

RWM welcomes proposed GDF search area in Allerdale

RWM has welcomed the proposed search area in Allerdale, Cumbria, for further engagement and investigation for a potentially suitable GDF site.

Allerdale GDF Working Group has been discussing geological disposal with local people since January and identified the area using existing information which includes local geology, environmental issues, transport infrastructure and safety. Local views were also taken into account following a series of public events and online engagement over the past nine months.

The area comprises 13 electoral wards of Allerdale Borough Council, covering 320 sq km: Aspatria; Broughton St Bridgets; Dalton; Ellen & Gilcruix; Flimby; Harrington & Salterbeck; Maryport North; Maryport South; Moorclose & Moss Bay; Seaton & Northside; St John's; St Michael's and Stainburn & Clifton.

Any land inside the boundary of the Lake District National Park (LDNP), and its proposed extension, will remain excluded from consideration for both the underground and surface parts of a GDF.

RWM's initial evaluation has confirmed that the proposed area does have potential worth exploring. A period of detailed investigations would be needed to narrow down any possibilities within this area and confirm suitability.

The deep geology off the coastline is also being considered for the underground elements of a GDF. This means a land-based surface facility of around 1 sq km could provide access to underground tunnels and vaults located many kilometres away, covering up to 20 sq km and constructed in rocks up to 1,000 metres deep.

The next part of the process will involve forming a Community Partnership to continue discussions, a move that will require support and participation from at least one local authority – Allerdale Borough Council or Cumbria County Council.

If a Community Partnership is formed, there will be a process for identifying and recruiting groups, organisations, and individuals as members, aiming to reflect the make-up of the community. Its activities would include further public engagement and creating a long-term vision for the community.

Formation of a longer-term Community Partnership would also trigger access to community investment funding that would be available for projects and initiatives in the search area that drive economic development, enhance the local environment or improve community well-being.

RWM Siting and Community Engagement Director Simon Hughes said:

RWM has been fully engaged with the Allerdale GDF Working Group as it begins to consider a GDF locally. It has been a real privilege to join discussions around the area, to hear local views, answer questions and explain this vital project.

We welcome the progress already made by the Working Group and very much look forward to continuing engagement with local people, whose views form an important part of the siting process.

Detailed investigations would be needed before any conclusions are reached on a particular site to develop, and we fully appreciate the importance of excluding the Lake District National Park and any proposed extension. A Community Partnership will continue to engage as it considers further refinements to the search area in future.

Allerdale GDF Working Group was the second to form in England and followed the first Working Group in neighbouring Copeland, which was established last November. Last week, two search areas were proposed in Copeland, representing real progress in the nationwide search for a location where higher-activity radioactive waste could be disposed of safely and securely.

RWM continues to hold informal discussions in other parts of the country that may lead to the formation of additional Working Groups.

Construction of a GDF requires both a suitable site and willing community. If a suitable site is eventually found in Allerdale, a Test of Public Support would be held with those living in the wards affected. The project could only go ahead with explicit public support.

[Read the Allerdale GDF Working Group announcement](#)

Learn more about [geological disposal](#).