



Cumbria Minerals and Waste Development Framework

Hearing in Public for the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies.

Cumbria County Council's Opening Statement

1. The Cumbria Minerals and Waste Development Framework is a spatial plan, which has been prepared to reflect Cumbria's unique combination of geology, geography and history. It is the second largest county in England in area but has a relatively small population in a dispersed pattern of settlements.
2. Cumbria is a county of contrasts. The county is known for its stunning landscapes, particularly in the Lake District, for the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and wildlife conservation areas of national and international importance. But it also includes areas with some of the country's most serious social and economic problems. Regeneration is needed, particularly in Barrow and West Cumbria, and we need to grow our economy faster than anywhere else just to catch up with the rest of the UK.
3. The county contains a broad range of minerals, which meet its own needs and also supply regional and national markets, particularly for high specification roadstones, lime for the steel industry and gypsum.

4. In relation to facilities for managing waste Cumbria generally is able to meet its own needs. Because of its distance from the major sources of waste arisings in the north west region and beyond it is not under pressure to receive significant quantities of waste from outside the county.
5. There is one other way in which Cumbria truly is unique. The Sellafield/Windscale complex is one of the largest concentrations of nuclear facilities in the world and holds much of the national inventory of higher level radioactive wastes. The Low Level Radioactive Waste Repository near Drigg provides a national facility for low level wastes.
6. The Core Strategy and Development Control Policies set out policies which reflect the situation in Cumbria. At their heart is the need to address climate change issues relating to minerals and waste developments, in particular transport, energy management, carbon reduction and environmental performance.
7. The Development Plan Documents recognise that, whilst the supply of minerals will continue, it needs to become more sustainable and have regard to the need to be more careful in the use and safeguarding of finite resources. In the main this has involved developing policies in line with long standing national and regional policies and guidance. Policies have regard to Cumbria's particular circumstances of a large geographic area with dispersed patterns of supply and demand and sometimes limited road and rail infrastructure.
8. The Development Plan Documents reflect the need for the biggest change that there has ever been in the way we manage waste. We have to move away from landfill to practices which reduce, reuse or recycle waste materials. For

municipal waste, the County Council is in the process of awarding a new 25 year waste management contract. This will require new facilities to be built, general locations for these are identified in the Core Strategy and on its Key Diagram.

9. National policies for the management of radioactive waste are not matters for this Development Framework. Policy for higher level wastes is still evolving. For Low Level Waste the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is required to develop a plan for the optimal use of the Low Level Waste Repository, near Drigg, and to assess the extent to which other disposal options might be employed.

10. The approach in the Core Strategy is based on policies for development at the existing sites and setting out how planning application proposals relating to a geological disposal facility might be considered, in the event that one is proposed. This policy would only come into effect if a community within Cumbria, with suitable geology, volunteers to host such a facility.

11. I would like to quickly summarise how we have got to this stage. This is a new type of development plan and it has taken longer than we had anticipated to get here. Work started over three years ago and initial consultation letters and documents were sent out in May, June and November 2005.

12. The first full consultation exercise was for the Regulation 25 Issues and Options Discussion Paper from June to September 2006. This was followed by consultations on the Preferred Options, from March to April 2007. At these stages the County Council was progressing the Site Allocations Policies alongside the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies.

13. Consultations were repeated, from November to December 2007, with the Changes to the Preferred Options Core Strategy. At this stage the County Council was persuaded by the Planning Inspectorate and Government Office North West to delay further progress with the Site Allocations Policies until after the Examination of the Core Strategy. It is now intended to publish the Site Allocations Policies in early 2009.
14. The Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies, that this Hearing is considering, were submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2008. Sixty one people or organisations submitted a total of 197 comments about the Core Strategy and 66 about the Development Control Policies. Of these comments, 53 stated that the Core Strategy was not sound and 7 that the Development Control Policies were not sound.
15. Thirteen people or organisations have indicated that they will be taking part in these Hearing in Public sessions. In addition, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Environment Agency and Nuclear Installations Inspectorate have been invited to attend to provide advice about radioactive waste matters that fall within their responsibilities. This is in connection with “duly made” representations that others have made and not ones that they have made themselves.
16. The County Council has published its recommended changes to the two documents, and to their Appendices. I would stress that the council does not consider that any of the recommended changes are necessary to make the documents sound. They are changes which are updates or intended to improve or clarify the text. None of the recommended changes involves a fundamental

change to the submitted policies. Some of the other matters that have been raised can be addressed in the Site Allocations DPD when further consultations with the public and other stakeholders will take place.

17. Several of the comments that have been received relate to matters that have happened since the Core Strategy was submitted. Whilst the County Council has recommended that updates should be included, there is a limit on the changes that can be made without requiring further publicity and consultations or, in the extreme, a review of the Core Strategy.

18. In conclusion, the submitted Development Plan Documents have been prepared in accordance with the relevant Regulations and provide a spatial plan for minerals and waste management developments in Cumbria up to 2020. The County Council believes that the documents are sound and hopes that the outcome of this independent examination will confirm that this is the case.

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