

# LEICESTERSHIRE MDF TO 2021 - SUBMISSION DRAFT - CORE STRATEGY AND DC POLICIES

## MINERALS – SPATIAL VISION AND OBJECTIVES

### SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF UK COAL MINING LTD

## 1 Introduction/General

1.1 UK Coal has, by virtue of its representations on the Preferred Options and Submission Draft Documents, as well as responding to the Inspectors Issues and Matters for Discussion, an overall interest in a number of Spatial Vision and Objectives matters upon which the Inspector has raised the following questions that are relevant to the Company:

- Items 1 and 2 – the key mineral issues facing the County and objectives of meeting national, regional and local requirements
- Item 6 – references to avoiding effects on the River Mease SAC
- Item 7 – green infrastructure and biodiversity

## 2 Consideration of the Issues

### *Items 1 and 2 – the key mineral issues facing the County and objectives of meeting national, regional and local requirements*

2.1 Based on our submissions on behalf of UK Coal to the preferred options documents and the submission draft MDF CS, along with our submissions on coal and fireclay supply in response to the Inspector's identification of specific issues and matters for discussion, we consider that one of the issues facing the county is as follows:

2.2 There is a demand for and a benefit from working environmentally acceptable sites for coal and fireclay. The issue is, where are such sites

likely to be located and how can the MDF CS provide a degree of certainty for both communities and the coal/clay industry and thus provide a delivery strategy (as far as it is able) for coal and clay supply and the delivery of strategic sites for the extraction of these minerals?

- 2.3 We accept that for coal there are no supply figures to plan for. There is a better indication of the levels of fireclay to be supplied, for which coal extraction is the most likely form of delivery. In the case of coal supply, and looking across the whole plan period, there should be an assumption that there will be some supplies of coal, potentially combined with fireclay supply, and the MDF CS should make the best possible attempt to show where environmentally acceptable sources may be found in the Leicestershire coalfield.

***Item 6 – references to avoiding effects on the River Mease SAC***

- 2.4 We would accept a reference in general policy – not specifically coal related policy/text - to avoiding unacceptable adverse effects on the River Mease SAC. We suggest though that this should be balanced with some wording about also taking into account potential beneficial effects to the River Mease SAC. Our reasoning is that mining schemes have the potential, particularly through reclamation schemes, to deliver long-term drainage improvements and habitats that could be of benefit to the SAC.

***Item 7 – green infrastructure and biodiversity***

- 2.5 As a general point, the reclamation of coal and clay workings can have a long-term beneficial effect in terms of the delivery of biodiversity benefits and perhaps also green infrastructure. We consider that the MDF CS could be more positive about this delivery aspect of site reclamation. In this regard it is worth noting that surface coal and clay workings have delivered significant contributions to woodland and new habitats in NW Leicestershire (thus benefiting the delivery of the National Forest). Future coal and clay working has the benefit to deliver more permanent benefits to this area of the County.