

South Lakeland District Council

Question	Response
<p>Letter</p>	<p>As Partnership members representing South Lakeland District Council we would like the following views to be considered as a response to the consultation.</p> <p>Whilst we acknowledge the significant economic benefits that progressing towards a Geological Disposal Facility, could bring to an area this authority wishes to express concerns over the current information available with regard to the geology of West Cumbria and in particular to those areas remaining following the British Geological Survey (BGS) screening report. We are not persuaded that there is sufficient evidence available at this time to support the view that "there are sufficient areas remaining in West Cumbria after initial screening to make further progress worthwhile", particularly in relation to the geological suitability of the remaining areas to host a repository.</p> <p>Whilst we acknowledge that detailed evidence could only be provided by further investigations, at this stage we must question if we know enough, and find, what we know to be acceptable to us to justify entering the siting process. At the current time we do not consider that we can be reassured to this fact and the significant uncertainties about the suitability of West Cumbria's geology lead us to remain sceptical about the prospects of finding a site for a repository that meet all regulatory requirements.</p> <p>We are aware that there may be far more suitable sites to host a repository from a geological perspective elsewhere in the country that have not or are not being considered due to the process of possible site selection by voluntarism. It is understood that whilst other countries have followed a similar approach to this, detailed considerations of the underlying geology were undertaken first to establish a greater level of confidence that a geology may be suitable prior to making requests for volunteer communities in those highlighted areas.</p> <p>We consider, in light of the geological uncertainties, and significant costs to the country of progressing further this process in West Cumbria, the government should reconsider the approach advocated in the white paper to finding a suitable site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) by undertaking detailed studies of other areas of the country where the known geology would be considered by the scientific community to be initially more favourable, then approach those communities for a view of acceptability.</p> <p>We are also concerned with what we consider to be two fundamental flaws in the procedures which have been followed to date:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Decision Making Bodies (DMB) viz Allerdale and Copeland District Councils and Cumbria County Council are being advised by a Partnership of which they themselves are leading and highly influential members. 2. That the telephone opinion poll is being limited to a sample of the residents of Allerdale and Copeland when the consequences of the decision to go ahead has ramifications that are far wider than just these two geographical districts. <p>In addition we are not at all sanguine that, despite assurances to the contrary, the right to withdraw would be allowed once the process had moved on to the next stage of finding a suitable site - especially if no other community in the country was Volunteering to host the facility.</p>