



## Mark Kirkbride Address to CCC Planning Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Mark Kirkbride, CEO of West Cumbria Mining.

As a fully qualified and chartered mining engineer, with more than twenty-five years' experience in the industry, and a Fellow of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, I believe I am suitably qualified to provide robust evidence-based information to this committee. Also, my project team have more than 500 years of combined relevant mining experience.

I would like to thank the officers and team at CCC for their hard work over the last couple of years to reach today's hearing.

I was born and grew up a working-class family in the North East. I understand the local issues and people.

It is more apparent than ever that the UK needs its own strong and sustainable industrial skills to provide long term economic benefits.

It has taken more than five years of development, with an investment in excess of thirty million pounds, to get the project to this stage.

The mine will generate over 500 real jobs, delivering a major boost to the economy at local, county and country levels, helping to reduce the UK balance of trade deficit.

I believe in the highest levels of corporate social responsibility and have pledged significant commitments to the local area. I run a UK company that will pay all its taxes in the UK. We will be a good neighbour.

I fully support the view that renewables are the way forward for energy generation and that coal should no longer form part of the UK energy mix.

However, this is an industrial project, wholly focussed upon providing specialist coking coal for steelmaking. This is a rare form of coal found in very limited locations around the world.

Global steel production was one point eight billion tonnes in 2018.

Over seventy percent of this was produced using the blast furnace technique which requires more than seven hundred kilograms of coal to produce one tonne of steel.

In an ideal world all new steel would be produced by recycling scrap steel, however there is a limit to the amount of scrap available, currently five hundred million tonnes per year. The recycling process still consumes 150kg of coal per tonne of recycled steel.



The World Steel Association confirm that steel demand will continue to grow significantly over the next fifty years, with at least sixty percent of this still being made using the blast furnace. Thus, there is a clear long-term requirement, no matter what the opposition groups seek to suggest.

The UK and Europe currently import by sea more than forty million tonnes of coking coal a year. The two large UK steelworks (at Scunthorpe and Port Talbot) have expressed their desire to buy our product. The major steelmakers in Europe have also expressed their wish to source coking coal locally, instead of imports coming from afar, including the USA.

Due to its rarity, the challenge for the resources industry is to identify and secure new and responsible supplies of specialist coal. Such coals also vary significantly, with at least four sub-categories. The Whitehaven deposits are therefore of global significance.

With the very high level of focus upon climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, I am very much aware of the climate aspects of the project. To put this into context, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2017 from the UK steel industry were less than 2.6% of total UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. European manufacturers are also world leaders in improving steel making efficiency with similarly low proportions of CO<sub>2</sub> contribution. A key element of our project is that there is no net increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

By supplying the UK and European markets, there is a significant reduction in emissions compared to global shipments. As a result, Woodhouse Colliery will be able to demonstrate the lowest overall environmental impacts for any comparable mine in the world.

It is also a clear fact that all sources of renewable energy require steel as a key raw material. As a result, I strongly believe the project meets the needs and demands of a modern and environmentally responsible society.

My team have worked closely with the local community throughout the development of the mine design to ensure protection in terms of noise, dust and light effects. The mine is modern, fully enclosed and highly mechanised and will operate within very strict UK legislation. New green public space, landscaping, footpaths and extensive tree planting will significantly transform the existing brownfield site and area.

We have also agreed to implement a robust remediation bond to provide guarantees to protect the local community.

Extensive evidence-based modelling work has been completed to assess any mining related impacts. For example, this work has proven there will be no impacts upon the sea bed or marine environment, including no re-suspension of sediment.

I have made a series of very clear commitments to local community benefits and sustainability initiatives. These include creating a managed and sustainable carbon sink forest in Cumbria to further reduce our carbon footprint.



The project made an early commitment to move all product by rail. This alone results in a 76% reduction in CO2 compared with road transportation. The most modern locomotives and rolling stock will also be used.

WCM continues to engage in an open and honest manner. We have seen very high levels of support for the project from both the public and a wide range of stakeholders and businesses in the area. All statutory consultees have confirmed no objections to the scheme, as a result of our extensive engagement over the last few years.

If planning permission is approved, we will have to comply with an extensive schedule of conditions and agreements. I am fully supportive of this process and approach.

Summing up, I believe the benefits from the project are very real. My team and I have worked tirelessly to ensure the project is both innovative and responsible, delivering jobs, investment and a much needed boost to the local and wider economy. I hope that you will consider all these points and support approval of this important and significant project.