

## A word from our CEO



**Incredibly, it has been two years since our last newsletter was issued.**

I hope that this newsletter will prove useful to many of you who have contacted us, and answer some of those questions that you have, until we are able to restart our community update events in the summer. The WCM team has very much missed meeting and engaging directly with you and we look forward to being able to host an event soon.

Since then, we have witnessed many changes and major events. As we all experienced and know, in March 2020 the country faced an unprecedented national lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the repercussions and impacts of this continuing to be felt by many individuals, communities and businesses.

During this Covid-19 period the Cumbria County Council Development Control and Regulation Committee met (online) in October 2020 and granted approval for the third time.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, on behalf of the UK Government, formally 'called-in' the Woodhouse Colliery project application for further scrutiny via a public inquiry.

The public inquiry took place online over a four-week period in September 2021, with evidence presented by witnesses from WCM and the two 'Rule 6' parties and also individuals.

In April 2022, the Planning Inspectorate confirmed that the planning inspector's report had been issued to the Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP, for review and determination.

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022, following two changes in Prime Minister and three changes in Secretary of State, planning approval was granted by the Secretary of State, with the planning inspector also recommending approval.

On 17<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 the two Rule 6 parties (Friends of the Earth and South Lakes Action Against Climate Change) each lodged a legal challenge against the Government decision (with WCM being an 'Interested Party').

Since the approval, WCM has been inundated with emails asking for information and updates on a whole range of topics.

Wherever possible, we have responded individually to these, however the quantity now being received is so significant that we will address these within a newsletter.

Due to the sheer volume of people wishing to be updated or sending expressions of interest in employment to WCM, future newsletters will be published via the company website and social media pages, so please do look out for these.

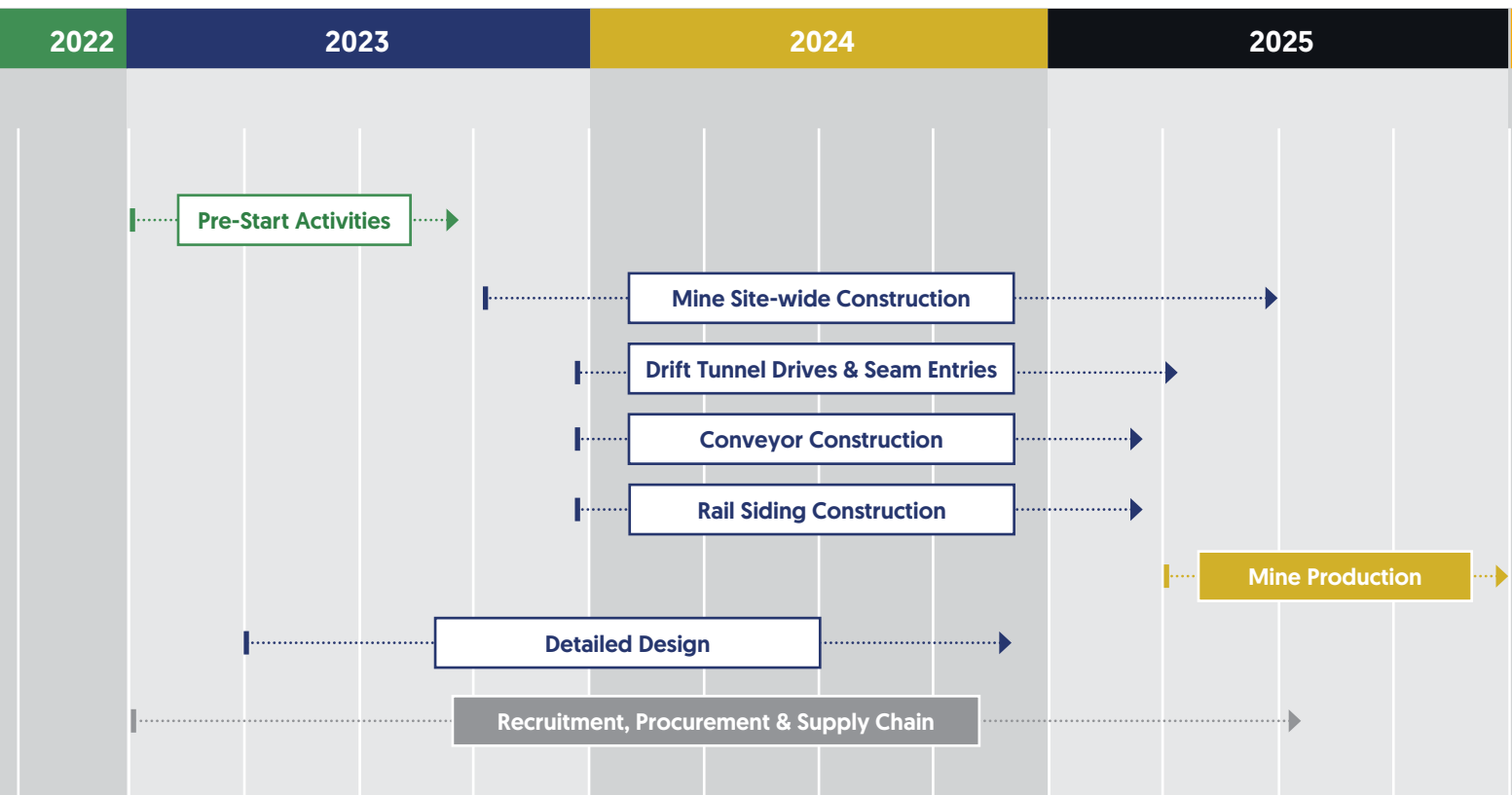
WCM is working to progress the activity required to allow construction to start on site later this year. A summary timeline has been included in this newsletter which hopefully helps to explain our next steps and timings over the next few years to deliver the mine into operation.

Finally, WCM would like to extend a massive thank you to everyone in the local community who have continued to support the project, and to all of the stakeholders, companies and individuals who have been involved and worked with the team over the last few years.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines.

Mark

# Indicative Timeline and Activities



## Pre-Start Activities

- Discharge Planning Conditions required to commence works (a total of 89 planning conditions)
- Construction level detailed design
- Equipment orders (long lead times for specific mining equipment)
- Recruit delivery team
- Appoint construction & rail contractors
- Ecology, topographic and site investigation surveys

## Mine Site-Wide Construction

- Site establishment (offices, welfare, power etc)
- Tunnel portal construction
- Tunnel decline drivages (x2)
- Surface infrastructure (roads, drainage, culverts, lighting)
- Civil engineering (concrete pads, walls, structures, workshops, facilities, fanhouse)
- Surface dome structures
- Coal processing plant & materials handling M&E
- Electrical installations and connections
- 2.3km buried conveyor from mine site to rail loader
- 1.5km rail siding and connection to existing Cumbria coast line

## Mine Production

- Progress ramp-up of production
- Workforce growth and training aligned to production ramp-up
- All coal transported by rail
- 25-year production period
- Active apprenticeships (50No)
- On site training in dedicated facilities
- Off site forestry development and management (carbon offset programme)
- Community engagement and initiatives

## Mine Closure

- Production must cease by the end of 2049
- Legally binding remediation bond for full restoration
- Site restoration plans part of the planning conditions

# Q&A

## **When will the mine start to produce coal?**

The current target is for the mine to commence coal production in 2025.

## **How long will the mine take to build?**

The overall construction period is approx. 2 years, with both the surface and underground construction running together. Work is currently forecast to commence from September 2023.

## **When will you start employing people?**

Employment will be aligned to the construction and grow as the project moves into production.

During 2023, WCM will start the process of engagement with those previously registered for employment, with a phased process linked to the timing of specific roles and skills required. We will look to organise a series of engagement events for these people.

Specific roles, requiring particular skills and experience, may also be advertised separately and a formal recruitment process followed.

## **Will local people be involved in the building of the mine?**

Yes. WCM has made a clear commitment to employ local people and work with local businesses. There will be the need for specific specialist skills, particularly during the development of the underground access tunnels.

WCM has received many applications from skilled miners and tunnellers, so will be looking to recruit in

collaboration with our appointed principal construction contractor.

## **Is the coal ok to be used by British steel makers?**

Yes. British steel makers source their metallurgical coal from a series of different sources. WCM will be competitive with those sources and aims to offer attractive terms to our steel producers.

## **There has been a lot of coverage that the coal is not good quality. Is this correct?**

No. WCM has spent significant time and resources to explore the coal deposit, including the drilling of many boreholes to recover coal samples, which have been subjected to extensive laboratory testing to international standards. All of this coal test data has been independently verified, via industry experts, and confirms that the coal is of a very high quality and perfectly suitable for British and EU steelmakers.

Comments made by other parties regarding sulphur are wrong and baseless; we look forward to meeting the needs of our prospective customers.

## **There has also been a lot of comments that UK steelmakers cannot use the coal. Is this correct?**

This myth has been generated by those opposed to the project seeking to support their own arguments that the mine is not required and that the steel industry does not want it.

The reality is that WCM keeps all discussions with future customers confidential and will continue to engage with all of the steelmakers who purchase metallurgical coal. We remain confident that this will offer a suitable and attractive new source of high-quality steelmaking coal.

## **There is a lot of talk about the steel industry moving to green steelmaking. Does this mean the mine will become a stranded asset in the near future?**

At the public inquiry independent experts presented clear and unchallenged forecasts of the demand for steelmaking coal through to 2050.

These forecasts accounted for the growth in alternative green steel production, but still showed that there would be a significant demand both in the EU and globally out to at least 2050.

This is in part driven by the continued growth in steel consumption and also the modest rate of change to move to green steel manufacturing. This is due to the complexities of any potential hydrogen steelmaking, including costs (both to build and operate safely, massive energy requirement and scalability).

It will take many decades for the steel industry to fully transition from blast furnaces using coke (produced using metallurgical coals) to alternative lower carbon techniques. During this transition the application of Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) is also forecast to become a part of the blast furnace emissions reduction process.

## **Objectors are saying that the Government should create green jobs instead of funding the mine. What is the true position?**

The idea that the government is funding the project is entirely baseless - the project is wholly funded by private investors. This does not prevent investment into Cumbria by the Government or other external investors. WCM strongly believe that green initiatives can work alongside the project.

# Q&A

## **Are you still allowing people to apply for jobs or is the process closed?**

WCM is not actively accepting further CV's at this stage but will advise in due course when the process will reopen. WCM will look to prioritise those individuals who submitted full pre-applications when that process was active in 2016.

## **Which other local businesses will you rely on for the build and running of the mine?**

WCM is currently engaging with a series of Cumbrian based companies and will be hosting an event for local suppliers in the summer of this year as we progress towards the start of construction.

We are already intending to work collaboratively with Lakes College for training, apprenticeships and skills development, as well as major Cumbrian construction/ rail specialists, IT providers and associated service companies.

WCM will source as much of the construction services, materials and products from within the UK (locally wherever possible), including UK steel, specialist contractors and designers.

## **I have read that there will be many trains carrying your coal through Whitehaven and on the local railway – how much noise will this make and how often?**

The planning approval contains very specific restrictions on train movements and operation times. WCM has already selected its

railfreight provider, who will be using the quietest locomotives and wagons to minimise noise. There will be no more than six trains per day when the mine reaches full production (by 2030), only operating between 8am and 6pm weekdays and Saturday mornings.

## **What happens if there is a change of government at the next election? Some parties have said they will look to block the mine, haven't they?**

The binding planning permission was granted following a non-political planning inquiry and recommendation from an independent non-political planning inspector.

The Secretary of State (as Planning Minister) agreed with the independent inspector's report. Such a process is above party politics and we will now progress to building the mine to achieve full production.

## **There has been news that there are two legal challenges against the planning approval decision. What does this mean?**

The only challenge route for those opposed to the project is to pursue a 'statutory review' which is to challenge the decision in the high court. This challenge is against the UK Government, not WCM (we are an 'interested party').

A challenge cannot relate to the re-hearing of the evidence. It can only succeed if it can be very clearly demonstrated that there was an error in law, and that the error had a significant influence upon the decision reached.

WCM is very strongly of the view that there are no such grounds for any challenge to succeed.

## **Will the challenge stop or delay the project?**

No. The planning permission remains 'live' and fully in force throughout any challenge against the Government decision. As a result, WCM intends to proactively proceed with all of the preparatory works and commence work later in 2023.

## **Do you have to have previous mining experience to work underground, or will you offer training?**

WCM will initially need a small, core team of experienced miners during the construction phase of the drift tunnels and then this skilled team, along with external training providers, will train up a new generation of mining personnel. WCM will look to recruit these new miners from the local community.

## **Why do you claim that the mine operations will be net zero?**

WCM will operate a world leading, legally binding emissions mitigation scheme, with the project completely aligning with the UK 2050 Net-Zero commitments.

This will be achieved using a series of specific methods, including an all-electric underground mining fleet, green electricity tariff, methane capture and elimination, green biofuel for back-up generators, zero emission transport schemes and carbon offsets for the residual emissions which cannot be mitigated.

The end use emissions of using the coal during the steelmaking process remain the responsibility of the steel makers themselves, who are also pro-actively seeking to reduce their own emissions (including the introduction of CCUS).

# Q&A

## **Will you be hosting further public open days?**

Yes, WCM looks forward to reinstating update events in the summer and these will focus on recruitment and supply chain.

## **What will salary levels be like for differing roles?**

The article recently circulated in the Whitehaven News (and sister publications) was based upon information WCM shared in 2016 during the public engagement process. As a result the information was incorrect and outdated.

The current expectation is that employees working underground will typically earn £65,000 per annum (before any performance related bonus) with excellent terms including pension, holidays, working hours and other benefits.

Supervisory & technical roles will be significantly higher.

WCM has always been committed to being a 'real living wage' minimum level employer of choice, which would also apply to all trainees and apprentices.

WCM will issue further information and role specific details during 2023.

## **There has been a lot of comments regarding exports from the UK, why is that part of the plan?**

The UK steelmaking industry currently imports all of the metallurgical coal consumed in the UK from overseas. The same applies to the EU (other than a very limited supply from Poland). There are a wide range of metallurgical coal characteristics which vary depending upon where the coal is being produced. Steelmakers blend these different types of coal to meet their own plant requirements. This is why steelmakers cannot use metallurgical coal supplied from only one mine. Therefore, the limit on how much WCM coal can be used is not related to the WCM coal quality.

WCM's annual production (maximum of 2.8 million tonnes) is modest compared to many other underground coal mines (with many producing more than 8 million tonnes per annum). Given that there is no other source of high quality metallurgical coal in Europe, and that WCM is much closer than other suppliers, it is still far more environmentally responsible to supply into Europe from the UK.

The UK currently operates with a balance of trade deficit (e.g. we import more goods than we export). The mine will contribute significantly to helping reduce this deficit and support overall GDP (gross domestic product).

## **Will the coal trains reduce local passenger services?**

No, all of the trains carrying coal from the mine will be timetabled around local passenger services; there is significant scope for additional train movements on the Cumbrian Coast line.

## **Isn't coal mining old fashioned, dirty and hard work?**

The old image of coal mining is hard manual labour with picks and shovels.

Modern 21<sup>st</sup> century coal mining uses state of the art mining machines, using advanced monitoring and control systems. Woodhouse Colliery will be a world class operation, with the highest standards of operations, environmental mitigation and ethical business practices.



WCM will always try and respond in a timely manner whenever possible.

Please note that we have been experiencing very high volumes of emails and it is not currently possible to respond directly to each one individually.

### **General Enquiries**

Contact us directly at:  
[news@westcumbriamining.com](mailto:news@westcumbriamining.com)

### **News & Recruitment**

All updates will be announced via our website and social media pages.

### **Supply Chain**

If you are interested in registering to be a preferred supplier, you can do this by visiting the 'Register Your Interest' tab on the website and click on Supplier Registration.

### **Media Enquiries**

To obtain authorised use of our imagery, please contact us at:  
[news@westcumbriamining.com](mailto:news@westcumbriamining.com)