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For the attention of: Mr R Grant

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

[By email: development.management@rochdale.gov.uk]

20 May 2025

Dear Mr Grant

Re: 25/00418/OUT

Application for outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for a national scale employment development, comprising Storage & Distribution (Use Class B8) and Industrial (Use Classes B2, E(g)(ii) and E (g)(iii)); Land Bound To The North By Brightley Brook, Pilsworth Fisheries, Pilsworth Road & Heywood Distribution Park, The West By Whittle Brook, The East By Birch Industrial Park & Agricultural Fields, And The South By The M62 Corridor

Thank you for your notification of 6 May 2025 seeking the views of the Coal Authority on the above.

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**

I have reviewed the proposals and confirm that the application site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development High Risk Area. Therefore within the application site and surrounding area

there are recorded coal mining features present at surface or shallow depths. The risk these features may pose should be considered as part of the planning process.

The Coal Authority records indicate that a thick coal seam outcrops at or close to the surface of the site which may have been worked in the past and historic unrecorded underground coal mining is likely to have taken place beneath the site 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 site also lies within a Surface Coal Resource Zone.

The Coal Authority records indicate that the site contains 5 no. mine entries (shafts) for which the Coal Authority holds no treatment details and, due to plotting inaccuracies, there could be some deviation, by several metres from the inferred locations. An untreated or an inadequately treated mine entry and its resultant zone of influence pose a significant risk not only to surface stability but also public safety.

As you will be aware, any form of development over or within the influencing distance of a mine entry can be dangerous and raises significant safety and engineering risks and exposes all parties to potential financial liabilities. The Coal Authority has adopted a policy where, as a general precautionary principle, the building over or within the influencing distance of a mine entry should wherever possible be avoided, even once treated. Our adopted policy on the matter can be found at:

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

The applicant has obtained appropriate and up-to-date coal mining information for the proposed development site. This information has been used to inform a Coal Mining Risk Assessment (or equivalent) (v.2 February 2025, prepared by Tetra Tech Ltd) to accompany the planning application.

Based on this review of information obtained, the report confirms that a ground investigation will be necessary to establish the exact situation with regard to potential shallow coal mine workings and to assess any implications on future development layout posed by the recorded on-site mine entries.

Given that these recorded mine entries are within the site boundary, after the undertaking of an intrusive site investigation, the Coal Authority would expect the finalised site layout to be informed by their presence and these features and their zones of influence depicted on the drawings. In this regard, we note that the provision of the indicative development layout options, none of which appear to have been designed around the recorded mine entries and their zones of influence. However, we fully acknowledge that the application is seeking to establish the acceptability of the principle of the proposed development and that siting is not currently being considered by the Local Planning Authority.

Prior to the undertaking of any investigations, the Coal Authority considers that it would be prudent for the applicant to carry out a positional review of the mine entries from source data, to ensure that investigations are based upon the most accurate best plot positions for these features.

The intrusive site investigations should be designed and undertaken 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 and inform any remedial works and/or mitigation measures that may be necessary.

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

Sustainable Urban Drainage

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 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 Mining Risk Assessment Report; that coal mining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that intrusive site investigation works should be undertaken prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues on the site.

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. Prior to the submission of any Reserved Matters application seeking approval of a detailed layout of development, a scheme of intrusive investigations shall be carried out to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity, including works to locate recorded mine shafts (5no.) and to establish whether mine shafts are present within the site. These works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.
2. Any application seeking approval of a detailed layout of development shall be accompanied by: the findings of the intrusive site investigations (required by condition X above); a proposed layout plan which identifies the position of the recorded mine shafts, where located, and the extent of their potential zones of influence, and suitable no-build zones around these features.
3. Prior to the commencement of above ground development (excluding demolition of existing structures and site clearance), any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, shall be implemented in full in order to ensure that the site is made safe and stable for the proposed development. These works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.
4. 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 conditions to secure the above**.

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 187, 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Yours sincerely

Ashley Langrick

Ashley Langrick BA (HONS) Dip TRP MRTPI

Planning and Development Manager (Corporate Projects)

PLEASE INCLUDE AS INFORMATIVE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS ON ANY PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED

Ground Investigations:

Any intrusive activities which disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits) requires a Mining Remediation Authority Permit. Such activities could include site investigation boreholes, excavations for foundations, piling activities, other ground works and any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Application forms for Mining Remediation Authority permission and further guidance can be obtained from the Mining Remediation Authority's website at: www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property

[What is a perm it and how to get one? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Shallow coal seams:

In areas where shallow coal seams are present caution should be taken when carrying out any on site burning or heat focused activities. To check your site for coal mining features on or near to the surface the [Coal Authority interactive map viewer](#) allows you to view selected coal mining information in your browser graphically. To check a particular location either enter a post code or use your mouse to zoom in to view the surrounding area.

The Coal Authority's records indicate that surface coal resource is present on the site, although this should not be taken to imply that mineral extraction would be economically viable, technically

feasible or environmentally acceptable. As you will be aware those authorities with responsibility for minerals planning and safeguarding will have identified where they consider minerals of national importance are present in your area and related policy considerations. As part of the planning application decision making process consideration should be given to such advice in respect of the indicated surface coal resource.

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.