of its future construction requirements, Sellafield Ltd is currently intending to build a railhead on the Moorside site to support the decommissioning mission. The business case for this development would be much stronger if the costs and facilities could be shared with a SMR/AI Infrastructure development.

Delivery of training and education programmes for local residents

To underpin the Low Carbon Energy developments, Cumbria is scaling up green skills training and workforce development. Institutions like Lakes College are delivering education in solar PV, battery storage, hydrogen systems, and advanced manufacturing, aligning local talent pipelines with industry needs. The region is working closely with NWIC partners to align training provision with key technical requirements, addressing skill shortages while creating high-quality employment opportunities. By investing in a skilled workforce and strategic energy infrastructure, Cumbria is well-positioned to lead the UK's clean energy transition while delivering lasting economic and environmental benefits to its communities.

Regeneration of Brownfield or Underused Land

The development of the Moorside site represents the opportunity to regenerate circa 220 acres of underused land.

c. Low Carbon Energy Solutions

In 2023, a local organisation, Solway Community Power Company (SCPC) put forward a fully and privately funded proposal for a £6bn SMR development at Moorside that was specifically designed to attract inward investment by high energy consumers, such as data centres, hydrogen generation and synthetic fuel manufacture. This proposal was effectively rejected by the previous Government's Minister for Nuclear and Networks in favour of waiting to allow the newly formed Great British Nuclear to carry out its technology and siting deliberations to be concluded. With this uncertainty, SCPC's investors withdrew their support for the Moorside development. Instead, SCPC's parent company, Community Nuclear Power (CNP) and their investors are now making significant progress on a SMR development in Teesside that is designed for very similar purposes to the SCPC.

The model being proposed in 2025 for Moorside is directly based on the SCPC proposal – fully privately funded SMR investment specifically designed to attract Low Carbon Energy Solutions into West Cumbria.

We already have experience of Low Carbon Energy developments in Cumbria, which is advancing a bold clean energy agenda, as outlined in its 2022 Clean Energy and Distributed Energy Strategies and further reinforced by the Going for Growth Strategy. These plans position the region as a testbed for renewable energy technologies and aim to establish Cumbria as a national hub for clean energy generation, storage, and innovation. Central to this vision is the development of key energy hubs, including Moorside, the Workington Energy Hub (focused on hydrogen and offshore energy) and Barrow (a hub for hydrogen, carbon storage, and offshore wind). The strategy emphasises the importance of targeted investment and collaboration, particularly in maximizing the role of the ports of Barrow, Workington, and Silloth to support energy logistics, manufacturing, and exports—anchoring the region's Clean Energy Coast Cluster.

Offshore wind energy remains a cornerstone of Cumbria's clean energy strategy. Flagship developments like the Walney Extension, West of Duddon Sands, and Barrow Offshore Wind Farms contribute significantly to the UK's renewable energy mix and provide a strong foundation for local economic growth. These assets are being integrated into wider regional plans to expand local manufacturing, maintenance, and export capabilities, supported by infrastructure investments such as the proposed expansion of the Port of Workington. Cumbria is also exploring a Cumbria-Wide Rural Test Bed to foster innovation in hydro, tidal, bioenergy, and geothermal technologies—solutions tailored to the rural and coastal character of the county.

Hydrogen and nuclear energy are critical pillars in Cumbria's transition to a low-carbon economy. The Barrow Green Hydrogen project aims to produce 3,500 tonnes of green hydrogen annually, serving both industrial and transport needs. In parallel, the Morecambe Net Zero project is advancing plans for a major carbon capture and storage (CCS) facility, which will play a pivotal role in reducing emissions from regional industries while supporting the UK's wider decarbonisation targets. Cumbria's participation in the North West Industrial Cluster (NWIC)—a £207 billion investment initiative—further strengthens its role in national clean growth. This includes expanding industrial decarbonisation efforts, developing SMRs in West Cumbria, and exploring Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) opportunities.

6. Level of Government Support Required

As highlighted previously, working with partners in the nuclear industry and our local MPs, we have formed the Cumberland Economic Development Forum (now being termed as the Cumberland Nuclear Futures Board), chaired at a national level by the Secretary of State for DESNZ.

At this early stage, our request of DSIT and other Government Departments is simple – to join and support the Cumberland Nuclear Futures Board and to work towards our vision for the Moorside site and the associated AI, technology and industrial regeneration that this would bring to our community.

We have the opportunity to support the Governments ultimate AI goals and to lead the way on new nuclear technology and with Government support, we are confident that we can achieve this by the mid 2030s.