



**The Coal
Authority**

Coal Auth 1.

Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development DPD - Publication

Consultation Deadline – 9 June 2017

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Person Making Comments

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Date of Response

8 June 2017

Background on the Coal Authority

The Coal Authority is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. The Coal Authority was established by Parliament in 1994 to: undertake specific statutory responsibilities associated with the licensing of coal mining operations in Britain; handle subsidence claims which are not the responsibility of licensed coalmine operators; deal with property and historic liability issues; and provide information on coal mining.

The main areas of planning interest to the Coal Authority in terms of policy making relate to:

- the safeguarding of coal in accordance with the advice contained in The National Planning Policy Framework & Planning Practice Guidance;
- the establishment of a suitable policy framework for energy minerals including hydrocarbons in accordance with the advice contained in The National Planning Policy Framework & Planning Practice Guidance; and
- ensuring that future development is undertaken safely and reduces the future liability on the tax payer for subsidence and other mining related hazards claims arising from the legacy of coal mining in accordance with the advice in The National Planning Policy Framework & Planning Practice Guidance.

Background on Coal Mining Issues in Ribble Valley

Surface Coal Resources and Prior Extraction

As you will be aware, the Ribble Valley area contains coal resources which are capable of extraction by surface mining operations. These resources cover an area amounting to only approximately 1.0% of the Plan area.

The Coal Authority is keen to ensure that coal resources are not unnecessarily sterilised by new development. Where this may be the case, The Coal Authority would be seeking prior extraction of the coal. Prior extraction of coal also has the benefit of removing any potential land instability problems in the process.

Coal Mining Legacy

As you will also be aware, the area has been subjected to coal mining which will have left a legacy. Whilst most past mining is generally benign in nature, potential public safety and stability problems can be triggered and uncovered by development activities.

Problems can include collapses of mine entries and shallow coal mine workings, emissions of mine gases, incidents of spontaneous combustion, and the discharge of water from abandoned coal mines. These surface hazards can be found in any coal mining area, particularly where coal exists near to the surface, including existing residential areas.

Within the Plan area there are approximately 50 recorded mine entries and around 3 coal mining related hazards have been reported to The Coal Authority. A range of other mining legacy features are present, in total The Coal Authority High Risk Development Area covers approximately 0.21% of the Council area, in the very south around Read/Simonstone.

Specific Comments on the Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development DPD

The comments which The Coal Authority would like to make or see in relation to the above document are:

Representation No.1

All Proposed Allocations

Test of Soundness

Positively Prepared	Justified	Effective	Consistency to NPPF	Legal & Procedural Requirements Inc. Duty to Cooperate
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Comment – The Coal Authority notes that when considering any potential sites for allocation as part of the Local Plan process the Council should consider land instability alongside other planning issues as a potential constraint.

Although mining legacy occurs as a result of mineral workings, it is important that new development recognises the problems and how they can be positively addressed. However, it is important to note that land instability and mining legacy is not always a complete constraint on new development; rather it can be argued that because mining legacy matters have been addressed the new development is safe, stable and sustainable.

Mining legacy features can affect the potential deliverability of sites due to the cost of remediation, however this is very dependent upon the actual ground conditions present and the nature of the proposed land use.

We note however that none of the sites proposed for allocation in the consultation document fall within the defined Coal Authority Development High Risk Area.

Representation No.2

Proposals Map - General

Test of Soundness

Positively Prepared	Justified	Effective	Consistency to NPPF	Legal & Procedural Requirements Inc. Duty to Cooperate
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Comment - The Coal Authority supports proposed illustration of the Lancashire Mineral Safeguarding Areas on the draft Proposals Map (Policies Map).

Conclusion

The Coal Authority welcomes the opportunity to make these comments. The Coal Authority also wishes to continue to be consulted both informally if required and formally on future stages.

Thank you for your attention.

For and on behalf of

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