

News Release: 28.02.22

**GDF Community Partnership in South Copeland invites questions, concerns and funding applications**

South Copeland GDF Community Partnership is encouraging people to find out more about what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) could mean for local people.

The Community Partnership is a longer-term group which formed in December 2021 to take forward discussions about whether South Copeland could be the right place to host a GDF, taking over from the Copeland Working Group.

Its Search Area includes the Borough electoral wards of Millom and Black Combe & Scafell and its role includes providing information for local people, helping with community discussions, questions and concerns.

A Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

The potential of the deep geology beyond the coast is being considered for siting the underground elements of a GDF. This means a 1 km sq surface facility on the coast would provide access to a disposal area deep in rock beyond the coast.

This week a leaflet is going out to households in the Search Area to provide further information about the Community Partnership, geological disposal, Community Investment Funding and how to get involved.

Kelly Anderson, Community Engagement Manager for the Partnership, said: “This Community Partnership is a starting point to consider possibilities around GDF in more detail. I would encourage people to get involved, ask questions, raise concerns - this is an opportunity to ensure your voice is heard.

“No decisions have been made about where a GDF could be sited. The role of the GDF Community Partnership is to consider the possibilities of hosting a GDF within the identified Search Area in more detail. It will help to refine Search Area boundaries and can identify priorities for Community Investment Funding.

“There’s now access to £1m a year investment funding for local community projects, which would rise to £2.5m per year if deep borehole investigations to assess geology were to take place and it’s good to see applications and enquiries coming in.”

The South Copeland GDF Community Partnership has initial membership to begin with which includes Copeland Borough Council, the GDF developer, Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) and local councillors.

A GDF requires a suitable site and willing community. If a suitable site is found in Copeland – which could take 10-15 years - a Test of Public Support to give people a direct say would be held with those living in the wards affected. Without public support the project would not 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.

If you would like to find out further information about the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership or Community Investment Funding, please see the website: <https://southcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/>

Other ways to contact the Partnership include email:

Gdfinfo-southcopeland@nda.gov.uk or telephone 0300 369 0000. You can also email the Community Investment Funding team direct on: communityinvestment-southcopeland@nda.gov.uk