

<b>Meeting:</b>	NuLeAF Steering Group, 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2018
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	4
<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:

- Consultations on the GDF framework;
- CoRWM update;
- Statement by Tim Knowles, former Chair of MRWS Partnership;
- RWM Update; and
- International overview of geological disposal published.

### **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>.

---

<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>

## 1. Consultations on the GDF framework

The consultations on the GDF siting process were launched in late January 2018.

BEIS has published separate consultations on the community aspects of the siting process as it applies to England and Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup> and on the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Geological Disposal Infrastructure, covering England only<sup>4</sup>. The Welsh Government is also seeking views on its proposals for the community aspects of the GDF siting process as they would apply in Wales<sup>5</sup>.

NuLeAF has drafted responses to all three consultations and circulated to members – they have also been included in the Steering Group papers. Members will have an opportunity to discuss the consultations and NuLeAF responses at the meeting, and also hear from BEIS and RWM at a dedicated workshop held during the afternoon of this Steering Group. Written comments on the NuLeAF responses are also invited, to be **submitted by the 31<sup>st</sup> March**.

Drawing on the feedback from Steering Group and in written comments, final versions of the NuLeAF responses will be submitted by the **close of the consultations on the 19<sup>th</sup> April (England) and 20<sup>th</sup> April (Wales)**. NuLeAF would also encourage individual local authorities to submit responses and the Executive Director would be happy to comment on drafts.

To support the consultation process, BEIS has also hosted a series of workshops around England, the last of which was held in Lancaster the day before this meeting. A technical workshop on the NPS consultation will be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March in London. NuLeAF's Executive Director will be attending and it is understood a number of planning officers from member local authorities will also be participating.

The Welsh Government is not hosting any events in support of its consultation.

## 2. CoRWM update

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) is recruiting a new Chair after Professor Laurence Williams stepped down. The closing date for applications was the 19<sup>th</sup> February and it is hoped that the new Chair will be announced this spring.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/civil-nuclear-resilience/gdf-www/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-policy-statement-for-geological-disposal-infrastructure>

<sup>5</sup> <https://beta.gov.wales/geological-disposal-radioactive-waste>

CoRWM has published its annual report for 2016-17<sup>6</sup>, setting out its advice to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), along with its proposed programme of work for 2017-2020<sup>7</sup>.

The annual report provides the Committee's assessment of progress across all workstreams that are taking forward in support of the proposals contained within the Implementing Geology Disposal (IGD) White Paper of 2014. The Committee also offers an assessment of the work of the Welsh Government on IGD and of the Scottish Government's work on radioactive waste management, as well as of Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) Ltd.

Its overall assessment is that satisfactory progress is being made by BEIS and RWM. However, it believes that there is room for improvement in RWM in order to ensure it will be able to engage effectively with interested parties as and when they are able to enter the GDF siting process.

The responsible Minister, Richard Harrington MP, has written to CoRWM with the Government's response to its recommendations<sup>8</sup>.

### **3. Statement by Tim Knowles, former Chair of MRWS Partnership**

Tim Knowles, formerly Cabinet Member at Cumbria Country Council and Chair of the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership, was interviewed on Radio Cumbria on the 15<sup>th</sup> January regarding plans for the GDF siting process.

Tim, also a former Chair of NuLeAF, stated in the interview that, while he still accepted there was a case for geological disposal, he had come to believe that Cumbria was not a suitable place for it. He believes that better geology for a repository is to be found elsewhere within England, and also expressed a lack of confidence in the UK Government being able to deliver an acceptable funding and investment package, given their poor record of investment in the county.

Tim also suggested that a near-surface (30m-50m below surface) interim store with a lifespan of 100-200 years might be a more appropriate way forward as it would enable waste to be retrieved and used in future if technology advanced. He thought that such a facility could be developed within NDA land in West Cumbria. The radio interview is available here<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management-corwm-thirteenth-annual-report-2016-to-2017>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management-corwm-programme-of-work-2017-to-2020>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gdfwatch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Govt-response-to-corwm-recommendations-in-2016-17-annual-report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://cumbriatrust.org/>

## 4. RWM Update

It has been announced that Prof. Malcolm Morley has been appointed as Chair of RWM. Professor Morley previously served as an independent Non-Executive Director on the RWM Board. He has a local government background, having previously worked for 14 years as the Chief Executive of Harlow Council<sup>10</sup>.

RWM has also announced the establishment of a new Advisory Council, Chaired by Lorraine Baldry. Ms Baldry is currently Chair of a number of organisations including London and Continental Railways. She has experience of strategic level working in a range of industries including technology, broadcasting, waste and financial services. The other Board members bring skills from the private sector, local government, communication and the trade unions and are listed here.<sup>11</sup>

## 5. International overview of geological disposal published

RWM has published an overview of geological disposal facility siting processes from 19 different countries<sup>12</sup> ranging from Australia to Lithuania. The report looks at:

- How each country undertook, or is undertaking, the siting process for disposal facilities
- The roles of local decision-making bodies, national governments and the developer
- The level and timing of payment for any community investment

The report highlights the different political, social and cultural circumstances of each country but notes that:

- Local government has always been involved as one of the main representatives of the community and, with the exception of Switzerland, has a decision-making role in the process
- The elected representatives of the community closest to where the facility is proposed to be built (the local municipality) tend to be the local decision makers in the siting process
- Engagement with and understanding of the issues, along with support for the siting process, is often higher at the local than the regional or national level
- The community investment associated with a GDF varies in terms of the approach, scope and amount as well as when it becomes available. In a number of countries community investment is to be made available in advance of the facility being constructed.

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/professor-malcolm-morley-obe-appointed-as-chair-of-rwm>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/radioactive-waste-management-establishes-advisory-council>

<sup>12</sup> <https://rwm.nda.gov.uk/publication/geological-disposal-overview-of-international-siting-processes-2017/>