

## Notes of Bridging Group Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012

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Author:	3KQ
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### **Present:**

Richard Griffin (Cumbria CC), Paul Feehily (Cumbria CC), Cllr Tim Knowles, (Cumbria CC), Cllr Michael Heaslip (Allerdale BC), Guy Richardson (CALC), Keith Hitchen (CALC), Steve Smith (Copeland BC), Paul Gardner (Osprey Communications), Richard Harris (3KQ), Jenny Willis (3KQ)

### **1 – Updates**

#### **Updates from Bridging Group members**

Since the last Bridging Group meeting, the three DMBs (Allerdale BC, Copeland BC and Cumbria CC) have each held full Council meetings with presentations about the MRWS process and an opportunity for questions.

Since then the Councils have agreed to seek a pause in the process. They are currently awaiting a response from DECC to their letter which explained the reasons for the pause.

CALC have held an Executive meeting and decided that their previously stated position was still appropriate, notwithstanding the pause.

The DMBs have received some letters (including from Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace) enquiring about or commenting on the decision to 'pause' the MRWS process and defer a decision about participation to January. The main concern was that openness and transparency should be maintained regarding MRWS-related decisions. It was agreed that this was a matter for DMBs, not the Bridging Group. The need for continuing transparency in the current 'paused' process was acknowledged and the DMBs agreed to discuss how best this could be achieved.

#### **Evaluation**

The draft evaluation report from Wood Holmes has been circulated to Bridging group members with a deadline for comment of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October. It will be finalised early in the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

### **2 – Review current 'pause' and former MRWS Partnership's interest/need**

The role of the Bridging Group during the current pause was discussed and it was agreed that effectively it was unchanged i.e. to represent the interests of the former West Cumbria MRWS Partnership, with particular regard to communicating and clarifying the Partnership's final report until a decision about participation is made by the DMBs. It was also agreed that the role of the group would not include contributing to the DMBs decision-making process unless this was in order to confirm or clarify the Final Report.

### 3 – Communication

Concern was expressed about the work of the former Partnership and its report being misunderstood and/or misrepresented in some public discussions e.g. in Silloth. The Bridging Group felt it was important to publicly restate the main facts of the report to counteract some of this misinterpretation, including answering letters in the media which contained factual inaccuracies about the MRWS process and the findings of the Partnership.

Advertorials will be placed in all Cumbrian papers before the end of the year and a newsletter will be sent to all homes in West Cumbria early in the New Year. An e-bulletin will also be sent to all those on the West Cumbria MRWS database. The DMBs agreed to give a further update for circulation as soon as there is a response to their letter from DECC.

All acknowledged the need to keep communication open and to continue to publish meeting notes and correspondence on the MRWS website.

Concerns were discussed about the fact that open discussion was made difficult by legal restrictions on councillors in relation to pre-determination. However, it was felt that it would be acceptable for Partnership members to use the content of the Partnership's Final Report to clarify facts, as it is a document that all Partnership members are already signed up to.

**Action: 3KQ and Osprey** to offer further information on the content of the final report and other support as required to make sure that all councillors can respond to queries from local people about the process.

**Action: 3KQ** to contact DECC and the NDA to raise the fact that when media coverage concerns the MRWS process itself, or general issues regarding the management of radioactive waste, it could be appropriate for them to respond directly.

Given that geology is still a big area of debate, the possibility of inviting the Geological Society of London to hold an event in West Cumbria focusing on geological disposal was discussed, but it was felt that it would be inappropriate for the Bridging Group to host/organise such an event.

**Action: Osprey** to circulate final version of communications plan.

### 4 – Brand Management work

The Brand Management Group and Bridging Group are still waiting for confirmation from DECC of the verbal agreement about support for the Brand Management work following the meeting with DECC in London attended by Richard Griffin (Allerdale BC), Ian Stephens (Cumbria Tourism), Rob Johnston (Cumbria Chamber of Commerce) and Paul Gardner (Osprey Communications). A written record of the meeting is expected from John Dalton at DECC shortly.

The Brand Management Plan has been revised after discussion with the Brand Management Group last week. There was some discussion about the name of the plan and concern about whether the current 'Cumbria Lake District' label would make it clear that all parts of Cumbria were included in the plan, not just those more closely

associated with the Lake District. To resolve this, the group agreed the plan should be re-titled: '*A Brand Management Plan for Cumbria and the Lake District*'.

**Action: Paul Gardner** to amend plan and re-circulate to Bridging Group and Brand Management Group for comment. It was agreed that the final plan would need to be agreed by the DMBs (who will be taking the work forward formally) before publishing on the MRWS website.

**Action: Steve Smith** to write tender brief for economic and perceptions research work – design and completion of baseline study.

**Action: Paul Gardner** to write tender brief for the marketing aspect of the plan.

Both tender briefs will be circulated for comment to the Bridging Group and Brand Management Group before going out to tender.

Steve Smith, on behalf of Copeland BC as the accountable body, told the group that he had been checking procurement procedures.

**Action: All** to send contact details to Cath Little for organisations which could be contacted about tendering.

## **5 – Actions and way forward**

There was a concern at the lack of formal agreement for funding of any work on MRWS beyond December. However verbal assurances have been given that the engagement package will be extended.

**Action: 3KQ** to look at budgets to see whether current budgets reflect current circumstance and highlight if extra funds are required.

There was a note to keep Members copied in on Bridging Group emails to keep them informed of discussions.

**Date for next meeting:** to be set by email – aiming for end Nov/early Dec