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Jonathan Walsh

Expansion time for nuclear hub site

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COMPANIES involved in the booming nuclear sector today unveiled expansion plans for their operations in Cheshire.

The **United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA)** is returning to Warrington's Birchwood Park, 10 years after it sold the complex to property giant **MEPC**.

UKAEA had developed the site for nuclear research following the Second World War.

Now it has signed a deal to lease offices from MEPC which are three times the size of its existing facilities in Warrington's Cinnamon Park.

Over the next year, the authority, which specialises in decommissioning and regenerating nuclear sites, will look to increase the size of its team of experts from 20 to 40 to deal with increased demand after the government announced it would invest in a new generation of reactors earlier this year.

John Anderson, head of UKAEA's assurance services group, said: "There is already a good nuclear industry community there, and it will bring us into closer touch with our customers.

"There's also something satisfying about being back in the place which helped UKAEA first establish its international reputation, which we are now continuing."

Birchwood Park's occupants now include 20 companies linked to the nuclear sector, such as **Serco Assurance**, **Amec Nuclear** and **Nuvia**.

Birchwood Park managing director Jonathan Walsh said that the 'sectoral hub' for the nuclear sector had benefits for the north west's economy.

He said: "The park hosts a highly diverse business community, of which the nuclear sector is a growing part.

"Firms operating within the nuclear industry have much to gain from locating at Birchwood Park, not least the sophisticated infrastructure created as it has developed."

UKAEA's return coincides with significant expansion by three other businesses at Birchwood Park - electrical design specialist **Tenet Consultants**, recruitment consultants **Fircroft** and **Nuclear Engineering Services**.