

# Copeland Borough Council

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Copeland Council to ‘Express an Interest’ in Disposal Site Process**

Copeland councillors have this week agreed to ‘express an interest’ in the formal Government process to find a location for a deep geological repository for nuclear waste.

Councillors took the decision to express an interest at their Full Council meeting on Tuesday 24 June. This was in line with their long held policy commitment to discuss a solution with the Government, without commitment.

Expressing an interest is the first step in a comprehensive process, outlined in the Managing Nuclear Waste Safely white paper, to find a geological repository. To express an interest means that Copeland can access Government funding to help undertake a community engagement process. Such a process is necessary to gauge public opinion and to take a decision to participate in the siting process.

Councillor Elaine Woodburn, the Leader of Copeland Borough Council said, “We have agreed to express an interest in process to find a geological repository. All this means that we are willing to talk to Government about a solution. As this area has a wealth of highly specialist nuclear skills, and is the current home of much of this waste, it is important that we do have these discussions.”

“However, no decision has been taken on whether to participate in the siting process, and we cannot and will not even consider this without undertaking thorough community consultation. We are now able to access funding to do this,” Councillor Woodburn added.

The Council will now establish a partnership to look at the issues in the White Paper, and to

develop a process for community engagement. This work will eventually lead to a decision on whether Copeland is willing to participate in the siting process. The partnership to be formed will include members of Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council, along with other colleagues across the county, all of whom have been working closely on this issue.

Councillor David Moore, the Leader of the Conservative Group at Copeland Borough Council, said, “It is important for Copeland Borough Council to express an interest in the repository siting process, and one which all Copeland councillors support. We recognise that the unique skills and experience we have in this area mean that we should have these discussions with Government. Especially, and crucially, as these discussions are without any further commitment.”

The Council’s view remains that the siting process must be voluntary, and that any community that agrees to host the site should have a community benefit packages where the benefits outweigh any detriment.

Jamie Reed, MP for Copeland said, “This is a sensible move and the Council should be commended for it. Partnership is crucial to this entire process, however these are extremely early days in the process and there is now a great deal of work to be undertaken.”

Peter Kane of the Sellafield Trade Unions and Copeland Alliance supported the Council’s stance, saying “This is only a first initial expression of interest but one which we fully support. It is the right move for the community and the workforce and we will continue to work closely with the Council in taking this 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).