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For the attention of: Ryan Killeen – Case Officer

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

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

12 August 2026

Dear Mr Killeen

Re: PL/2026/0692

Erection of a mixed-use building comprising of a self-storage facility (Use Class B8) and ground floor commercial units (Use Class E) together with associated access, car parking, servicing infrastructure and landscaping; Old Hall Street, Middleton, M24 1AG

Thank you for your notification of 4 August 2026 seeking the views of the Coal Authority on the above.

The Coal Authority (now trading as the Mining Remediation 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 the site lies within an area of probable historic unrecorded shallow coal mining and coal seams of workable thickness infer to outcrop at or close to the surface of the north eastern area which may have been historically worked from the surface to shallow depths beneath the site. These coal mining features currently present a risk to public safety and surface stability for the proposed development.

The planning application is accompanied by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report (6081/VSW CMRA V1.0, Nov-21) prepared by GeoAssist Limited for commercial land use at the site. The Report has been informed by an appropriate range of sources of historical, geological and coal mining information.

We acknowledge that the above Report is dated November 2021, however the report authors have assessed the site, in the context of commercial development and therefore we would have no objections to the LPA considering the content and conclusions made therein.

Having carried out their review of the available information the report authors consider that the available data is inconclusive regarding the presence or otherwise of worked coal seams beneath the site and therefore the risk is currently classified as low to moderate. In order to mitigate the risk recommendations have been made that for any significant development, ground investigations (rotary boreholes drilled to depths of 35m) should be undertaken.

It is noted that whilst the report authors identify two coal seams inferred to outcrop within the site (Higher Bents Mine and Lower Bents Mine) their positions shown on plan ref: 6081VSW differs to the location shown on our records. A review of both BGS and our data may be considered necessary prior to the undertaking of intrusive site investigations in order to inform the design of such works. However, the intrusive site investigations should be designed and undertaken by competent persons to ensure that these are appropriate to assess the ground conditions on the site to establish the coal-mining legacy present and

the risks it may pose to the development and inform any mitigation measures that may be necessary.

The applicant should be aware 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

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.

Sustainable 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

In light of the above, the Coal Authority recommends the imposition of the following conditions:

1. No above ground development shall commence until;
 - a) a scheme of intrusive site investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past 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.

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 Coal Authority has **no objection** to the proposed development **subject to the imposition of the conditions** to secure the above.

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 & 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is also requested that the following Informative Notes are included on any planning permission granted:

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 permit and how to get one? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property)

In areas where shallow coal seams are present caution should be taken when carrying out any on site burning or heat focused activities.

If any future development has the potential to encounter coal seams which require excavating, for example excavation of building foundations, service trenches, development platforms, earthworks, non-coal mineral operations, an Incidental Coal Agreement will be required. Further information regarding Incidental Coal Agreements can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidental-coal-agreement/guidance-notes-for-applicants-for-incidental-coal-agreements>

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely

D Roberts

Deb Roberts M.Sc. MRTPI

Planning & 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 and the electronic consultation records held by the Coal Authority since 1 April 2013. The comments made are also based on the information provided to the Coal Authority by the Local Planning Authority and/or information that has been published on the Council's website for consultation purposed 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 advisors for this development in relation to ground conditions and the acceptability of development.