



## HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS

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# Councillors hear Dounreay-Sellafield nuclear rail plan

**A Nuclear Decommissioning Authority boss has given a presentation to councillors on plans to move nuclear material from Scotland to England.**

The NDA has sought approval for its scheme to transport breeder material from Dounreay in Caithness to Sellafield for reprocessing.

The first of about 50 movements could start this summer.

Dr Adrian Simper, head of strategy at the NDA, addressed Highland councillors in Inverness.

He gave his presentation to Highland Council's transport, environmental and community services committee.

Ahead of the meeting, Dr Simper told BBC Radio Scotland that Dounreay did not have the capability to reprocess the material.

He said this was because the site was at an advanced stage of being demolished and cleaned up.

Dr Simper added: "If it was to stay at Dounreay it is not clear how we would restore the site."

Approval for the NDA's plan to shift the 44 tonnes of breeder material over a period of four to five years has been sought from the Office for Nuclear Regulation and Office for Civil Nuclear Regulation.

Breeder is classed as material and not as fuel or waste, by the NDA.

The material comprises cylinders of uranium metal, about 150mm long and 35mm in diameter known as "pucks".

Fourteen pucks are stacked end-to-end in a stainless steel tube. The tubes were positioned vertically to form an outer ring around experimental Dounreay Fast Reactor (DFR).

The uranium metal captured neutrons from the reactors inner core and produced plutonium which could be removed and converted into fuel.

Last year, the NDA set out its options for the breeder material in [a public consultation document](#).

The paper reported that handling it at Sellafield would be cheaper than dealing with it at Dounreay where a new reprocessing plant and store would have to be built.

The safety record for transporting nuclear material was proven and any employment generated from managing it at the Scottish site would be short-term, according to the document.

In November, the NDA said local authorities would receive some information to pass on to communities close to the lines the trains would follow.

However, it said the exact timings of the trains and security measures would remain confidential.

Friends of the Earth Scotland has opposed the rail plan and said the material should be dealt with at Dounreay.

Stan Blackley said moving the material opened it to the "risk of accident and mishap".

He added: "The best thing to do is reprocess it and store it on site in Caithness."

**Dounreay material to be dealt with**

44 tonnes of breeder material

240,000 tonnes of low-level radioactive waste

20,000 tonnes of highly radioactive waste

More than 150 tonnes of intermediate level waste from highly enriched nuclear fuel from Belgium that was processed at Dounreay

**How it will be handled**

Moved in 50 shipments by rail to Sellafield for reprocessing

Stored in a £100m facility at Dounreay

Possible storage in heavily-shielded facility at Dounreay

The material is to be collected by Belgian contractors and moved by sea in about 20 shipments



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