

ITEM 9: UPDATE ON GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY (GDF) SITING PROCESS

Report to the RWPG, 9th September 2026

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

- UK Government Update; and
- Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Update; and
- International news.

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. UK government update

2.1 A decision on next steps in the GDF siting process is awaited from the UK Government. Originally anticipated before the summer recess, this has been delayed by the change in Prime Minister and the appointment of the **Rt. Hon. Miatta Fahnbulleh MP** as DESNZ Secretary of State, with **Michael Shanks MP** the Minister for Energy.

Nuleaf's Chair has written to the new ministers to stress our view that the delivery of a GDF is a priority for the UK's legacy and new nuclear power sector, that it requires proper resourcing, and that Nuleaf would engage constructively in any consideration of amendments to the current Working With Communities policy.

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>

3. Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Update

3.1 NWS has announced that **Seth Kybird** has been appointed as its permanent Chief Executive Officer (CEO), commencing on the 1st July 2026, having led the organisation on an interim basis since April 2025.

Seth said 'What NWS does matters – protecting people and the environment today and taking responsibility for the generations that come after us. This year has asked a lot of us, delivering for the country while working within real financial constraints, and it is the skill and commitment of my colleagues that has carried us through.

And we will keep building on our progress: widening the waste solutions we provide; operating the Low Level Waste Repository safely, and making progress towards permanent disposal, especially a Geological Disposal Facility.'

3.2 NWS has published the latest **UK Radioactive Waste Inventory (UKRWI)** reports, the official national record of all radioactive wastes and materials in the UK. These can all be found on the dedicated webpages, [here](#)⁴.

4. International news

4.1 The Finnish nuclear regulator, **STUK** has completed its safety assessment of the Finnish geological repository for Spent Fuel⁵ and concluded that the requirements for granting an operating license have been met. It says the facility meets the safety requirements set for it in the Nuclear Energy Act and Decree, and, *'therefore, there is no obstacle to granting the facility an operating licence with regard to radiation and nuclear safety'*.

The President of **Posiva** (the developer of the repository), Ilkka Poikolainen, commented *'This is the world's first industrial-scale final disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel...The solution developed by Posiva has attracted worldwide interest. For this reason, the safety assessment is significant not only for Posiva and our owner companies TVO and Fortum, but also for the international nuclear energy community.'*

A final decision on Posiva's application to operate the facility will be made by the Finnish Government.

⁴ [2025 Inventory reports - UK Radioactive Waste & Materials Inventory](#)

⁵ [Finnish regulator gives positive decision on used fuel repository - World Nuclear News](#)