

## **DRAFT CBC NUCLEAR POLICIES**

### **Introduction**

1. This document brings together Copeland Borough Council's key policies in relation to the nuclear industry.

### **Purpose**

2. It creates the potential to formally clarify the Council's position for both the industry and related governmental organisations.
3. An agreed comprehensive policy document will provide guidance to officers and members and will help to ensure the Council adopts a consistent approach.

### **Consultation**

4. It is proposed that the document is the subject of consultation before final adoption by the Council. This process will include local partners and organisations as well as wider consultation with the community. The latter will be assisted by the production of a simplified questionnaire on some key issues including those related to the long term management of radioactive waste.
5. The consultation process will also provide further opportunities for Council members to put forward views on the contents of this draft.

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## **COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Policies in Relation to the Nuclear Industry and the Management of Radioactive Waste**

#### **1. SAFETY**

- 1.1 The Council's priority is to scrutinise the safe operation of the nuclear industry to ensure that safety standards are of the highest possible order to protect the wellbeing of employees and the local community. The Council has a high degree of confidence in the safety regulation operated by the Health and Safety Executive (Nuclear Installations Inspectorate). The Council will scrutinise the operation of the latter through the West Cumbrian Sites Stakeholder Group to ensure all risks are minimised.

#### **2. ENVIRONMENT**

- 2.1 The Council believe that the nuclear installations in Copeland should have the minimum environmental impact. We will support the continued reduction of any emissions from the site and the reduction of on site contamination. We believe that government and the industry has a responsibility to remediate all contamination created by site activities in due course

#### **3 NUCLEAR RELATED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 The council supports new development in Copeland related to the nuclear fuel cycle provided that the benefits created, particularly in terms of jobs and the economy, outweigh detriments. Such possible developments include the construction and operation of new Nuclear Power Generators, Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing and Manufacturing facilities.
- 3.2 This support is subject to any such facilities being built to the highest possible technical and safety standards and making a positive contribution to the areas reputation as an area of clean technology and world class technical excellence in the sector.
- 3.3 Employment related to the nuclear industry should only be located on licensed nuclear sites when operationally essential. Where possible office space accommodating staff should be located in Copeland's town centres. This is to ensure sustainable development and make such accommodation more useable for other purposes after decommissioning and to support healthy and vibrant town centres.
- 3.4 To ensure sustainable development any extensions of the footprint of nuclear sites will be resisted in view of the space that will be released within the site, in due course, as a result of decommissioning.
- 3.5 The current level of road infrastructure in Copeland is inadequate for the scale and nature of the nuclear activities in the Borough. The Council will continue to lobby for the allocation of resources to make significant improvements. The council will expect significant improvements to accompany any significant new development.

Attached Annex 1 sets out the land use policies related of the industry, which are included in the Councils Statutory Copeland Local (Land Use) Plan.

#### **4. LEGACY CLEAN UP**

- 4.1 The Council fully support the Legacy clean up being carried out by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. In principle, we support the decommissioning and clean up of the most hazardous facilities as a top priority subject only to considerations of safety.
- 4.2 Planning for legacy clean up must take into account the impact on employment of local people and the overall effect on Copeland's economy. Site programmes should be designed to maintain a steady level of employment for as long as possible. The Council would not consider it acceptable to have periods of 'boom and bust' where there are periods when jobs are considerably reduced and others where it is necessary to draw external contract labour into the area.
- 4.3 The Council expects the NDA and its contractors to undertake effective workforce planning to ensure the skills are available amongst local people to carry out the full range of clean up and decommissioning activities required in the future. Priority in any reskilling should be given to existing staff in operations that will be coming to an end.
- 4.4 The NDA has a responsibility for managing socio economic change triggered by decommissioning of the industry. The Council expects the NDA and its contractors to consult the Council on the contents of these documents as Copeland Borough Council has statutory responsibilities to manage the economic wellbeing of its area and is a statutory consultee on the NDA's Strategy and Annual Plans.
- 4.5 Socio economic plans should be compliant with the strategies agreed by Copeland Borough Council for the economic and social development of its area.
- 4.6 Copeland will work with the NDA and other partners to deliver the agreed actions to offset the impact of nuclear decommissioning on employment and the economy locally.
- 4.7 Copeland expects the NDA to maximise the opportunities through its spending power to support the development of economic transition in Copeland.

#### **5. LONG TERM MANAGEMENT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE**

- 5.1 The Council will seek a strategic and co-ordinated approach to dealing with waste nationally and supports the concept of a hierarchy of waste management facilities with the long term management of the lower level wastes being regionally or sub regionally based and the very highest level wastes being in centralised management facilities.
- 5.2 Waste minimisation recycling and free release of radioactive waste should be pursued wherever possible and waste disposal pricing should reflect this policy.

- 5.3 The Council favours phased deep geological disposal of higher level wastes, which would be fully monitorable and retrievable.
- 5.4 In any siting process issues relating firstly to safety and secondly to environmental impact must be given priority.
- 5.5 Copeland would have serious concerns if West Cumbria were used as a centralised interim storage location for intermediate or higher level radioactive wastes. This would prejudice a future siting decision for a repository or other permanent facilities and concentrate perceived hazard and risk and associated stigma in our area to our further disadvantage. Increasing the amount of the UK's waste stored locally will increase the likelihood of a disposal facility being in West Cumbria and reduce the attractiveness of alternative options. Copeland Borough Council has maintained a consistent policy in recent years that additional LLW and ILW from outside this area should not be moved to Copeland.
- 5.6 Measures to offset the detriments created by the presence of hazardous radioactive wastes, and recognition of Copeland's strategic national importance in this respect, has been minimal. The Council does not accept the concept that it is equitable for Copeland to host waste generated in its own areas just because they have received economic benefits from previous nuclear operations. Nuclear facilities were installed to meet a national need and not a local need; the benefits have therefore been national whilst most of the detriment has been local.
- 5.7 The Council believes that any process for siting long term radioactive waste management facilities or centralised interim facilities must rely on a partnership with willing host communities. This needs to include full consideration of the community packages to offset detriment and make any such facility acceptable to the receiving community. For this process to be effective from the local communities side it must include the right to withdraw from any proposed partnership if the local community has not been able to agree the full terms of the partnership agreement.
- 5.8 Community offset packages need to recognise the length of the time period that the local community will be affected by potential detriments is unusually long and that packages to offset this must provide a positive impact for a similar length of time. A major element of any such offset package should be an intergenerational endowment fund that can be managed to the benefit of local people, by the local people, into the long-term future.
- 5.9 The partnership agreement would need to reflect the value and scale of such a service to the nation.
- 5.10 The Council believes that for any such partnership agreement to be reached, the local community will need to be fully engaged in the issue and widely consulted before Copeland Borough Council makes a final decision.
- 5.11 Copeland Council should be fully funded by Government to involve the local community in a dialogue on these issues and it should not be the responsibility of the local Council or local Council Tax payers to fund the costs of this.
- 5.12 Copeland Borough Council recognises that the UK Government will need to find one or more locations for such facilities. On the basis described above the Borough Council would be prepared to enter into a dialogue with Government to explore whether there are circumstances under which the Copeland community and the

government could enter into a partnership that agree formal arrangements for Copeland hosting a long term radioactive waste management facility.

- 5.13 With regard to Low Level Radioactive Waste in particular, the Council disagrees with any increase in capacity at the Low Level Waste Repository in Copeland until a community package is agreed with this Council

## **6. MANAGEMENT OF THE LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY IN COPELAND – SPECIFIC POLICIES**

- 6.1 The Council recognises that there are regulatory concerns with regard to climate change and subsequent coastal erosion issues that create uncertainty for the future Low Level Waste Repository in Copeland. The current uncertainties should rule out any further disposal at the site and it should be considered as an interim storage site until these issues are resolved.
- 6.2 The Council believes that it is important to have prior agreement of an offset package in the form of an inter-generational endowment prior to any further expansion of the facility as a national repository to offset its impact for the lifetime of the waste.
- 6.3 Waste minimisation, recycling and free release for lower level wastes should be maximised. This is not best served by reducing the cost of disposal. The Council believes that consideration should be given to reviewing the cost of disposal at the LLWR as any net increase in disposal income should be used firstly to fund a local offset package and then to provide additional funding for decommissioning work.
- 6.4 All transport of radioactive materials should be by rail due to the unsuitability of the road infrastructure through Drigg village. The Council wishes to see a new access to the site bypassing the village.

## **7. USE OF NUCLEAR SITES AFTER DECOMMISSIONING**

- 7.1 Whilst it is recognised that it will be a considerable period of time before any Copeland's nuclear sites could be used for alternative purposes it is important to start considering end uses at an early stage to ensure that work carried out early fits in with longer term plans and future budgets and liabilities can be more accurately assessed.
- 7.2 Copeland's nuclear sites should be treated no less favourably than nuclear sites elsewhere in the country. We believe users that despoil land have a duty to the local community and society at large to put right contamination and return the site to its original condition. Any intention to reclaim sites to a lower standard should not disadvantage the community affected. Incomplete clean up should only be carried out with the agreement of the community as represented by their local authority. There would need to be clear benefits to the community if it were to accept less than full restoration. In any negotiations on this issue consideration will need to be given to the length of the decommissioning process and society's rapidly changing standards of what is acceptable environmentally.
- 7.3 Any site planning processes on nuclear sites outside our area may impact on Copeland with respect to proposals to relocate contaminated materials arising. As such Copeland should be fully involved in the decision-making processes.

- 7.4 In general the Council expects to see sites progressing towards free release and delicensing. In the short term we would expect to see the Sellafield site reduce its footprint as peripheral parts of the site are decommissioned cleaned and released.

## **8. OTHER**

- 8.1 The Council, as the democratically elected body representing the community most impacted by the nuclear industry, is the priority local stakeholder for engagement and consultation by the industry. As such, full weight should be afforded to its views. In addition the Council believes that it is important that the wider local community is able to contribute to the whole local decision making processes.
- 8.2 Whilst it is the normal business of Councils to seek and represent the views of its residents and provide expert input to key decision making processes on their behalf, the requirements of the nuclear industry place an undue burden which is not reflected in the resources provided to the Council. It is not acceptable for local Council Tax payers to fund this work so special funding will continue to be sought from Government or the industry.
- 8.3 The Council expects that contractors to the nuclear industry will operate corporate social responsibility activities at the highest level to benefit the local community within which they work. This should include good neighbour support for the local community and play an active part in the local community. Tier one suppliers are expected to develop and support good liaison arrangements with the Borough Council.