

17/10

NWG – 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2007  
Item AOB

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF VAULT 9 FOR THE STORAGE OF LOW LEVEL WASTE AT THE LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY, DRIGG, CUMBRIA**

**CHAIRMAN:** Councillor Allan Holliday  
**PORTFOLIO HOLDER** Councillor Elaine Woodburn  
**LEAD OFFICER:** David Davies  
**REPORT AUTHOR:** David Davies

**Recommendation:**

Members are requested to consider the planning proposal and draft response to the Planning Panel. The response will be sent to the Members of the Planning Panel for their meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

**It is recommended that Members oppose the planning application until there is an agreed benefits package in place.**

**Introduction**

The current disposal facility, Vault 8, is reaching capacity and it is expected that the current capacity at the LLWR will be fully exhausted by December 2008. Given the expected short lifetime of the current facility and given the forecasted LLW arisings over the coming years the Low Level Waste Repository Ltd (formerly BNGSL) consider there is an urgent and pressing need to find sufficient capacity to meet likely needs in the short to medium term pending the development and commissioning of alternative LLW facilities.

It should be noted that the planning application is seeking permission for **storage only**; however it is important to recognise that the proposed Vault 9 will be built in a manner which will enable it to be converted to a permanent disposal site at a later date (following planning approval). Any application for permanent disposal will be considered following clarification of the national strategy for the future management of LLW.

**SUMMARY**

The Council's current policy position with regard to the LLWR is:

- To oppose any increase in capacity at the Low Level Waste Repository in Copeland until a community package is agreed with this Council.

- That any additional LLW and ILW from outside Copeland should not be moved to Copeland unless a negotiated agreement, including a community offset package, can be agreed.

### **PROCESS**

As stated earlier, the NWG response will be sent to the Copeland Borough Council Planning Panel. The deadline for NWG comments is the 12<sup>th</sup> October '07 in order for it to be discussed at the Panel on the 17<sup>th</sup> October '07.

14/11

## APPENDIX 1

4/07/9010/OF2

### CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF VAULT 9 FOR THE STORAGE OF LOW LEVEL WASTE LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY, DRIGG, HOLMROOK BRITISH NUCLEAR GROUP SELLAFIELD LTD

Parish: Drigg and Carleton

#### THE SITE

The existing Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) site is the former Royal Ordnance Factory site, which covers an area of 110 ha. The LLWR is adjacent to and to the west of the village of Drigg and around 0.5 km east of the West Cumbrian coast. The site is approximately 8 km south-east of the Sellafield site. The site slopes gently, falling from around 20m above sea level at the north-eastern boundary to 7m above sea level at the south-western boundary.

The application site covers 9.162 ha and is within the LLWR site, adjacent to the North West site boundary. It is located to the west of the historic trenches and south of Vault 8. At present the site is covered by a mixture of natural features and is crossed by an unmade site road. The Drigg stream runs north to south adjacent to the western edge of the proposed vault. The stream will be diverted as part of the development.

The Carlisle – Barrow railway line runs along the eastern boundary of the LLWR and is linked with the repository via rail sidings. The Vault 9 development site is approximately 1.2 km from Drigg Station which is on the south eastern boundary of the LLWR.

#### THE PROPOSAL

The main objective of the new vault is to continue to provide low level waste storage for the NDA and its customers beyond the point at which Vault 8 reaches capacity, (by December 2008). Due to limited remaining capacity and accelerated decommissioning activities, the need is urgent. It has been determined that the provision of a new storage vault at the LLWR is the most appropriate solution in order to provide additional, safe, secure and cost effective storage capacity for low level waste (LLW). There is no other suitable and available option in the short term. The new vault will provide a national facility for the storage of LLW until such time as alternative facilities are available, maintaining the status quo until the national strategy is adopted.

The development consists of the construction of Vault 9 and ancillary works comprising the partial diversion of the Drigg stream, the formation of internal site access roads, the provision of a temporary site compound, the formation of an earth stockpiling mound and settlement pond. The vault storage slab will be constructed from concrete walls on all four sides, although that on the south west side is lower than the other three walls. The base slab will incorporate falls to facilitate the management of leachate. A basal liner will be incorporated in the walls and a double liner system, consisting of primary and secondary low permeability layers, will be incorporated within the base. The liner system will segregate the waste and any leachate resulting from water infiltration from the environment. The leachate system will be capable of achieving the performance required under the Radioactive Substances Act (1993) for disposal of LLW. Vault 9 will be excavated to a formation depth of approximately 14m AOD, ensuring that the visual impact from beyond the LLWR boundary will be minimised, even with containers stacked within the vault area. The vault will measure 200m from north to south and 141m east to west. The height of the north-east wall will be about 4.5m high, the south-east wall will be about 2m high and north-west and south-east walls will be approximately 5.3m high. All are variable because of the fall in the concrete base slab. The vault will have a capacity of approximately 5,500 Half Height ISO freights. Whilst the vault is for the storage of LLW, it will be constructed to a standard capable of providing a disposal facility in the future, if policy determines, (and subject to appropriate consents).

Once Vault 9 is constructed, its operation will be similar to that of vault 8, except that all Half Height ISO freights will be subject to a reduced maximum weight of 35 tonnes, in order to facilitate their potential future transfer off-site.

A contractor's area will be required in order to construct the proposed vault. This facility will include two batching plants (one concrete and one bentonite) which may be used in parallel. The installation of these plants will facilitate the import of raw construction materials by rail and minimise the impact of traffic through Drigg and Holmrook villages. The contractor's compound is to be provided in the area to the south of Vault 9.

Earth to be excavated from the Vault 9 construction site is to be used to form an earth mound in an area to the south of the vault. The mound will rise to a maximum height of 8m. The mound will be seeded to prevent erosion and drainage ditches will be provided around its perimeter.

It is estimated that about 50 jobs will be created during the construction period, which will be approximately 12 months. The development itself will safeguard existing jobs at the site.

The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement supporting the proposal. The Environmental Statement is very comprehensive covering the following:

- Description of project
- Alternative sites for storage
- Stakeholder co-ordination
- Planning context
- Assessment of radiological effects
- Traffic impact assessment
- Noise impact assessment
- Landscape and visual impact assessment
- Flora and fauna
- Air quality assessment
- Geology, soils and hydrogeology
- Aquatics
- Economic and social effects
- Environmental management plan
- Residual impacts and interaction summary

Following a joint County and Copeland officer site visit, amended plans have been submitted which avoid the need to divert part of the Drigg Stream and to fell part of the perimeter tree screen. This will avoid a number of ecological issues which were previously caused by the proposed diversion.

A presentation was given by Drigg personnel to the Planning Panel and Nuclear Working Party on 18 September when a number of issues were raised by members and answered by the Drigg representatives. The main issue under discussion was the question of a suitable community compensation package. This matter is the subject of further on-going discussions and members will be updated at the meeting.

The Nuclear Working Group is due to consider this proposal at its meeting on 11 October and the recommendation of that Group will be sent to Members before the Panel meeting.

The Council's policy with regard to low level waste is that there should be no extension of capacity without agreeing a community benefits package with the Council. The Council has been in significant discussions for sometime with regard to agreeing a suitable community package.

In detailed site planning terms there are no objections to the proposal. The outstanding issue to be resolved is to agree the content and format of a suitable community compensation package.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That no objection be raised to the proposal subject to an acceptable community compensation package being agreed with Copeland Borough Council.

APPENDIX 2

defer??

NUCLEAR WORKING GROUP REPORT:

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF VAULT 9 FOR THE STORAGE OF LOW LEVEL WASTE AT THE LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY, DRIGG, CUMBRIA

On the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2007 the Nuclear Working Group considered the planning proposal for the construction and operation of Vault 9 for the storage of low level waste at the Low Level Waste Repository near the village of Drigg and have made the following recommendations.

Copeland Borough Council has for some time been involved in discussions with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council on negotiating a resolution over an acceptable benefits package to offset the real and perceived socio-economic impacts resulting from the LLWR near the village of Drigg. Currently Copeland Borough Council's policy relevant this matter is;

*To oppose any increase in capacity at the Low Level Waste Repository in Copeland until a community package is agreed with this Council.*

In 'detailed site planning terms' Nuclear Working Members have no objections to the proposal. However, Members see the issue as one of 'strategic land use' and the potential negative effects on the community from the construction of another waste vault.

Therefore the outstanding issue to be resolved is to agree the content and format of an acceptable community package and it is recommended that the Council object to the proposed application until such an agreement has been established with this Council.

Cllr. Allan Holliday  
Chairman, Nuclear Working Group  
11th October 2007

Careful with wording

In line with council policy

if this item pulled then this will not go out

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND  
OPERATION OF VAULT 9 FOR THE STORAGE OF LOW LEVEL  
WASTE AT THE LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY, DRIGG,  
CUMBRIA**

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Chairman, Nuclear Working Group  
11th October 2007

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