

## **A view from Cumberland Council – by Leader, Mark Fryer**

**February 6, 2024**

**Cumberland Council is participating in the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process as the Relevant Principal Local Authority for both the Mid and South Copeland Community Partnerships: a role established in the Government’s Working With Communities Policy and that gives the Council certain powers and responsibilities.**

The primary purpose of the Community Partnerships is to give people credible information about what a GDF is, about why it is considered the right way to manage the UK’s higher activity radioactive waste and about what it might mean if a GDF were in fact constructed here. Cumberland Council fully supports that work and our representatives on the Partnerships are keen to play an active role.

The Council fully appreciates there are differing views about whether it would be a good thing for our area to host a GDF and we remain neutral on the matter. But we do recognise there is a real need for a permanent solution to managing the waste concerned – ongoing surface storage is not a longer-term solution.

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

Given that much of the waste intended for a GDF is held at the Sellafield site, Cumberland will be affected by the GDF project regardless of where the facility itself is located so it makes sense for our community to be part of the conversation.

The task of examining the geology off our coastline and assessing whether it might provide a suitable site for a GDF is challenging and could take the developer some years to conclude.

During that process, I hope people will continue to engage positively with the Community Partnerships, take an interest in the site evaluation work as it progresses and help us to ensure any concerns and questions people may have about the project are properly examined and addressed.

**Mark Fryer, Leader Cumberland Council**