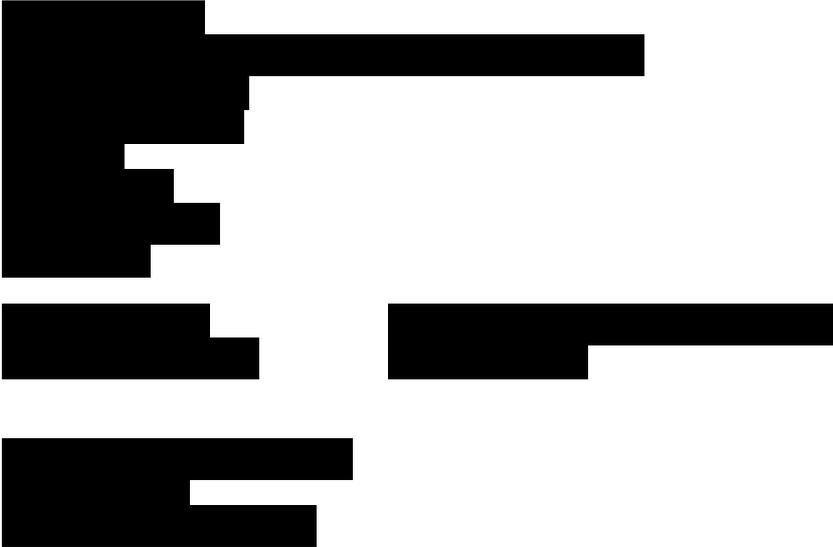




## **BASSETLAW PUBLICATION CORE STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

**Consultation Deadline – 20 December 2010**

The following contact details are the only ones you need for planning related matters, therefore please amend your database if necessary.



### **BACKGROUND ON THE COAL AUTHORITY**

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 coal mine operators; deal with property and historic liability issues and provide information on coal mining.

The Coal Authority set up a new Planning and Local Authority Liaison Department in 2008 to re-engage with the three planning systems across England, Scotland and Wales. The main areas of planning interest to The Coal Authority in terms of policy making relate to:

- the safeguarding of coal as a mineral in accordance with the advice contained in MPS1 and MPG3 in England; and
- ensuring that future development is undertaken safely and reduce 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 PPG14 and MPG3 in England.

### **COMMENTS ON THE BASSETLAW CORE STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES – ISSUES & OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

#### Coal Mining Legacy

As you will be aware, the Bassetlaw District 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 where coal exists near to the surface, including existing residential areas. The new Planning Department at The Coal Authority was created in 2008 to lead the work on defining areas where these legacy issues may occur.

Within the Bassetlaw District area the main coal mining legacy issues which need to be identified are mine entries and fissures concentrated in the west of the District.

The Coal Authority has records of over 171,000 coal mine entries across the coalfields, although there are thought to be many more unrecorded. Shallow coal which is present near the surface can give rise to stability, gas and potential spontaneous combustion problems. It is estimated that as many as 2 million properties of the 7.7 million properties across the coalfields may lie in areas with the potential to be affected by these problems. In our view, the planning processes in coalfield areas need to take account of the coal mining legacy issues. The principal source of guidance is PPG14, which despite its age still contains the science and best practice on how to safely treat unstable ground.

Within the Bassetlaw District area there are approximately 18 recorded mine entries. Mine entries may be located in built up areas, often under buildings where the owners and occupiers have no knowledge of their presence unless they have received a mining report during the property transaction. Mine entries can also be present in open space and areas of green infrastructure, potentially just under the surface of grassed areas. Mine entries and mining legacy matters should be considered by the Local Planning Authority to ensure site allocations and other policies and programmes will not lead to future public safety hazards.

Although mining legacy is as a result of mineral workings it is important that new development delivered through the Local Development Framework, recognises the problems and how they can be positively addressed. Land instability and mining legacy is not a complete constraint on the new development, rather it can be argued that because mining legacy matters have been addressed the new development is safe, stable and sustainable.

As The Coal Authority owns the coal and coal mine entries on behalf of the state, if a development is to intersect the ground then specific written permission of The Coal Authority may be required.

The Coal Authority has the following comments to make in relation to coal mining legacy issues:

**Representation No.1**

**Site/Policy/Paragraph/Proposal** – Policy DM14: Ground Conditions and Land Stability

**Test of Soundness**

Justified	Effective	Consistency With National Policy
		X

**Support** – The Coal Authority fully supports the inclusion of Policy DM14 in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD. As noted above, the western part of Bassetlaw District has been subjected to underground coal mining activity, which will have left a legacy. There are a limited number of mine entries and fissures present in the west of the district.

We are therefore pleased to note that, further to our comments on the Preferred Options document in June 2010, this development management policy has been added acknowledging the coal mining legacy and requiring developers to afford the issue due consideration, thus meeting the requirements of PPG14. As the Council will be aware, The Coal Authority is introducing a new risk based approach to development management for all coalfield LPAs, and has recently provided Bassetlaw District Council with GIS data of the coal mining legacy in their LPA area. This development management policy will assist in implementing the new risk based approach by making developers aware of those settlements that are affected by coal mining legacy issues, and where consideration of land stability might be necessary.

**Reason** – This policy identifies the locally distinctive coal mining legacy in Bassetlaw and addresses the requirements of PPG14 regarding land stability.

**CONCLUSION**

The Coal Authority welcomes the opportunity to make these comments, we are of course willing to discuss the comments made above in further detail if desired and would be happy to negotiate alternative suitable wording to address any of its concerns.

Thank you for your attention.

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