# Minutes of the 16th Meeting of the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership

**Drigg and Carleton Village Hall 16th May 2023 at 6.30pm**

### Present:

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| Cllr Ged McGrath | Chair |
| Cllr David Moore | Cumberland Council |
| Kelly Anderson | Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) |
| David Billing | Millom Town Council |
| Maggie Cumming | Whicham Parish Council |
| Andy Pratt  | Cumberland Councillor |
| Ian Lockwood  | Millom Without Parish Council |
| Bob Kelly  | Cumberland Councillor  |
| David Savage | Cumbria Association of Local Councils |
| Chris Gigg  | Drigg & Carleton Council  |
| John Sutton | Sustainable Duddon |
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### Supporting Attendees:

Simon Hughes NWS Community Engagement and Siting Director

Lisa Mugan NWS Site Evaluation Manager

Malcolm Orford NWS Major Permissions Programme Lead

Andrew Parkes NWS Site Characterisation Sponsor

Ruth Letourneur NWS Land Use Planning Manager

Anne Broome NWS Community Engagement Coordinator

Dawn Walker NWS Secretary

**Apologies**

Kate Willshaw Friends of the Lake District

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### Agenda:

# Meeting Agenda

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| **Meeting Date:** | 16th May 2023 | **Time**: | 18.30 – 20.30 |
| **Meeting Type:** | Phone Call [ ]   | Virtual/Conference [x]   | In Person [x]  |
| **Location:** | Drigg and Carleton Village Hall, Drigg  |
| **Additional Material enclosed?** [ ] *If so, list here* |
| **Agenda** |
| **Item No.** | **Time** | **Description** | **Lead** |
| 1 | 18.30 – 18.35 | Welcome & Introductions. Declaration of Interest. | Chair |
| 2 | 18.35 - 18.40 | Approval of minutes/Action Log | Chair |
| 3 | 18.40 – 18.45  | Chairs Update  | Chair |
| 4 | 18.45 – 19.10 | Site Evaluation Roadmap  | LM |
| 5 | 19.10 – 19.35 | Major Permissions  | MO/RL |
| 6 | 19.35 – 20.00 | Geology Update  | AP |
| 7 | 20.00 – 20.10 | Subgroups  | KW |
| 8 | 20.10 – 20.25  | Public Forum  | ALL |
| 9 | 20.25 – 20.30 | AOB and Close | Chair |

## Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members of the public, Partnership members and supporting attendees to the meeting.

## Approval of Minutes and Review of Action Log

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

| **Action Reference:** | **Description:** | **Assigned to:** |
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| 190423 1 | Seek clarity with the CIF team the progress of the Kirksanton application. | Complete  |
| 190423 2 | Can the Partnership have the right to legal services if required.  | CK – Ongoing  |
| 190423 3 | Circulate final version of the CPA.  | Complete  |
| 190423 4 | Comms Lead to add a caveat under the link to the jobs and skills report  | Complete  |
| 190423 5 | Clarity to be sought from the Contact Centre and a new service level agreement approved for the receipt of questions into the contact centre. This work will be conducted by the communications subgroup | CL/CM – referred to Operations subgroup  |
| 190423 6 | Draft a response to the consultation. CK/JS/KW  | Completed  |
| 190423 7 | Respond through the contact Centre that the Partnership will be submitting a response.  | Completed  |
| 190423 8 | Teams meeting to discuss base line survey.  | Completed  |

## Chair’s Update

The Chair provided an update on the following items:

**Role of the Community Partnership**

For the benefit of the members of the public, the Chair covered the responsibilities of the Partnership. These are:

* Facilitate discussion with the community
* Identify relevant information that people in the Search Area and Potential Host Community want or need about the siting process
* Be the key vehicle for community dialogue with the developer
* Review and refine the boundaries of the Search Area as the developer’s investigations progress
* Identify priorities for Community Investment Funding
* Make recommendations to the RPLA on whether to invoke the Right of Withdrawal and if and when to launch a Test of Public Support
* Agree a programme of activities to develop the community’s understanding of the siting process and the potential implications of hosting a GDF
* Develop a community vision and consider the part a GDF may play in that vision
* Monitor public opinion in relation to siting a GDF within the Search Area and the Potential Host Community

**Questions to the Community partnership**

The Community Partnership had received two letters from members of the public. The letters included a number of questions and it was requested that these be answered by the Community Partnership rather than by the developer. It took approximately ten hours of members time to answer all of the questions posed and one member commented that one of her Parishioners has refused to send any future questions to the Contact Centre and only wants responses from the Community partnership. As the members are all volunteers it was felt that this was not sustainable.

There was a wide-ranging discussion about solutions to the problem and members requested better visibility of the questions and answers coming into the contact centre as well as more information about how queries are handled. It was felt that the answers to the questions were too formal with no personal touch and there was no indication as to who had answered the questions. The Community Engagement Manager (CEM) informed members that a representative from the contact centre had offered to give members a briefing about how questions were allocated and answered. Members also felt that a local contact centre should be considered to give a more personal touch.

After further discussion it was decided that the issue should be passed to the operations subgroup who would agree a process for better visibility of contact centre queries.

**Action:** Operations subgroup to discuss approach to visibility of contact centre queries.

**Meetings**

* **Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organisation (NWMO)**

David Billing had represented the Community Partnership at a meeting between the Canadian NWMO and Cumberland Community Partnerships. He was asked by the Chair to give feedback to the Community partnership members:

“It was a very informative meeting, presented by the Canadian Developer NWMO. They have issues very similar to our own but the material that they are looking to store in the GDF is slightly different. Their funding model is different to our Community Investment Funding and they also have to engage with the first nations who have specific ownership rights to the land. In Canada they started off with twenty-two potential communities and they are now down to the final two. The process so far has taken approximately 15 years.

## NWS Journey

The Chair introduced the Partnership to the NWS team - Lisa Mugan, Ruth Letourneur,

Malcolm Orford, and Andy Parkes.

The CEM explained that originally the agenda had specified three separate presentations – one on site evaluation, one on major permissions and one on geology but the team had worked together to provide one presentation on NWS activities.

Malcolm Orford firstly explained that although it was one presentation, the NWS journey had been divided into three prime areas of activity to track the journey from initial conversations all the way through to the delivery of boreholes. These three areas were - Site Evaluation, Major Permissions and Site Characterisation.

This was a complicated and nuanced process where the reality is that one activity doesn’t stop and then the next begins, rather, activities overlap, sometimes for many years.

He explained that the assessment (site evaluation) of each of the identified Search Areas is now underway and that it includes a range of studies which will help us to understand the Search Area better and its potential to host a GDF. This assessment includes the area of identified potential host geology (in the inshore area), along with assessments at surface level which are critical when considering the ability to support surface facilities. This assessment of the search area will continue in some form or another all the way up until the identification of the potential host community.

Lisa Mugan will take you through the headlines of this stage and answer any questions.

To enable the subsequent phases, in particular the site characterisation phases a number of specific permissions and approvals are required, these collectively are referred to as Major Permissions. These permissions and approvals are to enable intrusive investigation (deep boreholes) only and not the delivery of the GDF itself. Ruth Letourner will take you through the headlines of this stage and answer any questions.

Assuming we are successful in obtaining the relevant permissions and approvals we will then be able proceed to the site characterisation phase and actually deliver the intrusive investigation (deep boreholes). The subsequent analysis of the extracted core samples will enable us to build that critical detailed understanding of the geology of interest. Andy Parkes will take you through the headlines of this stage and answer any questions.

Throughout all the stages we will of course be continuing to work with the Community Partnerships to build understanding and understand willingness to host a GDF.

Once a community has consented to a GDF in a test of public support, we have recommended a preferred site and we have the secretary of state’s approval for the design only then can then start applying for the suite of permission and regulatory consents required to actually construct a GDF.

Lisa Mugan Site Evaluation manager then talked to the partnership about Site Evaluation.

**Feasibility Studies**

NWS are implementing a programme of feasibility studies based on the published siting factors.

The studies vary in duration and are being carried out by specialist consultants.

The studies will initially be ‘desktop’ studies looking at existing data (no visible ‘on-the-ground’ activity).

The first studies will address priority topics, and further studies will be considered.

The feasibility studies will contribute to the consideration of two potential communities and help to determine whether or not an area is considered for further site characterisation (2025/2026).

The desk top studies we are currently working on are:

* Site Descriptive Model - brings together all the geology information, reports, data, and studies we currently have, this will be continually updated as more information becomes available.
* Power - covers the power requirements of the whole process of the build and the life of the GDF Facility
* Subsurface
* Local Skills Pathway - high level option to establish a local workforce and assess how a GDF may influence future employment and training opportunities
* Visitor Economy - assesses the impacts of a GDF on visitors and local tourism
* Landscape Desk-based Report – environmental report on the visual impact of a GDF
* Bio-diversity Desk-based Report - environmental report on habitats
* Heritage Desk-based Report - covers the heritage of the area
* Initial Transport Study – assessing the transport requirements of a GDF
* Geosphere Implications for Post Closure
* Ability to Characterise - brings together all the geological information

The attendees were given the predicted dates when outputs from the different studies will be available but obviously these may be subject to change. The reports are subject to NWS review/ governance processes, but all information will be shared as soon as is feasibly possible.

Ruth Letourner then talked to the partnership about Major Permissions

**Major Permissions**

This is specifically looking at how we get permission to do the intrusive investigations of deep bore holes. Two key permissions are needed – planning permission and environmental permission.

The GDF is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and in these cases planning permission is called a Development Consent Order (DCO). A DCO Application is submitted to the Secretary of State and includes a period of public examination. Anyone can register as an interested party to engage in this process. The National policy statement sets out the planning tests which the application is assessed against. This is purely for the consent to drill bore holes not to build the GDF.

There are various Environmental Permits which the GDF programme may need, but the key one is under Schedule 23 of EPR – for “Radioactive substances activities”. The current approach being adopted by the Environmental Agencies to permit the GDF is via a process of ‘staged regulation’:

Environmental Permits will ensure that different stages of GDF development are regulated by the Environment Agency.

At the current early stage:

* NWS needs to demonstrate that the area has potential to host a GDF safely.
* NWS needs to show that the boreholes will not impact the area's ability to host a GDF safely.
* NWS needs to demonstrate they are a competent operator that has suitable systems and arrangements in place to manage the work safely.

The Environment Agency will consult on the permit application, draft permit, and basis of decision.

Permitting is staged as follows:

Stage 1 is for intrusive investigations

Stage 2 is for underground investigations – the accessways

Stage 3 is for the disposal systems

Stage 4 is for the operation of the GDF

At each stage of the GDF development process more detail is required to refine the Environmental Safety Case that is supplied as supporting information when each permit variation is submitted. The first stage of this is for intrusive investigations, where we demonstrate that the planned boreholes will both gather sufficient information for the next stage of the safety case, but also that we will not hinder the safety of the GDF site. This is a matter of interest for the Environment Agency and where they begin to regulate us, but at this stage we do not get regulated by the Office for Nuclear Regulations.

Andy Parkes then talked to the partnership about site characterisation.

**Characterisation**

Andy explained the multi barrier approach which is used by countries around the world to members. The centre of the package holds the waste form, then you have the canister that holds the package, around that you have buffers and barriers then bentonite blocks and the final barrier is the rock itself. To enable long term (100,000s of years) safety requires a suitable rock which has been around for millions of years wear we understand the movement and how water moves through it. The host rock and the under and overlying rock are equally important.

When we started the current process, we had lots of information available from the national geological screening exercise. We are now looking in further detail at the specific Search Areas that have come about following formation of the Community Partnerships. The British geological survey has some of the information we require and we are also looking at previous studies previous seismic analysis.

Intrusive and non-intrusive investigations need to be undertaken next. Previously commissioned seismic surveys did not give us the detail we require so we conducted seismic surveys off the west cost of Cumbria in 2022. Four terabytes of information were collected and this is currently being processed.

The major permission is needed to do the intrusive investigations which are the boreholes. The boreholes are drilled with a metal tube similar to a straw approx. six inches in diameter with a four inch diameter core. Using a drilling rig, we bore into the ground to extract rock and ground water which can be analysed in the laboratory. We can look at the rock, the ground water and how the ground water moves through the rock. Most of the investigations will take place off the coast in the inshore area.

**Questions on the presentation**

Q – When you were about to start the Seismic survey there was a lot of scare mongering storys about the effects of the seismic survey on local wildlife? Was there any harm to wildlife?

A - As part of the conditions for the licence for the survey, we had Marine Mammal Observers (MMO) onboard the survey vessel who monitored all the activity of birds, mammals and fish in the area. They had to produce reports about what they saw. Nothing out of the ordinary was found and there were no detrimental effects on the wildlife population.

Q – Is the report available?

A – Yes the report is available.

Q - How deep is an oil well borehole and how deep will a GDF borehole be?

A – Oil well boreholes are approx 3 to 5km deep and the GDF boreholes will be approximatly 1km.

Q – Will all information on the desk top studies be shared once available?

A - Yes they will be shared with the Community Partnership once availble.

Q – How can you determine the capacity of a GDF facility when some decisions on what constitutes nuclear waste have not been made?

A - The generic design of the GDF has been designed under current government guidelines for worst case scenario in terms of capacity.

Q - We as a Partnership have no idea of the scope of the site evaluation studies, why are not we involved in the scoping?

A – These are initial studies and we will involve the Partnership once we have some information to share. There will then be further studies following your input.

Q – Major Permissions - the community we live in has been through this process many times and the over whelming impact that it had on the community was intolerable, there needs to be a level of sensitivity. There are lessons to be learned.

A – We are aware that the community has been through DCO’s previously and we will collaborate closely with the Community Partnership to understand this. There will be lots of opportunities for communities to engage.

Q – Can the site evaluation roadmap be shared with the community?

A – Yes, we will produce a public facing version for you to share on the website.

Q – If you bore through the rock it becomes like a cheese and has holes in it. How do you guarantee the integrity of the rock?

A – We have been looking at the process of sealing deep bore holes for over ten years. It is important to choose where you put them initially, we have undertaken three trails, we have a test facility in Warrington which is a twenty-meter-tall tube which mimics the same as in situ boreholes. There will be future developments and we will continue to advance the process.

Q – The GDF policy is a government document and the planning inspectorate are a government body – where is the check?

A – The planning inspectorate are completely independent from the policy side. Once a DCO application is received by the planning inspectorate the policy teams have no influence over the procedure, it is governed independently.

Q- Where are you doing your desk top studies in which area?

A- The desk top studies are considering the entire Search Area.

## Subgroups

**Communication & Engagement**

Communications and Engagement subgroup met on the 10.05.23 to discuss the following items

* Terms of reference for the subgroup
* Engagement Strategy and supporting engagement calendar

Both of these items have now been approved

**Operations subgroup**

The operations group has not met since the last meeting. The next meeting will cover:

* Service Level Agreement for meeting minutes
* Process for visibility of Contact Centre questions
* Member Expectations

## Public Forum

15 minutes is allocated on each Partnership meeting agenda for a public forum, to enable members of the public to ask questions directly of Community Partnership members.

Responses to any questions submitted in advance of the meeting via the website/contact centre are addressed before opening to the floor.

### Responses to questions:

**Question 1.**

Very interested to note that the local opposition to a GDF siting on border of Mablethorpe and Theddlethorpe. Newly elected councillors are opposed to the decision and have written to Lincolnshire County Council asking to withdraw from the Community Partnership. I believe NWS have spoken to the press and intend to ignore the result. This is the second test of public support, the first a survey showing 85% against. This situation does not fill me with confidence in keeping with the promise of a “willing community.” Will the final referendum vote if a NO vote be adhered to or could it be overruled by a government body?

A - Yes it will be adhered too – it is written into the policy.

Q- Government can change its mind at any time

A – NWS will follow the guidance of the policy and will honour the results of a test of public support.

**Question 2**

What is South Copeland GDF’s response to the sections of the ongoing UK Nuclear Waste Disposal Policy Discussions documents which reference the search for a GDF? In Particular,

* The increase in the list of material likely to go into a GDF including the entire plutonium stockpile waste from modular reactor programmes and the process?
* The notion that a preliminary GDF might well be built even if it is not big enough?

Would SC GDF be happy to be part of a process which results in a GDF that is not fit for purpose?

A- The list of waste from the “2014 white paper” is in the “working with Communities policy” the only thing that has changed is any capacity for nuclear new build.

The pressing need at hand is to take the existing waste and deal with that.

Q - What if you only have 6 or 4 square kilometres of area what happens then?

A - If the potential host community cannot deal with the inventory that is currently listed, it would rule it out.

**Question 3**

On land boreholes - what is the footprint based on your slide show? Assuming that the slide show is representative of what is going to be required? How long is the time scale from the first spade to being restored to its original state?

A - The area is 100m x 100m squared. It takes approximately nine months. If a smaller rig is required to be left to do further investigations, the site would be approximately 10m x 10m squared.

**Question 4.**

What is the executive summary of the Partnership’s response to the government consultation?

a. Noting that working with communities is unchanged.

b. Noting that Drigg is being proposed by developer’s owner as the national NSD

c. That the potential search area in Drigg will be “trumped“ by government policy

A – The Community Partnership have written a response to the consultation policy which will we are happy to share with the member of the community who has requested the response. It will also be published on the South Copeland Community Partnership website.

## AOB

No further business was discussed.

## New Actions

| **Action Reference:** | **Description:** | **Assigned to:** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| 160523 1 | Operations subgroup to discuss approach to visibility of contact centre queries.  | Ops subgroup |
| 160523 2 | Create a public facing version of the site evaluation roadmap | Site Evaluation manager/CEM |
| 160523 3 | Share the CP response to the Consultation document  | Secretariat – complete  |

## Next Meeting

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | 14th June 2023  |
| **Time** | 6.30 – 8.30pm  |
| **Venue** | Kirksanton Village Hall  |