

Woodhouse Colliery Planning Application

Press Statement

2nd October 2020



Today, 2nd October 2020, the Cumbria County Council (CCC) Development Control and Regulation Committee resolved again to grant planning approval to West Cumbria Mining (WCM) to develop the Cumbrian Metallurgical Coal Project. This will be known as Woodhouse Colliery; a new underground mine located on a brownfield site, to the south west of Whitehaven in West Cumbria, UK.

Since 2014, the company has been working on its plans to develop a modern, 21st century mine to supply metallurgical coal (listed by the EU as one of 27 critical raw materials) to the steel industry.

This has included careful thought and consideration regarding the design of the surface infrastructure to minimise potential impact from noise, dust and light. An extensive programme of environmental and ecological surveys has been completed, alongside a programme of exploration, both onshore and offshore, which has proven the presence of high-quality coal for use in the steel industry.

Once construction of the mine is completed and Woodhouse Colliery moves into the operational phase, the company plans to extract and process around 2.7 million tonnes of metallurgical coal per year, focused on supplying the UK and European steel-making plants, which currently import around 60 million tonnes per annum from USA, Canada, Russia and Australia.

As is normal with projects of this nature and as part of the planning approval being granted, CCC has set-out extensive planning conditions which WCM needs to meet to enable the company to move forward to the next phases of the development of the project. These include a legally binding greenhouse gas assessment commitment as part of the Section 106 agreement, a first for such a project, together with an production end date of no later than 2049 to recognise the transition to a net zero carbon economy over the coming decades.

Moving forwards, WCM will work with CCC to finalise and discharge those conditions, which will enable the project to progress into the construction phase. It is anticipated that site work will start early next year (before spring 2021), with initial coal production commencing around 18-months from the start of construction.

Commenting, **Mark Kirkbride**, CEO of West Cumbria Mining said “today marks another very important milestone in our journey to develop a world class mine in Cumbria and is the culmination of six years of dedication and determination by the WCM team to realise our vision”.

“Woodhouse Colliery will bring significant local benefits to Whitehaven, Copeland and Cumbria in terms of jobs and investment, at a critical time given the impacts of Covid-19 upon employment and economics both locally and nationally. I am proud to be part of a scheme which will have such a positive impact on the local community as well as the long-term financial benefits the mine will bring to Cumbria and the UK”.

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“We remain confident that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, will also be able to quickly conclude, as he did so previously, that nothing has changed such that the holding direction can be removed and the final planning permit be issued.”

“I am now looking forward to moving positively towards the construction of Woodhouse Colliery and harnessing the extensive mining history and knowledge in West Cumbria to operate a state-of-the-art mine, including the highest levels of health and safety and technology to ultimately realise our vision of becoming a leading European producer of high-quality metallurgical coal for steel making”.

- Ends -

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Notes to Editors:

West Cumbria Mining (WCM) is a private UK company focused on the development of its Cumbrian Metallurgical Coal Project to supply the steel industry in the UK and Europe.

West Cumbria Mining holds a series of licences which together cover an area of approximately 200km² off the coast near Whitehaven. The project sits within the West Cumbrian Coalfield, in an area where mining has spanned many centuries, and is located adjacent to the former Haig Colliery, from which 48 Mt of metallurgical coal was extracted between 1914 and 1986, with mining activities beneath the seabed over four miles offshore.

Since 2014, WCM has been developing its plans for the project. This has included:

- four programmes of coal exploration, both onshore and offshore, which has proven the presence of high quality, high volatile metallurgical coal with excellent properties;
- the company completed detailed feasibility work including compliant resource and reserve statements;
- undertaking an extensive programme of engagement with key stakeholders and the local community; and,
- developing its plans and supply chain readiness to deliver the project.

In May 2017 WCM submitted its planning application for ‘Woodhouse Colliery’ to Cumbria County Council, which was followed by a unanimous approval in March 2019 and a further unanimous ratification approval in October 2019.