

NWS Decision to Withdraw from Allerdale

Executive summary

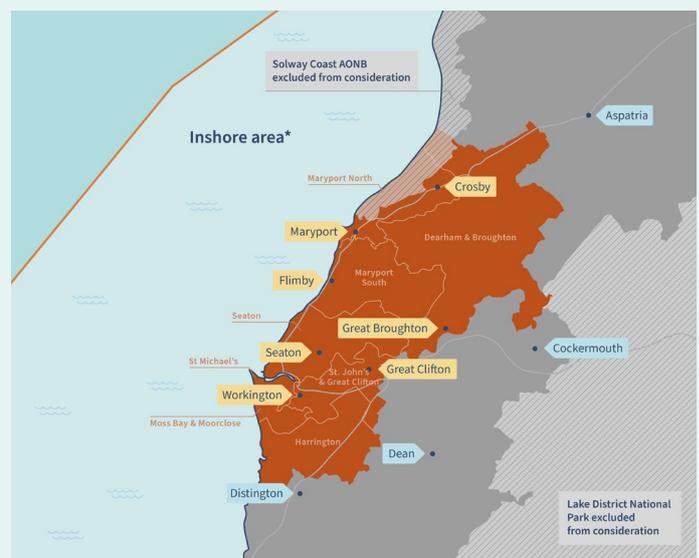
We (Nuclear Waste Services, or NWS) have been part of the Allerdale Community Partnership since it was established in January 2022. This followed a year's work with the Allerdale Working Group to propose an initial Search Area for the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process, and to recruit a chair and members to the Community Partnership.

During this time we have studied the feasibility of building, operating and safely closing a GDF in the deep rocks beneath the Allerdale Search Area (the area on land), and beyond the coast (the inshore area).

As well as carrying out detailed and comprehensive studies of the geology of the area, we have also begun to look at:

- How siting a GDF in the area would impact the community
- Whether it would be possible to design and build a GDF in the area that would be big enough to hold all the waste planned to be disposed of
- Whether our (and our regulators') very stringent safety and security standards could be met
- Whether there are any environmental constraints in the area
- How the waste could be transported to a GDF in the area
- Whether building a GDF in the area would offer value for money

Allerdale Search Area and Inshore Area



Illustrative map of the search area being considered to host a GDF

- Search area
- Inshore area
- Inshore area boundary

* All around the country, the Inshore Area extends to a maximum of 22.2km off the coast. In the case of Allerdale it may be less than 16km in places, due to the limit of English waters narrowing between England and Scotland to the north.

But it is in the studies of the local deep geology that we have made the most progress. Because the safety of a GDF is so important, these studies have concentrated on helping us understand the amount, quality, type and distribution of the rock that is present deep below the Search Area and inshore area. A GDF needs these rocks to be right, to enable us to meet the very high safety standards we set and our regulators demand. You can read more about why this is important [here](#) or [Why underground? - GOV.UK](#).

We were fortunate that others had already gathered data about these rocks, which we used in our studies over the course of 2023. Our specialists worked alongside an expert team of professionals from the British Geological Survey and others in our supply chain to analyse this data and draw conclusions about these rocks.



These studies have only recently concluded and, following a series of checks and tests, we are able to share the following conclusions:

- 1 | We have strong evidence that there is not enough rock of the quality and type we need in either the deep rocks beneath the inshore area or the Search Area.
- 2 | We have strong evidence that the geology of the area is not of the quality and type we need.
- 3 | These conclusions mean that it will be more difficult for us to successfully make the case that a GDF could be closed safely.
- 4 | Further investigations would need years of complex and very expensive studies, which would have no guarantee of improving the prospects of the area to host a GDF.

So even though many of the other factors we have studied are showing positive results, we have decided that we should stop our work on siting a GDF in the Allerdale area and focus our efforts and resources in other locations.

We'd like to thank the Allerdale Community Partnership, with whom we've had an excellent working relationship and who has proven to be a vibrant and effective group with outstanding links across communities in the Search Area.



About this document

The purpose of this document is to explain the reasons why NWS has decided not to progress Allerdale further in the search for a suitable site to host a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Anyone may contact us to find out more about this decision. We are here to help and we invite people to join us in the discussions about geological disposal and the process for identifying a site for a GDF.

The document is divided into the following sections

Section 1 (pages 4 – 5) provides an overview of the various policy and other documents on which NWS makes key siting decisions, including decisions (like this one) about withdrawing from a community.

Section 2 (pages 6 – 7) explains how NWS has worked with Allerdale to date and the geographical areas, both on land and off the coast, which have been under consideration.

Section 3 (pages 8 – 12) contains a summary of the core conclusions from the technical work, which underpin the NWS decision to withdraw.

Section 4 (pages 13 – 14) gives an overview of the Allerdale Community Partnership and how NWS considered the community in taking the decision.

Section 5 (page 15) notes how Programme factors were taken into account in taking the decision.

Finally, in **Section 6** (page 15) we present our key conclusions leading to the decision.

Throughout this document we have included additional information in boxes to explain key concepts and terminology. There are also links to resources where further information can be found.



To get in touch

Email: info@nuclearwasteservices.uk

or write to us at:

Nuclear Waste Services
PO Box 322
Didcot
OX11 1FX

SECTION 1

Framework for the decision to withdraw

NWS needs to identify both a suitable site and a willing community to host a GDF. The key documents which set out this framework are the Working With Communities (WWC) Policy and the Site Evaluation document. NWS also undertakes an assessment of key siting decisions against factors relating to the overall GDF Programme. This includes consideration of NWS's Programme Objectives.

Each of these three matters informs NWS decision making. Further information on each is set out below.

Working With Communities Policy

The Implementing Geological Disposal – Working With Communities (WWC) Policy¹ puts a framework in place to ensure NWS works in partnership with communities to build trust and understanding of a GDF before any commitment to host a GDF is required. The WWC Policy does not identify preferred sites or locations; it relies on communities working with NWS throughout the siting process and NWS undertaking the necessary technical analysis to assess the suitability of the areas under consideration.

The WWC Policy recognises that either a community² or NWS³ may choose to withdraw from the siting process, ending the participation of the area in the GDF siting process. The WWC Policy anticipates that technical considerations may be a reason for a withdrawal by NWS.



The relevant part of the WWC Policy (paragraph 6.94) states that “NWS can also choose to withdraw from the process. For example, NWS could withdraw for technical reasons or other reasons which demonstrated there were no longer prospects of finding a suitable site within either the Search Area or Potential Host Community. NWS could also withdraw in order to prioritise available funds across other communities in the siting process. NWS will be transparent in its considerations to withdraw from a community”.

1. HM Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, December 2018. Note, this document applies to England only. As this decision relates to a community located within England, reference to the Welsh Policy has not been included.
2. This is exercised by the relevant principal local authority on a community partnership taking a decision to withdraw a community from further consideration.
3. The WWC Policy refers to RWM as the delivery body for a GDF. RWM is short for Radioactive Waste Management Limited, which since the WWC Policy was adopted, has become part of Nuclear Waste Services, the waste division of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Group. Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) is the joint trading name of RWM and LLW Repository Limited, which operates the low level waste facility in Cumbria and where the WWC Policy refers to RWM this should now be read as referring to NWS.

Site Evaluation Document and finding a suitable site

Site Evaluation: How we evaluate sites in England (NWS, 2020) establishes six 'siting factors' (and 26 associated 'evaluation considerations') against which we will assess site suitability throughout the siting process.

These six factors – which have informed this decision in Allerdale - are:



Safety and Security

whether the relevant safety and security requirements, including those for safeguarding, can be satisfied



Community

whether the relevant community requirements, including the social and economic implications and community wellbeing, can be satisfied



Environment

whether the relevant requirements relating to environmental matters, including those for protected habitats and species, can be satisfied



Engineering Feasibility

whether the relevant requirements relating to engineering feasibility, including those for construction, sustainable design and the ability to accommodate the inventory for disposal, can be satisfied



Transport

whether the relevant requirements relating to the transport of waste, people and other materials can be satisfied



Value for Money

whether the relevant requirements relating to delivering value for money can be satisfied

GDF Programme Objectives

The mission of the GDF Programme is to deliver a permanent solution for the disposal of higher activity radioactive waste through the design, construction, operation and closure of a GDF.

In order to deliver on this mission, our **GDF Programme Objectives** are:

- To build trust and work in partnership with one or more communities to gain consent and support to host a GDF
- To facilitate economic benefits and growth, delivering regional jobs and skills and a positive legacy
- To deliver a permanent solution for the safe disposal of Higher Activity Waste (HAW) through the safe, sustainable, and cost-effective design, construction, operation and closure of a GDF
- To enable the timely retirement of the significant and currently enduring financial liability and risk associated with above ground storage of HAW, that would persist for thousands of years if a disposal solution was not developed

A rounded view on other factors such as land access, consenting, and positions of our stakeholders is also taken into account.

SECTION 2

Working with Allerdale

Initial assessment of geological conditions in Allerdale

The National Geological Screening exercise (the NGS) demonstrated that there is a range of potentially suitable geological environments for geological disposal in the UK.

The NGS identified that there were three rock types which had the potential to support GDF development in the Allerdale Search Area and the adjacent inshore area: Lower Strength Sedimentary Rocks, Higher Strength Rock, and Evaporite. See page 8 for further information on these rock types.

When we were approached by a party interested in understanding if Allerdale might be a suitable location for a GDF, we undertook an initial assessment (the Initial Evaluation Report) based on the six siting factors as set out on page 5. That work concluded that there was potential to host a GDF in Allerdale, but recognised that further information and investigation would be required to understand the area's potential in more detail. This conclusion was verified in a further report (the Search Area Evaluation Report) prepared when the Allerdale Working Group was transitioning into the Allerdale Community Partnership.

National Geological Screening exercise and NWS' Allerdale evaluation reports

The National Geological Screening exercise was performed across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to summarise what is already known about the geology that is relevant to the safe disposal of higher activity radioactive waste.

The NGS enables NWS to take a reasoned view on potential suitability at the time communities are brought into the siting process. However, it does not typically contain sufficient detail to fully inform the ability to site a GDF; that requires further detailed and specific characterisation and/or assessment work.

More information is available here: [gov.uk/guidance/national-geological-screening-for-a-gdf](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-geological-screening-for-a-gdf)

The two NWS reports informing our initial assessment of potential are the Initial Evaluation Report and the Search Area Evaluation Report, available [here](#).

Working in partnership in Allerdale

In January 2021 a Working Group was formed to start to understand whether Allerdale could be a suitable location for a GDF.⁴

What is a Working Group?

The Working Group is formed in the early part of the siting process to gather information about the community and provide information to the community about geological disposal before a Community Partnership is formed.

A Working Group will:

- begin to engage with people in the area of interest / engagement area to understand the issues, questions, and concerns that they may have about a GDF
- identify the Search Area(s)
- identify potential members of the community who may be interested in joining a Community Partnership

4. The Working Group was formed between Allerdale Borough Council, NWS, and a private company as the interested party.

The Allerdale Community Partnership was subsequently formed in January 2022.⁵ As at the date of our decision to withdraw, we were looking at both the inshore area and the Search Area for potential sites to locate a GDF.

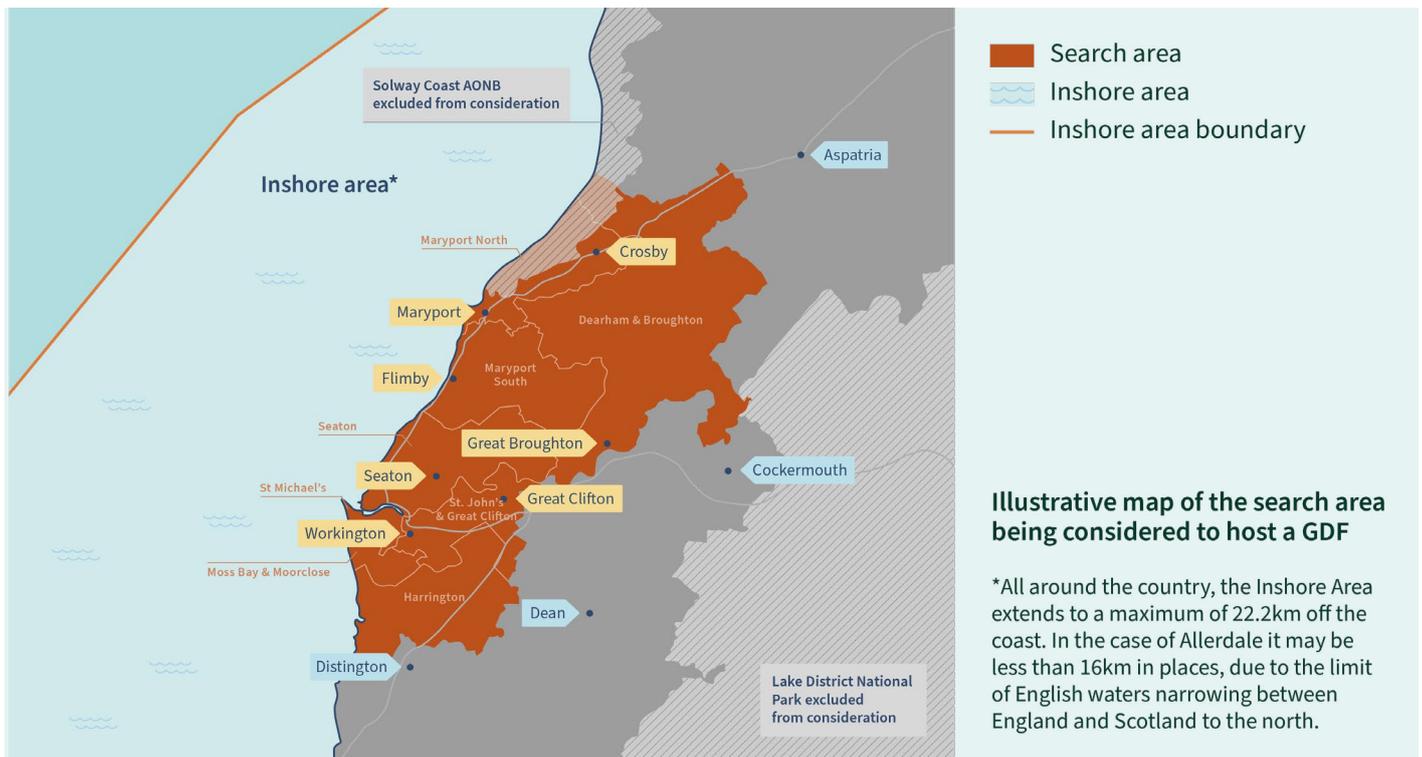
The Allerdale Search Area comprised eight wards: Dearham and Broughton; Maryport North; Maryport South; Harrington; Moss Bay and Moorclose; Seaton; St John's and Great Clifton; St Michael's. However, within those wards, the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Lake District National Park were excluded from consideration to host a GDF.

Onshore and inshore areas where a GDF and associated facilities may be located

Onshore, the **Search Area** is the geographical area encompassing all the electoral wards within which we were able to search for potential sites. For areas which include potential for development under the seabed, the Search Area will comprise only that area on land.

The term "**inshore area**" is used to refer to the area beyond the coast out to a maximum of 22km off the coast.

Allerdale Search Area and Inshore Area



5. In January 2023 the Partnership announced changes to the initial Search Area. These changes were introduced on 1st April 2023 to align with Local Government Reform and the new Cumberland Authority. The figure in this document shows the Search Area following these changes.

SECTION 3

Technical Conclusions

NWS has developed its understanding of the potential host rock in the Allerdale Search Area to sufficient maturity to conclude that there is a significant risk of there being insufficient rock volume and challenge to post closure safety for development of a GDF in the inshore area, and that no other options for GDF development present a lower risk for delivery within Allerdale.

The technical basis for this conclusion is set out in the following pages.

Geology explainer

Work in the UK and overseas has identified three broad types of rock that may be suitable for a GDF. One of the primary considerations when assessing the suitability of a rock type to host a GDF is how would fluid move through the rock. This is important because the movement of fluid is one of the ways in which radioactive material could be transported to the surface.

Lower Strength Sedimentary Rocks (LSSR) include rocks such as mudstones.

- Broadly, these rocks tend to be rich in very small clay and mud particles, which only allow water to pass through the matrix of the rock very slowly. A higher clay content means that there is potential for any fractures that form in these rocks to reseal, particularly under the weight of hundreds of metres of overlying rock. As a result, there is often almost no water or fluid movement through these rocks.
- In the Allerdale Search Area and adjacent inshore area the LSSR potential rock types of interest include the Mercia Mudstone Group, Cumbrian Coast Group and Warwickshire Group.

Higher Strength Rock (HSR) are rocks such as granites and volcanic rocks.

- This type of rock is composed of interlocking crystals, which means that fluid cannot move directly through the actual rock mass and can only move through divisions in the rock, commonly referred to as discontinuities (e.g. open connected faults and fractures).
- To understand if these kinds of rocks are suitable, NWS needs to understand how many fractures and faults are present and how they may be connected.
- In the Allerdale Search Area and adjacent inshore area the HSR potential rock types of interest include the Eycott Volcanic Group and the Skiddaw Group.

Evaporite Rock are rocks that formed from the evaporation of ancient seas or lakes, and includes salt.

- There is very little or no fluid movement within these types of rock. Any fractures that form in these rocks as a result of underground construction have the ability to reseal.
- In the Allerdale Search Area and adjacent inshore area, NGS indicated that Evaporite potential rock types of interest may occur within the Mercia Mudstone Group.

Understanding the Geology of Allerdale: further work

The focus of the site evaluation work undertaken in Allerdale was the potential for the development of a GDF in an LSSR (Lower Strength Sedimentary Rock) formation, the Mercia Mudstone Group, which is known to occur in the depth range of interest, in the inshore area (it is not present beneath land, onshore). Earlier work had determined that the Mercia Mudstone Group presented the best potential to host the underground parts of a GDF.

As part of planned site evaluation work, NWS purchased geophysical (seismic survey and borehole) data for the Allerdale inshore area that had previously been acquired by third parties in oil and gas exploration. NWS assessed the relevance and quality of these data and a portion was processed using modern analysis methods to enable an improved interpretation of the subsurface geology. The aim of this work, which was focused on the Mercia Mudstone Group, was to assess:

- the volume,⁶ and potential complexity of the host rock available to host a GDF.
- the ability to undertake further geophysical characterisation of the host rock in the future.
- the potential to assure the safety case for a GDF developed in the host rock after closure.

A summary of the findings and conclusion of our assessment against each of these points is presented below.

The volume and potential complexity of the host rock available to host a GDF

NWS has concluded that there is a significant risk that there is an insufficient volume of host rock within the Mercia Mudstone Group in the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area to accommodate the inventory for disposal.

Our improved interpretation of the subsurface geology established a better understanding of the depth, thickness, lateral extent, structure, and complexity of the Mercia Mudstone Group in the inshore area. Complexity refers to the internal composition of the Mercia Mudstone Group at this location, which is comprised of layers of mudstone interleaved with layers of minerals (halite, gypsum, anhydrite); these layers are known to vary in depth, thickness, and lateral area in this rock type. Structure refers to the presence of major geological features, such as faults, and the inclination, or dip, of the rock formation (and internal layers), relative to the horizontal.⁷

The interpretation of geophysical data identified a narrow area of subsurface geology, roughly 12 x 1.5 km, in which the Mercia Mudstone Group was likely to be present in sufficient thickness, in the depth range of interest (focus area). This area is bounded on one side by Scottish territorial waters, and on the other by a major fault. Within the focus area, the geophysical data were consistent with the internal heterogeneity expected of the Mercia Mudstone Group (i.e. mudstone / mineral layers). The average inclination of the Mercia Mudstone Group was determined to be 10°, into the focus area. Toward the onshore, the Mercia Mudstone Group was confirmed to be present at progressively more shallow depth and become progressively thinner.⁸

6. NWS site evaluation considerations pose the question of “Whether there is sufficient volume of suitable rock available at a suitable depth”. In the case of LSSR rocks, the thickness of the rock layer is important for assuring the isolation and containment of radioactivity; if the rock is not sufficiently thick, then the areal extent is immaterial. On the assumption that a sufficient thickness of rock is a pre-requisite for consideration, then “sufficient volume” of host rock is synonymous with “sufficient area of host rock”. Here, we discuss the availability of sufficient rock in terms of the area extent available and required, which was determined in our technical work.

7. For context, the Mercia Mudstone Group was formed from deposition of sediments and minerals in an ancient marine basin. These layers were successively buried, compacted, moderately heated, and then uplifted by geological processes.

8. This interpretation is consistent with the ancient basin environment in which the Mercia Mudstone Group was formed, increasing in thickness and depth from the basin edge toward the focus area, near the centre.

Within the focus area, the available areal extent of Mercia Mudstone Group, in the depth range of interest, was estimated to be between 9 km² and 23 km². This is, effectively, the area available for development. This range was determined by considering plausible scenarios for accommodating the underground part of the GDF at the centre or bottom of the Mercia Mudstone Group formation, corresponding to the lower or greater areal extent, and the inclusion or exclusion of the area in which the Mercia Mudstone Group was potentially thin. However, not all of this rock will be usable and, therefore, the usable area may be lower than the range estimated.

NWS estimated the host rock required to accommodate the inventory of waste for geological disposal, to compare against that available in the Mercia Mudstone Group in the inshore area. This estimate depends on several design and site-specific characteristics, which have considerable uncertainty, including, but not limited to:

- Design of the engineered barriers selected to complement the host geology
- Host rock depth
- Host rock geotechnical properties (i.e. its strength and stress state)
- Host rock thermal properties (i.e. its effectiveness at conducting heat)
- Host rock structure, including dip and faulting
- Presence of any other layout constraining features, such as investigation boreholes.

Assuming the host rock to be a predominantly mudstone layer, the estimated area required to accommodate the inventory for geological disposal was between 22km² and 51km², taking into account the challenging nature of the local rock structure.

It is therefore clear that development of a GDF in the Mercia Mudstone Group in the inshore area would require simultaneous realisation of the most optimistic scenario for the area of host rock required (i.e. the lowest volume, 22km²), and the most optimistic scenario of the area of host rock available (i.e. the highest volume, 23 km²), which is a low likelihood. Consequently, there is a significant risk that there is an insufficient volume of host rock within the Mercia Mudstone Group to accommodate the inventory for disposal.

The potential to assure the safety case for a GDF developed in the host rock after closure

NWS has concluded that there is a high risk that, even after further site characterisation, it will not be feasible to demonstrate post-closure safety for a GDF within the Mercia Mudstone Group of the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area.

Taking into account the improved interpretation and understanding of the subsurface geology of the Mercia Mudstone Group in the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area, NWS conducted an evaluation of the potential to assure the safety case for a GDF developed in this host rock after closure (i.e. post closure safety).

Post closure safety is assured by the isolation and containment of radioactive wastes provided by both the host geology and engineered barrier, for sufficient time to enable the radioactivity to naturally decay to a level insufficient to cause harm. NWS assessed the potential for the Mercia Mudstone Group at this location to contribute sufficient isolation and containment, in post closure safety, using a series of scenarios.

In the most straightforward scenario, the Mercia Mudstone Group at this location has very limited ability to allow the movement of fluids (water and gas), i.e. it has very low permeability, contributing substantially and sufficiently to the containment of radioactivity. However, our evaluation determined that it was unlikely that sufficient low permeability rock would be identified in the Mercia Mudstone Group at this location for this scenario to be valid. We also considered scenarios where reliance on other arguments could be applied to assure safety over long time scales, for example dispersion of radioactivity, through very long groundwater pathways. However, reliance on such arguments would be difficult to evidence as valid over the long time scales required. Consequently, there is a high risk that, even after further site characterisation, it would not be feasible to demonstrate post-closure safety for a GDF within the Mercia Mudstone Group of the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area.

The ability to undertake further geophysical characterisation of the host rock in the future

NWS has concluded that further site characterisation of the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area is likely to be technically challenging, lengthy, and costly.

Site characterisation is the process by which NWS develops understanding of the subsurface environment. Initially this is done by examining existing data and information and later by carrying out geoscientific investigations to acquire new data, such as geophysical surveys or boreholes.

Further site characterisation activities in the inshore area would commence with undertaking a geophysical survey. Although technically feasible, the shallow water depth in the area means that non-conventional geophysical survey acquisition equipment would be required, greatly increasing operational challenges, duration and cost. Furthermore, the wider Solway Firth inshore area has numerous environmentally protected areas, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protected Areas and a Highly Protected Marine Area. These protected areas, combined with the

proximity to the Scottish Border, are likely to place additional operational constraints on a geophysical survey within the inshore area. These factors mean carrying out a successful geophysical survey in the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area would take substantially longer to plan, consent and carry out than a conventional survey. Costs are also expected to be significantly higher than undertaking a conventional geophysical survey. To develop further geological understanding of the subsurface rocks, deep boreholes would be required. Further site characterisation of the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area is likely to be more technically challenging, higher risk, take longer and be significantly more costly. In Allerdale, it is likely that factors that make seismic surveys challenging would also make drilling deep boreholes challenging and costly.

Consideration of alternative siting scenarios in the Allerdale Search Area

NWS gained further understanding of other LSSR rock formations in the inshore area adjacent to the Allerdale Search Area from its interpretation of the subsurface geology derived from legacy geophysical data, specifically the Cumbrian Coast Group and the Warwickshire Group. This work confirmed that these formations present similar complexity to the Mercia Mudstone Group, but have comparatively reduced thickness in the depth range of interest. These formations therefore present the same challenge as the Mercia Mudstone Group at this location in terms of sufficient host rock and post closure safety.

NWS also reviewed understanding of the potential higher strength rocks on shore, beneath land, in the Allerdale Search Area. The complex geological history and structure of these rocks were considered likely to require a long, complex, deep borehole investigation programme, to develop sufficient understanding and assurance of post closure safety.

In summary, consideration of alternative siting scenarios in the Allerdale Search Area established high risk in terms of assuring sufficient rock volume, site characterisation, and post closure safety.

What is the safety case?

A core component of site evaluation is safety. A key set of documentation referred to in this process (and in this document) is the “safety case”. The safety case is a collection of arguments and evidence in support of the safety of a facility or activity. This will normally include the findings of a safety assessment and a statement of confidence in these findings.

For a GDF, there will be a number of safety cases required including, for example, nuclear safety, environmental safety, and transport. A safety case may also relate to a given stage of development (e.g., site investigations, commissioning, operations, closure, post-closure, etc).

A key component of this decision has been consideration of the risk that it may not be feasible to support a **post-closure safety case, even after further characterisation of the geology**. The post-closure safety case for a GDF will contain the safety assessment and arguments that the GDF will deliver the necessary level of safety for hundreds of thousands of years after the facility has been closed and sealed.



What is radioactive waste and the waste “inventory for disposal”?

Inventory for disposal means the specific types of higher activity radioactive waste (and nuclear materials that could be declared as waste) which may need to be disposed of in a GDF.

Higher activity radioactive waste is defined as: high level waste, intermediate level waste and a small fraction of low level waste with a concentration of specific radionuclides sufficient to prevent its disposal as low level waste.

High level waste: Radioactive wastes that generate heat as a result of their radioactivity, so this factor has to be taken into account in the design of storage or disposal facilities.

Intermediate level waste: radioactive wastes exceeding the upper activity boundaries for low level waste but which do not need heat to be taken into account in the design of storage or disposal facilities.

Low level waste: radioactive wastes not exceeding specified levels of radioactivity. The major components of low level waste are building rubble, soil and steel items from the dismantling and demolition of nuclear reactors and other nuclear facilities.

SECTION 4

Community

Operation of the Allerdale Community Partnership

The Allerdale Community Partnership has successfully begun to develop community understanding about the GDF and the siting process. The Allerdale Community Partnership is led by a Chair and is made up of 11 members, each one making valuable contributions within their own areas of expertise. Members have each taken a lead role in the Programme of Activities workstreams and are currently busy delivering their own objectives. The Allerdale Community Partnership has operated well since its formation, delivering many of its activities ahead of schedule and working diligently to meet the expectations of a Community Partnership set out in the WWC Policy.

The Allerdale Community Partnership aimed to ensure people understand the project and any potential impact on local people by attending more than 40 meetings with local groups, holding exhibitions, attending discussions with Town and Parish councils and meeting with special interest groups.

We aim to leave a positive legacy in Allerdale. Further discussion with the Allerdale Community Partnership and key stakeholders will continue to inform the close out of the Community Partnership and its activities.

The **role of the Community Partnership** as detailed in the WWC Policy is to:

- facilitate discussion with the community;
- identify relevant information that people in the Search Area and Potential Host Community want or need about the siting process;
- be the key vehicle for community dialogue with NWS;
- review and refine the boundaries of the Search Area as NWS's investigations progress;
- identify priorities for Community Investment Funding;
- make recommendations to the relevant principal local authorities on the Community Partnership on whether to invoke the Right of Withdrawal and if and when to launch a Test of Public Support;
- agree a programme of activities to develop the community's understanding of the siting process and the potential implications of hosting a GDF;
- develop a community vision and consider the part a GDF may play in that vision; and
- monitor public opinion in relation to siting a GDF within the Search Area and the Potential Host Community.

Community Investment Funding

The WWC Policy establishes up to £1 million per year in funding for communities which form a Community Partnership, and which are engaging in the siting process (Community Investment Funding).

Explainer

The WWC Policy provides that Community Investment Funding can be used to pay for projects, schemes or initiatives that:

- improve community well-being, for example improvements to community facilities, enhancement of the quality of life or health and well-being of the community;
- enhance the natural and built environment including cultural and natural heritage, especially where economic benefits, for example through tourism, can be demonstrated; or
- provide economic development opportunities, for example employment opportunities, job creation, skills development, education or training, promotion of local enterprise, long-term economic development or economic diversification.



Members of the Allerdale Community Partnership have invested their own time and commitment to support local projects through management of the Community Investment Funding. The Allerdale Community Partnership has been instrumental in enabling active local engagement and working with community groups who NWS have been able to support through NWS Community Investment Funding. There is a positive legacy to the Allerdale community's participation in the process, with £2 million of Community Investment Funding allocated to support over 50 local projects. These range from providing hospice at home care, support for victims of domestic violence and installing new facilities for young people.

We are continuing to work with the Allerdale Community Partnership on arrangements for Community Investment Funding following the decision to withdraw. NWS must comply with the WWC Policy which requires that any Community Investment Funding that has been committed within the relevant financial year will be honoured.

SECTION 5

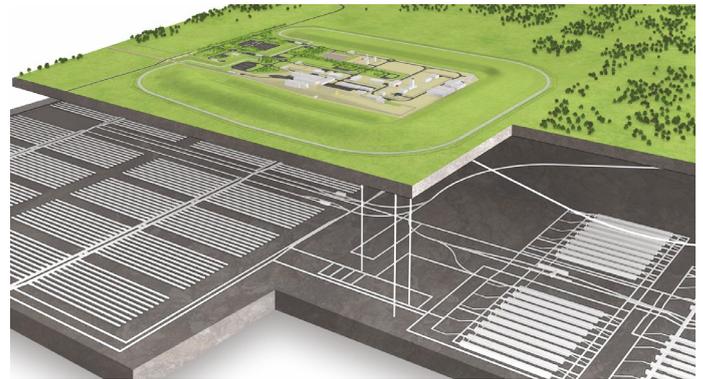
The GDF Programme

We have also taken the decision to withdraw from Allerdale in light of our Programme Objectives. This enables us to take a balanced view, to understand how the Allerdale community fares against the objectives, as compared with other communities participating in the process.

This assessment concluded that, because of the technical information (see section 3 above), there is very low probability that Allerdale could ultimately meet the third and fourth objectives (see our Programme Objectives on page 5 above).

The positions of Government and programme stakeholders were also considered. This includes the expectation that NWS will proactively manage its portfolio of communities and ensure that it appropriately manages its resources and public money.

A rounded view was also taken on other factors, including: land access, permits, consents and licences, policy considerations, HSSEQ, operations and sustainability. However, given that Allerdale was still early in the siting process – without specific sites for e.g. surface facilities or associated development identified – these factors did not materially influence our decision to withdraw.



SECTION 6

Conclusions



NWS has developed its understanding of the potential host rock in the Allerdale Search Area and adjacent inshore area to sufficient maturity to conclude that:

- there is a significant risk of there being insufficient rock volume and challenge to post closure safety for development of a GDF in the inshore area
- no other options for GDF development in Allerdale present a lower risk for delivery.

NWS will continue to work with the Allerdale Community Partnership to close out the work being undertaken by the partnership in a considered way and to ensure that committed Community Investment Funding is allocated. This will build on the strong delivery of projects supported by Community Investment Funding to date ensuring that NWS will leave a positive legacy in the Allerdale community.



Nuclear Waste
Services