

Corporate Strategy 2019

Our approach to provide a safer future by managing radioactive waste effectively, to protect people and the environment

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Chairman's statement



RWM is a subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority with responsibility for delivering radioactive waste solutions and delivery of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). Geological disposal is recognised by governments and scientists worldwide as the long-term solution for managing higher activity radioactive waste.

UK Government policy is to pursue the building of a GDF with the consent of the community in which it will be constructed. This approach to delivering a GDF is one that RWM is proud to lead.

RWM will engage with communities willing to explore a GDF and work with them as they look at the best ways forward. It will also work with them to identify how it can support them in realising the long-term benefits a GDF will bring, including local jobs, training, investment in infrastructure and significant on-going contribution to the local economy.

A GDF is a vital and major national project. This Corporate Strategy seeks to illustrate how RWM will work towards delivering its role in providing a safer future by managing radioactive waste effectively to protect people and the environment for generations to come through working with communities.

The delivery and operation of a GDF is a very long-term project. RWM's Corporate Strategy will necessarily evolve over time as the different phases for the delivery of a GDF are embarked upon. RWM will continue to evolve as an organisation to reflect these different phases. Throughout all of this, however, RWM's commitment to work with local communities will remain constant.

Professor Malcolm Morley OBE

Chair

Foreword



Since the late 1940s, the UK has accumulated radioactive waste which is currently stored at more than thirty sites around Britain. RWM has been entrusted with delivering a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) to dispose of higher activity waste safely and securely.

We support our parent organisation, the NDA, its site licence companies, and other nuclear site operators in developing solutions today to manage radioactive waste.

As Managing Director of RWM, I am proud to present our second Corporate Strategy, which explains our approach to achieving our vision for a safer future by managing radioactive waste effectively to protect people and the environment. It also sets out our mission and values and highlights key external factors which influence and guide our work.

Our strategy highlights how we will engage, and work in partnership, with communities to deliver a GDF. It also emphasises how we will work collaboratively with stakeholders to deliver our mission efficiently and effectively.

The management of radioactive waste is a devolved policy issue and RWM works with the devolved administrations to help them manage their own radioactive waste inventories effectively. We also work closely with other bodies such as regulators to ensure we are meeting safety standards, as well as our equivalent organisations overseas to share best practice and learn lessons.

RWM's work and the delivery of geological disposal is a matter of national importance. A GDF provides a permanent and safe solution for managing radioactive waste and is a major national infrastructure project, which will benefit the nation and the community that hosts it.

Our approach recognises that this work is long-term and that the context in which we work will change. Our plans are outward-looking and flexible so that we are always best-placed to deliver successfully.

Bruce McKirdy
Managing Director

Introduction

Nuclear technology has been a part of our lives for more than sixty years. It includes nuclear energy, which today represents around 20% of our electricity supply, the defence of our nation, and the provision of medical treatments. These and future nuclear activities generate radioactive waste which needs to be managed irrespective of views on new nuclear build.

Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) is responsible for delivering a UK Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) to dispose of the legacy higher activity radioactive waste that already exists and any such waste that will be generated in the future.

Our vision is a safer future by managing radioactive waste effectively, to protect people and the environment.

Our work also supports government objectives set out in its Industrial Strategy to boost our national economy, increase scientific, engineering and technological skills, and support regional economic growth. A GDF will help achieve the aims of the Nuclear Sector Deal.

The UK Government and devolved administrations set policy for the management of higher activity radioactive waste (see Annex A).

The government established the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to clean up the UK's civil nuclear legacy. The NDA delivers its mission through a number of site licence companies and delivery bodies.

RWM is a wholly owned subsidiary of the NDA with its main objectives being the delivery of geological disposal and providing waste management solutions. These are the overall objectives that this Corporate Strategy addresses.

This document sets out the strategic drivers, our strategy to respond to those drivers and deliver our overall objectives. It also sets out a number of near term strategic objectives which provide the link to our Business Plan.

This is a programme with an overall duration of more than 100 years covering site selection and characterisation, construction, operation and closure. We continually review and monitor the context in which we operate. Change is inevitable over this timescale and to assess its potential impact on our activities, we identify key underlying assumptions and model a number of scenarios in accordance with best practice used in other industries.

We periodically test our strategy to examine and understand the implications of such external change. Our plans are comprehensive and flexible enough to enable us to deliver all of the safety, security, social and economic benefits of our work.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Following engagement with stakeholders, staff and our Board of Directors, we have established a vision for RWM.

Our vision is to provide a safer future by managing radioactive waste effectively, to protect people and the environment.

Our mission is to deliver a Geological Disposal Facility and provide radioactive waste management solutions.

Our vision is aspirational and challenging and is supported by a mission statement which says what we will do to achieve that vision. This strategy describes how we will address this challenge and sets out a number of strategic objectives. Our Business Plan presents a programme of work to meet these objectives.

We have also, through a similar process of engagement, established a set of values which describe the kind of organisation we strive to be. We actively use these values in developing the organisation and our people, who are central to delivering our strategy. The values are factored into our assessment of how well we are performing as individuals and as an organisation.

Since the previous version of our Corporate Strategy we have reviewed the values and agreed two changes with our Board. One change is to include “Safe” as a specific value to reflect the overriding importance we give to it. The other is to change the previous “Accessible” value to “Engaging”. This is to reflect the need for a more proactive style of engagement as we enter the next stage of the programme.

Safe

We are committed to achieving the highest standards of **safety, security** and **environmental protection**.

Professional

We are experts in our field, acting with **integrity** and **efficiency** to deliver the best solutions.

Engaging

We are open and communicate in a straightforward way that enhances **understanding** and encourages **engagement**.

Learning

We continuously **learn**, share **knowledge** and build strong mutually beneficial **relationships**.

Strategic Drivers

To provide the context for our Corporate Strategy we have set out the key strategic drivers. These are listed below as a series of factual statements followed by a brief description of the implications or drivers on our strategy.

- NDA is responsible under the Energy Act 2004 for the clean-up of the UK’s publicly-owned, civil nuclear legacy sites including management of radioactive waste. It is also responsible for implementing government policy on long-term management of radioactive waste, including geological disposal.
To support it in discharging these responsibilities the NDA has established RWM as the body to develop and deliver geological disposal for higher activity wastes.
- Government policy includes plans to develop new nuclear energy capacity as part of a low carbon energy mix. The policy is that before consents for new nuclear power stations are granted, the government will need to be satisfied that effective arrangements exist or will exist to manage and dispose of the waste they will produce.
RWM engages with organisations seeking approval for new nuclear build in the UK, to advise on the disposability of their higher activity wastes. RWM also advises these organisations and government on the estimated costs of disposal.
- A GDF is a major infrastructure project that will bring long-term investment and jobs to a community.
This requires RWM to have the culture, skills and resources to engage effectively with community representatives and to establish and implement a comprehensive programme of community engagement.
- Within a GDF, waste packages form the first of a number of barriers designed to isolate and contain radioactivity and provide long-term passive safety. The UK regulators have issued guidance that requires waste producers to demonstrate that higher activity wastes being packaged now are suitable for geological disposal.
This requires RWM to work closely with waste producers to assess the disposability of packaging proposals, influence how wastes are being packaged and maintain appropriate records.
- NDA is developing an Integrated Waste Management Strategy that aims to provide a range of disposal solutions for the UK’s entire inventory of radioactive waste. This is in support of UK Government policy and also that of the devolved administrations.
RWM has a role to support NDA in the further development and implementation of that strategy.
- Geological disposal is included in the government’s Major Project Portfolio and is designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.
RWM must establish structures and capability for major programme delivery and will need to obtain the financial approvals and planning consents needed to progress this programme.
- The development, construction, operation and closure of a GDF will be regulated by the nuclear regulators and, among other requirements RWM, as the developer, will need to obtain permits from the relevant environmental regulator and a site licence from the Office for Nuclear Regulation to undertake these activities.
It will be necessary to demonstrate to regulators that a GDF will protect people and the environment at the time of disposal and in the very long-term, following closure.
- Development of a GDF is a long term project with an overall duration in excess of 100 years.
RWM will have to adapt its core capability, supply chain support and culture to the changing needs of the project through community engagement, site-investigation, facility construction, operation and closure.
- Geological disposal is being pursued internationally as the long-term solution for higher activity waste management. Some programmes such as those in Finland, France and Sweden are significantly more advanced than ours.
We can learn from the knowledge, technology and experience gained internationally, which can help reduce project risks and avoid unnecessary cost.

Our Corporate Strategy

In order to achieve our vision within the context set by the strategic drivers and in a manner consistent with our values, we have adopted the following Corporate Strategy.

- Work with the NDA to deliver an Integrated Waste Management Strategy for higher activity radioactive waste.

We will use our expertise to support development and implementation of an integrated programme for the management of higher activity waste.
- Deliver a programme for implementation of geological disposal in the UK in line with government policy.

We will deliver a comprehensive programme for the implementation of geological disposal, covering higher activity radioactive waste from legacy and new nuclear build activities. Based on that programme, we will advise on waste management costs and timescales.
- Engage with stakeholders to raise awareness and identify communities willing to participate in the process for siting a GDF set out in government policy.

We will develop and implement a comprehensive engagement programme to raise awareness and provide information nationally about geological disposal. Building on that, we will engage at the local level with stakeholders and communities to provide information on geological disposal and the benefits it could bring to communities.
- Engage proactively at an early stage with waste producers to develop and deliver cost-effective waste packaging solutions suitable for eventual disposal.

We will share knowledge and promote good practice and innovation in retrieving, treating and storing wastes prior to disposal. We will provide robust advice on the disposability of proposed waste packages.
- Continue to engage with the regulators to ensure we have the necessary capability, organisation, resources and arrangements in place to apply for and hold environmental permits and a nuclear site licence, ahead of the time we need to apply for them.

We will build on arrangements for the regulatory scrutiny of our work programme. This includes GDF design and safety case, disposability assessment and organisational development.
- Gain the necessary financial and land-use planning approvals for a GDF.

We will develop and gain approval of business cases to secure the finance required and obtain Development Consent Orders for land-use planning approval.
- Develop and maintain RWM as a high performing organisation and provide the right environment to get the very best out of our people and with the skills and expertise to deliver our programme.

The nature of our programme is such that the specific capabilities and resources required at different stages of the programme will change. To accommodate these changes we make extensive use of the supply chain. To do this effectively we will ensure we have core knowledge within the organisation covering major programme delivery, communications and engagement and the technical and safety basis for geological disposal. We will provide a workplace that embraces equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- Develop and maintain our geological disposal concepts to underpin waste packaging advice and provide a basis for the siting and development of a GDF.

We undertake scientific and engineering work to support development of geological disposal concepts. This reflects changes to the radioactive waste inventory and the understanding gained through our research, development and disposability assessment programmes.
- Benefit from the exchange of knowledge and expertise through co-operation with overseas waste management agencies and other relevant programmes.

We establish long term relationships with our overseas counterparts through both formal and informal mechanisms. We aim to transfer technology and knowledge to help reduce project risk and avoid unnecessary costs.

Strategic Objectives

The overall objectives this strategy aims to deliver are articulated in our Mission Statement: *Deliver a Geological Disposal Facility and provide radioactive waste management solutions.*

Over the next five years we have identified a number of near-term strategic objectives required to progress our mission.

Following the successful launch of the GDF siting process in England and Wales, our first objective is to **engage constructively with a number of communities by 2020**. To do this we are carrying out activities to raise awareness of RWM and our work and providing people with information about geological disposal. Following initial engagement we aim to work in partnership with communities to evaluate a number of potential sites for a GDF. These evaluations would include design studies for specific sites, initial safety analyses, and environmental and economic impact assessments to help us establish whether the site is geologically suitable. In parallel with this, we will work closely with communities to address their questions, help develop a community vision and establish their willingness to potentially host such a facility. After a period of about five years, we would expect to recommend two sites for further investigation.

This would result in **starting site characterisation around 2024**. The characterisation of a potential GDF site is a rigorous combination of measurements, data gathering, analysis and design and safety assessment. The assessments will provide the Community Partnership with information on the suitability of the site based on a number of factors.

A GDF is a multi-barrier safety system to provide containment and isolation of the waste for up to a million years. The first barrier is the waste package. Waste is being packaged now in line with advice we provide to waste producers to ensure that the packages provide the necessary safety barrier. It is essential that RWM has adequate records of all waste packages destined for a GDF. We therefore have a programme of work to **approve records for all intermediate level waste packages in interim storage by 2021**.

Whilst geological disposal is not Scottish Government Policy, our work on waste packaging does include Scottish wastes. We are **working with the NDA to establish a work programme to support Scottish Government policy on higher activity waste by 2024**.

All of our work is underpinned by a well-established, technical programme that has been developed drawing upon the extensive international knowledge of geological disposal. At this stage in the programme, where we don't yet have a site, we have produced a generic safety case which has been reviewed by nuclear safety and environmental regulators. We will **address regulatory comments on the generic disposal system safety case and produce a site specific safety case methodology by 2023**.

As an organisation, we have developed our capability to deliver the current stage of the programme. This programme of organisational development is ongoing to meet the changing needs of our long-term programme. The next key milestone is to **complete cultural and capability development for major programme delivery by 2022**.

Strategic Objectives

Engage constructively with a number of communities by 2020

Start site characterisation by 2024

Approve records for all Intermediate Level Waste packages already in interim storage by 2021

Work with the NDA to establish a work programme to support Scottish Government policy on higher activity waste management by 2024

Address regulatory comments on the generic disposal system safety case and produce a site specific safety case methodology by 2023

Complete cultural and capability development for major programme delivery by 2022

The above dates are indicative planning assumptions. Because the policy framework is a consent-based approach to implementation, the actual pace of the programme will be strongly influenced by the communities we work with. Our Business Plan provides more detail on the near-term work programme we will deliver to progress this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

Annex A

Policy Positions for the Management of Higher Activity Radioactive Waste.

UK Government

The UK Government remains committed to the policy of geological disposal for higher activity radioactive waste. In December 2018 the UK Government published an updated policy, entitled 'Implementing Geological Disposal – Working With Communities', which set out a consent-based approach to siting a GDF in England, based on RWM working in partnership with communities.

Radioactive waste management is a devolved policy issue. Therefore, the Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Executive and Scottish Government each have responsibility for this issue in respect of their areas.

Welsh Government

In 2015 the Welsh Government set out its policy on geological disposal of higher activity radioactive waste, based on the principle of voluntary participation by potential host communities. In January 2019 Welsh Government published further policy on 'Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Radioactive Waste: Working With Communities' which sets out a consent-based approach to consideration of siting a GDF in Wales, based on RWM working in partnership with communities.

Northern Ireland Executive

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs recognises that it is in the best interests of Northern Ireland that the UK's higher activity radioactive waste is managed in the safest and most appropriate manner. Northern Ireland does not have any higher activity radioactive waste and there are no plans to site a Geological Disposal Facility there. Any future policy decisions in relation to geological disposal in Northern Ireland would be a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive and would be subject to community agreement as well as planning and environmental consents.

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is not a sponsor of the programme for implementing geological disposal, but does remain committed to dealing responsibly with radioactive waste arising in Scotland. In 2011, the Scottish Government published its Higher Activity Waste Policy. Scottish Government policy is that the long-term management of higher activity radioactive waste should be in near-surface facilities. Facilities should be located as near to the site where the waste is produced as possible.

Getting in touch

To learn more about the UK's mission to deal with radioactive waste:

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Telephone **03000 660 100**

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geologicaldisposal.campaign.gov.uk