



The Coal
Authority



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For the Attention of: Ms H. Leach – Case Officer
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

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

11 October 2023

Dear Ms Leach

PLANNING APPLICATION: 70002

Demolition of existing school buildings/temporary leisure centre and erection of a two storey temporary school building, external landscaping and associated site infrastructure at Site of Radcliffe Leisure Centre, Spring Lane, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 2SZ - RECONSULTATION

Thank you for your consultation email of 3 October 2023 seeking the further views of the Coal Authority on the above planning application.

The Coal Authority Response:

As you are aware, the application site falls partly within the defined Development High Risk Area. The Coal Authority's information indicates that the north western part of the site lies in an area where historic unrecorded coal mining is likely to have taken place at shallow depth. Such workings can pose a risk of ground instability and may give rise to the emission of mine gases.

You will recall that we last commented on this application in a letter to the LPA dated 4 September 2023. In this letter, we requested clarification from the applicant's technical consultants as to whether or not they are satisfied that the results of previous investigations detailed in the supporting Preliminary Ground Investigation Report are sufficient to conclude that the site is safe and stable for the scheme of development currently under consideration by the LPA.

We are therefore pleased to note that the LPA is now in receipt of an email from the planning agent, Peter Campbell of Tetra Tech, dated 20 September 2023, which includes additional commentary on coal mining legacy matters from Brownfield Solutions who undertook ground investigations at the site.

Based upon a further review of the results of boreholes drilled across the wider site, Brownfield Solutions are satisfied that any coal seams present beneath the proposed temporary accommodation would benefit from sufficient overlying rock cover to ensure that the collapse of any unrecorded mine workings present would not affect surface stability. They conclude that the temporary school building is unlikely to be impacted by potential coal workings.

The Coal Authority Recommendation to the LPA

The Coal Authority's Planning & Development Team considers that the supporting Desk Study, subsequent Preliminary Ground Investigation Report and supplementary comments from Brownfield Solutions 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. The Coal Authority therefore wishes 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.

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

It should be noted that 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 coalmining 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.

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.