

19 February 2010
Your reference:
Our reference: MF314/MMW

Mr Robin Clarke
OPM
252b Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8XG

Dear Mr Clarke

Response from Cumbria County Council to the Consultation on the Draft National Policy Statement for Energy Infrastructure

At its meeting on 2 February 2010 the County Council's Cabinet considered and agreed a response to the above consultation in the attached terms. Cabinet also decided:

- That it supports the nomination of the Sellafield site for nuclear new build but is not convinced of the case for the nominated sites at Braystones and Kirksanton and is minded not to support them.
- That Cabinet urge Government to clarify the position in relation to the MRWS process, particularly to build confidence that Community Benefits will be delivered.

Whilst writing I would make the following additional points.

- RWE NPower has now withdrawn from its connection agreement with National Grid at Braystones and Kirksanton making deployment of any new nuclear station at these sites very unlikely before 2025. We believe that these sites should be removed from the Nuclear National Policy Statement before it is designated by the Secretary of State.
- Local Authorities need additional resourcing to engage with and carry out their important roles in respect of proposals to the IPC for new nuclear power stations, related development and grid enhancement proposals, being substantial major developments. In Cumbria, the cumulative effect of responding to and planning for the range of national policy initiatives on the nuclear agenda alone is placing a heavy burden upon the local authorities' development management and forward planning services. Without support, the concern is that capacity issues will affect our ability to engage sufficiently proactively with all the nuclear agenda and affect our important role in representing local views and presenting and addressing local considerations on IPC developments. This risks slowing and undermining the rigour of the new planning system.

- Subsequent to Cabinet's consideration of the above consultation, OFGEM published its Project Discovery conclusions proposing reform of electricity markets to stimulate investment in low carbon technologies. We believe such reforms should be considered.

This response is not confidential and may be freely cited and published.

We would welcome being kept informed of progress in this matter.

Your acknowledgement of safe receipt of this submission would be very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Fallon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Marie Fallon
Corporate Director – Environment