

Meeting Notes: Bridging Group – 26th November 2012

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Title:	Notes of MRWS Bridging Group meeting 26 th November 2012
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Present:

Richard Griffin (Cumbria CC), Guy Richardson (CALC), Steve Smith (Copeland BC), Cath Little (Copeland BC), Charles Holmes (Allerdale BC), Paul Gardner (Osprey Communications), Rhuari Bennett (3KQ), Jenny Willis (3KQ)

1 - Updates

Decision-making bodies (DMBs)

Since the last Bridging Group meeting, the three DMBs (Allerdale BC, Copeland BC and Cumbria CC) have been continuing discussions about the issues highlighted in their letter to DECC indicating the need for the 'pause period'.

An official response to the letter is not expected from DECC until January 2013. In the meantime DECC officials have met informally with officers and members from the DMBs to discuss progress towards the decision expected at the end of January. It is not yet clear whether the Councils will coordinate their procedures to enable their decisions to be made public at the same time.

Cllr Eddie Martin and Cllr Tony Markley have visited facilities in Sweden where a repository is being developed. They also saw an underground facility for sub surface storage of low and intermediate level waste.

CALC

CALC has received a reply to its letter from Baroness Verma. It will be made available on the West Cumbria MRWS website. She has indicated that she would like to meet representatives from CALC before the end of January. In the meantime CALC will be meeting Eddie Martin from CCC on 15th January 2013.

ACTION: 3KQ to look into changing time and/or venue of next Bridging Group meeting (currently scheduled on 15th January at 10.30 a.m. at Allerdale House).

ACTION: Guy to pass Baroness Verma's letter on to 3KQ to put on MRWS website after parishes have been briefed on the contents.

ACTION: 3KQ publish letter on website.

MPs' Inquiry

Alison Conboy from DECC has been seconded to support the six Cumbrian MPs in their inquiry about issues relating to the MRWS process in West Cumbria. It is not yet known how many times the group will meet. It is anticipated that they will call on the experience and expertise of some experts who advised the Partnership and possibly others too.

Campaign group meetings

Meetings of SPAND (Solway Plain Against a Nuclear Dump) were held at Silloth and Maryport last week. They were well attended with some national as well as local coverage.

Another meeting (separate to SPAND) is being planned by David Wood in Ennerdale in January. Elaine Woodburn has agreed to attend. 3KQ has also been invited but the group doesn't really consider it appropriate for 3KQ to speak on behalf of the process given the Partnership's work is complete.

Update on letters/emails received:

National Trust

The Manchester office of the National Trust has been in touch requesting a meeting about the MRWS process. It is not clear if they are aware of the meeting that took place with two National Trust staff at their Grasmere office in March 2012 as part of PSE3 briefings.

ACTION: Steve to respond, copying in other Bridging Group members

Natural England

Correspondence between West Cumbria Rivers Trust and Natural England was discussed. It was felt that with hindsight it would have been helpful for the Partnership's report to state that SSSI designations would be taken into account in any potential siting process, alongside the other many factors.

Colin Wales

Email sent to Cllr Eddie Martin and 3KQ about the potential to hold an event before the decisions about participation are taken by the Councils. It was felt that this would be inappropriate due to the fact that the Bridging Group exists to clarify enquiries about the Partnership's work only, and not enter into debate about the issue. The opportunity for debate in Stage 3 has already happened within the extensive consultation period, and this has been openly reported.

ACTION: Rhuari to draft a response and circulate to Bridging Group for comment before sending to Colin Wales.

Lake District National Park

The recent letter was noted. It is published on the MRWS website.

2 – Brand management work

Economic baseline research – A consortium led by DC Research has been appointed.

Perceptions baseline research – IPSOS Mori have been appointed.

DC Research and IPSOS Mori are each taking part in 'slots' at the next Brand Management meeting on 29th November 2012.

Media monitoring – Paul Gardner and Ian Curwen were due to go through the submissions immediately after the Bridging Group meeting. They will advise of their decision.

Marketing campaign – Different Ltd are the preferred choice after the analysis of the initial written bids and are being invited back for the second stage of the selection

process, an interview with the evaluation panel made up of members of the Brand Management Group. A decision to appoint or not will be made following the interview.

Next meeting dates for Brand Management Group: 29th November, 13th December. Date of January 2013 meeting to be advised.

3 – Finance

Further to the discussion at the last Bridging Group meeting there has still not been official confirmation from DECC for funding the MRWS process in West Cumbria after the end of December 2012. However, no problems have been raised by DECC, so confirmation is still expected. In terms of potential budget needed **if** the process moves to Stage 4, it is difficult to make predictions as much would depend on the design of that stage for which there are many variables. One way to make an initial estimate is to average spend from the last three years of the process, but this would have to be treated as a very rough guide.

In terms of commitment to provision of an engagement package if the process does continue, it was agreed that DMB members would need to feel confident that an adequate engagement package could be put in place very quickly if a decision to participate was taken. It also needs to be clear that the funding for the brand management work would need to be over and above the ongoing engagement process, whatever form that would take.

ACTION: Rhuari to have an initial discussion with John Dalton at DECC about engagement package funding and how this is recognised by DECC in any letter going back to the DMBs.

ACTION: Steve to speak to Paul Walker about asking for confirmation/approval for 2012/13.

4 – Communications

A communications plan for the 'pause period' was agreed at the last Bridging Group meeting. However it has become clear that certain aspects of the plan are not deliverable. Paul Gardner explained that he wanted to discuss this with the Bridging Group and agree an amended plan. The main issue is the fact that ex-Partnership members, and particular DMB representatives, feel unable to be put forward for media interviews due to concerns about perceptions of pre-determination.

In this context it was agreed at the start of the pause period that the role of the Bridging Group role should be about providing clarification on the work that took place during the three year life of the Partnership. Recent media requests have nearly all included questions about 'what will happen next' which the Bridging Group is not in a position to answer.

Elements of the communications plan which will still go ahead are:

- i) Advertorials – information is going out to local papers in the week beginning 3rd December 2012. More are planned for January 2013.
- ii) 'Toolkit' – more details to support businesses (including tourism) who may need to answer questions from customers/clients about the whole process.

ACTION: Paul G to revise communications plan for the pause period and circulate to Brand Management Group and Bridging Group for comment/approval.

ACTION: Paul G to contact Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Cumbria Tourism to remind them to put forward questions they would like addressing in the tool kit alongside the existing website Q&A.

5 – Date for next meeting

15th January 2013 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Allerdale House, Lonsdale room