

Sedbergh Parish Council

Question	Response
Letter	<p>Sedbergh Parish Council is aware that the period for response to the consultation ended on the 23rd March. Nevertheless the Parish Council wishes to place formally on record its views on the current process following its meeting on the 29th March not only because of the grave disquiet which it feels as a result of how the matter is being dealt with but also as a declaration of solidarity with those other Parish Council which have expressed opposition to the matter proceeding to Stage 4 (and which in many cases are far closer to the likely site of the proposed repository).</p> <p>The Parish Council has both substantive and procedural reservations to the existing process and is opposed to the matter proceeding further at this time. In summary the reasons for objection are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contrary to the procedure carried out in other countries, "volunteer" communities to host the repository were requested before scientific and geological surveys were undertaken as to the suitability and safety of likely volunteer sites. This is putting the cart before the horse. Common sense alone dictates (let alone the practice in all other countries) that the science be done first and only then that volunteers be requested. Otherwise there is the strong danger that the geology will be "bent" to fit the volunteer community which in the present case in fact is the only community in the country coming forward. From the Nirex Inquiry onwards there is abundant evidence to indicated that there are very big question marks over the suitability of the geology throughout the whole of West Cumbria and this alone is enough reason to pause the process until other sites in the country have been investigated.2. The Parish Council is astonished that the principal and most influential members of the Partnership set up to advise the Decision Making Bodies (DMB's) are the DMB's themselves. This seems contrary to all principles of natural justice and weights the process in such a way as to lead to the conclusion that the decision to go ahead to the next stage has effectively already been taken.3. For similar reasons we feel that the decision to limit the telephone opinion poll largely to the Districts of Allerdale and Copeland is once again skewing the likely result in favour of proceeding to the next stage. There are many other interests in the County which should be considered at this crucial point in the process apart from the economic benefits which are seen as likely to accrue to the West Coast as a result of proceeding all the way down the road to the construction of a repository. The further the process goes the less likelihood there is of the Government allowing a withdrawal at a later stage.4. So far we feel that the whole process has been lacking in transparency and that the only way in which this can be rectified is by way of a Cumbria wide referendum so that the concerns of everyone in the County may be expressed and given due weight alongside the views of those living in West Cumbria. <p>We ask that the Partnership take these views into account when formulating its advice to the DMB's.</p>