

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 7 December 2016
Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	Update on the GDF siting process
Author:	Philip Matthews
Purpose:	To report on recent developments related to the Geological Disposal Facility

Introduction:

This report provides an update on recent developments related to the process for identifying a Geological Disposal Facility. It covers:

- Consultation on the GDF framework; and
- RWM stakeholder engagement.

Recommendation:

This report is for noting.

Background information

The Call for Evidence can be found on the BEIS website¹, as can information on the Communities Representation Working Group².

You can read more about the national geological screening exercise on RWM's website³ and find out about the Independent Review Panel on that of the Geological Society (see page 3, footnote 3).

1. Consultations on the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) framework

Consultations on the community and land use planning aspects of the GDF siting process were due to be launched in autumn 2016 but as yet no firm date has been set. It is understood that the new ministerial team in BEIS has taken time to review the approach to the GDF and that the consultations cannot proceed until this has been completed. NuLeAF will notify members as and when more information is available, but it is anticipated that both consultations will now be launched in January 2017 and run for 12 weeks.

RWM is also committed to provide information to communities on geology and its implications for GDF siting. A website is in development, with background information and access to the materials produced for the Geological Screening Exercise. NuLeAF staff have been given sight of this and have fed back comments to RWM. Two members of the Radioactive Waste Planning Group also provided their comments.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementing-geological-disposal-working-with-communities>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/implementing-geological-disposal-community-representation-working-group>

³ <http://www.nda.gov.uk/rwm/national-geological-screening/>

2. RWM Stakeholder engagement

As RWM prepares for the launch of the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process in summer 2017, the organisation is keen to involve NuLeAF as an advisor, ensuring it is geared up for the launch and that its workings are as effective as possible.

NuLeAF's Executive Director participated in RWM's 'organisational readiness review' in Oxfordshire on the 3rd and 4th October. The aim of this was to advise RWM of the preparations, internal and external, that will be required to engage communities and local authorities in the GDF siting process. Along with NuLeAF there was representation from BEIS, Welsh Government, NDA, Environment Agency, Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM), as well as some international experts and most members of RWM's senior management team.

The meeting explored different scenarios that might impact on RWM's plans and sought to identify and discuss the individual perspectives of all those present. It highlighted a number of issues within the framework for community engagement that will need to be addressed to ensure local authorities are able to engage effectively, and also internal challenges for RWM in terms of its ability to respond quickly and appropriately to local needs and media pressures. A note of the meeting will be prepared and circulated to attendees, with a more detailed internal report submitted to RWM for consideration.

NuLeAF's Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Director attended RWM's annual stakeholder meeting in Manchester on the 13rd and 14th October. The meeting provided updates on progress with the siting process and plans for engagement with communities, along with technical briefings. Also of interest was information on the progress of GDF plans in Sweden and Finland. Stakeholders representing the Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs), Government, regulators and the industry were present. The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) were critical of the lack of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representation at the event.

Looking forward, NuLeAF has been invited to a Welsh National Stakeholder event on the GDF siting process, being held in Cardiff on January 6th 2017. While the Welsh Government is not actively seeking to host a GDF in Wales, they have committed to supporting any Welsh community which is interested in being considered as a possible location for the repository. A report on this event will be provided to the next Steering Group meeting.

Finally, NuLeAF's regular engagement meetings with RWM and BEIS have been extended to include NDA. The next meeting of this group will be held immediately after the Steering Group.