

ENERGY COAST MASTERPLAN

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Elaine Woodburn, Leader
LEAD OFFICER: Fergus McMorrow, Corporate Director Economic Prosperity and Sustainability
REPORT AUTHOR: Liam Murphy, Chief Executive

Summary and Recommendation:

The Energy Coast Partners have produced a “masterplan” for the further economic development of West Cumbria based upon positive conditions of investment for the nuclear industry.

Council is asked to consider the “masterplan” and approve the following:

- (a) that the Energy Coast Partners, comprising Copeland Borough Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Vision, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and West Lakes Renaissance, is the most appropriate partnership for the further economic development of West Cumbria;
- (b) that the Energy Coast “Masterplan” is considered an important strategic resource for the future development of a spatial masterplan for Copeland and/or West Cumbria;
- (c) that the detailed planning and agreement on economic development priorities for Copeland and West Cumbria is subject to further work, including a detailed delivery plan for Copeland; and
- (d) that the Energy Coast “Masterplan” is not seen as the definitive plan for the regeneration of West Cumbria but should be seen as part of a suite of plans contributing to the implementation of the West Cumbria Sustainable Communities Strategy – “Future Generations”;

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2005, following recent The Energy Act, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between Cumbrian Partners and Her Majesty’s Government. This agreement committed all parties to “West Cumbria proofing” key policy and strategy decisions in light of the potential dramatic changes to the economy in the face of nuclear decommissioning. This agreement also spearheaded a concerted effort to produce the definitive plan for the future regeneration of West Cumbria.

- 1.2 The Energy Coast “Masterplan” is the result of a large scale study of the economic, social and environmental needs and challenges facing West Cumbria in the medium to long-term. The work was commissioned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and West Lakes Renaissance and project managed by Cumbria Vision.
- 1.3 While the original intention was to produce a spatial masterplan for West Cumbria the resulting document is in fact a strategic plan. One implication of this is that a strategic plan will not meet the technical requirements of a bona fide spatial masterplan that can strategically influence the planning and development control processes of the Council.
- 1.4 The document however does capture the strategic aspirations of the Energy Coast Partners in terms of a vision for the future of West Cumbria.

2. THE ENERGY COAST

- 2.1 The “Energy Coast” is a brand name developed by the partnership of Copeland Borough Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Vision, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, and West Lakes Renaissance. It refers to the perceived future role that West Cumbria can provide for the UK’s energy mix that would ensure energy security and environmental responsibility (with particular reference to climate change).
- 2.2 “Energy Coast “ has been a successful policy marketing tool with Central Government and at the meeting of the West Cumbria Strategic Forum in June (chaired by the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry) the Energy Coast “masterplan” was endorsed by Government as a coherent argument subject to further scrutiny and testing by Whitehall Departments. The Energy Coast partners were given 12 months to debate on a project by project basis with Whitehall what proposals were really intrinsically valid for successful regeneration of West Cumbria.
- 2.3 At this present time, the Energy Coast Partnership chair has appointed West Lakes Renaissance to lead on the further work required to engage with the Cross-Departmental Liaison Group in Whitehall.

3. THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Energy Coast proposals are based around three key themes:

- Business and enterprise
 - Skills and research
 - Connectivity and infrastructure
- 3.2 The proposals identify 6 poles of growth and investment within West Cumbria, 3 each in Copeland and Allerdale. Within Copeland these areas are: Whitehaven, West Lakes Science Park, and the Sellafield site. In Allerdale, these sites are: Workington, Lilyhall Business Park, and Broughton Moor.

4. FURTHER WORK PROGRAMME

- 4.1 While there is a tremendous amount of detail and supporting evidence to the Energy Coast proposals there a number of important limitations. Consequently, more work is required so consideration has to be given to address the following issues:
- 4.2 First, work needs to be done to provide a solid evidence base upon which technical support can be drawn to develop a spatial plan for Copeland and/or West Cumbria;
- 4.3 Second, a programme plan needs to be developed that can prioritise the development of the key sites and identify an appropriate financial mechanism for land value uplift and investment. As a consequence it will then be possible to determine what are the definite medium and long-term implications for Copeland and West Cumbria.
- 4.4 Third, there needs to be developed a supporting economic evidence base to assure that the proposals would be effective and sustainable. This work would complement the schedule of capital projects identified in the plan.
- 4.5 Fourth, there is a significant amount of work to be done to develop proposals that will integrate the plan with community planning and give appropriate consideration to employment strategy, health impacts, community safety considerations or housing and environmental options.
- 4.6 Fifth, work needs to be done to evaluate the proposed projects against the scale of potential job losses in the nuclear sector, and the timescale of the potential job losses.
- 4.7 For these reasons the Energy Coast plan is best seen a supporting document to the West Cumbria Sustainable Communities Strategy – “Future Generations”.

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

The Energy Coast proposals seek approximately £500m of additional Government funding within a wider £3billion pound programme of economic infrastructure change. In practically all considerations Copeland BC would not be the accountable body for these monies.

There are, however, other implications for the Council. The Energy Coast proposals will, if delivered, generate a supply-side effect for improvement in public services and wider community regeneration. The Council will have to consider whether the current capacity of the Council would be suitable to these demands.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

The relationship to the Energy Coast proposals and the Corporate Plan is extremely strong as many of the Council's objectives seek to ensure economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

List of Appendices

Energy Coast Masterplan – Executive Summary – Issued Separately

List of Background Documents: Energy Coast Masterplan (Full Documents)

List of Consultees:

Leader
Deputy Leader, Achieving Transformation
Corporate Team

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	None
Impact on Sustainability	None
Impact on Rural Proofing	None
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None
Section 151 Officer Comments	None
Monitoring Officer Comments	