

E-bulletin 6 – October 2010

Our Aim is *"to make recommendations to Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council on whether they should participate or not in the Geological Disposal Facility siting process, without commitment to eventually host a facility".*

This latest update from the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership includes details about the report by the British Geological Survey (BGS) on the geology of West Cumbria, information about the second stage of the Partnership's public and stakeholder engagement programme and three frequently asked questions.

British Geological Survey 'desk top' study of West Cumbria

- The British Geological Survey (BGS), the UK geological experts, was commissioned by the Government to carry out a study of the geology of West Cumbria. The Government published the results of this basic geological study (http://mrws.decc.gov.uk/en/mrws/cms/Disposal/Site_selection/Initial_screen/west_cumbria/west_cumbria.aspx) at the Partnership meeting at the Greenhill Hotel in Wigton on Thursday 28th October.
- The BGS study shows how much of Copeland and Allerdale, and up to five kilometres offshore, would definitely be unsuitable for a geological disposal facility.
- The study rules out areas based on criteria set out by an independent scientific panel. These criteria are largely based around two key issues - the need to exclude areas in order to reduce the risk of intrusion into a facility by future generations seeking to extract resources such as coal and iron ore deposits, and the need to protect the quality of exploitable groundwater.
- The study does not mean that all the rest of West Cumbria would be suitable for a repository. The surface facilities could also be located in areas that are geologically unsuitable for the underground facilities.
- More rigorous assessment of a wide range of geological and other criteria will only be undertaken if West Cumbria then makes a 'decision to participate' further in the Government process.
- The Partnership commissioned two independent peer reviews on behalf of the community, to ensure this initial geological work was rigorous and accurate. They were Dr Jeremy Dearlove from FWS Consultants Ltd and Professor Agust Gudmundsson from the Department of Earth Sciences at Royal Holloway University of London.

For further detail, please see the Q&A section below.

Public and stakeholder engagement – second stage (PSE2)

- One of the key roles of the Partnership is to ensure that local people have the information they need to come to their own views on whether or not West Cumbria should fully participate in the Government search for a site for a geological disposal facility. The Partnership will be launching the second stage (www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/page/94/Introduction.htm) of its comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement (PSE) programme over the next few weeks.
- A key priority in PSE2 will be to significantly raise awareness of the issues involved in the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) process. The Partnership is planning a high level of activity in order to raise awareness to the sort of levels that will enable the public to come to a reasonably informed view about this process.
- PSE2 is an opportunity to get public and stakeholder input to inform the Partnership's judgements on key topics, as well as gather evidence to support the work of the Partnership.
- The PSE2 process will help the Partnership to gain a clearer understanding of the issues that stakeholders and the public have and what information they feel they need. There are a number of key issues on which the Partnership will be providing information and seeking input at this stage:
 - What the Partnership did as a result of public views in PSE1.
 - The process, including voluntarism, timescales, and how a site selection process would work.
 - How a geological disposal facility (GDF) might look above and below ground, its size and what could be in it.
 - The role of the Partnership, public involvement and how a decision will be made.
 - Potential impacts including safety, security and the image of the area.
 - Potential benefits including investment that would naturally come with a facility, and what additional community benefits the Government might provide in practice.
 - The results of the study by the British Geological Survey.
- There will be a further round of public and stakeholder engagement around the middle of next year before there is any decision about whether or not West Cumbria should participate in the Government siting process.

How to get involved

- In the next few months there will be a number of opportunities to find out more about this important issue, ask questions and have your say.
- A newsletter will be sent to all households in West Cumbria from 11th November and will also be available in a number of other places such as local libraries. There will also be information in the media and other publications.
- A series of Community Drop-In Events will include displays with information, and you will be able to talk to members of the Partnership, as well as representatives from the Government, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the British

Geological Survey. There will be short presentations from the specialists and small discussion groups.

- The dates of the Drop-In Events are as follows:

Friday 19 th November	Millom - Network Centre	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Saturday 20 th November	Barrow - The Forum	Drop in 10am - 4pm
Monday 22 nd November	Carlisle - Old Town Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Tuesday 23 rd November	Whitehaven - Civic Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Wednesday 24 th November	Keswick - Crosthwaite Church Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Thursday 25 th November	Wigton - Market Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Friday 26 th November	Calderbridge - Village Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Monday 29 th November	Penrith - Methodist Church Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Tuesday 30 th November	Kendal - Town Hall	Drop in 12 - 8pm
Friday 3 rd December	Workington - St Michael's Church	Drop in 12 - 8pm

- The Partnership is also producing a pack of materials to enable members of the public to find out more and feed their views into the process. This 'discussion pack' includes a DVD and a booklet with some background information and questions. The pack is designed to help small groups of up to 10 to have a discussion for around two hours, and then give their views on some of the key issues such as potential impacts, community benefits and community involvement in decision making.

The packs will be available from early November. You can request any number of packs to be sent to you by emailing your name and address to helenf@3kq.co.uk or phoning 0800 048 8912 extension 1.

- The Partnership also has a new website – www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk. The site includes: background information on the work of the Partnership and the key issues; FAQs; details about how you can get involved; and a document library. There's also a quiz to win a pocket camcorder. All the answers can be found in the overview section of the website so you get a chance to find out more about what's happening in this process and you could also win a prize.

Partnership meetings

- At the Partnership meeting on 28th October the Department of Energy and Climate Change published the report by the British Geological Survey. The Partnership also heard details about the next stage of the Public and Stakeholder Engagement programme.

A report of the meeting (www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/documents.asp) will be available on the website shortly.

- The Partnership meets every six weeks. Members of the public are welcome to attend as observers and are also given an opportunity to ask questions. We would be grateful if anyone who is planning to attend could contact sharon.walker@copeland.gov.uk to let her know so that we can ensure that enough seating is made available. The next scheduled meeting is:

10th December 2010

The Copeland Centre, Whitehaven. 9.30am – 4pm, 9am arrivals.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What is the geological screening study?

- A. This study was commissioned by the Government and carried out by the British Geological Survey – the UK’s geological experts. It only uses currently available information. It does not involve new field investigation and there has been no consideration of non-geological factors.

It has ruled out areas based on criteria set out by an independent scientific panel. These criteria are largely based around two key issues - the need to exclude areas in order to reduce the risk of intrusion into a facility by future generations seeking to extract resources, and the need to protect the quality of exploitable groundwater.

The Government say it *does not* show which areas could definitely host a facility, but rules out areas that absolutely could not host the underground workings of a geological disposal facility for obvious geological reasons.

This is an early stage in the process and detailed assessments, applying more localised geological and other criteria will only be made **IF** this area decides to take part in the Government search for somewhere to put a repository.

Q. What area was screened?

- A. The British Geological Survey looked at was the whole of Allerdale and Copeland as well as the area up to 5 km offshore.

Q. What does it mean if an area is screened out?

- A. If an area is screened out they will be excluded from any further consideration for an underground facility. However, it does not affect the location of the surface facilities as these could be a number of kilometres from an underground facility and could therefore be located in an area that is found to be unsuitable for the repository.

Q. What does it mean if an area is not screened out?

- A. The Government say that this work does not show where a facility would eventually be located. It is simply intended to avoid unnecessary work in areas which are clearly unsuitable on geological grounds.

Members of the Partnership are clear that a repository could only be built somewhere that is suitable, both geologically and in terms of the wider environmental and social impacts it would have. It would take much more detailed investigations, over a number of years, to establish which areas were suitable.

This is an early stage in the process and it is right that these detailed assessments, applying more localised geological and other criteria will only be made **IF** this area decides to take part in the Government search for somewhere to put a repository.

A key role of the Partnership is to represent the views of people living in or near West Cumbria in these discussions with the Government. If you want to [get involved](#) then visit the Partnership website for details or call us on 0800 048 8912.

Thank you.

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