

RWM sets out approach to evaluating sites for a GDF

Safety, opportunities for communities, and protection of the environment will be key considerations as part of the evaluation of sites to ensure they are suitable for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) today published its approach to GDF site evaluation in [England](#) and [Wales](#), following a comprehensive and open national consultation.

A GDF will only be built where there is both a willing community and a suitable site. 'Siting factors', which are guided by government policy and legislation, will inform the conversations RWM will be having with communities and evaluations of site suitability.

There are six siting factors, which cover:

- Safety and security – safety and security must be assured and endorsed by independent regulators. A GDF will not be built unless we, and they, are satisfied it is safe.
- Community – communities are at the heart of the process to site a GDF, and RWM will consider social and economic opportunities, community wellbeing, and how a GDF can align with the host community's vision.
- Environment – a GDF is a major environmental protection endeavour. Construction of a GDF will need to meet independent regulatory requirements.
- Engineering feasibility – RWM will need to ensure there is scope for sustainable design and the ability to construct and operate a GDF in a location.
- Transport – the safe and secure transport of waste, people and other materials.
- Value for money – RWM has a duty to ensure that value for money is delivered.

RWM Chief Executive Karen Wheeler said:

“A GDF is the best long-term solution for managing the UK's legacy of higher activity radioactive waste safely.”

“A facility will only be built where there is a suitable site and a willing community, so it is important that communities and their representatives understand how we will evaluate suitability.”

“The site evaluation documents we published today, set out the ‘siting factors’ which we will use to assess suitability as we work with communities interested in exploring the benefits and implications of hosting a GDF.”

[Remit letter for Police Remuneration Review Body 2020 Northern Ireland pay round](#)

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[Life on marsh in A585 bypass exhibition](#)

The significant remains, some dating all the way back to the Stone Age, are to feature in two Highways England public information events being staged to update local residents and drivers on progress with the £100 million A585 Windy Harbour to Skippool bypass and junction improvement project near Poulton-le-Fylde.

Tools including (on the left) worked flint and chert blades – stone tools of either Mesolithic hunter-gatherers (pre 3800 BC) or Neolithic first farmers (after about 3800 BC). The two grey pieces on the right are fragments of a Neolithic polished stone axe – made from Lake District stone and an example of axes exchanged over great distances in Britain.

The new road and associated improvements will tackle existing congestion, help secure and improve opportunities for housing and jobs in this part of Lancashire and contribute to improved connections to the whole of the motorway network.

Oxford Archaeology was conducting pre-construction ground investigations for the project last year when it unearthed the perfectly-preserved prehistoric vegetation as well as the stone tools.

Lead archaeologist Fraser Brown said the finds were at least regionally significant if not nationally with no precedent for such finds in the Fylde area which was under melting glacial ice thousands of years ago.

Mr Brown said:

We have found extensive deposits of peat and marine clays which have helped preserve ancient plant remains and which yield information on the local vegetation, water, climate, and human activity.

We've also found pottery, stone tools and charred remains providing direct evidence for Mesolithic hunter-gatherers foraging, and possibly camping, at the water's edge and later on, Neolithic and Bronze Age farmers living on the fringes of a salt marsh.

The archaeological finds unearthed from peat and clay left from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronzes ages – between almost 14,000 and 5,000 years ago – will feature prominently at the information events. They include ancient pollen, wood, leaves, hazelnuts and charred seeds and fruits giving clues to the natural history of the area and how people lived and developed from hunter gatherers living on the coast to early farmers eking a living from salt marshes.

Locally very rare pottery and tool fragments and vegetation sieved from the site including (on the left) sherds from a Carinated Bowl, the first type of pottery to be used in UK, when farming arrived c3800 BC. On the right, from the same deposit, are some twigs and hazelnuts, charring suggesting people may have been processing and eating the nuts. There is also a tiny triangular chip – possibly part of a hunter's arrowhead.

Windy Harbour, at the eastern end of the planned bypass, is near the south bank of the River Wyre but is more than six miles from the sea. However, it was thought to be completely under water and then part of a coastal salt marsh thousands of years ago when it was fished by hunter gatherers and later settled by early Bronze Age farmers.

The Government's planning inspectorate is expected to announce on Thursday 9 April whether the new three-mile dual carriageway – bypassing Little Singleton and book-ended by improved junctions at Windy Harbour and Skippool

– can go ahead.

Highways England will know if the new bypass can be built on 9 April

The two public information events are on Friday 6 March (12.30pm to 8pm) at Wyre Civic Centre, Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire and on Saturday 7 March (10am to 6pm) at Singleton Village Hall, Station Road, Singleton, FY6 8LL. As well as displaying some of the archaeology finds they will give people an idea of likely traffic management and milestones for the project.

More information is available on the project's [dedicated webpage](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Payment software deal does not raise competition concerns](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating Bottomline Technology's completed purchase of the Experian Payments Gateway (EPG) business from Experian Limited.

Bottomline and EPG provide payments software used by businesses to submit direct debits, make payroll payments and pay suppliers. This software allows customers of Bottomline and EPG to make payments via the Bacs and Faster Payments Direct Corporate Access systems.

After completing its initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA was concerned that the merger may reduce competition and the merged company may increase prices, reduce product availability, or reduce its investment in innovation.

However, following further in-depth analysis carried out as part of a Phase 2 investigation led by an independent group of panel members, the CMA has now provisionally found that the merger is not likely to raise competition concerns. This is largely because the CMA has found that EPG was no longer a strong force in the market and that, following the deal, there remain enough alternative providers competing with Bottomline for customers.

The CMA also looked in more detail at the possibility that, under alternative ownership, EPG would have become a more active competitor than it was before the merger but provisionally determined that this was not the case.

The CMA now seeks views on these findings by 10 March 2020 and will assess all evidence provided before making a final decision.

The statutory deadline for the CMA's final report is 5 April 2020.

For more information, visit the [Bottomline Technologies \(de\), Inc / Experian Limited merger inquiry case page](#).

[Apply to the Attorney General's Civil Panel Counsel: London A, B and C panels](#)

The Attorney General is seeking to appoint new members to three of her panels of junior counsel, the London A, B and C panels, to undertake civil work for government departments.

Membership of the London panels is open to both barristers and solicitors with the appropriate qualifications.

The London A, B and C panels

London A Panel

Members of this panel deal with the most complex government cases in all kinds of courts and tribunals including the Supreme Court. They will often appear against QCs. Those previously appointed to the A panel have generally had in excess of 10 years advocacy experience in actual practice (from the end of their second six months' pupillage for barristers, or the date of commencement of advocacy for solicitors).

London B Panel

Members of this panel deal with substantial cases but generally not ones as complex as those handled by the A panel. They will generally be instructed where knowledge and experience of a particular field is required. Those previously appointed to the B panel have generally had between 5 and 10 years advocacy experience in actual practice (from the end of their second six months' pupillage for barristers, or the date of commencement of advocacy for solicitors).

London C Panel

Members of this panel will be expected to have at least two years' experience in actual practice (from the end of their second six months' pupillage for barristers, or the date of commencement of advocacy for solicitors). Those appointed to the C panel will often (but not exclusively) provide the A and B panel members of the future and so should have the potential to join the A panel.

In choosing which of the panels to apply to, candidates will want to make a careful decision based on which best suits their level of expertise and experience.

Appointments will be for five years.

Experience and specialisms

As is the case every year, the Attorney General is looking for applicants with experience in general public and administrative law; employment; or personal injury. For the 2020 exercise, the Attorney is also looking to deepen the capacity of the panels by appointing specialists in the following areas:

- Admiralty – Maritime/Shipping
- Charity/Trust
- Clinical negligence
- Competition and State Aid
- Construction
- Contract / Commercial Law
- Corporate
- Costs (including routine &/or mass group litigation experience)
- Defamation
- Directors' Disqualification
- Education, including teacher regulation proceedings
- Energy/Utilities/Environmental
- EU Law
- Family and Public Children's Law
- General Tax Work – Direct and Indirect, Personal and Business
- Human Rights
- Industrial Diseases
- Industrial Relations
- Inquests
- Insolvency
- Intellectual Property
- Land and Planning/Environmental
- Mental Health/Mental Health Capacity Act 2005
- Pensions
- Planning (including Environmental Impact expertise)
- Procurement
- Property (including Landlord and Tenant)
- Rating and Valuation

- Social Security, including free movement, social justice and statutory payments
- State Aid
- VAT and Duties

The Attorney General is also looking to appoint applicants capable of advising departments on the interface of public and commercial law issues, and also where criminal or regulatory issues arise in public law cases.

Public International Law and Trade specialists are also eligible to apply for appointment to the Public International Law (PIL) panel, and there is no bar to being a member of both panels. The next PIL ABC Panel competitions will also open on Tuesday 18 February 2020 and close at noon on Thursday 2 April 2020. For details on how to apply to the PIL Panel competitions please see [their dedicated page](#).

Application

To obtain details about the application process, we recommend reading our [information for candidates](#) (ODT, 46.5KB) and [frequently asked questions](#) (ODT, 45.7KB).

To make an application, please email panelcounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk and register an interest in applying. Please note that registering an interest does not commit you to making an application if you later decide not to do so.

Once you have registered, you will be provided with a link to access our online portal to obtain the full application pack.

Completed applications must be submitted by noon on Thursday 2 April 2020.

Further information and mentoring

If you have any queries, please feel free to raise them in the first instance with the Government Legal Department Panel Counsel Secretariat via email panelcounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk or on 020 7210 1506.

We wish to encourage applications from as wide a range as possible of those eligible to apply. We will therefore endeavour to put advocates who are considering applying, and who want to discuss the application process, in touch with an established panel member. The mentor will discuss, either by telephone or in a meeting, the application process, the eligibility criteria, and the presentation of relevant information on the application form.

If you are considering applying and want a mentor please contact the Panel Counsel Secretariat via email:

panelcounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk on or before Friday 13 March 2020.