

**NUCLEAR SITES: COPELAND
SITE END STATES AND USES**

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Summary and Recommendation:

The report considers the options for the eventual use of the nuclear sites in Copeland and the nature of the clean up that will be required. The purpose is to allow the submission of the Councils views in these issues in response to an NDA consultation.

The Nuclear Working Group recommends that the Council agrees:

A. The following policies in relation to the post operational future of Copeland Nuclear Sites.

END STATES

1. Nuclear sites should be the subject of complete reclamation on completion of operations on the basis of the principle of polluter pays and in order to ensure that local environmental safety and economic well being is maximised for the benefit of the community.

2. Any proposals coming forward to use a site indefinitely to accommodate waste or contamination that arises from the clean up should be treated as specific proposals for a repository and should be negotiated with the Borough Council to ensure that such facilities are in the beneficial interest of the local community

3. The low level waste facility near Drigg should be fully cleaned up and restored and waste and contamination removed unless;

i) a safety case can be agreed which, resolves issues of coastal erosion, and sea level change,

and;

ii) a host community recognition package is agreed with Copeland Borough Council, which creates a beneficial interest in the host community accepting such a facility.

Should i) and ii) be implemented the facility can be operated as a repository subject to the reclamation and appropriate repackaging and management of material buried in the area known as the trenches.

END USES

4. The subsequent use of the sites must be informed by the planning framework being operated for Copeland at the time of implementation. The current preferred uses for the Sellafield site are as follows:

i) North: Should be fully restored and allocated in part for research/technology/business park use. The larger part to be made available for special industrial uses (not general industrial)

ii) Windscale: Fully restored possible use in association with North area for large special industrial uses

**iii) Central: Fully restored and possible Low Level Waste repository, (subject to the MWRS principles of veto and community benefits)
Alternatively special industrial/leisure/agriculture/forestry**

iv) Calder and South: Full restoration and use for leisure/recreational/forestry agricultural use.

5. Subject to considerations in 3 above the Council supports the use of the site for radioactive waste management, recreation/nature reserve

B. That the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority should be informed of the Councils policy and supporting arguments as set out in the report

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has been running a process of identifying stakeholder views on the projected end states and end uses of Copeland's nuclear sites.
- 1.2 Whilst this work identifies future uses and levels of clean up that any many decades away, and may be the subject for future review, it does set the direction for the standard of work currently being planned and implemented and hardens expectations about what will be required and the financial commitment that the NDA/Treasury will need to make to deliver the outcomes.
- 1.3 The consultation process has been carried out through the West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group and has involved a wide group of stakeholders. This work will bring together the broad views of the stakeholders and is now nearing completion.
- 1.4 The council has an important input to make to this process in its role as:
- i) Democratic community leader
 - ii) Statutory body in relation to environmental and economic wellbeing and,
 - iii) As statutory planning authority

It is, therefore, disappointing that the NDA did not consult the Council separately on this issue

- 1.5 A separate and clear submission from the council incorporating current policy and developing its policy position, as appropriate, is necessary to provide guidance to the NDA.

2. GENERAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Whilst recognising that the Sellafield site, in particular, may present major clear up challenges, the council's policy in that full restoration should be pursued. Cost or difficulty should not be a reason for allowing clean up to be a lower standard than would be expected for less contaminated sites elsewhere. Copeland's nuclear licensed sites should be treated in the same way as sites elsewhere in the country. Our expectation is that the government's responsibility to repair environmental damage in Copeland is fully honoured. This is on the accepted principle of polluter pays.

- 2.2 The need for this approach is heightened by the ever more rigorous standards of environmental clean up required as time goes on. If we should accept a standard of clean up which is not full restoration now, it is unlikely to be regarded as an 'end state' as it becomes less and less acceptable as years pass and standards change.
- 2.3 There should be a presumption that current decommissioning of nuclear licensed sites should lead to delicensing or a reduction in size of the licensed area whenever possible. This would not preclude special consideration being given by the Council to new economically beneficial development that might require the retention of existing, or the addition of new licensed areas.
- 2.4 The Councils land use policies set out a framework within which future uses on the sites would need to be considered. Although the very long timescale presents difficulties in terms of process, at this stage we need to assume that planning policies pertaining now will apply when any new uses are introduced to the site. There will clearly be opportunities in the future for the work to be reviewed in line with the changing planning requirements of the time.
- 2.5 It should be noted that complete restoration meets the council's objectives in other ways. As the latter involves the maximum investment from government into environmental restoration in our area, it will also result in the largest amount of associated economic activity and thus job and wealth creation. This will also link in with the areas aspiration to be a centre of excellence in environmental restoration, as full restoration will involve the greatest degree of innovation.

3. WCSSG INTERIM OUTCOMES

- 3.1 The stakeholder exercise carried out by the NDA has generated initial preferences, but has not considered the effect of local planning policies. This is needed to inform the acceptability of the results. These preferences are included in Annex 1 to this report.
- 3.2 For the purposes of the exercise the Sellafield site was divided into sub areas with different characteristics, particularly in terms of the expected level and nature of ground contamination. It will be seen from the Annex that, in four of the areas, industrial uses are preferred, and in the fifth, industrial and waste management.

4. PLANNING POLICY ISSUES ARISING

- 4.1 Our Local Development Framework policies seek an arrangement of land uses that would provide workplaces as near as possible to homes and

reduce journey times and environmental impact. Limited amounts of industrial land prescribed by regional planning processes are allocated accordingly. There has also been some concern that based on previous take up rates, too much industrial land is allocated in West Cumbria as a whole, depressing land values and the attractiveness of investing in them. Whilst it is clear that this situation may change by the time any land could be released from Sellafield, it is more likely that the need for large scale industrial land allocations will have decreased not increased.

- 4.2 It would, therefore, be difficult to support the end use of such a large area as being industrial in the future. However, there are some special uses that are appropriately sited remotely from settlements due to their potential hazard. As a result it is likely to be acceptable for some of the area to be allocated for special industrial uses of this kind only. Clearly this could include new nuclear related development such as Power Generation etc.
- 4.3 This would leave a limited number of uses that would be acceptable for other parts of the site. These include nature reserve/recreational or returning the land to agriculture or forestry.
- 4.4 The area includes the proposed new National Nuclear Laboratory facility that is included in plans to deliver the future transformation of the local economy. As an existing and developing asset it would be appropriate to retain and support development around this area. A 'research and technology centre' may be acceptable although care would need to be taken not to adversely affect development at West Lakes Science and Technology Park and our town centres.

5. LOW LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE STORAGE

- 5.1 Amongst the options being discussed is the potential for using the central part of the site, which is heavily contaminated, for the deposition of Low Level Radioactive Waste by leaving the contamination in situ, or providing some form of engineered repository, thus significantly reducing costs.
- 5.2 Adopting our policy that Copeland should be treated no less favourable than other areas would mean that the presumption should be that the central area should be fully restored.
- 5.3 In these circumstances the NDA would be faced with the need to find another community to accept the waste. Having identified a preferred location, a process would need to be put in place to seek community acceptance/design a suitable repository to take the waste/community packages would need to be discussed/transportation would be required.

- 5.4 There are clear advantages to the NDA and Government to have to avoid such a process and retain the material in the area. However, this creates clear disadvantages for the local community in having to continue to live with it in our area. Therefore, it would not be acceptable to leave the central area contaminated by default due to an incomplete clean up. It is considered that this is a matter that this Council may wish to discuss further with the NDA, on the basis that Copeland is treated no less favourably than an alternative community would be in locating that waste. Any consideration given to allowing the radioactive contamination to remain on the site permanently must be subject to community acceptance, a fully engineered repository facility to manage the environmental impacts and hazards, and an appropriate community package to offset negative impacts. This would need to be on a par with the scale of similar packages being provided elsewhere in the world where such facilities are being located within communities (such as at Dessel in Belgium and Gyeongju, South Korea).

6. RECOMMENDED PROPOSALS: SELLAFIELD

- 6.1 Taking the above consideration into account it is recommended that the following proposals are put forward for each section of the site:
- i) **North:** Should be fully restored and allocated in part for technology/research/business park use. The larger part to be made available for large special industrial uses (not general industrial)
 - ii) **Windscale:** Fully restored possible use in association with North area for large special industrial uses
 - iii) **Central:** Fully restored and possible Low Level Waste repository as described in para 5.4 above or special industrial(not general) or leisure/forestry/agriculture
 - iv) **Calder and South:** Full restoration and use as leisure/recreation / agricultural forestry.

7. LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY

- 7.1 The stakeholder process has produced two preferred end **uses** for the site. These are waste management and recreational and nature conservation. The first reflects the current use of the site and the long term preferred use once capped.
- 7.2 The process also looked at **end states** and considered whether the site should be disturbed, partially disturbed or not disturbed.

- i) **Disturb:** This option would require all waste being moved elsewhere and the site being released free of all institutional control
- ii) **Partially Disturb:** This particularly identifies a scenario where part of the site, the historic tumble tip trenches, would be disturbed and the radioactive materials reclaimed, repackaged and relocated as appropriate
- iii) **Don't Disturb:** In this preference the whole site would continue to take LLW and remain operational. (Implies an extension to the current vaults which requires planning approval)

8. COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 In previous consultations the Council has considered a number of relevant issues relating to the site. Firstly, that the site could only be regarded as a store until the safety case in relation to sea level change was agreed. Secondly that the site could continue to grow only if an acceptable community package was agreed. Thirdly, that the tumble tip area should be excavated and decommissioned and the waste stored in an acceptable standards as required for new waste arising on the site.
- 8.2 From a land use point of view it would be inappropriate to allocate a site of this size and location for uses such as employment land, industry or housing. Uses such as agriculture/forestry and recreation/amenity would be appropriate. However, agricultural use may prove unlikely on a capped site accommodating radioactive waste and would only be appropriate if the waste were removed and the site fully restored.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSALS LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY SITE

- 9.1 **End State:** This should be 'Disturb'; i.e. remove waste and release free from institutional control unless:
 - a) the safety case in relation to sea level change is agreed, and
 - b) a community compensation package is agreed with Copeland Borough CouncilIf the two conditions above are met then Copeland Borough Council would accept 'Partial Disturb'. Subject to the trenches being excavated and the waste appropriately disposed of.
- 9.2 **End Use:** Subject to the policy on the end state above the Council support the preferred uses of waste management and recreation and nature reserve identified in the stakeholder exercise.

10. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

10.1 No direct implications for the Council from this report

11. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 No direct implications

12. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 Whilst this report looks at policy over a long timescale there will be medium term implications on employment in decommissioning. The Corporate Plan policies directly affected

3.1 Sufficient and diverse job opportunities

3.1.1 Ensure sufficient employment sites and buildings are available

3.3 Every resident will be proud of their environment

3.3.5 Local Development Framework in place

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Annex 1

List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees: Cllr A Holliday, Head of Regeneration, Regeneration Strategy Manager, Head of Sustainability and Nuclear Policy, V Emmerson Environmental Health Manager, Corporate Team, Cllr D Moore.

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed . This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	No relationship
Impact on Sustainability	Whole report relates to environmental sustainability
Impact on Rural Proofing	Considered through ensuring maximum improvement to rural environment
Health and Safety Implications	Consider by references throughout to how contamination is dealt with and requirement on the management of low level radioactive waste
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	No relationship
Children and Young Persons Implications	Report seeks to resolve issues that may affect future generation including our young people
Human Rights Act Implications	There may be human rights implications associated with the effect of poor management of radioactive waste on individuals. The report seeks standards of management which would avoid these.

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision NO