



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Report from national workshops held during the review of the siting process for a geological disposal facility (GDF)

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Report from the National Stakeholder Consultation Workshops on DECC's Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)

Prepared by 3KQ Ltd



**Department
of Energy &
Climate Change**

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Note:

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors (as summarised from what was said by participants in the workshops), not necessarily those of DECC, and nor do they necessarily reflect Government policy.

The workshops were supplementary to DECC's public consultation on potential revisions to the siting process for a geological disposal facility (GDF) and this report should be read alongside the [consultation document](#) and responses to the consultation.

A key aim of the workshops was to help stakeholders build their formal submissions to the public consultation, and it was emphasised to participants that their input at the workshops would *not* be classified as a formal response to the consultation.

The information in this report therefore does not form part of the consultation responses, and should be read as useful context and information for DECC on their proposed revisions to the siting process.

All responses to the consultation have been published on DECC's website alongside a summary of responses. For further information see www.gov.uk/decc.

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3KQ is a company that helps organisations engage the public and stakeholders around sensitive issues within the environmental sector.

For more information see www.3kq.co.uk.

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Executive summary

Aims and objectives

Four national stakeholder workshops were held by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in November 2013 to supplement their public consultation on the Government's proposals for a revised siting process for a geological disposal facility (GDF) for higher activity radioactive waste. The workshops took place in Penrith, Llandudno, Exeter and London.

The workshops were held alongside:

- 3 sector stakeholder workshops (for industry, local authorities and NGOs).
- A series of public dialogue research workshops in 4 locations (each held over 2 sessions) to explore views of members of the public. These public workshops were co-funded and supported by Sciencewise¹.

A key aim of the national stakeholder workshops was to provide an opportunity for deliberation to help participants build their formal submissions to the public consultation, and it was emphasised that input at the workshops would *not* be classified as a formal response to the consultation. Participants were encouraged and reminded to submit their responses after the event so that their views could be formally taken on board by DECC.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- To help DECC explore and understand stakeholders' issues/questions/concerns about the current GDF site selection process.
- To allow stakeholders to explore and understand the implications of the Government's proposals for them and other stakeholders.
- To obtain stakeholders' feedback on the proposals for improving the current GDF site selection process.
- To support stakeholders in compiling any responses they wished to make to the public consultation.

Invitations were issued to a range of stakeholder organisations with experience of or interest in the siting process for a GDF. The workshops were independently facilitated, and were supported by representatives from DECC, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (NDA RWMD), the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation. The Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales also supported the workshop in Llandudno.

Agenda

The workshops began with presentations from DECC outlining the history of the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) process in the UK, the key messages from their review of the siting process, and a summary of the proposed revisions to the siting process.

¹ Sciencewise is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Sciencewise aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate to ensure public views are considered as part of the evidence base. www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk.

Participants were then divided into small groups to discuss the proposals and the consultation questions.

The workshops were structured around the proposals outlined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the consultation document and the related consultation questions. Discussions focused on questions of clarification to gain a better understanding of DECC's proposals, and developing participants' thoughts on how they/their organisation would respond to the consultation questions.

Summary of discussions

There was much consistency in the discussions at all four workshops, including the levels of support for and/or opposition to the proposals. The issues and key themes that were discussed are summarised below under the relevant chapter headings with an additional section on themes that cut across more than one area of the proposals.

Cross-cutting themes

Issues that cut across more than one area of DECC's proposals, or that were felt by participants to be fundamental to the overall siting process were raised at all four workshops. These included:

- The need for more clarity on the definition of 'community' as it impacts on many aspects of the siting process.
- The importance of education and information to inform members of the public, stakeholders and local authorities on all aspects of geological disposal and the siting process, both in advance of and throughout the process.
- Challenges to the Government's favoured approach of voluntarism and partnership, including a number of suggestions for alternative approaches that could be adopted either alongside voluntarism or as an alternative to it.
- Issues of lack of trust in the Government and the NDA, including cynicism about the Government's motives for making some of the proposed revisions to the siting process.
- Views and perceptions of the history of the MRWS process in west Cumbria, including concerns that the question as to whether the area is a reasonable prospect for hosting a GDF still has not been answered.
- The potential for more than one GDF.

Chapter 2 of consultation document – Decision making and roles

National awareness-raising – Discussions focused on how DECC intends to consult/engage with communities in order to encourage them to come forward to learn more. There was support for the proposal for a period of national awareness-raising before seeking volunteers, but participants acknowledged the difficulties of raising radioactive waste management as an issue in the public's mind.

Expressions of Interest – There were a number of questions about the process for communities to register their interest, and the difference between informal discussions and formal Expressions of Interest. Questions were also asked about what would happen if more than one community volunteers.

A more continuous process – There was some support for a more continuous process with an ongoing Right of Withdrawal, including views that more information earlier in the process would enable people to make better, more informed decisions. Concerns included wasting time and money on communities that are not suitable, and the need for a mechanism that would allow concerns that emerge after the Right of Withdrawal has ceased to be addressed.

Requirement for a demonstration of community support – Support for a formal test of public support before the representative authority loses the Right of Withdrawal was expressed at all of the workshops, although views differed on how and when the test should be carried out, who should be asked, and whether there should be more than one test at different stages. The importance of being able to define the constituency/community being tested was also highlighted as a fundamental issue at all of the workshops, and a number of alternatives for defining/determining community(ies) were suggested.

Representative authority – At the workshop in Penrith, the proposal to define the district council as the representative authority was an area of much debate, with strong views being expressed both for and against this proposed revision. There were also opposing views on this issue at the other workshops, and there was some cynicism about the Government's motives for removing county councils from decision making. It was also felt that there is not enough clarity on how the process would work for regional/unitary authorities, and challenges were made to the logic of equating a district council with a unitary authority, and excluding a county council but including a unitary authority.

Roles in the siting process – Discussions focused on: the definition and roles of the Steering Group and the Consultative Partnership and how they would interact; the importance of peer review and independent scientific expertise; funding for communities to take part, including concerns that some of the bodies that *should* be involved would not have the structure, capacity or resources to take part, and would therefore need a lot of support; and the importance of engaging young people and future generations in the process.

Chapter 3 of consultation document – Technical delivery

Geology – It was acknowledged by some participants that the proposals are intended to improve on the previous process and there was some support for the provision of more geological information, however, there were concerns. Issues that were raised included:

- That a national geological screening survey should be carried out in advance of seeking volunteers.
- Publishing information about regional geology is not helpful if it does not identify areas of the country that are more or less suitable.
- The need for more clarity on the nature of the information that would be provided in the different stages of the process, including the differences (if any) between the proposed information and the existing British Geological Survey (BGS) study carried out for west Cumbria.
- The importance of education and interpretation in addition to factual information and data, and the need to also provide information about engineering.
- The importance of peer review and opportunity for challenge.

Planning – Common themes included:

- Differing views, for a variety of reasons, on whether the GDF should be designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).
- Concerns about how voluntarism and the NSIP regime would work alongside each other, and the need for clarity about the interaction between the two processes including who has the powers to decide what.
- Concerns that consultation under the NSIP regime was insufficient for new build and would therefore not be adequate for a GDF.
- Differing views on whether or not intrusive investigations should be brought within the definition of nationally significant infrastructure.
- The need for more clarity on whether it is intended that other infrastructure and ancillary developments would be included as part of the NSIP regime.

Inventory – Although there was support for providing more clarity on the inventory, there was disagreement about the extent to which the proposals would actually make the situation any clearer for people, and there were some concerns about being overly prescriptive at this stage. Discussions included:

- Differing views on what should be included in the inventory.
- Uncertainties around the classification of some materials as an asset or as waste.
- The difficulties of communicating some of the complexities and uncertainties.
- The need for more clarity over who controls future changes to the inventory.
- Differing views on the inclusion of new build waste, and the need to discuss with communities the impact of its inclusion on the lifetime of a GDF.
- The current location of the inventory, including the extent to which this would be taken into account when considering locations for a GDF, and the potential of narrowing the search by focusing on sites that are already storing the waste.
- The need for more clarity on what is meant by retrievability and reversibility, and the implications for communities around a potential site.

Chapter 4 of consultation document – Communities

Community benefits – There was support at all of the workshops for more clarity on the scale and scope of the benefits package, and it was felt by some that this would encourage a community to volunteer. There were concerns about the definition and scope of the community that would benefit and who would be accountable for controlling the fund and determining how it is spent. Other discussions included:

- The differences between engagement funding and community benefits, and the need for DECC to be more specific about how engagement funding would work.
- The need for clarity that community benefits are *additional* to what is needed to deliver a GDF, and a guarantee that existing social/economic packages (including those for existing NDA sites) would continue.
- That the benefits should be seen as more than a fund of money, and the need to be as specific as possible to help people understand what the benefits might be.
- How to define the community(ies) that will receive the benefits.
- The need to ensure that benefits are secured over the long term.
- Differing views on the proposal that the Government will be able to retrieve/claw back funds if a GDF is not constructed in a community.

Socio-economic and environmental assessments – Discussions focused on clarifications about how the assessments would work, and exactly what would be included. Specific issues were:

- The scope of the assessments including who should carry out and/or be involved in the assessments, and whether wider aspects than the GDF itself would be included.
- Concerns about impacts on designated sites such as national parks.
- The challenges of communicating nuclear-related issues to members of the public, including the balance between providing reassurance for communities that are new to the nuclear sector and being open about the impacts and risks.
- The need for clarity that the developer's duty to mitigate any impacts will *not* be paid for by the community benefits fund.
- The need to utilise information from all of the different work streams in the siting process to avoid duplication.
- The processes that would be in place for maintenance and management after the facility has been closed to safeguard future generations and societies.

Key messages

One of the key objectives of the national stakeholder workshops was to support stakeholders in compiling any responses they wished to make to the public consultation, and it was apparent that many of the participants wanted to use the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the GDF siting process and DECC's proposals for revising and improving it. For DECC and participants this highlighted the importance of clear and accessible information, and the need for education for members of the public, stakeholders and local authorities both in advance of and throughout the siting process.

In relation to this, there was support for the proposed period of national awareness-raising, and for providing more clarity on the scale and scope of the community benefits package, and it was felt by some that these measures would provide more encouragement for communities to volunteer.

There was also support for providing more information on geology at an earlier stage in the process. It was, however, felt by some that providing broad descriptions of what is already known about regional geology will not be helpful if it does not identify which areas are more or less suitable, and confusion remained about whether the proposed local geological information would be any different to that already provided for west Cumbria.

A key theme at all of the workshops was the need for more clarity on the definition of community, and/or a better description of the process by which community(ies) would be defined as part of the process, particularly in relation to community benefits and the role of the communities in decision making.

Although much of the focus of the debate at the workshop in Penrith was on the history of the MRWS process in west Cumbria, references were also made to it at the other workshops, and there was scepticism about the motives behind some of the proposed revisions, particularly in relation to decision making. There was both support for and opposition to the proposal to designate district councils as the representative authority, and the Government's reasons for removing county councils from decision making were questioned.

Support was, however, expressed for a formal test of community support before the representative authority loses the Right of Withdrawal, although views differed on how and when the test (or tests) should be carried out and who should be asked. There were also concerns about the potential for voluntarism to be overridden by the NSIP planning regime.

Challenges were also made to the Government's favoured approach of voluntarism and partnership, and several suggestions were made for alternative approaches that could be adopted either alongside voluntarism or as an alternative to it.

For further information, including the reports from the public dialogue and sector stakeholder workshops and responses to the formal consultation, see the DECC website at www.gov.uk/decc or contact radioactivewaste@decc.gsi.gov.uk.

Section 1 – Introduction and objectives

The series of four national stakeholder workshops was held by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to explore the Government's proposals for a revised siting process for a geological disposal facility (GDF) for higher activity radioactive waste.

The workshops were to support DECC's national public consultation on potential revisions to the siting process for a GDF as part of the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme. The consultation, which ran from 12th September 2013 to 5th December 2013², aimed to gather views of stakeholders and members of the public on how aspects of the siting process could be revised and improved.

The workshops took place in November 2013 in Penrith, Llandudno, Exeter and London, and were held alongside:

- 3 sector stakeholder workshops (for industry, local authorities and NGOs).
- A series of public dialogue research workshops in 4 locations (each held over 2 sessions) to explore views of members of the public. These public workshops were co-funded and supported by Sciencewise³.

In addition to providing DECC with useful context and information on the proposed revisions to the siting process, a key aim of the national and sector stakeholder workshops was to provide an opportunity for deliberation to help participants build their formal submissions to the public consultation. It was emphasised to participants that their input at the workshops would *not* be classified as a formal response to the consultation, and participants were encouraged and reminded to submit their responses after the event so that their views could be formally taken on board by DECC.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- To help DECC explore and understand stakeholders' issues/questions/concerns about the current GDF site selection process.
- To allow stakeholders to explore and understand the implications of the Government's proposals for them and other stakeholders.
- To obtain stakeholders' feedback on the proposals for improving the current GDF site selection process.
- To support stakeholders in compiling any responses they wished to make to the public consultation.

² The deadline was subsequently extended to 19th December for submissions made by email due to a technical issue with the email address that had been used to receive submissions.

³ Public dialogue is a process during which members of the public interact with scientists, stakeholders and policy makers to deliberate on issues likely to be important for future policies. The public dialogue was partly funded and supported by Sciencewise (www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk), which is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and was conducted in accordance with its "Guiding Principles" for public dialogues on science and technology. Sciencewise aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate to ensure public views are considered as part of the evidence base. It provides a wide range of information, advice, guidance and support services aimed at policy makers and all the different stakeholders involved in science and technology policy making, including the public. Sciencewise also provides co-funding to Government departments and agencies to develop and commission public dialogue activities.

The workshops were independently facilitated by 3KQ and were supported by representatives from DECC and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (NDA RWMD). Representatives from the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales also attended in Llandudno, and the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) attended all workshops. Members of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) attended in Penrith, Llandudno and London.

Invitations were issued by DECC to a range of stakeholder organisations with experience of or interest in the siting process for a GDF. Organisations were identified on the basis of their representation of a range of relevant interests in the subject area and included local authority groups, industry representatives, third sector organisations and academics. DECC worked with various bodies to identify representatives, and invitations were sent to all local authorities, existing stakeholder groups and mailing lists.

Appendix 2 contains details of the organisations that attended each workshop.

Section 2 – Methodology and approach

The workshops were preceded by an optional background briefing from DECC. This was aimed at participants who were new to the topic of geological disposal, or who wished to have a refresher on the history of radioactive waste management in the UK.

The main part of the workshop was introduced by the independent facilitators 3KQ and DECC (plus the Welsh Government in Llandudno), who outlined the objectives and the agenda for the day. See Appendix 1 for a summary of the agenda.

The introductions were followed by presentations from DECC (see Appendix 3 for the presentation slides) outlining:

- The history of the MRWS process in the UK and the key messages from their review of the siting process and the ‘Call for Evidence’ that took place in May and June 2013.
- A summary of the key proposals in the consultation document.

Following these presentations, participants were divided into groups to discuss the proposals and related consultation questions in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the consultation document. Each of the small group discussions was supported by a representative from DECC, and representatives from the supporting/observing organisations were also available to respond to technical questions and provide any necessary clarifications.

The discussions focused on questions of clarification to gain a better understanding of DECC’s proposals, and developing participants’ thoughts on how they/their organisation would respond to the consultation questions.

The main points and issues that were discussed were recorded on flipchart either during the small group discussions or in the plenary sessions that followed. The key areas of discussion from all four workshops are summarised in Sections 3 to 7. These sections should be read alongside the [consultation document](#)⁴.

Government positions in the United Kingdom

The consultation covered England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but not Scotland as the Scottish Government has a different policy for the long-term management of radioactive waste.

Participants were interested in how the process would operate in different parts of the United Kingdom, including the implications, if any, of Scottish independence. More detailed information about Welsh Government policy and the current position in Wales on geological disposal was also given at the workshop in Llandudno by a representative from the Welsh Government.

For further information on the different positions of each of the UK Governments see Paragraphs 1.6 to 1.13 of the consultation document.

⁴ The consultation document can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239237/Consultation_Review_of_the_siting_process_for_a_GDF_FINAL.pdf.

Section 3 – Cross-cutting themes

This section contains a summary of issues raised by participants that cut across more than one area of DECC's proposals, or that were felt to be fundamental to the overall siting process.

3.1 – Definition of community

The need for more clarity on the definition of community was identified as a fundamental issue at all of the workshops, and it was noted that the way in which community is defined has a knock-on effect on many aspects of the siting process. A number of suggestions were put forward (see Section 4.1.4 in Decision making in the siting process, and Section 6.1.6 in Community benefits in particular), and DECC also welcomed suggestions for this in submissions to the consultation. A number of participants at each workshop expressed frustration about the lack of clarity as they felt it made it difficult to respond to certain aspects of the consultation.

3.2 – History of the MRWS process in Cumbria

The history of the MRWS process in west Cumbria was the subject of much discussion at the workshop in Penrith, however, participants at all of the other workshops also made references to it. Issues included:

- Views that west Cumbria is the best location for a GDF as the majority of the waste destined for disposal is already located at Sellafield.
- That the community in west Cumbria has shown that they want the GDF to be hosted there but were overruled by local politicians – this contrasted with views from some participants at Penrith who felt that as Cumbria has 'said no' in the previous process it should be excluded from any future process.
- Cynicism about the Government's motives for removing county councils from decision making and therefore being seen to 'move the goalposts'.
- Concerns that the question as to whether west Cumbria is a reasonable prospect for hosting a GDF still has not been answered.
- Views that there is now a commonly held perception that the geology in west Cumbria has already been proved to be unsuitable.
- That other communities did not respond to the previous invitation for Expressions of Interest due to an assumption that the GDF was always going to be located in west Cumbria.
- The importance of the period of national awareness-raising to educate people and local authorities about some of the perceptions and beliefs that exist, including in relation to what is and is not known about the geology of west Cumbria.

3.3 – Information and education

At all of the workshops there were a number of questions and requests for more detail/clarification on many aspects of the siting process. For DECC and participants this highlighted the necessity of information and education for members of the public, stakeholders and local authorities, both in advance of and throughout the siting process. Whilst there was support for the proposal for a period of national awareness-raising, the difficulties of getting members of the public to engage with this issue were also highlighted. The need to provide information at a level that is simple enough to be understood and

interpreted, but that also gives enough detail on e.g. technical/scientific aspects was also acknowledged. (See also Section 4.1.1 on National awareness-raising.)

3.4 – More than one GDF

The potential for more than one GDF was discussed at all of the workshops, with reasons for considering this including:

- To avoid putting all eggs in one basket, and to spread the risk.
- To avoid transporting waste across large parts of the UK.
- To separate legacy and new build waste, particularly in relation to the potential difficulties of finding a community that is willing to take all current *and* future waste as opposed to just signing up to take the nation's legacy waste.
- To separate high level waste (HLW) and intermediate level waste (ILW). Although the cost implications were acknowledged, it was suggested that e.g. mining communities might consider having a facility just for ILW, and this would make the main facility smaller.

3.5 – Alternatives to voluntarism

DECC reiterated in their presentations that the Government continues to favour an approach to site selection that is based on voluntarism and partnership, and that this aspect of the siting process is *not* in the scope of the consultation. There were, however, participants at all of the workshops who felt that alternative approaches to identifying potential sites should be adopted, either alongside voluntarism or as an alternative to it. Suggestions included:

- Carrying out a national geological survey first to identify areas of the country with the most suitable geology and/or rule out those that are not suitable [*although this issue was raised during the Call for Evidence and addressed by DECC in the consultation document, it was still raised by participants at all of the workshops*].
- Conforming with the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle by narrowing the field to sites that are already storing HLW and spent fuel.
- Investigating the suitability of nuclear new build sites.
- Providing more up-front information on potential suitability to avoid wasting time/money.
- Carrying out a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) first.
- Applying other criteria to narrow down potentially suitable/unsuitable locations e.g. excluding areas with high population densities.
- That the voluntarism approach is too passive, and there is no reason why the Government shouldn't "woo" communities, including those where the waste is already located (and/or will be in the future).

(See also Section 5.1.4 in Geological settings and Section 5.3.4 in Inventory.)

3.6 – Trust

The issue of trust in the Government, the NDA and (to a lesser extent) local authorities, was another consistent theme, and there was some cynicism about the Government's motives for making some of the proposed revisions to the siting process. This was particularly evident in relation to decision making, and there were concerns that the process is being made less trustworthy than previously by removing levels of local government from decision making and allowing decisions to be made by those who have already shown themselves to be willing. Suggestions for improving community confidence in the process included: carrying out research into how to get communities to have more trust in government; ensuring independence, openness and transparency throughout the process; ensuring that there is

funding for peer review and challenge; and providing information about how other countries are managing their radioactive waste, including how voluntarism has been used or adapted elsewhere.

Section 4 – Chapter 2: Decision Making and Roles

4.1 – Decision making in the siting process

Summary of proposals (see also pages 21 to 31 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- A period of national public awareness raising and engagement before seeking volunteers.
- A more continuous process of two phases – ‘Learning’ and ‘Focusing’ – with an ongoing Right of Withdrawal.
- A possible requirement for a demonstration of community support before a community commits to hosting.
- Specify that it is the district council that will exercise the Right of Withdrawal during the siting process.

Consultation questions:

- Question 1 – Do you agree that a test of public support should be taken before the representative authority loses the Right of Withdrawal? If so, what do you think would be the most appropriate means of testing public support, and when should it take place? If you do not agree with the need for such a test, please explain why.
- Question 2 – Do you agree with the proposed amendments to decision making within the MRWS siting process? If not, how would you modify the proposed phased approach, or, alternatively, what different approach would you propose? Please explain your reasoning.

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation questions is given below.

4.1.1 – National awareness-raising and engagement before seeking volunteers

Discussions focused on how DECC intends to carry out the national awareness-raising and consult/engage with local authorities and communities in order to invite them to come forward. It was acknowledged that radioactive waste management is not currently an issue in the public’s mind, and there was agreement that its profile needs to be raised if people are to engage with it. It was noted that community benefits are a real opportunity for some communities, but for the process to succeed it must be “marketed”.

Suggestions for areas to focus on included:

- Explaining how the UK has got to this stage with legacy waste.
- The pros and cons of hosting a GDF, including impacts and benefits to communities.
- That a GDF is a highly regulated and engineered solution, not a “dump”.
- How waste is currently managed and where it is located.
- The implications/consequences of *not* having a GDF.
- A comparison of the costs of continuing with surface storage against the costs of a GDF.
- Addressing some of the “myths” about safety and risks.
- Putting the risks in context e.g. by comparing a GDF with surface storage.
- Clarity that more than one facility might be considered.
- Openness and transparency, including about what is/isn’t known and the uncertainties.

- More clarity on the timescales involved in the process for e.g. consultation, site investigations, planning, construction, emplacement of waste etc.
- Information on the solutions adopted by other countries, including e.g. the approaches used to identify/select sites and what the surface/underground facilities look like, to show that the process being proposed has worked elsewhere.

There were a number of suggestions for methods of communication, and the importance of providing information in language that people will understand was also emphasised. The challenges of communicating with people who are not nuclear literate and communities that are not well informed/aware on nuclear issues were also noted.

4.1.2 – Expressions of Interest

There were a number of questions about the process for communities to register their interest and the difference between informal discussions and formal Expressions of Interest. DECC reiterated that the proposal is to only start the ‘Learning’ phase with any community *after* the national awareness-raising stage has been completed, but explained that there might be informal discussions with communities during the initial awareness-raising and engagement process. They also clarified that any community, individual or local body could volunteer, but the local authority has the say as to whether interest becomes formal.

There were also discussions about what would happen if more than one community volunteers, including how decisions would be made about which area is most suitable. (See also Sections 5.1 on Geological settings and 6.2 on Socio-economic and environmental assessments.)

4.1.3 – A more continuous process of two phases – ‘Learning’ and ‘Focusing’ – with an ongoing Right of Withdrawal

Discussions at Penrith focused primarily on the proposal to define the district council as the representative authority (see Section 4.1.5 below). At the other workshops, there was support for the proposals for a more continuous process. Comments included:

- The proposed changes are reasonable and quite pragmatic.
- The process is improved as communities can get information earlier, and decisions later in the process would therefore be better informed.
- A continuous process is better than actively having to opt in at decision points.
- General satisfaction with the option for a “brake lever” at any point.

Concerns included:

- The extended timescales mean that communities might lose interest.
- The need for a mechanism that would allow concerns that emerge after the Right of Withdrawal has ceased to be addressed.
- The need to keep advocacy and decision making separate.
- The potential for wasting time and money on communities that will not be suitable.
- A risk that the process could fail due to the public getting a sense that the risks are greater than they actually are due e.g. to distorted media coverage or the extended timescales involved in the process.
- The need for the Right of Withdrawal to be enshrined in law.

The links with Planning (Section 5.2) and Socio-economic and environmental assessments (Section 6.2), were also noted, and participants discussed the need to ensure that information gained from across the different work streams is fully utilised in order to avoid duplication.

It was emphasised that the Learning and Focusing phases present a *huge* educational issue, and it was suggested that DECC will need to involve people who have experience of community education and engagement. Other comments included:

- The need to raise understanding of the *whole* process, and not just provide site-specific information.
- The importance of *dialogue* during the Learning phase, and specific information for communities about what they would be signing up to.
- The need to accommodate the fact that it is difficult/impossible to ever have the full picture, and to make it clear that information will not be complete at any stage.

4.1.4 – Requirement for a demonstration of community support

Sequence of decision making – It was confirmed that the sequencing as to whether the decision made by a district council has to be supported by public view or vice versa has not yet been determined. It was also confirmed that the proposal is for the public test of support to be binding.

Views of those who agreed with the proposal for a test of public support – Support for a formal test of public support before the representative authority loses the Right of Withdrawal was expressed at all of the workshops, although views differed on how and when the test should be carried out, and who should be asked.

There were a number of suggestions that there should be more than one test of public support at different stages e.g. opportunities to get a sense of views along the way with a referendum of the whole constituency at the end of the process. It was also suggested that the wider community should be consulted at different stages about specific aspects of the development so that they can influence what happens.

Some felt that support for entering the Learning phase of the process should be formally measured or tested, but others disagreed. Arguments against early testing included the need to go further through the Learning phase before testing to ensure communities have enough information to be able to make informed/meaningful decisions and avoid people making assumptions. Experience of the process in Shepway was cited as an example where people felt that the process was defeated due to a lack of information. In contrast, concerns were expressed in Penrith about the removal of the suggestion in the current MRWS White Paper that a local authority ‘should have canvassed opinion’ before making an Expression of Interest.

Views of those who did not agree with the proposal – The reasons given by those who were against a test of public support were that “you might as well abolish local government”, and that the UK has already waited far too long to get a GDF and this would slow the process down even further.

Method for testing support – Views on the method for testing support included a referendum (possibly coinciding with a local or national election), a simple majority vote, and an opinion survey(s). Concerns about referendums included low turnout, and results being skewed due to people being less likely to turn out if they are in agreement with the issue being voted on. Concerns about opinion surveys included campaigns being used to attempt to skew people’s views, especially if it is known in advance that the survey is happening. Discussions in Exeter also focused on how *willingness* can be defined and measured, and in London, Citizens’ Panels were viewed favourably as part of a package of consultation.

It was also suggested that a guide to consultation would be useful, including guidelines and resources for carrying out surveys of public support.

Definition of community – The importance of being able to define the constituency/ community being tested was highlighted as a fundamental issue at all of the workshops. Requests for clarification on the definition of community were made in relation to this and many other topics, and DECC highlighted that they welcomed views on this in responses to the consultation.

Although there was a suggestion at Penrith that ‘community’ is already well defined in the MRWS White Paper, others at all venues felt that it is a significant challenge to identify/define specific areas, and a number of differing views were expressed on how this could or should be done. It was noted that there are several potential levels of community in relation to a GDF e.g. the immediate vicinity of the facility, neighbouring communities, the whole county, the whole of the UK, and anybody who is affected e.g. by transport, construction etc. Whilst some felt that consultation should be much wider than the immediate vicinity of the site(s) (including the need for support from neighbouring communities), the difficulties of achieving a unanimous voice, and the tensions arising from the fact that those who are opposed to a site will want to maximise the size of the community being tested for its support, were also noted.

Suggestions and viewpoints on defining community included:

- Define by authority boundaries and test those on the electoral register at the time.
- Community should not be defined by authority boundaries – it should be bespoke.
- Draw circles around the proposed site [*this was suggested at all of the workshops*], and/or identify consultation zones according to level of impact/benefit.
- Allow ‘everyone’ to have their say and disaggregate different weightings – the communities most affected should have a heavier weighting.

4.1.5 – Representative authority

Cynicism about the Government’s motives for the revisions – Cynicism about the Government’s motives for removing the level of county council from decision making was expressed at all of the workshops. Comments included that it is a “blatant” attempt to silence dissent and get the answer that DECC wants, and that it looks like Cumbria County Council is being taken out of the equation so that they cannot “torpedo” the process.

DECC acknowledged this and explained that the need for ‘three green lights’⁵ was not part of the White Paper, and that it had been agreed as a bespoke solution for how the MRWS process would operate in west Cumbria. It was suggested by a participant at Exeter that the local authorities involved in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process for Hinkley had proved that it was possible to work well together, but this was disputed by another participant who felt that this had not been the case on another local infrastructure project.

Lack of clarity – It was suggested that the section of the consultation document on local government does not provide enough clarity e.g. it does not cover regional tiers of government (as exist in London), and is unhelpful for areas where a unitary authority exists. There were questions about how a district council can be equated with a unitary authority and the logic of excluding a county council but including a unitary authority was challenged. It was also suggested that parish councils should be recognised as another tier of local government, and the need for clarity about the roles of elected representatives at county, district and parish levels was highlighted.

County council vs district council as representative authority – At Penrith, the proposal to define the district council as the representative authority was an area of much debate, with strong views being expressed both for and against this proposed revision. There were also opposing views on this at the other workshops.

Participants who felt that the county council should be the representative authority expressed concerns about excluding higher levels of local government from decision making, and references were made to the role of county councils in issues such as minerals and waste, transport and emergency measures. It was also suggested that higher level, more strategic authorities might be more likely to come forward and should therefore not be excluded from doing so.

Others who supported the proposed revision felt that having the district council as the representative authority would bring decision making to the community level, and it was suggested that district councils might take a more objective view than county councils. There was a challenge to this at Penrith, where it was noted that the district councils in Cumbria had voted to proceed to the next stage of the process despite many parish councillors having objected.

At Exeter it was suggested that local councillors would be reluctant to be seen to support volunteering their community due to the “political furore” that might ensue, and that an officer from a county council might be better placed to take such a step.

Parish and town councils – The role of parish and town councils in the process was also debated. There was some discontent with the content of Paragraph 2.28 in the consultation document in which the role of parish councils is discussed. Some participants had concerns that parishes would now be given a less prominent role in the process, and some also felt that parish councils *should* be involved in decision making, particularly as they are in the heart of the community. In contrast, others expressed concerns about parishes voting on an

⁵ ‘Three green lights’ refers to DECC’s acknowledgement in west Cumbria in the previous process that they believed for the process to work, they needed a green light (or decision to continue the siting process) from the Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and national Government.

issue of national importance, and it was reiterated that parish councils are not always elected bodies.

Community involvement – The role of communities in the process was questioned at all of the workshops, and the issue of lack of definition of community was again raised. Although DECC reiterated that the proposal for a binding test of public support would allow the community to have the final say, concerns included:

- The potential for a local community to be overruled by a wider community.
- Concerns that the credibility of this process hinges on public support, and that this will be difficult to achieve if it appears that the Government is simply changing the rules to achieve a yes vote in west Cumbria.

Timescales and local elections – Concerns were expressed that, due to the extended timescales of the process, there is the potential for a community that has gone through a number of years of the process to be withdrawn by a new political party. In contrast it was also suggested that the process needs to be long enough for people to be able to vote authorities in or out according to their position on hosting a GDF.

4.2 – Roles in the siting process

Summary of proposals (see also pages 32 to 35 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- The Government and RWMD to carry out a national public awareness and engagement programme. RWMD, as the developer, to form part of a ‘Steering Group’ with local councils.
- District council to be specified as the local decision making body. ‘Consultative Partnership’ to provide a role for counties and parishes.
- The Government to explore using CoRWM, a pool of professional peer reviewers and/or a new independent advisory body.

Consultation question:

- Question 3 – Do you agree with this approach to revising roles in the siting process set out in the White Paper? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation question is given below (see also Section 4.1.5 on Representative authority above).

4.2.1 – Steering Group and Consultative Partnership

Discussions at all workshops focused on the definition and roles of the ‘Steering Group’ and ‘Consultative Partnership’ (see paragraphs 2.53 to 2.56 of the consultation document), and how they would interact. Support for the proposed structure was expressed at Exeter in particular, as it was felt that it would allow the process to start locally and bring in wider viewpoints via the Consultative Partnership (including county and parish councils). In contrast, there was a suggestion at Penrith that parish councils should have a more prominent role in the Steering Group, and there were concerns that ‘partners’ in the previous process would now become consultees.

There was some support for DECC taking more of a proactive lead in the process, however, it was also noted that with the shifting of DECC and the NDA to an advocacy role, clarity about roles and interactions is particularly important. The need for a distinction between who is driving and who is informing the process was highlighted.

There were suggestions in both Penrith and London that there should be more independent leadership and/or chairing of either or both of the above groups.

4.2.2 – Independent scientific input and peer review

The need for the input of independent scientific expertise and peer review was highlighted at all of the workshops, but it was also noted that this can be difficult to achieve. It was acknowledged that academic institutions, learned societies and independent committees such as CoRWM are generally viewed as trustworthy, however, the perception of independence can be compromised by e.g. carrying out work for Government/industry, and having members who work in nuclear-related fields. It was also noted that institutions face increasing difficulties in meeting/resourcing the challenge.

Whilst it was acknowledged that proven processes for peer review already exist in the UK’s scientific institutions, the issue of knowing who to believe and trust was highlighted, especially as there are usually experts on both sides of scientific arguments. Suggestions

included setting up an independent committee under a judicial head, and having a broad range of expertise to draw on.

4.2.3 – Regulators

It was suggested that there should be more prominence and emphasis on the role of the regulators to provide assurances/confidence in safety, and for the general public to understand there are independent regulatory processes in place. Some participants felt that the regulators are more trusted than the Government and the NDA, and that this should be nurtured and protected.

4.2.4 – Funding and resources

Concerns were raised about funding and resources for communities to take part in the process. Assurances were given by DECC that the engagement funding is intended for this purpose, and the Welsh Government also confirmed that it is intended that local communities and the regulatory bodies in Wales would be funded/resourced to fully engage. Despite these assurances, fears remained that some of the bodies that *should* be involved in the Steering Group and Consultative Partnership would not have the structure, capacity or resources to take part, and would therefore need a lot of support (see also Section 6.1.1. on Engagement funding).

A question was also asked as to whether RWMD is sufficiently funded to carry out ongoing research into treatment/handling of waste.

4.2.5 – Engaging with future generations

The importance of involving and engaging with younger generations was highlighted at all of the workshops, and it was suggested that e.g. schools and students should be supported to have a role in the process.

Section 5 – Chapter 3: Technical Delivery

5.1 – Geological settings

Summary of proposals (see also pages 36 to 41 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- The Government to publish information on regional geology in advance of any call for volunteers.
- The Government to move quickly to provide a detailed, independent geological report for areas engaged in the 'Learning' phase.

Consultation question:

- Question 4 – Do you agree with this proposed approach to assessing geological suitability as part of the MRWS siting process? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation question is given below.

5.1.1 – Overall level of support for the proposals

There was some support for the proposals, including a comment from one group of participants in London that the proposed process for providing information on geology was the least controversial issue in the consultation document. However views on this section of the consultation document differed widely with some strongly held opinions. Whilst there was acknowledgement that the proposals are intended to improve on the previous process, participants expressed concerns about several aspects of this part of the siting process and these are outlined in more detail below.

5.1.2 – Nature of the geological information that would be provided

Clarifications were sought about the nature and level of the information that would be provided during the different stages of the process, whether it would be purely factual or would also include interpretation, and the differences (if any) between the proposed information and the BGS study carried out for west Cumbria during the previous process. Questions were also asked about how much would need to be spent to rule out a site.

Whilst some felt that it would be useful to publish broad descriptions of what is already known about regional geology as part of the national awareness-raising, it was felt by others that this information is not helpful if it does not identify areas which are more/less suitable. It was suggested that people on either side of the argument will use the regional information to back up their argument, and (in relation to Paragraph 3.11 in the consultation document) it was noted that it is inevitable that people *will* make definitive judgements about suitability no matter what level of information is provided. The need to find a way of handling this *or* to wait until more detailed information is available was suggested.

There was also some support for the proposal to provide more detailed geological information at an earlier stage for communities that go into the Learning phase. Despite much discussion, it was apparent that more clarity has yet to emerge about the nature of the information that would be made available to communities during this phase, and there were concerns from some participants at Penrith in particular that it would not go any further than

the information that has already been provided for west Cumbria. Concerns were also expressed as to whether the proposed information on local geology would actually help local communities get any further forward in determining whether the geology is suitable or not.

5.1.3 – Education and interpretation

It was noted that just publishing information and data without trusted interpretation would not necessarily help, and the importance of education on geology was also highlighted. Suggestions included: the need to answer questions on the suitability/unsuitability of different types of rock and geological features; an understanding of the geological requirements of a GDF including the ways in which different types of rock provide protection; and the implications of the existence of aquifers on the location/depth of a GDF.

It was also emphasised that the picture is incomplete without also providing information about engineering, as geology is only one of the barriers. Suggestions included explaining how the engineering would be adapted to deal with different types of rock, case histories of what has been done in different types of geology, and information about the safety case process. The importance of acknowledging and communicating the scientific uncertainties in both geology and engineering was also highlighted.

5.1.4 – National geological survey

The issue of whether a national geological screening survey should or could be carried out in advance of inviting communities to come forward was raised at all of the workshops. There were participants at each workshop who felt that a national screening survey *should* be carried out, to identify areas of the country with the most suitable geology or rule out those that are not suitable. It was also felt that it would avoid wasting time and money on areas that might ultimately prove to be unsuitable, and would allow local authorities to have a better understanding of whether there is a *chance* of their area being suitable. Questions were also asked about how much it would cost to carry out such a survey, and it was suggested that, given the scale of this project, the costs involved should not be beyond consideration.

It was noted by DECC and some participants that there are geologists (including members of the BGS and the Geological Society) who support voluntarism. It was also stated that drawing a map identifying suitable/unsuitable geology is not possible, and that not enough is known about geology in all areas of the country (particularly at the depths that a GDF might be located) to carry out such a survey. DECC and RWMD also explained that there is no such thing as 'ideal' geology, and that research has been conducted into what kinds of facility would need to be constructed in each of 9 geological settings.

References were made by participants to other countries that *have* carried out national screening and to investigations carried out by Nirex that identified areas of the UK with the most suitable geology. DECC stated that it would be difficult to find a site using such a broad brush approach, and reiterated the need to carry out detailed intrusive investigations at a potential site in order to determine geological suitability.

Despite these explanations, there were participants at all of the workshops who remained unconvinced by the arguments, and who still felt that a national screening process *should* be carried out.

5.1.5 – Support for voluntarism before geology

In contrast to the above, there was some support for voluntarism before geology, with voluntarism being cited as a critical aspect of the process, and concerns that too much focus on geology could put voluntarism into second place. It was also noted that there is a danger of identifying potential sites on the basis of geology only for there to be local opposition.

5.1.6 – Independence, peer review and challenge

Discussions took place at all of the workshops about the importance of peer review and the opportunity for challenge. It was suggested that there should be more clarity about the scientific process for research and peer review in the siting of a GDF, and the role/involvement of learned societies etc. It was also noted that transparency about what is understood about geology is crucial, including clarity on what is/is not known, and openness about the differing viewpoints that exist. The need for care in how the data is presented, especially to avoid skewing investigations towards areas that have been explored in more detail, was also highlighted.

The issues of trust and independence were also common themes, in relation to both the provision and interpretation of the data. Suggestions for bodies that could be involved in carrying out the work and/or acting as peer reviewers included the BGS (although there were concerns that they are not always seen as independent) and the Royal Society. The possibility of a new body being set up to scrutinise the process was also discussed.

RWMD also confirmed that their safety case will be peer reviewed before it is presented to the regulators.

5.1.7 – Geology in west Cumbria

The studies of geology in west Cumbria during the MRWS and Nirex processes were the focus of discussions at Penrith, and were also referred to at the other workshops. It was acknowledged that a large amount of geological information for west Cumbria already exists. However, although some people believe that the geology of the area has already been shown to be unsuitable, it was noted that there is still not a definitive answer as to whether west Cumbria provides a reasonable prospect or not.

5.1.8 – Other siting criteria

Although it was acknowledged that geology is a fundamental criterion in the siting process, it was suggested that other criteria could or should be used for initial/early screening e.g. screen out highly populated areas, prioritise brown-field sites and focus on locations that already have good rail/road connections.

5.1.9 – Other comments and clarifications

Other topics that were discussed included:

- Assurances from the Government and the NDA that no sites have been ‘pencilled in’.
- Confirmation that a GDF would *not* be located in areas that might be exploited for mineral resources in the future, both to safeguard the resources for future need and to guard against intrusion by future generations.
- Confirmation that it is feasible to locate a GDF under the sea although it would be more complicated.

5.2 – Planning

Summary of proposals (see also pages 42 to 45 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- The Government to commit to applying the Nationally Significant Infrastructure (NSIP) regime and bring forward necessary amendments to the Planning Act 2008.
- The Government to bring intrusive investigations within the definition of nationally significant infrastructure as well.
- The Government to publish a generic National Policy Statement, specifically for a GDF, early in the siting process which would be subject to an Appraisal of Sustainability.

Consultation question:

- Question 5 – Do you agree with this proposed approach to planning for a GDF? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation question is given below.

5.2.1 – Designation of a GDF as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

Views differed at all of the workshops on whether a GDF should be designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Those who supported the proposal felt that it makes sense as a GDF *is* nationally significant infrastructure, and that the NSIP planning framework would benefit the GDF siting process. There was also support for having a National Policy Statement, as long as it provides the certainty needed for different levels of the process including e.g. the Right of Withdrawal.

Reasons given by those who disagreed with the proposal included concerns that a GDF would now just be imposed (as has been perceived with new build), that the proposal is seen as a move to remove power from county council level (in particular in Cumbria), and suspicions that the process is being changed to fit the circumstances.

It was also suggested that there is very little respect for the Planning Inspectorate from those who have dealt with them, and that there is a commonly held perception that they ride roughshod over local communities.

5.2.2 – How voluntarism would work alongside the NSIP regime

Discussions were held at all of the workshops about how voluntarism and the NSIP regime would work alongside each other. There were concerns that voluntarism would be overridden, and that the Secretary of State/the Planning Inspectorate would be able to make the final decision independent of voluntarism and the community's Right of Withdrawal.

Despite assurances from DECC that the decision to host a GDF would be made by the local community, concerns remained. There were also differing interpretations of how the two processes would work alongside each other. It was emphasised that there needs to be a very clear explanation about the interaction between the MRWS voluntarism process and the NSIP regime, as well as clarity about who has the powers to decide what.

5.2.3 – Consultation and engagement

The requirements for consultation and engagement under the NSIP regime were discussed, and comparisons were made with the new build process during which it was felt by some that consultation was insufficient. Assurances were given that all of the usual engagement processes for planning applications would be in place, and it was also noted that the NSIP regime would put *more* onus on developers to engage with local communities. The regulators also emphasised that they would want to be consulted at each stage from early on in the process.

The difference between *'like to'* and *'have to'* consult was, however, noted and it was suggested that it would help to bring people on board if communication and consultation happens when it does not have to. It was also suggested that local government needs to be fully resourced to respond to whatever planning process is in place.

5.2.4 – Inclusion of intrusive investigations and other related developments

Views differed at all of the workshops on whether intrusive investigations such as boreholes should be brought within the definition of nationally significant infrastructure. Some felt that the process would be more streamlined by bringing all planning applications under the same regime, but others felt that everything should *not* be treated in the same way.

There were several questions about the nature of and differences between the intrusive investigations. It was felt that there is a lot of ambiguity in the proposals about what is involved in the different investigations (including the *non*-intrusive investigations), and that there needs to be more clarity (see also Section 4.1 on Geological settings). Questions were also asked about how long it would take for planning applications to go through under the different planning regimes.

It was also unclear to participants whether it is intended that other infrastructure and ancillary developments would be included as part of the NSIP planning process. Whilst some felt that these *should* be explicitly included, there were concerns about the process becoming “stuck” if it is too complicated.

Concerns were also expressed about a lack of focus on wider implications e.g. accessibility of the site, transport networks, and links with other infrastructure, and it was suggested that all of the variables should be considered together. Although assurances were given that the Planning Inspectorate would cover transport, it was acknowledged that communities will be concerned about this and it therefore needs to be covered in more detail.

5.2.5 – Links with other planning legislation

It was noted that the amendments to the Planning Act 2008 are not clear (or unknown), and concerns were expressed about agreeing to changes in planning until the full picture is clear. Questions were also asked about the timing of negotiations for community benefits and Section 106 agreements under the NSIP regime.

5.2.6 – Planning legislation in Wales

Clarifications at the workshop in Llandudno included confirmation that the NSIP regime and National Policy Statement would not apply in Wales, however new planning process legislation that is due to go through the National Assembly may institute a similar system.

5.3 – Inventory

Summary of proposals (see also pages 45 to 50 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- The inventory for disposal to be communicated to potential communities with a focus on waste and material types and the safety case (volume figures still available).
- To be clear on the inclusion of new nuclear waste, of a specified maximum size.

Consultation question:

- Question 6 – Do you agree with this clarification of the inventory for geological disposal – and how this will be communicated with the volunteer host community? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation question is given below.

5.3.1 – Provision of more clarity

There was some support for providing more clarity on the inventory, but there was disagreement about the extent to which the situation would actually be any clearer. The difficulties of communicating some of the complexities and uncertainties were noted, and views differed at all workshops on some of the detail in the proposals, including what should or should not be included in the inventory.

Those who broadly supported the proposals felt that it is useful to ‘bound’ the inventory, and accepted that, although it is difficult to know what might be in the inventory in the future, these proposals provide a useful starting point. Others felt that it is not helpful to over-prescribe the inventory yet, and that there is a need for more clarity over who controls future changes to the inventory.

5.3.2 – Clarifications and uncertainties

Although it was acknowledged that the proposals are trying to reduce uncertainty and provide more clarity, it was apparent that there are still *many* uncertainties. Questions and requests for clarification included discussions around:

- Which types of waste are included in the inventory, including specific questions about e.g. MOD waste, waste from the submarine decommissioning programme, spent fuel, ‘exotic’ fuel and certain types of LLW.
- Current plans and future options for dealing with plutonium and uranium.
- Which types of waste can be (and/or are) reprocessed.
- Differing viewpoints and uncertainties around the classification of some materials (including e.g. spent fuel) as an asset or as waste.
- Future forms/types of waste from new build.
- Whether spent fuel from nuclear new build would go straight to the GDF or be kept on site until it is ready for disposal.
- What would happen if the maximum inventory was exceeded.
- Concerns about disposing of multiple types of waste in one GDF.
- Whether the waste hierarchy applies to nuclear waste, including re-use where possible.

- Whether overseas waste could be disposed of in the UK, the potential for international co-operation, and the legal situation regarding international restrictions on moving nuclear waste.

5.3.3 – Communication

The challenges of communication were discussed at most of the workshops, particularly in relation to providing explanations and definitions of the different types of waste, and communicating the uncertainties. It was noted that communities will also want to know about issues such as transportation, and how ‘dangerous’ the materials are. Specific suggestions included:

- Providing information and descriptions of different types of waste in terms of physical form, levels of radioactivity and so on.
- Providing useful descriptors of volume (e.g. lorry or train loads) to give people a better understanding of transportation issues.
- Providing assurances regarding the regulation of transport and safety.
- Explaining that some radioactive materials are recycled and re-used whenever possible.
- Explaining new build waste using different measures e.g. type of radioactivity in addition to generation capacity.

5.3.4 – Location of the inventory

The current location of the waste was a common theme, and discussions were held about the extent to which this would be considered when considering locations for a GDF. There were a number of requests for a more detailed map of the inventory in relation to its location.

Some participants felt that location *should* be taken into account, to conform with the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle, and/or to minimise the risks and security issues associated with transporting radioactive waste and plutonium. It was noted that radioactive waste is already transported around the country but many people do not realise that it is.

There were also suggestions that, instead of focusing on voluntarism, a more sensible approach would be to narrow the field by focusing on sites that already have high level waste or spent fuel. At the workshop in Llandudno it was suggested that there is a reason for communities living around sites where waste is already stored to investigate whether the site is suitable, and that there should be a process which allows such sites to be investigated with an absolute guarantee that a decision is not taken to use that site until it is known that it is suitable. There was a further suggestion that site owners where HLW and ILW are already stored should be *obliged* to start this process off.

Other suggestions included: simply locating the GDF in Cumbria as the majority of the waste is already located there; considering more than one site e.g. having different disposal sites for ILW; or having two GDFs with one in the north and one in the south.

5.3.5 – Inclusion of new build waste

Views differed on whether new build waste should be included in the inventory. Some felt that it makes the situation more complicated, whereas others felt that it should be included so that it can be planned for.

Reference was made by a participant to the fact that CoRWM asserted in 2010 that its recommendations on a GDF should not be seen as a green light for nuclear new build, and

that legacy and new build waste should not be ‘conflated’. Concerns were expressed that this had been “ignored”, and another participant suggested that the Government had previously said that nuclear new build could not go ahead without a GDF in place. *[DECC has since clarified that it has been stated Government policy since the 2008 White Papers on new nuclear power and on geological disposal that waste and spent fuel from new nuclear power stations will be disposed of in a GDF. Spent fuel will be stored safely and securely on site until a GDF is ready to dispose of the waste.]*

The changes to the lifetime of a GDF if new build waste is included were noted, and it was emphasised that the implications of this should be discussed with communities.

5.3.6 – Policy for interim storage of new build waste

A discussion was held in Llandudno regarding the timescales for storing spent fuel at reactor sites and it was noted that the current policy is that spent fuel would be stored on site for approximately 100 years after it is taken out of a reactor. It was felt that if local communities were more aware that HLW would be stored on site for these timescales anyway, it could create a potential incentive for them to put themselves forward, as committing to a GDF would not be significantly different.

It was, however, noted that the policy of keeping spent fuel on site is Government policy and is not for technical reasons. New companies will have a choice as to what to do with their fuel and would not necessarily have to store it on site for 100+ years, especially if there was another place that it could be moved to after a certain period of time, whether for disposal or reprocessing.

5.3.7 – Retrievability and reversibility

Questions were asked about retrievability and reversibility, and it was suggested that clarity is needed on what these both mean and the implications for communities around a potential site. The security implications of closing the GDF were also discussed, with concerns that removing the surface facilities would mean that the site could be accessed by people in the future (see also Section 6.2.7 on Impacts and risks for future generations).

Section 6 – Chapter 4: Communities

6.1 – Community benefits

Summary of proposals (see also pages 51 to 52 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- The Government to make clear – early in a revised siting process – the potential scale of community benefits.
- To start paying limited benefits to a potential host community during the ‘Focusing’ phase.
- The Government to create a community fund – only able to retrieve these funds if a GDF was not constructed in the community.

Consultation question:

- Question 7 – Do you endorse the proposed approach on community benefits associated with a GDF? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation question is given below.

6.1.1 – Engagement funding

Clarification was sought at all of the workshops about the difference between engagement funding and community benefits. It was suggested that DECC needs to be more specific about how engagement funding would work, including how it would be paid and to whom (see also Section 4.2.4 on Funding and resources). Specific concerns included funding for parish councils/associations and small under-funded groups, ensuring that any costs incurred in the initial phases are covered, and managing expectations about whether short-term benefits will be focused on engagement rather than tangible benefits.

There was a suggestion that, in addition to engagement funding and community benefits, there should also be economic benefits to incentivise communities to enter into discussions with the Government (i.e. enter the Learning phase), and it was felt that this would also address concerns that local councillors might have about “putting their head above the parapet”. It was also suggested that the Swedish model of compensating communities that engage should be adopted including the option of benefits for communities that miss out. DECC confirmed that they would discuss how to handle community benefits if multiple communities show interest.

6.1.2 – Definition and scope of the benefits

There was support at all of the workshops for more clarity on the scale and scope of the benefits package, and it was felt by some that this would provide more encouragement for a community to volunteer. Concerns still remained, however, about the definition and scope of the community that would benefit and who would be accountable for spending the funds. It was also felt that the ‘limited’ benefit during the Focusing phase could be better defined.

It was suggested that the benefits should be seen as more than a fund of money, and that there is a need to be as specific as possible to help people understand what the benefits might be. Suggestions for types of benefits included hospitals, guarantees of jobs, education, benefits to future generations, providing renewable energy and free council tax.

A distinction was made between community benefits and benefits that would arise anyway from construction and operation of the facility (e.g. employment, training, professions, infrastructure etc.). Questions were also asked about whether the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 type benefits would apply *in addition* to community benefits, and it was suggested that it would also be useful to have clarity on how business rates would be applied.

DECC advised that the Treasury has yet to agree the budget for community benefits, but acknowledged that more clarity is needed. Discussions amongst participants around the potential scale of the benefits package included a comparison with the Community Infrastructure Levy across an authority area, and a specific example was given of a saving to the Treasury of £90-£100 million per annum that had been identified by Magnox through local consultation.

6.1.3 – Additionality

A consistent theme was the need for clarification and assurance for communities that community benefits are *additional* to what is needed to deliver a GDF, and a guarantee that existing social/economic packages (including those for existing NDA sites) would continue. It was also noted that it is important to avoid any perceptions that the benefits fund would be spent on a developer's duty to mitigate impacts.

Some scepticism was expressed at the workshop in Penrith about existing benefits packages, and whether communities in Cumbria have really received any benefit from having Sellafield, apart from employment. There was a question as to whether the community around Sellafield would receive community benefits for continuing to store the waste if no GDF is built, and the issue of "dis-benefits" to Cumbria if the GDF was to go elsewhere was also noted.

6.1.4 – Accountability and decision making for community benefits

The need for more clarity on who would be responsible for controlling the fund and determining how it is spent was raised at all of the workshops. The importance of community representation was highlighted and it was suggested that the community should be involved in defining how the process would work *and* determining the benefits. Reference was made to Chapter 2 of the consultation document in which representation of the community by an appropriate body is discussed, and it was emphasised that this body *must* be capable of representing the community in a credible way.

Suggestions included:

- Setting up an independent body to supervise and develop the process.
- That the Consultative Partnership will be essential but there should be *one* accountable body for decision making on community benefit spend/distribution.
- That parish councils should have a say in decisions on benefits.

It was emphasised that the Government should *not* be able to direct what the money can be spent on. Concerns were also expressed about local political control as it is subject to change, and it was suggested that politicians can be too short-term in their thinking.

6.1.5 – Perceptions of community benefits

The different perceptions of community benefits were another common theme. It was acknowledged that some people will always see them as a bribe or sweetener, as opposed to an appropriate payment in recognition of providing a service to the nation. The importance of presentation was noted, with some participants suggesting that benefits should be presented positively/as an opportunity, but others suggesting that it is important to be clear that there will be downsides in hosting a GDF and that community benefits are intended to compensate for these. It was also noted that no matter how community benefits are presented, the Government will always be accused of spin.

There were also concerns about the potential for conflict in communities due to different views on the risks as opposed to the benefits, and for some participants issues around safety, security and future generations were considered to be more important than benefits.

6.1.6 – Defining community and who should receive the benefits

The issues around defining community were raised again (see also Section 4.1.4 on Decision making in the siting process), and it was commonly felt that local authority boundaries may not be the most appropriate method for determining who should receive the benefits. Suggestions included:

- Using impacts to inform the definition of community and relating payments to impacts.
- Defining community by concentric circles and distributing benefits according to radius.
- Prioritising developments that would benefit the whole area.
- Using geographical criteria to account for the potential impact of serious incidents.

6.1.7 – Securing benefits over the long term

The need to ensure that benefits are secured over the long term was also discussed, both in terms of making sure that benefits continue after the facility has been built/closed, and the “resilience” of the fund over time, particularly in relation to changes in government and economic circumstances. Suggestions for ensuring this included maximising long-term benefits by taking a strategic view, relating benefits to what is needed for sustainability, and guaranteeing the payment of benefits through changes to legislation.

6.1.8 – Retrieval of funds if a community withdraws from the process

There was some agreement that communities should benefit as they progress through stages of the process. It was, however, suggested that more clarity is needed about the mechanism by which the Government would be able to retrieve/claw back funds if a GDF is not ultimately constructed in a community (Paragraph 4.15 of the consultation document).

Some felt that the wording should be stronger (i.e. that the Government “will” retrieve the funds if a GDF is not constructed), and the potential for communities to volunteer for the sake of the funding and then back out was noted. There were, however, concerns about what would happen if a community has already started to invest the funds in preparation for the future e.g. in skills/training. It was also noted that the reason for not proceeding might be because the geology is found to be unsuitable, or because construction is not permitted.

It was suggested that the focus should be on positive thinking and trying to encourage people to engage, rather than on how to take the money back if a community pulls out.

6.2 – Socio-economic and environmental assessments

Summary of proposals (see also pages 53 to 56 of the consultation document and the presentation slides in Appendix 3):

- Offer to provide further information about potential environmental, socio-economic, health and transport effects at the launch of the revised site selection process.
- Planning permission for a GDF to be sought through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime.
- A National Policy Statement, specifically for a GDF and focusing closely on the detail(s) of the siting process, to be subject to:
 - An Appraisal of Sustainability, satisfying the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and considering the implications of different approaches to site selection.
 - A separate Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).
- All to be developed shortly after revised siting process launched.

Consultation question:

- Question 8 – Do you agree with the proposed approach to addressing potential socio-economic and environmental effects that might come from hosting a GDF? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

A summary of the discussions relating to the above proposals and consultation question is given below (see also Section 5.2 on Planning).

6.2.1 – Clarifications

Discussions focused on clarifications about how the socio-economic and environmental assessments would work, and exactly what would be included. The importance of special reports for local areas, and the need to look at the assessments as a social exercise and not just a technical one were noted. It was also suggested that socio-economic and environmental issues should be kept separate.

In Llandudno discussions also focused on how the process would work in Wales, including how it would be resourced and funded.

6.2.2 – Scope of the assessments

The scope of the assessments was a common theme, and there were questions regarding whether wider aspects than the GDF itself would be taken into account including e.g. the impacts of site investigations and ancillary developments, disruptions to the wider community, waste from site excavations and so on.

At the workshop in Penrith it was suggested that the proposals did not contain enough about socio-economic impacts, and the need for better research and evidence was highlighted. The importance of ensuring that the socio-economic report is robust and that issues are not brushed under the carpet was also raised.

6.2.3 – Who should be involved

Discussions at Penrith also focused on who should carry out and/or be involved in assessing/determining socio-economic impacts. It was suggested that the NDA and Britain's Energy Coast should not carry out the assessments, and that an independent body should supervise the process. Suggestions for who could be involved included groups with local

knowledge such as the Chamber of Commerce and trade associations, and national business organisations.

Concerns were expressed about late involvement of the tourist industry and the Chamber of Commerce in the process in west Cumbria during the previous MRWS process, and the importance of convincing stakeholders such as these to become involved at an early stage was emphasised.

6.2.4 – Designated sites

Concerns were also raised at Penrith about impacts on designated sites such as national parks, Ramsar⁶ sites, special habitats etc. It was suggested that screening for designations should take place early on in the process, and that this would also avoid the potential for wasting money by investigating designated sites only for it to be subsequently found that this process contradicts the protection afforded to them.

Concerns were also expressed about the impact of a GDF on tourism in Cumbria, however, in contrast, it was noted that there has been a close association between tourism and the nuclear industry for many years, and that Sellafield has not stopped tourism.

6.2.5 – Communication with the public

The importance of communication with the public was a common theme. Concerns included the risk of poor communication and suspicion, the need to avoid any perception that the developer's duty to mitigate impacts will *not* be funded by the community benefits fund (see Section 6.1), and the need to highlight/reiterate that the safety case is embedded throughout the process, including post-closure. The challenges of communicating about nuclear-related issues with members of the public were acknowledged, including the balance between providing reassurance for communities that are new to the nuclear sector and being open about the impacts and risks.

6.2.6 – Duplication of processes

It was noted at Exeter and London in particular that the siting process for a GDF involves working through a number of parallel processes (including the Learning/Focusing phases and Planning), and the need to utilise the information that is gained across all of the work streams in order to avoid duplication was highlighted. There was a further suggestion that information from other processes should also be used e.g. the impacts assessments from nuclear new build that have already been carried out.

6.2.7 – Impacts and risks for future generations

Discussions also took place in London about the need to safeguard future generations, and the processes that would be in place for maintenance and management after the facility has been closed. This included a discussion about how future societies will know that radioactive waste is buried at the site. DECC advised that debates are taking place internationally about how this kind of facility should or should not be marked. Options that are being debated include e.g. the use of prominent symbols and an alternative view that attention should *not* be drawn to such sites.

⁶ Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention – see <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/ramsars/>.

Section 7 – Other comments

This section contains a summary of other issues discussed at the workshops that did not fit into the above categories, and includes responses to the final consultation question (Consultation Question 9: Do you have any other comments?), and key messages from participants for DECC.

7.1 – Comments about the review of the siting process and the consultation

A number of comments were made about the consultation itself and the work that DECC has carried out to review the siting process. Positive views included: encouragement that DECC and the NDA seem to genuinely be trying to learn; that it is good to see that there has been learning from having tried the process and that revisions are being made; and that it is a step forward in a process that people thought had foundered. Negative views included: that the consultation document is generally unclear and ambiguous in some places; there is a need for much more specific information and less complicated language to make the proposals more accessible to the general public; and a feeling that DECC are going through the motions of saying that they have consulted people but that they will go ahead anyway.

Some participants felt that it would be better to simply go back to Cumbria as it has already been shown that the community is willing. There were also concerns that the process has already taken too long and that many more years could be wasted if investigations into a volunteer community do not lead anywhere. It was further noted that it would be a waste of time and money if the GDF ends up going to Sellafield anyway. In contrast, however, there were others who felt it would *not* be appropriate to go back to Cumbria for a quick fix, and support was reiterated for the national awareness-raising and a “cooling-off” period where no interest can be registered. It was suggested that this is a whole new way of the Government interacting with the public, and it is therefore worth taking the time to do it properly, invest wisely, and get people on board.

7.2 – Funding for the process

Concerns were expressed about the cost of the process and whether there is a “bottomless public purse” to fund the nuclear sector. Although it was noted that the operators of new nuclear plants would bear the cost of disposing of new build waste, legacy waste has to be paid for by tax payers, and concerns were also expressed about the potential impact on the price of electricity.

7.3 – What happens if the revised process doesn’t work

Several questions were asked about what would happen if the process fails. DECC reiterated that the Government is committed to a process that is based on voluntarism and partnership, and that other programmes that have failed were based on trying to dictate to unwilling communities. A comparison was made with Sweden where the first attempt failed but the second revised attempt had two communities competing to host a facility. As the UK’s attempts to date have not worked, it is therefore appropriate to take stock and learn from the experience of having tried and this may need to happen again. Assurances were given by RWMD that other things are happening in parallel e.g. a continuing programme of investment at Sellafield, and research into interim storage. The ONR also reiterated that the ongoing safety of waste is in their remit, and that they are looking at sites to have safe and secure interim storage for 100 years.

7.4 – Other issues

Comments on other issues included:

- The need for a joined-up approach from central Government.
- Concerns about the extent to which the process has cross-party support.
- Concerns about mixing a scientific process with a social/political process.
- The need for a better description and more emphasis in the proposals on consultation with the community.
- That consultation should be inherent throughout the process and that it needs to be an iterative process with an emphasis on listening/responding.
- The need to be wary of consultation fatigue.

Section 8 – Key messages

There was much consistency in the discussions at all four workshops, including the key areas of focus for participants, and the levels of support for and/or opposition to the proposals. It was also apparent that there are many strong and opposing views on the issues surrounding radioactive waste management and geological disposal.

One of the key objectives of the national stakeholder workshops was to support stakeholders in compiling any responses they wished to make to the public consultation. It was apparent that many of the participants wanted to use the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the GDF siting process and DECC's proposals for revising and improving it, and this was highlighted by the significant number of questions and requests for clarification at all of the workshops. For DECC and participants this highlighted the importance of clear and accessible information, and the need for education for members of the public, stakeholders and local authorities both in advance of and throughout the siting process.

In relation to this there was support for the proposed period of national awareness-raising and for the proposal to provide more clarity on the scale and scope of the community benefits package, and it was felt by some that this would provide more encouragement for communities to volunteer. The challenges of getting members of the public to engage with the topic of radioactive waste management were, however, acknowledged.

There was also some support for the provision of more detailed geological information at an earlier stage in the process, but it was apparent that more clarity has yet to emerge about the exact nature of the information that would be provided. There were concerns that providing broad descriptions of what is already known about regional geology will not be helpful if it does not identify areas which are more or less suitable, and confusion remained about whether the local geological information would be different to that already provided for west Cumbria.

A key theme at all of the workshops was the need for more clarity on the definition of community, and/or a better description of the process by which community(ies) would be defined as part of the process, particularly in relation to community benefits and the role of the community in decision making. Frustration was expressed by a number of participants about the lack of clarity as they felt it made it difficult to respond to certain aspects of the consultation.

Although much of the focus of the debate in Penrith was on the history of the MRWS process in west Cumbria, references were also made to it at the other venues, and there was scepticism about the motives behind some of DECC's proposed revisions, particularly in relation to decision making. There were strong and opposing views at all of the workshops on the proposal to designate district councils as the representative authority. Whilst some felt this was appropriate, others were cynical about the Government's reasons for removing county councils from decision making. It was also felt that there needed to be more focus on how the process would operate in areas where unitary authorities and regional tiers of government exist. Support was, however, expressed for a formal test of community support before the representative authority loses the Right of Withdrawal, although views differed on how and when the test (or tests) should be carried out and who should be asked. Concerns

were expressed about the potential for voluntarism to be overridden by the NSIP planning regime, and there were consistent requests for more clarity and assurances about how the two processes would work alongside each other.

Challenges were also made to the Government's favoured approach of voluntarism and partnership, and several suggestions were made for approaches that could be adopted either alongside voluntarism or as an alternative to it. This included views from participants at all of the workshops that a national geological screening survey *should* be carried out before seeking volunteers, and participants remained unconvinced by DECC's arguments for not carrying out such a survey. It was also suggested that voluntarism alone is too passive, with some participants feeling that more proactive approaches could be adopted by DECC e.g. approaching communities that already have nuclear waste sited locally and applying other screening criteria alongside a voluntarism approach.

For further information, including the reports from the public dialogue and sector stakeholder workshops and responses to the formal consultation, see the DECC website at www.gov.uk/decc or contact radioactivewaste@decc.gsi.gov.uk.

Appendix 1 – Summary agenda

The objectives of the workshops were:

- To help DECC explore and understand stakeholders' issues/questions/concerns about the current GDF site selection process.
- To allow stakeholders to explore and understand the implications of the Government's proposals for them and other stakeholders.
- To obtain stakeholders' feedback on the proposals for improving the current GDF site selection process.
- To support stakeholders in compiling any responses they wish to make to the public consultation.

Agenda

Time	Details
09.00 – 10.00	Optional background briefing for participants (coffee and tea available from 08.45) Presentation by DECC.
10.00	Registration and arrivals for main workshop (coffee and tea available)
10.30 – 10.45	Workshop start – introductions & overview of the day
10.45 – 11.25	History, context & key messages from the review of the siting process Presentation and Q&A.
11.25 – 12.30	Workshop sessions on consultation questions Participants will be split into groups to take part in three workshop sessions, each giving/adding feedback in turn on the consultation questions as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making and roles – Chapter 2 (page 21). • Technical delivery – Chapter 3 (page 36). • Communities – Chapter 4 (page 51). These sessions will continue after lunch and each participant will be able to take part in all three sessions.
12.30 – 13.10	Break for lunch
13.10 – 14.40	Workshop sessions on consultation questions Continuing sessions from before lunch.
14.40 – 15.05	Break
15.05 – 16.00	Final session Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion at tables – additional points and reflections. • Final comments/observations/messages to DECC. • Next steps. • Evaluation forms.
16.00	Close
16.00 – 16.30	Further opportunity for informal discussions and networking with representatives from DECC and the NDA

Appendix 2 – Workshop attendance lists

Attendance List: Penrith – 12th November 2013

Organisation
Above Derwent Parish Council
Allerdale Borough Council
Britain's Energy Coast
Churches Together in Cumbria
Copeland Borough Council
Copper Consultancy
Crosscanonby Parish Council
Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC)
Cumbria County Council
The Cumbria Trust Ltd
Cummersdale Parish Council (also District Councillor for Dalston, and County Councillor for Dalston and Burgh-By-Sands)
Direct Rail Services
Eden District Council
Eden Nuclear and Environment Ltd
GMB
Gosforth Parish Council
Independent Consultant
Lake District National Park Authority
Lowick Parish Council
Morgan Sindall
Morland Parish Council
Moresby Parish Council
National Nuclear Laboratory
National Skills Academy for Nuclear
No Ennerdale Nuclear Dump
The Nuclear Institute, Cumbria
Prospect/Sellafield Workers Campaign
Radiation Free Lakeland
St Bees Parish Council
Sir Robert McAlpine
Syndicate Communications (supporting the NDA)
Three Weeks to Save the Lakes
Torver Parish Council
Workington Town Council

Total participants: 50

Supported by DECC, NDA RWMD, the Environment Agency, the Office for Nuclear Regulation, CoRWM and Sciencewise.

Attendance List: Llandudno – 19th November 2013

Organisation
British Geological Survey
British Geological Survey in Wales
Carillion PLC
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Gwynedd Council
Lancaster University Engineering Department
Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service on behalf of the six District Councils of the Liverpool City Region
Llandudno Minerals and Waste Planning Service
Nuvia Ltd
Shropshire Council
Snowdonia Enterprise Zone
Trawsfynydd Site Stakeholder Group
Wylfa Site Stakeholder Group

Total participants: 14

Supported by the Welsh Government, DECC, NDA RWMD, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales, the Office for Nuclear Regulation and CoRWM.

Attendance List: Exeter – 21st November 2013

Organisation
Berkeley Site Stakeholder Group
Devon County Council
EDF Energy
Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group
Gloucestershire County Council
Oldbury Site Stakeholder Group
Stop Hinkley Group
University of Plymouth Students' Union
West Somerset Council

Total participants: 11

Supported by DECC, NDA RWMD, the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

Attendance List: London – 22nd November 2013

Organisation
Bradwell for Renewable Energy (BRARE)
Bradwell Nuclear Power Station Local Community Liaison Council (Site Stakeholder Group)
British Geological Survey
British Geotechnical Association and the Institute of Civil Engineering Board
Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, Ireland
Design Council
Dungeness Site Stakeholder Group
EDF Energy
The Geological Society
GE Healthcare
Kent County Council
Kingston Council
Northamptonshire County Council
Nuclear Industry Association
NuGeneration Ltd
Oldbury Site Stakeholder Group
Shepway District Council
Sizewell Sites Stakeholder Group
Sussex Energy Group, The University of Sussex
University of Birmingham
University of Cambridge

Total participants: 22

Supported by DECC, NDA RWMD, the Environment Agency, the Office for Nuclear Regulation, CoRWM and Sciencewise.

Appendix 3 – DECC’s presentation slides

Department of Energy & Climate Change

DECC introduction


Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility

Department of Energy & Climate Change

UK Nuclear History

UK has been a “nuclear nation” since the late 1940s

- Early work in support of weapons programme
- World’s first commercial nuclear power station
- Waste management and cleaning up sites were not priorities.



2 DECC introduction

Department of Energy & Climate Change

Waste inventory – for geological disposal

HLW – High Level Waste

ILW – Intermediate Level Waste

LLW – Low Level Waste



3 DECC introduction

Department of Energy & Climate Change

Where is the waste stored?

30+ sites around the UK




4 DECC introduction

Department of Energy & Climate Change

Government policy

2008 White Paper:

- Staged process for site identification and assessment
- Based on the principles of Voluntarism and Partnership working
- Right of Withdrawal and commitment to local Community Benefits
- Staged technical screening in parallel
- Call for volunteers

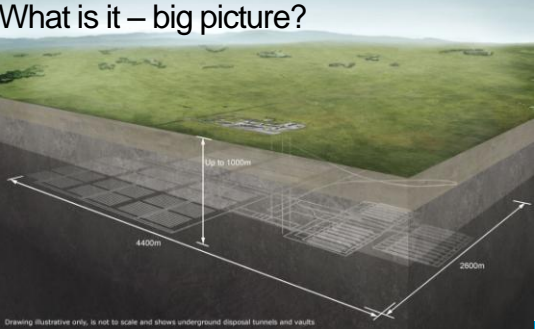


5 DECC introduction

Department of Energy & Climate Change

Geological Disposal

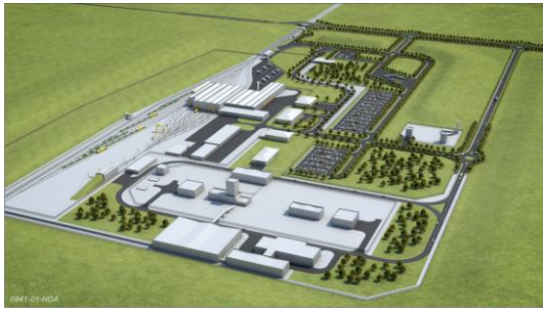
What is it – big picture?



Drawing illustrative only, is not to scale and shows underground disposal tunnels and vaults

6 DECC introduction

Geological disposal – surface facilities



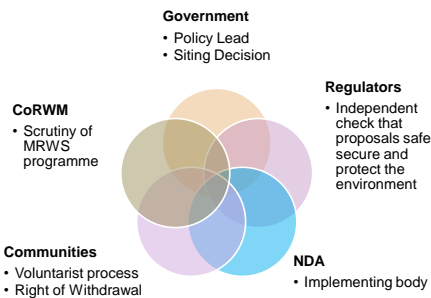
7 DECC introduction

Timescales – how long will it take?

- US WIPP** - operational since 2001 work commenced 1974
- Finland** - siting began in 1983 facility to be operational ~ 2020
- Sweden** - expression of interest in 1992, facility by ~ 2023
- France** - siting began 1993 facility to be operational ~2025
- Belgium** - facility planned to be operational in ~ 2040
- Switzerland** - facility planned to be operational in ~ 2040
- China** - facility anticipated ~ 2050

8 DECC introduction

Who is involved?



9 DECC introduction

What's happened so far?

- 3 Cumbrian local authorities formally expressed an interest
- Initial geological screening revealed areas in west Cumbria that could not immediately be ruled out
- Other potential volunteers around country watched developments – some interest from Shepway District Council in Kent
- West Cumbrian votes on 30 January 2013



10 DECC introduction

Policy implications – what happened next

- Government remains committed to geological disposal
- Confident that overarching MRWS programme is sound and new nuclear build can continue
- Overseas programmes have taken time to progress
- Reflected on experience of site selection process to date
- 13 May – 10 June 2013: Call for Evidence
- Consultation on revised siting process launched 12 September

11 DECC introduction

Key lessons learned

- Earlier information on geology – some calling for geological screening prior to volunteering
- Clarity needed on the scale, nature and timing of community benefits
- Clarity needed on the nature and timing of the Right of Withdrawal
- Independent bodies to either peer review the process or to make decisions

12 DECC introduction

Key lessons learned

- Support for voluntarism as the right approach
- Lack of trust in the current siting process, DECC and / or RWMD
- Greater clarity needed about the decision making process
- Greater clarity needed on the inventory of waste for disposal in a GDF

DECC consultation proposals

Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility

Purpose of consultation

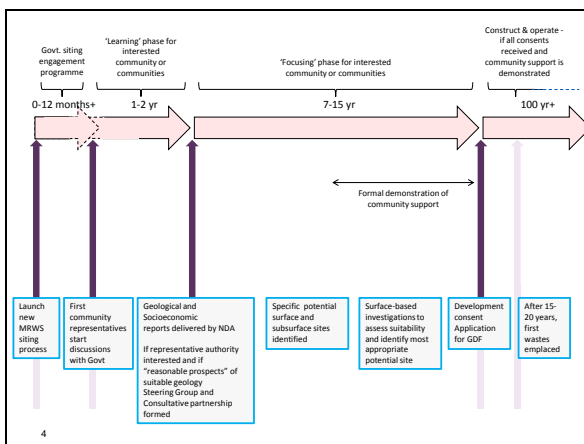
1. To seek views on the proposed revised siting process for a geological disposal facility.
2. To obtain evidence on (and rationale for) any proposed alternative approaches.

The context

- Government policy is that geological disposal will be the means by which higher activity radioactive waste will be managed, and so this is not in the scope of the consultation.
- Government continues to favour an approach to site selection based on voluntarism and partnership working, and so this is not in the scope of the consultation.

Key lessons learned from process to date

- Need for earlier information on geology – some calling for geological screening prior to volunteering
- Clarity needed on the scale, nature and timing of community benefits
- Clarity needed on the nature and timing of the Right of Withdrawal
- Proposals for the introduction of new independent bodies to either peer review the process or to make decisions
- Support for voluntarism as the right approach on which to base a siting process
- Lack of trust in the current siting process, DECC and / or RWMD
- Greater clarity needed about the decision making process
- Greater clarity needed on the inventory of waste for disposal in a GDF



Chapter 2 – Decision-making

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
A number of specified 'decision points' before each of the six stages can commence	A more continuous process of two phases, with an ongoing Right of Withdrawal
'Expressions of interest' sought from the launch of the siting process	A period of national public awareness raising and engagement before seeking volunteers
Level of local decision making not specified – to be determined by each participating area – which led to conflict and confusion	Specify that it is the District Council that will exercise the Right of Withdrawal during the siting process
No requirements on a local decision making body to consult with its community before committing to host a GDF	A possible requirement for a demonstration of community support before a community commits to hosting

Chapter 2 – Roles

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
Government and RWMD's role largely passive and reactive	Government and RWMD to carry out national public awareness and engagement programme. RWMD, as the developer, to form part of 'Steering Group' with local councils
Lack of clarity over the role of locally-elected bodies	District Council to be specified as the local decision making body. 'Consultative Partnership' to provide a role for Counties and Parishes.
No formal means of independent verification or peer review	Government to explore using CoRWM, a pool of professional peer reviewers and / or a new independent advisory body

Chapter 3: Technical delivery – Geological Settings

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
Insufficient geological information provided to councils at an early stage	Government to publish information on regional geology in advance of any call for volunteers Government to move quickly to provide detailed, independent geological report for areas engaged in the 'Learning phase'

Chapter 3 – Planning

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
Government 'minded' to apply the nationally significant infrastructure planning regime to the construction of the GDF	Government to commit to applying this regime and bring forward necessary amendments to Planning Act 2008
Government took no view on how to consent intrusive investigations (i.e. boreholes)	Government to bring intrusive investigations within definition of nationally significant infrastructure as well

Chapter 3 – Inventory

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
Estimated inventory for disposal expressed in terms of waste volumes (m ³)	Inventory for disposal to be communicated to potential communities with a focus on waste and material types and the safety case (volume figures still available)
Inclusion of new build waste 'will be taken forward in discussion with host communities as the programme proceeds'	Be clear on inclusion of new nuclear waste, of a specified maximum size

Chapter 4 – Community benefits

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
Government not clear on the amount of community benefits that would be available	Government to make clear, early in a revised siting process, the potential scale of community benefits
No significant payment of community benefits until a community commits to hosting a GDF	Start paying limited benefits to a potential host community during the 'Focusing' phase
Mechanism for delivering long-term community benefits unspecified	Government create a community fund – only able to retrieve these funds if a GDF was not constructed in the community

Chapter 4 – Assessments

MRWS siting process	PROPOSAL for consultation
Government intended to carry out a site specific Strategic Environmental Assessment, and site specific Environmental Impact Assessments, in the latter stages of the siting process	Government to publish a generic Nationally Policy Statement, specifically for a GDF, early in the siting process which would be subject to an Appraisal of Sustainability

Appendix 4 – Glossary

The glossary below is taken from DECC's consultation document.

Appraisal of Sustainability

An appraisal of the sustainability of the policy set out in a National Policy Statement, as required by Section 5 (3) of The Planning Act 2008. An AoS normally incorporates an assessment in accordance with the European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and its transposing regulations in the UK.

Baseline Inventory

An estimate of the higher activity radioactive waste and other materials that could, possibly, come to be regarded as wastes that might need to be managed in the future through geological disposal drawn from the UK Radioactive Waste Inventory.

British Geological Survey (BGS)

BGS is the UK's national centre for earth science information and expertise, providing expert impartial advice on all aspects of geology.

Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM)

CoRWM was set up in 2003 to provide independent advice to Government on the long-term management of the UK's solid higher activity radioactive waste. In October 2007, CoRWM was reconstituted with revised Terms of Reference and new membership. The Committee provides independent scrutiny and advice to UK Government and devolved administration Ministers on the long-term radioactive waste management programme, including storage and disposal.

Environment Agency

The environmental regulator for England. The Agency's role is the enforcement of specified laws and regulations aimed at protecting the environment, in the context of sustainable development, predominantly by authorising and controlling radioactive discharges and waste disposal to air, water (surface water, groundwater) and land. The Environment Agency also regulates nuclear sites under the Environmental Permitting Regulations and issues consents for non-radioactive discharges.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

A legal requirement under EU Directive 2011/92/EU for certain types of project, including various categories of radioactive waste management project. To protect the environment and human health, it requires that a competent authority (the planning authority, the Health and Safety Executive or other regulators concerned) giving consent to the project makes the decision in the knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment, and that the public are given early and effective opportunities to participate in the decision making procedure.

High Level Waste (HLW)

Radioactive wastes that generate heat as a result of their radioactivity, so this factor has to be taken into account in the design of storage or disposal facilities.

Higher activity radioactive waste

It includes the following categories of radioactive waste: high level waste, intermediate level waste, a small fraction of low level waste with a concentration of specific radionuclides sufficient to prevent its disposal as low level waste.

Intermediate level waste (ILW)

Radioactive wastes exceeding the upper activity boundaries for LLW but which do not need heat to be taken into account in the design of storage or disposal facilities.

Legacy Waste

Radioactive waste which already exists or whose arising is committed in future by the operation of an existing nuclear power plant.

Low Level Waste (LLW)

LLW is defined as waste not exceeding specified levels of radioactivity. Overall, the major components of LLW are building rubble, soil and steel items such as framework, pipework and reinforcement from the dismantling and demolition of nuclear reactors and other nuclear facilities and the clean-up of nuclear sites. At the present time most LLW is from the operation of nuclear facilities, and is mainly paper, plastics and scrap metal items.

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS)

A phrase covering the whole process of public consultation, work by CoRWM, and subsequent actions by Government, to identify and implement the option, or combination of options, for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

NRW is the environmental regulator for Wales. NRW enforces specified laws and regulations aimed at protecting the environment, in the context of sustainable development, predominantly by authorising and controlling radioactive discharges and waste disposal to air, water (surface water, groundwater) and land. NRW also regulates nuclear licensed sites under the Environmental Permitting Regulations and issues consents for non-radioactive discharges.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

The environmental regulator for Northern Ireland. The Agency's role is to enforce legislation aimed at protecting the environment. This is primarily achieved by authorising and controlling radioactive discharges and waste disposals to air, water and land.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)

The NDA was established on 1 April 2005, under the Energy Act 2004. It is a non-departmental public body with statutory and financial responsibility for decommissioning and managing the liabilities at specific, designated nuclear sites. These sites are operated under contract by site licensee companies. The NDA has a statutory requirement under the Energy Act 2004, to publish and consult on its Strategy and Annual Plans, which have to be agreed by the Secretary of State and Scottish Ministers. The Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (RWMD) of the NDA is the organisation responsible for planning and delivering a GDF.

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)

An agency within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that regulates safety, security and safeguards at nuclear facilities and transport of radioactive materials. ONR will in due course become an autonomous organisation, legally separated from but still supported by HSE.

Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (RWMD)

The NDA has established its Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (RWMD) to design and implement a safe, sustainable, publicly acceptable geological disposal programme. In due course, the RWMD will become a wholly owned subsidiary company of the NDA. Ultimately, it will evolve into the organisation which will hold the nuclear site licence for a GDF. Ownership of this organisation may then be opened up to competition, in due course, in line with the NDA's current contracting structure for its other sites.

Reprocessing

A physical or chemical separation operation, the purpose of which is to extract uranium or plutonium for re-use from spent nuclear fuel.

Safety cases

A 'safety case' is the written documentation demonstrating that risks associated with a site, a plant, part of a plant or a plant modification are as low as reasonably practicable and that the relevant standards have been met. Safety cases for licensable activities at nuclear sites are required as licence conditions under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965.

Seismic survey

A technique for determining the detailed structure of the rocks underlying a particular area by passing acoustic shock waves into the rock strata and detecting and measuring the reflected signals.

Spent fuel (Spent nuclear fuel)

Used fuel assemblies removed from a nuclear power plant reactor after several years use and stored pending reprocessing to extract reusable materials/or, if declared as radioactive waste, for disposal in a GDF.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

In this document, SEA refers to the type of environmental assessment legally required by EC Directive 2001/42/EC in the preparation of certain plans and programmes. The authority responsible for the plan or programme must prepare a report on its likely significant environmental effects, consult the public on the environmental report and the plan or programme proposals, take the findings into account, and provide information on the plan or programme as finally adopted.

UK Radioactive Waste Inventory (UKRWI)

A compilation of data on UK radioactive waste holdings, produced about every three years. The latest version, for a holding date of 1 April 2010, was published in February 2011. It is produced by DECC and the NDA.

The 'White Paper'

The 2008 Managing Radioactive Waste Safely White Paper.

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