

Charles Hendry MP

Minister of State

Department of Energy & Climate Change

3 Whitehall Place

London

SW1A 2AW

www.decc.gov.uk

Councillor Elaine Woodburn
Chair of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership
Copeland Borough Council
The Copeland Centre
Catherine Street
WHITEHAVEN
CA28 7SJ

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Dear Elaine,

Community Benefits Principles and codifying the MRWS process

Thank you for sharing with my officials the revisions you have made to your 'community benefit principles', following the recent public and stakeholder engagement activities in west Cumbria. I agree to the changes made, in discussion with my officials, and that your thirteen principles for community benefit, as set out below, will form the basis for negotiation in a potential Stage 4. They are consistent with the Government's policy, as set out in the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) White Paper.

Following discussions between representatives from the Partnership and my officials, you asked me in June for an assurance that particular aspects of the MRWS process would be put on a 'firmer footing' building on the statement of Government policy enshrined in the MRWS White Paper.

I am happy to make a commitment to see this objective delivered such that, by the end of Stage 4 of the MRWS process, Government will have decided what mechanisms it will use to put subsequent aspects of the MRWS process (such as the Right of Withdrawal, planning, inventory change control, and reaching agreements on community benefits) on a clear, transparent and more certain path, and to have started the steps to put these in place. These mechanisms should be legally binding – although we should not rule out other means at this stage, provided they are found to be acceptable to both Government and Decision Making Bodies in due course. The choice of mechanisms should be reached via close engagement with any Community Siting Partnership.

With many thanks for your help in making our meeting last week so constructive.

CHARLES HENDRY

Yours sincerely,

Charles Hendry

PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Principle 1: Overall: International best practice shows that community benefits are commonly used to ensure a positive contribution to the well being of host and other affected communities, and are therefore worthy of consideration in West Cumbria;

Principle 2: Timescale: Any benefits must deliver both short and long-term community well being for West Cumbria as a whole;

Principle 3: Making a Difference: Benefits must put the area in a better position, both economically and socially, than if no repository were to be developed;

Principle 4: Additionality: Benefits must be *additional* to existing and planned investments, rather than replacing them. Other national and local government funds or opportunities must not be displaced, and the approach must be at no cost to the community. Benefits must also be in addition to the investment that will be necessary to create a repository and its associated facilities. Benefits should be seen as additional to impact mitigation and compensation;

Principle 5: Impact Mitigation: Preference should be given to mitigating rather than compensating for impacts recognising the long timescales over which impacts could potentially occur. All reasonable steps should be taken to mitigate and/or compensate for any impacts arising from the siting process itself, as well as from hosting a potential facility;

Principle 6: Scale: The scale of any benefits must have the potential to transform the economic and social well-being of West Cumbria (taking into account best practice from other countries);

Principle 7: Defining Scale: The magnitude of benefits must bear a clear relationship to the overall scale, nature and national significance of the development;

Principle 8: Flexibility: There must be flexibility over how community benefits are distributed over time and between different communities;

Principle 9: Distribution: Benefit distribution must be equitable, in terms of the scale of the impact on different stakeholders. It is anticipated for example that a proportion of the benefits would be ring-fenced for the relevant host communities' use, whilst other benefits would reach more widely.

Principle 10: Delivery: Effective mechanisms must be agreed between national and local government for the provision of benefits. These mechanisms must ensure value for money and incorporate the principles of fairness, equity and flexibility in relation to communities and local businesses;

Principle 11: Longevity: Agreements on community benefits will need to endure over a substantial period of time because of the multi-generational nature of the proposed development. These agreements could take a range of forms including legislation;

Principle 12: Community Confidence: In order to establish and maintain community confidence, any agreement on a community benefits package must provide a guarantee that any agreed benefits will be delivered if a site is developed;

Principle 13: Timing: Outline community benefits packages should be agreed with Government by the end of Stage 4, providing a clear indication of scale, distribution and specific investments that are envisaged to be made, for each of the different Potential Siting Areas under discussion. Further details and formal agreement should then happen during Stage 5, as it becomes clear which (if any) site is to be selected.