

Meeting Notes



West Cumbria Coking Coal Project Liaison Group		
Date: Tuesday 22 nd March 2016	Time: 1030-1130	Location: Whitehaven Library
Meeting called by	West Cumbria Mining	
Type of meeting	Community Liaison Group	
WCM host	Caroline Leatherdale (CL) and Kevin Murphy (KM)	
Attendees	Stuart Trevaskis (ST), John Cain (JC), Graham Barwise (GB), Thomas Todd (TT), Tony Potts (TP), Tom O'Fee (TO)	
Introductions & Update		
Discussion		
<p>KM is the West Cumbria Mining Project Manager and is involved with project planning. CL is the environmental and planning advisor.</p> <p>ST runs the bookmaker's shop near the Marchon site and has excellent links with the local community. TP is the Chairman of the Copeland Rail User's Group. TT is the Chairman of the Whitehaven Rugby Club. JC is Team Leader of Environmental Health at Copeland Borough Council. TO is a former Mining Surveyor at Haig. GB is a landowner whose land may be affected by the project.</p> <p>KM explained that since the last Liaison Group Meeting, West Cumbria Mining have identified part of the former Marchon chemical works as a preferred site for the mine head and coal processing plant. This would link, via underground conveyor, to a rail loading facility located in the Pow Beck Valley. A new rail sidings would be built to accommodate coal trains, primarily to take coal north and east, to Redcar port. The advantages of Marchon as a site are that it is a 'brownfield' site (i.e. it has been previously developed), and beneath it runs the old mine drifts that were used for the old anhydrite mine. WCM plan to refurbish and extend those drifts in order to access the coking coal.</p> <p>KM explained that because the mine is a mineral development, the decision on planning permission will be made by Cumbria County Council. Copeland Borough Council are an important consultee, and WCM is in consultation and liaison with both Authorities.</p> <p>KM explained there will be approximately 5 train movements per day, based on a 12 hour working day at the rail loading facility, 6 days per week. There will be very few people working at the rail loading facility, and a train is loaded in about 15 minutes. TP expressed concern about the impact of coal trains on passenger trains. KM explained that the coal trains will work around existing train timetables and that there will be a separate sidings for the coal trains. In addition, there is a Nuclear Transport Group that includes Nugen and the National Grid, in relation to the projects proposed locally. From this, Cumbria County Council can model predicted impacts of road and rail transport, and that WCM are committed to supporting a proportionate share of any infrastructure upgrades required.</p> <p>ST asked whether WCM are consulting with Nugen, and KM responded that the consultation process is ongoing.</p> <p>TT expressed support for the project in view of increased job numbers and creation of local prosperity. KM thanked TT for a previous offer of using the Rugby Club as a venue for the next Stakeholder Consultation Event.</p> <p>TO asked whether WCM are considering potential water ingress into the mine. KM explained that this is being examined, and that WCM are entering into a long term lease of part of the former Marchon works site.</p> <p>GB explained that Nugen are undertaking ecological surveys on their proposed land nearby and there may be the opportunity for information sharing between WCM and Nugen.</p>		
Guidelines, Scope and Confidentiality for the Liaison Group		
Discussion		
<p>KM said that a Terms of Reference for the Liaison Group will be sent to every Liaison Group member with the Minutes of this meeting.</p> <p>CL explained that she hoped membership of the Group would expand, for example with the National Trust (in light of the Colourful Coast Project), and the Environment Agency, especially as the mine becomes operational.</p> <p>KM explained that unless informed otherwise, nothing discussed within the Group meetings was confidential.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Minutes and Terms of Reference to be sent to each Liaison Group Member.	CL	04 April 2016

Meeting Notes



Work to Date, Future Plans and Stakeholder Engagement

Discussion

KM updated the group:

- Heads of Terms for a lease of part of the Marchon site have been agreed with the owners.
- Discussions are underway with landowners on the route of the buried conveyor and the rail loading facility.
- Mineral rights are agreed with Lowther Estates for the 'sterilisation' of possible minerals around the area of the mine head and drifts.
- WCM have sent a formal request for "Scoping Opinion" to Cumbria County Council, to determine the extent of the Environmental Impact Assessment which has to accompany the planning application.
- The planning application should be submitted by December 2016.
- Subject to permission being granted, construction of the mine head and drifts will start in 2017, with operational work expected to begin in 2018/19.

The steel market in the UK affects the market for coking coal in the UK, and the current projections show that coking coal from West Cumbria will majority be exported to Northern Europe, which currently imports 40 million tonnes per annum from North America. The availability of North American coking coal is expected to decline in coming years, with an additional rise predicted in shipping costs. Therefore a more local supply of coking coal will be attractive to the northern European market, as well as the UK market. The coking coal off the coast of West Cumbria is of the "high vol" type, which forms part of the recipe for steelmaking.

JC asked about waste rock overburden, and where this would go. CL explained the approach to waste is to design the mine and mining method to reduce the amount of rock overburden. There will be overburden which WCM is investigating re-use options for, including grading the rock into aggregates for use in National Grid temporary trackways, discussions with the Severn Tidal Barrage to use rocks for infill, and discussions with secondary aggregate producers to send the material for recycling. WCM aim to minimise use of the local road network and are investigating whether rock overburden can be removed from site via rail. In addition, coal fines from the processing plant could be turned into a paste and pumped into the old anhydrite mine below the Marchon site, dramatically reducing the need for road transport of this waste material.

JC explained the Marchon site had been contaminated in its previous use, and some remedial work had been undertaken. WCM will conduct investigations into the existing state of the site in order to ensure that any remaining contamination is dealt with safely and without harm to the environment.

KM announced the next Stakeholder Event at the Haig Museum, which WCM are taking over in part following the museum going into administration. The event will be on 8, 9 and 10 April, and announcements will be made in the local press, the WCM website etc.

KM showed the computer visualization of the plant, explaining the various aspects of the mine head site. Keeping the processing of coal on site enables all the jobs to be kept in the Copeland Borough. KM explained that WCM are liaising with Copeland and the owners of the Marchon site, as the part of the site that WCM will not occupy is proposed for development.

JC commented on the impact on the rail lines of up to 5000 additional workers (arising from Mirehouse development, WCM development etc) would create pinch points on the rail lines. KM explained that DRS, the rail freight company, is examining this for WCM.

KM and CL reported that St Bees Parish Council and Copeland Borough Council have both been consulted and in discussions with WCM, and both organisations were supportive of the proposals.

Any Other Business

KM agreed that Liaison Group Meetings would be held every 2 months.

JC suggested a Sharepoint system for sharing information with Nugen.

KM and CL mentioned the importance of ensuring that the local community are fully consulted, but that there are challenges to 'reaching' people who do not have access to IT and do not read the local press.

KM and CL expressed thanks to all attendees for taking the time and interest to attend the meeting. It is hoped that attendees can take messages and updates back to the local community.

Post Meeting Note: ST emailed CL to raise concern about potential road traffic impacts, and community consultation & awareness, with respect to both the Nugen and WCM developments. ST offered to assist prior to the next Liaison Group meeting.