Feedback report on the public engagement event held in January 2018 about proposed mine water treatment schemes for discharges in Nenthead and Nentsberry

The Coal Authority and Environment Agency held a public consultation event on 25 January 2018 to provide an update on the proposed scheme to clean up polluted mine water from the Haggs adit.

The event was designed to update the public on final proposals for a scheme for the Haggs site in advance of submitting a planning application in February 2018.

The event was widely advertised using the GOV.UK website, letters to local residents, posters and notices in public spaces, local newspaper advertising and social media. 39 people were recorded as attending the event.

Feedback at the event was collected through evaluation questionnaires, comments made to the team during conversations and comments written on flip charts during the event.

Venue and arrangements

The event was in the form of an open house session which allowed people to drop in at their convenience from 8am until 8pm on Thursday 25th January.

As for previous engagement events on the scheme, the Nenthead Village Hall was chosen as the most appropriate venue because of the large open space that would easily accommodate the large maps and display boards.

A single set of display boards for the Haggs site was available for people to view and members of staff from the Coal Authority and Environment Agency project team were available to speak to on a one to one basis. Support was provided by Wilson Sherriff, consultation and engagement specialists.

A selection of display boards from the previous events were also made available to allow people to refresh their memories of the progress made to date, and to allow any new attendees to understand why a treatment scheme was needed and how the preferred site had been identified.

Purpose of the event

The purpose of the event was to give members of the local community a final chance to review the plans for the Haggs scheme, to gain their views before proposals are finalised and a planning application is submitted, and to give those attending an introduction on how to access details of the planning application once submitted to Cumbria County Council.

Summary of the themes discussed

A range of views and comments were expressed at the event and in evaluation questionnaires submitted by email or post. A detailed review of the comments can be viewed in the independent feedback report below.
Independent feedback report from Nenthead public engagement event held in January 2018 – summary of the most frequent points raised.

**Choice of site**

A number of people commented that the site was the most appropriate, causing the least disruption locally.

**Need for the scheme**

Some attendees at the event continued to question the need for the scheme and asked whether there would be any potential benefits for the community. Others said that they hoped the scheme worked, if approved, and looked forward to seeing more and bigger fish, as well as other wildlife in the River Nent and surrounding area.

**Odour control**

A new display board was used to help explain the treatment process and how the potential for creating odour would be managed. This is still a concern for people, but the board was helpful in explaining the process.

**Construction**

There were a number of comments about ensuring that disruption, including road closures, was minimised during construction. Concern was also raised about the behaviour and communications with the contractors who would be leading the construction phase, if planning permission is granted. Several people, attending the event raised concerns about how the contractors had undertaken recent ground investigations work in the area.

**Checkweirs and a recent flooding incident**

Apart from comments on the Haggs specific scheme, comments were also taken from the team about work already completed in the area by the Coal Authority. Some people expressed continued concern that the site where the checkweirs had been dredged had still not be restored, following the dredging work last autumn. The ground is rutted and muddy and sections of the footpath adjacent to the river have been covered with sediment from the river.

There is also a view from the community that flooding on the A689 approaching the bridge near the Nent Hall Hotel is worse as a result of the works undertaken in the field opposite, where new check weirs have been installed.

**Next steps**

Having listened to the public’s comments during the events, the project team will finalise the detailed application for the Haggs site and are planning to submit a planning application in February 2018. Once the application has been validated by the Planning Authority, Cumbria County Council, there will be a period during which the public can submit their views on the application to the Council, for consideration during the determination process.
For the proposed Caplecleugh site, the project team plan to provide an update to the local community in spring 2018 with the latest information on this project. A review of the work at the two checkweir sites will be undertaken as a separate matter.

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