

Siting and Engagement Strategy

December 2017



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Introduction

Following extensive public consultation, including experience and evidence gathered from previous siting processes both in the UK and overseas, the Government published its White Paper on Implementing Geological Disposal in 2014. The White Paper set out UK Government Policy for management of higher activity waste based on:

- Long-term protection of people and the environment
- An open and transparent approach that inspires public confidence
- Sound science
- Effective use of public monies

It set the framework for implementation of geological disposal through a consent-based siting process, making it clear that:

- Government sets policy,
- NDA is the implementer of Government Policy; and
- RWM is the delivery body.

Welsh Government policy, published in 2015, describes a consent-based siting process with the same broad policy commitments as were made for England and Northern Ireland in the 2014 White Paper. Scottish Government policy is different and does not include geological disposal.

RWM's mission, vision and values are set out in our Corporate Strategy document¹. That document describes our strategy to achieve our vision and mission within the context set by a number of strategic drivers.

- Our vision is a safer future by managing waste effectively, to protect people and the environment.
- Our mission is to deliver a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) and provide waste management solutions.

Delivery of a GDF requires: a design and safety case, waste suitable for acceptance in a GDF and a suitable site with a willing community.

A design and safety case – Safety, security and protection of people and the environment are at the heart of our work. Through our technical work and the preparation of designs and safety cases, we will ensure that a GDF can be designed and constructed and that we can obtain the necessary approvals for its construction and operation. This work is subject to strong, independent regulation by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the environment agencies.

Waste suitable for acceptance in a GDF – Radioactive waste is being packaged today as legacy facilities are decommissioned and cleaned up at over 30 sites

¹ Radioactive Waste Management Limited, Corporate Strategy 2015-2018.

around the UK. We work with waste producers to assess whether the waste being packaged today is compatible with the GDF design and safety case. This work is overseen and scrutinised by the ONR and environment agencies.

A suitable site with a willing community – RWM will use its knowledge of the design and safety case for a GDF and of the waste that needs to be dealt with in order to assess the suitability of sites. But this is not enough. RWM must also find a community willing to host such a facility and work in partnership with us within a consent-based siting process.

This document sets out our siting and engagement strategy to deliver a suitable site with a willing community as part of the delivery of a GDF.

Strategy

The objective of this strategy is to deliver a suitable site with a willing community. Our strategy has three parallel strands:

- Awareness Raising and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Making people aware of the need for a GDF and the process for its implementation.
- Engagement with Communities
 - Attracting and retaining communities into the process for siting a GDF.
- Evaluation of Potential Sites
 - Conducting feasibility studies, assessments and detailed investigations to identify a preferred site or sites for GDF development.

Awareness Raising and Stakeholder Engagement is carried out at a national and local level and builds on work carried out before the launch of the siting process. The aim is to raise awareness and generate interest in geological disposal and the process for its implementation. We are providing clear, accessible information on all aspects of geological disposal. As well as making this information generally available, we will identify key stakeholders and potential advocates and brief and equip them with key information. Briefing materials including brochures, webinars and exhibitions will be developed and used to support the campaign to raise awareness and attract interest in the siting process.

Prior to launching the siting process, the awareness raising includes activities to explain the need for geological disposal and its technical basis set in the context of energy policy. This aims to build understanding and create the conditions to encourage communities to engage with the siting process. After launch, the awareness raising campaign becomes more concerted and proactive. We will continue the national campaign but also bring our messages into communities.

Engagement with communities can be initiated by representatives of a community or by RWM. Initial engagement will be informal with no commitment from the community or RWM.

The aim will be to develop a strong relationship with the community based on mutual trust and respect. This will require us to work with community representatives to help develop a vision of how a GDF could benefit their community.

Engagement activities seek to maximise the level of interest in the siting process. To attract and retain communities in the siting process we will build enduring relationships, share knowledge and inspire confidence. Community engagement activities will continue throughout the siting process and will underpin all aspects of our work to identify a suitable site.

Early in the siting process we will engage with interested parties and aim to

stimulate interest in areas of potential, informed by the national geological screening. We will pro-actively engage with landowners, including Government agencies, to ensure they all have awareness and understanding of this nationally significant infrastructure project.

In each community, RWM will work with community members to understand their needs, develop their vision and enable their constructive involvement in the siting process. RWM will build a collaborative and transparent partnership with the community to deliver long term benefits for the community.

Suitability of potential sites will be evaluated and before a final decision is made to site a geological disposal facility in a particular community, there will be a test to ensure there is community support to proceed: a test of public support.

Evaluation of Potential Sites To identify a suitable site we will carry out evaluations of a number of sites within areas put forward by communities.

Site evaluation work will consider the preferences of the community in identifying potential locations for a geological disposal facility. We will develop feasibility studies that consider geographic, social and economic aspects of communities alongside safety and technical assessments.

Environmental permits and development consents will be required before RWM will be able to undertake deep borehole investigations and progress with site characterisation. Achieving the necessary approvals to progress the siting process will require both technical site evaluation and community engagement.

Further environmental permits, development consent and a nuclear site licence will be required at the site selected for construction. To provide confidence in our current activities and ensure we prepare in good time to be a permit and licence holder, we will continue to engage with regulators and subject us and our work to their scrutiny.

Following preliminary site evaluation work, site characterisation will deliver a more detailed understanding of the geological environment. It will continue until RWM is confident that it can make a safety case for construction of a GDF.

Implementation

This strategy is underpinned by a series of implementation plans. At the highest level, Figure 1 shows how the overall structure of implementation follows each of the three strands of our strategy and how they interrelate with each other.

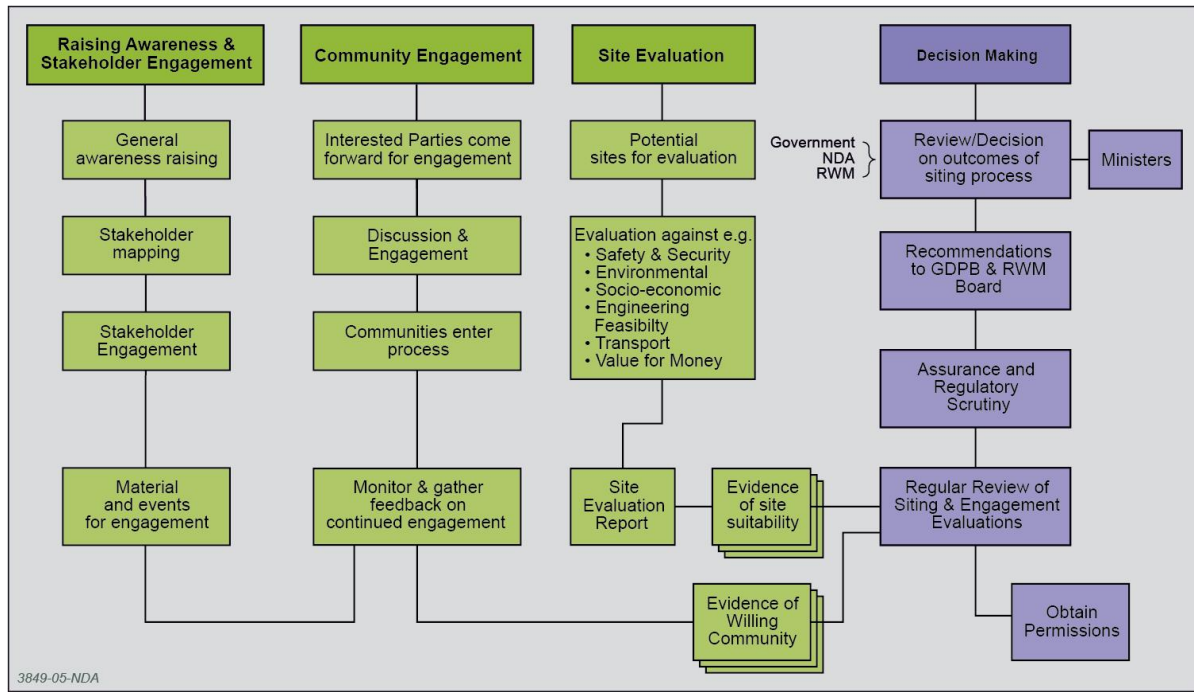


Figure 1 Overview of Siting and Engagement Implementation

It also shows how the results of that work are brought together to provide evidence of a site's suitability and a community's willingness to proceed. The evidence is reviewed and used to inform recommendations to Government on the selection of suitable sites.

RWM will lead the delivery of the siting and engagement strategy. Our staff will be ambassadors for the programme and an outreach team drawn from across the company will support our engagement activities.

As a future nuclear site licence holder, our work is scrutinised by nuclear safety and environmental regulators. This work includes the generic design and safety cases on which technical evaluations of site suitability will be based.

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) provides independent advice and scrutiny to Government on the plans and programmes for delivering geological disposal.

Confidence is increased by bringing in advice through our Advisory Council which includes socio-political, socio-economic and major programme expertise.

We also benefit from strong relationships with overseas GDF implementer

organisations and transfer valuable learning and technology from other national programmes.



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