

ITEM 7: UPDATE ON GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY SITING PROCESS

Report to RWPG, 29th July 2020

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

- NuLeAF Briefing Paper on the Inventory for Disposal;
- RWM Update; and
- CoRWM Update

1. Introduction

1.1 The UK Government's policy on **Working with Communities – implementing geological disposal** was published in December 2018¹, with the equivalent policy for Wales published in January 2019². The **National Policy Statement**, governing the planning aspects of the GDF in England, was published in July 2019³.

2. NuLeAF Briefing Paper on the Inventory for Disposal

2.1 NuLeAF has prepared a draft **Briefing Paper** on the **Inventory for Geological Disposal**.

The UK radioactive waste inventory is complex, comprising materials that pose varying degrees of risk to people and the environment; and which require a range of management techniques. The GDF will be the disposal route for the UK's Higher Activity Waste (HAW). This includes materials that have already been declared waste, and potentially other materials such as Spent Fuel, Uranics and Plutonium that may be declared waste in future.

The paper explains the UK inventory of radioactive wastes and the various materials that are or may be destined for geological disposal. It also highlights a number of issues and discussion points that have been raised in relation to the inventory; notes some alternative management options that are under consideration; and sets out NuLeAF's view.

The draft was circulated to NuLeAF members in advance of this meeting. There will be an opportunity to discuss the paper at the RWPG, and to provide written comment.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-geological-disposal-working-with-communities-long-term-management-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste>

² <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/190116-geological-disposal-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste-working-with-communities-en.pdf>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statement-for-geological-disposal-infrastructure>

3. RWM Update

3.1 NuLeAF's Chair and Director held a phone meeting with Dr. Guy Esnouf, RWM's new Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Director on the 16th June. Dr. Esnouf joined RWM from Npower where he was their Director of Communications and Corporate Responsibility, and he has also served as Head of Corporate and Internal Communications at E.ON. The meeting was positive and focussed on the role of NuLeAF and local authorities in the GDF siting process, and on future collaboration between RWM and NuLeAF.

3.2 As part of their ongoing engagement with local government on geological disposal, RWM held a meeting with Nigel Riglar, the President of ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transportation) and Director of Environment and Community Services at South Gloucestershire Council. Following this meeting, NuLeAF's Executive Director held a phone meeting with Hannah Bartram, ADEPT's Chief Operating Officer to discuss the GDF siting process and the role of local authorities and communities. RWM hope to continue the dialogue with ADEPT over the coming months.

3.3 RWM and the British Geological Survey (BGS) have published a 5-year agreement⁴ that sets out plans for joint working at the strategic, technical and operational levels.

A GDF can only proceed within suitable geology, and the expertise brought by the BGS is therefore of great importance to the siting process. The agreement covers collaboration on a wide range of areas including strategic planning, site characterisation, stakeholder engagement, research, training, communications and information exchange.

4. CoRWM

4.1 CoRWM has published its work programme for 2020/21⁵. Work areas, tasks and deliverables are noted in Annex A. These include a commitment to work on the community engagement aspects of the GDF siting process and NuLeAF will seek to engage with the Committee on this and other topics.

Sir Nigel Thrift, CoRWM's Chair, along with 2 members of the Committee, will address NuLeAF's September Steering Group meeting.

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rwm-partners-with-the-british-geological-survey?utm_source=09f3bb6a-98c0-4349-83c1-37b23fa84e51&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887571/CoRWM_Work_Programme_-_2020.pdf