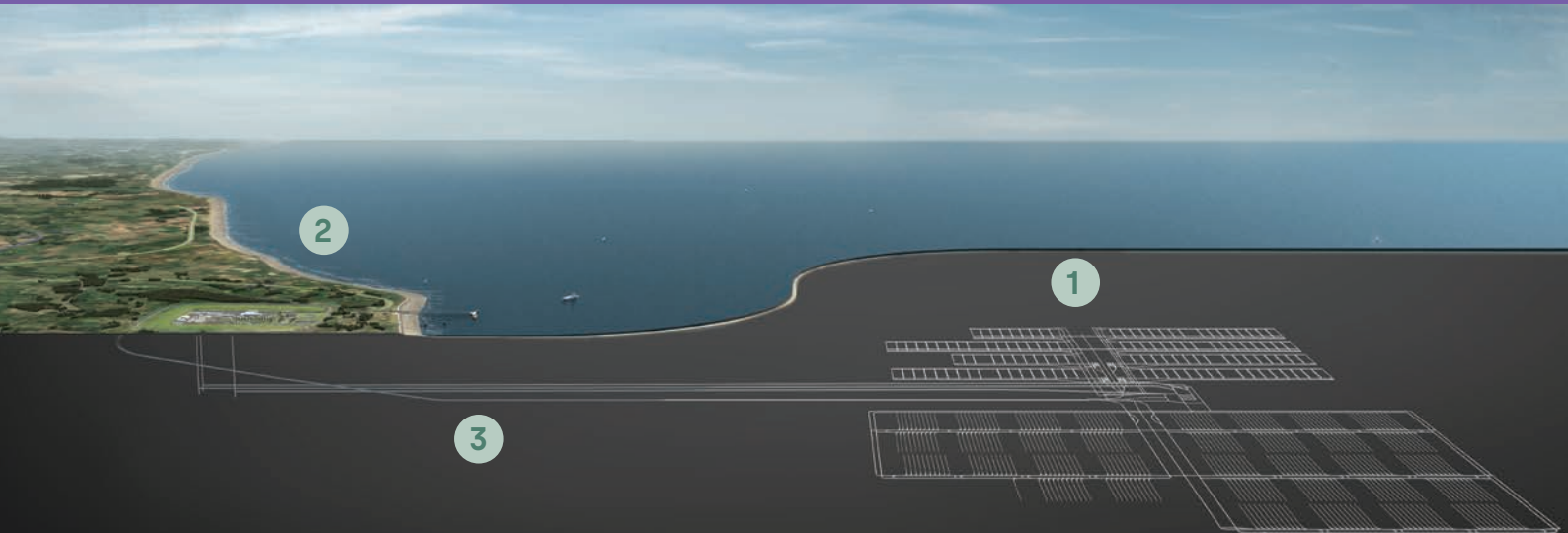




# South Copeland GDF Community Partnership Newsletter



1. Sub-surface
2. Surface
3. Accessways  
Tunnels connecting surface site to disposal area

Welcome to the ninth printed newsletter from the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership.

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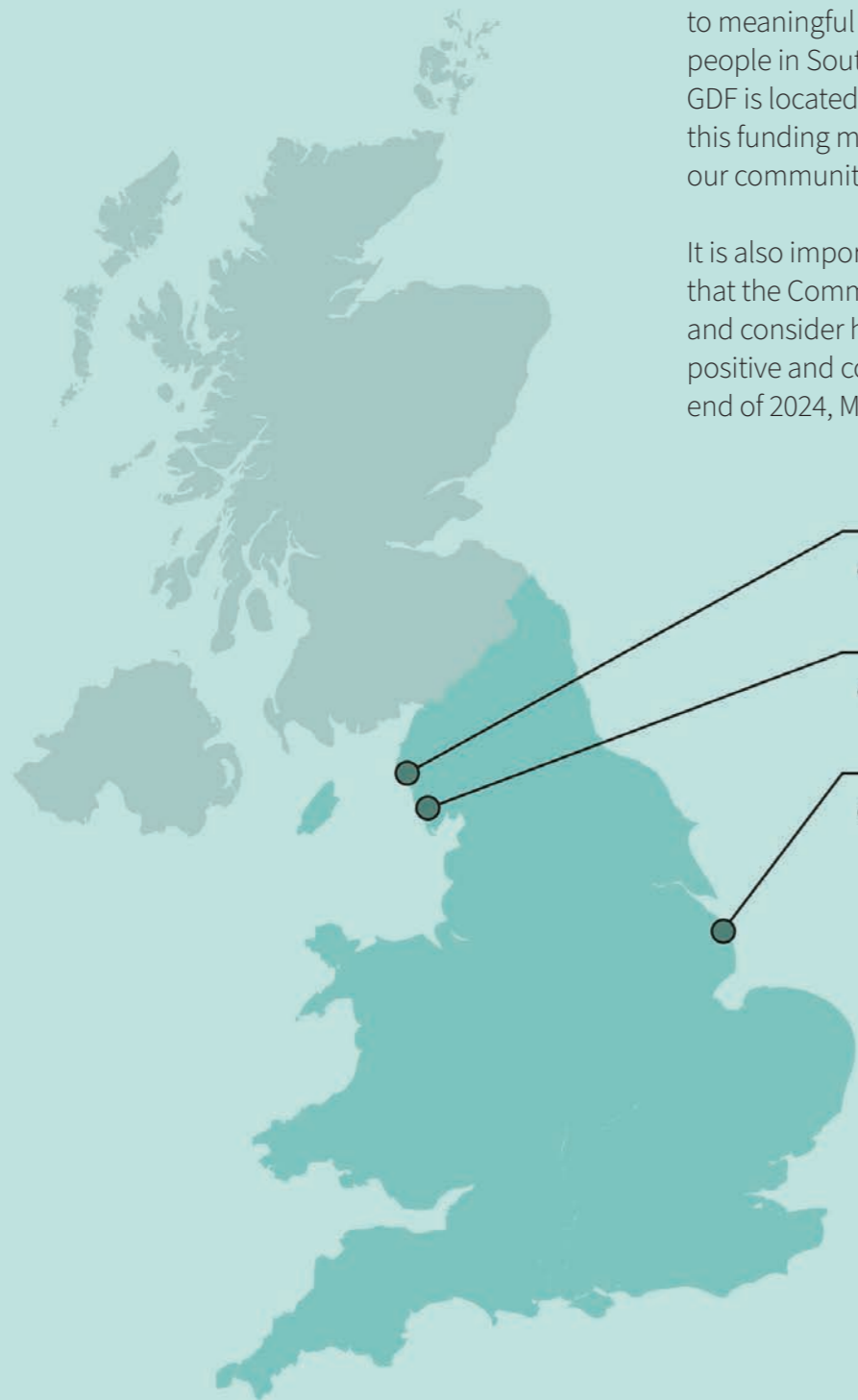
As I introduce this newsletter, I'm reflecting on the important steps we have started to make in understanding a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) and the siting process since the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership launched in December 2021.

Deciding whether to host a GDF containing the UK's most hazardous radioactive waste is a significant decision, and if a suitable site is found here, it is one that the Potential Host Community will be asked to make through a Test of Public Support. A GDF can only go ahead if a suitable site and a willing community are found.

To make an informed choice, our community needs access to information on what a GDF could mean for them. Through this next stage in the siting process - the identification of Areas of Focus (page 4) - the GDF developer, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), will be able to focus site evaluation studies, such as transport and environmental surveys, and the site characterisation work needed to consider the potential for the area to safely host a GDF.

The Community Partnership's Annual Review, which will be published on our website in April, highlights the Community Partnership's activities in 2024, including understanding the community's information needs through community surveys and enquiries. We received around 400 individual responses to our Community Visioning questionnaires (see page 14), and a total of £3 million Community Investment Funding (CIF) has been awarded to meaningful projects that benefit local people in South Copeland (page 9). Whether a GDF is located here or not, I am pleased to see this funding making a positive difference to our community.

It is also important to reflect on the challenges that the Community Partnership has faced and consider how we can move forward in a positive and collaborative way. Towards the end of 2024, Millom Town Council made the



 **Mid Copeland**  
Community Partnership

 **South Copeland**  
Community Partnership

 **Theddlethorpe**  
Community Partnership

decision to withdraw from the Community Partnership. An external review is taking place to ensure that Millom Town Council's views are considered.

Despite the differences in opinion that such a subject matter can bring, our aim is to assist everyone in the local community through the GDF process, whatever their views, and we will seek out and share information, discuss concerns and find answers to questions the community has about all aspects of the GDF.

Finally, I must share that this will be my last newsletter as Chair of this Community Partnership, as my two-year term draws to a close in March. It has been an honour to serve in this role, working alongside community members, the dedicated local team at NWS, and an engaged community.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and involvement in this important discussion.

Warm regards,

**Ged McGrath**  
Chair, South Copeland GDF Community Partnership



*"Despite the differences in opinion that such a subject matter can bring, our aim is to assist everyone in the local community through the GDF process, whatever their views".*



# News from NWS:

## Areas of Focus identified



**NWS has published Areas of Focus in the search to find a suitable site and a willing community to host a GDF. The areas are within the three communities currently involved in the process, in Mid Copeland and South Copeland in Cumbria, and in East Lincolnshire.**

The Areas of Focus will enable NWS to focus more in-depth studies and investigations to help experts understand and consider the potential for an area to safely and securely host a GDF. They have been identified using a range of information, such as geological data, areas of environmental protection, and consideration of built-up areas.

Identification of Areas of Focus does not mean a GDF will be sited in these areas. Construction will only start when a suitable site is identified, a potential host community has confirmed its willingness to host the facility, and all the necessary consents and permits have been obtained.

Corhyn Parr, Chief Executive Officer at NWS, said: “NWS is delivering a GDF as the safe, secure, and long-term solution for the most hazardous radioactive waste. We are making real progress and establishing these Areas of Focus will focus our investigations to help us determine the potential suitability of a specific area, with on-the-ground surveys, further desk studies and engagement with landowners.

“A GDF requires a suitable site and willing community and will only be developed when both are in place. We will continue our engagement with local people and stakeholders, and will be holding events in local communities to talk about what this means for each area.”

In the search for a suitable site for a GDF, three key elements are needed with the right sub-surface geological environment deep underground, a suitable surface location, and the ability to connect the two areas with accessways.

In South Copeland, there is one surface Area of Focus – Land West of Haverigg. Two surface Areas of Focus have been identified in Mid Copeland – Land East of Sellafield and Land East of Seascale.

The sub-surface Area of Focus in the deep geology off the coast is the same for Mid Copeland and South Copeland.

Identifying these areas enables NWS to focus site evaluation studies, such as transport and environmental surveys, and the site characterisation work needed to consider the potential for an area to safely host a GDF.

South Copeland GDF Community Partnership Chair, Ged McGrath, said: “The Community Partnership is just starting to consider the detail of the Areas of Focus which have been identified and what this means for the community, and there will be opportunities to come together and discuss.

“Local people will naturally have questions and concerns, and if you weren’t able to attend one of NWS’ events, we encourage you to make yourself familiar with the information available on NWS’ website. You can also contact NWS’ Helpdesk to arrange a personal discussion.”

### South Copeland Areas of Focus

NWS has applied its methodology for identifying Areas of Focus to define the Sub-surface, Surface and Accessway Areas of Focus in the Search Areas. The methodology includes looking at a range of factors, such as geological characteristics, protected areas, environmental constraints and community considerations.

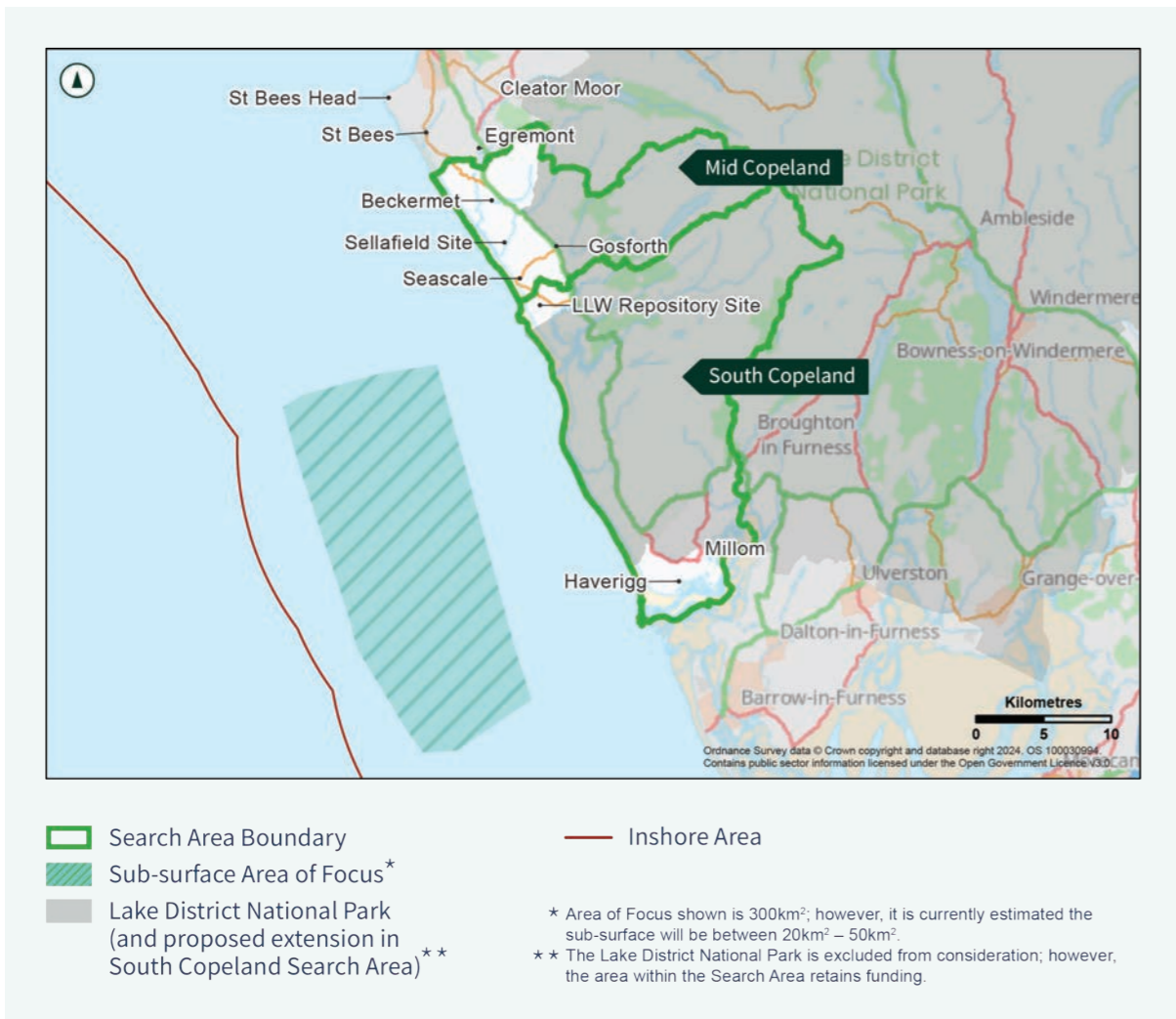


Read the full Areas of Focus methodology brochure.



Read the full 'Identifying South Copeland Areas of Focus' brochure.

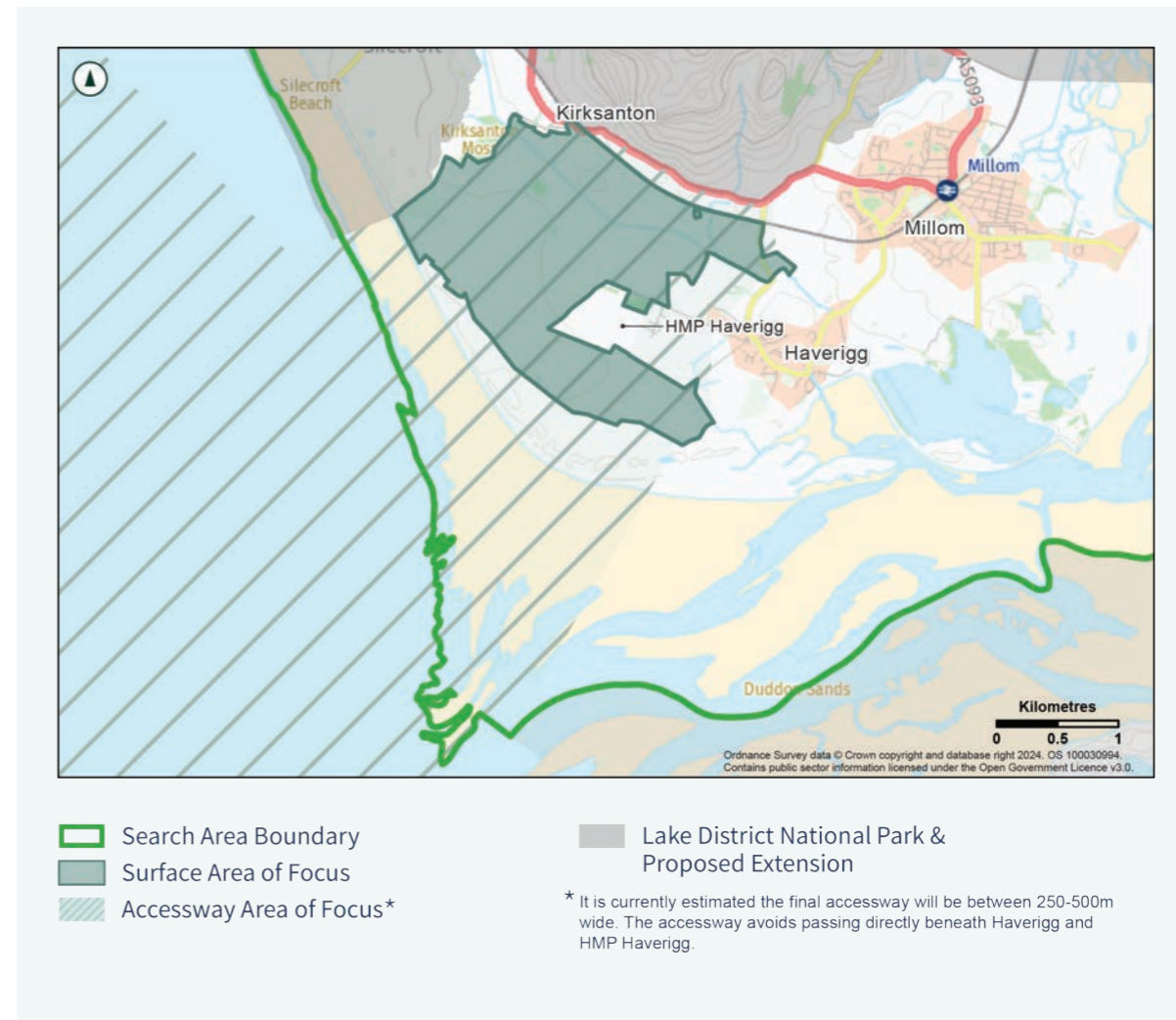




## Sub-surface Area of Focus

Alongside the National Geological Screening data, in South Copeland, NWS looked at legacy 2D and 3D seismic data, and 3D seismic survey data collected by NWS in August 2022. This indicates that there may be a volume of rock with suitable geological characteristics to develop a GDF which could be accessed from a surface site. Further studies will continue to develop our understanding of this sub-surface area as a potential host geology.

The Sub-surface Area of Focus is approximately 300km<sup>2</sup>. The full area would not be needed, yet at this early stage, looking at a larger volume of rock gives NWS flexibility in the design and location of the underground vaults and tunnels. This Sub-surface Area of Focus is the same for both South Copeland and Mid Copeland Search Areas.



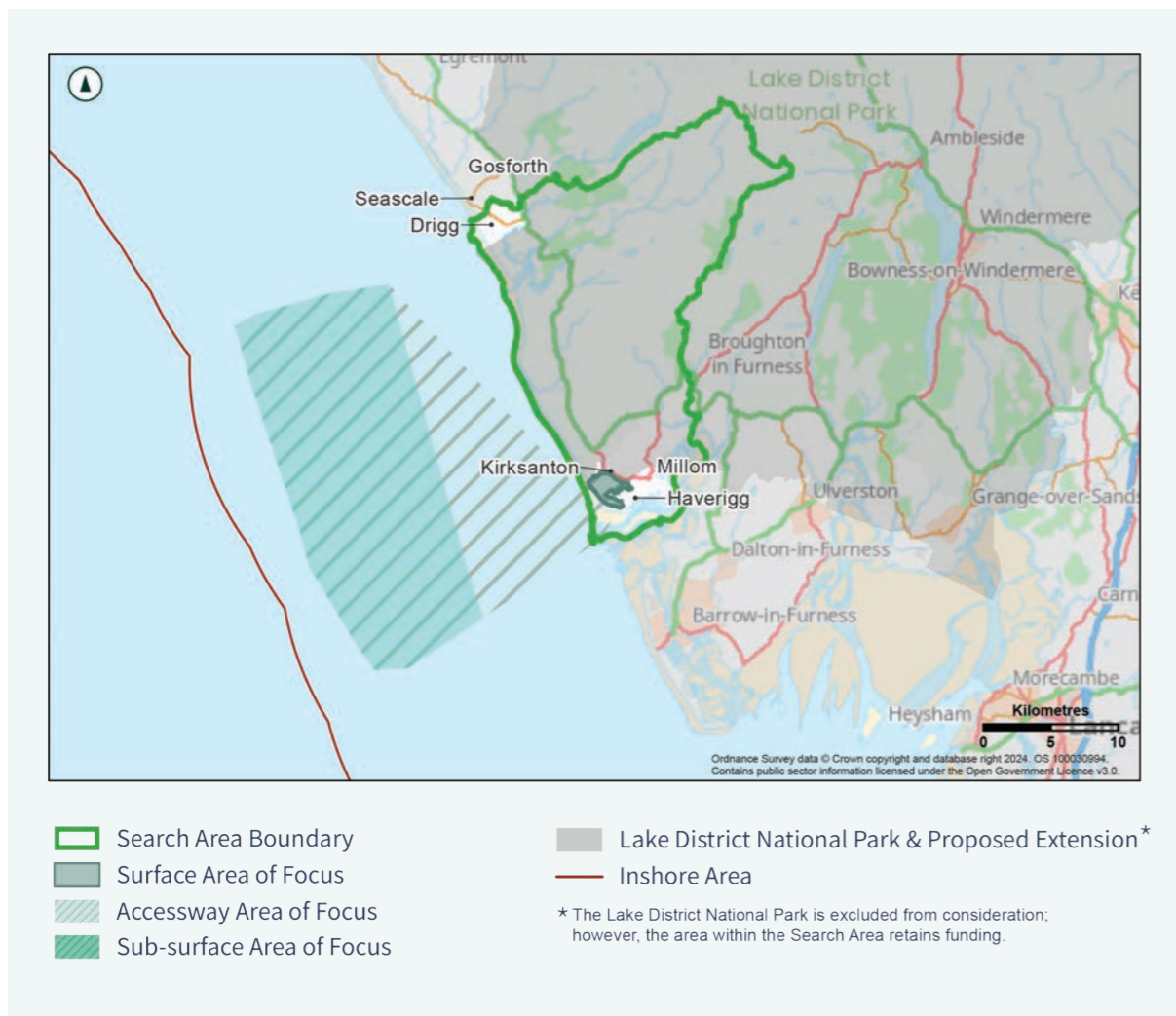
## Surface Area of Focus

Through the application of the Areas of Focus methodology, a number of potentially suitable and less constrained areas were identified in the South Copeland Search Area. Further consideration of this area, that took into account NWS' Siting Factors, as well as community and programme considerations, resulted in the identification of a Surface Area of Focus at the Land West of Haverigg, which NWS will prioritise and consider further at this time.

## Land West of Haverigg

This Surface Area of Focus is to the west of Haverigg, between the Lake District National Park (LDNP) and the coast. This land is approximately 3.5km<sup>2</sup>. The area is bounded by the LDNP and Cumbrian Coast Railway Line to the north and east, and the coastline in the west and south. Whilst maintaining the feasibility of the Surface Area of Focus, we have sought to minimise the number of included residential properties.

A buffer of approximately 500 metres has been applied from the urban areas of Millom and Haverigg. Kirksanton has also not been included in the Surface Area of Focus. HMP Haverigg, Kirksanton Moss Nature Reserve and the Duddon Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest are not included within the Area of Focus.



## Accessway Area of Focus

Applying the Areas of Focus methodology, we have identified a potential accessway within which the connection tunnels could be constructed, joining the Sub-surface Area of Focus to the Surface Area of Focus. This Area is significantly wider than what will be ultimately be required to allow for flexibility; it is currently estimated the final accessway will be between 250-500m wide. For the onshore part of the accessway, we have sought to avoid passing directly beneath Haverigg and HMP Haverigg.

For more information, visit the Nuclear Waste Services website: [www.nuclearwasteservices.uk](http://www.nuclearwasteservices.uk)



# £3 million Community Investment Funding awarded so far in South Copeland

A total of £3 million of Community Investment Funding (CIF) has now been awarded to local projects in South Copeland since the formation of the Community Partnership.

CIF grants can be used for projects that benefit the communities within the South Copeland Community Partnership Search Area.

79 projects have benefited from the support so far – 27 initiatives in 2022, 23 in 2023 and a further 29 in 2024.

Up to £1 million of CIF is made available each year for local communities engaging in the GDF siting process.

The Community Investment Panel is now into its fourth year

of providing the funding and the grants team is supporting interested groups and organisations on their applications.

CIF offers an opportunity to secure funding for projects, big or small, that:

- Create economic opportunities
- Enhance the natural or built environment
- Improve community wellbeing

The Community Investment Panel may also consider funding for projects that are delivered outside of the Search Area, however, the applicant would be required to demonstrate and evidence the benefit to the community in the South Copeland Search Area.

## Millom Striders Running Club £2,536

To provide funding for the Run the Edge 2024 event, which is a running event from Millom along the West Coast.



## Projects benefitting from the funding in year 3 include:



### Millom Bowling Club £14,547

To purchase a new lawn mower with interchangeable cassettes to enable the upkeep of the local bowling green for the local community.

**A Skye Full of Stars: £1,100** – The grant will provide a personalised marquee, which the charity can use for outreach events. The Charity awards grants to children/young people aged 25 and under in the Millom area to help them fulfil their dreams, including education, sports, dance and music.

### Bootle & District Bowling Club: £26,467 –

To purchase new equipment to maintain the Bowling Green. This new machinery will enable the greens man to produce a better playing surface for the members, local community and visitors to enjoy the game of Bowls. The equipment covered includes a Mower, Spiker, Scarifier and Sprayer.

**Bootle Village Hall: £50,000** – Towards the replacement of the play park equipment area next to Bootle Village Hall.

### Cumberland Council: £200,000 –

Contribution towards Activating Community Health, a project in Millom will provide a new Health Hub facility for the community. The money provided will fund an upgraded surface (3G) to the existing artificial pitch; and a further £150k from both the 2025 and 2026 budget will be provided for the outfitting of the building stage of the full Activating Community Health project.

**Cumberland & Westmorland Archaeological & Antiquarian Society: £1,020** – In addition to £3,627 allocated in 2023, to fund a local excavation searching for evidence of and activities relating to a medieval settlement and the history of Irton.

**Duddon & Furness Mountain Rescue: £57,500** – To contribute towards costs for a new purpose-built centre providing a control room, secure storage for three vehicles and a wide range of medical, rope access and water rescue equipment; space for maintenance, training, briefing and the welfare of members, relatives and the public on operations; and drying facilities.

**Eskdale Mill Heritage Trust: £4,000** – Funding towards volunteer training, and the related PPE, tools and materials costs involved at Eskdale Mill.



### Howgill Family Centre £59,894

Has received a total of £190,935 over three years to the Good Enough Start programme. Good Enough Start contributes to parents understanding of how they develop their baby's lifelong mental health, shaped by the parent-infant relationship.

**Haverigg Nursery & The Clubbers: £20,225** – Towards the replacement of existing old equipment and the purchase of new equipment to enhance both the internal and external play areas nursery resources.

**Millom Amateur Operatic Society: £4,871** – Funding to enable a series of surveys to be completed in relation to the building.

**Millom Baptist Church: £46,089** – New audio-visual conference facilities will be installed to two areas of the Church building; the Sanctuary and the Main Hall. This will enhance the overall use of the hall for all users of the building.

**Millom Rugby League Football Club: £45,739** – For the installation of a Solar Panel System which will allow them to reduce utility costs and contribute towards the sustainability of the Club.

**Millom Recreation Centre Limited: £3,912** – The project will provide surveys for Millom Recreation Centre (MRC) which are aimed at assessing the feasibility of installing solar panels to reduce energy costs, promote sustainability and increase the centre's eco-friendly agenda, efficiency, and annual users.

**Millom Town Council: Awarded £4,083** to replace six public seats in Millom and **£4,764** for the provision of seven new seats at points around the lagoon.

**Millom Velo Club: £10,000** – For the purchase of training equipment to enable them to create an inclusive and safe environment for cyclists of all ages to learn, develop and improve their bike handling skills for both on and off-road disciplines.

**Mind in Furness: £36,617** – 'Safe Space Millom' will provide a weekly mental health drop in/support service with a full range of targeted mental health and wellbeing opportunities. All sessions and courses delivered as part of this project are free to attendees.

**Muncaster Microbus: £30,000** – This grant is to provide funding towards a replacement vehicle of a similar type and specification to the current disabled accessible minibus used by the Muncaster Microbus Ltd, allowing them to continue with their current services.

**Norman Nicholson House: £63,741** – The project aims to rescue the lifelong home of the 20th century Cumbrian poet Norman Nicholson from a state of increasing disrepair and transform it into a place that people will want to visit. The grant award is to contribute to external renovation costs.

**Silecroft Village Hall Committee: £27,963** – For the supply and installation of audio-visual equipment. It will enable the hall to offer conference facilities, film nights, children's entertainment and family parties.



## Millom National Children's Choir

**£5,000**

Funding for seven children to attend two week-long courses with the National Children's Choir of Great Britain. This gave the children the opportunity to work with the very best choral and vocal coaches alongside children from all over the country who share their love of music and singing.

### Slag Bank Play Area Association:

**£29,723** – To replace the current play area flooring, which will provide a safe all-weather, all-season surface for the children's play area.

### South Cumbria Sea Sports Association:

**£21,560** – This grant application is for Phase 2 of the project to erect a tractor facility which will enable the members to carry out repairs whilst at the site rather than the tractors being moved to members' homes for any repair and maintenance works. The extra facility will be energy efficient, enable repair works to be carried out in a safe manner, and reduce the carbon footprint of their operations.

### St Paul's Irton Parochial Church Council:

**£400** – Towards obtaining an expert's report on the conservation and display of two medieval objects: The 9th century Anglian cross, a scheduled monument of national importance, currently in poor condition; and the 13th century Irton crusader's grave slab, currently in storage beneath the Abbey Church at St Bees.

### The Eskdale Centre CIC: £8,385 (with an additional £7,257 taken from 2025's budget)

– The project is to provide feasibility studies and an energy efficiency assessment in regard to the Eskdale Bunkhouse.

### West Lakeland Rotary Club: £4,295 –

To install interpretation boards for St Paul's Church to Irton Hall walk. The first being a natural history information board located at Holmrook Hall Bridge and the second detailing the history of the footpath is adjacent to St Paul's Church.

### Whicham Parish Council: £10,000 –

The project will update and provide additional play equipment for children under 7 years-of-age in the Parish Council owned play areas in Silecroft and Kirksanton.

### Waberthwaite & Corney District Village Hall:

**£93,069** – For the installation of audio-visual equipment which will attract more hall users and expand the types of events they may offer to the community. The project will also provide a heating upgrade and installation of CCTV.

You can also contact the grants team by email at [communityinvestment-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk](mailto:communityinvestment-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk)



For more information about the funding and how you can apply online, please visit our Community Investment Funding webpage.

# International GDF updates

## Canada community referendum results are in – and Sweden has been granted an environmental permit to build and operate a geological disposal facility.



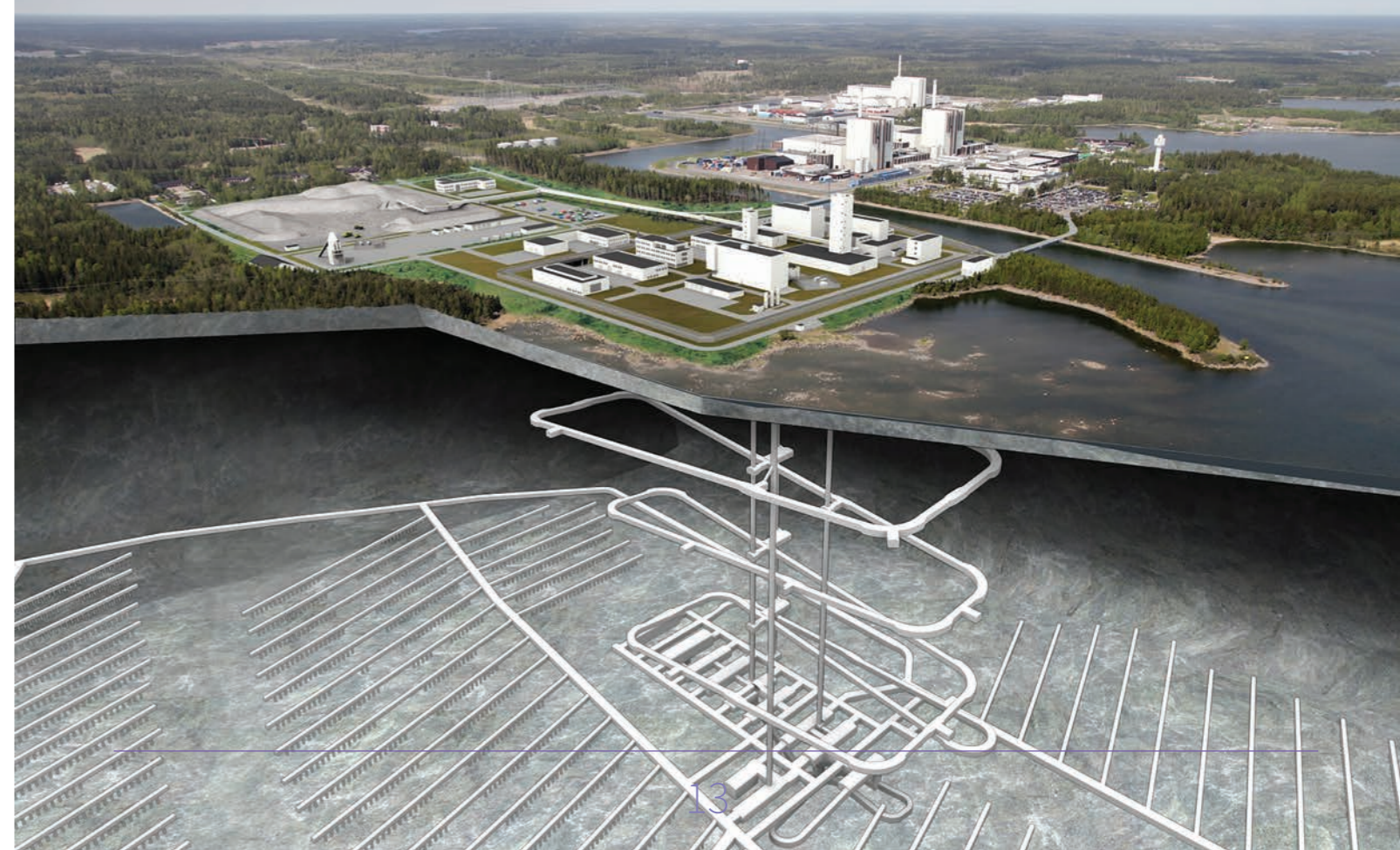
In Sweden, developer SKB has received an environmental permit to build and operate the final repository for spent nuclear fuel in Forsmark and the encapsulation plant in Oskarshamn. Work can now begin at the start of 2025.

SKB developed a consent-based approach before the UK and committed to walk away from any community that did not support having a GDF built nearby. This helped build trust and encouraged people to join a conversation about GDF.



In Canada, the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation-Ignace area will be the future location for a deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel. The country's

Nuclear Waste Management Organization made the decision following extensive technical studies, more than a decade of community engagement and with three communities confirming their willingness to host the project.



# Community Visioning

The Community Partnership's role includes working directly with local people to create a Community Vision. This means actively involving the community in how they would like their community to evolve and to consider the part that a GDF may play in that Vision becoming a reality.

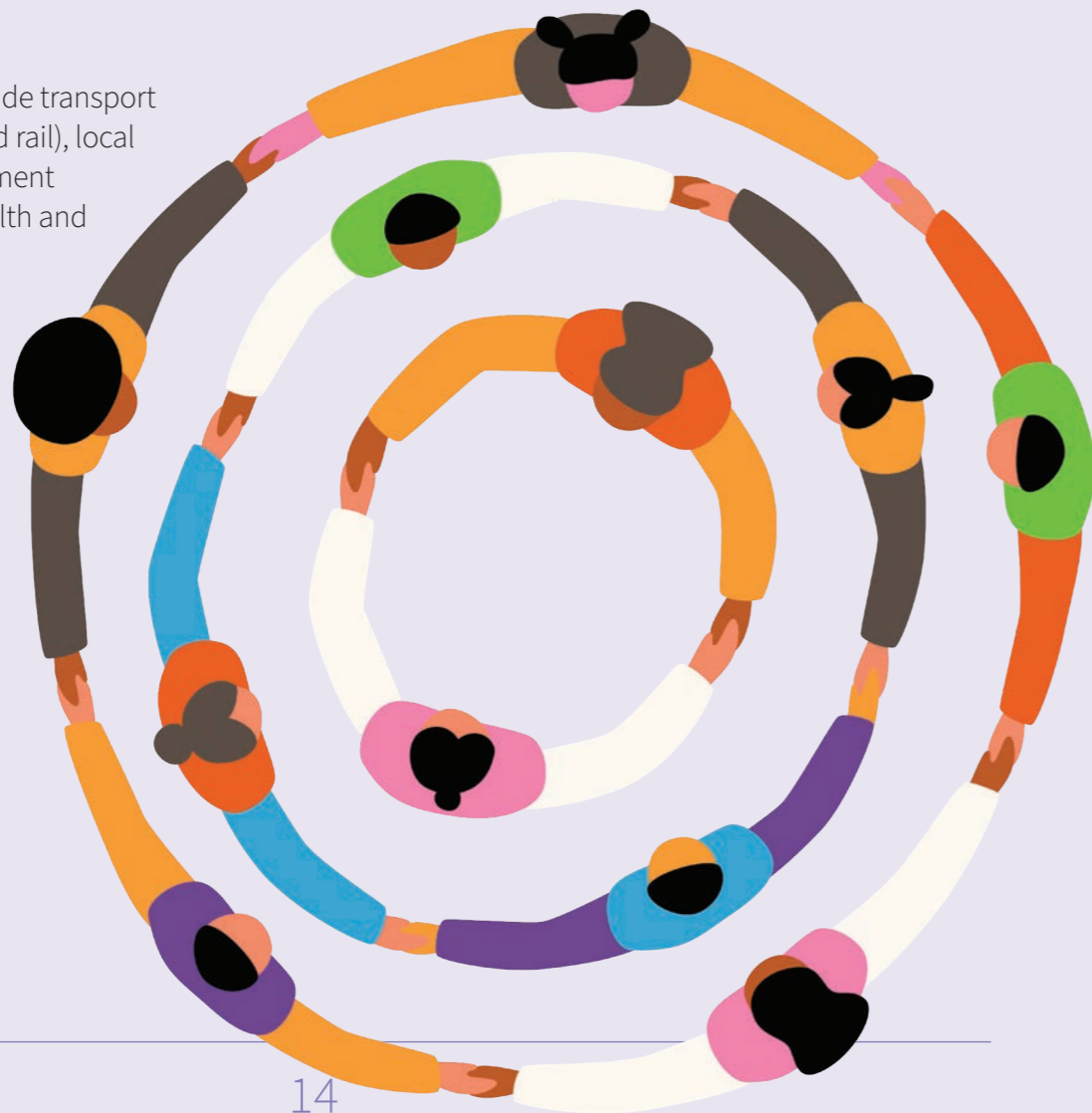
As part of that work programme, we have been gathering the views of local people to understand how people feel about the South Copeland area, what they most value and what they might want to improve.

We have attended events and Community Forums to understand views, and many people completed a questionnaire (online and postal), resulting in almost 400 individual responses.

Emerging themes include transport infrastructure (road and rail), local economy and employment opportunities, and health and social care services.

In 2025, the Community Partnership will be continuing this work by developing this with local residents to explore the emerging themes in more detail. We will be sharing next steps soon.

Learn more about the Community Vision and Significant Additional Investment:







## Helpdesk

Managed by NWS

 0300 369 0000

 [gdfinfo-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk](mailto:gdfinfo-southcopeland@nuclearwasteservices.uk)

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