

- **What aspects of the site selection process in the MRWS White Paper do you think could be improved and how?**

There are many aspects that are good and should continue. Earlier preliminary geological investigations would be useful to defend against unsubstantiated allegations that the geology is unsuitable.

I think the volunteerism approach must continue, however at times DECC seem to be in a position of weakness, and at the mercy of the community engaged in the process. Community benefits in the early stages of the process are necessary, but the continuation of benefits should be predicated upon prompt (not rushed) progression of the process.

The GDF needs a 'champion'. I can fully understand why DECC have been opposed to taking this approach as it could be misperceived as coercion. However the majority of the communities were only informed from a negative perspective or not at all.

- **What do you think could be done to attract communities into the MRWS site selection process?**

I don't know how to attract a community, but perhaps starting with individuals and organisations would be more effective. Notwithstanding that the community would need to be in agreement to any plans, has the communication strategy considered attracting individuals, organisations or Government departments that are land owners where the surface facilities could be situated as these groups have an established relationship (and even trust) with the local community?

More national awareness, debate and publicity is required but will need careful handling of presentational aspects. Greater awareness of the socio-economic benefits during construction and operation is needed.

- **What information do you think would help communities engage with the MRWS site selection process?**

The thing all communities want to know is 'what is in it for me'.

Secondly they want assurances that there will be no detriment to them and a robust ongoing monitoring regime to protect future generations.

I think the important thing to consider is who are we communicating with? Local Authorities or the public in general, as we will need to communicate differently with each group.

If we approach councils and local authorities they will consult the local community. This conventional consultation route is likely to attract a minority that are opposed to the GDF and have the effect of influencing those in the community that are not otherwise informed in addition to presenting their own views loudly.

Up until now there has been no advocate for the GDF. Does DECC have a

strategy to establish a GDF advocate. Without prejudicing any future competition for construction and operation of the GDF, has any consideration been given to establishing a consortia to give the concept of the GDF a more commercial persona. Communities may find it easier to relate to employment opportunities and greater local prosperity if the GDF concept had a more commercial 'appearance'.