

News Release - for immediate use 30.08.21

### **Copeland GDF Working Group Exhibition Roadshow starts this week**

**An exhibition roadshow starts this week to allow people to find out more about what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) is and what it could mean for Copeland.**

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste. Copeland GDF Working Group has organised a series of exhibitions to encourage further conversations and understanding about geological disposal.

It's taking place in 10 locations across Copeland and starts this Wednesday at The Beacon Portal, Whitehaven. It's a chance to hear more, give views, ask questions, raise any concerns and understand potential opportunities. There will be plenty of information plus some interactive content and virtual reality.

Gillian Johnston, Community Engagement Manager for Copeland GDF Working Group, said: "We've had lots of interest about the exhibitions and people have been registering their preferred time and location to come along."

Copeland Mayor, Mike Starkie, said: "It's important that residents understand what a Geological Disposal Facility is and what this could mean for our community and economy. It could impact on employment opportunities, our environment and the prosperity of Copeland, and I would encourage everyone to go along to find out more."

The events will operate within current Government guidance and will be held across the following locations and times:

- The Beacon Portal, Whitehaven: Sept 1 (10am-7pm); Sept 2 (9.30am-2pm)
- Silecroft Village Hall: Sept 3 (10am-2pm)
- Kirksanton Village Hall: Sept 3 (5pm-8pm)
- Thwaites Village Hall: Sept 4 (10am-6pm)
- Millom Rugby Union Club, Haverigg: Sept 6 (10am-6pm)
- Drigg & Carleton Village Hall: Sept 7 (10am-6pm)
- Egremont Methodist Church: Sept 8 (10am-6pm); Sept 9 (10am-6pm)
- Cleator Moor Civic Hall: Sept 10 (10am-6pm); Sept 11 (10am-2pm)
- St Bees Management Centre: Sept 13 (10am-6pm); Sept 14 (10am-6pm)
- Whitehaven Golf Club: Sept 16 (10am-7pm); Sept 17 (10am-2pm)

To register in advance, by going online to book a morning or afternoon visit go to:

<https://copeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/latest-news/> or direct to:

<https://copelandgdfexhibitions.rwmevents.co.uk/home>. This will help to manage each

venue's capacities and ensure Covid-safety. Alternatively, telephone the Copeland Call Centre on 0300 369 0000 to book your place. Those who choose to turn up on the day without registering will be able to enter when there's a safe space - however there may be a wait if the venue is fully booked at that time.

As part of the process to find a site for a GDF in England or Wales, a Working Group was formed in Copeland last November. It has three main tasks – begin to understand community issues, examine any concerns and questions the public has about a GDF; identify a search area or areas within Copeland and recruit initial members for a Community Partnership which could take that work forward.

Ends

### **Notes to editors**

1. A GDF would be made up of highly engineered vaults and tunnels located deep underground designed to protect people and the environment and keep the radioactive waste safe and secure while the radioactivity naturally decays to safe levels.
2. Successive UK Governments, supported by scientific advice, agree that geological disposal is the right long-term solution for our higher activity radioactive waste, and there is overwhelming international consensus, with advanced programmes now underway in Canada, Finland, France, Sweden, Switzerland and many other countries.
3. The independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) recommends that geological disposal, coupled with safe and secure interim storage, is the best approach for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste.
4. The search for a host community is a nationwide process, construction is based on community consent, and includes detailed investigations to make sure there is a suitable site to construct a safe and secure GDF. If the independent regulators don't agree that a GDF can be designed, constructed and operated safely and securely then it won't be built.

### **About the Copeland Working Group and the GDF siting process**

The Working Group in Copeland is made up of individuals and organisations who asked RWM to consider whether a GDF could be located in the area, an independent Chair, independent facilitator, RWM, and others such as Local Authorities from the area. The group will begin local discussions and fact-finding with the community.

Establishing a Working Group is just the starting point for engaging with the community, in a process that will take several years. The Working Group will identify and propose a Search Area for further consideration in the search for potentially suitable sites, engage citizens across the community to begin to understand their views, and recruit initial members for a Community Partnership with RWM that could take the process further forward.

For further information go to the website: [Working Group Copeland \(workinginpartnership.org.uk\)](http://workinginpartnership.org.uk)

### **About RWM**

Radioactive Waste Management (RWM), formed in 2014, is responsible for geological disposal to manage higher activity waste in England and Wales by finding a willing community and suitable site to construct and operate a UK GDF for the long-term management of higher-activity radioactive waste. RWM is a public organisation and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.