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Max

RADIOACTIVE

# 2020-21 Annual Review Summary

Doing  
The  
Right  
Thing

# About Us

- Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) was established in 2014 to deliver a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) and waste management solutions.
- We are a subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), which is responsible for clean-up of the UK's 17 earliest nuclear sites.
- Government policy in England and Wales is based on recommendations from the Independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM): safe, secure disposal in a GDF, at a suitable location and where the local community has demonstrated its willingness to host such a facility.
- A GDF is a highly engineered facility constructed deep underground and will consist of a series of vaults and tunnels where radioactive waste can be disposed of safely, securely and permanently.
- We will deliver this vital project through a community consent-based process, working in close partnership with communities, building trust for the long-term and ensuring a GDF supports local interests and priorities.
- We also work closely with waste producers across all nuclear sectors to ensure that treatment, storage, and packaging solutions are compatible with final disposal in a GDF.

*"Fulfilling RWM's mission will ensure that the nuclear legacy of the past will not be passed on to future generations."*

*Malcolm Morley, RWM Chair*

- We carry out wide-ranging research, often in collaboration with international partners and academic institutions, into all technical details of geological disposal.
- Our aim is to achieve world-leading environmental and safety standards.

## Background

- Nuclear technologies have been in our lives for over 60 years.
- Electricity generation, defence, industrial, medical and research activities have created an accumulated legacy of radioactive waste.
- The longer-lived, higher-activity waste needs careful management. Some materials will remain radioactive for many thousands of years.
- Packaged higher-activity waste is currently held in secure stores across the UK, which must be constantly monitored, maintained and repaired when necessary.
- Without a permanent disposal solution, we will simply be passing this burden to future generations.

# Introduction



*Professor Malcolm Morley OBE.*

## Chair's welcome

Welcome to this brief overview of our achievements over the past financial year. Our key priority, as a government body and subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), is to deliver one of the UK's most important infrastructure programmes: a

Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher activity radioactive waste.

In common with many other countries, and supported by scientific advice, creating a permanent deep underground disposal facility has been identified by the Government as the most appropriate means of disposing of this waste.

The government, the regulators and the NDA group recognise our mission as the critical end point for safely dismantling the accumulated legacy of our country's pioneering nuclear programme.

Fulfilling RWM's mission will ensure that the nuclear legacy of the past will not be passed on to future generations.



*Karen Wheeler CBE*

## Chief Executive's review

My first full year as RWM's Chief Executive has been extraordinary, with many challenges due to the specific circumstances of working through the impacts of COVID-19.

I am delighted that we have now begun constructive public discussions in Copeland and Allerdale in west Cumbria about the possibility of hosting a GDF. The formation of these first two Working Groups marks the start of a journey towards finding a willing community, together with a suitable site, where a GDF could be safely constructed and operated. Discussions so far have been focused online, through platforms such as webinars and virtual exhibitions.

However, we are very much looking forward to spending more time in west Cumbria and other community locations in England, and meeting people in more conventional circumstances.

We are continuing to have very positive discussions in a range of places across England with people and organisations who are also interested in exploring the benefits of hosting a GDF. So we expect more Working Groups to form across the country in the next year or two.



# Our expertise and approach

*RWM brings together a breadth of specialists, skills and expertise*



**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 GDF and provide radioactive waste management solutions.



**Our four core values**  
underpin how we conduct our business.



**Safe**

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



**Professional**

We are experts in the 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 and builds trusting relationships.



**Learning**

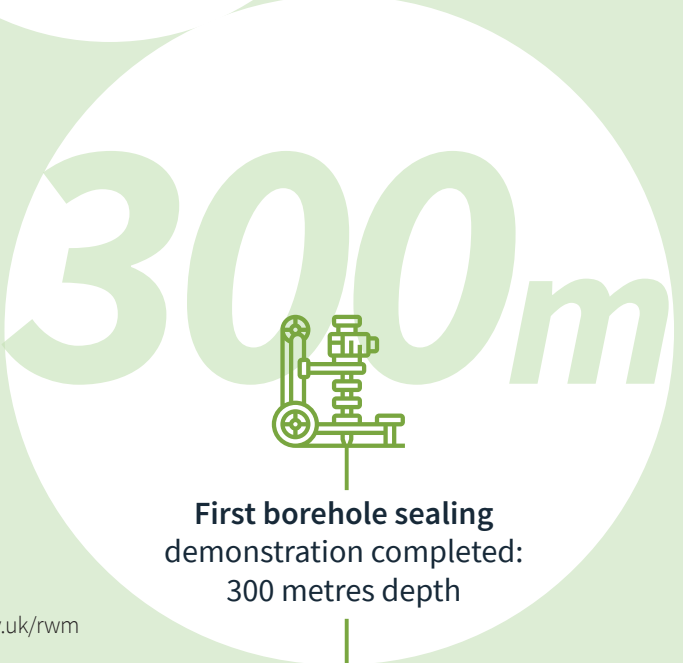
We continuously learn from others, and build and share our knowledge.





# 2020-21

## Year at a glance







## Priority 1:

Deliver Community Partnerships for a GDF and prepare for site selection

# 1



*Simon Hughes,  
Community  
Engagement and  
Siting Director, RWM*

**Simon Hughes, RWM's Community Engagement and Siting Director, is delighted with the launch of two working groups in Copeland and Allerdale in west Cumbria and looks forward to similar discussions elsewhere in England.**

After years of behind-the-scenes planning and preparation, the past 12 months have brought our vitally important mission to a wider public audience and given us some valuable early feedback. The policy is emphatic in requiring the consent of the people who would be living alongside a GDF, and giving them influence over the pace at which discussions progress..

The future is exciting and challenging as we seek to understand issues that matter for local people in relation to a GDF and to their own aspirations for the future of their community. Our aim is to build a constructive dialogue with individuals and organisations representing the full spectrum of viewpoints, ensuring that all are aware of the huge positive benefits that a GDF could bring for current and future generations.

Our success in finding a location for the UK will depend on relationships in the communities that choose to talk with us, and on our own people who are engaging with them on the ground, together with the RWM experts supporting them and the supply chain delivering the essential services we need to make progress.

We also acknowledge that the right to withdraw could also be activated at any time before the test of public support, and if that happens, we will walk away. And if a community advocates rapid progress as an aspiration, we'd be pleased to deliver.

A GDF investment is worth many £billions and this will benefit the immediate area, generating employment and contracts, but also providing a huge economic stimulus in the wider region over many generations. We will also contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of an area.

We're also holding conversations in other regions of the country - the offer to embark on exploratory talks without any commitment remains open.





### Priority 2:

Deliver waste management solutions to support the UK nuclear estate



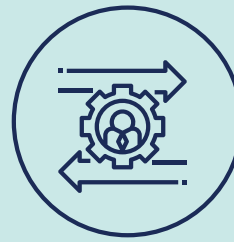
*Shaun Roberts,  
Waste Management  
Director, RWM*

**Waste Management Director Shaun Roberts** manages a team of 35 experts, who work alongside UK waste producers to plan and advise on dealing with the radioactive by-products that will eventually be placed in a GDF.

Our adjustment to online working was challenging but we made the transition smoothly and continued providing support to customers during the year. We work with stakeholders across the nuclear industry, as well as the NDA: many were also initially impacted by, for example, delays to waste retrievals and disruption to site operations.

Despite COVID-19 setbacks, the last 12 months were nonetheless a busy year, with 19 assessments complete and 95% delivered early or on time. We met all industry demands, due in part to our long-standing relationships and constructive dialogue with customers.

Packages must meet the needs of specific waste types, taking into account the way the waste will be managed throughout its life. This includes interim storage, safety during transport to a GDF, waste emplacement and how it will perform after GDF closure.



### Priority 3:

Transform our organisation for safe and effective delivery



*Elizabeth Atherton,  
Acting Transformation  
Director, RWM*

**Acting Transformation Director Elizabeth Atherton** oversees the task of building the capability that RWM needs to deliver its mission.

For many years, the focus has been on detailed planning and research activities, but RWM is now evolving as a delivery organisation, strengthening with new expertise, and working in partnership with stakeholders and suppliers.

Our transformation is well under way and will ensure we are fully prepared to deliver a GDF. After a process of analysis, which involved surveys, staff feedback and engagement with other stakeholders, we identified areas of importance and proposed the steps needed: we are building a pool of talent that reflects the expertise required to manage site investigations, procure supply chain expertise and oversee an eventual construction programme.

Ahead of on-site activities, we have recruited experienced community engagement and siting managers to engage with local people and understand where we can contribute to their vision for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic brought an additional impetus to our focus on offering greater flexibility. Support for mental health and wellbeing has also been strengthened during this challenging period. We also remain committed to a supportive, inclusive work environment where all our people can achieve their potential.





*“The offer to embark on exploratory talks without any commitment remains open.”*

*Simon Hughes, Community Engagement and Siting Director*

# Brief review of our priorities for 2021-2022

By Chief Executive Karen Wheeler

- RWM will continue to evolve so we are best placed to deliver a GDF, working in partnership with stakeholders and communities.
- More Working Groups are expected to form in other parts of England over the coming year – and we expect existing Working Groups to set up Community Partnerships to take the process forward too.
- Our technical work includes preparation for early seismic work on the sites, further investigations and preparation for the design and safety work required for a GDF in a specific location.
- We will also continue to focus on delivering waste management solutions, so that the longer-lived radioactive waste is compatible for a GDF.
- As part of the NDA group, we will form a single waste division with Low Level Waste Repository to utilise our combined expertise.
- We will develop as an organisation, ensuring we have the knowledge, expertise and capability to deliver this project alongside our partners and building our operational experience.



## Getting in touch

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

Email [gdfenquiries@nda.gov.uk](mailto:gdfenquiries@nda.gov.uk)

Telephone **03000 660 100**

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or visit our website [gov.uk/rwm](https://gov.uk/rwm)