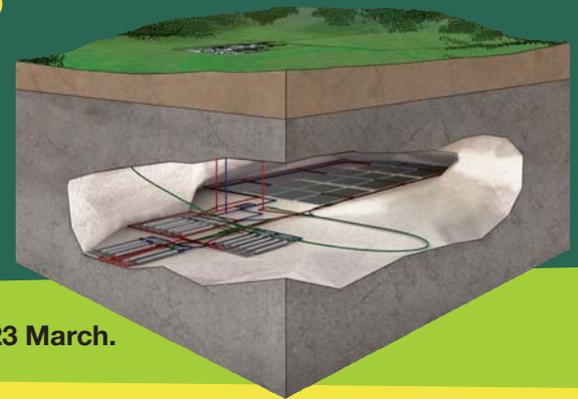
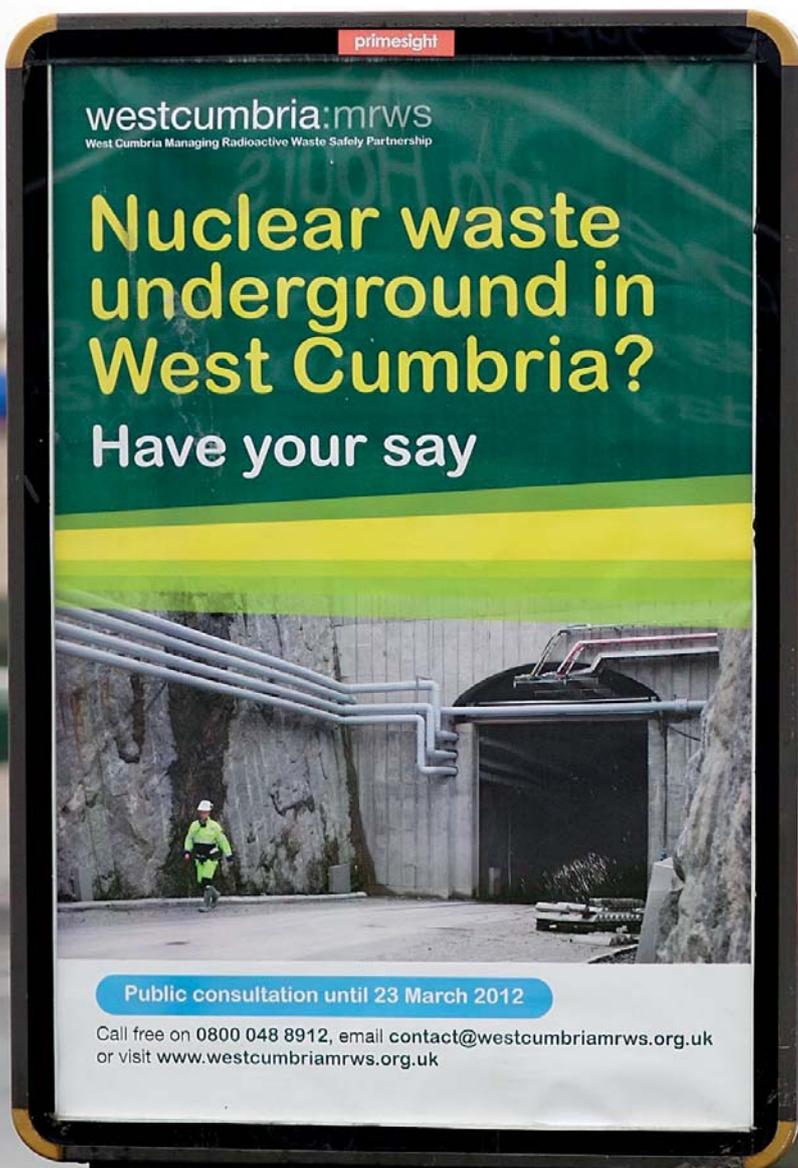


A nuclear waste repository in West Cumbria?

Have your say on whether West Cumbria should take part in the search for somewhere to put an underground repository for higher activity radioactive waste.



An important public consultation is taking place which finishes on 23 March.



The West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership, which consists of a wide range of local organisations, has spent nearly three years looking into what participating in the Government's search could mean for West Cumbria, and the rest of the county.

We have published our initial opinions on a range of issues in a consultation document.

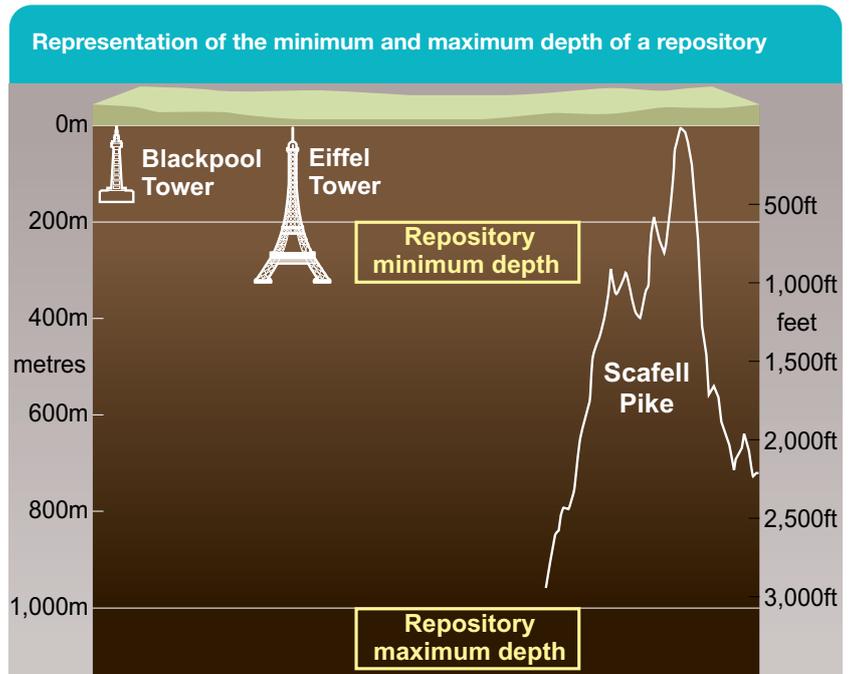
We hope people will take some time to read the consultation document and consider what a repository might mean for them, their family and the wider area.

We will look at all the responses we get back and then report to Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council. These Councils will make the formal decision on whether to go any further in this process.

If that happens, the search for a site would involve detailed studies and investigations lasting more than a decade, looking at factors like geology. The Councils would have the right to withdraw up until the point where building work could begin.

A few key facts

- Higher activity waste is currently stored above ground, the majority of it at Sellafield.
- Geological disposal of this waste is based on the idea that radiation can be contained for extremely long periods by a combination of engineered underground structures and the surrounding rocks.
- A repository would be located between 200 and 1000 metres underground. It could be between **6 km²** and **25 km²** (2.5 and 9.5 square miles) in size, depending on the type of rock, and how much and what kind of waste would be placed into it.



Summary of our initial opinions

We have reached initial opinions on a number of issues, which are set out in full in the consultation document.

For example, on safety we say that on the basis of the information available now we believe the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, which is responsible for developing a repository, and the regulators have suitable capability and processes in place to protect local residents, the workforce and the environment. A safety case for any specific site would also have to be independently checked and approved.

Some people say there is already enough evidence that the whole of West Cumbria is geologically unsuitable. However, after looking at a range of views and evidence our initial opinion is that there is not enough information to show that the whole area is unsuitable.

We believe it will only be possible to find out if there is a suitable site for a repository if there are more detailed investigations, including boreholes, to test the rocks in the area.

We have concluded that it is not possible to be certain this far in advance how much waste would go into a repository. However, we have made satisfactory progress towards agreeing a set of principles with the Government that define an acceptable process for how the inventory could be changed, including how the community can influence this.

A repository could lead to a number of possible negative and positive impacts. These include things like noise, dust

and spoil created during construction; whether the special qualities of the Lake District National Park would be affected; and the creation of additional jobs.

We are satisfied at this stage that an acceptable process can be put in place to assess any negative impacts and either sufficiently reduce their effects or compensate for them. However, we would only have a clear picture on impacts if a site is identified and more detailed plans are produced.

If a repository was built there would also be a package of additional community benefits. We cannot be sure what the Government would agree to at this stage but have agreed a set of principles as the basis for any future negotiations.



Points of view

The Partnership asked two organisations to outline their views on whether the area should take part in the search for somewhere to put a repository. This is what they said.



NDA image showing what the facilities might look like above ground

SAVE OUR LAKE DISTRICT - DON'T DUMP CUMBRIA!

We've been invited by MRWS to contribute 200 words in this space to tell readers why we oppose this process.

Anyone who thinks that 200 words could summarise the many flaws in the plans and the process is deeply mistaken. This kind of offer gets very close to the heart of what's wrong – it's about Managing Radioactive DEBATE safely, not having an in-depth and reasoned argument!

The consultation document gives only part of the picture...

- there will be no Right of Withdrawal for affected communities – only the Councils can withdraw
- the plans ignore internationally recognised geological criteria for nuclear waste disposal
- the project's scale will mean several communities will be affected, not just one.
- the impacts of construction are not included
- huge amounts of rock spoil will have to be stored for decades for backfill – affecting yet more communities
- transport of spoil will affect yet more communities....
- no other country has tried to dispose of high AND intermediate level waste in the same dump

If you're against these plans, this may be your ONLY chance to say NO.

For more information visit our website www.mrwsold.org.uk

SELLAFIELD WORKERS CAMPAIGN

Be part of the search.

We should probably admit it, right from the start. The Sellafield Workers Campaign is a bit puzzled why this stage of the process needs to take so long.

We're puzzled in the same kind of way as environmentalist George Monbiot. He wrote in the Guardian, last May: "I know that others don't share my puzzlement, but I don't understand why the nuclear question needs to divide the environmental movement".

Mr Monbiot believes any rational person should understand the need for nuclear energy as part of a credible climate change strategy. So do we.

Our present puzzlement? Well, let's take a cool look at the precise question MRWS, acting on behalf of Cumbria, Copeland and Allerdale councils, is asking us all, including our Sellafield workforce: should our community TAKE PART in the search for a site for a repository, without ANY commitment to host that repository.

We can't understand why any rational person would answer No, we will NOT take part in the search. Even if they DO want to close OUR industry . . .

As West Cumbrians, we've worked with nuclear materials day in and day out for more than 50 years. We understand the need for rigorous, sound science, and for top-level technology. We trust ourselves, and we trust our community

So we say Yes. Be part of the search.

Poll to gauge public opinion in West Cumbria

We have appointed a leading polling company Ipsos MORI to carry out a statistically representative opinion survey, starting in early March.

The survey, conducted by telephone, will ask residents of West Cumbria if they think the area should take part in the search for somewhere to put a repository.

Some people have suggested that there should be a referendum but we concluded this would not be appropriate at this point. That is partly because it is not yet known where a repository might be sited and therefore there is only general information available on key issues such as safety and geology.

If the area takes part in the search for a site, we believe it will be important to test public opinion at a number of points in the future, particularly before a final decision was taken on whether to have a repository. That would involve using a method such as an opinion poll or a referendum.

Youth competition

We're challenging young people to produce a news report about West Cumbria's potential involvement in the search for a repository site.

We want to encourage young people to think about the issues involved.

Anyone aged 18 or younger on the closing date of 12th March can take part. You need to write an article up to 500 words or make a film or podcast of up to four minutes long.

The winner will receive £500 with three runners-up prizes of £150. The competition will be judged by two local journalists and a Partnership member.

For more details visit our website.

Students taking part in a discussion on a repository last year



Have your say

To get a copy of the consultation document including a DVD and an overview leaflet.

1. Call our Freephone number **0800 048 8912**
2. Email contact@westcumbriamrws.org.uk
3. Write to us at:

FREEPOST RSKT-LTXU-HAYC

West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safety Partnership

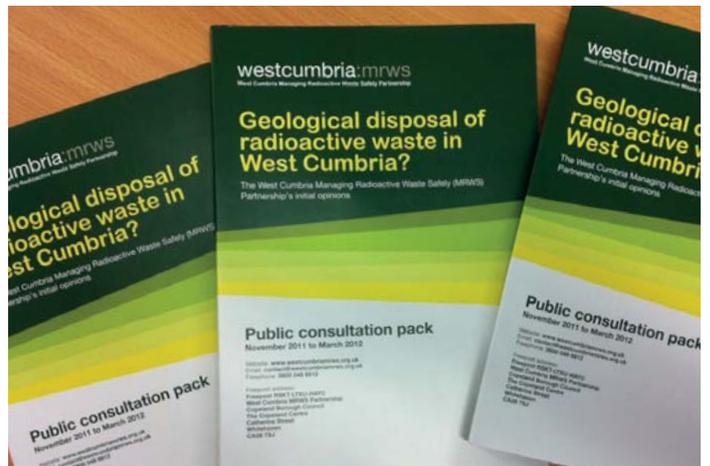
Copeland Borough Council

The Copeland Centre

Catherine Street

Whitehaven CA28 7SJ

You can download the consultation document and watch the DVD on our website www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk.



The consultation period will run until 23rd March 2012.

Log-on to our live discussion

You can find out more about the issues and ask questions during a live webcast from 6pm to 8pm on 6th March.

We have already held 12 events at locations across Cumbria. The online programme or webcast will give those who could not attend one of these events the chance to get involved.

There will be a panel, which will include Partnership members and experts on the issues involved.

To watch the programme and submit your questions you just need to log on to the Partnership's website. It will also be available to watch again after the event.