

Response to:

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely:

**A Framework for implementing
Geological Disposal**

November 2007



Copeland Borough Council

Response to the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: A Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal

Question 1. Do you agree with this approach to compiling and updating the radioactive waste inventory and using it as a basis for discussion with potential host communities? If not, what would you propose?

The suggestions in the Consultation Document (CD) are welcome. We agree that any final agreement with a community on a single preferred site will need to address possible changes to the inventory in future years, and that this should include an agreement on a 'change control process'. Discussion within the local Siting Partnership will be required to define the scale and type of changes to the inventory that should be subject to local agreement. The need for flexibility in relation to relatively minor inventory changes is recognised.

There is a need for clarity about the management routes for the main categories of wastes, including different types of LLW, and for materials that might be declared as wastes in the future (including spent fuel, plutonium and uranium). As far as is possible, a clear picture of these management routes should be published in the information packs associated with the invitation for Expressions of Interest (EoI).

There is a need for further public information about the potential implications of new build wastes for the size (footprint) and period of operation of the repository. The potential implications need to be clearly set out for potential host communities. The 3 categories of high-level, medium-level and low-level waste are not adequate for exploring the range of issues that need to be considered for handling different types of waste. More detailed criteria need to be developed and there needs to be appropriate prioritisation over different types of waste.

Question 2. Do you have any comments on the proposed technical approach for developing a geological disposal facility, as set out in Chapter 3?

The commitment not to exclude extended retrievability is welcome. We believe that the issue of whether to design a repository for an extended period of underground storage prior to closure should be discussed and agreed with potential host communities during the siting process. Government should ask the NDA to clarify (a) what it means when it uses the term 'retrievability', (b) how the repository will be designed so as not to exclude retrievability, (c) when potential decision points about repository closure would occur, and (d) what provision it proposes to make for the monitoring of wastes in the repository. These points should be clarified in the initial information packs produced.

The commitment to undertake further research to reduce uncertainties and to support development of site specific safety cases is welcome. It will be essential that this is done in an open and transparent way, so that stakeholders can see what research is being undertaken, and understand the way it contributes to the reduction of uncertainties and development of site specific safety cases.

Steps should be taken to encourage national and local stakeholder review of the adequacy of the research programme.—There should be a commitment to regular review with stakeholder

participation at a frequency required by the Siting Partnership. The programme of review should start with a regulator-led workshop in early 08.

The NDA should publish an early version of the repository Lifetime Plan, including an explanation of the proposed repository design and safety concepts, and how it will be built, operated and closed. The preliminary version of the Lifetime Plan should be published for consultation.

Question 3. Do you agree with the approach to public and stakeholder engagement set out here? If not, how do you believe your input could be better managed or your concerns addressed?

The Government's proposal that the NDA will work in partnership with potential host communities through the siting process is welcome. Government should also expect repository development to feature as a key aspect in the NDA's stakeholder engagement plan, so that there is clarity about the timing of the NDA's different national and local engagement activities on repository development, and the objectives of those activities. In addition, it is important that Government itself takes a programmatic approach to its stakeholder engagement activities up to the point when NDA takes the lead. It should therefore liaise with key stakeholders to establish a forward programme of stakeholder engagement. The quality of the Government's engagement programme will be an important factor in determining the success or otherwise of the early part of the siting process.

Following a local decision to participate in the siting process, community engagement should be coordinated through a local Siting Partnership (SP) proposed. This would ensure that national bodies and agencies are not in competition to engage with local communities, and that adequate liaison and joint planning of engagement takes place. Decision making Local Authorities should play a leading role in local Siting Partnerships to ensure that the engagement processes they themselves carry out, in their role as democratically accountable community leaders, is integrated with the Siting Partnership processes and not running in parallel. This will help to avoid the risk of a division appearing between a Siting Partnership and the Local Authority that will make the final decision.

It would not be appropriate for the NDA to lead community engagement at this stage, as they will be seen as the body that is seeking to secure implementation and with a vested interest in producing an outcome supporting the repository, and not as one taking a balanced approach. The Local Authority and the Siting Partnership should therefore, manage engagement.

Question 4. Government believes the system of regulation outlined in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.14 is strong and robust in relation to a geological disposal facility. Do you agree? If not, what other regulation do you feel is necessary?

The proposed staged approach to regulation, with important hold-points as development progresses, is welcome. It will be important to align this approach with right of withdrawal during the siting process. NuLeAF is involved in discussions with NDA and the Environment Agency about how to do this. Copeland Borough Council reserves the right to make a separate response on this.

The Environment Agency considers that amendments to the Radioactive Substances Act are required to ensure a legislative underpinning to their early and step-wise involvement in the siting process, particularly regarding regulatory consents at key stages. This would help provide strong and effective environmental regulation throughout the siting process. We support the EA proposal, as staged environmental regulation is essential to an effective siting process, including

provision of structured information and advice to Siting Partnerships and Local Authorities, and development of community confidence in the role of the regulator.

Local Siting Partnerships should be equipped to scrutinise and challenge regulators views to ensure the local community is comfortable with proposals.

Question 5. Do you think the proposed planning reforms in England outlined in Chapter 4 should apply to the development of a geological disposal facility, and if so how could this be integrated with the voluntarism and partnership approach outlined in Chapter 5?

The Government statement that proposed planning reforms would need to fit with a voluntarism and partnership approach is welcome.

An important point to note is that if a partnership approach is followed, and a local right of withdrawal has not been exercised, it could be expected that the local Siting Partnership and Local Planning Authority (LPA) will support the planning application for repository construction. Any planning issues should have been resolved by this time. In such circumstances, it is difficult to see what purpose would be served by referring the planning application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) for determination. In addition, the *possibility* of referral to the IPC will be perceived by some local authorities as a coercive fall-back position for Government and may help to deter participation in the siting process. These authorities are likely to take the view that the possibility of referral should be ruled out at the start of the siting process.

If the siting process is effective, the planning process should become almost a matter of routine. The existence of the right of withdrawal provides sufficient control for local communities to ensure that full scrutiny of all the relevant factors takes place. This siting partnership process should involve all relevant Local Planning Authorities.

However the potential exists, in two tier Local Government systems, for a District to support the project, whilst a wider tier of Government may wish to use the current planning system to block a repository development. The opportunity exists for the Government to call the application in for a public enquiry where any planning concerns of wider interests can be scrutinised. This would be a better approach than involving, at such a late stage, a new body, such as the Infrastructure Planning Commission, which has had no previous involvement in the process.

An ideal process would see the government, the NDA, and the host 'decision making body' having resolved all local issues in advance of planning applications being submitted.

The potential of the decision making authority to be a partner in the repository development and in the submission of the planning application should not be excluded.

The possibility that there could be a single planning application covering underground investigations ('underground research laboratory') and repository development is problematic because the LPA would not have sufficient information to determine an application for repository development prior to the underground investigations. If an adequate form of 'planning permission' hold point between URL and repository development cannot be identified, we would consider it necessary to pursue a two stage planning process for URL and repository development.

The implementation of a repository will have a major implication for future development of the host area. The full Local Development Framework for the recipient area will need to be reviewed and made relevant, and when final agreement is reached brought up to date to reflect the impact

of a repository. Development of a revised LDF should be progressed in parallel with the siting process so that the development impact can be tested and planned for.

It is essential that a coordinated approach is taken to permission processes, including environmental and safety regulation and the determination of planning applications. This needs to be effectively integrated with the right to withdraw

Question 6. Do you agree with this approach to defining 'community' for the purposes of the site selection process? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

The Government's preference for an approach based on voluntarism and partnership is welcome. From studying progress around the world we believe that this has, by far, the greatest potential to finally resolve the issue. We support Government's recognition of "the important role that existing local democratic decision-making structures must play in a successful process as they are elected representatives with a mandate to speak for communities".

The Government's proposal that local landowners or organisations could express an interest in having a repository built on their land, encourages a premature focus on specific sites and is an approach Copeland Borough Council strongly opposes. Identification of potential sites within a local authority area would be better managed once a Siting Partnership has been established and has engaged in the process. Following that, potential locations for a facility can be investigated by the Siting Partnership.

Any decision to undertake surface-based investigation of such sites should only be taken with the explicit support of the decision making body. It would be very unhelpful if site options were being pursued and investigated that were never likely to gain the support of the local decision making body.

If any landowners or local bodies wish to express an interest, they should enter into discussions with their principal local authority (decision making body) with a view to jointly making an approach to Government. The early involvement of the appropriate local authority is necessary if the foundations are to be laid for the partnership approach that Government is seeking. Any attempts to by-pass the involvement of the local authority could jeopardise the development of an effective partnership.

We are concerned about the timing of any formal decisions to engage in the process and how the public will perceive them. Making any such decision creates high risks for local politicians particularly when there are no obvious benefits at the outset. A clear decision to express an interest may be perceived by the public as volunteering. Any further formal steps such as separate decision to 'participate' may also be perceived in the same way especially if it follows an earlier decision to express an interest. In our view any process set out should focus on the decision making point being when volunteering actually takes place. We would see this as being when the Right of Withdrawal ends (within the current terminology). At that point there should be a balance between the benefits and the detriments agreed which will enable local politicians to move forward with the support of their communities. However we recognise that this will be at the end of a lengthy process and there needs to be a way of deciding which communities take part in that process. We believe initial engagement should be kept as informal as possible to allow interested communities to undertake genuinely exploratory work with the full financial support of government without the need to make a formal decision on engagement. Further discussion would be necessary on exactly how this might work. We feel that forcing local communities into a position where some kind of formal decision needed to be made early in the process before benefits are

agreed, even in outline, will deter many communities. Where there is any point of formal decision making either 'Expression of Interest' or 'participation' this needs to be actioned by the 'local decision making body'. Government should recognise and be prepared to fund discussion and agreement about the steps that are needed to reach a local decision about engagement in the formal process. These steps include: undertaking community engagement and assessment to inform the decision makers about participation; and the application of 'sub-surface' criteria to rule out local areas that are not suitable for repository development.

A failure on the part of Government to seriously address these concerns is likely to increase the risk that no local authorities will be found that will endorse participation in the siting process.

Government should make it very clear which local authority should be the decision making body in the case of two tier authorities. It is our view that it should be the Local Authority that is most closely identified with the 'host community'. We believe that the 'host community' is best defined by reference to the government's own statistical definition of a Travel To Work Area. Unlike administrative boundaries these best describe a self contained social and economic entity.

We are aware that NuLeAF has also asked Government to clarify its views on which tier/s of local government in two-tier areas should have responsibility for such decision making. There are different views on this amongst NuLeAF member authorities. 'Some authorities consider that decision-making responsibility should be at district level. Others consider that district and county tiers should be involved in decision-making.' There are no authorities that consider decision making should be just at County level. We agree with NuLeAF that both tiers should be **involved** in decision making as part of the Siting Partnership advising the decision maker. However, to avoid the prospect of an impasse, we believe that there should be a single Local Authority that actually makes the decision. This should be the authority closest to the affected community. Our view is that this should be the District Council or, alternatively a panel of elected councillors representing the Travel To Work Area within which the proposed facility is proposed to be located.

Question 7. Do you agree with the proposals for providing information to communities and the way Government proposes to issue invitations?

The way it proposes to issue invitations is problematic because it encourages a premature focus on specific sites and places insufficient emphasis on the role of the relevant decision-making bodies in this key *initial* step in the siting process. The basis for this view is set out in response to Q6. The Government also proposes that considerable effort be put into gauging the level of community support prior to an initial expression of interest, when the main effort needs to be taken to inform a formal local decision about whether to participate. This suggests a lack of clear thinking about the distinction between an expression of interest and a formal decision about participation.

Government should make it clear that there must be democratic accountability at the point of formal decision about local participation in the siting process. The decision to participate should be taken by the relevant local authority, informed by the findings of community engagement.

Time must be allowed for the local processes of discussion and decision-making about engagement in the siting process. Steps are likely to include:

- Organisation of engagement with local communities and potential partners
- Review of the findings of local engagement
- Discussion with Government about the issues raised through local engagement

- Review of the Government's response
- Assessment of the pros and cons of participation

We recognise that Government may wish to adopt 'target dates' for decisions about engaging in the process, but would consider it unhelpful if arbitrary and fixed deadlines were to be put in place.

Question 8. Do you believe that the initial sub-surface screening criteria proposed by the expert panel are correct? Do you believe that the way in which Government proposes to apply these criteria in the process is correct? If not, how could this be done differently?

The proposed approach is likely to be appropriate as long as it is clearly understood that the objective is to identify excluded areas in order to inform local decision-making about whether to participate in the siting process. This objective would ensure that the application of the criteria is limited as far as practicable to the provision of information about areas that should be excluded, rather than part of a premature attempt to identify potential sites for repository development. As explained above, it is preferable for the initial identification of potential sites within an area to be approached systematically once a decision to participate has been taken and a Siting Partnership is up and running.

The proposals to use the British Geological Survey to apply the criteria and to publish the findings are welcome. The implementation framework should also specify that the relevant local authority will be the local point of contact for the BGS. This would assist coordination in local authority areas if a situation arises where there is more than one interested 'host community' (in a local authority area that includes a number of Travel To Work Areas), and would be appropriate where a local authority wishes to know which specific local areas within its boundaries are not suitable for repository development. The initial exclusion of unsuitable areas should not be taken to imply that remaining areas are suitable. That could only be established during the course of the subsequent siting process.

Question 9. Has Government identified the relevant assessment criteria? If not, what other criteria should be used? Do you have any comments on how the criteria should be applied at different stages?

The proposed criteria provide a checklist of the major issues that will need to be assessed. As such, they should be seen as providing a basis for further discussion within a Siting Partnership. It is expected that this discussion will develop and refine the criteria as appropriate to the stage of assessment and local circumstances. The Government should provide guidance, rather than be prescriptive in specifying criteria, their weighting and assessment methodology. It is important for local confidence and trust in the siting process, that the development of the criteria, weightings and methodology, and their application, can be undertaken in partnership between the relevant national and local players.

Question 10. Do you have any comments on whether and how a partnership arrangement could be used to support a voluntarism approach?

The Government's proposals for community partnerships are welcome. The Government should give encouragement to the setting up of local partnerships in participating areas.

It is not appropriate for Government to be prescriptive about the forms of local partnership that should be established. However, it would be appropriate for Government to give guidance on key aspects, including the mission and role of a local partnership.

The partnership must secure and retain the confidence of the decision making body to do the job. We believe the siting partnership arrangements should be agreed by both the local decision making body and the national oversight body at the outset.

The mission of a Siting Partnership is to ensure that:

(a) All the questions and concerns of potential host communities within its area and other affected communities about repository siting, construction, operation, closure and post-closure are addressed and resolved as far as reasonably practicable; and

(b) The well-being of host communities is enhanced.

It is anticipated that fulfilment of this mission would substantially enhance the prospects for a successful implementation programme.

We agree with NuLeAF proposal that the core elements of the role of a Siting Partnership should be set out in the implementation framework, including:

- Developing advice and recommendations for decision-making bodies
- Scrutiny of the work of the bodies involved in repository siting and development
- Obtaining specialist advice or commissioning research to inform its scrutiny role, address community concerns or identify ways of enhancing community well-being
- Provision of public information about the activities, views and recommendations of the Partnership
- Engagement or consultation with potential host communities, other affected communities and neighbouring local authorities
- Identifying and addressing divergent views within those communities
- Liaison and discussion with local bodies with remits related to the mission of the Partnership (e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships or Site Stakeholder Groups)
- Building the capacity of its membership to enable it to effectively carry out these roles.

The implementation framework should clarify that a Siting Partnership is primarily a partnership of local community interests, with members identified and recruited locally to enable the Partnership's mission to be fulfilled. The framework should acknowledge that there needs to be flexibility in the geographic scope and membership of a local partnership to take account of local circumstances. The make up of partnerships should be a matter of local decision.¹

The framework should, however, make clear that Government expects that the relevant local authority will be effectively represented within the partnership so that its views can be expressed, local political realities are recognised and there are no surprises when proposals are presented to the local authority for decision. It is important to ensure that the Siting Partnership and the thinking of the local decision making body move forward in parallel avoiding divergence in approach. In addition to strong links between the two, there will need to be a staged process of referral to the local decision making body at key points to ensure that the final report of the Siting

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Partnership covers fully the issues of concern the decision making body will want to address in coming to a final decision and that any divergence in thinking is addressed early.

It is important that the timetable for the siting process allows sufficient time for local discussion and negotiation to enable a shared local vision to be developed about the mission, role and organisation of a local partnership. A partnership must have sufficient time to get up to speed and function effectively in the siting process.

A very early task of a Siting Partnership should be to develop a detailed local implementation plan, building on the national implementation framework. This would enable the requirements of the partnership approach to be integrated with the technical programme, resulting in a shared understanding of the way forward and a plan that is owned by all key players at national and local levels.

The Siting Partnership should be seen as a resource, bringing valuable local knowledge and experience to the process. In order to most effectively harness that resource, the Siting Partnership must be allowed to participate in the programme in 'real time' e.g. through consideration of draft reports when first produced by the implementer (as opposed to being simply informed about decisions after they have been taken).

It should be noted that Site Stakeholder Groups do not provide a model for the sorts of Siting Partnerships that are required. The work of a Siting Partnership will be far more intensive, requiring an independent secretariat and a much greater level of resourcing. It will also have a substantially more involved advisory role, particularly in developing advice and recommendations for decision-making at local authority level.

Question 11. Do you agree that the work of communities and/or partnerships should be funded by Government through an engagement package? If so, what activities do you think it would be reasonable to expect Government to fund?

The Government's proposals are welcome. It will be important that the work of partnerships and participating local authorities receive adequate funding from Government. Government should also provide a commitment to meet the costs of the earliest steps needed to arrive at decisions to engage in the siting process (including community engagement to inform that decision). If there is to be an initial 'expression of interest,' cost in getting to that point should also be covered. These early costs can be identified and agreed in discussions between Government and local authorities that have expressed an interest in participation.

Government should establish funding arrangements that are independent of the implementing body (the NDA). This approach would reflect the requirement for the funding of packages to be in addition to and separate from existing arrangements for funding socio-economic initiatives. Having a funding mechanism that is independent of the implementing body would also contribute to the development of trust and confidence in a Siting Partnership on the part of local communities.

Question 12. How best can Government and the NDA ensure that the development of a geological disposal facility delivers lasting benefits to the host community? Should this involve the use of benefits packages and if so how might this best be achieved, taking into account the need to make the best use of public funds?

A geological repository will be a highly controversial development. The scale of the benefits package will have to enable local judgements to be made that the overall benefits outweigh the actual and perceived detriments. Without the perception of clear and substantial additional long term benefits it will be difficult for any accountable body to convince the local community that hosting such a facility is in the local interest.

In order to provide sufficient incentive for participation in the siting process, Government should provide a clear commitment that a benefits package *in addition* to the direct and indirect benefits from repository development *will* be provided. It should make clear its *commitment to honour* a benefits package negotiated and agreed by the relevant parties within the siting process. A lack of certainty that a substantive package will be available could increase the risk that no local authorities will be found that will endorse participation in the siting process.

The rationale for providing a benefits package is based on principle and pragmatism (it is right thing to do and one of the key ingredients needed to make implementation work in practice). It is based on the following combination of factors:

- the long-term management of radioactive wastes is a national issue that requires local sites;
- a geological repository will contain hazardous and very long-lived radioactive wastes;
- the actual and perceived impacts of the repository will be mainly in an area containing the site;
- there have been decades of failure to implement a long-term management policy in the UK, with high financial costs and damage to stakeholder relations;
- future failure to site a geological repository will have large financial costs, with associated impacts on decommissioning and clean-up programmes;
- international experience shows that the availability of Engagement and Benefits Packages is a key element of many of the programmes where substantial progress has been made in the siting of disposal facilities
- there is wide knowledge of the benefits packages being offered in other countries, to treat a potential host community in the UK in a less favourable way risks generating a strong negative reaction from potential hosts.
- an Engagement Package is a way of enabling potential host communities to understand, address and, as far as practicable, resolve issues associated with repository siting, development, operation and closure;
- a Benefits Package is a way of recognising the role that host communities are playing on behalf of the UK; and
- there is wide support from UK stakeholders for the provision of support packages.
- The intergenerational nature of the hazard to be hosted, raises the issue of a current local community 'selling out' their future generations in their area. Particularly when future perceptions of the extent of the hazard have the potential to become worse than they are now. This is politically and morally a difficult course to take and can only be justified locally by substantial intergenerational benefits offsetting the perception of the hazard.

We recognise the importance of discussing and identifying ways of maximising the benefits that could be gained from (a) the potential cultural and amenity value of repository siting and (b) S106 planning agreements and other statutory agreements, but highlights the need for benefits over and above these aspects. In particular, the case for establishing an intergenerational Trust Fund to enable future generations to fund projects and make provision for schemes designed to compensate for any adverse impacts, is strong. Precedents for this approach are already well established, as identified in recent NDA reviews of UK and international experience.

On defining the contents of a Benefits Package, this should be done at a local level by reference to:

- the principles of sustainable development and enhancing well-being;
- the principle of self-determination;
- the need for consistency with local strategic plans; and
- the need for local democratic accountability.

On geographic scope, the primary focus for the bulk of the Benefits Package should be the local area containing the site. The benefits package should be additional to any other funding streams and should not fund activities normally funded from elsewhere. The use of the funds would be determined locally (within an agreed framework) to ensure local requirements were met over the very long timescales relevant for the facility.

On the timetable for defining a Benefits Package, this should be started once the Siting Partnership is properly established. Preliminary discussions and negotiations should proceed in parallel with investigations to identify a short-list of possible sites. Proposals for the package should be finalised once a preferred site has been identified.

Government should establish funding arrangements for the benefits package that are independent of the implementing body. It should also ensure that there is early clarity in the respective roles of Government, NDA and others in negotiating and agreeing benefits packages.

The government should be mindful of other potential risks to local partners. At the present time the decision to proceed with a repository has been made subject to further research to inform the best route for the wastes. The consultation document has made it clear that interim stores need to have a one hundred year life to allow for uncertainties in the future. There remains a high risk that a future government may move away from the proposal to site a deep geological repository. This could occur many years into a siting process involving a local area. Yet embarking on a siting partnership process with government will have the immediate effect of creating blight on a potential host area. Thought will need to be given as to how the government would be able to offset such local impacts when a repository may in the end not proceed and a full community benefits package is as a result not provided.

Given the long term political and scientific uncertainties, location of interim storage facilities should be subject to a similar siting approach as the geological repository.

Question 13. Do you have any other comments?

Right to Withdrawal

The Government's proposal that local decision-makers could exercise a Right of Withdrawal (RoW) after desk-based and surface investigation stages is welcome. This right is an integral part of a siting process based on willingness to participate. As explained above, these decision-makers should also have opportunity to make a decision about participation at the start of the siting process, following community engagement. Further discussion is needed about whether there is a case for a more limited form of right of withdrawal between underground investigations and repository construction, based on specialist and regulatory assessment of the environmental safety case

The NDA's suggestion that RoW should end prior to borehole investigations is strongly opposed. Such a constrained RoW would be insufficient to deliver community confidence that their concerns will be addressed within the siting process beyond the point where borehole investigations start. It is therefore likely to increase the risk that no local authorities will be found that will endorse participation in the siting process. International experience strongly suggests that maintaining the RoW is one of the key elements that will increase the prospects for a successful siting process.

Formal Agreements

The Implementation Framework should acknowledge that formal agreements will be needed to underpin key aspects of the siting process, including Siting Partnerships, Participation and Benefits Packages and Rights of Withdrawal. As far as is possible, such agreements will need to provide assurance that the agreed approach will not be overturned by changes of Government

Maintaining Government Support for the Siting Process

Government should make strenuous efforts to develop a cross-party consensus on the implementation framework and seek to develop safeguards to ensure an approach based on voluntarism and partnership will be followed by future administrations. At some point it may be desirable for specific elements of the siting process to be embedded in statute.

Maintaining Financial Support for the Siting Process

Government should ensure that the siting process is not jeopardised through an inability to maintain adequate funding. Financial cutbacks during the course of the process would have damaging impacts on stakeholder confidence and trust in that programme.

Timetable

It is recognised that the momentum of the MRWS process should be maintained, but wishes to highlight that the pace needs to be at that of potentially participating or participating communities and local authorities. This is particularly important in the early stages of the programme, when decisions are being made about participation, Siting Partnerships are being established, and a local implementation plan is being developed with the Siting Partnership . International experience shows that the implementing body must have patience and that time invested in the early stages of a siting process will pay dividends later.

Plan B

Plan B should entail review and re-appraisal of how to make an approach built on voluntarism and partnership work in practice. Plan B should not involve a return to a top-down, decide-announce-defend approach.

Flexibility

We feel strongly that any further guidance issued should remain as flexible as possible to encourage the largest number of communities to express an interest. There is a risk that a rigid process will deter potentially interested areas. As far as possible details of process going forward can be agreed with communities expressing an interest.

General

Any documentation produced within the process should avoid terms that ordinary people would not be able to understand. Where absolutely necessary, explanation should be given. Evidence must be truthful and referenced. Methodologies should be scientifically correct. The quantity of evidence should not obscure the quality of the scientific argument. Due consideration should be given to previous literature. Full recognition should be given to the role of chemical methodology issues in addition to geological questions

The suitability of a site must be the primary consideration, not the willingness of people in the locality to host it. Copeland area already houses a majority of nuclear waste and no matter where it is moved to we retain an interest in the process and should continue to be consulted.

The use of the term 'disposal' is not helpful as an overall concept, as it obscures issues relating to retrieval and monitoring. Accountability to a locality under consideration for a site needs to be fully debated in parallel with a reasoned scientific case has been made.

There must be a completely separate stream of funding and business plan for the implementation of the repository. We are concerned that as the NDA have the responsibility for both decommissioning, and the repository, tensions could develop between both functions that would negatively affect delivery. Would want to see complete clarity about how this would be managed.

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