

WEST CUMBRIA MRWS PARTNERSHIP: THE EARLY STEPS

Case Study 9 November 2009



Introduction

In June 2008 the Government published a [White Paper](#) setting out the implementation framework for establishing a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher activity radioactive waste. The White Paper was accompanied by an invitation to local authorities to express an initial interest in holding discussions about the possibility of hosting the GDF.

To date Government has received three Expressions of Interest: from Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council. These were made after the local authorities took soundings from local stakeholders. A Partnership body has been established to advise the local authorities about whether a Decision to Participate should be taken and to give "a wider representation of community interests to the Councils".

This Case Study provides an overview of the Partnership, its objectives and work programme.

The Partnership

The aim of the Partnership as defined in its draft Terms of Reference¹ is to make recommendations to the relevant local authorities on "whether they should participate or not in the geological disposal facility siting process, without commitment to eventually host a facility."

Initially, Cumbria County Council sat as an observing member, pending clarification of decision-making processes. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding² with Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils was signed, and Cumbria CC took up full membership.

Membership of the Partnership is governed by specific criteria. Participants must:-

- 1 "Hold a substantive interest in Copeland and/or Allerdale and the impact a geological disposal facility might have on the wider area;
- 2 Represent a formally constituted body or community of interest whose views are not already represented on the Partnership;

¹ The Terms of Reference are currently being finalised following Cumbria CC's decision to take up full membership.

² See Links and Resources section of West Cumbria MRWS Partnership website for details.

- 3 Be willing to operate within the Terms of Reference and working agreement of the Partnership.”

Only full members of the Partnership have voting rights. Observing members are those that attend the meetings in an advisory or informative capacity. A list of current Partnership members can be found at Annex A.

The full Partnership meets approximately every six weeks. Partnership meetings are open to the general public and meeting dates are publicised on the Partnership’s website. In between meetings a Steering Group meets to deal with day to day issues. The Steering Group has submitted a draft budget for 2009-10 to DECC for approval. A sub-group has also been set up to develop and oversee Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) (see below for the PSE Plan).

A Partnership [website](#) gives an overview of the Partnership. Reports and minutes of the Partnership, Steering Group and PSE sub-group are posted on the website, as are the dates for future meetings.

Early Objectives

Early objectives for Partnership meetings have included:

- To develop criteria for whether to recommend a decision to participate and a work programme which addresses each of the criteria
- To discuss Public and Stakeholder Engagement; agreeing objectives and key phases; developing and adopting a PSE plan including the timing of the British Geological Survey work and how external enquiries and meetings will be handled
- To build understanding of key issues, including the initial high level geological screening to be undertaken by the British Geological Survey, the likely impacts of a GDF, the potential for community benefits, and the generic design concept for the GDF

Criteria for a Decision to Participate

A set of criteria has been established which the Partnership will use when deciding whether or not to recommend participation in the next stage of the GDF siting process. The criteria cover six areas:

- Safety, security, environment and planning – whether there is confidence that regulatory and planning processes will be in place to protect residents, the workforce and the environment
- Geology – whether there is confidence in initial high level geological screening and that sufficient areas will remain to make further progress worthwhile
- Community benefits – whether there is confidence that an appropriate package can be developed and that it is possible to assess and mitigate blight should it occur

- Design and engineering – whether there is confidence that the design concepts being developed are appropriate and that the proposed inventory of radioactive wastes is satisfactory
- Process – where there is confidence that the siting process is sufficiently robust and flexible
- Public and stakeholder views – whether the Partnership’s recommendations are credible given public and stakeholder views.

A table outlining each criterion and relevant indicators of what needs to be achieved is at Annex B.

Work Programme

A Work Programme has been established to address each of the criteria. It details the work the Partnership will undertake in order to demonstrate that each of the criteria are being met, and will be updated as progress is made. Work programme tasks are set out in the final column of the table in Annex B.

PSE Programme

The Partnership is undertaking three rounds of PSE in the build up to a decision about participation. These are shown in the flow diagram on the next page:³

³ Taken from West Cumbria MRWS Partnership Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Decision-Making Bodies (DMBs)

Partnership

Stakeholder Organisations and Public



START HERE
- DMBs set up the MRWS Partnership

Phase 1 Set-up
Develop and agree:
- draft ToRs and memb'shp
- draft work programme
- draft criteria
- draft PSE plan

Round 1 PSE: Marking out the Pitch
"This is the issue and how we're going about it: any thoughts?"
Objectives:
- Build the understanding of stakeholder organisations and public
- Seek input from s/h organisations on the Partnership's:
 o Work programme
 o Terms of Reference
 o Criteria
 o PSE Plan
- Understand issues raised by stakeholders and public
- Provide a response to comments where possible and adapt activity accordingly

Review output of Round 1 PSE. Amend 4 docs. Start BGS work if appropriate.

DMBs endorse plans

BGS Screening

Round 2 PSE: Disseminate Results and Way Fwd
"This is how far we've got including the screening work, and how we intend on moving forward: what do you think?"
Objectives:
- Build the understanding of stakeholder organisations and public
- Understand s/h organisation and public views on the BGS report
- Seek input from s/h organisations on the Partnership's:
 o Criteria
 o PSE Plan
- Understand s/h and public issues and information needs
- Provide a response to comments where possible and adapt activity accordingly

Amend and agree:
- response to results
- way forward incl PSE 3
- response to concerns raised

DMBs endorse plans

Phase 3 Test Support, and Report

Round 3 PSE: Assess Extent of Support
"To what extent would you support or oppose WCumbria participating in the process, and why?"
Objectives:
- Continue to build the understanding of s/h organisations + public
- Assess extent of support or otherwise for participation
- Understand reasons for support or opposition
- Understand any conditionality and limits to support
- Understand any additional s/h and public issues
- Provide a response to comments where possible and adapt activity accordingly

DMBs decide whether to participate

Amend and agree:
- response to input
- form recommendations

The First Round of PSE

The first round of PSE is starting in November. It includes:

- Delivery of an information leaflet to all households across West Cumbria, over the fortnight commencing 16 November, 2009.
- A stakeholder workshop on 4 December, 2009 in Whitehaven. Attendance is by invitation⁴.
- Inclusion of a series of short general questions about people's attitude towards MRWS in the quarterly survey of 3000 people on the Cumbria Citizens Panel (CCP).
- Establishment of a small West Cumbrian sub-group from the CCP (approx 30) as a Residents Panel to engage in the issues at a deeper level.
- Making a presentation to each of the Neighbourhood Forums in Allerdale and Copeland between November and January, 2010. There will be an opportunity for Q&A and a small information display set up prior to the meeting enabling members of the public to drop in and out without committing to attending the whole meeting.

MORI has also been commissioned to conduct a regular public awareness survey in Cumbria regarding MRWS and the work of the Partnership.

Next Steps

The findings from the first round of PSE will be reviewed at the Partnership meeting on 23 February 2010. The Partnership will then decide whether any changes are needed to its terms of reference, work programme, decision criteria and subsequent rounds of PSE.

This will be followed by the high level geological screening exercise and the second round of PSE.

It is expected that the Partnership will make its recommendations about participation in the siting process in the middle of 2011.

⁴ A list of those invited is available to view on the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership website

Annex A: Partnership Membership

There are two types of membership to the Partnership: full members and observing members. The current full members are (*italics* denote membership of the Steering Group):

Allerdale Borough Council
Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council
Copeland Borough Council
Cumbria Association of Local Councils
Cumbria County Council
Eden District Council
Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
GMB Union
Lake District National Park Authority
National Farmers Union
NuLeAF
Prospect Union
South Lakes District Council
West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group
West Cumbria Strategic Partnership

Observing members are:

Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM)
Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)
Environment Agency
Isle of Man Government
Nuclear Decommissioning Agency (NDA)
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate / Health and Safety Executive

Other organisations invited to attend meetings, but currently without formal status include: Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment (CORE) and Carlisle City Council. Discussions are in hand regarding the best way in which to involve the environmental groups.

Annex B: Criteria for a Decision to Participate

Name	Full Criteria	Indicator	Work programme tasks
<p>Safety, Security Environment and Planning</p>	<p>Satisfied that suitable regulatory and planning processes are in place or being developed to protect residents, workforce and the environment</p>	<p>Confidence that necessary regulatory bodies and processes exist or are being developed</p> <p>Adequate communication links between regulators and community are present and working</p> <p>Acceptability of the planning aspects of the siting process.</p>	<p>Understand what regulatory bodies are involved, what their roles are and what regulatory processes they have in place or are developing.</p> <p>Assess the recent and current arrangements for regulatory interfaces with the community.</p> <p>Understand the context and role of the planning system in the process and any uncertainties associated.</p>
<p>Geology</p>	<p>Whether the Partnership is confident in the integrity of the BGS screening work/report</p> <p>Sufficient areas remaining in West Cumbria after initial screening to make further progress worthwhile</p>	<p>Acceptable peer review process</p> <p>Broad stakeholder confidence in BGS study</p> <p>Subjective judgement that the results of the screening leave enough "possibly suitable" land to make further progress worthwhile</p>	<p>Understand peer review process and work with Government to alter process if required.</p> <p>To Ask DECC to instruct the start of BGS work.</p> <p>Assess summary of stakeholder views from DECC's stakeholder review process, and Partnership's PSE Round 2.</p> <p>Assess BGS report when published.</p>
<p>Community Benefits</p>	<p>Whether the Partnership is confident that an appropriate community benefit package can be developed</p>	<p>Acceptable process in place to secure additional benefits - beyond those which derived directly from the construction and operation of the facility</p>	<p>Understand Government's perspective on community benefit and what is stated in the White Paper, as well as international experience of other nuclear communities.</p> <p>Develop with Government a formal set of cross-party principles by which</p>

	<p>Whether the Partnership is confident that appropriate possibilities exist to assess and mitigate blight if it occurs</p> <p>Whether the Partnership is confident that the possibility of a repository fits appropriately with the overall direction of the relevant community/ies</p>	<p>Acceptable process is in place to assess any negative impacts and mitigate them</p> <p>Support for the possibility of a repository at Borough and/or County level in relation to other long term priorities</p>	<p>community benefit would be discussed, agreed and potentially administered, including how benefits might be allocated to different communities.</p> <p>Understand the likely broad impacts (both positive and negative) of hosting a repository, and how they might be mitigated. Collate existing work with DNA and NuLeAF.</p> <p>Define the scope of research required to assess in more detail the likely extent of impacts.</p> <p>Understand the vision for the future of West Cumbria and to what extent a repository may or may not fit into it.</p>
Design and Engineering	<p>Satisfied that the design concepts being developed are appropriate</p> <p>Satisfied with the proposed inventory to be managed in a facility</p>	<p>Acceptable design concept and flexibility thereof</p> <p>Reassurance that reversibility / retrievability is an option, and flexibility to confirm this later on</p> <p>Knowledge of what the inventory is, and acceptable process for how the inventory would be changed, including how the community can influence this</p>	<p>Examine the generic design concept, and how this translates into a specific design depending on any location ultimately chosen.</p> <p>Develop a common understanding of the meanings of reversibility / retrievability / recoverability and the implications associated with them, as well as how flexible the generic design concept is.</p> <p>Develop understanding of the inventory, the process for altering it and how the community might influence it.</p>
Process	<p>Whether the Partnership is confident that the siting process is sufficiently robust and flexible to meet their needs</p>	<p>Acceptable process of moving from 'possibly suitable areas' to specific potential host sites</p>	<p>Understand the site selection process, including how community can influence it.</p>

		<p>Provision for 'pause points' to allow more work to be undertaken at the Partnership's request</p> <p>Acceptable nature of (and limitations to) the Right of Withdrawal</p> <p>Acceptable Community Siting Partnership process can be defined</p> <p>Government commitment to sustain the process</p>	<p>Understand, and seek reassurance on, how 'pause points' might be introduced and managed.</p> <p>Understand what a Decision to Participate implies and how the Right of Withdrawal works, what would need to underpin it, and when it ceases to exist.</p> <p>Define Terms of Reference for potential Community Siting Partnership.</p> <p>Seek reassurance and evidence from Government on their commitment to the process.</p>
Public and stakeholder views	Whether the siting process is capable of inspiring public confidence, including confidence amongst those engaged about the Partnership itself, the forward process and the balance of positive and negative impacts.	<p>Broad support from the stakeholder organisations in the area, including those that are likely to form a Community Siting Partnership if a DtP was taken</p> <p>An increasing level of confidence in the Partnership held over time by stakeholders engaged and a surveyed sample of the general public</p> <p>Evidence that concerns raised have been, or will be, addressed where possible, including explanations as to why not where relevant</p>	<p>Design and adopt a PSE Plan.</p> <p>Initiate, monitor and guide Round 1 PSE, including consulting on the PSE Plan.</p> <p>Reflect on output of Round 1 PSE, incorporate output and provide feedback to participants.</p> <p>Adopt a redesigned Round 2 PSE as required.</p>
Other supporting activity			<p>Build the capacity of Decision Making Bodies and other Partnership members.</p> <p>Manage risks in the process</p>