

I should like to record some brief comments on the consultation document.

I spent a long time filling out the on line survey yesterday only to find when I submitted it the entry was rejected by the website - some thing to do with cookies. Highly annoying as it also wiped all my comments.

As I live in Allerdale district in Cumbria, my comments refer to this county but are generalizable to the whole process

Decision making

It is disgraceful that county councils may be excluded from decision making. The proposal to exclude the Cumbria County Council from the consultation process is transparently an 'expedient political' trick, and damages the reputation of politics and the trust that the electorate may have in politicians to use established democratic processes. This is even more shameful if, as I understand it, ADC's decision will be made by only 7 councillors. What about the opinion of the large majority (41/44) of Allerdale parish councils who have opposed expressing an interest in becoming host to a nuclear repository, and the opinion of councillors who are not party to the inner circle.

Siting of GDF

Geology must come first. It is surely nonsensical to persevere with the plan to seek volunteer councils, to lead them down the slippery slope of acceptance with inducements, and then think about geological suitability. Surely geological and environmental suitability MUST lead the process. It reminds me of the 3 little pigs story and we know what happened to the houses built by the expedient options of sand and straw. The geology in Allerdale has been shown already to be unreliable in terms of housing the size of nuclear repository needed. Nirex have already concluded that 30% of the UK has potentially suitable geology for an underground repository, none of this is in Cumbria.

National parks and areas of special interest and natural beauty should be excluded

Views of local major organisations

Firm policy statements have now been issued by Cumbria Tourism, the National Trust, the Friends of the Lake District and the Lake District National Park Authority which clearly state that infringing the boundaries of the National Park, above or below ground, is unacceptable and will be fiercely resisted. It would be perverse if just 7 members of a district council (ADC) went against this set of broad based opinions.

Inducements

It must be made clear at the start, the conditions upon which inducements and payments and grants are offered to the interested districts and what happens if the community then vote to pull out. Will they have to pay back money?

Sampling public opinion

This must be done at an early stage in a fair honest and transparent way

Professor John Macfarlane

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