

Meeting Notes



West Cumbria Coking Coal Project Liaison Group		
Date: Thursday 6 th October 2016	Time: 15:00 – 16:10	Location: Haig Pit Museum
Meeting called by	West Cumbria Mining	
Type of meeting	Community Liaison Group	
WCM host	Kevin Murphy (KM), Caroline Leatherdale (CL)	
Attendees	Tom O’Fee, Stuart Trevaskis (ST), John Cain (JC), Tony Potts (TP), John Heneghan (JH), Sharon Blakeley (SB), Tom Todd (TT)	
Apologies	Graham Barwise (GB), Sophie Badrick (SB)	
WCM Update		
Discussion		
<p>KM opened the meeting and welcomed John Heneghan, a new Liaison Group member who lives in Ravenglass and who works for Atkins. John is a hydrogeologist and is interested in the project. The rest of the Liaison Group introduced themselves. Slightly later in the meeting, the Group was joined by leaving member John Cain, who was shortly due to leave Copeland Borough Council. He was accompanied by Sharon Blakeley, who is John’s replacement as the Lead Officer for Environmental Health at Copeland BC.</p>		
<p>CL updated the Group on the progress of planning application preparation and Environmental Impact Assessment works. This is progressing well, and West Cumbria Mining are working closely with Cumbria County Council, Copeland Borough Council, and other regulators.</p>		
<p>KM and CL informed the group that the baseline environmental surveys (including noise monitoring, air quality monitoring, ecological surveys, hydrogeological and hydrological investigations) are all complete now. The planning application is being developed, including the Environmental Impact Assessment. This will include over 20 chapters on a range of issues.</p>		
<p>KM informed the Group that the onshore drilling is going well, with good recovery of coal.</p>		
<p>KM has arranged a meeting for 7th October with Network Rail and the local MP Jamie Reed, to see if rail issues can be progressed more quickly.</p>		
Feedback from the latest Project Update Event		
Discussion		
<p>KM reported that after the very high public turnout at the last Project Update Event, West Cumbria Mining has now received over 200 pre-application forms for jobs that the mine will offer. Over 90% are from people who live within a 20 mile radius. John Cain asked about the age range of those people, and KM explained that about half of them are in the over 40 age range.</p>		
<p>The next Project Update Event would be held in mid-October, and the information boards have been updated to show how West Cumbria Mining have progressed the design of the project to incorporate feedback from local people.</p>		
<p>TP mentioned the ongoing discussion with St Bees Parish Council regarding a proposal for a cycleway from St Bees to Whitehaven. Discussions are ongoing and WCM have offered to help where possible.</p>		
<p>ST asked what the life of the mine would be, and KM explained that the initial design life is 50 years. ST suggested that local schools get involved, including secondary schools, to inform pupils of the proposed development. KM replied that West Cumbria Mining has a note from a local youth project who were planning to attend the next Project Update Event.</p>		

Meeting Notes



JH asked whether Nugen would attend the meeting with Network Rail and WCM, and KM explained that there is a separate group that meets to discuss future rail requirements (the Nuclear Transport Group). Assuming the Nugen developments go ahead, KM explained that there would be requirements to upgrade some aspects of the rail system, and that Network Rail's current plan was to carry out all the upgrades as part of one project. This approach is supported by Cumbria County Council, however this plan would mean that upgrades would come after WCM and Nugen start to use the line. Therefore WCM are having a series of meetings with Network Rail to see whether certain improvements can be made sooner.

KM explained that there is currently a limited number of train paths and that this, coupled with an old block signaling system, contributed to restrictions on numbers of rail movements. TP added that the tunnel to the north of Whitehaven is too narrow to allow two trains to pass at once, and that the old signaling is not the only issue, but that it does need improving.

KM mentioned that the rail freight provider DRS have agreed to run a modern Class 68 locomotive along the line so that the noise levels can be compared between this type of locomotive and the ones currently used on the line.

JC made the point that rail spending goes in 5 year cycles and that unfortunately at the present time we're in the middle of a 5 year cycle, so it may be difficult to get Network Rail to commit to spending outside of the cycle.

JC mentioned an ongoing discussion with Nugen regarding rail noise. KM replied that WCM are planning on using much quieter modern locomotives than the ones that are currently used.

JC asked whether the Mirehouse angling ponds would be removed by West Cumbria Mining, and KM replied that the ponds would be unaffected.

Future Plans

Discussion

KM informed the meeting that there is a plan to open the drifts on the Marchon site to enable inspection of condition.

KM has now had two meetings with Copeland Borough Council to discuss WCM's proposed Community Fund. This idea has been well-received by Copeland, and others, and WCM will progress this to ensure the fund is targeted appropriately.

ST asked how long WCM were planning to rent the current space at the Haig Museum. KM explained that if planning permission is granted, then WCM would like to stay in the building long-term, to keep offices, and maybe establish a Visitor Centre and mine training facility on the site. However the buildings are in the hands of the Administrators, and they may decide to sell the buildings.

Programme of Works

Discussion

KM reported that WCM intend to submit the planning application in early 2017. There will be a programme of offshore drilling works in 2017, and the construction of the mine will not be delayed whilst the results of the offshore drilling are awaited.

KM explained that the investors in the mine project have in place a significant fund that is ready to invest in a range of projects. There are a range of investors so that the investors spread any risk amongst themselves.

KM tabled a list of possible names for the mine, including North Head Mine, New Sandwith Mine, Woodhouse Mine, High Road Mine, and Fleswick Mine. TO suggested Lingydale Mine, as a reference to a row of cottages that used to be on what is now the Marchon Site. After the meeting, SB suggested that she favoured this idea.

Meeting Notes



Stakeholder Engagement Plans

Discussion

CL mentioned that the owners of the Marchon site, NPL, will be presenting their outline plans for residential development on the section of the Marchon site that WCM will not be occupying.

KM mentioned that an outside company called "Critical Resources" were currently carrying out a health check of the project, including an assessment of WCM's work to date on stakeholder and community engagement. KM and CL thanked those members of the Liaison Group who had agreed to meet with Critical Resources, or have telephone discussions with them.

KM explained that the Leaflet Drop to the local neighbourhood had been extended, following feedback from Councillor Henry Wormstrup.

JC mentioned the opportunities for WCM to engage with local sixth form colleges, with particular reference to those who may be thinking about engineering careers and/or those thinking of university.

JH asked about the difference between thermal coal and coking coal. KM explained that there is a reasonable level of understanding that coking coal is used for steel making, and that it is very different to thermal coal. WCM has endeavoured to explain the difference via the WCM website, local press, engagement and face to face discussions.

Any Other Business

The next meeting was arranged for 15 December 2016. **POST MEETING NOTE: this has now been moved to January, to accommodate various constraints on time in the run-up to Christmas. Date to be advised.**

There being no other business, CL and KM thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.