



Radioactive Waste Management

Community decision making in a consent-based siting process

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Waste generating sites



Waste types



Plutonium storage containers



Storage of uranium

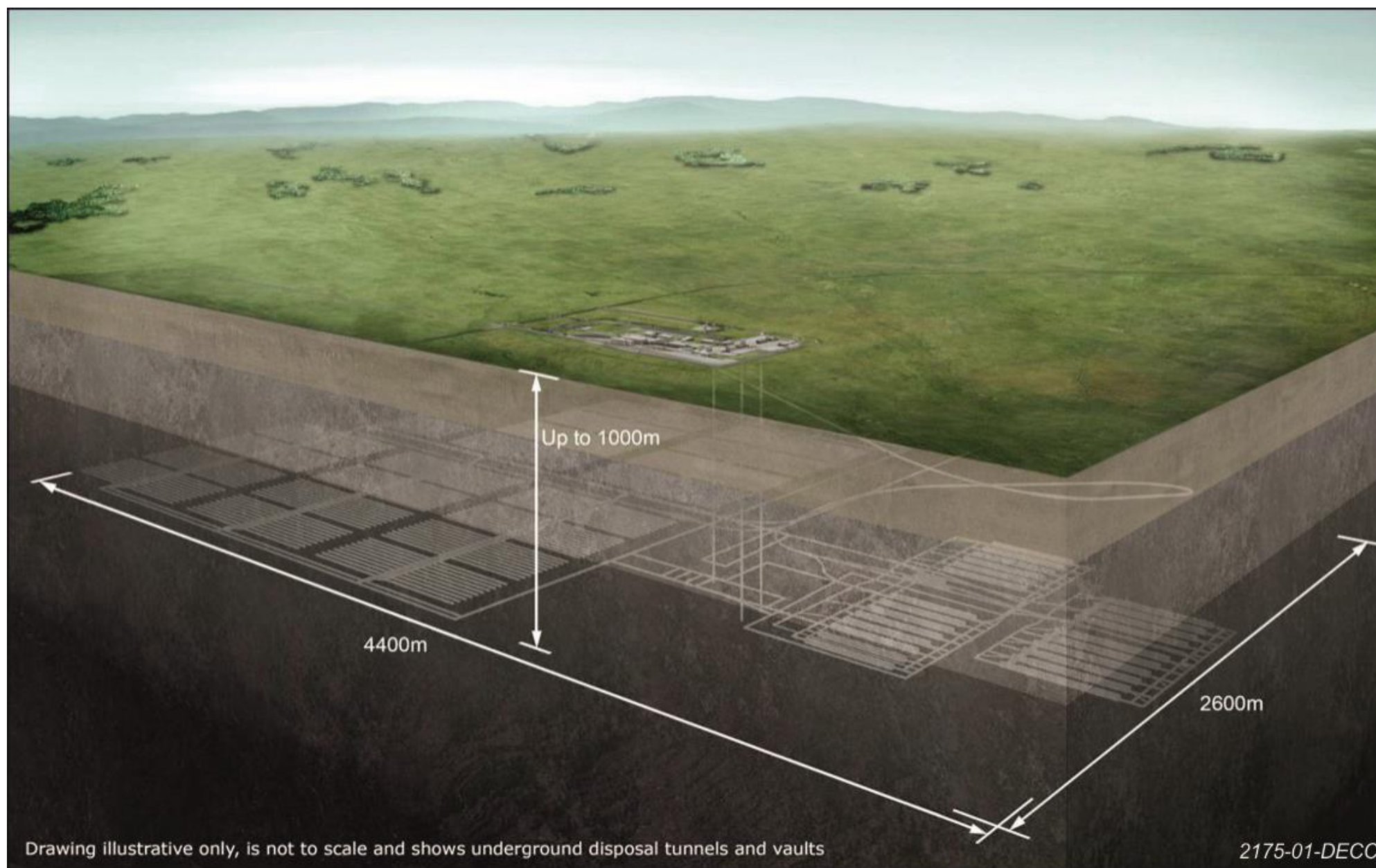


Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor fuel

UK Policy for managing higher activity wastes:

- geological disposal
- safe and secure interim storage
- ongoing research and development to support implementation

Geological Disposal



InSOTEC “waves”

The InSOTEC project identified three waves of understanding the interrelationship of social and technical aspects of radioactive waste management:

- a first wave founded on a separation between the social and the technical with technology taking precedence and social aspects understood only as a context for technology
- a second wave of understanding which views the different aspects as interdependent ‘socio-technical combinations’
- evolution to a third wave of thinking in which public participation and social science are meaningfully embedded in technical decision making

Yannick Barthe, Morgan Meyer, Goran Sundqvist. *Making Technical Democracy Real: the social and technical divide illustrated by European radwaste examples*. InSOTEC WP2 Synthesis Report, 2016

Siting Process 2008 - 2013

- 2008 White Paper inviting expressions of interest from local authorities in participating in the siting process for a GDF
- consent-based approach based on working with communities willing to participate in the siting process
- right of withdrawal until quite late in the process with final decision to support a local GDF resting with local authorities

Siting Process 2008 - 2013

- formally staged process with positive decisions required of local authorities at the end of each stage before progress could be made
- during each successive stage, increasingly detailed technical development and assessment work undertaken (largely by the developer)....
- comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement, led by the local authorities rather than the waste management company or central Government, but obvious dichotomy between technical and social aspects of the process
- linear, staged process also restricted discourse on key technical issues during early stages of stakeholder engagement
- local authorities naturally reluctant to take decisions to move forward so stayed in an early stage much longer than originally envisaged while questions built up that could not be answered without moving to a later stage
- ironically, lack of answers to some of these questions became a reason not to proceed to the stage that would provide the answers.

Siting process 2008 - 2013

- 2008/9 - 3 Cumbrian local authorities formally expressed an interest in the siting process
- Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils and Cumbria County Council worked together in a local “Partnership” to explore implications
- July 2012 - Partnership provided recommendations to councils
- January 2013 – Allerdale and Copeland voted to continue in the process, Cumbria County Council cabinet voted not to continue
- it had previously been agreed that support would be needed at both Borough and County level to proceed – so the process came to an end in west Cumbria
- in 2012, Shepway in Kent took “soundings” from local residents but ultimately decided against participation in the siting process when initial reactions were more negative than positive

2013 Siting Review

- immediate statement of continued commitment to geological disposal with a consent-based siting process, working in partnership with potential host communities
- Government engages and reflects on experience of those involved in Cumbria and Kent
- May / June: National Call for Evidence
- September / December: National Public Consultation.

Department of Energy & Climate Change

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Department of the Environment
www.doeri.gov.uk

Consultation

Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility

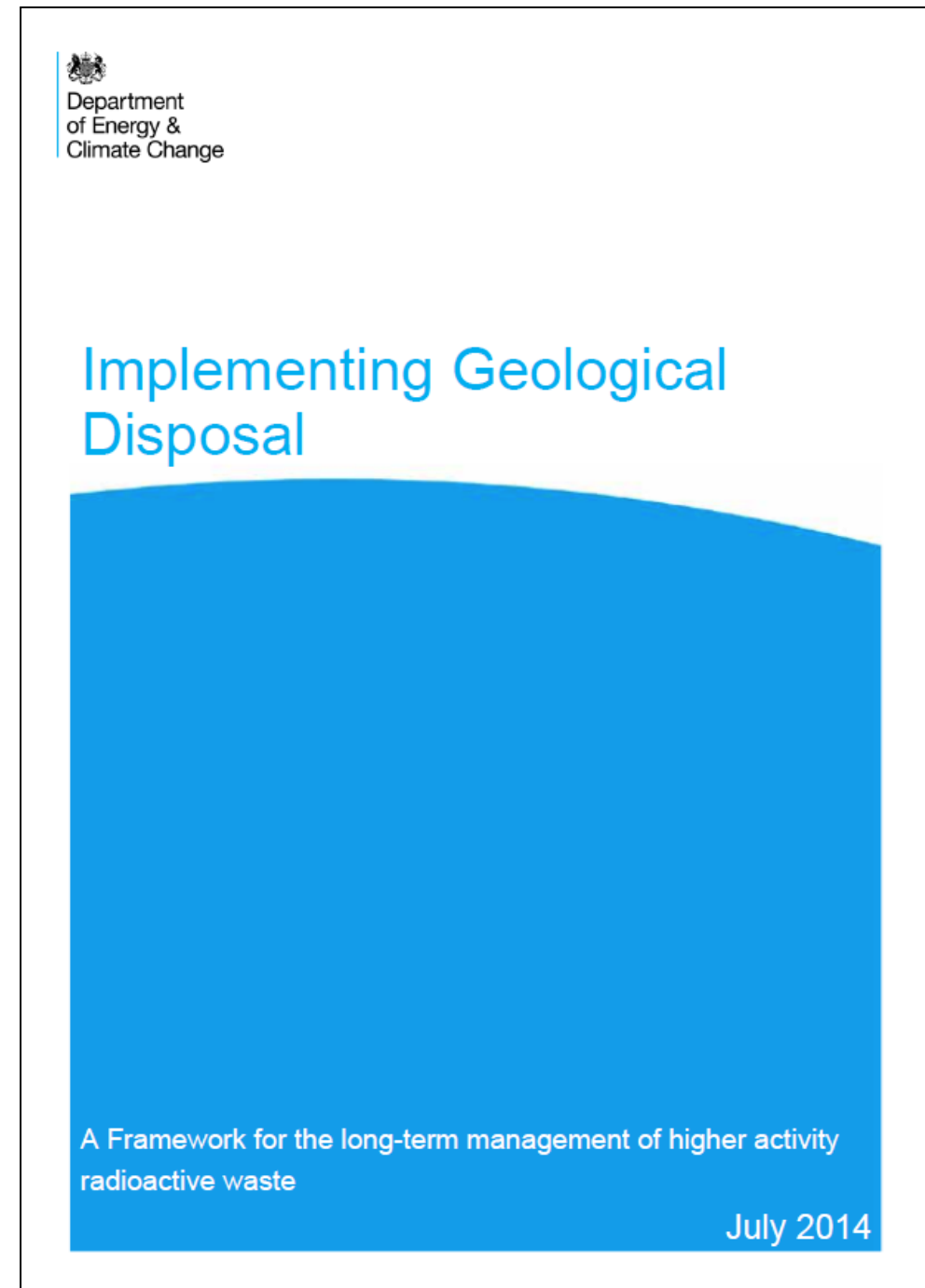
September 2013

URN 13D/250

2014 White Paper

Made commitments on community funding levels and placing decisions directly in the hands of communities. Set out initial actions to be completed before launching new siting process:

- designation of a GDF as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) with a National Policy Statement
- National geological screening exercise
- developing approach to working with communities



Geological disposal: making it happen



Making it safe: Office for Nuclear Regulation and environment agencies - independent bodies that will only authorise construction and operation of any facility if the developer can demonstrate that it will be safe, secure and the environment will be protected.



Engagement: Communities can talk to Government and the developer at any time, although formal discussions will only begin in 2016. There will be open dialogue throughout the entire process and a test of public support will be carried out before construction of a geological disposal facility can begin.

Siting process 2018.....

- being developed as a more continuous process with explicit commitment to ongoing support for communities
- Communities have right of withdrawal...
- ...but can find a way through that works for them with no need to repeatedly make formal commitments at arbitrary stages pre-determined by Government
- more flexible, less prescriptive approach to allow issues and concerns to be discussed and addressed as they arise
- more emphasis on partnership working between the waste management body and the community and on integrating the social and technical aspects of implementing geological disposal
- final decisions rest with the community through a direct test of public support rather than being in the hands of a relatively small number of politicians with other priorities

Siting process 2018....

- to date, the focus has been on public / community involvement in the siting process....
-but where should the boundary of public / community involvement be in technical aspects of implementation?
- how do we capture public / community concerns?
- how do we translate these into technical solutions?
- how should decisions be made and what does good governance look like?

Further Information

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/radioactive-waste-management>

