

Charles Hendry MP

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Councillor Tim Knowles
Chair of West Cumbria MRWS Partnership
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Dear Tim,

MRWS engagement funding for 2012/13

I am now able to confirm the position with regard to MRWS engagement funding for 2012/13. I am grateful for the information you provided in support of your bid. I also note that you are only seeking funding up until a decision about participation at this stage.

I am pleased that we are approaching the point at which the local authorities feel able to take a decision about participation. I appreciate all the work that the Partnership have done to get us to this point and note and welcome the intention to take a decision by October 2012 if at all possible.

I accept that at this stage, prior to the results of the consultation and opinion survey being known, there is still some uncertainty about what work will still be required to reach a decision. In line with your bid, I am therefore willing to agree that up to £720k can be drawn down from the department ahead of a decision about participation. This should enable any unexpected issues that arise to be addressed.

However, I remain hopeful that the optimistic scenario you outline can be achieved and the full £720k is not required. In the event of a positive decision any unspent commitment can then be used to help ensure a smooth transition to the next phase of the process.

Should there be a positive decision about participation, I am aware that there will be a need for an extensive programme of community engagement as the programme moves forward. It will also provide an opportunity to consider how this is best delivered and the funding arrangements we will need to put in place.

I hope that we can now reach agreement on a settlement for this coming financial year. One which provides certainty to all involved, recognises the task ahead and helps ensure we proceed to a timely decision about participation.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Hendry

CHARLES HENDRY