



The Coal  
Authority



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**RTPI**  
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For the Attention of: Chris Johnston – Case Officer  
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

[By Email: [planning@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk)]

21 July 2021

Dear Chris

**PLANNING APPLICATION: SMD/2021/0420**

**Proposed additional car parking area, associated landscaping and external lighting;  
The Woodhouse Hospital, Lockwood Road, Cheadle**

Thank you for your consultation letter of 15 July 2021 seeking the views of the Coal Authority on the above planning application.

The Coal Authority is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. As a statutory consultee, the Coal Authority has a duty to respond to planning applications and development plans in order to protect the public and the environment in mining areas.

**The Coal Authority Response: Fundamental Concern**

The application site falls within the defined Development High Risk Area.

The Coal Authority records indicate that within the application site and surrounding area there are coal mining features and hazards which need to be considered in relation to the determination of this planning application. In this instance the site is likely to have been subject to historic unrecorded underground coal mining at shallow depth. Our records also indicate one recorded mine entry (shaft) within, or within 20m of the planning boundary.

The applicant has submitted a Coal Mining Risk Assessment (June 2021, prepared by Martin Environmental Solutions) in support of the development proposal. However, the Coal Authority considers that this does not adequately address the inter-relationship between the proposed layout and the recorded mine entry, which could be within the planning boundary and within influencing distance of the car parking area. We must therefore **object** to the proposed development in principle.

Whilst the Coal Authority acknowledges that no built development is proposed and that the proposed investigation of potential shallow workings could be ensured by condition, the shaft clearly poses a risk to public safety and property and no clear commitment is made within the report to investigate/remediate the shaft.

The layout is for approval and it is therefore necessary to consider the inter-relationship between this mine entry and the site. From the information supplied there appears to be no evidence of any intrusive site investigations to either locate the mine entry, or to calculate its zone of influence (worst-case scenario etc.)

Any form of development over or within the influencing distance of a mine entry can be dangerous and has the potential for significant risks if not undertaken appropriately. For more information with regards to this issue, The Coal Authority's adopted policy, Development and Mine Entries, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-on-or-within-the-influencing-distance-of-mine-entries>

The Coal Authority does not support in principle the provision of development within the zone of influence of a mine entry, even where this has been treated due to the public safety risks arising.

#### The Coal Authority Recommendation to the LPA

The Coal Authority's information has revealed that there is a significant risk to the development from a recorded mine entry (shaft).

The applicant should therefore be advised of the Coal Authority's view as technical expert in the field of coal mining legacy and land instability. Furthermore, they should be required to carry out further work in the form of amended plans illustrating the precise or conjectured position (worst-case scenario) of the mine entry and its respective zone of influence with the proposed development avoiding them. Any remedial/mitigatory measures should then be proposed as part of the revised Report, as necessary, to address any issues of land instability.

The Coal Authority considers that this issue goes to the heart of whether planning permission should be granted; it is not an issue therefore that would be appropriate for the imposition of conditions in this case.

The Coal Authority would be very pleased to receive for further consultation and comment any additional information prepared and submitted by the applicant.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

**Chris MacArthur** *B.Sc.(Hons), DipTP, MRTPI*  
**Planning Liaison Manager**

## General Information for the Applicant

Building over or within the influencing distance of a mine entry (shaft or adit) can be dangerous and has the potential for significant risks to both the development and the occupiers if not undertaken appropriately. The Coal Authority would draw your attention to our adopted policy regarding new development and mine entries:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-on-or-within-the-influencing-distance-of-mine-entries>

Under the Coal Industry Act 1994 any intrusive activities, including initial site investigation boreholes, and/or any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings/coal mine entries for ground stability purposes require the prior written permission of The Coal Authority, since such activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Failure to obtain permission will result in trespass, with the potential for court action. In the event that you are proposing to undertake such work in the Forest of Dean local authority area our permission may not be required; it is recommended that you check with us prior to commencing any works. Application forms for Coal Authority permission and further guidance can be obtained from The Coal Authority's website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property>

## Disclaimer

The above consultation response is provided by The Coal Authority as a Statutory Consultee and is based upon the latest available coal mining data on the date of the response, and electronic consultation records held by The Coal Authority since 1 April 2013. The comments made are also based upon only the information provided to The Coal Authority by the Local Planning Authority and/or has been published on the Council's website for consultation purposes in relation to this specific planning application. The views and conclusions contained in this response may be subject to review and amendment by The Coal Authority if additional or new data/information (such as a revised Coal Mining Risk Assessment) is provided by the Local Planning Authority or the Applicant for consultation purposes.

