

31 July 2008

Letter to Partners

Dear Partner

MANAGING RADIOACTIVE WASTE SAFELY – A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL

As you will be aware the Government launched on the 12th June 2008 a White Paper by DEFRA, BERR and devolved administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland, entitled *Managing Radioactive Waste Safely - A Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal*. The White Paper sets out the Government's framework for managing higher activity radioactive waste in the long term through geological disposal, coupled with safe and secure interim storage and on going research and development.

The White Paper invites communities to make an 'expression of interest' in opening up without commitment discussions with Government on the possibility of hosting a geological disposal facility at some point in the future.

The White Paper can be found at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/radioactivity/mrws/index.htm>. It contains a short and very useful Executive Summary though I urge you to take the time to read the Paper in full. Further information in support of the White Paper can also be found on this website.

The County Council at its meeting on 26th June 2008 considered this issue and a copy of the report may be found on the County Council's website at:

<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/CouncilMeetings/Content/Public/2969/3961785735.pdf>

There was a full and comprehensive debate at County Council and the following resolution was agreed.

That given Sellafield's role in hosting much of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste and also the potential impacts of moving it, the County Council engages with District Councils and other stakeholders in discussing the implications of a deep geological facility siting programme.

That Cabinet take all necessary steps, as set out in the White Paper, to enable Council to decide, at a future Council meeting, whether to register a without commitment Expression of Interest in holding discussions with Government about the repository siting process.

This is an important White Paper for Cumbria given Sellafield's current role in hosting two thirds of the waste earmarked for geological disposal. All of Cumbria will be affected by a repository siting decision regardless of where it is ultimately located.

Given the impact on Cumbria the County Council is taking 'soundings' to see whether it should make an initial 'expression of interest' to Government. This would be without commitment and would take account of your views. Please consider this letter as the commencement of a countywide 'soundings' process. You will see from the Government process that this is not yet a formal consultation but simply a 'soundings' exercise about whether the County Council should express a without commitment interest to explore the possible location of a repository in Cumbria.

You may be aware that Copeland Borough Council has already decided to make an 'expression of interest' and decided to inform Government following its Council meeting on 24 June 2008. The County Council will respond to this decision and will wait until the results of this 'soundings' exercise and until the level of interest from other District Councils and partners is known. The County Council will be pleased to discuss future partnership approaches in principle but has not agreed to support any 'expression of interest' until it has considered the results of this 'soundings' process.

The process that the Government has begun, to find a suitable site for eventual disposal of higher activity wastes, is one that the County Council fully supports. It will be a process that must be founded on the principles of openness, transparency, volunteerism and partnership. It will be long and complex but it is an issue we must address positively for the future benefit of our communities, environment, and generations to come.

In view of the impact of this issue on the whole of Cumbria the County Council wishes to ensure that whatever future decisions are taken and whatever partnering arrangements develop, 'Cumbria' speaks with one voice in its future dealings with Government and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (who are the MRWS programme implementation body). All our efforts will be directed at securing an agreed way forward on the *Managing Radioactive Waste Safely* White Paper.

It would be helpful if you could let me know whether you support the County Council expressing a without commitment interest to examine whether there should be a repository in Cumbria. I would like to report the results of these soundings to the County Council Cabinet on 4 November 2008 so a response by 14 October 2008 would be appreciated.

This letter is being sent to a wide range of partners throughout Cumbria (see Annex A). Please do share this letter within your organisation and any partners you wish and encourage them to respond direct to me on this request. I shall do all I can to ensure that you are kept up to date with the process and results in due course.

It would be helpful if you would let me know your nominated contact point for any further correspondence or engagement in developing our understanding of opinion within Cumbria.

I appreciate that this letter will raise many questions and if it is helpful I can ask our Nuclear Issues Manager, Stewart Kemp, to provide you with a detailed briefing, presentation or any other support you might find helpful he may be contacted on 01539 713416 or stewart.kemp@cumbriacc.gov.uk If you would like to discuss this with the Leader, Tim Stoddard, Cabinet Member, Tony Markley, or me personally please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Peter Stybelski
Chief Executive

CC: All County Councillors

CLASB

Cllr. Joe Milburn, Leader of Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr. Jack Richardson, Leader of Barrow Borough Council
Cllr. Mike Mitchelson, Leader of Carlisle City Council
Cllr. Elaine Woodburn, Leader of Copeland Borough Council
Cllr. Colin Nineham, Leader of Eden District Council
Cllr. Brendan Jameson, Leader of South Lakeland District Council
Cllr. Winston Collinge, Cumbria Association of Local Councils
Cllr. Bill Jefferson, Lake District National Park Authority

LOCAL AUTHORITY CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Chief Executive of Allerdale Borough Council
Tom Campbell, Chief Executive of Barrow Borough Council
Maggie Mooney, Chief Executive of Carlisle City Council
Liam Murphy, Chief Executive of Copeland Borough Council
Kevin Douglas, Chief Executive of Eden District Council
Peter Ridgway, Chief Executive of South Lakeland District Council
Richard Leafe, Lake District National Park Authority

CALC

Winston Collinge, Chairman
Guy Richardson, Chief Executive

LSPs

Trevor Hebdon, Chair of Carlisle LSP
Roger Roberts, Chair of Eden LSP
Willie Slavin, Chair of West Cumbria LSP
Mandy Dixon, Chair of South Lakeland LSP
Stephen Murray, Chair of Furness Partnership LSP

CSP and partners (not already listed)

Bill Lowther, Chairman
Tom Bell, Business Link
Rob Johnston, Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Rev Colin Laxon, Churches Together in Cumbria
Sian Rees, Connexions Cumbria
Karen Bowen, Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service
Professor John Ashton, Cumbria PCT
Eddie Edge, Cumbria Sport
Andy Beeforth, Cumbria Community Foundation
Craig Mackey, Cumbria Constabulary
Bruce Bennison, Cumbria Cultural Forum
Mike Muir, Cumbria Housing Group Partnership
John Grainger, Invest in Cumbria
Emer Clarke, Cumbria Learning and Skills Council

Harry Knowles, Cumbria Local Enterprise Agency Network
Clive Alcock, Cumbria Police Authority
Bob Clarke, Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency
Ian Stephens, Cumbria Tourism
Richard Greenwood, Cumbria Vision
Simon Humphries, Natural England
Jonathan Shatwell, Environment Agency
Graham Wilkinson, Kendal College, on behalf of FE Colleges
David Higham, GONW
Chris Carr, University of Cumbria
Steve Johnston, Job Centre Plus
Annette Hennessy, National Probation Service
Tiffany Hunt, National Trust
Stewart Swift, NWDA
Aileen McEvoy, Arts Council North West
Julie Smith, Sport England North West
Roger Roberts, Voluntary Action Cumbria
Yvonne Lake, Youth Offending Service
Graham Baldwin, UCLAN
Bob Pointing, West Lakes Renaissance
Bob Churchill, NDA
John Collins, Environment Agency
Maggie Chadwick, PCT

Neighbouring Authorities

Ged Fitzgerald, Chief Executive, Lancashire County Council
John Marsden, Chief Executive, North Yorkshire County Council
Mark Henderson, Chief Executive, Northumbria County Council
Philip Jones, Chief Executive, Dumfries & Galloway Council
David Hume, Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council
Kathleen Rice, Chief Executive, Isle of Man

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