

EXECUTIVE REPORT**LEADER'S REPORT****COUNCILLOR MISS E WOODBURN – PORTFOLIO HOLDER****1. Low Level Waste Site**

Cumbria County Council, as we know, initially refused the planning application for temporary stacking and the plans were resubmitted for consideration at the end of last month. This resulted in a change in their original recommendation and the application was consequently approved. Conditions were attached which protect the local community from visual intrusion and noise amongst others.

CoWRM – Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

CoWRM is the committee set up by Government to consider options for the long-term management of radioactive waste. They have now reached their criteria analysis stage where they will be analysing the scoring done by local stakeholders and technical professionals. We still have the opportunity to comment on the scoring weighting through CoWRM's website, though I attended the local stakeholder forum held recently in Whitehaven. They are also considering the wider social and environmental issues and will combine all of these to produce draft recommendations for Government in May followed by a very short consultation period with their final report to Government in July. It was good to hear that it is likely their final recommendations will also include the recognition of volunteerism, right to veto and offset packages, this major turnaround in thinking is due to the constant message that Copeland Borough Council has given to whoever we have been talking to – the message is finally hitting home!

Calder Hall Cooling Towers

Calder Hall's Near Term Work Plan and Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Strategy were based on completing the cooling tower demolition by the end of March 2006. This was a challenging schedule given the complexity of the project due to its location on a sensitive site.

The level of detail required to demonstrate that the demolition will be carried out with minimal risk to the site, environment or public, means that more time is required to compile the safety case than was originally anticipated. Although it seems it is not possible for BNG at this moment in time to determine a new date for demolition the project team remain committed to conducting the demolition just as soon as it has been demonstrated that it is safe to proceed.

NDA National Stakeholder Group – Waste Issues Group

As colleagues will know the national stakeholder group set up by the NDA is to provide a framework to influence the NDA's decision making process. At its first meeting, two sub groups were formed of which I attended the Waste Issues Group meeting as a representative of the West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group. We spent two days looking at the key waste materials as identified by the NDA and agreed a work plan which will initially consider Low Level Waste and Siting Issues around Low Level Waste. As with most things nuclear all of these discussions will have an impact on Copeland therefore it is essential we play an active part.

West Cumbria Strategic Forum

Just to update Members on the master planning exercise with the first stage of a prospectus being written which stresses the importance of this unique piece of work. It also includes a CD of the existing information we have on the social and economic issues we face as well as what strategic plans are already in existence. A comprehensive interim report will be required to present to the Secretary of state for the DTI during the early stages of the work with detailed proposals ready to inform HM Government in its Comprehensive Spending Review undertaken during Autumn 2006.

Budget

The budget process for 2006/07 has been successfully completed and is reported on this Council Agenda. Through good financial management and with rigorous challenging we have been able to set a balanced budget whilst only increasing the Council Tax by 2.5%. Central Government has provided us with indicative settlement figures for 2007/08 and it is proposed that the rise in council tax in 2007/08 be 2%.

We recognise that the process for 2007/08 budget will be challenging with the need to find efficiencies in light of additional spending requirements and the need to meet the gershon agenda. With this in mind the Budget Working Party is starting on a process of reviewing the base budget in conjunction with the Key objectives of the Council and future changes anticipated. This process will commence with a workshop in early March between head of service and the budget working party.

Copeland PRIDE Awards

The Copeland Pride Awards, which recognises Business Excellence throughout Copeland, are nearly upon us and as last year Copeland Borough Council is proud to be one of the main sponsors alongside British Nuclear Group, UKAEA, The Whitehaven News, Millom and Haverigg Regeneration Partnership, Egremont Regeneration Partnership and North East Copeland Regeneration Partnership. This is the people of Copeland's opportunity to enter those businesses that make so much difference to this community as a whole.

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

None