Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

IMPLEMENTING GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL – ANNUAL REPORT

April 2016 - March 2017

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Introduction and Background

Introduction

1. In its November 2010 response[1] to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee's report 'Radioactive Waste Management: a Further Update'[2] (March 2010), the UK Government committed to producing an annual report to Parliament, setting out progress in relation to the management of higher activity radioactive waste. This is the seventh annual report.

2. This document sets out progress made in relation to the management of higher activity radioactive waste for the period April 2016 to March 2017.

Background

3. The UK Government remains committed to the policy of geological disposal, for the reasons set out in the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management's (CoRWM)[3] original 2006 report and subsequent UK Government policy documents on radioactive waste management. All major nuclear nations are actively pursuing geological disposal. It is internationally recognised that geological disposal represents the safest and most sustainable option as the end point of the management of higher activity radioactive waste and spent fuel considered as waste. In 2013, CoRWM confirmed that they remain committed to their original view that geological disposal is the most appropriate solution for the long-term management and disposal of higher activity radioactive wastes. The UK Government continues to favour an approach to siting a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) that is based on the willingness of local communities to participate in the siting process.

4. Geological disposal involves isolating radioactive waste within an engineered, multi-barrier underground facility, typically between 200m and 1,000m deep, inside a suitable rock formation, to ensure no harmful quantities of radioactivity ever reach the surface environment.

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[1] http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/science-technology/ScienceGovandPolicy/RespRWM.pdf
[2] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldselect/ldsctech/95/95.pdf
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management

5. Government published a renewed process for siting a GDF in 2014 – the 'Implementing Geological Disposal' White Paper[4] (referred to as 'The White Paper' throughout this document).

6. The White Paper sets out a policy framework for the future implementation of geological disposal and explains the Initial Actions that will happen before formal discussions begin between interested communities and the delivery body for a GDF, Radioactive Waste Management Limited (RWM). These 'Initial Actions' are being overseen by Government and are intended to address issues that are important to the public and stakeholders in advance of the formal siting process re-starting. No sites have been selected or are currently under consideration. Formal discussions to start to identify potential sites will begin once the outputs from this initial work have been completed. This will ensure that any community wanting to engage with the process at that point can do so with more information and greater clarity about the nature of a GDF development.

7. These 'Initial Actions' include:

- National Geological Screening – This information will help the delivery body, RWM, engage openly on questions about local geological prospects that are likely to be raised early in any community's thinking about possible GDF developments;
- National Land-use Planning – Establishment of the policy framework for planning decisions in England; and
- Developing a process of Working with Communities, including Community Engagement, Community Representation, Community Investment and the Test of Public Support.

8. The White Paper also stated that a GDF would be a nuclear installation under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. As such, it will be the Office for Nuclear Regulation's (ONR) role to ensure that, prior to construction of a GDF, a working process is in place such that the Office for Nuclear Regulation can consider the granting of a licence for the site; with the requisite site licence conditions attached, and enforce the requirements of that licence.

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332890/GDF_White_Paper_FINAL.pdf

9. The White Paper was issued jointly by the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. The Scottish Government has a separate higher activity radioactive waste policy[5].

10. The Welsh Government adopted a policy for the geological disposal of higher activity radioactive waste in May 2015[6]. The policy confirms that the Welsh Government considers that geological disposal can only be delivered in Wales on a voluntary basis following discussions with a community or communities. In December 2015, the Welsh Government issued a further policy statement confirming its intention of working with the Community Representation Working Group (see Paragraph 28) with a view to adopting arrangements for engaging with potential volunteer host communities that are compatible with those arrangements being proposed by UK Government. They will also need to be compatible with the needs of communities in Wales and with those of Wales as a whole. The Welsh Government is expected to consult on its policy for working with communities in parallel with the UK Government's consultation on its draft Working with Communities policy.

[5]The Scottish Government published Scotland's Higher Activity Radioactive Waste Policy in 2011. It can be found at:
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/16293/higheractivitywastepolicy
[6]The Welsh Government policy statements adopting geological disposal as the long-term management route for higher activity radioactive waste, and engagement with potential volunteer host communities can be found at:
http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/chemicalsradioactivity/radioactivity/radioactivewastemanagement/?skip=1&lang=en

Initial Actions Project

National Geological Screening

11. The objective of the national geological screening initial action is to provide authoritative information that can be used in discussions with communities. This information will help the delivery body, RWM, engage openly on questions about local geological prospects that are likely to be raised early in any community's thinking about possible GDF developments. Screening will focus on the relationship between geology and the long-term safety of a GDF.

12. National geological screening will not definitively rule all areas as either 'suitable' or 'unsuitable'. It will not seek to target individual sites for development; select sites; or replace the statutory planning and regulatory processes that apply to a development of this nature.

13. The Geological Society of London established an Independent Review Panel in early 2015, on behalf of DECC (now BEIS), with access to a broad range of well-respected national and international geoscience expertise. The remit of the Independent Review Panel was to:

    - assess whether the national geological screening guidance was technically robust,
    - whether it could be implemented using the existing geological information available, and,
    - whether it provided an appropriate assessment of the prospects for developing a robust long-term safety case in a range of geological settings to accommodate the UK inventory of higher activity radioactive waste.

14. Following public consultation on the draft national geological screening guidance conducted by RWM, the Independent Review Panel (IRP) endorsed the national geological screening guidance and detailed technical instructions in March 2016. The final national geological screening guidance, detailed technical instructions and public consultation response report were published in April 2016[7].

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-consultation-on-national-geological-screening

15. RWM has been working closely with the British Geological Survey to apply the national geological screening guidance to existing UK geological data. Focus groups, including members of local government and the general public, have been engaged to inform the development of Regional Narratives. These Narratives will be plain English adaptations of the Technical Information Reports drafted by the BGS for RWM. A Regional Narrative will be produced for each of the 13 regions of England, Wales and Northern Ireland used by the British Geological Survey in its existing regional guides and will show existing information about geological settings relevant to the potential development and long-term safety of a GDF. The Independent Review Panel provided feedback on the application process and the progress made in developing the Regional Narratives at a meeting in London in November 2016. They remained content that a technically robust process was being followed by RWM in the development of these Regional Narratives.

National Land-use Planning

16. The objective of the National Land-use Planning initial action is to develop a clear and transparent process for GDF land-use planning decisions in England. It puts in place a process that is appropriate for an infrastructure project of this scale and significance, in line with a range of similarly significant major energy, transport and waste projects.

17. In March 2015, the Planning Act 2008 was amended by the Infrastructure Planning (Radioactive Waste Geological Disposal Facilities) Order 2015, bringing GDFs and their related deep borehole investigations (in England) within the definition of nationally significant infrastructure projects.

18. As a nationally significant infrastructure project, the GDF is consistent with the government's continued commitment to investing in national infrastructure as set out in the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper, published in January 2017.[8]

19. The inclusion of GDFs and deep investigatory boreholes[9] within the definition of nationally significant infrastructure projects has enabled further work to develop a National Policy Statement (NPS), in respect of geological disposal infrastructure that will further define the planning process for a GDF. The primary purpose of the NPS is to guide the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State when

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/developing-a-modern-industrial-strategy
[9] The boreholes are for investigatory/characterisation purposes only, and are not to be used for waste disposal.

examining and making decisions on applications for development consent; it will also aid the delivery body, RWM, in their application for development consent.

20. The Planning Act 2008 requires that an Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS) of the NPS must be carried out before it can be designated. The White Paper also stated that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the NPS would be carried out. As part of the first stage of this process, a technical consultation on the Appraisal of Sustainability scoping report and Habitats Regulations Assessment Methodology report associated with a draft NPS took place in summer/autumn 2015. The Government response was published in February 2016[10].

21. During 2016, DECC (and subsequently BEIS) has developed:

- An Appraisal of Sustainability to present the predicted environmental and socio-economic effects of the draft NPS, including reasonable alternatives, in a form suitable for public consultation and use by decision-makers. The Appraisal of Sustainability identifies options for mitigating any adverse effects of the NPS and has assisted the further development of the NPS and its contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment which assesses whether there are likely to be any 'significant effects' on any European site (sites protected because of their importance to European nature conservation) as a result of the implementation of the NPS and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse impacts on that site's integrity.

22. The draft NPS provides the framework for decision making on development consent applications for the construction of geological disposal infrastructure in England[11]. The associated Appraisal of Sustainability and Habitats Regulations Assessment, which inform the draft NPS, consider the impacts of geological disposal infrastructure (located in England) on England, as well as on Wales and Scotland, given their proximity and common borders with England.

23. CoRWM have reviewed and provided comments on initial drafts of the Appraisal of Sustainability and Habitats Regulations Assessment as part of their Work Programme. This has helped to inform the development of these reports.

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/appraisal-of-sustainability-scoping-and-habitats-regulations-assessment-methodology-reports-for-geological-disposal-national-policy-statement

[11] This includes beneath the seabed in waters adjacent to England up to the seaward limits of the territorial sea.

24. A public consultation on all three documents (NPS, Appraisal of Sustainability and Habitats Regulations Assessment) has been launched in parallel with the publication of this Annual Report. Parliamentary scrutiny will also occur in parallel with the public consultation.

25. The Welsh Government is considering how the current Welsh planning system should be applied to any geological disposal facility in Wales. This will need to take into account the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.

26. All planning issues in Northern Ireland would be considered by the relevant department within the Northern Ireland Executive, as the GDF is an infrastructure development on a major scale, and of national significance.

Working with Communities

27. The objective of the Working with Communities initial action is to provide clarity on the processes for the delivery body and communities to work together in the GDF siting process, including Community Engagement, Community Representation, Community Investment and the Test of Public Support.

28. In order to assist BEIS (formerly DECC) to develop approaches for working with communities in an open and transparent fashion, a Community Representation Working Group (CRWG) was convened in 2015. The group was chaired by DECC (now BEIS) and had a core membership comprising other relevant government departments, the GDF delivery body (RWM) as well as voluntary representatives with experience and expertise in local government issues, delivery of large infrastructure projects, GDF siting, and academia. The final meeting of the CRWG was held on 20 April 2016. Detailed discussions took place on community representation, including early representation and constructive engagement, community investment, the test of public support and the right of withdrawal.[12]

29. The UK government furthered the development of the draft policy proposals, for how the delivery body will work with communities in the GDF siting process, during 2017. This was based on gathering information from a number of activities including the outputs from CRWG and public dialogue events in Manchester and Swindon (March/April 2016). It also took into account information from earlier work such as responses to the 2015 ‘call for evidence’ (aided by the CRWG)

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/implementing-geological-disposal-community-representation-working-group

published in March 2016, as well as literature reviews published shortly after, including examples of relevant national and international projects. [13] [14]

30. The draft Working with Communities policy public consultation has been launched in parallel with the publication of this Annual Report and the process of formal engagement with communities is expected to start once the policy has been finalised.

31. The Welsh Government is developing their own policy on Working with Communities. This is expected to be subject to public consultation in parallel with the BEIS Working with Communities policy.

[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementing-geological-disposal-working-with-communities
[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-dialogue-on-geological-disposal-and-working-with-communities

Update from the Regulators

Work of the independent regulators

33. The independent regulators (the Office for Nuclear Regulation, and the relevant environment agencies[15]: the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) are responsible for ensuring that any future GDF meets the required high standards for protecting people and the environment when it is being developed and constructed, while it is operating, and after it has closed.

34. The regulators are working together and engaging with RWM now to ensure that any future applications for the development of a GDF will take full account of regulatory requirements. They are also working to ensure that the advice RWM currently provides to waste producers, about how they should be packaging their radioactive waste for future geological disposal, is appropriate. Reports of this work and other relevant information are available online.[16]

35. After selection of an area or site for geological disposal infrastructure (i.e. deep investigatory boreholes, GDF construction), the relevant environment agency will regulate the development of any future GDF. They will do so under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, using a process known as staged regulation. However, in Northern Ireland, environmental regulation will be carried out under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, using 'process by agreement' as staged regulation is not possible under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993.[17]

36. Staged regulation provides regulatory control from very early in the development of a GDF and enables the relevant environment agency to maintain regulatory control throughout each stage of development from the start of intrusive site

[15] A number of environment agencies are responsible for environmental regulation of the nuclear sector within their respective jurisdictions. The Environment Agency is responsible for the enforcement of environmental protection legislation in England, regulating radioactive and non-radioactive discharges and disposals to air, water (both surface and groundwater) and land, including disposal by transfer to another site. This responsibility sits with Natural Resources Wales in respect of Wales, and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in respect of Northern Ireland.

[16] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scrutiny-of-radioactive-waste-management-directorates-rwmd-work

[17] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1993/12/contents

investigation, through construction and operation, and eventually to closure. The developer will need regulatory approval before each stage of development can begin and, in particular, disposal of radioactive waste will not be allowed without the appropriate environmental permit (or authorisation).

37. In addition to the Initial Actions described earlier, the White Paper also stated that a GDF would be a nuclear site, licensed under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. This means that it will be the role of the Office for Nuclear Regulation to ensure that any future GDF is constructed and operated safety and securely. Prior to construction of a GDF, the delivery body (RWM) will be required to have applied for and been granted a nuclear site licence, with the requisite site licence conditions attached, by the Office for Nuclear Regulation. Work is progressing on ensuring that the relevant regulations are in place to grant the Office for Nuclear Regulation legal powers to license a GDF under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. The Office for Nuclear Regulation is developing guidance on its regulatory expectations for achieving compliance with the site licence for a future GDF.

Preparation for Siting

38. The GDF will be delivered over an unusually long lifecycle and as such the requirements for the delivery body, RWM, will change as the programme progresses through distinct phases. Current work is focussed on preparations to launch and deliver the GDF siting process.

39. RWM has developed strategies and continues to update its plans for implementation of the siting process. RWM has embarked on a transformation programme, changing from a research driven organisation to a delivery organisation. Organisational change (including recruitment) is ongoing.[18]

40. In order to attract interest from communities, RWM has also continued work to refine and articulate the opportunity that hosting a GDF might represent for them. This information will form part of a suite of digital and print documentation which is being designed to build a balanced public debate and raise awareness about the siting process. Existing messaging has been tested with stakeholders and this will inform further work before the launch of the siting process.

41. A stakeholder engagement programme is underway which has been designed to raise awareness of the GDF programme and build advocacy for it prior to the launch of the siting process. RWM is attending and presenting at various events, conferences and meetings with national and regional organisations with an aim of making those organisations more knowledgeable about, and potentially supportive of the GDF programme.

42. RWM is also developing a framework which will support consistent assessment of areas or sites for siting a GDF. The framework includes existing statutory and regulatory requirements (e.g. land-use planning, safety, environmental protection) and brings them together to support a robust and consistent assessment of different areas and sites.

[18] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radioactive-waste-management-organisation-chart

International Developments

43. Geological disposal is internationally accepted as the safest and most secure approach for the long-term management of higher activity radioactive waste. No other country with a comparable inventory has developed a complete solution to long-term management of higher activity radioactive waste that does not include geological disposal. Therefore, information on relevant international progress in implementing geological disposal is set out below.

44. Germany – In July 2016, the Bundesrat (the legislative body that represents the 16 federated states of Germany at national level) received a report from the German Commission for High Level Waste Disposal, with recommendations for a site selection process for geological disposal (of high level waste and spent fuel.[19] Following this in the summer of 2016, BGE (the Agency for the Disposal of Nuclear Waste), was set up. BGE will be the sole implementation body for all radioactive waste disposal projects in Germany. In parallel to the set-up of BGE, BfE (the Federal Office for the Safety of Nuclear Waste Management was made the sole licensing authority for all nuclear waste management and the regulator of the site selection process. A National Societal Commission was set up to act as an independent observer (and mediator if necessary). In March 2017, the Bundestag adopted new law, containing requirements for the sites / site selection process for geological disposal (expected to begin in late 2017). This included: Geoscientific exclusionary criteria, minimum requirements, evaluation criteria and other decision making criteria.

45. Switzerland - A site selection process for deep geological repositories for low- and intermediate-level waste and high-level waste has been underway since 2008. At the beginning of 2015, the Swiss Waste Management Organisation, Nagra, proposed two siting regions for borehole investigation. In December 2016, following a review of the documentation on the siting proposals submitted by Nagra, the Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (ENSI), recommended that a third siting region should also be investigated[20]. A phase of public consultation is now scheduled which will be followed by the decision of the Swiss Federal Council, expected for the end of 2018. Borehole investigations can then begin.

[19] www.umwelt.niedersachsen.de/download/115957
[20] http://www.nagra.ch/en/disposalwhere.htm

46. Canada - The Nuclear Waste Management Organization[21] (NWMO) is continuing its preliminary assessments with communities that have expressed interest in learning more about Canada's plan for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. These preliminary assessments comprise part of step three (nine steps in total) of a multi-year process for evaluating potential suitability of communities to host a deep geological repository Initially, more than twenty communities expressed interest and studies and engagement associated with step three is ongoing in areas in or near six communities. The areas not considered for further study had all reached differing phases in the process – with none going beyond phase three. The preliminary assessments will build information to guide a decision on one or two sites to proceed to the site characterisation stage.[22] Plans for a separate repository (to be located in Ontario) for low and intermediate level radioactive waste have been proposed by OPG (Ontario Power Generation)[23], and are progressing through the Canadian regulatory process(es).

47. France – the French Waste Management Organisation, Andra[24] is continuing to develop its licence application for the GDF near Bure in the north-east of the country. Subject to approvals, the construction of the disposal facility could begin in 2020 and the commissioning, beginning with a pilot industrial phase, could take place in 2025. The pilot phase and provision for retrievability (long term) were introduced as a reaction to a public consultation in 2013. Since the summer of 2016, a group of French eco-activists has been occupying the area around the site and has caused some disruption to activities.

48. Finland – In December 2016, excavation work began on the first disposal tunnels at Posiva's[25] final disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel at Olkiluoto. Posiva was founded in Finland in 1995 (by two Finnish energy companies), and is responsible for the final disposal of spent nuclear fuel produced by those companies. The Finnish Government granted Posiva the construction licence for the facility in November 2015; waste emplacement is expected to start in the 2020's.

49. Sweden – Review of the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company's (SKB) application to construct a geological disposal facility for disposal of spent nuclear fuel has continued. In June 2016, the Swedish Radiation Safety

[21] https://www.nwmo.ca/en/ABOUT-US/Who-We-Are **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**
[22] https://www.nwmo.ca/en/Site-selection/About-the-Process
[23] http://www.opg.com/generating-power/nuclear/nuclear-waste-management/Deep-Geologic-Repository/Pages/Deep-Geologic-Repository.aspx
[24] http://www.andra.fr/international/index.html
[25] http://www.posiva.fi/en/final_disposal#.V1fnhKNwbIU

Authority (SSM) concluded that SKB has the potential to fulfil the Authority's nuclear safety and radiation protection requirements in relation to the development and operation of an encapsulation facility for spent nuclear fuel[26]. The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority plans to present its final assessment in 2017. In March 2017, the Swedish Land and Environment Court decided that the main hearing on SKB's application for permits to build a Spent Fuel Repository at Forsmark and an encapsulation facility in Oskarshamn will begin in September 2017. By 2019, SKB hopes to have obtained a positive decision by the Swedish government. Construction and commissioning of the repository could then begin. This is expected to be completed by 2028, when trial operations would begin. Commercial operation is scheduled for 2030.

50. United States – The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), a GDF in New Mexico for defence-related waste containing long-lived radionuclides, first opened in 1991[27]. It reopened at the end of 2016, having been closed following an incident involving a waste package in February 2014. The waste in the package had been incorrectly treated at a packaging plant prior to arriving at WIPP, causing it to overheat in the underground facility, bursting the metal container and releasing a small amount of radioactive material. As the package had already been taken underground by the time the burst occurred, almost all of the released material was contained in the underground facility rather than being released into the surface environment. The USA continues to consider a phased, adaptive, and consent-based approach to siting a disposal facility for used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste and has also allocated budget to restart an approval process for a repository for spent nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain in the Nevada Desert. Licensing was suspended by the previous USA administration in 2011. The USA is also carrying out research into an alternative disposal concept based on deep boreholes and plans to drill a test borehole to over 16,000 feet in crystalline rock. During the early part of 2016, consideration of two test borehole sites, one in North Dakota and one in South Dakota was abandoned due to local opposition. In December 2016, the USA announced the locations of four new sites under consideration: two in New

[26] http://www.stralsakerhetsmyndigheten.se/In-English/About-the-Swedish-Radiation-Safety-Authority1/News1/SSMs-consultation-response-to-the-land-and-environmental-court-SKB-has-the-potential-to-fulfil-repository-safety-requirements//

[27] www.wipp.energy.gov/

Mexico, one in Texas and one in South Dakota. Ultimately, only one site will be chosen for the field test.[28]

51. While there are many countries that have yet to decide or issue long-term higher activity radioactive waste management policies, no country has identified a complete solution that does not involve geological disposal.

[28] https://www.energy.gov/ne/downloads/deep-borehole-disposal-research-demonstration-site-selection-guidelines-borehole-seals

Work of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM)

52. CoRWM is an advisory non-departmental public body, and provides independent advice, based on informed scrutiny of the available evidence, to the UK Government, the Scottish and Welsh Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive on the long-term management of radioactive waste, including the geological disposal of higher activity radioactive wastes.

53. CoRWM has continued to provide scrutiny and advice on the UK Government's and devolved administrations' management of higher activity radioactive waste. In particular, it has provided advice to BEIS and RWM on the key work packages arising from the 2014 White Paper.

54. CoRWM's work over 2016/17 is set out in its Work Programme.[29] It has focussed on the following areas (percentages denote the proportion of time CoRWM has spent on each issue):

- GDF Siting Policy – providing advice to BEIS on the work packages arising from the White Paper (60%);
- Welsh Government – providing advice on its review of radioactive waste policy in respect of higher activity radioactive waste (8%);
- Scottish Government – providing advice on its radioactive waste management strategy (8%);
- Safety Case Development – providing advice to BEIS and other sponsors on RWM's development of the GDF Safety Case (7%);
- RWM's transition to becoming a GDF delivery organisation (7%);
- Interim Surface Storage – reviewing the current status of interim storage of radioactive waste, spent fuel and other nuclear materials in the UK and its implications for a GDF (3.5%); and

[29] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/534467/CoRWM_Proposed_Work_Programme_for_2016-19_Final_.pdf

- CoRWM Outreach – providing effective engagement with the public and other stakeholders to raise the profile of CoRWM and help inspire confidence in its work (6.5%).

CoRWM's Public and Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

55. CoRWM held five open plenary meetings throughout the year, at which members of the public were free to attend and observe the Committee in action. Agendas and minutes of meetings are published on the CoRWM website[30] along with other documents relating to the work of the Committee. Committee members attended various conferences on radioactive waste management and geological disposal and appeared on national radio.

Appointments to CoRWM

56. The process of appointing new members to CoRWM was completed with six members retiring from the Committee and nine new members joining (six in July 2016 and three in December 2016).

[30] https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management

Next steps

57. Throughout 2017-18, Government will continue to progress the Initial Actions Project with a view to launching the revised siting process once they are complete. This is when formal discussions between interested communities and RWM can commence.

National Geological Screening

58. RWM will further trial the draft outputs from this work with external stakeholders in order to develop the geological screening outputs into publicly accessible formats. The Independent Review Panel will also be asked to make any further comments on the final Regional Narratives and to confirm that the process followed by RWM in the application of the guidance was technically robust.

National Land-use Planning

59. Public consultation on the draft NPS (alongside the Appraisal of Sustainability and Habitats Regulations Assessment reports) has been launched in parallel with the publication of this Annual Report. It has also be laid in Parliament and be subject to scrutiny by the relevant House of Commons Select Committee, who will produce a report and recommendations based on outputs from the public consultation and evidence sessions. There may also be Parliamentary debates in either or both Houses of Parliament on the draft NPS if the Select Committee makes a recommendation to this effect.

Working with Communities

60. BEIS's public consultation on a draft policy proposal on Working with Communities has been launched in parallel with the publication of this Annual Report. This proposal draws on the input of the Community Representation Working Group, and the evidence base, including a literature review, case studies and public dialogue workshops. The Welsh Government is planning a separate, parallel consultation on working with communities in Wales to issue at the same time as the BEIS consultation.

Preparation for Siting

61. RWM will continue to develop its organisational structure, resources and capability to deliver the next phase of the programme.

62. RWM will work closely with BEIS and Welsh Government to produce information for communities about the project and guidance on how they can become involved in the siting process. The information will be made available at the time the siting process is launched. The launch will be preceded by proactive communications delivered by RWM at a national level and stakeholder engagement, including with any interested parties arising from these activities.

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