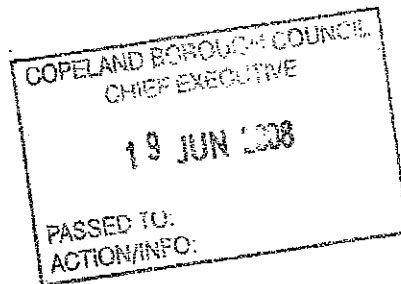


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Email [Hilary.Benn@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Hilary.Benn@defra.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

Mr Liam Murphy  
General Manager  
Copeland Borough Council  
The Council Offices  
Catherine Street  
WHITEHAVEN  
Cumbria  
CA28 7NY



12 June 2008

Dear Mr Murphy

### **Managing Radioactive Waste Safely - An invite to local communities**

Following a letter to you last year from Ian Pearson when we launched the consultation 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: A framework for implementing geological disposal', I am writing to inform you of the publication of the resulting White Paper and to invite local authorities to express an interest in opening without commitment discussions with Government on the possibility of hosting a geological disposal facility at some point in the future.

The White Paper sets out the UK Government's framework for managing higher activity radioactive waste in the long-term through geological disposal, coupled with safe and secure interim storage and ongoing research and development to support its implementation. The consultation had followed from the recommendations of the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) who carried out extensive expert, public and stakeholder consultation to find the best long term management option for protecting the public and the environment.

Geological disposal and an approach based on voluntarism and partnership as a means of siting of a geological disposal facility is the right way forward. That is why I am inviting communities to express an interest in entering into discussions about potential involvement in the siting process. It would be without commitment and initially will be expressing an interest in finding out more about what hosting a geological disposal facility would mean for a community in the long-term.

Construction and operation of a geological disposal facility will be a multi-billion pound project that will provide skilled employment for hundreds of people over many decades. It will contribute greatly to the local economy and wider socio-economic framework. In addition there may be other benefits which may be commensurate with developing the social and economic wellbeing of a community that has decided to fulfil such an essential service to the nation.

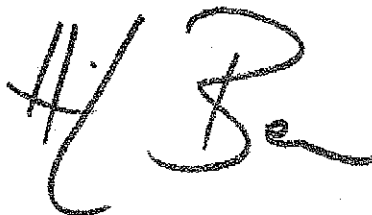
To support the invitation we have opened a dedicated website that provide detailed information on radioactive waste and its long term management: [www.defra.gov.uk/mrws](http://www.defra.gov.uk/mrws).

I also enclose a copy of the White Paper and would be grateful if you could also bring this to the attention of the Leader of the your Authority. Expressions of Interest in opening up such discussions or securing further information should be sent or emailed to:

Senior Responsible Officer  
Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Programme  
4 C, Ergon House  
Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 2AL

Phone: 020 7238 1728  
Email: [radioactivewaste@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:radioactivewaste@defra.gsi.gov.uk)  
Fax: 020 7238 6471

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Benn', written in a cursive style.

**From the Secretary of State**  
The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP