



News Release - for immediate use 15.07.21

### **Pop-up events in Copeland on geological disposal**

**Copeland GDF Working Group is holding a series of pop-up events over the next few weeks to continue the conversation about geological disposal and what it could mean for Copeland.**

A Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

Members of the community are invited to drop-in and have a chat with the local community engagement team, pick up a leaflet, ask a question or share views. The informal events will take place in different areas of Copeland - limited to small numbers to ensure Covid-safety and will operate within Government guidance.

They will be followed by a larger exhibition roadshow which the Working Group plans to run during September.

Gillian Johnston, Copeland Working Group's Community Engagement Manager, said:

"We're looking forward to being able to speak face to face with people about what geological disposal could mean for Copeland. The Working Group is here to help inform people about GDF, listen to views and answer any questions people may have. Come along and have a chat with the local team."

The drop-ins are being held in the following locations:

- July 22 Cleator Moor Town Council offices, Market Square, 10am-3pm
- July 28 Thwaites Village Hall, 10am-3pm
- July 30 Cumbria Traders' Day Market, St Nicholas' Gardens, Whitehaven, 9.30-3pm
- Aug 5 Egremont Meeting Place, Methodist Church, 10am-3pm
- Aug 11 Seascale Library, 10am-3pm
- Aug 20 Millom Conservative & Unionist Club, Lapstone Road, 10am-3pm
- Aug 24 Former Belvoir shop, King Street, Whitehaven, 10am-3pm

The larger exhibitions are set to take place from September 1-17<sup>th</sup> around Copeland and will feature information boards, interactive activities and experts in different subjects to help answer questions.

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.

Construction of a GDF facility is based on consent – which means there must be a suitable site and a willing community in order to proceed.

The Working Group is available to speak to groups, help to answer questions and provide information. Please get in touch by email: [gdfinfo-copeland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:gdfinfo-copeland@nda.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 369 0000. For further information, see the website: [www.copeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk](http://www.copeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk) where you can also sign up for a monthly newsletter and please also visit the virtual exhibition: [www.copeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/get-involved/](http://www.copeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/get-involved/)

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://Working Group Copeland (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.