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Mid Copeland  
GDF Community Partnership

Issue 2: June 2023

MID COPELAND  
**GDF**

# News

SUPPORTING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT A GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY IN OUR AREA



A vision shared:  
Your questions answered  
at public engagement  
sessions – see page 8

## Skills and jobs focus

**THE** development of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) in Mid Copeland requires a suitable site and also depends on the consent of local residents.

One of the aims of the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership is to ensure that if a site is built here, it helps to deliver the investment and benefits the community wants.

We have held 18 public events in the Search Area so far this year – and one of the key areas of questioning from local people is about potential job creation and training opportunities, such as apprenticeships.

Work is now under way to determine how many local jobs and training opportunities would be created if the

We're interested in ensuring local jobs, says Partnership Chair

community agrees to a GDF being built in this area.

Simon Hughes, Director of Siting and Communities for Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) has said that “during the construction and operation of a GDF, roles will be needed at all levels – from jobs that don't require any qualifications to apprenticeships, graduates and highly skilled and experienced specialists – creating thousands of skilled, well-paid roles across generations”.

Simon added: “At the heart of this infrastructure project is the drive to recruit locally, use local contractors and build local skills and expertise. Most jobs created during construction and operation could and should be locally based.”

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership Chair Andy Pratt said: “We're interested in ensuring a commitment to jobs and long-term careers for local people by using local training providers and supply chain.

“We're also interested in the new skills this could bring to the area, what opportunities it could bring for future generations of local people and how businesses may want to diversify further to meet the needs of this infrastructure project if Mid Copeland wants to progress further in the GDF programme.

“We don't know at this stage where a GDF will be hosted. Our area is already home to Sellafield, Europe's largest nuclear plant, directly employing around 11,000 people. Work is already under way at Sellafield to package radioactive waste, ready for emplacement in a GDF”

More on jobs and skills – pages 4 and 5

GET IN TOUCH! EMAIL YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO [GDFINFO-MIDCOPELAND@NDA.GOV.UK](mailto:GDFINFO-MIDCOPELAND@NDA.GOV.UK)



## Mike takes the Lead

Mike, right, helps to answer questions about the project

**MIKE** Slater, of Beckermet, is the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership's Farming Lead.

His role will be to feed information back to the farming community from the GDF process and about Community Partnership work, facilitate discussions and encourage two-way communication.

Mike grew up in Middletown, Lowside Quarter. He then lived at Thornhill for 15 years before moving to Beckermet 12 years ago.

From a farming family, Mike has had a small-holding in Beckermet for about 20 years where he has pedigree beef cattle as well as some continental cross sheep.

He was an active member of the Young Farmers from an early age and has built up a lot of contacts in the farming community.

Leaving school at 16 years old, Mike took an apprenticeship at Sellafield where he has worked for 40 years. He served his time as a plumber, then became a lead-burner before becoming a process worker 20 years ago.

"I would like to think that I'm approachable for anyone to contact me if they have a question," said Mike. "I'm also a shop steward and safety rep at work and therefore I understand the importance of confidentiality."

Mike's work includes being involved

in the storage of material ready for final disposal in a GDF.

"I'm comfortable with nuclear power and nuclear waste as I have been brought up with it and worked with it but I am never blasé about it," said Mike, whose grandparents' farm is in Beckermet.

"I wanted to become involved with the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership as I've lived here all my life and I wanted to know what was going on at an early stage. So far, I have found people to be really open and I am happy to be a part of this process."

To contact Mike email:  
[gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk)

## Drop in to see us and talk about geological disposal

The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership is holding a regular drop-in on Wednesdays from 10am until 5.30pm until July 19.

These are being held at the Vicarage, The Banks, Seascale, and are open to anyone who would like to go along and speak to the community engagement team.

Ask your questions, find out more about what a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) could mean for the Mid Copeland area.

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

The Mid Copeland Search Area covers the electoral ward of Gosforth which includes Seascale, Gosforth, Beckermet, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones.

The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration.

For further information contact the team on: [gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk)

## Giving young people a voice in GDF process

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership is committed to engaging with young people to discuss the possibility of hosting a GDF.

Deb Naylor, Area Operations Manager for Inspira, is the Community Partnership's Youth Lead and is working with young people to develop a Youth Strategy.

She said: "To engage with young people about a GDF, you have to go to where they are, really listen to what they have to say and be willing to do something with the information when you receive it."

Over 10 weeks, Deb and the Partnership's community engagement co-ordinators Claire Dobson and Sue Shepherd worked with the Shackles Off youth project in Seascale.

Those attending the Monday evening youth group session were aged 12-16, with 15 people at the first session where they used 'virtual reality' headsets to experience a GDF.

Prior to the first session, no members of the group had heard about geological disposal, but afterwards they agreed they had a better understanding.

In other weeks the group discussed how young people thought it was important they should be involved. Suggestions made about the best ways to engage with other young people included through TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, youth theatre and a graffiti wall.

Deb said: "The group also discussed advantages and disadvantages of a GDF in Mid Copeland and Community Investment Funding (CIF). Group members could see there were advantages in terms of job creation and boost to the local economy but were concerned it might spoil the beautiful coastline. They had definite ideas about how CIF money should be spent on creating more things for people to do."

By week four of the project, all the group said they had a better understanding of what a GDF is; around two thirds said they understood why young people should be involved in the discussion and felt they had been able to make suggestions about the ways in which the Community Partnership could engage with young people.



As part of the project, the group prepared a presentation for the Community Partnership which addressed how young people would like to be involved in the discussion.

Deb added: "The work with Shackles Off has been useful from the Community Partnership's perspective. We have learned that more needs to be done about informing young people about what a GDF is and the important role they have to play; young people have very clear views on what they want for their community and they want to engage on their terms and, rather unsurprisingly, TikTok came out top of the list of engagement platforms.

"We have a responsibility to engage with more young people in different settings at every opportunity over the next few months. Only then can we create a Youth Strategy that will be a living document and a testament to our commitment to give young people a voice in the process."

### Drop-In Events

Nuclear Waste Services, the GDF developer, will be holding some drop-in events outside of the Mid Copeland Search Area to allow other people who live in neighbouring communities to have a discussion about geological disposal and ask questions.

These events will be held as follows:

- Thursday, June 22, 2pm-6.30pm, The Meeting Place, Main Street, Egremont
- Friday, June 23, 2-7pm, Cleator Moor Civic Hall
- Thursday, June 29, 2-7pm, The Beacon, Whitehaven

### Upcoming Meetings

The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership's meetings are held in public. People can submit questions in advance or ask in person. Meetings will be held on the following dates:

- Monday, June 26, 3pm – 5pm, at Calderbridge and Ponsonby Village Hall
- Monday, August 7, 3pm – 5pm
- Wednesday, September, 20, 6pm – 8pm
- Monday, October 30, 3pm – 5pm
- Monday, December 11, 3pm – 5pm

Some venues have yet to be confirmed and details will be posted on our website, [midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk](http://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk), as soon as they have been confirmed.

The gym offers fun for all the family

# Community outdoor gym opens

The project was funded by Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership

**GOSFORTH** has celebrated the official opening of its new outdoor gym facility.

The community rallied around for the grand opening of the new gym equipment, purpose-built for all ages, at Gosforth Playing Field.

Rachel Unsworth Project Manager and Vice Chair of Gosforth Parish Council said: "After asking residents through a questionnaire, it became clear that residents thought there was a lack of facilities for teenagers and young adults at the playing field and an outdoor gym was suggested by a few.

"We sought residents' opinion with the concept of an outdoor gym and table tennis facility, and it was clear that this would be a good asset for the Parish.

"We are over the moon to have this new facility, which makes the playing field more accessible for a range of ages with different fitness abilities. The equipment comes with digital QR codes that can be scanned using the user's smart phone to access instructions and workout plans."

The project was funded by Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, which provides access to £1million Community Investment Funding per year from the GDF developer as discussions progress around what a Geological Disposal Facility could mean locally.

Partnership Chair Andy Pratt said: "This is a brilliant local community project and demonstrates how this funding can help to make a difference to local facilities in the area. Well done to everyone who has helped to make this happen.

"Any organisations in Mid Copeland who would like to apply for funding, please do get in touch."

Rachel added: "I would like to say a big thank you to Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership for making the funding process straight forward to follow and for awarding 100% of the costs, I'd also like to thank Anthony Millard (playing field committee) for been on site each day during installation and all Parish Councillors and Clerk for support during the process.

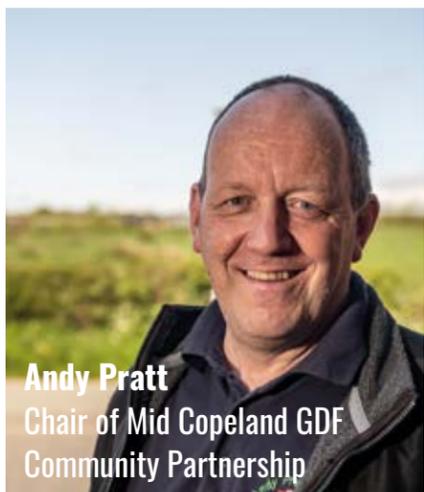
"We hope to be able to go on and secure funding for phase two which will be to offer new play equipment at the playpark.

"I recommend to anyone who is thinking of volunteering for a group to give it a go, it's so rewarding helping others or to see ideas become real."

To apply for Community Investment Funding in Mid Copeland contact: [communityinvestment-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:communityinvestment-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk)



## Welcome to our newsletter



**Andy Pratt**  
Chair of Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership

**WELCOME** to the second printed newsletter from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership.

I hope you found the first issue informative and interesting as we continue the journey to see whether Mid Copeland is suitable to host a Geological Disposal Facility and whether the community want it.

We look forward to working with the new unitary authority around the subject of geological disposal and community participation.

The Community Partnership would also like to thank David Moore, formerly Nuclear Portfolio Holder for Copeland Borough Council, as the local authority representative over the past 18 months.

David has brought a great deal of knowledge and experience to the table which has been a significant help as we take part in this programme. He will continue on the Partnership as interim local authority lead in the short term.

As detailed in the first issue of this *GDF News* for Mid Copeland, our Search Area is now made up of Gosforth ward following Local Government Reorganisation.

This means it includes Seascale, Gosforth, Beckermest, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones areas.

The parishes of Drigg and Carleton and Irton with Santon now sit outside the Mid Copeland Search Area in the Millom Without ward and are instead in the South Copeland GDF Community Partnership.

As always, areas within the Lake District National Park continue to be excluded from consideration.

The Mid Copeland Community Partnership offered a non-voting seat to Drigg and Carleton Parish Council to keep communication open and provide continuity.

The full parish of Lowside Quarter is now included in the Mid Copeland Search Area and the Community

Partnership has offered a voting seat to Lowside Quarter Parish Council.

Our Community Partnership plans to review arrangements in April 2024.

Community Partnership members have had a meeting with the Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organisation (NWMO) and it was interesting to explore what is happening elsewhere in the world regarding geological disposal.

And following on from that I think our next step as a Community Partnership would be to speak to a community who is going through a similar process to us to see what it is like from a residents' perspective.

As always, do get in touch with us to have a conversation, ask a question, highlight a concern or if you are part of an organisation which would like a presentation or a talk.

Get in touch via: [gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk)

# 4,000 jobs a year

## GDF report indicates sort of jobs which could be created, says Partnership

A NATIONAL report *Creating Jobs & Skills: A First Look*, by Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), estimates that there will be approximately 4,000 roles created in any given year during the first 25 years of construction.

This becomes 2,000 jobs in any given year throughout the long-term operational lifetime of a GDF. The research adds that most of the jobs created during the construction and operation phases of a GDF could be based locally.

A commitment has been made by NWS to train and recruit in the area where a Geological Disposal Facility would be built and also, when possible, to buy goods and services from local businesses and to work with them to create supply chains for the future. The report, released in 2022, states there will be a wide range of 'skilled, well-paid' roles available, in sectors such as construction, engineering and project management. Roles will be needed at all levels – from apprenticeships to graduates and specialists – and local training opportunities will be offered.

The report also says the host community could benefit from significant additional investment and infrastructure, including improved transport links. You can read the full report at: [gov.uk/government/](http://gov.uk/government/)



Roles would be created at all levels and would lead to rewarding careers

publications/ gdf-creating-jobs-skills-a-first-look

Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership Chair Andy Pratt said: "The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership welcomes this report from the GDF developer which begins to give an indication of the sort of jobs which would be created by hosting a

Geological Disposal Facility and the numbers required.

"We recognise that this report is a 'first look' and that further work will be required from the GDF developer to give more details.

"There are a number of nuclear-related developments which could potentially be hosted in Cumbria and

would all require a skilled workforce at different times.

"This could help to retain skills and knowledge as well as providing further development opportunities for local people.

"Our Community Partnership will consider this report in further detail."

## Training opportunities for communities

THE creation of a GDF will result in apprenticeships and training opportunities for people living in the host community, the developer has said.

Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) has pledged to recruit and train residents of the area in which the site will be built and highlighted how Sellafield has brought upskilling opportunities and economic growth to Cumbria.

In 2021/22, Sellafield had 10,843 employees, with 322 being sponsored to complete further education. There were 198 apprentices – a 25 per cent

increase on the previous year – with 20 different apprentice career pathways. Some 77 graduates were among the team, a fifth more than the year before.

Sellafield is one of the top 100 large apprentice employers in the UK, according to the Department for Education.

A total of 1,900 apprentices have been employed there over the past 10 years, with funding provided to primary and secondary schools.

Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) ambassadors

work with schools, while specific programmes of investment and intervention aim to improve education outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged. In addition, PhDs have been sponsored and 575 graduates employed over the past 10 years.

Simon Hughes, Director of Siting and Communities for NWS said: "The type of roles available across the lifetime of a GDF will range from jobs that don't require any qualifications, apprenticeships and those accessible from GCSE level, through to highly skilled roles.

"The majority of direct roles (75 per cent) are estimated to be open to those with qualifications at equivalent of A Level or below."

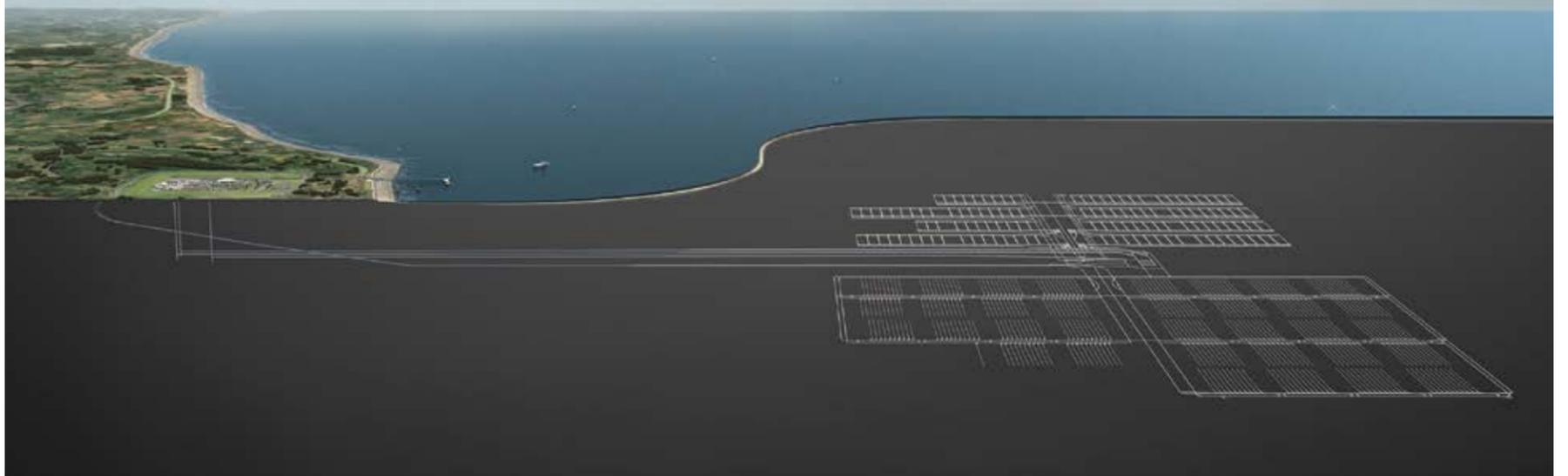
Simon added that NWS intends to follow best practice and has looked to the Crossrail Tunnelling and Underground Construction Academy (TUCA) as a model of success. Over seven years, the Academy has provided training to more than 2,000 people, including continued professional development and apprentices – 98 per cent of whom have gained full-time employment.

# in first 25 years

“We recognise this report is a ‘first look’ and further work will be required



# Initial work under way in Mid Copeland as part of GDF siting process



**WORKING** with Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) has started some initial work to begin to understand the suitability of hosting GDF in the area.

The desk-based studies will look at the feasibility of delivering a surface facility connected to the geology of interest off the coast.

A GDF is an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of higher activity radioactive waste. It is made up of a surface site and a larger underground facility which would be linked by sloping tunnels and/or vertical shafts.

Deep geology beyond the coast is being considered for siting the underground elements of a GDF in Mid Copeland. This means a surface facility on, or near, the coast would provide access to a disposal area deep in rock beyond the coast.

Studies may take around 2-3 years and will look at a range of topics which have taken into consideration community feedback gathered since the formation of the Community Partnership.

The work will include looking at issues such as geology, labour & skills, local power supply and transport. Another study is accessways - which looks at potential options for underground tunnels linking a surface site to an underground facility. Several contracts have now been issued to supply chain specialists to carry out some of this work.

A single surface facility would require approximately one square kilometre once constructed - however all the elements of the surface facilities may not need to be together in one place.

The underground part of a GDF will be located at a depth of between 200 and 1,000 metres.

Simon Hughes, Nuclear Waste Services' Director of Siting and Communities, said: "The work we've now started will address the most common topics to have emerged from our discussions with local people. It will begin to give us a much better understanding of the suitability of the area and enable us to consider how different elements of a GDF could be delivered in Copeland."

"A GDF is a multi-billion-pound infrastructure project, which could bring significant economic opportunities and thousands of jobs to the area which eventually hosts it."

"It's quite unique in having a construction and operation timeline of around 150 years, so we need to be thinking long term."

Andy Pratt, Chair of Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership, added: "This is important work which will help to build a picture around whether Mid Copeland could be suitable to host a GDF."

"Following lots of discussions with local people throughout 2022, the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership would encourage the local community to continue to be involved by coming along to events or meetings, asking questions and raising any issues."

"As these studies progress, we will ensure people are kept up to date as findings emerge and provide information."

Community Partnerships are long-term groups made up of local people, the GDF developer and local authorities to consider the possibilities of hosting a GDF within an identified Search Area.

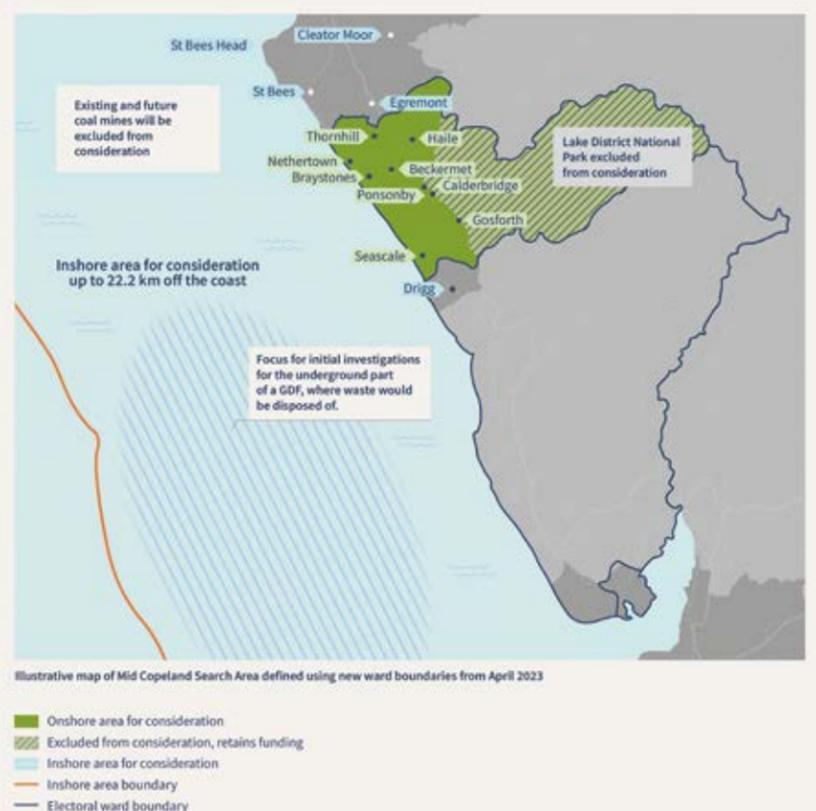
The Mid Copeland Search Area covers the electoral ward of Gosforth which includes Seascale, Gosforth, Beckermet, Calderbridge, Haile, Thornhill, Nethertown and Braystones.

The Lake District National Park is excluded from consideration.

The parishes of Drigg and Carleton and Irton with Santon now sit outside the Mid Copeland Search Area in the Millom Without ward and are instead in the South Copeland Search Area. The full parish of Lowside Quarter is included in the Mid Copeland Search Area. A GDF will only be built where there is a suitable site and a willing community.

**This is important work which will help to build a picture around whether Mid Copeland could be suitable to host a GDF**

## Mid Copeland Search Area Gosforth electoral ward





# Website Q&A with Siting Manager

The GDF developer has started its initial investigations to begin to understand the suitability of hosting a GDF in Mid Copeland. The desk-based studies will look at the feasibility of delivering a surface facility connected to the geology of interest off the coast.

The developer will lead the studies and draw upon a wider supply chain of specialist contractors to conduct non-intrusive and desk-based studies in all of the Community Partnership areas.

We asked Barnaby Hudson, Mid Copeland's Siting Manager at Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), some questions about the studies.

## WHAT ARE SITE EVALUATION STUDIES?

A RANGE of studies will be undertaken in each of the Community Partnership areas – Mid Copeland, South Copeland, Allerdale and Theddlethorpe – to look at where a surface site, underground accessways and associated development for a GDF might be located.

The first studies will address priority topics, and further studies will be considered. The feasibility studies are expected to inform decisions about whether an area should proceed to further site characterisation. The studies are likely to be 'desktop' studies looking in more detail at existing data.

## WHAT ARE THE INITIAL STUDIES YOU ARE CARRYING OUT IN MID COPELAND?

The initial studies are in these areas:  
**Geology** – Collating existing information about geology in the Mid Copeland Search Area and the adjacent inshore area to provide an increased understanding of geology to help support further local studies. Seismic data collected last summer will be included when processed.

**Accessways (Tunnels)** – Accessways is the underground tunnels or shafts which link a surface site to a disposal location. This will include looking at engineering feasibility such as number of accessways which could be required and appropriate mining methodology.

**Initial Transport Study** – Gathering existing information about local transport to assess how a GDF may use the current transport infrastructure and consider what potential upgrades may be required.

**Utilities (power)** – Identifying power infrastructure and capacity to

understand local supply and assess how a GDF may influence future demand.

### Implications of local geology

– Consider the implications of local geology which may influence the engineering requirements and design of a GDF to ensure safe and secure disposal of radioactive waste.

### Higher activity waste disposal

– Consider the implications of local geology which may influence the disposal requirements and design of a GDF to ensure safe and secure disposal of radioactive waste.



**The feasibility studies are expected to inform decisions about whether an area should proceed to site characterisation**

**Labour and skills** – Identifying local skills levels to assess how a GDF may influence future employment and training opportunities.

**Future investigations** – Identifying the deep borehole drilling techniques and supporting investigations which could be used in the local area.

**Land** – Understand potential local land requirements to support early engagement and raising awareness of future GDF investigations

**Proximity to nuclear licensed sites** – Understanding any operational requirements from an existing nuclear licensed site which may have an influence on the operations of a GDF.

## HOW LONG WILL THE STUDIES TAKE?

The studies will vary in duration and topic but are expected to be completed in all areas within two to three years of them starting. The results of some studies will come sooner than others.

## WHY HAVEN'T YOU STARTED THESE STUDIES EARLIER?

In the last 18 months, NWS has been preparing for Site Evaluation work in terms of learning lessons from Site Evaluation activities in other countries, engaging and selecting an expert supply chain to support this work.

## WHO IS DOING THE STUDIES?

NWS will lead the studies and draw upon a wider supply chain of specialist contractors to conduct non-intrusive and desk-based studies in all of the Community Partnership areas.

## DO THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DECIDE WHAT STUDIES ARE DONE?

NWS, as developer, needs to consider a range of factors. The Community Partnerships have been briefed on the programme of studies. The Community Partnerships will be kept up to date about technical work carried out by NWS.

## WHICH STUDIES DO YOU EXPECT TO COMPLETE FIRST?

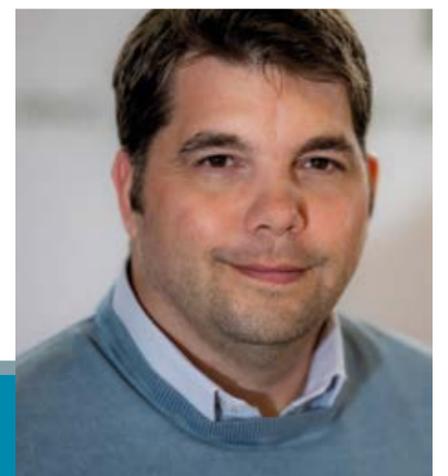
It's too early to say, but we will be keeping Community Partnerships updated on progress.

## WERE LAST YEAR'S GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS OFF COPELAND PART OF THIS WORK?

The marine geophysical survey off the coast of South and Mid Copeland was an important early step in beginning to understand the deep geology beyond the coast. The information, when available, will help us to further consider the suitability of the geology beneath the seabed to host a GDF and detailed analysis of the data collected from the surveys will inform the evaluation of sites.

## WHEN ARE THE RESULTS OF THE COPELAND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS EXPECTED?

Data acquired in the seismic survey is being processed, which takes nine months. It will then be interpreted by geoscientists, taking an additional four months, meaning results will not be available for NWS to assess until the later part of 2023.



**Barnaby Hudson**  
Siting Manager



# Over 100 people attend GDF safety and technical events

**THANKS** to everyone who came along to the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership events in March to find out more about the safety and technical aspects of what a GDF could mean for the area.

The Community Engagement Team, Partnership members and experts from the GDF developer spoke to more than 100 people over the course of the four events which were held in Thornhill Social Club, Gosforth Public Hall, Seascale's Windscale Club and Drigg and Carleton Village Hall.

The events resulted in 94 questions from members of the public over the four days which were answered and discussed, as well as 52 statements and concerns. The main themes people were interested in discussing this time included nuclear waste, the environment, the GDF siting process, transport, engineering and the Community Partnership.

Gillian Johnston, Community Engagement Manager for the Partnership, said: "It was really good to continue our conversations with people around so many different subjects connected to geological disposal.

"We had some example models of what a GDF could look like above ground, an interactive display board

showing what it could look like underground, plus some virtual reality headsets to help bring it to life for people.

"Thank you to everyone who came along to find out more, we always use the feedback from people to plan future events and look at what further information is required.

People can come to us any time to ask for information or have a conversation – there is no need to wait for an event."

For more information from these events please go to: <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/resources/>

In its first year, the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership held 50 events and had discussions with over 1,000 people.

So far this year, the Partnership has held a series of drop-ins and these larger events to share information, answer questions, address concerns and talk about opportunities.

The Partnership's Community Engagement Team is available to attend community events and give presentations/talks.

They attend local drop-ins on a regular basis – so if you'd like the team to attend one of your events or set up a meeting, please do get in touch: [gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk](mailto:gdfinfo-midcopeland@nda.gov.uk)



Further drop-in events have been organised for later this year, do come along and ask your questions:

- Thurs August 10, 11-3pm, Thornhill Primary School
- Thurs August 17, 12-4pm, Calderbridge and Ponsonby Village Hall
- Thurs September 28, 2-7pm, Seascale venue TBC
- Fri September 29, 2-7pm, Gosforth venue TBC
- Thurs Oct 5, 2-7pm, Braystones venue TBC
- Sat October 7, 10-3pm, Beckermest venue TBC

Venues will be confirmed nearer the time, please check here for updates: <https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/get-involved/>

**Join the GDF conversation**



 @Copeland\_WG

 WIPCopeland

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