

Richard Waite, NDA Acting Chief Executive
Speech for launch of Britain's Energy Coast – 23 July 2008

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. This is a hugely significant day for West Cumbria and the local community, a community that the NDA is also part of. We clearly recognise the importance of the Energy Coast vision to the future of the area and indeed the NDA has played, and will continue to play a supportive role in turning that vision into reality. So today is also an important day for the NDA.

I would also like to welcome today's news about the creation of the National Nuclear Laboratory. The concept of developing a national laboratory was referred to in our original strategy and we can now look forward to fulfilling our role in its implementation as Chair of the Customer Advisory Group.

As for the Energy Coast I see our continual involvement as key to the delivery of many of our own objectives, both for our industry but also the community in which that industry operates. As many here will know, the NDA has socio-economic and skills development responsibilities under the Energy Act. They are responsibilities we take seriously and put considerable resource and effort in to.

When combining the workforces at Sellafield and LLWR, over 10,000 people rely on the funding we provide as well as the positive impact on local businesses and the broader supply chain. At our HQ on Westlakes Science Park we have created over 200 new jobs here in West Cumbria, filled by highly skilled workers drawn from the local community, but also attracting new people and their families to this part of the world.

So whilst we have a national remit we are extremely proud and conscious of our role and place in the future of West Cumbria. In many respects a prosperous future for West Cumbria will be a sign of success for the NDA and those who work with us.

I joined the NDA over three years ago and in those early days I can well remember conversations about various initiatives like the National Lab, a skills academy and a research facility, concepts that are now coming to fruition. And of course the NDA was joint funder of the £500,000 feasibility study that drew up the Masterplan. Through our place on the Strategic Leaders Group we have continued to provide advice and support and indeed we have learned much from our partners on that group.

In preparing for today I asked exactly how much funding the NDA had put into initiatives that support the Energy Coast vision. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that it amounts to some £35m, a total that will double through the additional funding it attracts from government, industry and academia. And already we can begin to see the impact that funding is making.

At Lillyhall, we have invested £5m into the creation of Energus, a £20m project to create a world class centre of vocational skills training and business support. Construction is well underway and the steel framework gives an early impression of what we all expect to be a world class facility.

But it's what goes on inside that matters, and as the NW flagship for the

National Skills Academy for Nuclear, and through an emerging partnership with the University of Cumbria, Energus will be a hive of activity - training and teaching over 100 apprentices and some 200 university students each year, plus reskilling existing workers and providing advice and support to help local business grow and prosper.

We will soon see the first students qualify from the Foundation Degree in Nuclear Decommissioning at Lakes College, accredited by UCLAN.

We are investing £10m into the creation of a West Cumbria campus for the University of Cumbria and are working with the University, Energus and Lakes College to create an integrated campus that will provide a real focus for both business and further and higher education in the area.

At Westlakes Science & Technology Park we are finalising the business case for the Dalton Cumbria Facility. This £20m project, jointly funded by the NDA and Manchester University, will create a research facility for the linked disciplines of radiation science and decommissioning engineering. An academic chair in Epidemiology has also been created within Westlakes Research Institute.

And let's not forget that earlier this month we announced that Nuclear Management Partners Ltd are our preferred bidder to be the parent body for Sellafield Ltd. Through their partnership of Washington Group, AMEC and Areva they will bring world class experience and expertise to West Cumbria.

Whilst details of their plans remain commercial in confidence at this time I can tell you that within their tender they made a clear commitment to the continued development of the workforce, a clear commitment to the local community and a desire to be involved in the delivery of the Energy Coast Masterplan. Socio-economic activity was one of the criteria evaluated in the tender process and the NDA has the task to ensure they keep to their promises.

The NDA's clean-up and decommissioning mission is a lengthy one, particularly here in West Cumbria. So we are both interested and dependent on the long term future and prosperity of the area. Yes we have a nuclear focus but we clearly see the benefits of a broader range of activity as visualised by the Energy Coast.

The Energy Coast vision and the West Cumbria Masterplan provide a strategic framework for us and others to target resources. We are committed to continuing our investment in the area and committed to seeing the job through.

We firmly believe the Energy Coast can deliver a bright future for West Cumbria and we will continue to play our part in building that prosperity.