

## **Nuclear Position Statements**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor Elaine Woodburn  
Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Nuclear Policy

**LEAD OFFICER:** Pat Graham - Director of Economic Growth

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### **WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?**

The economy of the Borough and the well-being of its communities has been intrinsically linked to the fortunes of the nuclear sector for a number of decades and this link is likely to continue into the future.

### **WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE COUNCIL?**

The nuclear sector is subject to local, national and international political and technological influences. Such influences create potential significant fluctuations in the fortunes of the sector and due to its dominance in the local economy it is important for the Council to be clear on its own position relating to the sector and for other local and national stakeholders to clearly understand that position. This paper proposes a number of Council position statements in relation to those aspects of the sector which are important to the future well-being of the local economy and residents.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Council agrees the Nuclear Position Statements as more fully described in the report below (or Appendix A attached).

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

- 1.1.** The economy of the Borough and the well-being of its communities has been intrinsically linked to the fortunes of the nuclear sector for a number of decades and this link is likely to continue into the future. The nuclear sector is subject to local, national and international political and technological influences. Such influences create potential significant fluctuations in the fortunes of the sector and due to its dominance in the local economy it is important for the Council to be clear on its own position relating to the sector and for other local and national stakeholders to clearly understand that position.
- 1.2.** Through a range of all-Member workshop sessions held over the last six weeks, a number of nuclear position statements have been developed. They provide a *current* view of the Council's position on specific nuclear related matters that are seen as important to the well-being of Copeland and its communities. It is

recognised that due to the potentially changing political and technological context for this sector that the Council's position statements are likely to change in the future and so it will be important for these statements to be reviewed on at least an annual basis.

- 1.3.** In the short term it will be appropriate to review the statements at the end of the calendar year as the process to publish their revised strategy (known as Strategy 3) is completed by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).
- 1.4.** The scope of coverage for the statements includes all those aspects of the nuclear cycle that exist or are planned to be provided in the Borough including power generation and distribution, nuclear site decommissioning and radioactive materials and waste management. The statements also recognise the role that the Borough and the Council has within the developing Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE) and the opportunities that this will create for growth in the local economy.

## **Copeland Borough Council – Nuclear Position Statements 2015.**

### **1.0 Background and context**

This document provides a statement of Copeland Borough Council's position relating to the nuclear industry and the principles that the Council will apply when engaging with the sector. The position statement is a standalone document, it has been developed in support of the Council's policies and strategies. The position statements have been developed following all-Member workshops on nuclear specific topics:

- 1) Nuclear Policies overview - 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015.
- 2) Nuclear Waste management – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015.
- 3) Plutonium management – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015.

Cumbria is home to the Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE) and the County, and Copeland specifically, plays host to a range of nuclear sites and activities and a highly skilled workforce and dynamic supply chain. Copeland has held a long standing ambition to secure long term sustainability and development of this sector.

Government have clear plans to realise national economic growth through the nuclear sector, both through the Commercialisation of Decommissioning, and through Nuclear New Build. These are reflected in the Government's National Nuclear Industrial Strategy, Cumbrian Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan under the Nuclear and Energy Excellence theme and the West Cumbria Economic Blueprint published in 2012. For decades Copeland has underpinned and supported the national growth agenda from this sector, and through this revised and updated statement of intent, the Council can reaffirm its commitment to support the national interest once again.

In making this offer, and aligning both National and County level plans with local ambitions, we also seek to ensure that the local economy is grown and sustained. To do this we will work with Government and partners to:

- Support the investment in human capital and the development of the skill base and an inclusive approach education and training.
- Keep our communities safe and our world class environment protected.
- Develop the policies, plans and programmes, sites and premises to enable growth
- Support and encourage innovation and the wealth creators of the future to diversify and sustain our economy
- Ensure that the economically required infrastructure and conditions for growth are in place to realise the UK growth potential here in Copeland.

- Re-establish the global reputation of Cumbria as a Centre of Nuclear Excellence

The Council aims to secure a sustainable, diverse economy which maximises the benefits of nuclear energy related development and which supports the delivery of the energy needs of today's society without compromising either the environment, community safety or other future needs of our community.

The Borough has a unique role to play in taking forward the Government's nuclear energy agenda through our world class work force developed through addressing world class challenges with regard to:

- Nuclear Decommissioning
- Waste Management
- Spent fuel re-processing and
- Research and Development.

The Council continues to develop its relationship with UK Government to ensure the continued recognition of the positive and essential role our community plays now, and long into the future in terms of achieving the national growth ambitions and targets from this sector.

The Council recognises that the local economy is currently dependent on the nuclear sector. However our aspiration is to maximise the opportunity provided by this sector as an anchor to attract wider business activities from across the full spectrum of the industry, with the expectation that this will encourage greater diversity in local economic activity and in turn secure greater social value.

## **2.0 The National Context for Local Strategy/Action**

Copeland has an established nuclear presence which provides a number of opportunities and challenges. A proposed new nuclear reactor and the supporting infrastructure and workforce needed to build and operate it will result in a significant economic boost to the local economy. However, the delivery of the project needs to be considered in the context of the wider needs of the local economy and communities, through consideration of matters such as infrastructure requirements, skills,, transient workers and legacy., This document reflects the special position that Copeland Borough Council and its communities have in the national nuclear and energy agenda, it also complements the emerging Growth Strategy for the borough which will be published later this year.

## **3.0 Position Statements**

The nuclear sector is a dynamic sector and subject to economic and political influence so regular/annual review of the Councils position will be required.

### **Current and New Nuclear Missions**

#### **Copeland Borough Council.....**

1. Supports Copeland and Cumbria as a whole as the Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE)
2. Recognises that Sellafield has, by default, become the assumed national 'storage' facility for high and intermediate level radioactive wastes. The Council will consider its position with regard to the formalisation of this role as part of the forthcoming NDA's Strategy 3 consultation.
3. Recognises and supports the need for a GDF to ensure safe disposal of the higher legacy wastes currently stored at Sellafield but has no preference or position with regard to the location of that facility locally or nationally.
4. Does not consider that the proposals to invest to ensure the long term above ground storage of higher activity wastes is the best practicable environmental option, and will resist this as a proposal which has been suggested by some as being the safest and optimum solution for our community.
5. Recognises the additional complexities presented in terms of clean up and decommissioning of the Sellafield site in terms of physical space. Nonetheless, the Council will resist any proposals to enlarge the nuclear licensed site as a point of principle, seeking in the first instance better strategic planning and site management.
6. Supports the reuse of Plutonium (Pu) as a key UK asset and endorses the government-led approach to identify proposals to develop facilities for the re-use of plutonium but in a safe and economically advantageous way. The Council's view is that such facilities should be developed close to the source of the Plutonium store in Copeland.
7. Is aware that there is currently no decision taken on the management of future waste arising's generated by the fleet of proposed new nuclear power stations. The Council will continue to monitor this situation and will review new nuclear waste arising's at a later date.
8. Supports the proposal for the development of a new nuclear power station at Moorside, provided the development seeks to create a lasting legacy for the local community, through investment in the local economy, and that any

additional supporting developments are advanced in a sustainable manner and provide opportunities for growth.

9. Supports in principle the National Grid promoted North West Coast Connections Project but will seek to ensure that potential landscape and environmental impacts are minimised where practicable and that the economic opportunity of the project is maximised.
10. Supports the principle of new nuclear missions in Copeland including new nuclear power generation, spent fuel re-processing, the commercialisation of decommissioning and waste management in appropriate locations in support of the CoNE, where local economic growth and opportunity in the local supply chain can be secured and the safety of our community assured.
11. Supports the continued operation of the National Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) in the Borough provided it is environmentally acceptable, that the Borough continues to benefit from hosting this national facility and, a final end state plan is agreed and implemented.
- 12 Encourages government to provide a comprehensive and holistic view of all radioactive wastes arising through the production of a National (Radioactive) Waste Management Plan.
- 13 Is opposed to the proliferation of nuclear waste disposal sites across Copeland as this conflicts with the proximity principle applied to radioactive waste management strategy. However, we recognise that there are opportunities for commercial waste management operations, the Council's support or other for these will be considered on a case by case basis and where the highest levels of safety can be assured.
- 14 Will work proactively with public and private partners, including through the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), to optimise existing infrastructure and where appropriate seek to secure the necessary additional or upgraded physical and business infrastructure to promote business expansion, diversification and growth.
- 15 Is determined that the cumulative benefits and issues presented by proposed major developments in the Borough are evidenced, understood and planned for, in order that, opportunities to be efficient, creative and strategic are secured and maximised.
- 16 Will support the CoNE to develop the Counties supply chain and position Copeland in collaboration with our universities, as the place for nuclear and associated knowledge based industries.

- 17 Will support the work of partners (employers and skills providers) to ensure the skills and human capital is grown and developed to support and create and sustain growth.
- 18 Support business development in the supply chain to make the local business sector competitive and able to access local as well as global markets.
- 19 Will consider the need for community benefits packages, over and above direct mitigation, as appropriate to individual proposals, in consultation with our partners and for the maximum benefit for the Borough.
- 20 Actively supports the multi-agency resilience arrangements for the Sellafield site, and will proactively engage with all parties and seek assurance that all safety measures adequately accommodate further nuclear growth, to ensure that our communities safety, economy and environment is at the heart of those arrangements.
- 21 Will work in partnership to ensure that planning and licensing regimes are coordinated to ensure that any requirements with regard to infrastructure or other safety measures are accommodated through the planning process and built into the consideration of major projects.