



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date of Meeting: 27 June 2011

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

Inside Policy Framework

Title: THE WEST CUMBRIA MANAGING RADIOACTIVE WASTE
SAFELY PARTNERSHIP

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Report reference: CE.16/11

Summary: The purpose of this report is to inform members of the work of the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership and arrange suitable representation for the meeting to sign off the initial programme of work in August.

Recommendations:

1. That the Executive notes the work of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership and how this will help Allerdale and Copeland Councils decide on whether to participate.
2. To authorise for the Portfolio Holders for Local Environment and Economic Development to attend the meeting of the MRWS Partnership in August 2011 and take a view on behalf of Carlisle City Council as to the satisfactory completion of the work programme described in this report.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

In 2008 the Government published a White Paper called “Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: A Framework for Geological Disposal”. This sets out the approach that the Government is taking to identify and develop an engineered, underground site for disposal of this country’s higher activity radioactive waste. The site will be called a Geological Disposal Facility.

There are three important key messages within the White Paper

- The Government does not want to force the facility upon a community: it is looking for volunteers
- Talking to Government about having a site does not commit a community to anything
- It will be a number of years before any construction starts, and at any time before then communities have a right to withdraw from the process.

In response to the White Paper, Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and the County Council expressed interest and have started discussions with Government about identifying a site. To ensure discussions were informed by wider community interests, these councils established the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership, with the ultimate aim of producing a report for consideration by Allerdale, Copeland and the County Council when they each make a decision on whether to participate in the next steps of the process. These next steps in the process are defined in the White Paper and would centre around a “Community Siting Partnership” – which would be formed after a positive decision to participate, if one is taken. The right of withdrawal would still exist up until physical work begins.

An invitation to attend the MRWS Partnership was extended to Carlisle City Council and the Deputy Chief Executive has been attending on behalf of the City Council since 10 December 2010. The City Council (although a full member of the Partnership) attends as one of the “Wider Local Interests” (as defined in the White Paper) rather than as a Decision Making Body for the Host Community. It has therefore been appropriate for this role to be taken by an officer of the City Council.

The MRWS Partnership is about to reach an import juncture in its work. A draft of the report it will produce for the Decision Making Bodies will go out for public consultation before being finalised and presented to the Decision Making Bodies (Allerdale, Copeland and The County Council).

The meetings of the MRWS scheduled for 23 June, 7 July and 18 August 2011 (dates tbc) are “assessment meetings”. At these meeting the Partnership will take a view on whether the criteria to inform a decision to participate have been met. These criteria have been defined by the Partnership and are presented at Appendix 1.

It would be appropriate that the relevant portfolio holders attend these meetings (or at least the final assessment meeting on 18 August, date tbc) to ensure that they are content with the view taken by the City Council at those meetings.

It is important to emphasise that the view to be taken is not one of support or otherwise for the establishment of a facility – but a view on whether the pieces of work identified to meet the criteria in Appendix 1 have been satisfactorily completed - thus signing off the draft report for public consultation.

The Deputy Chief Executive will fully brief the Portfolio Holders, and any other councillors who require it, on the work of MRWS. All of the meetings are held in public and all documentation is available at www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk .

Following the public consultation, further work will be done to finalise the report of the MRWS Partnership to the Decision Making Bodies. It is anticipated that the will be in a position to make a decision about whether to participate in the early part of 2012.

Recommendations:

1. That the Executive notes the work of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership and how this will help Allerdale and Copeland Councils decide on whether to participate.
2. To authorise for the Portfolio Holders for Local Environment and Economic Development to attend the meeting of the MRWS Partnership in August 2011 and take a view on behalf of Carlisle City Council as to the satisfactory completion of the work programme described in this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

It is appropriate that the relevant Portfolio Holders for the City Council attend the MRWS Partnership meeting to take a view on behalf of the City Council as to whether the work programme has been satisfactorily achieved.

Criteria for a Decision whether to Participate

12 Aug 09

Document No:	7 draft 5
Author:	WCumbria MRWS Steering Group
Status:	Draft
Notes:	Amended following Steering Group meeting (29 July)

1 - Background

The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership exists to *"make recommendations to Copeland BC and Allerdale BC on whether or not they should participate in the geological disposal facility siting process, without commitment to eventually host a facility"*. The Partnership is therefore predominantly concerned with the process up to a "Decision to Participate" as defined in the Government White Paper¹, and not beyond.

This paper outlines draft criteria that the Partnership will use when recommending whether to participate or not. The criteria will also:

- be subject to a round of wider stakeholder organisation comments
- be recommended to the Decision Making Bodies as the criteria they could use for making their final decision on whether to participate or not

2 – Draft Criteria

Name	Full Criteria	What we will look for
Safety, Security, Environment and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Satisfied that suitable regulatory and planning processes are in place or being developed to protect residents, workforce and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acceptable regulatory bodies and processes exist or are being developed▪ Adequate communication links between regulators and community are present and working▪ Acceptability of the planning aspects of the siting process
Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Whether the Partnership is confident in the integrity of the BGS screening work/report▪ Sufficient areas remaining in West Cumbria after initial screening to make further progress worthwhile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acceptable peer review process▪ Broad stakeholder confidence in BGS study▪ Subjective judgement that the results of the screening leave enough "possibly suitable" land to make further progress worthwhile
Community Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Whether the Partnership is confident that an appropriate community benefit package can be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acceptable process in place to secure additional benefits - beyond those which derive directly from the construction and operation of the facility

¹ Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: A Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal, June 2008

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether the Partnership is confident that appropriate possibilities exist to assess and mitigate blight if it occurs Whether the Partnership is confident that the possibility of a repository fits appropriately with the overall direction of the relevant community/ies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptable process is in place to assess any negative impacts and mitigate them Support for the possibility of a repository in relation to other documented long term priorities
Design and Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied that the design concepts being developed are appropriate Satisfied with the proposed inventory to be managed in a facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptable design concept and flexibility thereof Reassurance that reversibility/retrieveability is an option, and flexibility to confirm this later Knowledge of what the inventory is, and acceptable process for how the inventory would be changed, including how the community can influence this
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether the Partnership is confident that the siting process is sufficiently robust and flexible to meet their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptable process of moving from 'possibly suitable areas' to specific potential host sites Provision for 'pause points' to allow more work to be undertaken at the Partnership's request Acceptable nature of (and limitations to) the Right of Withdrawal Government commitment to sustain the process
Public and stakeholder views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether the Partnership's recommendations are credible given public and stakeholder views <p><i>(note: the word 'credibility' here is used to reference the criterion in the White Paper, para 6.22)</i></p>	<p>This is a subjective judgement but any recommendation might require at least the following to indicate credibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad support from the stakeholder organisations in the area, including those that are likely to form a Community Siting Partnership if a DtP was taken <i>(again, words taken from WP para 6.22)</i> An increasing level of confidence in the Partnership held over time by those engaged Evidence that concerns raised have been, or will be, addressed where appropriate