

Consultation : Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility : September 2013
Silloth-on-Solway Town Council response

Silloth Town Council are alarmed that the Government can reopen the search for a nuclear repository in our area, in the same year as it declared the MRWS process officially dead. The Cumbria County Council Cabinet ruled out the suitability of our area by a unanimous vote in January this year. We were told to respect the process and we did despite neither us, nor our elected representatives in Allerdale, having a say in the decision. How can Government renege on its own process and then remove the only barrier (Cumbria County Council) to having another go, with another set of rules, whilst expecting us to believe it is actually looking at the whole of the country. We already know we are again to have no say in the decision and call into question the integrity of the Government and the honesty of its approach. Is this the true meaning of localism in a landscape which enjoys the highest level of protection in law and is already suffering from a plague of onshore and offshore giant turbines, with many more in the pipeline, whilst its people will be forced to live in the shadowy prospect of a nuclear repository, during many years of worry, anxiety and confusion. Rule us out now and make the national search for safety a genuine one. We also urge the leaders of Allerdale Borough Council not to renege on their promise to abide by the democratic process which they asked us to accept.

Question 1: Do you agree that the 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.

In the true form of localism, each local parish/town council to decide for its own area. The test of public support must be taken at a very early stage by each local parish/town council if there is a possibility that their area is under consideration. The form of the test whether public meeting, referendum or other, is best left to the individual council.

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.

No, we do not agree. Two levels of local government cannot be removed from the process, leaving the third to be represented by an unrepresentative oligarchy. We are extremely concerned at the reduced role of the County Council and the virtual elimination from the democratic process of the local tier.

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?

Yes, as long as the process follows the localism agenda and as long as there is a genuine national approach. We agree with a genuine national approach led by geological safety as the paramount concern.

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?

The Town Council propose the sensible solution would be a subsurface retrievable storage facility in the area where the bulk of it is at present located, but that is for the local people in that area to determine.

Question 5: Do you agree with this proposed approach to planning for the geological disposal facility? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

The Town Council do not agree that a geological disposal facility is safe for Cumbria.

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?

We do not agree with a geological disposal facility but propose a safe retrievable subsurface storage facility, as one day the waste could be reprocessed or made less dangerous through advances in science. Local people will always need to know precisely what is to be stored, volumes, origins etc

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

Discussion on community benefits is premature and should not be considered until a host community is identified and agreed in principle. Any detailed list of benefits should be mirrored by a list of disadvantages and risks.

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?

The report needs to be available to the wider public and give a balanced view, setting out the potential gains and possible drawbacks. We do not agree that the case for a safe geological disposal facility has been made.

Question 9: Do you have any other comments?

Our preface document is an integral part of our response and must remain attached to it. It gives the overarching view and rationale behind Silloth Town Council's views expressed above.