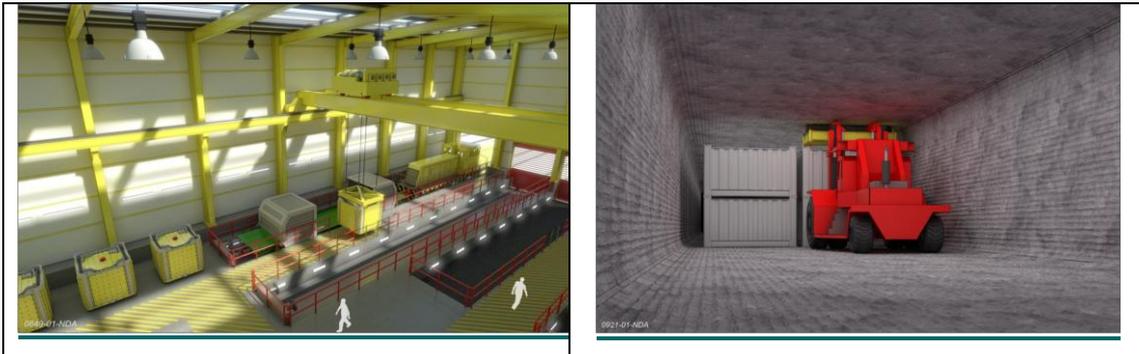


Our Aim is "to make recommendations to Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council on whether they should participate or not in the Geological Disposal Facility siting process, without commitment to eventually host a facility".

E-bulletin No.13 – September 2011



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Introduction

Welcome to the latest e-bulletin from the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership.

At our last two meetings we have discussed preliminary assessments of the criteria set out in our Work Programme. Since then we have been working on a draft report setting out our initial conclusions and this will be discussed at our next meeting on 20th September 2011.

People will have the chance to comment on this over the autumn and winter before our final report is sent to Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council in the first half of 2012.

The councils will then have to decide whether the Allerdale and Copeland areas should take part in the search for somewhere to put a repository for higher activity radioactive waste, without making any commitment to have it here.

This e-bulletin can be read in conjunction with [document 206 \(e-bulletin 12\)](#) which also looked at the preliminary assessments.

1. Next Partnership meeting (September 2011)

The meeting on 20th September 2011 will be one of the most important since the Partnership was established, because it will consider the draft report with initial conclusions on the criteria it set out at the start of this process.

Shortly after the draft report has been agreed the Partnership will launch a major consultation to give people the chance to find out more about the issues, ask questions and give their views.



The Partnership meeting will be from 0930 to 1600 on 20th September 2011 at The Wave in Maryport.

Members of the public are welcome to attend [Partnership meetings](#) as observers and are also given an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

We would be grateful if anyone who is planning to attend could contact catherine.little@copeland.gov.uk to let her know so that we can ensure that enough seating is made available.

2. Last Partnership meeting (July 2011)

The Partnership's last meeting, at Market Hall, Wigton on 29th July 2011, was the second Assessment Meeting on its Work Programme.



The main objective of the meeting was to form an initial view regarding the degree to which three of the criteria in the Work Programme are being met (Safety, Security, Environment and Planning; Community Benefits and Impacts; and the Siting Process).

You can read more about each of these in the sections below.

Japanese TV crew filming at the Partnership meeting in July

A report of the latest Partnership meeting is available in the [documents section of the website](#).

3. Safety, Security, Environment and Planning

Assessment discussions on Criterion 1 (Safety, Security, Environment and Planning) focused on whether a repository could be safe, secure and environmentally sound.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) is responsible for developing the plans for a repository and demonstrating that it would be safe.

The Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation would also be responsible for ensuring that the design and operation of any facility meets their standards for environmental protection, safety, security, waste management and radioactive waste transportation.



The NDA has produced general proposals that look at how a repository could be constructed and operated safely. However, they could only do specific work on designing a repository at a later stage, as the design will be affected by the geology of the site that is considered.

There were a number of comments and questions during the meeting on issues such as planning and the NDA's research and development programme.

On the basis of the information available at this stage the Partnership agreed a preliminary conclusion that the NDA and the regulators have suitable capability and processes in place to protect local residents, the workforce and the environment.

You can read the full [Preliminary Assessment Report on Safety, Security, Environment and Planning here](#), and find out more about the discussion on this topic in the full meeting report.

4. Community Benefits and Impacts

The assessment of Criterion 3 (Community Benefits and Impacts) focused on whether the Partnership is confident that an appropriate community benefits package could be developed, whilst ensuring that appropriate possibilities exist to manage any environmental, social and economic impacts.



A Swiss film crew at the July meeting

The question of whether a repository would fit with the overall direction of the relevant communities and contribute to the economic sustainability of the area was also discussed.

The Partnership has developed [a set of Principles](#) that would form the basis of any future

negotiations on a community benefits package.

There was some discussion about the initial response from the Government to these Principles. The feeling was that Government had not gone far enough in agreeing the principles explicitly: it was decided that this criterion needs to be revisited at the next Partnership meeting following further dialogue between DECC and the Partnership. We accept that agreements about additional community benefits would need to be openly scrutinised especially given the difficulties that have been encountered reaching this stage.

The Partnership also discussed work that is being led by Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Cumbria Tourism on behalf of the Partnership on protecting the brand of the area and the possible need for mitigation of any impacts during a possible siting process.

The Partnership has produced a Schedule of Impacts that it believes would need to be addressed if a repository is built. The NDA says these issues would be considered during assessments that would take place if there is a decision to take part in the siting process.

The discussion on this criterion also included questions about the risk of over-reliance on the nuclear industry, the impacts that a repository might have on job creation and diversification and the need to consider the wider community interest for the National Park.

Following questions the NDA agreed to provide a summary of these assessment processes. Subject to this the Partnership provisionally agreed a preliminary judgement that it could be satisfied at this stage that an acceptable process can be put in place to assess any negative impacts and either sufficiently reduce their effect or compensate for them.

A member of the public argued that they believed too many issues were being shelved until a site is identified whereas they felt that a repository would have a massive impact wherever it was sited, particularly in relation to tourism.

You can read the full [Preliminary Assessment Report on Community Benefits and Impacts here](#), and find out more about the discussion on this topic in the full meeting report.

5. Siting Process

Criterion 5 considers whether the siting process, if there is a decision to participate, is sufficiently robust and flexible to meet the needs of people in the area.



Following the June Partnership meeting a group consisting of the three principal authorities (Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council), as well as the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC), was set up to work on and agree a set of guidelines on what the organisational arrangements of a Community Siting

Partnership would look like.

The group had not reached an agreement by the time of the July Partnership meeting and the decision was therefore made to revisit this criterion at the next Partnership meeting following further discussions.

A member of the public said there was a need to put specific steps in place to deal with a lack of trust in local government. A member of the Partnership suggested that the discussions on the siting process might address some of the concerns that were raised.

6. Partnership exhibition stands

In the lead up to the third round of Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE3) in the autumn, the Partnership has been taking exhibition stands to a number of town centres and events.



The stand aims to give people the opportunity to find out more about this process and the issues involved.

The Partnership manned stands at the Cumberland Show, Cockermouth Show, Gosforth Show, and the Keswick Show in July and August.

Several thousand people visited the stands over the spring and summer period, with many taking part in an informative quiz and commenting on the process.

Keep an eye on the Partnership [events](#) page for further details.

Planning for PSE3 continues to develop with the addition of a 'Webinar' and information for schools to encourage involvement by young people.

Two extra community events, one in Cockermouth and one in Egremont, have also been added to the proposed schedule. This takes the total of events across Cumbria to 12, four each in Allerdale and Copeland and one in each of the other districts of Cumbria. Details will be available soon.

PSE3 will include a wide range of activities to help inform people about what is happening and the issues involved, as well as providing opportunities to tell the Partnership what they think.

7. Getting involved

A key role of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership is to represent the views of people living in or near West Cumbria in these discussions with the Government.

You can find more information on our [website](http://www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/) - <http://www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/>

The most important time to get involved and give us your views will be during the consultation but you can contact us by using e-mail contact@westcumbriamrws.org.uk, freephone (0800 048 8912) or freepost (Freepost RSKT-LTXU-HAYC, West Cumbria MRWS Partnership, Copeland Borough Council, The Copeland Centre, Catherine Street, Whitehaven CA28 7SJ).



The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership also has a Facebook Page, a LinkedIn group and a Twitter profile. You can find these at:

<http://on.fb.me/fbZzir>,
www.linkedin.com/groups/West-Cumbria-Managing-Radioactive-Waste-3958824?home=&qid=3958824&trk=anet_ug_hm or by following [@westcumbriamrws](https://twitter.com/westcumbriamrws) on Twitter.

8. Frequently Asked Questions

- In each of these e-bulletins we include two 'Frequently Asked Questions'. You can find more of these [Q&As on our website](http://www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/page/80/QA-s.htm) - <http://www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/page/80/QA-s.htm>

Q. How will the Partnership take account of the views of the public and other stakeholders?

A. We will be carrying out a major consultation later in 2011 so that we can understand and take account of the views of the public and organisations with an interest in this issue.

We will look at whether a range of people think the initial conclusions set out in our draft report are reasonable and we will amend our final report as appropriate before sending it to Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council.

As this decision would particularly affect people in Allerdale and Copeland, there will be an opinion poll to see whether people in these areas are in favour or against taking part in the siting process, without a commitment to have the facility.

The opinion poll will be based on a large, statistically representative sample of the population.

As well as using a reputable polling company to do the survey it will also be reviewed by two external experts. Therefore we can have a significant amount of confidence that the results will represent the views of people in the area.

People outside West Cumbria can also have their say via the public consultation.

Q. Why not hold a referendum?

The Partnership has decided that the best way to gauge public opinion in West Cumbria at this stage in the process is to commission an opinion poll based on a large, statistically representative sample of the population.

Some people think there should be a referendum but in the limited number of countries where referendums have been held as part of a volunteer process this has only been done at a later stage, when there is much more information.

Many of the people who suggested holding a referendum, when we discussed this during our last round of public engagement, also thought it would be more appropriate at a later stage, if a site was identified and there was therefore more detailed information about the implications.

An opinion poll also avoids some of the problems that some people feel are features of referendums, such as low or unrepresentative turnout rate, manipulation of views by organised interests, over-simplification of the issues and the risk of other issues influencing people's responses.

However, the potential use of referendums and other methods of gauging public opinion in later stages of the siting process would be possible if there is a decision to take part in the search for a site.

Please pass this e-bulletin on. Thank you.

If you wish to unsubscribe to this e-bulletin and other updates please [email us](#).