

News Release – 22.02.22

**GDF drop-in events to be held in Mid Copeland**

A series of drop-in events will allow people to hear more about what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) is and what it could mean for the area.

They are being held by the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership over three weeks in March around the Search Area - which includes the electoral wards of Gosforth & Seascale and Beckermet.

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

The Partnership’s Community Engagement Team will be out and about across the Mid Copeland area in Beckermet, Seascale, Gosforth, Calderbridge, Drigg, Haile and Thornhill.

Community Engagement Manager, Gillian Johnston, said: “We want people to come along and have a chat with us, ask us questions, raise any concerns, talk about opportunities – we’re here to help.

“We’re trying to cover as many locations in the area as possible at different times to give as much opportunity for people to join us. The discussions will help us to build up a picture of the main themes which are important in each community.

“At a later date, we could then bring some different experts in their field to discuss in more detail the subjects which matter most to people.”

The drop-ins start on Monday, March 7 and run until Friday, March 25.

The first week’s events are:

**March 7:** Gosforth Public Hall (9.30am-12pm); Beckermet Reading Rooms (1-4pm)

**March 8:** Seascale Library (9.30am-12pm); Haile Village Hall (1-4pm)

**March 9:** Beckermet Reading Rooms (9.30am-12pm); Drigg & Carleton Village Hall (1-4pm)

**March 10:** Gosforth Public Hall (9.30am-12pm); Seascale Library (1-4pm)

**March 11:** Drigg & Carleton Village Hall (9.30am-12pm); Calderbridge & Ponsonby Village Hall (1-4pm).

The dates for all of the drop-ins can be found on the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership website: <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/>

The Community Partnership’s initial membership includes Chair Mark Cullinan, Copeland Borough Council, the GDF developer, Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) and local councillors. Its formation has given access to £1million investment funding to support projects that benefit the local community – which would rise to £2.5m per year if deep borehole investigations to assess geology take place.

Deep geology off the coast is being considered for siting the underground elements of a GDF. This means a surface facility on the coast would provide access to a disposal area deep in rock beyond the coast.

A GDF requires a suitable site and willing community. If a suitable site is found in Copeland - a decision which could take 10-15 years - a Test of Public Support to give people living in the wards affected a direct say would be held on whether or not the project should go ahead.

A community that takes the opportunity to host a GDF will receive significant additional investment and long-term benefits for future generations, including jobs and skills.