

Principles for a Community Benefits Package

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1 - Introduction

- 1.1 The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership aims to *"make recommendations to Allerdale BC, Copeland BC and Cumbria CC on whether or not they should participate in the geological disposal facility siting process, without commitment to eventually host a facility"*.
- 1.2 The Partnership's Work Programme (Doc 13.1) details the six criteria that it will ultimately judge against when providing its advice to the councils and others. Criterion 3a addresses the issue of community benefits, which states that the Partnership must reassure itself that it is *'Confident that an appropriate community benefit package can be developed'*.
- 1.3 The Partnership identified at an early stage that a key piece of work required was the agreement of *'a set of principles by which community benefit would be discussed, agreed and potentially administered, including how benefits might be allocated to different communities'*. This is Task 3a(ii) in the Work Programme.
- 1.4 Task 3a(ii) is discharged via this paper, which summarises the culmination of various discussions of the Community Benefit Sub-Group since the full Partnership generated a list of areas they wanted addressing in the Principles on 10th December 2010. The Partnership's list of concerns has been central to the development of the Principles, as well as taking on board input from both PSE1 (which was complete when the work started) and PSE2 (which closed while discussions were still underway). Another important input was the independent research conducted by Galson Sciences that collated international experience of community benefits in radioactive waste programmes globally (Doc 140).
- 1.5 The Principles below therefore outline the views and intentions of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership regarding a community benefits package. DECC will be requested to agree the Principles as a basis for negotiations if a Decision to Participate is taken. If agreed by DECC, the Principles will then form the basis of a formal Memorandum of Agreement that will be prepared and agreed should the siting process begin (Stage 4). The Principles recognise the Government's policy on providing community benefits as outlined in the 2008 White Paper.

2 - The Principles

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 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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 high level of reassurance that any agreed benefits will be delivered if a site is selected.

3 – Way Forward

The Principles will be subject to consultation during Public and Stakeholder Engagement round 3 (due to start in the autumn 2011) as part of the Partnership's

overall draft Report. They would then be reviewed and finalised as part of the Final Report published.

[managing radioactive waste safely]

Mark Higson
DECC
3 Whitehall Place
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26th May 2011

Dear Mark,

Community Benefits and the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership

You will be aware that the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership has been considering in some detail the issue of community benefits, alongside the other criteria in its Work Programme. As well as understanding issues related to safety, geology, impacts, repository design etc, we as community representatives were keen to understand more about the sections of the White Paper that refer to long term community benefit packages.

The White Paper does not set out many details of what a community benefits package might mean in practice. We are therefore keen to understand DECC's intentions correctly, and avoid any subsequent misunderstandings should the process in West Cumbria continue into Stage 4 of the MRWS process. This of course has not yet been decided.

To this end, the Partnership has drafted a set of 'Principles' that set out the desired direction of any future discussions related to community benefits from its perspective. The Principles do not attempt to replace the need for a formal and legally binding agreement but do aim to flush out any differences of view or interpretation between DECC and the community representatives that may exist before a Decision about Participation is taken. This is important because when the community representatives on the Partnership draw their conclusions about the merits of continuing in the process or not, they will need to be reassured that they fully understand DECC's views on the issue.

We enclose a set of the "Principles for Community Benefits". We request that DECC formally consider the Principles and let us know if the Minister is minded to agree them as a basis for negotiations if Stage 4 were to happen. We ask that any differences of view or clarifications in response to the Principles be put in writing by way of a letter to the Partnership. The Partnership expects DECC is in touch with relevant Government departments that will play a role. As such we would appreciate your response setting out the degree to which other parts of Government are supportive of the principles set out, and if you see any particular sensitivities we should be aware of, for example from the Treasury or Cabinet Office.

In order for our agreed work programme to be finalised without any undue delays, we would appreciate your response by 24th June.

Yours truly,
Elaine Woodburn, Chair of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership