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News Release – 09.05.23

**Weekly community drop-in to talk about geological disposal**

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership is starting to hold a weekly drop-in for anyone who would like to talk about what a Geological Disposal Facility could mean for the area.

It will be held in Seascale on Wednesdays, from May 17, 10am until 5.30pm, running initially until July 19.

The weekly drop-ins will be held at the Old Vicarage, The Banks, Seascale, and are open to anyone who would like to go along and speak to the community engagement team and ask questions.

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

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

The Mid Copeland Search Area covers the electoral ward of Gosforth which includes Seascale, Gosforth, Beckermet, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones. The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration.

Community Partnership Chair, Andy Pratt, said: “We thought this would be another useful way for people to be able to talk to someone face to face and gather information, so please come along and see the team.

“There’s no need to make an appointment, just drop-in and have a conversation, raise a question. As always, we will try our best to answer there and then, if we can’t then we will always come back to you.”

The GDF programme requires both a suitable site and a willing community and is still in the early stages.

If a suitable site is found in the area – a process which could take 10-15 years – a decision to develop a GDF in Mid Copeland could not be taken until the community in the electoral wards directly affected has had a say and taken a positive Test of Public Support.

For further information about the Community Partnership, please go to the website: <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/> or email us on: gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk

Ends

**Notes to editors**

1. A GDF would be made up of surface facilities, access ways, highly engineered vaults and tunnels located deep underground designed to protect people and the environment and keep the radioactive waste safe and secure while the radioactivity naturally decays to safe levels.
2. Successive UK Governments, supported by scientific advice, agree that geological disposal is the right long-term solution for our higher activity radioactive waste, and there is overwhelming international consensus, with advanced programmes now underway in Canada, Finland, France, Sweden, Switzerland and many other countries.
3. The independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) recommends that geological disposal, coupled with safe and secure interim storage, is the best approach for the long-term management of the UK’s higher activity radioactive waste.
4. The search for a host community is a nationwide process and is based on community consent. It includes detailed investigations to make sure there is a suitable site to construct a safe and secure GDF. Regulatory permissions will be required to be obtained from independent regulators, regulating various aspects of a GDF, including safety and environmental protection.
5. Community Investment Funding is made available by the GDF developer to communities that form Community Partnerships under the [Implementing Geological Disposal – Working with Communities Policy (December 2018)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-geological-disposal-working-with-communities-long-term-management-of-higher-activity-radioactive-waste). Up to £1m of funding is available annually per community, rising to £2.5m if deep borehole investigations take place to assess the geological suitability of a site.

**About Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership and the GDF siting process**

The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership has been formed following the proposal of two Search Areas by the Copeland GDF Working Group – it includes the electoral ward of Gosforth. The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration.

The Community Partnership’s membership includes a Chair, principal local authority, GDF developer, parish councillors and community members.

Community Partnerships are long-term groups made up of a members and organisations of the local community to consider the possibilities of GDF siting in more detail. They are providing up to £1m a year investment funding for communities, per partnership, rising to £2.5m per year if deep borehole investigations to assess geology take place. For further information go to the [website](https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/).

**About the GDF developer - Nuclear Waste Services**

Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) specialises in managing, treating and safely disposing of UK radioactive waste. Formed in January 2022, NWS integrates the expertise of LLW Repository Limited (LLWR), Radioactive Waste Management Limited (RWM), which manages the GDF Programme and is the GDF Developer and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) group’s Integrated Waste Management Programme (IWMP)