

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS)

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Summary and Recommendation:

This report provides a summary update on the MRWS programme and outlines arrangements for the coming months leading up to a Decision to Participate (DtP) by the 3 local authorities (Copeland Borough Council, Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council) as Decision Making Bodies (DMB's) including details for the third wave of Public Stakeholder Engagement.

1. Background

This report provides:

- A summary and update on the current work programme of the MRWS partnership and the way forward.

2. Current MRWS Work Programme update

2.1 In the Government's 2008 White Paper 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely – A Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal', communities across the UK were invited to express an interest in opening up without commitment discussions on the possibility of hosting a geological disposal facility at some point in the future. Members will be aware that the 3 local authorities, Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils and Cumbria County Council subsequently submitted an expression of interest and established the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership. The Partnership of 17 stakeholder organizations meets regularly to discuss the possibility of the relevant local authorities for the Allerdale and Copeland areas volunteering to participate in the Government's search for a national Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher level radioactive wastes. Its aim is to make recommendations to the three Councils on whether they should move to the next stage of the process with the Government.

2.2 In order to be in a position to make such a recommendation the Partnership has determined a work programme of key issues that are seen as being fundamental to understanding more about the process. Over the last 18 months the partnership has undertaken research around a range of criterion including;

- Safety, security, environment and planning
- Design, engineering and inventory
- Geology
- Community benefits and Impacts
- The siting process
- Public and stakeholder views

2.3 At its meeting on 3rd November the Partnership agreed the final form of the consultation. The consultation document and a shorter summary document were published on 21st November. Both documents will form the focus of a range of consultation and engagement activities with members of the public and stakeholders between November 2011 and March 2012. Based on the responses from the consultation process the Partnership will be making its recommendation to the 3 local authorities in May/June 2012. Each of the 3 local authorities will then consider whether or not to participate in the next stage of the process. A Memorandum of Understanding between the 3 local authorities and Government for Stage 3 of the MRWS process, leading up to a Decision to Participate has recently been agreed and reported to Executive.

2.4 As part of the consultation process a workshop is to be arranged to which all Members will be invited.

3. List of Appendices

None attached

4. Consultees