



The Coal
Authority



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Learning Partner

200 Lichfield Lane
Berry Hill
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG18 4RG

Tel: 01623 637 119 (Planning Enquiries)

Email: planningconsultation@coal.gov.uk

Web: www.gov.uk/coalauthority

For the Attention of: Ms J. Townsend – Case Officer
Bury Council

[By Email: development.control@bury.gov.uk]

20 October 2023

Dear Ms Townsend

PLANNING APPLICATION: 70078

**Provision of a new SEN classroom unit at Woodbank County Primary School,
Brandlesholme Road, Bury, BL8 1AX**

Thank you for your consultation letter of 12 October 2023 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 for Energy Security and Net Zero. 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 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.

The Coal Authority's information suggests that the site lies in an area where historic unrecorded coal mining 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 Mining Risk Assessment report (19 October 2023, prepared by the Coal Authority's commercial arm), which draws upon relevant sources of coal mining and geological information, including the results of BGS data relating to boreholes undertaken in the locality.

The report acknowledges that Coal Authority data suggests that the site is in an area of probable shallow coal mine workings associated with the Arley coal seam. However, given the absence of the seam in the boreholes undertaken adjacent to the site along with the presence of a preglacial river channel, the report author considers that the seam has either been eroded beneath the site or outcrops further south and is therefore unlikely to influence the proposed development.

The report concludes that the risk to the site from mining features is low and advises that an intrusive investigation is not required in this regard.

Mine Gas

It should be noted that wherever coal resources or coal mine features exist there is the potential for mine gases to exist. These risks should always be considered by the LPA. In this particular instance, the submitted report advises the developer to undertake a detailed Gas Risk Assessment.

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.

The Coal Authority Recommendation to the LPA

The Coal Authority's Planning & Development Team considers that the content and conclusions of the Coal Mining Risk Assessment report are sufficient for the purposes of the planning system and meet the requirements of the NPPF in demonstrating that the application site is safe and stable for the proposed development. We therefore wish to raise **no objection** to the proposed development. However, further more detailed considerations of ground conditions and foundation design may be required as part of any subsequent building regulations application.

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

Yours sincerely

James Smith

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

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.