

<b>Meeting:</b>	NuLeAF Steering Group, 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	7
<b>Subject:</b>	Update on the GDF siting process
<b>Author:</b>	Philip Matthews
<b>Purpose:</b>	To report on recent developments related to the proposed 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;
- Staff changes at RWM;
- GDF Safety Case published;
- Geology update.

### **Recommendation:**

This report is for noting.

### **Background information**

The UK Government **White Paper on Geological Disposal** and other information on government policy is available here<sup>1</sup>.

Information on the work of **Radioactive Waste Management** can be found here<sup>2</sup>.

## **1. Consultation on the GDF framework**

The latest indications are that the UK Government intends to open consultations on the Communities and Land-Use Planning aspects of the GDF siting process in mid to late October 2017, with a consultation period that will run for at least 12 weeks. In parallel, the Welsh Government will undertake a consultation on the Communities framework as it applies to Wales.

If the consultations are opened in October then BEIS plans to hold a series of workshops from late November to early December in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Darlington and Preston, along with a separate technical event on the National Planning Statement (NPS). The events will be targeted at key

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/geological-disposal-facility-gdf-for-high-activity-radioactive-waste>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/radioactive-waste-management>

stakeholders and BEIS will send out invitations once the consultations are open. Members of the public may be admitted on a case-to-case basis if there is space. There may also be consultation events in Wales but at present information on these is not available.

As noted in Steering Group Paper 6, NuLeAF is proposing to hold a workshop on the consultations as part of the next Steering Group on the 6<sup>th</sup> December. If members support this, the event will enable discussion with BEIS, RWM and others. NuLeAF will draw on this, and other feedback from members, in preparing our responses to both consultations. These will be circulated in draft form to members for comment.

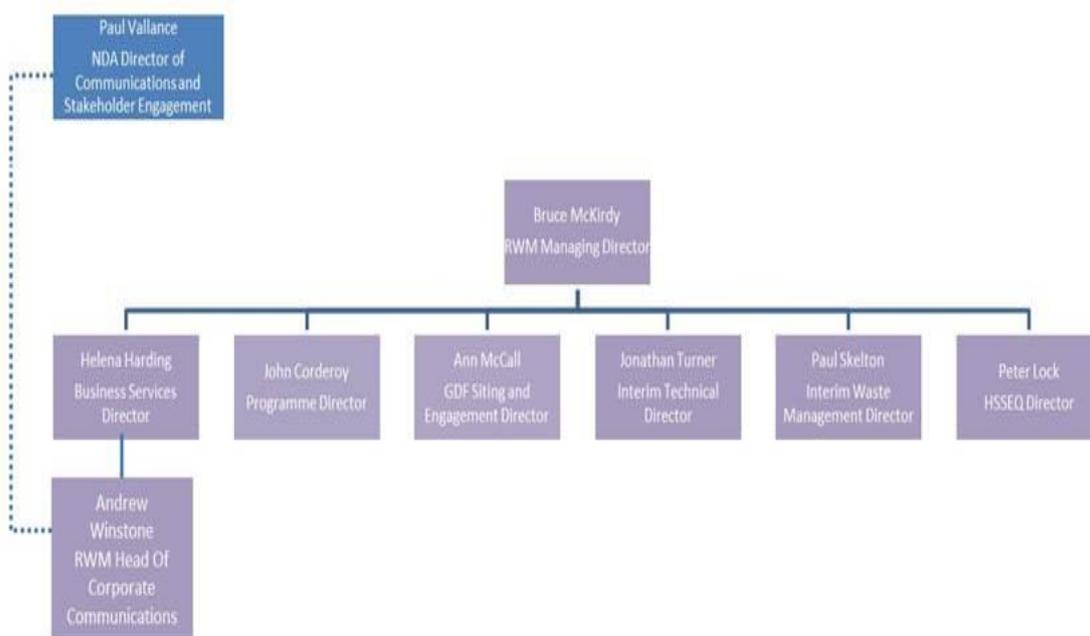
NuLeAF will email members as soon as the opening of these consultations has been confirmed or alternatively if it is clear that there will be a further delay. Given current proposals for the consultations, it is now likely that a final Government framework for the GDF siting process will be published in spring 2018, with the siting process launched in summer next year.

## 2. **Staff changes at RWM**

Changes in the senior management at RWM have been announced. **Ann McCall** has taken up a new, broader role as GDF Siting and Engagement Director, the aim being to ensure better linkages between the technical and engagement aspects of the siting process as we near launch. Ann was previously RWM's Waste Management Director and before that she spent 7 years with SKB – the Swedish Radioactive Waste Management company. The creation of this new role means that Natalyn Ala and Ivan Stone have left RWM.

**John Corderoy** has been appointed to the role of Programme Director. John was previously RWM's Science and Technology Director and before that he was with the Royal Navy where he had experience as a Programme Director on major programmes.

Temporary cover will be provided for the Waste Management Director and Science and Technology Director roles pending recruitment. An organogram of RWM's new senior management structure is provided overleaf.



### 3. GDF Safety case published

The UK Government has published the generic Disposal System Safety Case (DSSC) for the GDF<sup>3</sup>.

This suite of documents is intended to demonstrate how a geological disposal facility can be designed, constructed, and operated safely. It includes an overview, a series of main reports, and a range of background assessments of specific issues and technical information. A paper on the planned inventory for disposal is also available. As there is no site for the GDF at this stage no location specific issues are addressed, although a detailed site safety case will be required once a site or sites are selected.

The stated purposes of the generic safety case are to:

- Demonstrate that RWM is confident that the UK's radioactive waste can be safely disposal of in the UK
- Invite and support discussions with regulators and stakeholders
- Maintain a basis on which RWM can provide advice to waste producers on packaging for disposal, and for assessing the disposability of packages
- Support the siting process by providing information to communities interested in hosting the GDF
- Inform RWM's science and technology plan by identifying research and development needs

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/demonstrating-the-safety-of-a-geological-disposal-facility-gdf>

- Provide a basis for the early assessment of the suitability of potential sites
- Provide a source of information to support the development of site-specific designs and safety cases

The key elements of the safety case are set out in relation to three main elements of the process:

- Transport of the waste to the GDF – presented in the generic Transport Safety Case
- Construction and operation of the GDF – presented in the Operational Safety Case
- The long-term period after closure – presented in the generic Environmental Safety Case

Overall, the documents conclude that the GDF can be implemented safely in a range of geological environments and that there is greater confidence in the safety case than there was during the previous iteration in 2010. This enhanced confidence is due to improvements in the knowledge base and the further work that has been undertaken on assessments of three illustrative geological environments for the facility.

#### **4. Geology update**

As work continues to enhance the geological information available in relation to the UK's GDF siting process, the Japanese Government has published a 'scientific characteristic map' setting out the perceived suitability of different regions of Japan for geological disposal<sup>4</sup>.

Japan faces particular challenges in identifying a suitable site due to the complex geology of the country and its location in an active tectonic zone with a significant number of volcanoes. Their site selection process is expected to commence in 2025 with construction beginning in 2035.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/WR-Japan-maps-potential-repository-areas-2807174.html>