

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.15 – December 2011

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Introduction – public consultation starts

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

On November 21st we launched our public consultation to consider whether West Cumbria should take part in the search for a site for a repository for the UK's higher activity radioactive waste, without any commitment to have it. This follows the agreement of our consultation document at our last meeting on 3rd November 2011.

This consultation period, which will run until 23rd March next year, will allow people to find out more about the issues, ask questions and give their views before a 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 make a formal decision about whether the areas covered by Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils should take part in the Government's search for somewhere to put a repository for higher activity radioactive waste, without making any commitment to have it here.

1. How to find out more



There are a number of ways that people can find out more information and let us know their views.

We have produced a consultation document that details the issues we have been looking at over the last two years and gives our initial opinions on them. We would like people to

read this document and respond with their views on the issues.

The consultation document comes with a DVD and an overview leaflet which provide some background information and an overview of our initial opinions. However, you will find much more detail in the full consultation document. All of these materials can be downloaded from our [website](#) where it will also tell you about how you can respond.

You can also ask for a copy of the full consultation pack by:

1. Calling our Freephone number 0800 048 8912
2. Emailing contact@westcumbriamrws.org.uk
3. Writing to us at:

**Freepost RSKT-LTXU-HAYC
West Cumbria MRWS Partnership
Copeland Borough Council
The Copeland Centre
Catherine Street
Whitehaven
CA28 7SJ**

We will be posting the eight-page overview leaflet to all households in West Cumbria and copies will also be made available in places like libraries, council offices and leisure centres across Cumbria.

There is more information about the consultation on our website at www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk and you can also [view the DVD online](#).

We will be putting articles in local papers across Cumbria and other publications. To further raise awareness of the fact that the consultation is taking place and encourage people to take part we will be advertising on billboards, buses and telephone boxes in West Cumbria.

We will also be organising a webinar, an event that will be shown live on the internet, so people who are unable to attend a community event can watch an event and ask questions.

You can find a list of other relevant websites in the [Useful links](#) section of our website, including a selection of organisations with alternative views about geological disposal and the MRWS process. A number of these organisations will also be providing their own views on the issues that would be involved in taking part in the search for somewhere to put a repository.

Further details about all the activity during the consultation will be available on our website. We also have 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 on Twitter.

2. Community Events

We are organising a number of community drop-in events across Cumbria in the New Year where you can see our exhibition, speak to Partnership members and technical experts about the issues, and ask questions. You will also be able to pick up a copy of the consultation pack and our DVD at these events.



The community events are taking place on the following dates and locations:

Wednesday 18 January	Millom	Network Centre
Thursday 19 January	Whitehaven	Civic Hall
Friday 20 January	Gosforth	Village Hall
Monday 23 January	Kendal	Town Hall
Tuesday 24 January	Workington	Carnegie Arts Centre
Wednesday 25 January	Keswick	St Herbert's Centre
Wednesday 1 February	Penrith	Methodist Church
Thursday 2 February	Carlisle	The Courts (County Offices)
Tuesday 7 February	Barrow	Dock Museum
Wednesday 8 February	Wigton	Market Hall
Thursday 9 February	Egremont	Market hall
Friday 10 February	Cockermouth	Kirkgate Centre

All the events will run from 1pm – 7pm, with discussion sessions at 2pm, 4pm and 6pm.

For more information please see the [Community events](#) page on our website.

3. Youth engagement

As the search for a suitable location for a repository, and the building process of any potential repository, is potentially a very long one that may run over several decades, we feel it is important to make sure the younger generations are made aware of the issues relating to this process.

All secondary schools in Cumbria will be sent materials which will allow them to take part in activities and discuss four of the key issues involved with the process – geology, safety, impacts and benefits. The schools will be able to feed back views from these sessions to the public consultation.



The youth support organisation Connexions is planning around 30 sessions with young people in West Cumbria and they are available to help run additional sessions with schools or youth groups if requested, on behalf of the Partnership.

If you are interested in running a session with young people please get in touch.

4. Listening to your views

The Government says a repository will only be put somewhere where the geology is suitable and there is a community that has volunteered to have it.

We will look at whether a range of people in Cumbria think our initial opinions are reasonable, and amend our final report before sending it to the three Councils in 2012.

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

If there is a decision to take part in the search for somewhere to put a repository, the Councils would have the right to withdraw from the process up until the point where any construction starts. The Councils would need to show that there is credible support for a decision to accept a repository.

5. Brand protection work commissioned

Along with Cumbria Tourism and the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, we have commissioned a study to discover how the Lake District and Cumbria are perceived as a brand and whether this image may be affected by a potential underground disposal facility for higher activity waste in the county.

The two agencies that have been appointed to conduct the work will also prepare a marketing strategy to guide us if a decision is made for the area to participate in the Government's search for a repository site.

The research is funded by the Department for Energy and Climate Change as part of the budget given to the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership to enable the local community to find out as much as we can about the implications of participating in this process.

The findings of the research are due to be reported early next year.

6. Future Partnership meetings



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 email catherine.little@copeland.gov.uk or call 0800 048 8912 so that we can ensure that enough seating is made available.

The next scheduled meetings are:

- 31st January 2012, Braithwaite Village Hall, near Keswick
- 21st February 2012, The Oval Centre, Salterbeck

7. 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.

Q. What is the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership?

A. The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership includes a wide range of community organisations as well as all the councils in Cumbria. It was set up to look at the issues that are relevant to whether West Cumbria should take part in the search for a site for a repository for higher activity radioactive waste and to ensure local people are involved.

The Partnership itself is not taking any decisions. The decision-making bodies are Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council.

The Partnership has access to funding from the Government to enable these community representatives to meet, commission independent research, and organise public events on behalf of the wider community in West Cumbria.

Q. How is this different to the Nirex process in the 1990s?

A. This process is very different to the Nirex experience in the 1990s.

The Government says a repository will only be put somewhere where the geology is suitable and there is a community that has volunteered to have it. At this point we are looking at whether the areas covered by Allerdale and/or Copeland Borough Councils should take part in the search for a site.

However, even if we take part in this process, the Councils would be able to withdraw from the process until a late point when underground operations and construction are due to begin. A new community partnership would be set up to examine the issues and involve local people.

Those Councils that decided to take part in the search for a site would make the formal decisions about things like which areas to put forward for more detailed assessments and investigations, and ultimately which sites, if any, should be put forward for a repository, based on advice from the new partnership.

We, the current Partnership, are keen to ensure that the whole process is open and transparent. Our meetings are held in public and we publish minutes and other relevant documents on our website.

The discussions, and initial geological screening, that are taking place at this point are treating all of West Cumbria equally to begin with, rather than focusing around Sellafield, as Nirex did in the 1990s.

Potential areas have only started to be narrowed down following initial screening by the British Geological Survey (BGS) which has looked at the whole of Allerdale, Copeland and the area up to five kilometres off shore. If a decision to enter the siting process is subsequently taken, further work will identify potential sites in the areas that have not been screened out.

Please pass this e-bulletin on. Thank you.

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