



The Coal  
Authority



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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)]**

8 August 2022

Dear Chris

**PLANNING APPLICATION: SMD/2022/0313**

**Demolition of existing yard sheds and erection of one single storey dwelling at Newfold Farm, Sytch Road, Brown Edge**

Thank you for your consultation letter of 19 July 2022 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: Material Consideration**

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

More specifically, the Coal Authority's information indicates that the site lies in an area where historic unrecorded coal mining activity is likely to have taken place at shallow

depth. Voids and broken ground associated with such workings can pose a risk of ground instability and may give rise to the emission of mine gases.

The planning application is accompanied by a Coal Risk Assessment report (6 July 2020, prepared by RGS). Based on a review of relevant sources of coal mining and geological information, the submitted report concludes that possible unrecorded shallow coal mine workings pose a potential risk of subsidence at the site.

Accordingly, the report goes on to make appropriate recommendations for the carrying out of intrusive ground investigations, in the form of the drilling of boreholes, in order to establish the depth and thickness of shallow coal seams/workings to conclusively confirm whether any unrecorded shallow mine workings pose a risk to the proposed development.

The Coal Authority welcomes the recommendation for the undertaking of intrusive site investigations. These should be designed and carried out by competent persons and should be appropriate to assess the ground conditions on the site in order to establish the coal-mining legacy present and the risks it may pose to the development.

The report does not outline the measures to be taken in the event that mine workings are encountered within influencing distance of the site surface. The results of the investigations should therefore be interpreted by competent persons and used to inform any remedial works and/or mitigation measures that may be necessary to ensure the safety and stability of the proposed development as a whole, including the building and external parts of the site such as car parking areas and driveway. Such works/measures may include grouting stabilisation works and foundation solutions.

The applicant should note that Permission is required from our Permit and Licensing Team before undertaking any activity, such as ground investigation and ground works, which may disturb Coal Authority property. Any comments that the Coal Authority may have made in a Planning context are without prejudice to the outcomes of a Permit application.

The submitted report correctly notes that there are no recorded mine entries present within the site, but highlights the potential for unrecorded mine entries to be present. We therefore welcome the recommendation that vigilance should be maintained on site for any anomalous ground conditions which may be indicative of an unrecorded mine entry. Should any such feature be encountered, appropriate treatment will be required in accordance with details permitted under a Coal Authority Permit.

### Mine Gas

It should be noted that wherever coal resources or coal mine features exist at shallow depth or at the surface, there is the potential for mine gases to exist. These risks should always be considered by the LPA. The Planning & Development team at the Coal Authority, in its role of statutory consultee in the planning process, only comments on gas issues if our data indicates that gas emissions have been recorded on the site. However, the absence of such a comment should not be interpreted to imply that there are no gas risks present. Whether or not specific emissions have been noted by the Coal Authority, local planning authorities should seek their own technical advice on the gas hazards that may exist, and appropriate measures to be implemented, from technically competent personnel.

### SuDS

Where SuDS are proposed as part of the development scheme consideration will need to be given to the implications of this in relation to the stability and public safety risks posed by coal mining legacy. The developer should seek their own advice from a technically competent person to ensure that a proper assessment has been made of the potential interaction between hydrology, the proposed drainage system and ground stability, including the implications this may have for any mine workings which may be present beneath the site.

### The Coal Authority Recommendation to the LPA

The Coal Authority concurs with the recommendations of the Coal Risk Assessment report; that coal mining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that investigations are required, along with possible remedial measures, in order to ensure the safety and stability of the proposed development.

As such, should planning permission be granted for the proposed development, we would recommend that the following conditions are included on the Decision Notice:

- 1. No development shall commence (excluding the demolition of existing structures and site clearance) until;***
  - a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past shallow coal mining activity; and***
  - b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is made safe and stable for the development proposed.***

*The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.*

2. *Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.*

The Coal Authority therefore has **no objection** to the proposed development **subject to the imposition of the above conditions**. This is our recommendation for condition wording. Whilst we appreciate that you may wish to make some amendment to the choice of words, we would respectfully request that the specific parameters to be satisfied are not altered by any changes that may be made.

The following statement provides the justification why the Coal Authority considers that a pre-commencement condition is required in this instance:

*The undertaking of intrusive site investigations, prior to the commencement of development, is considered to be necessary to ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigatory measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site. This is in order to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with paragraphs 183 and 184 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the above matters further.

Yours sincerely

*James Smith*

**James Smith** *BSc. (Hons), Dip.URP, MRTPI*  
**Planning and Development Manager**

### General Information for the Applicant

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. Application forms for Coal Authority permission and further guidance can be obtained from The Coal Authority's website at: [www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property](http://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 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.

*In formulating this response The Coal Authority has taken full account of the professional conclusions reached by the competent person who has prepared the Coal Mining Risk Assessment or other similar report. In the event that any future claim for liability arises in relation to this development The Coal Authority will take full account of the views, conclusions and mitigation previously expressed by the professional advisers for this development in relation to ground conditions and the acceptability of development.*