

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 14 July 2010
Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	Geological Disposal Facility – West Cumbria Update
Author:	Fred Barker
Purpose:	To report on developments

Introduction

This report covers:

- developments in the work of the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Wastes Safely (MRWS) Partnership; and
- the Executive Director's input to the Partnership's work programme.

Recommendation

That the Steering Group welcomes the approach being taken by the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership.

Contribution to Achieving Strategic Objectives

This report and the inputs it describes are intended to contribute to the achievement of the following NuLeAF objectives:

- to liaise effectively with any local authority that may wish to consider, or makes, an expression of interest in the GDF siting process and to provide assistance as appropriate
- to work with Government, the NDA, CoRWM, regulators and member authorities to help ensure that the approach based on voluntarism and partnership works successfully in practice
- to ensure member authorities are briefed and up-to-date on developments in the GDF siting process.

1 Introduction

Three local authorities in Cumbria have submitted formal 'Expressions of Interest' to Government – Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council. A partnership has been established with participation from Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, the Cumbrian Association of Local Councils and other local stakeholders. NuLeAF is also a member of the partnership.

The partnership's primary role is to advise the relevant local authorities about whether to take formal decisions to participate in the siting process for a GDF.

2 Developments in the Work of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership

The most recent developments include:

- publication of the main outputs from the first stage of the Partnership's programme of public and stakeholder engagement (PSE1) and the Partnership's response;
- the decision to ask Government to proceed with the high-level geological screening of West Cumbria by the British Geological Survey (BGS); and
- agreement to a plan for a second period of PSE.

PSE1: Outputs and Response

These are outlined in the Partnership's latest newsletter which can be opened by double clicking on the pdf icon below or by visiting the Partnership's website at westcumbriamrws.



Partnership Newsletter June 2010

The newsletter outlines how the Partnership is responding to the headline themes in PSE1, including:

- overcoming cynicism and gaining trust
- clarifying decision-making
- being rigorous
- striving to engage
- securing community benefits.

BGS Survey

Before a community can make a decision about whether or not to participate in the process of finding a GDF site, the Government requires the area to be screened to take out areas that are clearly geologically unsuitable and therefore make sure that there are places that could be geologically suitable for such a facility. There is obviously no point any community spending too much time considering this issue if there are no areas where the facility could be built.

The BGS will look at the information that is already available about the geology of the whole of Allerdale and Copeland and up to 5 km offshore, and screen out any areas that clearly have unsuitable geology for a disposal facility, based on the criteria set out in the Government's White Paper on the MRWS process.

It is anticipated that the findings of the BGS survey will be made available at the 16 September meeting of the Partnership.

Plan for PSE2

PSE2 is about sharing the results of the BGS study and asking for input on other key topics. It is seen as an opportunity to use 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. It is the last chance the Partnership will have to ask for stakeholder input before preliminary judgements have to be reached against the criteria that need to be met if the Partnership is to recommend continued participation in the siting process. This round of PSE runs from mid September to mid December (three months).

The plan for PSE2 can be accessed on the Partnership website (click on [westcumbriamrws](#) then go to 'document library', 'complete document list', and click on document 15.1).

Partnership Work Programme

The Partnership's full work programme can be accessed by double clicking on the word icon below:



13 1-Work Prog
10-11 2 Jun 10.doc

The work programme sets out the tasks being undertaken against the criteria that need to be met if the Partnership is to recommend continued participation.

The work programme anticipates that the Partnership will report with advice about a decision about participation in the autumn of next year.

Independent Evaluation

An independent evaluation of the Partnership's work to date has been published (click on [westcumbriamrws](#) then go to 'document library', 'complete document list', and click on document 80). This indicates that the Partnership's work programme and approach is basically sound, but points to emerging and future challenges that the Partnership will have to address.

3 The Executive Director's Input to the Partnership's Work Programme

As agreed by the Chair and Vice-Chair and reported to the last meeting of the Steering Group (under the Progress Report item 7), the Executive Director (ED) has been contributing to the work of the Partnership, with re-imburement of costs based on an agreed daily rate.

In addition to participation in Partnership and PSE Group meetings, the ED's input has focused on the preparation of:

- two discussion papers, 'Credible Support and Decision Making about Participation' (doc 74) and 'The Siting Process and Principles for the Involvement of Affected Communities' (doc 75); and
- three briefing notes, 'Why the Partnership is only considering Geological Disposal', 'Why the current siting process is very different to Nirex's approach in earlier decades' and 'Why retrievability is an important issue'.

The discussion papers are subject to further discussion at the Partnership meeting on 5 August. Once adopted by the Partnership they will be published on its website.