



Allerdale Borough Council

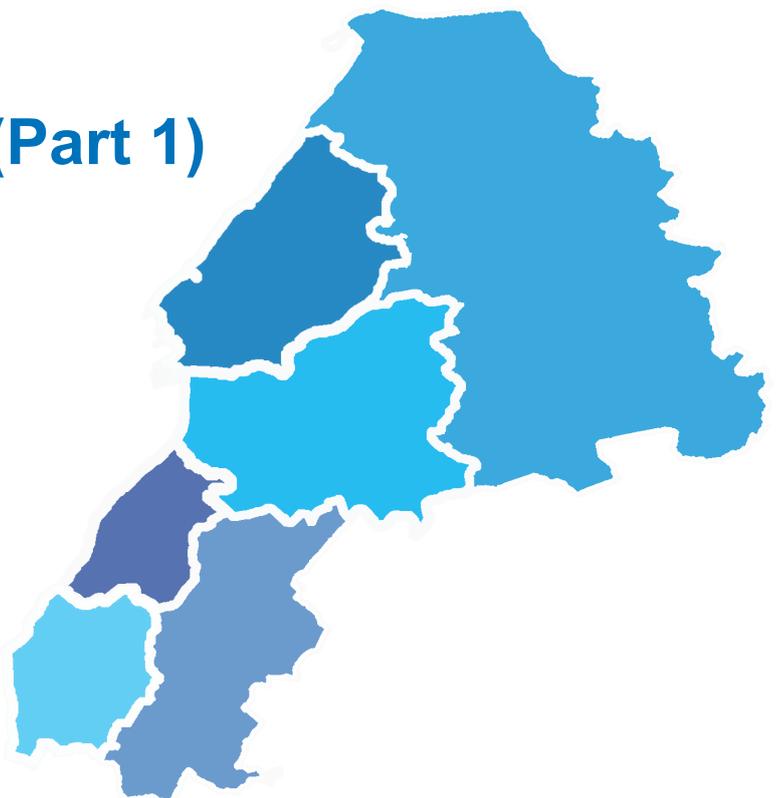


Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1)

Position Statement Main Matter 12:

The role of the Ports

January 2014



Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) Examination – Allerdale Borough Council Position Statement January 2014

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

Introduction

1. This Statement has been produced by Allerdale Borough Council to outline its response to the matters raised by the Inspector for the Hearings [ED3] into the Submitted Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) Development Plan Document (DPD) [CD1].
2. These Statements form the main basis for the Council's submission to the Hearings. They relate to the elements of the DPD that have been raised by the Inspector as matters to be discussed. Where appropriate the Statements draw upon and cross-refer to the main sources of information used in the preparation of the DPD such as the outcomes of public consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal, the evidence base and the supporting Topic Papers. Core Document numbers are given where appropriate.

Position of the Council regarding Matter 12

3. The Council considers that the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) provides a sound strategy for the future development of both Allerdale's ports and a clear definition of their different role in the economy and future economic growth.

Port Activity in Allerdale

4. There are two working freight ports in Allerdale; one in Silloth and the other in Workington.

The Port of Workington

5. The Port of Workington is a multi-modal operation situated on the eastern side of

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

the Solway Firth at the mouth of the River Derwent. It's one of the largest ports in Cumbria and forms an important transport hub for the North West delivering a key role in serving the region's industry and agriculture. The Port currently handles around 200,000 tonnes of cargo per annum with about 250 cargo vessel movements. This has declined from a peak of approximately 600,000 in the late 1990s, resulting from the closure of several large industrial sites. It recently secured multi million pound investment through the Britain's Energy Coast initiative, and plan to initiate major regeneration and the implementation of new and improved services

6. Cargo imports and exports include dry and liquid bulks, forest products and other general cargo. The Port is also utilised by the offshore wind industry who undertake their operations and maintenance from the site. The Port has warehousing and storage in addition to rail freight services via its main line connection and all berths are rail-connected with Port Authority operated locomotives servicing freight on the site's extensive internal rail system.

Silloth Port

7. The Port of Silloth is located in North Allerdale on the Southern side of the Solway Firth. It specialises in short sea shipping and handling and has averaged 200,000 tonnes over the last three years. Facilities include an operational and a tidal dock, in addition to approximately 1,800m² of warehousing.
8. The Port plays an important role in supporting the economy of the surrounding area through the import of grain, agribulks and molasses. It facilitates growth and employment in local and wider economy. As one of the main employers in Silloth and supports existing business in Silloth and the wider area, including Carr's Flour Mill, Prime Molasses and the agricultural industry.

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

Economic Strategy

9. 'Britain's Energy Coast; a Masterplan for West Cumbria' **[SD5]** and the subsequent West Cumbria Economic Blueprint **[SD4]** set out the vision and strategy for the development of the local economy over the next 15 years. The Blueprint seeks to build on the area's existing expertise in the nuclear industry and deliver the national priorities of tackling climate change and securing the nation's energy supply, while also transforming and diversifying the West Cumbria economy.
10. At the centre of the Blueprint is the Energy Coast Innovation Zone (IZone), which provides a focus for growth and investment along the coast of West Cumbria. This will act as a spatial focus for investment to support businesses, for R&D activity, investment in business infrastructure, knowledge transfer and delivery of skills and training linked to business requirements. Although the boundaries of the IZone are flexible and not 'hard and fast' it is intended to cover key sites in West Cumbria including Workington town centre, the Port of Workington and Lillyhall. Key to achieving the aims and objectives is ensuring that a high quality portfolio of employment sites is maintained with a focus on key site at Lillyhall and the Port of Workington.
11. The West Cumbria Employment Land and premises Study **[EB6]** and Employment Land Review Update January 2012 **[EB6a]** also suggest that the Port of Workington has a key role in the future economic development of the West Cumbria Economy. The ELPS suggested that more demand in port regions is expected over the medium term and multi-modal locations are becoming increasingly attractive, particularly given transport costs. Furthermore, the ELR recognises the importance of a number of the sites around the Port of Workington as being a key arrival point linked to the Nuclear industry, based on their proximity

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

to this arrival point. For example, the Nuclear Topic Paper [TP1] suggests likely requirements for 'laydown' areas related to the pre-construction stage. This is likely to include demand for secure sites with good transport links, with demand likely to emerge for these lay-down areas. As a result the cluster of sites in and around Workington are seen as potentially important sites associated with the future growth of the Nuclear sector across West Cumbria.

12. Although the extent of the West Cumbria Economic Blueprint [SD4] is broadly across West Cumbria, the spatial delivery of the strategy is through the IZone which has a spatial focus driven by its clear focus on nuclear and related energy sectors. Although the Blueprint does not exclude the areas, its influence and effect will dissipate, and therefore given its geographic location Silloth Harbour is not specifically referenced.
13. Both the ELPS and the ELR were focused on the whole of West Cumbria and have provided a comprehensive analysis of the employment sites, opportunities and issues across Allerdale. Silloth Harbour was ranked comparatively low in the employment studies largely due to remoteness and limited market interest. However, the Harbour was identified as fulfilling an important role in promoting local economic sustainability through providing opportunities for existing business to expand or in providing land/premises for new investment. Additionally, the ELPS suggested the strategy should focus on improving quality of sites in order to improve market attractiveness.

Local Plan Strategy

14. A key objective of the Local Plan is to facilitate Allerdale's economic strategy to ensure that we successfully grow and diversify the Borough's economy. Both Allerdale's Ports have an important role in facilitating future economy growth;

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

however, given the scale, nature and context, each has a different role.

15. The Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) **[CD1]** acknowledges that sustainable transport is a key objective and accordingly the strategy seeks to promote the role of Workington and Silloth ports as a means of accessing the area for existing and new business opportunities.
16. Following national policy and the local evidence the Plan recognises the importance of key sites to achieving the aims and objectives of the West Cumbria Economic Blueprint by providing support to the IZone through encouraging the appropriate development of Port of Workington. Key policies such as S2 'Sustainable Development Principles' S6a 'Workington' and primarily S13 'Energy Coast Innovation Zone' articulate the strategy recognising the key role of the Port of Workington as a strategic gateway and economic driver for the West Cumbrian economy in the future, with a particular focus on the energy and transportation sectors. Policy emphasises the importance of helping to deliver the appropriate infrastructure and the right conditions to support future uses and enable the Port to fulfill its vision.
17. The Local Plan also recognises the important role of the Port of Silloth to the economy of the Silloth Locality and wider Borough. Through Policy such as S6e 'Silloth' and S12 'Land and Premises' the plan defines the role of the Port of Silloth in the context of local evidence. The Council has proposed Minor Modifications **m48 [CD3]** to provide further clarity and emphasis to the role of the Port of Silloth.
18. Through the Site Allocations DPD the Council will work with stakeholders to review the employment sites and will seek to allocate appropriate quantity and quality of land to meet strategic and local needs. Where appropriate important sites and infrastructure can be provided with appropriate policy and protection to ensure that

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

sites can reach potential.

Settlement hierarchy and growth

19. Policy S3 'Spatial Strategy and Growth' sets out the Council's approach to the scale, location and distribution of future growth. The level of growth directed to the Principal and Key Service Centres is specific to the scale, character and context of the existing settlements, and relates to the overall spatial strategy.
20. As the Principal Service Centre, Workington will be the focus for major new development in Allerdale with approximately 35% of the growth. This top-level of the tier will support significant housing growth often delivered in large sites. This tier is central to the delivery of other policy aspiration such as affordable housing over the plan period. The principal centre will have the widest range of services in terms of public transport, employment, retail, education and leisure facilities.
21. Silloth is designated as a Key Service Centre continuing to develop its role offering a range of services and function as hub for a wider rural hinterland. 3% of the growth will be directed to Silloth based on various factors such as its role in the strategy for growth, size, infrastructure and constraints. These settlements have the ability to serve day-to-day needs of local and surrounding residents and offer a range of employment land to meet the needs of local businesses.
22. The Core Strategy Preferred Options **[LPP4]** presented five different options for the settlement hierarchy. The preferred option, the hierarchy identified in Policy S3, performed the most strongly and was considered the most sustainable option in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainable Appraisal Report **[CD5d(1)]**.

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

Habitats Regulations Assessments

23. The potential impact of Plan Policies on Natura 2000 sites have been robustly assessed through the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) **[CD6]** and where necessary Appropriate Assessment. Port development has been assessed through such as Policies S6, S12 and S13 and was taken forward to Appropriate Assessment.

24. The promotion of development of the Port of Workington has the potential for in-combination effects with other ports along the Cumbria Coast such as Silloth (Policy S14) as it is likely to result in greater shipping along the Cumbrian coast. This could potentially result in disturbance to certain species along this relatively undisturbed coastline, including the proposed Marine Conservation Zone, furthermore main impact considered likely to affect the River Derwent SAC through the potential disruption of the passage of migratory fish through the Port of Workington to and from the lower reaches of the Derwent. As a result supporting text was added into the Allerdale Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft **[CD1]** which refers to the need to carry out an Assessment of likely Significant Effect on any development with the potential to impact directly or indirectly on Natura 2000 sites (paragraph 169).

25. The assessment concluded that although increased operation of Silloth Port at the scale outlined in the Local Plan could potentially result in some minor adverse effects on qualifying features, the level of growth is unlikely to be significant enough to cause any adverse effect on the Integrity of the Solway Firth Marine sites. Additional text is proposed to ensure development relating to Silloth port does not have an adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites **MM41 [CD4]**.

Matter 12 - The Role of the Ports

26. The HRA concludes that the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) offers full protection for Natura 2000 sites through adequate precautionary text through out the plan. However, it is considered that the Local Plan Policies have been developed to address this issue at a strategic level, and that the strategy can be delivered without any Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Natura 2000 sites. Furthermore, Appropriate Assessment will need to be repeated for specific port developments when more detail will be available to inform the assessment.