

# NuLeAF Presentation to Nuclear Free Local Authorities

## Radioactive Waste Management Policy: Where Next?

Manchester Town Hall

28 June 2013



# Aim

This presentation recaps position in West Cumbria and sets out key issues identified by DECC when reviewing the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) policy

# Background (1)

- July 2012: West Cumbria MRWS Partnership Report advises 3 councils that there are no 'show stoppers' to engagement is a GDF siting process
- October 2012: 3 councils delay decision to seek more information on geology, RoW, and CBs
- January 2013: 2 lower tier councils agree to go forward, but upper tier council decides against, and current MRWS process ended by Government

# Background (2)

- Main reasons for County Council withdrawal from MRWS:
  - no guarantee on RoW
  - no idea of scale of community benefits
  - lack of ‘credible’ public support
  - no guarantee of ‘absolute safety’
  - potential for ‘blight’ in West Cumbria
  - ‘decades of uncertainty’
- Government reaffirms commitment to the MRWS policy and geological disposal

# Next Steps (1)

- DECC 'Call for Evidence': Need to identify learning points, gather views of West Cumbria MRWS Partners and other key local and national stakeholders, including NFLAs
- DECC to consult on MRWS policy in the Autumn

# Next Steps (2)

- DECC looking to relaunch MRWS policy in Spring 2014
- Invitation to local authorities to engage remains open
- No proactive work by DECC until new policy established

# Response to 'Call for Evidence'

- About 200 responses which point to 11 key issues

# 1. Key Issue: Decision Making

- White Paper lacks clarity
- Who can volunteer and exercise RoW
- Partnership advised legislative underpinning for RoW
- Legislative underpinning for RoW an issue for 3 Cumbrian Councils

## 2. Key Issue: Planning Process

- National Policy Statement?
- Hybrid Bill?
- But is this compatible with Localism Act?

# 3. Key Issues: Staged Process

- Value of stages and decision points in MRWS White Paper?
- Can any future process preserve confidence in Voluntarism and Right of Withdrawal without staged decision making?

## 4. Key Issue: Geology/Pre Screening

- West Cumbria Partnership divided on the level of confidence that suitable geology could be identified
- Should there be some high level geological screening so engagement can focus on areas of geological potential?

# 5. Key Issue: Strategic Environmental Assessment

- When to apply it? When to consider alternative sites? Compatibility with voluntary process?
- National Policy Statement would require Sustainability Assessment that includes an SEA

# 6. Key Issue: Inventory

- Partnership advised NDA to continue to reduce uncertainties around the waste inventory and options for staged disposal
- How to bring clarity?

# 7. Key Issue: Communication

- How to communicate the costs and benefits of geological disposal

## 8. Key Issue: Regulation and Licensing

- Clarity around staged process of GDF construction and waste emplacement?

# 9. Key Issue: Community Benefits

- Need more than a set of principles
- Legislative underpinning
- Are models available in other sectors or in radwaste programmes elsewhere?

# 10. Key Issue: Gauging Support

- Despite 68% of poll respondents in the Copeland area supporting continuation with MRWS (51% in Allerdale and 50% in Cumbria as a whole) this was not sufficient assurance for Cumbria County Council to proceed with a siting process.
- DECC likely to consult on proposed alternative methods of gauging support , including the role of local referenda.

# 11. Key Issue: Plan 'B'

- At what point does Government need to think about alternative policy if MRWS cannot make progress?

# Questions?

