

# WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

**Clerk to the Council:**

Marlene Jewell

Telephone: 01946 67366

**Chairman:**

Councillor Graham Roberts

**To: Members of the Whitehaven Town Council**

You are duly **SUMMONED** to attend an **Extraordinary Meeting** of the **WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL** which will be held at

**Venue: THE ENNERDALE ROOM, WHITEHAVEN CIVIC HALL, LOWTHER STREET, WHITEHAVEN**

**Date: Thursday 13th December 2018**

**Time: 6.00pm**

Signed.....*Marlene Jewell*.....Dated *7<sup>th</sup> December 2018*  
Marlene Jewell, Clerk

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interests by elected members in respect of Agenda items

If a Member requires any advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact the Clerk at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

### **3. Public Participation**

### **4. To consider the Amendments to the West Cumbria Mining Application – presentation to be given by Kevin Murphy**

**IN PRIVATE**

That prior to the following items of business the Chairman will move the Chairman will move the following Resolution

That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public and/or press be instructed to withdraw.

- 5. Office Accommodation** – To consider a report on office accommodation – to follow
- 6. Staffing Matters** – to consider a report on staffing matters – to follow

## Whitehaven Town Council Briefing 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018

### Planning Application Reference 4/17/9007

West Cumbria Mining (WCM) have proposed a modification to planning application, reference 4/17/9007 submitted to Cumbria County Council (CCC) on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017, in response to consultation with CCC and specifically Natural England (NE).

The intent, purpose and overall configuration of the project, together with the above ground infrastructure, has not fundamentally changed at all with this modification, which centres around the re-routing of the underground access tunnels.

The original application included for the refurbishment of two existing access tunnels (part of a former underground anhydrite mine accessed from the Marchon site) prior to driving new tunnels (drifts) down to the coal seams to be worked. The flooded former anhydrite mine also provided underground void space to store waste rock from the construction and operation of the new coal mine.

To be able to use the former mine, it first required the water to be pumped out, which WCM were proposing to pass through a water treatment plant to ensure acceptable water quality prior to discharge into the sea at Saltom Bay.

Following extensive consultation with CCC and NE, WCM were advised that insufficient information was currently available for them to fully support the proposed anhydrite mine water treatment and discharge to sea.

As a result, WCM concluded that the only practical solution to progress the planning application was to remove the anhydrite mine pumping, water treatment and discharge to sea from the application. Therefore, WCM produced a modification to the original proposal which avoids the flooded anhydrite mine workings by constructing new underground access tunnels which go over the top and to the side of the old workings. A revised and more efficient method for placing waste rock material back underground was also introduced and calculations re-run to confirm that all waste rock arising from the new drifts could be accommodated on the site as originally proposed.

The re-alignment of the tunnels also requires a minor adjustment to the red line boundary, with one small area being removed from the plan and replaced with a similar sized area slightly further to the north. The change is within the same land ownership and there is no associated surface development (given that the tunnels are deep underground at this point).

In all other respects the proposal remains exactly the same as the original submission. To highlight this a schedule of the key elements of the original application which have not changed is provided as Appendix 1 of this letter.

WCM have undertaken a wide-ranging and detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in accordance with all of the requirements of appropriate Regulations and Standards for the overall project and updated this EIA where necessary to take account of the planned modification to the proposal.

The additional information presented in the proposed modification does not result in any levels of unacceptable or significant environmental impact; rather, the information clearly sets out how WCM will manage the development to mitigate any impact. The decision not to utilise or de-water the former Anhydrite mine significantly reduces the potential for any adverse impacts upon the marine environment.

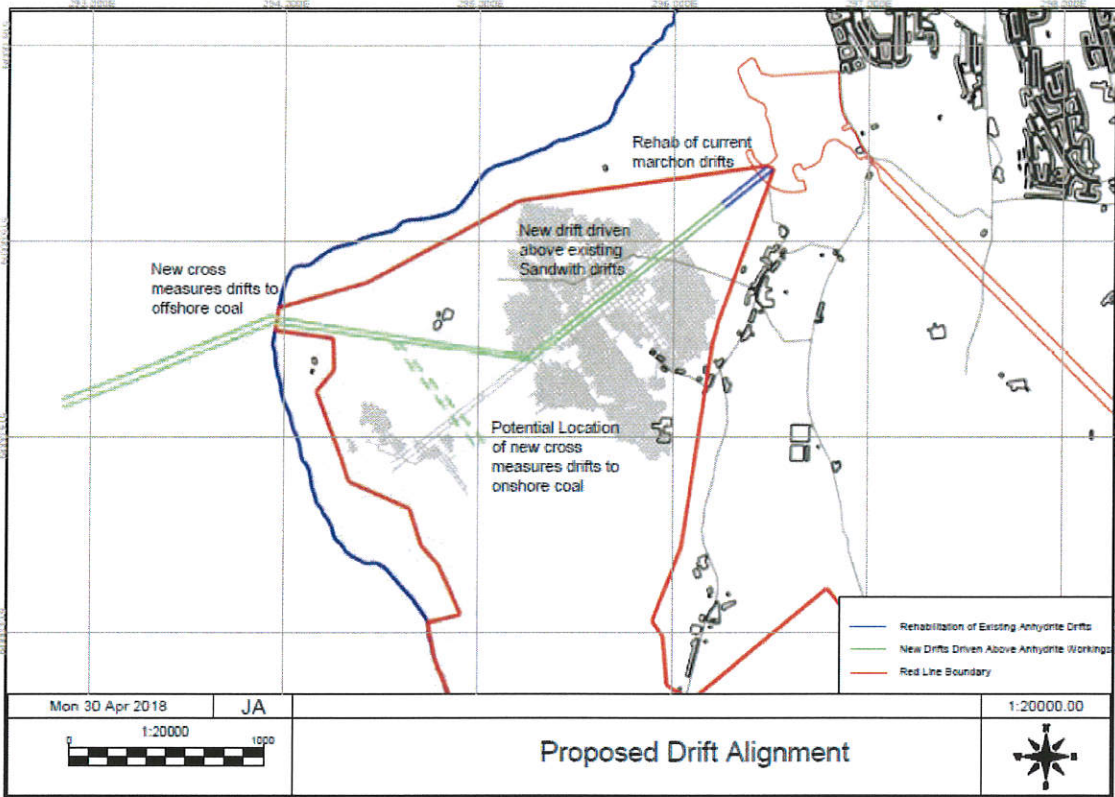
The local environment will benefit from the remediation of a significant portion of the Marchon site, with over 18 acres of wildlife habitats to be created. In addition, the ongoing risk of flooding in Sandwith village will be eliminated and any existing contaminant escape risks from the southern part of the Marchon site will be removed due to the proposed remediation strategy.

It is crucial to note that the positive impacts upon the local economy will be significant, with the creation of multi-generational, well-paid and skilled jobs, as well as significant exports and revenue for UK plc. The scheme fits the UK Government plans for both an Industrial Strategy and Northern Powerhouse; it is also fully supported at cabinet level. Further delays in the planning process are now on the critical path for the project development.

CCC have requested and WCM have agreed to provide an updated Environmental Statement which fully replaces the documentation provided in May 2017. This has been provided to CCC for consultation with Statutory and Non-Statutory consultees.

The fully updated Environmental Statement also includes additional details as requested by CCC to clarify and further support the application. These include in addition to the changes explained above:

- Additional details on the methods used to protect against contamination during the restoration of the site.
- Incorporation of the revised boundary of the Marine Conservation Zone in relation to the offshore mining.
- Additional details on how the mining will be carried out and where.
- Additional details on the extent and rates of undersea subsidence.
- Additional details on the methods used to dispose of reject material underground.
- Results of additional ecology and marine surveys requested by CCC (these do not alter the original conclusions in terms of impacts etc.)
- Additional details on the drainage proposals for the main site and the rail loading facility.
- Amendment of all reference to the National Planning Policy Framework as a result of this document being updated and re-issued by the Government in the summer.



## Appendix 1

Key elements of the original proposal which have not changed include:

1. The production of high-quality metallurgical coal to the same tonnages and timetable as per the original application;
2. All coal handling, processing, storage and movement arrangements remain the same;
3. At Marchon, the footprint, size, layout and function of the surface infrastructure, including landscape bunding, has not changed (a small additional piece of plant will be added within the existing footprint of the main dome building to process waste arising from the production of coal);
4. The timescales for the development remain the same;
5. The point at which the access tunnels will be entered via existing portals has not changed;
6. No change in the surface expression of any part of the proposal; the only modification is for temporary surface water settlement lagoons during construction only (if required) and temporary covers over working areas during the early remediation and groundworks on the Marchon site during construction only;
7. The concept of waste rock disposal underground has not changed (a more efficient method is now proposed);
8. Potential impacts on transport, noise, visual impact, hydrogeology and air quality have been re-assessed with no change to the conclusions of the original impact assessments;
9. The route of the buried conveyor system has not changed;
10. The rail loading facility to transport the coal remains the same;
11. The commitment to the movement of all product by rail has not changed;
12. The proposed employment of 500 full time employees (80% to be local) has not changed;
13. The expected 1,000 ancillary jobs and annual project expenditure in the local community and UK of £100m remains the same;
14. The £2.5bn in exports in the first 10 years of operation remains the same;
15. The requirements and market for the product have not changed;
16. The travel to work plan (to be finalised with CCC) has not changed; and
17. WCM remains fully committed to becoming a model employer and provider of real industrial diversification away from nuclear in the region.