

# Copeland Borough Council

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Copeland welcomes White Paper process

Copeland Borough Council has welcomed the Government's White Paper on the disposal of radioactive waste, which will see communities initially invited to 'participate' in the process of finding a location for a deep geological repository for nuclear waste.

Copeland Borough Council believes that the proposals within the White paper will ensure a transparent and fair process is followed and will allow communities themselves to lead the process. The Council is happy that the Government has adopted the approach that Copeland has long lobbied for. This is one of partnership, volunteering and negotiated community benefits with any potential host community having the right to pull out of the process. Government Ministers have made it clear that the repository will not be forced on any community.

Copeland hosts over 70% of the country's nuclear waste and the Council has a long-held policy of being willing to talk to Government about the long term solution for nuclear waste. This policy also states discussions would be without commitment, and subject to the views of local people being sought.

Councillor Elaine Woodburn, the Leader of Copeland Borough Council, said, "There is no doubt that with the launch of the White Paper all eyes will be on Copeland, and with the amount of nuclear waste stored here in Copeland it is essential we are involved in the process."

"We have long advocated a policy where the community has their say in any decision to dispose of radioactive waste and the proposals within the White Paper show a clear way forward. It is vital the Copeland community plays a significant role within that."

“However, there is a lot of work to be done, and lots of questions that need to be answered before we consider making a decision to formally participate in a siting process. Foremost amongst the issues will be ensuring a safe and Environmentally Sustainable facility. Our longstanding policy is that we are willing to discuss the issue and this is what we will do. We need to ensure we have sufficient information upon which a decision could be based, and we need to ensure Copeland residents have their say,”

The White Paper is now calling for areas to come forward and discuss potential participation in the siting process. It is expected it would take local authorities twelve to fifteen months to make a formal decision on participation but by expressing an interest, local communities can access funds to ensure the community is kept informed whilst deciding whether to participate.

“The siting of a repository is a long process, but one that Copeland must be involved with. We have the expertise in the Sellafield workforce, Copeland Borough Council and the local community to work with Government on finding a solution. Copeland Borough Council will always work on the principle that with any project the benefits must outweigh the detriments, and this project would be no different, no matter who is prepared to host the repository”  
Councillor Woodburn added.

The Council will involve local communities, businesses and other local authority partners in considering any proposal to move forward.

***Ends***

#### **Notes for Editors**

- For media enquires, please contact Ian Curwen on 01946 598504 or Leila Cox on 01946 598315.
- Copeland Borough Council – leading the transformation of West Cumbria to a prosperous future.
- Copeland – the best place to live in Cumbria (Readers Digest survey, 2006), with the best view in England at Wasdale. (ITV, 2007).