

This is a formal response to the DECC's Consultation review of the siting process for a GDF from the Social Responsibility Forum of Churches Together in Cumbria.

Churches Together in Cumbria is the umbrella body for all the main Christian denominations in Cumbria: Baptist Church, Church of England, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, (Orthodox Church not currently represented on the Social Responsibility Forum), Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army, United Reformed Church.

The views of the members of the Social Responsibility Forum were assembled at their meeting on 8 October 2013.

The Social Responsibility Forum wishes to reiterate the views that it expressed in letters to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change dated 27 February and 29 May 2012 (letters attached here), namely: 'We believe that it is the UK Government that should be seen to be taking responsibility for the nature and location of a nuclear repository for the nation because it is the safety of future generations of Britons, and neighbouring countries, which should be the overriding factor.

It has long been accepted that parts of the UK other than Cumbria have much more promising geology for the long term storage of nuclear waste. We believe most strongly it is wrong for West Cumbria to be evaluated in isolation as a possible site. While we accept a decision to investigate further the geology of West Cumbria, this should be part of a wider investigation of other potential sites of appropriate geology in the country, including deep clay formations.

Any repository should be in geological formations that are seismically stable and have provable water impermeability.

While community acceptance of any possible repository site is of course desirable, the imperative is its environmental suitability for thousands of years to come. A bad site remains a bad site even if it currently has a willing community, while a good site will be safe whoever lives on top of it.

In order to find the optimum solution to the problem of nuclear waste, the Government ought to manage a process whereby other areas of the UK than West Cumbria should also be assessed for geological suitability.'

In addition to reiterating our previously expressed views (above) the Social Responsibility Forum also wishes to note that we are concerned that procedural changes are proposed in this Consultation Review since the first consultation process regarding the veto and that this could set a dangerous precedent for a whole variety of national issues.

We hope that the Government will give weight to this response.

Yours,

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Helen Boothroyd
Social Responsibility Development Officer
Churches Together in Cumbria

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