

Economy, Culture and Environment

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RSG/nuclear – site end states/MS

FIRST CLASS

David Moore

West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group

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Dear David

Site End States Consultation

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April 2007 asking if the County Council had any comments on the above.

The County Council's Nuclear Issues Working Group had the benefit of a presentation from British Nuclear Group on the Sellafield site end states exercise on 14 May 2007. Arising from that meeting there are some comments the County Council would wish to make.

Clearly, local authorities are key stakeholders to engage with early and throughout this process because of their community leadership role and because of the wide range of services that they provide that have a spatial dimension. Particularly, the statutory spatial planning and regeneration roles of local authorities shape the area and the development and use of land and the site end states/site end uses will need to fit with planning policy and other relevant plans for the area.

The County Council see this consultation as the first stage of an iterative process to develop the final site end states and site end uses for these sites.

Starting this process now is supported, but it is too early in the view of the Council to firm up in any way what might be appropriate. The use of part of the site for industrial uses would appear to be a potential appropriate use but only to the extent that it complements the need for employment land provision in West Cumbria. There is unlikely to be a need for the use of the whole site for this type of development.

This should be a process of identifying options, not reducing to single options unless the use of particular parts of site is so heavily constrained. The County Council sees the main value at this stage of the end states exercise being to understand the issues relating to land contamination at the Sellafield site and progressing to deciding how this will be dealt with in the future.

As waste planning authority the County Council will need to be closely involved in discussions about the remediation of the contaminated land on the site and the disposal of waste on and off site. We would not want to see assumptions/decisions made at this stage about clean-up of the contaminated land that become cost limits in the eyes of Treasury and foreclose options that are subsequently found to be the most appropriate. The County Council wish to see the site restored to a state that is safe and secure and has as little impact on the environment as is reasonably practicable.

The County Council reiterates the view that it made to Defra on the Low Level Waste Policy Review that communities should be enhanced by an appropriate community package to offset the negative impacts of low level waste disposal in their areas. That principle applies no differently if radioactive contamination was to remain on the Sellafield Site or the Low Level Waste Repository site permanently.

The County Council recognises that the site end state options for the Low Level Waste Repository site, near Drigg are very limited because of the radioactive contamination of the site. Nature conservation may be the most appropriate after-use. The County Council would again stress the need for full assessment of the uncertainties regarding the future suitability of the site for permanent radioactive waste disposal [ie the vulnerability to and implications of sea-level rise and the capacity of the site in respect of external radiological impact] to be completed as soon as possible. Until these uncertainties have been fully addressed it is not possible to move forward on the preferred uses of the site.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shaun Gorman". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Shaun Gorman
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