



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Radioactive Waste: Working with Communities

2019

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Introduction

1. Radioactive waste disposal is a devolved matter - the Welsh Government is responsible for determining the policy for this within Wales. Based on international consensus and independent scientific advice the Welsh Government has adopted a policy for the geological disposal of higher activity radioactive waste (HAW¹) as the best and safest long-term management solution for HAW. This policy is based on a community or communities being willing to host a geological disposal facility (GDF) for HAW. Geological disposal will provide a permanent and safe solution for the disposal of HAW.
2. Although the Welsh Government has adopted a policy for the geological disposal of HAW this does not mean that a geological disposal facility (GDF) will necessarily be built in Wales or that the Welsh Government will seek to have a GDF built in Wales. Our policy is clear: a GDF will only be built in Wales if a community is willing to host it and a suitable and safe site can be found.
3. This document details the Welsh Government policy for engaging with communities and the support available for communities which may wish to enter discussions, without prior commitment, about potentially hosting a GDF.
4. Safety and protecting human health and the environment are fundamental to delivering geological disposal.
5. The Welsh Government held a consultation on the arrangements for geological disposal working with communities between 25 January and 20 April 2018. The responses, a summary of the issues raised and the Welsh Government response can be found on the Welsh Government website.
6. This document outlines the way that the delivery body, Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM), will work with parties in Wales who may be interested in finding out more about the potential for hosting a GDF.

Policy Background

7. In May 2015 the Welsh Government issued a policy statement: *Welsh Government Policy on the Management and Disposal of Higher Activity Radioactive Waste*². This was followed in December 2015 by a further policy statement: *Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Radioactive Waste: Community Engagement and Siting Processes*³. These policy statements confirmed the policy that geological disposal is the best long-term option for managing HAW, and confirmed our policy that geological disposal can only be

¹ Higher activity radioactive waste includes the following categories of radioactive waste – high level waste, intermediate level waste, a small fraction of low level waste with a concentration of specific radionuclides sufficient to prevent its disposal as low level waste.

² <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/policy/150519-policy-on-the-management-and-disposal-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste-en.pdf>

³ <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/151210-geological-disposal-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste-community-engagement-and-siting-processes-en.PDF>

delivered in Wales with a consent-based approach of working in partnership with potential host communities.

8. The May 2015 policy statement detailed the reasons why we adopted geological disposal and gave background information. The policy statement explained that geological disposal is internationally accepted as the best means for the management and disposal of HAW and follows advice given to the UK Government and the devolved administrations by the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM)⁴.
9. The Welsh Government's policy for geological disposal covers the disposal of HAW within Wales. If waste is brought into Wales for disposal following the siting of a GDF within a willing community in Wales, it will come within the Welsh Government's policy. If waste, currently stored on sites in Wales or arising in Wales, leaves Wales for disposal elsewhere in the UK it is no longer covered by the Welsh Government's policy.
10. Geological disposal provides a safe, permanent solution for the legacy of HAW accumulated over the last 60 years from military, civil electricity generation, medical, industrial and educational uses of radioactivity. It also provides a disposal route for the waste that will be generated as part of the UK Government's anticipated programme of new nuclear power stations.
11. Alternatives to geological disposal, such as ongoing surface storage, do not provide a permanent solution and leave future generations to take responsibility for the safe and secure management of these materials. The Welsh Government does not consider that ongoing surface storage would meet our responsibility to future generations or meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
12. In March 2017 Radioactive Waste Management (RWM), the delivery body for geological disposal, published a report: "Review of Alternative Radioactive Waste Management Options"⁵. Having considered developments in the management of HAW the report concluded that, while alternative ways of managing and disposal might reduce the volume of HAW needing geological disposal, a GDF will continue to be required, as the alternatives to disposal in a GDF cannot practicably be applied to all components of the radioactive waste inventory.

⁴ The UK Government and the devolved administrations established the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in 2003 to provide independent expert advice on the future management and disposal of higher activity radioactive waste in the UK. In July 2006, the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) made recommendations for the long-term management of higher activity radioactive waste having independently reviewed all of the available options. They recommended geological disposal, coupled with safe and secure interim storage while disposal facilities are developed, as the best available option. CoRWM concluded that a process should be adopted whereby communities were willing participants, working in partnership with an implementing body. In 2013, CoRWM reiterated their recommendation from 2006 supporting a geological disposal facility, and that there should be a willing community to host it. Information on CoRWM can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management>

⁵ <https://rwm.nda.gov.uk/publication/geological-disposal-review-of-alternative-radioactive-waste-management-options/>

13. A GDF can only be sited in Wales if a community is willing to host it. In addition, a GDF will also need approval by the relevant environmental protection regulator (in Wales, Natural Resources Wales (NRW)), and by the nuclear safety and security regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). In Wales a GDF will also need approval through the Welsh planning system.

Current ways of managing higher activity radioactive waste

14. The UK has accumulated a 60 year legacy of HAW which will exist whether or not new nuclear power stations are built. The Welsh Government supports the building of new nuclear power stations at existing sites in Wales⁶, such as Wylfa Newydd, which will also create HAW during their operation and decommissioning. Although both legacy waste and new build waste will need management and eventual disposal, legacy waste represents by far the largest proportion, over 85% by volume, of the overall inventory for disposal.
15. Modern, safe and secure interim storage can contain this waste in the short to medium term, but storage requires ongoing human intervention to monitor the material. There will also be a need in the future to repack the waste and to rebuild stores to ensure that it does not cause any risk to human health or the environment. Repackaging can itself create a risk of worker exposure to radioactivity and creates more radioactive waste for disposal. Surface stores will be exposed to changes in the natural environment and also need to be protected continually to keep them secure from malicious activity. Ongoing storage therefore retains the need for future generations to intervene in the management of HAW. This need for intervention by future generations would be removed by geological disposal.
16. Following the May 2015 policy statement the Welsh Government joined a programme with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive for delivering geological disposal in the UK. The programme is funded by the UK Government, with the intention of delivering geological disposal for all of the material requiring this form of disposal. The UK Government has expressed a preference to deliver this via a single GDF site, if possible, as this potentially offers a lower environmental impact and lower costs. It will be necessary to show that a single site can safely accommodate all the inventory for disposal.

Inventory for disposal

17. The specific types of higher activity radioactive waste (and nuclear materials that could be declared as waste) which would comprise the inventory for disposal in a GDF are:
- HLW arising from the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel at Sellafield;

⁶ Welsh Government Energy Wales: a low carbon transition, 2012
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/energy/energywales/?lang=en>

- ILW arising from existing nuclear licensed sites, defence, medical, industrial, research and educational facilities;
 - the small proportion of LLW that is not suitable for disposal in the national Low Level Waste Repository;
 - spent fuel from existing commercial reactors (yet to be declared waste) and from research reactors that is not reprocessed;
 - spent fuel (yet to be declared waste) and ILW from a new build programme up to a defined amount⁷;
 - plutonium stocks – plutonium not re-used in new fuel manufacture (yet to be declared as waste);
 - uranium stocks – including that arising from enrichment and fuel fabrication activities (yet to be declared waste); and
 - irradiated fuel and nuclear materials (yet to be declared waste) from the UK defence programme.
18. As component parts of the inventory for disposal in a GDF it is not expected that the categories of waste and material listed above will change significantly. For the purposes of discussions with communities that are considering hosting a GDF, this description provides the most complete picture of the possible inventory for disposal at this point in time.
19. At this stage in the programme, where actual site investigations are yet to take place, there is no guarantee that a community willing to host a GDF would have a large enough volume of suitable rock to take the entire inventory for disposal, or that RWM would be able to make a safety case for the entire inventory. Whilst UK Government are currently proceeding on the assumption that only one GDF will be necessary (subject to the safety case meeting the requirements of the independent regulators), if either of the above scenarios came to pass, one community might host a GDF to dispose of part of the inventory only, and an alternative site could be identified and developed elsewhere to dispose of the remainder. The UK Government favours an approach where one GDF will provide the capacity needed for the disposal of the inventory described above.
20. The volumes of these wastes and materials are regularly assessed, revised and made publicly available as part of the UK Radioactive Waste Inventory (UK RWI). Volumes are subject to change due to a number of factors, including improvements to the estimates of waste that will arise from planned operations and decommissioning programmes. Government policy also requires users of radioactive materials to minimise the radioactive waste requiring disposal, and this is checked by the regulators.
21. In order to support the implementation of geological disposal RWM publishes a quantified description of the inventory for disposal. The most recent report

⁷ See paras 2.11, 6.54 & 6.55 of the BEIS [Implementing Geological Disposal – Working with Communities](#) policy

was published in 2018⁸, together with the methodologies and assumptions that were used in its development.

Engaging with communities

22. The Welsh Government December 2015 policy statement contained an outline policy for engaging with communities; including arrangements for supporting communities and providing them with information to ensure that they are able to engage in discussions on a partnership basis. The policy statement confirmed our preference for adopting arrangements in Wales for engaging with communities that are compatible with those being adopted by the UK Government for use in England, provided that the arrangements reflect the needs of communities in Wales and of Wales as a whole.

Compatibility with the UK Government policy

23. For the reasons explained above the Welsh Government has joined the UK Government's GDF programme. The UK Government is funding the programme so it is important that there are compatible arrangements between Wales and England with regards to key elements e.g. the Right of Withdrawal and the Test of Public Support. To this end we have worked closely with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the development of policy proposals that, whilst based on the Welsh Government's own public consultation and policy development process, remain sufficiently aligned with UK Government policy to support efficient delivery. Consequently, this document follows a similar structure to that used by the UK Government to cover its respective policy and in places uses common text. Compatible arrangements do not necessarily have to be identical and we recognise that arrangements adopted in Wales will need to reflect policy differences between the countries and considerations such as the Welsh language, separate planning arrangements and the way that local authorities are structured.

Purpose of this document

24. This document provides the policy framework for RWM to work in partnership with communities (and the local authority⁹ or authorities of that community) in Wales that are potentially interested in finding out more about hosting a GDF. Welsh Government policy will only allow a GDF to be constructed in Wales if a community partnership is formed and engaged in discussions; is supported by the relevant local authority(ies) and if a positive Test of Public Support takes place in that community. As every community is different the policy is sufficiently flexible to allow for the needs of different communities but within a structure that ensures any potential host community is treated fairly. This

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2016-inventory-for-geological-disposal>

⁹ The term local authority is used throughout this document – this refers to the 22 unitary authorities in Wales: <https://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/unitary-authorities/?lang=en>

policy sets out the roles of the various parties that will have a role in the siting process.

25. The process to find and select a location for a GDF requires detailed technical work that is estimated to take about 15 to 20 years. It is an inter-generational project that will span several political cycles. The construction and operation of the facility will take a further 100+ years.
26. Discussions about a proposed location for a GDF can be initiated by anyone or any group of people with an interest in the siting process, and who wish to propose an area for consideration. The interested party may suggest an area of any size; it could be as large as a county, or it could be a small area of land.
27. Once RWM and the interested party have had an initial exchange of information and agree the proposal merits further consideration, they must jointly inform all relevant local authorities and open up discussion more widely in the community. RWM will carry out increasingly detailed investigations over a number of years. If there is continuing interest from the community then deep investigative boreholes will need to be drilled to carry out further testing of the geological conditions at depth. RWM will need to apply via the Welsh planning system for planning permission to carry out deep borehole investigations at potential sites and to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for Environmental Permits. This is likely to take around 18 months from the application to the decision.
28. Detailed site investigations may take up to 15 years, as it is essential to understand the geology and be confident that a facility can be designed to safely and securely isolate and contain the radioactive waste. When RWM has sufficient information to satisfy itself that a GDF is viable and the community has indicated it is willing to host it, RWM will be able to apply for planning permission to build a GDF. A GDF will also require Environmental Permits from NRW and a Nuclear Site Licence from the Office for Nuclear Regulation.
29. RWM anticipates that it will take around 10 years to construct the first vaults within a facility. Alongside construction, there will likely be continued underground investigations and testing of the geology to make sure that the GDF meets the necessary high standards of safety, security and environmental protection. Once the first vaults have been built, construction of the facility and the disposal of the waste will continue in parallel; with new tunnels and vaults being built as existing ones are filled.

Welsh Language

30. RWM is aware of the need to ensure Welsh language or bilingual provision where required. RWM is fully aware of the importance of ensuring that discussions can be conducted bilingually. RWM understands the importance

of stakeholders having the option to communicate in Welsh or English and will ensure that suitable provision is made or arranged.

31. RWM's public-facing material relevant to Wales is already bilingual. RWM appreciates the importance of ensuring that material made available to a potential host community, interested party, or stakeholder in Wales can be provided in both Welsh and English.

Initial Discussions

32. Identifying a willing host community with a suitable site for a GDF will be a long process. This is because it will take RWM time to identify, investigate and assess potential sites and make sure that communities that choose to get involved understand what will happen and how it might affect them. The intention is that RWM, as the delivery body, will work in partnership with communities to provide answers to their questions and any concerns, so the community can make an informed decision about whether to support a facility being developed in their area as more information becomes available through RWM's investigations.
33. Initially, RWM will raise awareness of geological disposal with the public and invite anyone with an interest to have initial conversations to find out more. Discussions with the delivery body can be initiated by anyone. We anticipate that local authorities, landowners, businesses, community groups or interested individuals may come forward to request further information.
34. An interested party could come forward without any specific land in mind but a general ambition to find out if there is potential to develop a GDF within their area. Alternatively interested parties could come forward with a particular site in mind. RWM's investigations to understand whether a potential site could be suitable will extend beyond the area of the proposed site itself. This is because in order to determine whether a site is potentially suitable, RWM will need to understand the surrounding geological environment.
35. It is possible that an interested party may suggest a location for a GDF beneath the UK's territorial waters, with the surface facilities being located on land, which could be a feasible option. Government owned land may also be put forward. Where a third party puts forward a potential site that it does not own, the third party and RWM should consider at what point it would be appropriate to include the landowner(s) in further discussions.
36. In the case of a local authority coming forward the initial area under consideration could be very large and RWM would seek to understand more about the area proposed, based on existing, readily available information.

37. Under all scenarios RWM will undertake initial work to understand whether the land identified has any potential to host a GDF. At this point discussions may remain confidential (subject to disclosure requirements contained in information law legislation, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004), though they should be made public at the earliest opportunity if the interested party and RWM decide to move forward.
38. It may be that RWM decides there is little or no prospect of siting a GDF in the area under consideration, or the interested party, after finding out more from RWM, decides that they are no longer interested. If, however, both RWM and the interested party want to progress they must inform all relevant local authorities before going public with the proposals and starting a dialogue with the people in the local area.

Forming a Working Group and identifying a Search Area

39. In order to begin a conversation with the people in the area, the interested party, RWM, an independent chair and an independent facilitator will form a Working Group. The term 'Working Group' replaces the term 'formative engagement team' used in the consultation as the former is more readily understood by stakeholders.
40. This early part of the process is essentially about fact finding, gathering information about the community and providing information to the community about geological disposal. At this stage, it is important to ensure a community has the ability to have fact-finding and exploratory discussions with RWM without having to wait for a relevant local authority to join the Working Group. Therefore, relevant local authority membership on the Working Group is not a requirement, although it would be preferable to have at least one relevant local authority as a member, given their invaluable knowledge and experience of the local area and people. Relevant local authorities will receive financial support from RWM to participate throughout the process including as a member of the Working Group, so that local taxpayers do not incur any additional financial burden. Funding will also be provided to support the Working Group's activities. Funding will also be available to cover reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for individuals taking part in the Working Group (e.g. travel costs for attending meetings). RWM will provide clear advice and guidance on activities where expenses can be covered and how costs will be reimbursed.
41. The Working Group may also want to consider whether it would be beneficial to invite representation from a Special Enterprise Zone¹⁰ and community

¹⁰ <https://businesswales.gov.wales/enterprisezones/>

councils¹¹. Given the potentially large number of community councils in any given area, it may not be feasible for them all to join. It may instead be possible for them to collectively agree to send a representative to join the Working Group.

Defining a Search Area

42. An early task for the Working Group will be to identify a Search Area. The Search Area is the geographical area within which RWM will seek to identify potentially suitable sites to host a GDF. Defining the boundaries of the Search Area is important in order to identify appropriate membership for the Community Partnership, including the local authority(ies), and to determine eligibility for Community Investment Funding. Projects, schemes and initiatives within the Search Area may be eligible for this funding. The Community Partnership and Community Investment Funding are discussed in paragraphs 50-64 & 82-87 respectively.
43. A number of interested parties from different areas of England and Wales may come forward during the siting process, so it is possible there may be a number of Search Areas in the siting process at any given time.
44. The Search Area will be derived from the area first put forward for consideration by the interested party and will be defined using community council area boundaries. Some parts of Wales don't have a community council but are part of a community council area. The Search Area will, therefore, encompass all the community council areas within which RWM will be able to consider potential sites.
45. For areas which include potential for development under the seabed, the Search Area will comprise only that area on land.
46. The geographical boundaries of the Search Area are likely to change as the search for a potential location for the surface and underground facilities progresses and more is understood about the area. The Search Area will be refined over time by the Community Partnership (the Community Partnership is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 50-64). As RWM investigations progress the Community Partnership may identify areas that they want to rule out of consideration or rule in additional areas that they did not at first consider to be part of the Search Area. Any future changes to community council area boundaries will be reflected in the Search Area as it evolves over time.
47. Eventually the Search Area will be narrowed down until the Community Partnership identifies a specific site and the community which will be directly

¹¹ http://www.onevoicewales.org.uk/OVWeb/all_about_councils-7450.aspx

affected by the facility being on that site. This will be referred to as the Potential Host Community. The Potential Host Community is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 98-102.

The role of the Working Group

48. As it identifies the Search Area the Working Group will start work to understand the local area and any issues or questions the community within it might have, and to identify members of the community who may be interested in working with RWM by joining a Community Partnership. This work will include:

- gathering information about the different people and organisations in the area who will have an interest or who are likely to be affected;
- gathering information to understand the existing geographic, social, economic, environmental, cultural (including the Welsh language) and administrative structures of the Search Area;
- understanding the community's issues, concerns and questions about geological disposal and the process for identifying potential locations for a GDF;
- engaging with the local authority(ies) within the Search Area (if they have not joined the working group).

49. RWM will use independent evaluation to review the practical effectiveness of this part of the process to help improve future engagement.

Table 1 Membership of Working Group

Member	Role
Independent Chair	The Chair will ensure that meetings and discussions are run appropriately. Someone to fulfil this role could be procured from an approved list of contractors on behalf of the interested party, or there may be existing community organisational structures in the local area that could be used.
Independent Facilitator	The independent facilitator will aim to ensure that discussions progress in a constructive and informative manner. The facilitator can assist in asking relevant questions and directing conversations to cover the points of interest from the interested parties and other members of the community.
Interested Party	This is the group, organisation, or individual(s) who first started discussions with RWM.
RWM	The delivery body who are engaging with the community – providing information to the

	community and promoting the benefits of a GDF.
Relevant Local Authorities (optional)	Relevant local authorities are the local authorities that represent all or part of the Search Area. It may be that the local authority is the interested party. If not, they must be informed of discussions and invited to join the Working Group.

The Community Partnership

50. A Community Partnership can only be formed and continue to operate if the local authority(ies) in the Search Area agree to participate. Where there is more than one local authority in the Search Area, they must each be invited to join. Where a relevant local authority decides not to be member, then the community council areas within its boundaries will not form a part of a Search Area or a Potential Host Community. When identifying prospective members of the Community Partnership, the Working Group will need to consider the types of skills, knowledge and experience that the Community Partnership will need. It may invite particular organisations to join, as well as inviting applications through an open process. It should aim for membership that is reflective of the community in the Search Area. Prospective members of the Community Partnership will be identified by a selection panel of Working Group members. The selection panel must include the independent chair, RWM and any local authority on the Working Group. The process for selecting members must be open and transparent. Prospective members will be appointed onto the Community Partnership upon signing the Community Partnership Agreement (see paragraphs 65-67).
51. The Community Partnership will be formed of representatives from community groups, organisations and individuals, which reflect as far as possible the community, any relevant local authority(ies) and RWM. It would be appropriate to invite representation from organisations that have responsibility for managing or regulating large areas of land such as National Park Authorities or the National Trust Wales should the Search Area include land for which they are responsible.
52. The Community Partnership should seek to include representation from community councils where they exist. Given the potentially large number of community councils in a Search Area, it may not be feasible for them all to be members of the Community Partnership. It may be possible for community councils to collectively put forward a representative for membership of the Community Partnership to reflect their views. Once the Potential Host Community is identified, there may be scope for individual community councils to be on the Community Partnership. It may also be appropriate to invite representatives of Special Enterprise Zones. Members representing organisations will be responsible for sharing all information discussed and developed through the Community Partnership with the rest of their organisations.

53. It will be for each Community Partnership to decide on its number of members and to appoint a chair. However, in order to function effectively it is suggested it should be around 12 people.

The role of the Community Partnership

54. The role of the Community Partnership is to:

- facilitate discussion with the community;
- identify relevant information that people in the Search Area and Potential Host Community want or need about the siting process;
- be the key vehicle for community dialogue with RWM;
- review and refine the boundaries of the Search Area as RWM's investigations progress;
- identify priorities for community investment funding;
- make recommendations to the local authority(ies) on the Community Partnership on whether to invoke the Right of Withdrawal and if and when to launch a Test of Public Support;
- agree a programme of activities to develop the community's understanding of the siting process and the potential implications of hosting a GDF;
- develop a community vision and consider the part a GDF may play in that vision;
- monitor public opinion in relation to siting a GDF within the Search Area and the Potential Host Community

55. There will be a lot of information to share between the community, RWM and other parties (e.g. Natural Resources Wales and the Office for Nuclear Regulation) over a long period of time. The Community Partnership provides a vehicle for sharing that information and to find answers to the questions the community may have about geological disposal, the siting process and how they, as a community, could benefit.

56. Sub groups could be set up to consider some of the issues set out above, for example on communication and engagement, in which people from the community could get involved. We would expect that members of sub-groups would normally be appointed through an open process; however, from time to time the Community Partnership may want to co-opt members with particular expertise.

57. RWM will have a key role to play in the Community Partnership as a source of information and expertise on geological disposal and as the developer working together in partnership with the community. RWM will help the community access information from a range of resources, from its own

technical and scientific teams, or from independent parties who can help to answer questions.

Table 2 Membership of the Community Partnership

Member	Role
Community Members	Organisations and individuals to reflect the make-up of the community
Relevant Local Authorities	Relevant local authorities are those whose community council areas are in the Search Area (and Potential Host Community when it is identified). If a local authority does not agree to join or decides to leave the Community Partnership then the land within the community council areas in its boundaries will no longer be considered in the siting process. Local authorities on the Community Partnership will take two key decisions. They will have the final say on whether to seek to withdraw the community from the siting process and on seeking the community's views on whether it wishes to host a GDF.
RWM	A key member of the partnership as the delivery body of a GDF. They will provide information as required by the Community Partnership and provide updates on their investigations into the feasibility of the area to host the facility. RWM will explain the concept of a GDF and its benefits. They will be responsible for all technical decisions.
Chair	At the beginning this could be the same chair as was used during Working Group discussions, or a new chair could be appointed. They will ensure that the work of the Community Partnership is fair, unbiased and reflects the needs of the community.

Decision making within the Community Partnership

58. Local authorities play a crucial role in respect of planning, infrastructure development and service provision. For this reason, and to ensure democratic accountability, the Welsh Government has decided that the relevant local authority(ies) on the Community Partnership will take two key decisions. They will have the final say on:

- whether to seek to withdraw the community council areas within its boundaries from the siting process (through invoking the Right of Withdrawal);

- seeking the community's final view on whether it wishes to host a GDF (i.e. proceed to a Test of Public Support).

59. As explained above a Search Area and Potential Host Community could potentially encompass land in more than one local authority. The siting process will not continue within the boundaries of a local authority in Wales if it does not agree to be on the Community Partnership. Any relevant local authority in Wales will be able to bring the siting process to an end in the community council areas within its boundaries by either leaving the Community Partnership or enacting a Right of Withdrawal. The relevant local authority(ies) can either take the decision to withdraw the community from the process themselves or seek the community(ies)'s views on this directly.
60. Although the relevant local authority(ies) will have the final say in relation to these two key decisions, they should involve other members of the Community Partnership in discussions on whether they intend to seek to withdraw the community from the process and the appropriate time to launch a Test of Public Support. Equally the other members of the Community Partnership should be able to make recommendations to the local authority(ies) on the Community Partnership on invoking the Right of Withdrawal and the timing of the Test of Public Support.
61. The relevant local authority(ies) must, however, seek a final view from the community, through a Test of Public Support, on whether it is willing to host a GDF before RWM seeks the necessary regulatory approvals and planning permission for the construction and operation of a GDF. The Test of Public Support can only take place within community council areas within a local authority if that local authority is on the Community Partnership and has agreed to it being held.
62. If the relevant local authority(ies) on the Community Partnership agree that it is an appropriate time to seek the community's view on whether or not it wishes to host a GDF then the method for taking that Test of Public Support will be decided by the Community Partnership as a whole. The Community Partnership's view on what mechanisms could be used for this should be set out in the Community Partnership Agreement, which can be updated as views on this develop over time. The Community Partnership Agreement is discussed in more detail at paragraphs 65-67.
63. If the relevant local authority(ies) agree that the decision to withdraw the community from the process should involve the community directly then the method for seeking the community's view on possible withdrawal from the process will be considered by the Community Partnership as a whole. The Community Partnership's view on what mechanism could be used for this should be set out in the Community Partnership Agreement, which can be

updated as views on this develop over time. The Right of Withdrawal and the final Test of Public Support are discussed in more detail in paragraphs 103-109 & 110-118 respectively.

64. All other decisions, such as the priorities for community investment funding, or agreeing the programme of activities, should be taken by the Community Partnership. It will be for the Community Partnership to decide how it takes these decisions, for instance whether unanimity is required, or a simple majority and what constitutes a quorum. This should be set out in the Community Partnership Agreement.

The Community Partnership Agreement

65. The prospective members of the Community Partnership will develop and sign a Community Partnership Agreement. Once the Community Partnership Agreement is in place Community Investment Funding can be made available. (Community Investment Funding is discussed further in paragraphs 82-87)/
66. The Community Partnership Agreement will set out the principles of how the members of the Community Partnership will work together and their roles and responsibilities. It should include terms of reference to clarify how the Community Partnership operates, how it will take decisions, settle disputes and an outline programme of activities and how progress in completing the activities will be monitored as set out in paragraphs 65-67 RWM will provide a template Community Partnership Agreement and further guidance.
67. In the first instance, the Community Partnership Agreement will cover the period immediately following the establishment of the Community Partnership. As the siting process progresses, the Community Partnership Agreement may evolve and will be subject to review, for example to reflect any change in geographical scope of the Search Area and therefore membership.

Community engagement activities

68. The Community Partnership will need to engage with the community over a long period of time. Getting people actively involved on any issue can be challenging and it is possible that vocal minorities can dominate debate. It will therefore be important to open up community participation through a wide number of channels.
69. One way of doing this could be to hold open public meetings of a Community Stakeholder Forum, inviting people from the Search Area and neighbouring local authority areas. The Forum could meet at regular intervals, and could

also exist online, giving the Community Partnership the opportunity to report on activities it has undertaken and the outcome of those activities. It would give members of the community the opportunity to raise questions and issues that they want addressed, which could then be fed into the programme of activities. It will be important that all interactions between the Community Partnership and people in the community are made public.

70. The Community Partnership could also consider engagement through social media, dedicated outreach work with particular groups (for example engagement with young people through schools and colleges) and using existing networks to reach out to people. It will also be important to consider how to address diversity and accessibility issues so that people within the Search Area or Potential Host Community are not excluded from participating.

Communicating the inventory for disposal

71. An important issue that will need to be covered as part of the community engagement will be the inventory for disposal. As set out in paragraphs 17-21 the inventory for disposal comprises a number of categories of waste and material, including spent fuel and ILW from new nuclear power stations.
72. The inventory will include a defined amount of spent fuel and ILW from new nuclear power stations. The 2014 UK Government White paper stated that the industry at that time was proposing about a 16 gigawatt electrical new nuclear pipeline. The UK Government would need to discuss and agree the disposal of any additional spent fuel and ILW with communities participating in the siting process.

Funding to support the activities of the Community Partnership

73. Engagement Funding will be provided by RWM throughout the process. It is intended to support the activities of the Working Group and the Community Partnership.
74. Engagement funding is intended to cover the costs of the Community Partnership's engagement activities, information gathering, and support services that may be required. It will be used to cover the administrative costs associated with the operation of the Community Partnership and disbursement of community investment funding. It will also provide for independent facilitators to work with the Community Partnership and Stakeholder Forum to provide constructive guidance and challenge to make sure all voices are heard and to help reconcile different views where possible.

75. The types of engagement and information gathering activities by the Community Partnership provided through engagement funding could include:

- activities through which communities learn about geological disposal;
- commissioning of reports on specific issues;
- accessing independent scientific and technical advice;
- communications activity, such as a Stakeholder Forum, websites, information leaflets, social media and outreach and information events.

76. Relevant local authorities will receive financial support from RWM to participate throughout the process including as a member of the Community Partnership, so that local taxpayers do not incur any additional financial burden. Engagement Funding will also be available to cover reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for individuals taking part in the work of the Community Partnership (e.g. travel costs for attending meetings). RWM will provide clear advice and guidance on activities where expenses can be covered and how costs will be reimbursed.

Access to scientific and technical information

77. It is vital that communities have confidence in the information provided to them about the siting process, including on all relevant scientific and technical issues. RWM will be the first port of call for information on geological disposal and the siting process. The Community Partnership will also be able to call on the Government's independent advisory body, CoRWM and regulators.

78. The Community Partnership may also commission reports and research on specific topics from independent experts, as part of the agreed programme of activities. Given the range of advice and information available it may be that the Community Partnership receives conflicting statements from different parties. If that is the case the Government is making available a mechanism through which the Community Partnership can access independent experts for views on contested and unresolved scientific or technical issues.

79. The Welsh Government and BEIS have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a number of Learned Societies, who have agreed a mechanism under which the Community Partnership may approach their members for a view on contested and unresolved scientific or technical questions it may have remaining after discussing them with RWM, the regulators and any research and reports that they may have had commissioned. It is not envisaged that this mechanism will be used on a regular basis, only where there are contested and unresolved scientific or technical issues that have arisen through the community engagement and one of the parties feels that a further view from a relevant Learned Society

member may be helpful in addition to all of the existing information provided by RWM. The mechanism can also be used by RWM.

80. The Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by: BEIS; the Welsh Government; RWM; the Geological Society of London; the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; and the Learned Society of Wales. A committee will be formed of these Learned Societies for them to identify the appropriate expert (depending on the subject matter) who will be asked to provide a view. This may be an individual or collective view from a group of people. Where the question falls outside the expertise of the Committee, it may approach a Learned Society which has not signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

Funding for the community in the Search Area and the Potential Host Community

81. In addition to the Engagement Funding explained in paragraphs 73-76 there will be Community Investment Funding for communities that participate in the process i.e. communities in the Search Area and the Potential Host Community, and significant additional investment for the community that eventually hosts a GDF.

Community investment funding

82. A GDF is a multi-billion pound infrastructure investment and is likely to have a positive effect on the local economy. It is estimated that a GDF will provide jobs and benefits to the economy for more than 100 years. Current estimates are it will directly employ around 600 skilled, well-paid staff per year, over the duration of the project, with workforce numbers rising to more than 1000 during construction and early operations. In addition, it is also likely to involve major investments in local transport facilities and other infrastructure and create secondary benefits within industry, local education resources and local service industries. However, these benefits will not materialise for a number of years. The UK Government is therefore making available Community Investment Funding to those communities that form Community Partnerships and participate in the siting process.
83. The funding will be available once the Community Partnership is formed and a Community Partnership Agreement has been signed. It will continue for as long as the community remains in the siting process and continues to demonstrate engagement through a programme of activities.
84. During the early parts of the siting process, the UK Government has committed to make available Community Investment Funding of up to £1

million per community per year. This will rise to up to £2.5 million per community, per year for communities where deep borehole investigations take place to assess the geological suitability of a site. Initially there may be several communities interested in participating in the process and these will go through a down selection process to a smaller number of communities that will progress to deep borehole investigation. The funding will be provided by RWM. It must not be used to fill shortfalls in local authority budgets. The Community Investment Funding is provided in addition to the Engagement Funding described above in paragraphs 73-76.

85. Community Investment Funding must be spent in accordance with best practice in delivering value for money as set out in the Managing Public Money guidance issued by HM Treasury and in accordance with other legal requirements, including State aid rules. RWM will need to ensure that the funding is distributed in accordance with the requirements of regularity and propriety set out in the guidance. Regularity requires that the use of public money is compliant with relevant legislation and delegated authorities. Propriety relates to meeting the high standards of public conduct, robust governance requirements and parliamentary expectations (in particular, transparency).
86. The UK Government has developed some high-level principles for the use of community investment funding. The funding can be used to pay for projects, schemes or initiatives that:
- improve community well-being, for example improvements to community facilities, enhancement of the quality of life or health and well-being of the community.
 - enhance the natural and built environment including cultural and natural heritage, especially where economic benefits, for example through tourism, can be demonstrated; and
 - provide economic development opportunities, for example employment opportunities, job creation, skills development, education or training, promotion of local enterprise, long-term economic development or economic diversification.
87. The Community Partnership will need to consider these principles along with any local economic vision, socio-economic strategies or plans in order to develop locally- specific funding criteria. They may wish to consider funding initiatives that could help them derive greater benefit from hosting a GDF.

How will Community Investment Funding be administered?

88. The Welsh Government consider it advisable that the Community Investment Funding should be administered by a body separate to RWM. This is intended

to provide additional transparency and independence from RWM, as the conduit of the funding. The body that administers the funding must have a legal personality (be a legal 'entity') as it will need to enter into an agreement or agreements with RWM, employ staff to support applicants for funding and enter into agreements to release funding for projects.

89. An appropriate existing community or public body could be used to administer the funds if the Community Partnership wishes, provided it has the necessary skills and resources, a legal personality and the appointment is compliant with all relevant procurement rules.

How will the community access the Community Investment Funding?

90. Community Investment Funding will be available for projects, schemes and initiatives within the Search Area and the Potential Host Community when it is identified. Once the Potential Host Community is identified the Community Partnership may decide to prioritise applications within the boundaries of the Potential Host Community.
91. The funding will be accessed through an open and transparent application process. Applicants will have to set out what they would like the funding for, how it will benefit the community and how it meets any locally agreed criteria. Applications would be submitted to the fund administrator. A Community Investment Panel would review recommendations made by the funding administrator and decide on applications for funding against the principles set out in paragraph 86 and any additional criteria the Community Partnership has decided to apply. The Community Investment Panel will be made up of RWM and other members of the Community Partnership. The Community Partnership may choose to appoint members to the Community Investment Panel through an open process. The funding administrator will provide advice and support to help members of the community apply for funding.
92. The UK Government, who will provide the funding via RWM, recognise that some projects, schemes, or initiatives may be spread over a number of years. Although the funding will be available on an annual basis this should not be a barrier to funding multi-year projects. RWM will provide further guidance on this point.
93. If either the community or RWM withdraws from the siting process the community investment funding will end in that community. Any funding that has been committed within that financial year by the Community Investment Panel will be honoured.

Significant Additional Investment for the host community

94. The UK Government will provide additional investment to the community that is ultimately selected to host a GDF. For the community chosen to host the GDF the significant additional investment will replace the Community Investment Funding. This additional investment will enhance the significant economic benefits that are inherent in hosting a major infrastructure project and recognise the long-term commitment from the community to the national interest. Investment could include improved local education and skills capacity, improved transport infrastructure, or improved recreational facilities. This additional investment will be significant – comparable to other international GDF projects.
95. The investment is additional to the investment and jobs that a major infrastructure project of this kind will bring to an area. It is also additional to any funding for planning obligations associated with mitigating impacts during development of a GDF, the Community Investment Funding and Engagement Funding provided during the siting process. RWM will work with the Community Partnership to identify a community vision, and what this might mean for the significant additional investment package.

Property compensation

96. The UK Government and Welsh Government recognise that communities may be concerned about effects geological disposal infrastructure may have on property values in the local area. Most major infrastructure projects involve making provision for compensation for local residents and property owners who experience an impact on the value of their property as a result of construction of the new infrastructure.
97. RWM will undertake work with Community Partnerships in the siting process to assess whether there is likely to be any impact on local property prices and consider whether a property support scheme would be appropriate. Once this assessment work is complete, a decision will be taken and an appropriate approach will be adopted for each community.

The Potential Host Community

98. The Potential Host Community is the community within the geographical area that could potentially host a GDF. It will be identified over time from within the Search Area. The boundaries of the Potential Host Community need to be defined to determine who will get a say in the Test of Public Support.
99. The Potential Host Community will be defined in Wales by community council areas. The Potential Host Community will include all of the community council areas in which the following are located:

- proposed surface and underground elements of a GDF ;any associated development which is relevant to the GDF facility and any land required to mitigate impacts
- transport links/routes from the GDF site to the nearest port, railhead or primary road network (i.e. out to where minor roads meet the nearest A roads);
- direct physical impacts associated with underground investigations, construction and operation of the geological disposal facility (identified though environmental impact assessment work carried out to support RWM's engagement with communities and its planning permission applications).

100. The Potential Host Community will likely be made up of several community council areas. Furthermore, all the community council areas could be contained within one local authority or could cross local authority boundaries. The geographical boundaries of the Potential Host Community will be agreed by the Community Partnership based on information gathered through the siting process and the criteria above.

101. The Welsh and UK Government's view is that only residents in the area that will be directly impacted by the development should have a final say in whether they wish to host a GDF. It will be the people living in the Potential Host Community, through a Test of Public Support that will decide whether they want RWM to continue with the process for siting a GDF in the area. The Test of Public Support is considered further in paragraphs 110-118.

102. If the Potential Host Community boundary is near other local authority boundaries, the Community Partnership will need to consider engaging with people within neighbouring local authorities. They would not, however, have a say in the Test of Public Support.

Right of Withdrawal

103. The community can withdraw from the process at any point up until a Test of Public Support is taken.

104. The Community Partnership itself might have concerns about continuing further in the process. Or it may judge, through its monitoring of public opinion, that there is no realistic prospect of building support for a GDF within the community.

105. Where either the Community Partnership or the community have concerns about the siting process, the Community Partnership, including RWM should make all attempts to address these concerns before considering

withdrawing from the process. In this situation RWM could fund independent mediation to ensure concerns are heard, understood and attempts have been made to address them.

106. The decision on whether to withdraw the community will be taken by relevant local authority(ies) on the Community Partnership. Regardless of how many local authorities are on the Community Partnership a relevant local authority can remove the community council areas within its boundaries from the siting process by leaving the Community Partnership or enacting the Right of Withdrawal.
107. The relevant local authority(ies) may decide to seek the views of the community on whether to withdraw from the process. The Welsh Government considers it would be best practice to consult the community on the question of whether to withdraw. If the relevant local authority(ies) decide they wish to consult the community then the decision on how they seek views would be a decision taken by the entire Community Partnership and should be set out in the Community Agreement. The method chosen to seek views could be either a local referendum, a formal consultation or statistically representative polling. If new methods of consultation emerge in the future the Community Partnership may wish to consider a different approach.
108. If the relevant local authority(ies) decide to seek the views of the community on whether to withdraw from the process it would be residents of the Search Area (as set out in paragraphs 42-47) that would participate or the residents of the Potential Host Community (as set out in paragraphs 98-102) if it had been identified by the time withdrawal was being considered.
109. RWM can also withdraw from the process. It could withdraw for technical reasons or other reasons which demonstrated there were no longer prospects of finding a suitable site within either the Search Area or Potential Host Community. RWM could also withdraw in order to prioritise available funds across other communities in the siting process. RWM will be transparent in its considerations to withdraw from a community.

Test of Public Support

110. Before RWM seeks regulatory approval and planning permission to site a GDF in a particular community, there must be a Test of Public Support to determine whether the community is willing to host a GDF.
111. The relevant local authority, or authorities where there is more than one, on the Community Partnership will take the decision on if or when to hold a Test of Public Support. A relevant local authority must agree that the Test of Public Support can take place in order for the community council areas within

its boundaries to be included in the test. As set out in paragraph 113 the Community Partnership will take a view on what mechanisms could be used for the Test of Public Support.

112. The Test of Public Support is designed to determine a final view from the community as to whether they are willing to host a GDF within their community. If the result of the Test of Public Support is positive, RWM may then proceed with statutory licensing, environmental permitting and planning permission application processes to build a GDF. Without a positive Test of Public Support RWM will not be able to seek regulatory approval and planning permission for a GDF and the siting process will end in that community.
113. The Test of Public Support will be carried out in the Potential Host Community. As with the Right of Withdrawal, there are currently three main mechanisms that could be used for the Test of Public Support: a local referendum, a formal consultation or statistically representative polling. If new methods to test public opinion emerge in the future, the Community Partnership may wish to consider a different approach.
114. RWM will produce guidance which will set out in more detail how the Test of Public Support could potentially operate, but it will be for the Community Partnership to decide how it wishes to approach it. Whatever approach is adopted, it is important that the Community Partnership carries out the Test of Public Support in a way that is fair and robust. The cost of carrying out the Test of Public Support will be funded by RWM.
115. The Test of Public Support would only be taken after extensive community engagement when the community has had time to ask questions, raise any concerns and learn about a GDF. There will be only one opportunity for a Test of Public Support in each Potential Host Community. However, the Welsh Government expects the Community Partnership to monitor public opinion throughout the process and as discussed in paragraphs 103-109 the community may be withdrawn from the process at any time.
116. The Right of Withdrawal will cease following the Test of Public Support once it has been established that the community is willing to host a facility, and RWM, has identified a preferred site, RWM, subject to the Secretary of State's agreement, will proceed with applications for the relevant planning and regulatory consents required for the construction and operation of a GDF.
117. The planning permission application and the applications that RWM makes for various permits and licenses are likely to involve further elements of public participation. This means that members of the Community Partnership, the Potential Host Community and any other member of the

public or organisations that have an interest, will have further opportunities to offer their views after a positive Test of Public Support.

118. The Working with Communities framework covers the process of community engagement up until the Test of Public Support. After this point the Community Partnership may then transition into a liaison group to provide an enduring interface between RWM and the local community during the planning permission process, the regulatory permitting and licensing processes and through to the construction, operation and closure of the facility.