

## West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Final Report

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor E Woodburn

**LEAD OFFICER:** Pat  
Graham

**REPORT AUTHOR:**  
Steve Smith

### WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?

This report provides the context for Members to debate the prospect of the Council taking a decision to participate in the next stage, stage 4, of the process to identify a suitable site for the provision of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher activity radioactive wastes. It refers to the Final Report of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership which provides a range of supporting information and advice to the Council as a 'decision making body' within the process including advice on impacts on local communities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Members are asked to express their views on the opinions and advice contained within the MRWS Partnership Final Report so that any views are taken into account by the Executive when they consider a 'decision about participation' into Stage 4 of the MRWS process at their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the context for Members to debate and express their views on the opinions and advice contained within the MRWS Partnership Final Report. All Members of the Council will have received a copy of the final report and supporting documentation in advance of this Council meeting. A further copy of the Executive Summary of the Final Report is attached for reference as Appendix A.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 Members will be aware that the Borough Council has been a member of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership since its establishment. The Partnership, established in response to the Government's MRWS White Paper 2008, has been working to examine a range of issues over the last 3 years. It has prepared and published its final report containing its opinions and advice to the 'decision making bodies' in the process, namely Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils and Cumbria County Council. The advice in the final report focuses on the issues that the decision making bodies need to consider when taking a decision about participation into stage 4 of the process. Stage 4 would involve beginning a search for a suitable site to host a deep geological disposal facility for higher activity radioactive wastes, but without a commitment to hosting. The Executives/Cabinet of each of the 3 decision making bodies will be considering a decision about participation at meetings to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> October. Members are asked to express their views regarding the advice contained within the MRWS Final report and such views will be considered by Executive when taking their decision about participation into Stage 4 at their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

2.2 The final report of the Partnership provides a detailed analysis of the work of the Partnership. As well as providing background to current Government policy on radioactive waste disposal the report provides a detailed consideration of issues relating to the provision of a deep geological disposal facility including;

- Inventory
- Geology
- Design and Engineering
- Safety, Security, Environment and Planning
- Impacts
- Community Benefits

In addition the report covers a number of overarching issues that the decision making bodies need to consider if they decide to go forward into Stage 4 and an outline of what stage 4 and 5 in the process could involve. The report also includes details of the public and stakeholder engagement processes employed by the Partnership to obtain the views of the public and stakeholders on the work and opinions of the Partnership and the extent of support for a decision to participate in stage 4 or not.

2.3 A presentation will be made at the Council meeting by Rhuari Bennett, the Partnership's independent Programme Manager who will summarise the opinions and advice contained within the Final Report relating to the topics highlighted above.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD**

3.1 A decision about participation into Stage 4 of the MRWS process is an important decision for the Council and the communities of Copeland. Views expressed by Members at this meeting will be considered by Executive at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October when a decision about participation is to be taken.

### **4. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS**

4.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are: The correct decision-making route is being followed in this matter – i.e. a debate by Council at this meeting followed by a decision by Executive on 11 October

4.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are: Any decision to proceed to stage 4 would need all funding and resource implications evidenced.

4.3 EIA Comments

4.4 Other consultee comments, if any

#### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Executive Summary of the Final Report of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership.

#### **List of Background Documents:**