

Call for Evidence - Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility

The Millom Without and Whicham Parish Councils welcome the opportunity to respond to the Governments call for evidence on the MRWS siting process and are pleased to offer the following comments:

The previous process seemed adequate (as far as it went), in that it allowed Parish Councils to make our views known, which Millom Without Parish did in some detail. In fact the final outcome closely reflected this council's view.

The main concern of this, and probably other Parish Councils, is with regard to the stance of the Borough Council in that Copeland did ignore the views of their parish councils relying instead on the result of a public opinion poll (which supported their view) - and as Whitehaven and surrounding area has over 50% of the borough's population this poll's outcome was not surprising. It is essential therefore that the process for any further consultation should ensure the views of the Parishes are taken into account and given as much weight as the views of the Borough Council.

This Parish Council was not against an underground repository, in fact there was some support for such a solution. The problem lay in the search for a site not being nation-wide and thus being unable to identify a range of possible suitable sites. Any proposal to restrict the search to any one geographical area should be strongly resisted.

The basic problem with the previous approach was that the government did no preliminary research into possible sites before asking for interest from councils. There were always going to be problems with the Copeland bid because of the geology/infrastructure of the area. It would be far better for the government itself to come up with areas within the UK that would be safe/able to take such a facility and then take an informed final decision, after consultation, in the knowledge that all the important considerations can be met by the designated area.

To summarise I would say that as a Parish Council we do not support any search which does not look at the country as a whole. Finding the best geological area is paramount. It is essential that geological and safety considerations are paramount in the search for a suitable site.

Millom Without Parish Council and the Whicham Parish Council.