

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 12 th September 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;
- CoRWM Chair appointed; 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

Following the close of the consultations on the **Working with Communities** and **National Policy Statement (NPS)** aspects of the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process, NuLeAF has continued to advise BEIS and the UK Parliament as policy is finalised ahead of launch.

NuLeAF's Executive Director has met with BEIS officials on three occasions to discuss our response to the Communities consultation and the Government's developing thinking. It is not clear when the final policy will be announced though it is understood that the Government and RWM are currently working on the basis that there will be a launch of the siting process before the end of 2018.

NuLeAF's Director was invited to appear before the **BEIS Commons Select Committee** inquiry into the GDF National Policy Statement on the 10th July. A full transcript of all evidence provided, along with video of the session and other written submissions is available on the Committee website³.

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>

³ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-energy-industrial-strategy/inquiries/parliament-2017/inquiry8/publications/>

The Committee's report was published on the 31st July⁴. The inquiry and report had a relatively narrow focus around four areas of interest, not all of which were relevant to NuLeAF's concerns. Despite that, NuLeAF's evidence regarding the need for more contextual information along with better links to the Communities policy and much greater clarity on the socio-economic impacts of a GDF were all noted by the Committee in their report.

The Committee's conclusions, along with the evidence submitted in response to the NPS consultation, will help inform the final NPS. This is expected to be published in early 2019.

2. CoRWM Chair appointed

The Government announced on the 2nd July that it has appointed Sir Nigel Thrift as the new Chair of the **Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM)**⁵ with the appointment due to run for 4 years.

Sir Nigel's background is in human geography rather than in engineering or physical science. He was previously the Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Warwick and Pro-Vice Chancellor for research at the University of Oxford.

3. RWM Update

As the launch of the GDF siting process nears, RWM has continued to develop its communication materials and information systems.

A draft of the prospectus for communities has now been prepared. This is intended to help interested individuals and communities to understand plans for a GDF and how the siting process is likely to proceed. RWM held a discussion on the draft with stakeholders as part of the NDA Stakeholder Summit. Dr. Stephen Brown of RWM will be attending the 12th September Steering Group to hear NuLeAF views on the prospectus.

RWM attended 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 to raise awareness of proposals for a geological disposal facility.

Finally, NuLeAF and RWM met via phone conference on the 22nd August. The meeting involved NuLeAF's Chair and Executive Director along with senior RWM staff. It was convened at NuLeAF's request to allow further discussion and clarification of proposals for the headworks and underground GDF facilities and the associated employment, economic and transport impacts. Of particular value were discussions around Business Rate retention and the sharing of the local authority perspective on engagement and planning issues around large infrastructure projects. The Chair and Director will provide a verbal report on the meeting to the Steering Group.

⁴ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmbeis/1092/109202.htm>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/beis-secretary-of-state-appoints-new-chair-to-the-committee-for-radioactive-waste-management>