

E-bulletin No.19 – July 2012

Introduction

1. Partnership considers its Final Report
2. Full Ipsos MORI report on the opinion survey
3. Next Partnership meeting
4. What happens next?

Introduction

Welcome to the latest e-bulletin from the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership.

The Partnership is coming towards the end of its work. We have spent more than three years looking at the issues that would be involved in Allerdale and/or Copeland taking part in a search to see if there is anywhere suitable for a repository for higher activity radioactive waste.



We are now finalising our report which will be discussed at our meeting on 19th July 2012. If the report is agreed at the meeting it will then be sent to Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council who are the decision making bodies in this process.

The Councils are likely to make a decision about whether to take part in the search for a site during the autumn.

This edition includes details about this final part of the Partnership's work and what happens next.

You can access all the associated documents on our [website](#), and you can follow updates on our Facebook page and Twitter account.

1. Partnership considers its Final Report

The Partnership meeting on 19th July will consider a draft of our Final Report. Once this report has been agreed the Partnership's work will be complete.

westcumbria:mrws
West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership

Geological disposal of radioactive waste in West Cumbria?

Should West Cumbria take part in the search for somewhere to put a repository – known as a geological disposal facility – for higher activity radioactive waste?

Public consultation

The West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership, which involves a wide range of local organisations, was set up to help Airedale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council decide whether or not to take part in the search for a site for a repository, without any commitment to have it.

After examining the issues and talking to local people we have produced a consultation document setting out our initial opinions on a range of issues. This is to get your views before we send our final report to the Councils.

This is now the time to get involved and decide what you think would be best for the area.

Have your say

Although there would still be a right to withdraw from this process during the search for a possible site, the decision that needs to be made now is an important one.

The consultation period will run until 23rd March 2012.

This Overview leaflet provides some background information and an overview of our initial opinions. You will find much more detail in the full consultation document.

Page 2 & 3: Background information	Page 4: Safety; Design & engineering	Page 5: Geology; Inventory	Page 6: Impacts; Community benefits	Page 7: How the search for a site would work	Page 8: Community events; Getting a consultation document
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Get the full consultation document: www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk 0800 048 8912

We set out our initial opinions in our consultation document and we have been considering how these need to be revised to take account of the comments made during the consultation which took place between November 2011 and March 2012.

We have already agreed and published a report – [the PSE3 report](#) – which sets out our responses to the views we received during the consultation.

Our Final Report to the Councils will set out our opinions on a range of issues related to whether the area should take part in the Government's search, and additional advice to the Councils. These include issues such as safety, geology, inventory and community benefits.

The Partnership is not coming to a view about whether the area should take part in the search for a site. That decision is for the three Councils.

Around 2,300 people and organisations contributed their views during the consultation and a wide range of issues were raised.

How we have taken account of the consultation responses

Some people have been unclear about how the results of the consultation are being used by the Partnership.

The Government's Code of Practice on Consultations is very clear that responses 'should be analysed carefully, using the expertise, experiences and views of respondents to develop a more effective and efficient policy. The focus should be on the evidence given by consultees to back up their arguments. Analysing consultation responses is primarily a *qualitative* rather than a *quantitative* exercise'.

The consultation gives valuable insight into the specific concerns the public have. The purpose of this consultation, like any other, was to listen to and take onboard the views of the public and interested groups.

Partnership members have already taken part in two workshops and two full Partnership meetings to go through the consultation responses and consider how their initial views should be changed as a result. This has led to significant changes to the Partnership's emerging Final Report.

If the Partnership's report is agreed on 19th July it will be sent to the three Councils after any changes agreed at the meeting have been made to the document.

2. Full Ipsos MORI report on the opinion survey

The full Ipsos MORI report from their survey of residents in West Cumbria and the rest of the county has now been completed and is available on the [Partnership's website](#) together with the data tables that underpin it.

The Partnership commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a statistically representative opinion survey to see whether there were more people for or against taking part in the search for a repository in Allerdale and/or Copeland.



We were particularly concerned to find out whether more people in the Allerdale and Copeland areas are in favour or opposed to taking part in the search as this is where a repository could be located.

In addition, the same questions were asked of people in the rest of Cumbria.

Ipsos MORI surveyed more than 3,000 people by telephone during March, April and early May 2012.



The survey showed that 51 per cent of people in Allerdale supported taking part in the search for a suitable site for a geological disposal facility, compared with 37 per cent who were opposed. Four per cent were neutral and eight per cent said they did not know.

In the area covered by Copeland Borough Council 68 per cent of people surveyed said they supported taking part in the search, with 23 per cent opposed, four per cent neutral and five per cent who did not know.

In the rest of the county 50 per cent said they supported Allerdale and/or Copeland taking part in the search for a site, compared with 35 per cent against. Five per cent said they were neutral and ten per cent did not know.

The Partnership has carried out a very large amount of communications and engagement work over the last three years. This has been much greater than is normal in most consultation processes. You can see further details about this activity [on our website](#).

There have therefore been a significant number of opportunities for people to learn more about the issues and get involved.

The opinion survey shows that 89% of adults in Allerdale and 92% in Copeland said they had heard about this process. In Allerdale 27% of people also said they knew a fair amount or a lot about the issues and in Copeland this figure was 38%.

It is important to understand that the results of the poll are not the only factor the Councils will need to take into account. It is only possible to get a full picture of public opinion by considering the results of the poll alongside the views expressed in responses to the consultation.



3. Next Partnership meeting

The next meeting of the Partnership will take place on 19th July 2012 at [Hunday Manor Hotel](#) near Workington, and is due to run from 9.30 am to 4 pm (there is also an option for the meeting to continue until 6pm necessary).



Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. There will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the morning session. At the end of the formal meeting there will also be an opportunity to stay on to talk to individual members of the Partnership.

If the final report is agreed at this meeting it will be the last meeting of this Partnership because our work will be complete.

The agenda is available on the [Partnership's website](#).

Anyone who would like to attend should contact Cath Little by emailing catherine.little@copeland.gov.uk or by phoning the Partnership's free-phone number 0800 048 8912, so that we can ensure that enough seating is made available.

4. What happens next?

If the Partnership agrees its Final Report on 19th July, any changes agreed at the meeting will be made over the following few weeks and the report will be made ready for publishing.

We anticipate that the Final Report will be available on our website by mid-August and that printed copies will be available by the end of the month.

The Councils are currently expected to make their decisions about whether to take part in the search for a site in October 2012.

It will be for the Councils to weigh up the evidence on all sides of the debate and decide whether to participate in the search to see if there is anywhere in Allerdale or Copeland that is suitable for a nuclear waste repository. For an area to formally enter the siting process, both the Borough Council and the County Council would need to be in agreement.

If an area was to participate in the search, the Councils could still withdraw from the process until work could begin on constructing a facility – which is likely to be more than 15 years from now.

Even though we will have completed our work as a Partnership, we believe it will be important to continue to keep people up to date with what is happening. A 'bridging group' will therefore be set up and will be responsible for future communications, including publicising the Partnership's Final Report and the decisions that the Councils make. They will also continue to send further editions of this e-bulletin.

Please pass this e-bulletin on. Thank you.

If you wish to unsubscribe to this e-bulletin and other updates about the MRWS process in West Cumbria please [email us](#).