

Baroness Verma of Leicester
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Energy and Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2AW

17 January 2013

Dear Baroness Verma

MRWS Process in West Cumbria

Thank you for your letter of 19 December in response to the letter of 1 October from the 3 Councils in West Cumbria. I agree that collectively we have made constructive progress in dialogue with you and your officials and with our local authority partners since our original letter.

Your letter has confirmed the Government's commitment to rolling forward the decision making arrangements originally set out in Charles Hendry's letter of 7th November and to bring forward proposals within the next 18 months to put the Right of Withdrawal on a firm legal footing, preferably through primary legislation and through engagement and discussion with the Decision Making Bodies (DMBs).

In relation to geology, which still remains the key issue within the wider community, if a decision to participate in Stage 4 is taken you have committed the NDA to engage with the DMBs at the earliest opportunity to consider the most appropriate means of accelerating the geological investigations. This will need to be considered in relation to the range of other items within stage 4 that will also need to be taken forward and for which a detailed programme of work will be required and engagement funding confirmed. Such a package will need to ensure adequate resource is made available for, amongst others, peer review and community engagement activities. I also note in relation to geology and the potential way forward that you have suggested that if necessary we 'should not rule out a change in the process set out in the White Paper'. I would expect the DMBs to be fully engaged in discussions around such potential changes. In addition it is noted that you intend to instigate a thorough review of the potential alternative radioactive waste management solutions in parallel with the MRWS programme.

On Community Benefits it is noted that you have reiterated and reinforced Government's commitment to the Community Benefits principles and will be bringing forward more detailed proposals covering the nature, scope, scale, timing and governance of Community Benefits within 18 months of any decision to participate for discussion with the DMBs.

In relation to the short term Decision Making Process I am able to confirm that the wording within Annex B is acceptable, should a decision to proceed into stage 4 be forthcoming.

Can I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and commitment for the MRWS process and West Cumbria.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Woodburn', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Elaine Woodburn
Leader of Copeland Borough Council