



University
of Glasgow

PRESS RELEASE

To News Editor

Show your support for ground-breaking fusion plant

People from North Ayrshire and across the West of Scotland are being asked to show their support for the bid to bring a revolutionary new fusion energy plant to Ardeer.

The proposed fusion energy plant at Ardeer would be a world-leading facility, producing safe, clean energy to help the fight against climate change, bringing thousands of new jobs and acting as an economic catalyst in this part of Scotland.

The proposal is already winning backing from businesses leaders, neighbouring local authorities, and figures from across the political spectrum.

Those who want to see Ardeer successfully become home to STEP are being asked to make their support known by signing the letter at <https://bit.ly/3Gt8fwC>

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) is considering a shortlist of five locations for the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP), an ambitious programme to design and construct a prototype fusion power plant.

The UKAEA is currently visiting each of the sites, ahead of making a recommendation on the preferred site later this year.

As part of the UKAEA's deliberations, they will be taking on board local sentiment towards the facility – and local support could be a key element.

The bid for the North Ayrshire site is being led by the Fusion Forward (Ardeer) consortium, which consists of the University of Glasgow, NPL Group, which owns the land, and North Ayrshire Council.

NPL Group Development Director, Arran Cameron, who has known the Ardeer site for 15 years, said: “The STEP project is a once in a generation opportunity for jobs and prosperity in Ayrshire and beyond. We have worked on major projects across our UK portfolio in waste, solar, wind and gas power generation systems but the scale of STEP is unprecedented.

“The project will deliver so much more than a powerplant including supporting industries in the supply chain, wider educational offering and a true sense of pride again in Ardeer. You can do your bit to help bring this project to Ardeer and transform Scotland’s largest brownfield industrial site into something truly amazing by signing the letter of support.”

North Ayrshire Council Leader Joe Cullinane said: “There’s no doubt that a STEP Fusion Plant can be a game-changer not only for Ardeer and North Ayrshire, but the whole of the West of Scotland.

“STEP Fusion is cutting edge technology with the potential to provide clean, safe energy for Scotland and further afield and would be viewed around the world as a pioneering breakthrough. With the potential to create around 3,500 skilled jobs during STEP’s construction, and up to 1,000 further roles once the plant is operational – including a significant number of apprenticeships and graduate position – the economic benefits are clear. We hope that people who support the proposal will put that in writing and sign a letter of support.”

Professor Declan Diver, of the University of Glasgow’s School of Physics and Astronomy, is convenor of Fusion Forward (Ardeer), the consortium which put together the Ardeer bid. Professor Diver said: “I’ve been a researcher and teacher of plasma physics for 30 years, and STEP is without a doubt one of the most exciting developments I’ve seen during that time.

“A fusion power plant on the shores of North Ayrshire would bring with it a wide range of potentially transformative benefits for research, education and training in addition to its obvious potential for zero-carbon electricity production and economic regeneration across Scotland and zero-carbon electricity production.

“We’ve been delighted by the interest and excitement already shown by local people, and I hope that many more will be inspired to do their part by signing a letter of support.”

You can sign the letter of support at <https://bit.ly/3Gt8fwC>

Alternatively, you can also download a copy of the letter of the support at <https://www.thisisnorthayrshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/STEP-letter-of-support-gen.docx>

Please sign the letter and return it to us business@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can print off a copy and hand it in or post it to North Ayrshire Council Business Team (STEP), Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE, by 3pm on Friday, 11 February, 2022. Alternatively, forms can be dropped off at Ardeer Community Centre.

Ends

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