

**Meeting:** Nuleaf Steering Group  
**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
**Item:** 5  
**Subject:** Update on Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process  
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## **Introduction:**

This report provides an update on recent developments related to the process for identifying a site for a Geological Disposal Facility and activities at NWS.

**Recommendation:** This report is for noting.

## **Background information:**

The UK Government's policy on **Working with Communities – implementing geological disposal** was published in December 2018<sup>1</sup>, with the equivalent policy for Wales published in January 2019<sup>2</sup>. The **National Policy Statement**, governing the planning aspects of the GDF in England, was published in July 2019<sup>3</sup>.

## **1. Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Siting Process**

1.1 It was confirmed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June<sup>4</sup> that **Lincolnshire County Council** will withdraw from the GDF siting process. This ends the search for a suitable site in the area, as the involvement of at least one principal local authority is necessary for the process to continue.

A recommendation to withdraw was made by the council's overview and scrutiny management board on the 29<sup>th</sup> May<sup>5</sup>. The local elections in May saw Reform UK win a majority of seats in the County, having stood on a platform that included opposition to a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). The previous Conservative administration had also signalled its intention to withdraw in April, prior to the elections.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-geological-disposal-working-with-communities-long-term-management-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste>

<sup>2</sup> <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/190116-geological-disposal-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste-working-with-communities-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statement-for-geological-disposal-infrastructure>

<sup>4</sup> [Lincolnshire nuclear waste storage plan thrown out after vote - BBC News](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Lincolnshire councillors move to end nuclear waste talks - BBC News](#)

The County Council's decision follows that of **East Lindsey District Council** to withdraw from the Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership, something that was formally confirmed at a meeting of the Council's Executive Board on the 4<sup>th</sup> April<sup>6</sup>.

Lincolnshire County Council Leader Sean Matthews said that local communities had been treated to years of *'distress and uncertainty.'*

David Fannin, chair of the GDF Community Partnership, commented *'If it had been possible to remove uncertainty, or to exercise a duty of care that mitigated the impact on the local community, I would have been more reassured about staying in the process. But, the council has spoken, local people have spoken up loudly and clearly, and we have to respect that.'*

Simon Hughes, siting and communities director at Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), noted that £2million had been granted to local projects, leaving a lasting positive legacy. He commented: *'The entire GDF siting process is based on community consent and there is an absolute requirement for any potential host community to have given its consent prior to any development being agreed. This conversation can carry on without commitment, but we will fully respect and understand any decision made by the council's executive on 3 June.'*

The decision leave only two Community Partnerships in the process, both in the Cumberland Council area.

1.2 The Chair of the **South Copeland GDF Partnership**, Ged McGrath, is stepping down after serving a two year term. It has also been announced that Millom Town Council is withdrawing from the Community Partnership. Following these significant changes, consideration is being given to the future shape of the Partnership and how the views of the Town Council can still be considered.

South Copeland has also published their **Annual Review 2024**<sup>7</sup>.

1.3 **Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership** has published a graphic<sup>8</sup> showing the progress of the Partnership over the past year.

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<sup>6</sup> [East Lindsey District Council withdraws from nuclear waste talks - BBC News](#)

<sup>7</sup> [South Copeland Annual Review - Looking back on 2024 - South Copeland GDF Community Partnership](#)

<sup>8</sup> <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/snapshot-of-mid-copeland-gdf-community-partnership-progress-over-past-year/>