

ITEM 6: UPDATE ON GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY SITING PROCESS

Report to RWPG, 8th November 2022

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

- Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Siting Process;
- Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Update;
- International situation; 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. Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Siting Process

2.1 **Mid Copeland GDF Partnership** has been busy, holding 11 community engagement events in September and October. The Partnership has also announced that another £110,000 of grants have been awarded to local projects, including £75,000 to the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team. A total of around £400,000 has now been allocated to community organisations.

Allerdale GDF Community Partnership has also seen a high level of interest in community funding from local groups. Over £360,000 has been allocated in the past 6 months, including £116,000 to West Cumbria domestic violence support.

The recently established **Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership** is seeking members. An invitation to join the Partnership has been extended to The Guardians of the East Coast (GOTEC) ⁴, a group opposed to geological disposal in Lincolnshire, and they have indicated that they are minded to join.

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/geological-disposal-higher-activity-radioactive-waste-guidance-communities>

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

⁴ <https://www.gotec.org.uk/post/gotec-invited-to-join-the-community-partnership>

2.2 Lincolnshire County Council has decided to become a contributing member of Nuleaf. The Council is closely engaged in the local GDF siting process, and we are delighted that they have decided to fully affiliate to our network.

3. Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Update

3.1 NWS has published a new report: **GDF - Creating Jobs and Skills: A First Look⁵**.

The report recognises that the siting process is at an early stage and the appraisal has to be generic rather than site specific. However, it concludes that a GDF would create more than 4,000 jobs within the first 25 years (the Site Characterisation and Initial Construction phases) and an average of 2,000 jobs over the whole 175 years before final closure. It states that 'most' of the jobs created during construction and operation could and should be created locally.

The paper outlines the range of employment that would be created and highlights that, while many highly skilled workers will be required, 75% of roles would be for those holding A levels or below. A commitment is made to invest in local labour and support local contractors. Examples are provided as to how this has worked in other GDF and large-scale infrastructure projects.

NWS will present the findings of the report to the December Steering Group meeting.

3.2 NWS has launched two short videos where Chief Scientist Prof. Neil Hyatt looks at the geological⁶ and community aspects⁷ of geological disposal.

4. International situation

4.1 Theo Leggett of the BBC has put together a podcast on the issues around geological disposal. In it he visits the Aspo Hard Rock Laboratory in Sweden and meets representatives of SKB (the developer) and the local authority in Oskarshamn. He also discusses the UK process with Prof. Neil Hyatt of NWS and Dr Paul Dorfman and Marianne Birkby, both of whom oppose GDF development. The podcast can be heard here⁸.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gdf-to-create-more-than-4000-jobs-within-the-first-25-years>

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GPDi39iDIY>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWkPujO8gC0>

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3ct30xm>

4.2 Switzerland has announced the proposed site for its geological repository as being **Nordlich Lagern**, close to the border with Germany⁹. The Swiss siting process was not based on volunteerism; rather it was driven by geological considerations, with much of the country deemed unsuitable due to the faulting and fracturing found in the Alps. The repository is in a low-lying area underlain with clay. The Swiss developer, Nagra, is expected to submit general license applications to the federal government in 2024.

5. CoRWM update

CoRWM has published two papers: Implications of inshore siting of a geological disposal facility¹⁰, and Geological Disposal Facility: high level cost review¹¹. The secretariat will review these and provide an update to the Steering Group meeting on 15th December.

⁹ <https://nagra.ch/en/media-release-nagra-proposes-nordlich-lagern-as-the-site-for-switzerlands-deep-geological-repository/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implications-of-inshore-siting-of-a-geological-disposal-facility-gdf>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geological-disposal-facility-gdf-high-level-cost-review>