To: The Clerk

Whicham Parish Council

Date: 24 June 2025

**GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY (GDF)**

Thank you for your letter of 11 June informing me of the motion passed by Whicham Parish Council. I note your related request that communities in Whicham should not be considered willing to host a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

As you know, land between Haverigg and Kirksanton has been identified by GDF developer, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) as an Area of Focus for the surface facilities of a GDF. The reasons for selecting this location are set out in NWS’s publication “[Identifying South Copeland Areas of Focus](https://www.nuclearwasteservices.uk/communities/south-copeland/areas-of-focus-in-south-copeland/)”. A further two Areas of Focus have been identified in the Mid Copeland GDF Search Area: one between the Sellafield site, Gosforth and Seascale and another east of Seascale and Gosforth. The reasons for selecting these locations are set out in the NWS publication “[Identifying Mid Copeland Areas of Focus](https://www.nuclearwasteservices.uk/communities/mid-copeland/)”.

Identifying these more specific locations within the Search Areas for examination as potential sites for the surface facilities and accessways of a GDF is an important stage in the GDF site evaluation process. You will be aware from previous correspondence with Cumberland Council that the GDF developer, NWS, is responsible for identifying a suitable site for a GDF and reaching conclusions about whether a particular location is likely to meet the GDF siting criteria. Any specific arguments about why a particular area of land should not be deemed a suitable location for the surface facilities of a GDF should be addressed directly to NWS who I know are very keen to engage with people about this issue.

The Council has sought to provide clarity about our role in the GDF siting process. The [February 2024 article](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsouthcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk%2Fa-view-from-cumberland-council-by-leader-mark-fryer%2F&data=05%7C02%7CJonathan.Cook%40copeland.gov.uk%7C83c4c21384ba4bdbd37308dd9787c781%7Cb6d1253e02e144bb8e79fe4ee8606cf0%7C1%7C0%7C638833331626399447%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dCdQPS5e6x5jtPWQgfcgW99dg9F%2BjgLLL3wRdfPIn48%3D&reserved=0) I wrote for the newsletters of the two Community Partnerships operating in Cumberland summarises our approach to this issue, and includes the following statement:

“Participating in the GDF siting process means the question of whether West Cumbria might or might not be a suitable location for a GDF can be properly resolved once and for all while allowing us all to examine in detail what the implications of siting a GDF here might be and whether it is something that could fit with our own ambitions for this area”.

A GDF will be a major Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project with all the impacts and implications that involves so the task of examining exactly what hosting a GDF would mean for this region is something we take very seriously. If a site in West Cumbria were ultimately selected for a GDF, Cumberland Council would also be a statutory consultee on the application for the Development Consent Order (DCO) that would be required before construction could proceed. This means we would be able to scrutinise the specific development proposals and ensure all necessary measures are taken to minimise or avoid negative impacts and achieve positive outcomes. In doing so, we would seek to apply learning and experience from previous NSIPs such as the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station currently under construction in Somerset.

Please note that in view of the wider public interest in the Council’s approach to the GDF siting process, I have asked the Community Partnerships to publish this response on their websites.

Yours sincerely

Mark Fryer

Leader of Cumberland Council.