

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 6 th June 2018
Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	Update on the GDF siting process
Author:	Philip Matthews
Purpose:	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:

- GDF siting process;
- NuLeAF presentation to CoRWM; and
- RWM 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 here¹. Information on the work of **Radioactive Waste Management** can be found here².

1. GDF siting process

Consultations on the GDF siting process were launched in late January 2018 and concluded on the 19th and 20th April.

It is understood that a total of 400 responses to the National Policy Statement (NPS) consultation were received, although 300 of these were from German members of the public. Key themes of the responses were that:

- A GDF was not necessarily a given i.e. there is doubt that it will happen
- The issue of retrievability is important to many
- There is a need to look at alternatives to geological disposal

There were 155 responses to the Working with Communities (WWC) consultation, including a number from Northern Ireland. Key questions or issues raised included:

- How to generate support for a consent-based process
- How it will work in practice

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

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

- The need to clarify whether there is a local authority veto

The Welsh consultation received 57 online responses and 24 hard copy responses. Issues highlighted included:

- The implication of a recent Swedish court case for geological disposal in the UK
- Long term storage as an alternative to disposal
- The need for a clearer definition of community

NuLeAF submitted detailed responses to all three consultations³, covering the Working with Communities and National Policy Statement (NPS) for the GDF siting process in England, and the communities policy for Wales. The final submissions were informed by a range of useful feedback provided by members at the GDF workshop on the 21st March and via one-to-one conversations and written comments. A number of local authorities also submitted their own responses to one or more of the consultations.

NuLeAF's Executive Director met with BEIS officials on the 3rd May to discuss our response to the Communities consultation and next steps. BEIS has indicated that it wishes to continue dialogue over the coming months as the Communities policy is finalised.

NuLeAF's Director also met with Umran Nazir, BEIS Deputy Director for Decommissioning, Radioactive Material and Geological Disposal on the 5th June. A verbal report on this meeting will be provided to Steering Group.

On Friday, 25th May, the BEIS Commons Select Committee opened an inquiry into the GDF National Policy Statement⁴. NuLeAF will submit a response and will also request an opportunity to present oral evidence. The deadline for submissions is 15th June, and the Committee Report on the NPS is anticipated in September.

2. NuLeAF presentation to CoRWM

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) invited NuLeAF's Executive Director to deliver a presentation and take part in a panel discussion as part of their London plenary on the 2nd May.

The focus of the discussions was the recent BEIS and Welsh Government consultations on the GDF siting process. NuLeAF's presentation was well received and led to a useful discussion. This covered a number of issues including:

- the role of local government and communities in the siting process;
- the need for greater clarity in a number of crucial areas than was provided in the consultations;

³ <http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/document-library/consultation-responses/consultation-responses-2018>

⁴ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-energy-industrial-strategy/inquiries/parliament-2017/inquiry8/>

- better financial support for communities entering the process;
- the weaknesses present in the draft NPS and associated Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS).

The minutes of the meeting are not yet available but will be posted on the CoRWM website at a later date.

3. RWM Update

NuLeAF's Director met with RWM's Engagement and Communications Team and Outreach Team on the 29th and 30th May. The meetings were intended to help build RWM's organisational readiness ahead of the likely launch of the siting process in late 2018 or early 2019. The aim of the meetings was to explain to RWM staff the structures and ways of working of local government, along with the drivers and constraints that govern local authorities now and in the coming years.

RWM will be attending and exhibiting at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) conference in Llandudno on the 28th June and at the Local Government Association (LGA) conference in Birmingham on the 3rd to 5th July.