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“ENERGY COAST” DOMINATES LIST OF POTENTIAL NEW NUCLEAR SITES

WEST Cumbria has three of the eleven sites under consideration for new nuclear power stations, bringing a significant boost for the region's plans to become a major energy production hub for the United Kingdom.

The Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has today (Wednesday, April 15) published details of all nominations that have been submitted under the Strategic Siting Assessment process.

The list includes the nomination of a 250 hectare site just north of the existing Sellafield plant, which has been prepared by the Nuclear New Build Nomination (NNBN) Team* led by urban regeneration company West Lakes Renaissance, and submitted by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

RWE npower's separate nominations for sites at Braystones, south of Egremont, and Kirksanton, near Millom, are also included on the list.

Today also marks the start of a month-long period for the public to make initial comments on nominations. A full programme of public consultation will take place in the winter before Government makes a final decision on appropriate sites in early 2010, as part of its Nuclear National Policy Statement.

Details of the nominations, along with information about how the public can have a say, are available from the Government at: www.nuclearpowersiting.decc.gov.uk. Copies of the nominations, and feedback forms, are available at Copeland Borough Council, Whitehaven; Millom Council Centre, St George's Road; or Cleator Moor Council Centre; as well as the main libraries in Barrow, Kendal, Penrith and Carlisle. All comments must be submitted by midnight on Thursday, May 14.

Nuclear new build is a key component of the Britain's Energy Coast™ Masterplan**, which aims to establish West Cumbria as a major national hub for low carbon and renewable energy generation. Locally it could create thousands of new jobs during the construction and operation phases; safeguard and create thousands more throughout the nuclear supply chain; and attract investment in infrastructure and local services, such as improvements to transport links and access to services. Nationally,

it could play an important role in helping the Government's response to the pressing challenges of climate change and energy security.

The NNBN Team has been working for more than 18 months on the nuclear new build nomination, ensuring that the NDA site meets the Government's siting criteria and generating market interest among utility companies, which include RWE npower, Vattenfall and Iberdrola/Scottish Power.

Roger Liddle, Chairman of economic development agency Cumbria Vision, said: "Two years ago West Cumbria was simply not a player when it came to nuclear new build, which is why having three of the potential sites published today is such a boost for our Britain's Energy Coast™ ambitions. The hard work to attract interest from utility companies means we have three hats in the ring and a greater chance of securing a new power station.

"The strength of this interest holds huge economic potential for an area which not only boasts world-renowned skills to support the UK's nuclear renaissance, but also the expertise to support other forms of low carbon and renewable energy production. Nuclear is the catalyst and not the sum total of our Energy Coast initiative, which has been built around the nation's need for a sustainable energy mix."

Rosie Mathisen, Energy Opportunities Director at West Lakes Renaissance, said: "The publication of the Government's list demonstrates West Cumbria is very much on the map when it comes to the future of the UK's nuclear industry. It is by no means a done deal, but with three sites in the mix we have a great opportunity to begin a new chapter of this area's rich nuclear history.

"The work undertaken by the Nuclear New Build Team, working closely with the NDA as owners of its site, has culminated in both a first class nomination and significant interest from major international energy companies. There is still a long way to go and each site will be subject to scrutiny from both Government and the public. The public's views will be essential in whatever happens so I would urge people to take the opportunities to make their voices heard."

Councillor Elaine Woodburn, the leader of Copeland Council, said, "Nuclear power is a crucial part of Britain's energy mix, and we know that this area can be a key player in delivering this, using the skills, expertise and experience that we have and this is something we have been working on for some time. The three nominations confirm the view that West Cumbria is fast becoming Britain's Energy Coast™, and nuclear power will be at the heart of this. There is a lot of work still to be done on the specifics of each site, and a lot of questions to be answered. This work will now be undertaken, crucially, with the public able to have their say."

Councillor Tim Knowles, Cumbria County Council's Cabinet member responsible for nuclear issues, said: "This marks an important step in the progress towards developing the Britain's Energy Coast™ Masterplan. Nuclear new build in Cumbria would have an extremely beneficial impact on the local economy and infrastructure as well as safeguarding and creating thousands of new jobs. We are still a long way from seeing any new nuclear power stations in Cumbria, but the site nomination process is now up and running and we have three candidate sites in West Cumbria.

"It's important that everyone has a say on this issue even at this early stage and I would urge as many people as possible living in West Cumbria to submit their

opinions to the Government in the next month so that this first stage of the consultation is truly reflective of local feeling."

The NNBN Team is continuing to make significant progress to address the major challenge to the nomination of the NDA site – an improved connection to the National Grid. Overland, sub-sea and hybrid connections are currently being considered. An improved connection would not only serve any new nuclear power station but also the other renewable energy industries expected to develop in West Cumbria over the coming years, such as wind, tidal, wave and biomass.

RWE npower – which has secured options to buy its two sites – has received an offer for the Braystones site for a 3.6GW grid connection and expects a second grid connection offer for the Kirksanton site later in the year.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

* Partners behind the Sellafield nomination for nuclear new build are; West Lakes Renaissance; Cumbria Vision; Invest in Cumbria; Nuclear Decommissioning Authority; Cumbria County Council; Allerdale Borough Council; Copeland Borough Council; Northwest Regional Development Agency; Furness Enterprise.

**The Britain's Energy Coast™ Masterplan includes 29 regeneration projects ranging from nuclear new build and new training and research facilities, such as Energus and the National Nuclear Laboratory, to improvements to health services and significant investment in transport links, leisure, culture and sporting facilities. For more information visit www.britainsenergycoast.com.

1: For further information contact Luke Diccico, PR & Communications Manager for West Lakes Renaissance and Cumbria Vision, on 01768 861310 or 07799035390 or email luke.diccico@cumbriavision.co.uk.

2: For more information on West Lakes Renaissance visit www.westlakesrenaissance.co.uk and for Cumbria Vision visit www.cumbriavision.co.uk

3: West Lakes Renaissance is supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), which leads the economic development and regeneration of England's Northwest and is responsible for: Supporting business growth and encouraging investment; Matching skills provision to employer needs; Creating the conditions for economic growth; Connecting the region through effective transport and communication infrastructure; Promoting the region's outstanding quality of life. www.nwda.co.uk

4: Cumbria County Council is a founding partner of and the accountable body for West Lakes Renaissance and Cumbria Vision. www.cumbria.gov.uk