

St Andrews Mirehouse (C of E)

Question	Response
Letter	<p>On Monday, 9 December 2012, we held a PCC meeting and on our agenda we included a response to the consultation process.</p> <p>Mirehouse (to the south of Whitehaven) is divided by the rail link that runs down the west coast of Cumbria; since there would be an increased usage of this rail link this is a matter of particular relevance to us.</p> <p>Here are some reflections from our discussion:</p> <p>Genuineness of Consultation:</p> <p>Whilst we were impressed by the thorough-going and comprehensive nature of the consultation process, several members, nonetheless, raised the issue of how genuine the consultation process would be. We have all taken part in 'consultation' processes only for our insights to be completely disregarded. The question was asked that if the project (not just the geological surveys etc) were to be given the final go-ahead would that be subjected to some kind of local referendum of the local population (who may not have confidence in the ability or motivation of their local councillors to make a sound decision)?</p> <p>Members were very mindful of their responsibility to ensure a secure decision was made as this will affect our future generations quite substantially.</p> <p>Previous Geological Surveys:</p> <p>Members recalled a geological boring survey some 15 years ago. The video presentation made passing reference to a former survey which concluded West Cumbria was unsuitable. What has changed since then? What new information has come to light? It was felt that the public would need more information about this former survey before we can simply dismiss it's findings.</p> <p>Economic and Environmental Considerations:</p> <p>Whilst the council recognised the attractive economic promise that could be represented by this development that came some way down our list of considerations - such a facility must be as safe as it is possible to make it, and it must be as sensitive as possible to the environment - especially in this beautiful part of England.</p> <p>We also felt that some more information on the environmental implications of construction and eventual running of such a facility would be helpful i.e. how much more freight noise would the rail link that runs through our housing estate cause?</p> <p>Vote on whether they can go to the next step:</p> <p>The council took a vote on whether we felt it was prudent to proceed to the next step in the process of surveying the area, the results were:</p>

12 voted for
2 voted against

In summary, St Andrew's PCC felt that the consultation was being carried out in a responsible and open manner. However, more detail needs to be supplied on previous surveys that ruled out the area for such a development and more environmental impacts should be provided as we move towards conclusive decisions.