

Summary Minutes – Actions and Decisions Arising from the South Copeland Partnership Meeting Held on 25 February 2021, at 7pm, via ‘Teams’ Conferencing

Agenda Item	Points to Note
1. a) Present b) Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Savage (Chair) Jane Micklethwaite (Minutes) Robert Kelly MTC, Dave Billing (MTC) Irene Rogan Haverigg and Millom Civic Society, Dave Faulkner (Bootle PC), Robert Morris-Eyton (Chair Stronger Towns Bid Fund) Ann Todd (Bootle Parish Council) Marion Giles (Millom Recreation Centre) Jonathan Powell (Millom Civic Society) Nick Gamble (Millom Without), Suzanne Cooper (Community Development Officer Cumbria County Council). Chris Shaw (CALC member of Copeland Working Group - GDF), Carl Carrington (Millom Without), Ian Lockwood (Millom Without), Maggie Cummings (Whicham PC) • Cllr. Andy Pratt (CBC) Ruth Peter (MTC and Millom Mayor), Cllr Ged McGrath (CBC)
2. Welcome and Introduction from Chair – Protocol for meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair introduced members to Chris Shaw from CALC. Explained that Cllr. Andy Pratt who was due to do the presentation had given his apologies. Chris Shaw will give the presentation instead.
3. (a) Geological Disposal Facility Working Party Member/CALC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Shaw outlined the progress to date. It has been twelve months since a document inviting interested parties to express an interest in the GDF. • Four parties expressed an interest in Copeland. Four evaluation reports were in the first RWM newsletter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copeland Borough Council (whole district) - Developers from - David Faulkner (South Copeland) - Land near Drigg – ILW Site • Noted that the whole of Copeland expressed interest, excluded land within the Lake District National Park boundary and the land within the potential increased boundaries (which has been submitted to HMG - known as the - Southern Boundary Extension) • The next stage was to organise the RWM Working Group. CBC appears with two hats, one as an interested party and one as a Local Authority. The LA is not obliged to join the working party, it is just there. • CALC has not joined to represent a particular area. It is playing an ‘interim’ role in the light that to date no Parish/Town Council is individually involved at this stage in the process • RWM consists of three sub-groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group one: Information group looking to communicate information as to what a GDF is. That is to ensure everyone in Copeland understands what is a GDF. CALC is currently circulating to Parish/Town Councils explanatory documents it has received from the RWM. Objective: Ensure people understand what it is about. - Group two: Looking at the Geology to see if a particular area of land has potential for further investigation. - Group three: If and where land is deemed suitable move onto the third stage, which is the formation of Community Partnership. It will look at which groups should be represented. • The Working Group is simply doing that work. CALC will then handover to the Community Partnerships and take a back seat role, if or when the three stages are progressed. This would move to the Parishes in a particular area. No area is specifically defined at present, only a potential. This is the reason why CALC is stepping in as an interim role.

- For the moment CALC is to maintain neutrality, not for or against any particular area. RWM may at some stage look at an area to move forward. Noted that it might not be welcomed if RWM chooses an area.
- Noted that it could be an issue for some parishes that the waste may travel through, by road or rail to the disposal site. Should they have a say or become full or partial Community Partnership members? This issue is not resolved.
- **Timetable:** The intention is to get through the initial stages as soon as possible, but only if they are confident that the group one stage has ensured that everyone fully understands the GDF. Potential areas could be singled out to be looked at in more detail with regard to who should be represented. July/August is aimed for bearing in mind that there could be slippage due to Covid-19 pandemic. The working group is to meet a fortnight from today with Cllr. Andy Pratt.

**(b) Q & A
with Chris
Shaw**

The Chair invited Questions:

Q: Anne Todd: Enquired as to the status of the land around Irton Hall/Drigg as to whether it was private land belonging to the occupier of the hall (business hotel)?

A: Confirmed it is not private land nor belonging to the occupier of the hall. The land around Irton Hall has not been nominated. The interested party has proposed the land around the ILW site at Drigg

Q: Dave Billing: referred to the former investigation by NIREX who did a comprehensive geological survey. Asked what is the difference between the current process and the one NIREX conducted?

A: The current proposal is to extend the area considerably offshore. The disposal site will be moved out under the sea. NIREX made some boreholes in the Gosforth area. The decision taken was not taken as to whether the land was suitable or not and the project was pulled out by the secretary of state. The Government of the time would not release the information and CCC refused to go to the next stage. (The information is probably available now.) The West Cumbrian coal mining area was also ruled out. An independent geologist's report looked at what had started to be available and stated that probably the best land geologically was in Ennerdale. This was under the National Park [excluded from current proposal] and people strongly objected.

Q: Carl Carrington: What is to be achieved by July/August?

A: It will still be at the information stage (group one) or the confirmation of sites will go forward. Repeated that the working group is simply looking at the potential of the sites in Copeland.

Carl expressed concern that a nebulous timeline could slow property sales and stated that it is critical that the timeline is clarified by July August?

Chris replied that the Community Plan is for 5 to 10 ten years. He said blight is a concern. Expressed in Beckermat over the Moorside proposal. The aim is to have a Community Partnership in place by July/August 2021.

Dave Faulkner added that if a Community Partnership is established in a particular ward, where potential is decided it could stay there two – three or otherwise an indeterminate number of years. It is a long-term process.

Chris concurred the time is vague. 'A piece of string'.

Q: Dave Faulkner: Whicham is part of the National Park potential extension area, yet there is progression in this area?

A: Chris reiterated that the National Park potential extension is off limits
Dave Faulkner pointed out that some of the land west of the railway is outside the proposed extension boundary and could be considered as a surface access area, with the rest of the site going under the sea.

Q: Jonathan Powell: Is it possible to know the potential areas?

A: Chris: The RWM do not know them yet.

Jonathan commented that it is difficult to believe that this is the third time this project is being considered. In addition, he stated that if the disposal site is under the sea the only area bothered with is the access to the tunnels.

Chris replied that it could also be the view of CBC to concern itself with the placement of the access. No piece of paper is in existence stating that any area is allocated.

Q: Maggie Cummins: Asked for clarification about the assessment process of potential sites. Group two is looking at the geology, but what other factors are being looked at?

A: Dave Faulkner responded: Geology is the first point of contact, if there is not potential that area will be dismissed. Process ceases beyond that point. Also included for consideration is the environmental context (Environmental Context Document) looking at areas of land subject to environmental protection and of historical interest. If found potential reduced.

Dave continued: Group three of the area criteria would address the community issues [if stage 2 passed] gathering the views of the area passed. At this stage, the community would be engaged, to bring out people's opinions. Aim to have 'Focus Groups' in place by March 2022.

Original plan was to obtain the information face to face through workshops. To avoid delay, due to Covid-19 the plan now is to do it virtually. The process is being developed. Expected that each member will have a personal idea which land is appropriate. Mode of transport also considered (probably rail).

Maggie asked for details as it pertains to the Whicham area. Concern expressed as to the speed. Quick but possibly not thorough if done by March.

Chris Shaw: Two major columns: One the geology must first be found to be sound. Second it **must** be a willing community.

Maggie Cummins: Surely the first part would look at whether it is sound, regarding safety assessments, etc and then go to the community?

Chris Shaw: RWMS failed last time because they never got to a specific area. This time it is being done the other way round. Firstly, identify an area that is geologically sound and then present the findings to the community.

Maggie Cummins said that the Southern Boundary potential extension was not yet concluded and noted that some villages (Kirksanton) potentially in the extension were only partially in it, yet it would still impact the area whether in or out of the potential extension.

Chris Shaw replied by stating that the area to be looked at would be at ward level.

3 (c)

The Chair intervened to express his deep concern, that the 'Focus' groups proposed by the working group would cut across the Parish Councils, thereby potentially disenfranchising Parish/Town Councils. The process does not give Parish Councils the time or the information that would enable them to engage with their residents. Currently the conversation coming via CALC and the RWM is not reaching down into the parishes. Recalling the experience with the pylons, it is feared this could be imposed on us. The Chair strongly asserted the need to start talking to us [the Parish/Town Councils].

Further dialogue ensued. Chris Shaw said that CALC would do whatever it could to engage the Parish Councils. The programme is coming from the RWM. The restrictions imposed due to the pandemic could be part of the problem and the normal process would be to approach the parish councils. Chris said that some parishes, like Whicham / Millom Without are more engaged than others and acknowledged that others required information. RWM want to engage with the parishes via CALC, but CALC does not have its own information.

Proposed: Chair – Dave Savage proposed that further off-line discussion was held with the CALC representatives so to start a two-way fully engaged process with the Parish Councils. The Chair asked that each PC/TC nominate two representatives so a further discussion can be arranged with Chris Shaw and Cllr. Andy Pratt. The Chair went to say that it is imperative there is transparency and a two-way conversation, which at the moment is lacking. Proposed that Chris takes the matter to the RWM working group, so an open conversation can commence. There is a pressing need for the process to have greater clarity and supporting timetable.

Dave Faulkner responded that communication was still at the planning stage last week. Aim is to go around the whole of Copeland to ensure people understand what a GDF is. Currently the objective is to produce monthly newsletters which have been issued to parish councils.

Nick Gamble reiterated the Chair's position that it appears the Copeland Working Group is fitting everyone into a process. Millom Without parish council would have liked to have been engaged earlier, but it did not have the specific information that would have enabled it to talk to the community. Nick stated that the consultation programme feels somewhat "railroaded" by the RWM Working Group that will only invite in the parishes when the working group wants them in.

Chris responded. CALC had invited itself in to ensure parish councils get the information that is available. There is no intention of by-passing the parish councils.

The Chair re-stated that Parish Councils need the courtesy and time to inform themselves and prepare for public engagement. At present no one has established what residents feel. Parish councils do not want RWM, entering public engagement prior to the parish councils being able to establish their own format for the conversation with residents.

Dave Faulkner said that there have been communications [on-line] inviting people to talk to the working group since mid-December. Little response. This may be due to the pandemic. Still option available to give a written opinion.

Action: The Chair will set up an off-line discussion with CALC representatives.

Chris Shaw then left the meeting.

3 (d)

The conversation continued between members as to where each parish stands at this moment.

- **Whicham:** Maggie Cummins does not feel as if the parish has tackled the issue in detail nor does it possess the appropriate information. The parish council needs to know precisely of what the assessment procedure consists. There must be criteria to be followed, beyond the geological assessment. Currently too vague.
- **MTC:** Bob Kelly said that no one expected Millom Town Council to be directly involved as working group is looking at other areas in Copeland. It does impact the area and MTC would like to engage in more discussion when the details are out. Dave Billing added that he wanted the Town Council involved, but to date received no feedback from the RWM working group. Bob Kelly concurred.
- **Bootle:** Dave Faulkner: Noted invitation to speak with RWM arrived last night. South Copeland expressed interest in the process. Understands parish councils want to learn more. Anne Todd: Parishes need more clarification. Dave Faulkner wants to know long term benefits and ability to redress deprivation resulting from closure industries in the South Copeland Area.
- **Millom Without:** Nick Gamble is putting information on Facebook and website. Parish seeks alternative views and does not want to just rely on RWM, hopefully this will result in a balanced return from the electorate.

Irene Rogan added a comment reminding members that the Millom area was a place of natural beauty. The impact on the environment must not be forgotten in the process of weighing up the benefits and the costs.

The Chair closed this part of the meeting.

4. South Copeland Partnership Governance.

- a) Approval minutes of last meeting.
Proposed: Anne Todd
Seconded: Bob Kelly
- b) Terms of reference documents. Updates will be sent out to parish councils from the Chair
- c) ENW: Disappointedly, the bid for a solar system on Unit 3 failed. Chair had worked closely with Paul Stewart to deliver this new funding.

5. One Cumbria Unitary Authority

Cllr Hitchen could not do the presentation as he had to give his apologies. Susanne Cooper, Community Development Officer for Cumbria County Council briefly outlined the consultation process. The process started on Monday 22nd Feb and closes on 21st April 2021. There are four proposals currently under consultation. Charts and statistics are available on the website. Important that as many people as possible respond. It is hoped that the outcome will result in saving money and more efficient governance. Secretary of state to make the final decision. NB This years County elections are postponed until May 2022 pending the decision.

6. Cumbria Hidden Coast

Dave Faulkner reported there had been delays due to Covid-19.

- The cycle path creation work has stalled due to the pandemic, but work is intended. Sellafield is supporting the repairs in the Seascale area where there was storm damage. The golf club refused use of their land.
- Art work, continues to produce ideas along various parts of the coast.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge route – Millom to Whitehaven postponed until May 2022 due to the pandemic. Entry fees to runners who booked places will be returned. A comment was made about litter around the recycling bins in Haverigg, being a disgrace that would give a bad impression if seen by runners. Action: Matter to be articulated via Millom Town Council. Dave Billing said he would raise the issue and see that MTC make it a priority to relocate the skips. • Muncaster Hub developing walk-way through trees. Currently looking at a feasibility study where something else could go in. • Silecroft Café Hub- Construction should have started. Delayed due to a few legal issues. Maggie Cummins reported delays in the legal process. The parish council completed the lease to the business that will run the café. Whicham council own the land and CBC have a plot of and. Land to be leased to Copeland. The lease must be in place before appointing building contractors. The matter has been on-going since summer 2020. The work should have started in Jan 2021. The delay may be an advantage as the footings will be put in during better weather. Café will probably be ready by summer 2022. • Irene Rogan reported on the art program. ‘Deep Time’ is the new title for the program on the ‘Hidden Coast’. Aldo is curating for Copeland. There are fifteen art commissions created by national and world-wide artists, who are high profile. It is a £1.6 million project. Irene said it was a brilliant project and stated that she had exhibited with one or two on the list.
<p>7. Stronger Town Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Morris-Eyton, Chair of the Town Board, reported that the bid was submitted on time at the end of January 2021. Awaiting response at the end of March. The next stage will be to flesh out the business cases for resubmission. It will be twelve months before there can be any delivery on the ground. Specialist consultants will be brought to assist the Board and CBC in progressing the Millom Town Bid. • Accelerator Fund has been a success. Work on the play area in the park is in progress. There is money for an App Trail around Millom about Norman Nicholson. The legal issues delaying the progress of the running track have been sorted.
<p>8. Cycling Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonathan Powell suggested a way that could help progress the South Copeland Cycle Plan, creating a continuous route between Silecroft and Duddon Bridge via Millom. Cllr. Keith Hitchen relayed information about a successful scheme in Barrow-in-Furness, that if copied could get results. Barrow had organised and formed a group to create a LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) involving the MP and three CCC Councillors and been successful in raising £850K worth of funding. • Jonathan has visited and spoken to the Barrow LCWIP. Jonathan proposed forming a South Copeland LCWIP which would consult with cyclists and develop a plan, consult with landowners and work with Cumbria County Council. Representatives would be needed from each constituent parish/town on the route. Action: PC’s to seek volunteers to support the formation of a LCWIP. (PC’s are encouraged to get name within the next two weeks)
<p>9. Community Skills Centre at HMP Haverigg</p>	<p>Dave Billing attended a workshop at HMP Haverigg regarding the establishment of the Copeland Skills Centre Project. It is a Cumbria wide project training all people and prisoners in all aspects of industry but focussing on the nuclear industry. Sellafield and fifty other companies involved in investing in the project. The project promises to be of great benefit to the area and will aid in the rehabilitation of offenders, by providing people with marketable skills. There is a presentation pack. Dave Savage will send it out a copy with the minutes,</p>

providing members with more detailed information. **Action:** Chair to send out presentation pack with minutes of this meeting.

10.
 - There was no further business the meeting ended at 20.58. Next meeting TBA

David Savage

Chair – South Copeland Partnership

4th March 21