

Cumbria Minerals and Waste Local Plan Examination in Public

Briefing note on the role of the Environment Agency Nuclear Regulation Group

14th December 2016

The purpose of this note is to inform the planning inspector of the role the Environment Agency Nuclear Regulation Group. The note only covers our responsibilities relating to the permitting of nuclear sites and radioactive discharges to the environment.

The Agency was not able to provide representation at the hearing on December 13th 2016, instead we have provided the following description of our role in the development of Cumbria Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Within Cumbria, we regulate a wide range of radioactive and nuclear premises and activities under Environmental Protection Regulations (2010) Radioactive Substance Regulation Permits (previously RSA93 Authorisations). These permits cover the management of radioactive wastes and authorised discharges to the environment. Our remit is to ensure that the disposals and discharges are carried out in such a way so as to minimise off site environmental and human health impacts and meet national and international environmental protection standards. Management of safety and the management of wastes on nuclear sites is undertaken by the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR).

The nuclear licensed sites we currently permit in Cumbria are:

- Sellafield Ltd
- Low Level Radioactive Waste Repository near Drigg
- BAE Systems Marine Limited, Barrow-in-Furness
- Cyclife UK Limited, Lillyhall

The Agency is a statutory consultee in both the planning process and the development of strategic plans by a local authority. For all consultations from Cumbria County Council Planning Authority we provide a single integrated response covering the full remit of the Environment Agency.

We will provide a response which ensures that any planning proposals do not impact the permitted operations and corresponds with the sites operational and closure plans. We may also work in conjunction with the planning authority in undertaking any Habitat Regulation assessments where applicable.

We were consulted as part of the development of the Minerals and Waste Plan and provided feedback on its contents in terms of our regulatory responsibilities. We were content with the both the scope and approach of the consultation process used to develop the Plan and consider that it takes satisfactory account of the Environmental Protection Regulations (2010) Radioactive Substances Regulations.

With specific regard to the identification of potential suitable land for the siting of future permitted radioactive waste activities within Cumbria, we did not provide any comment on allocated development areas. Rather we will provide comment on the suitability of a location for a permitted activity either at planning application or permit application stage.