

The COAL AUTHORITY



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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*This matter is being dealt with by
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15th November 2007

Director of Community Services
County Hall
Glenfield
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE		
16 NOV 2007		
HEAD W	REFER 1 SW	REFER 2 NH

Dear Sir

Minerals Spatial Strategy – Further Consultation

I refer to the above consultation and wish to make the following general comments on behalf of the Coal Authority :-

1. As the strategy states, within parts of Leicestershire coal has been mined in the past by opencast and underground methods. There are also mine entries recorded, which have been sunk in association with the past underground mining. There is currently one opencast site, Long Moor, developing in the county and reserves of coal remain which could be worked in the future.
2. As owner of the coal the Coal Authority encourages and supports the working of coal in environmentally and socially acceptable ways to meet the market requirements. This forms part of national policy frameworks for a diverse and secure energy supply and incorporates the principles of sustainable development. This framework has been incorporated into policy documents such as MPG3, SPP16 and the draft Welsh Coal Tan which set challenging standards for surface coal mining in Britain. The Coal Authority believes that the coal industry can successfully operate within these principles and would wish to see flexibility maintained by Leicestershire County Council in order that operators have such options as exist to allow them to work the nation's coal assets.
3. The ability of the industry to continue its significant contribution to the energy supply in Britain is dependant equally on success in an extremely competitive energy market place and success through a rigorous planning regime. With site life varying typically between one and five years it is essential to bring environmentally acceptable new sites on stream to replace exhausted sites on a regular basis. There is no shortage of coal in the ground, the policy framework has been laid out and the Authority believe that the industry can find sites that meet the strict criteria provided that the planning system is conducted fairly and professionally.
4. It is essential that the planning process takes account of the occurrence of minerals which can only be worked where they occur. The role of surface mining is critical to the continued supply of good quality coal for the British market and it should be recognised that coal currently provides the basis for up to half of the electricity generated in Britain.
5. The Authority believes that the coal supply in Britain should contain a significant proportion of indigenous production. The electricity generators have made similar statements in their submissions to the recent Energy Review. Coal supplied from within Britain offers security against the volatility of international coal prices, freight rates, exchange rates and a reliance on port capacity. The 2006 Energy Review recognised the importance of indigenous energy resources as shown below :-

12. Notwithstanding the issue of removal of coal, all activities which intersect, disturb or enter any of the Authority's coal interests require the prior written permission of the Authority. Such activities include investigation and/or treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Developers should be reminded of this when submitting their proposals to Leicestershire County Council.

If you feel that a meeting to discuss the issues with myself or one of my colleagues would be useful, please contact me using the details below.

Yours faithfully



SIMON COOKE

Deputy Operations Manager