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The Coal Authority
200 Lichfield Lane
Mansfield
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Date: 4th June 2021

Dear Coryn Reynolds

Thank you for the information you supplied under the Freedom of information Act 2000, regarding your reference: FOI 82-2020. Building application made by Avant Homes application reference: 19/03143/FUL.

I do realize that there are many old mine workings under Sheffield but Citizens of Sheffield do have genuine concerns about the safety of these mines. Published 29th April 2016

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3557781/Old-workings-suddenly-open-busy-main-road-leaving-massive-gaping-sinkhole-20ft-deep.html> Old mine workings suddenly open on busy main road leaving massive gaping sinkhole 20ft deep. Mines closed between 1860 and 1870 when the price of metals crashed. Timber was used to seal off the shafts but has been gradually rotting away ever since.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-36128768> Sheffield sink hole: Hutcliffe Wood Road closed to traffic. BBC Look North reporter Phil Bodmer said people have speculated that **old mine workings under the road may have become unstable**.

On 22nd January 2021 workmen were seen working on drains on Moss Way;

GPS Co-ordinates: 53.340038,-1.362883 it is assumed this is where the flood waters of the disused mines usually discharge into the drains, but in heavy rain events the drains cannot cope and Ochre floods into the Ochre Dyke. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> this video was taken at the same time as downstream flooding occurred in Beighton, Rotherham and Fishlake.

I wonder if you could supply further information under the Freedom of information Act 2000:

- **Who is responsible for maintaining mine floodwater discharge into the drainage system? The damage it does to wild life and the environment downstream is horrendous not to mention the destruction to property and livelihoods of citizens living downstream.**
- **In (2.) CD2.27 The Coal Authority Mining Report, you state “that coal mining was last worked in 1932” but research suggests that mining continued until at least 1964 and possibly into the early 1970s. This was the reason for my question in previous communication “1. Exactly how much coal was extracted by Dent Main Colliery?” Research indicates that vast quantities of coal were extracted from Dent Main Colliery after 1932 and up to at least 1964. What effect will this have on the condition of the mines and is the landscape above safe?**

- **In your response dated 29th April 2021 you do say: “From 1872, legislation required mine owners to record on mine plans the areas of coal that were extracted. These historical plans are held by the Coal Authority but their accuracy cannot be verified by us.” Could you please supply copies of the unverified records held by the Coal Authority with regard to Dent Main Colliery <https://www.mindat.org/loc-376953.html> , Moorhole Colliery and any other collieries that may cause subsidence or collapse in the Owlthorpe area?**
- **Research shows there are many Hazards in Underground Mines including: Explosions – Fires – Toxic Gas – Floods – Collapse. The mines in Owlthorpe were gas free, but evidence shows that when the mines were worked flooding was problematic, water had to be constantly pumped out. Although the Coal Authority holds no evidence of the condition of water damage to pit props, there is genuine concern that this damage may cause collapse as reported in April 2016. Site E in Owlthorpe has now been fenced off and Avant Homes are preparing to build. In view of the evidence I have provided and Comments made by the Coal Authority: “In view of the mining circumstances a prudent developer would seek appropriate technical advice before any works are undertaken. Therefore if development proposals are being considered, technical advice relating to both the investigation of coal and former coal mines and their treatment should be obtained before beginning work on site.” It seems to me that Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) and Avant Homes are relying on information dating back to 1932 as supplied by The Coal Authority which does not cover floodwater and the damage to the workings of the pits. In light of this information, do Avant Homes need investigation of former coal mines and their treatment before beginning work on site? Or are the Coal Authority happy for Avant Homes to continue to build over old flooding mine works without further exploration?**

I have studied the following evidence supplied to the Public inquiry.

(1.) CD2.26 Appraisal by Lithos Consulting.

<http://www.dlppanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.26%20-%20App%20submission%202023.8.19%20-%20Geoenvironmental%20Appraisal%20%20Site%20Investigation%20-%202014-03-24-Owlthorpe-final-si-report-Lithos-1792-2.pdf> This is a very detailed document, which does include Moorhole Colliery but does not cover the fact that when the mines were in use water had to be continually pumped out. It also does not address who is responsible for maintaining discharge from the old mine workings. Also what will the state of wooden pit props be and the state of the mines in general, which have been subject to water damage for many years?

(2.) CD2.27 The Coal Authority Mining Report.

<http://www.dlppanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.27%20-%20App%20submission%202023.8.19%20-%20Coal%20Mining%20Report%20-%20Mining%20Report%208718.pdf> It seems to me that Lithos Consulting are relying on information provided by the Coal Authority Mining Report which also does not address what happens to the water which was pumped out of the mines when open. What happens to it now and who is responsible when it floods out? The Coal Authority Mining Report also states “that coal mining was last worked in 1932” I think this may be referring to the Moorhole Colliery” but research evidence shows that mining in Dent Main Colliery <https://www.mindat.org/loc-376953.html> continued until at least 1964 and possibly into the early 1970s.

(3.) CD2.28 Gas Risk Assessment by Lithos Consulting.

[http://www.dlppanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.28%20-%20Post%20submission%2030.4.20%20-%20Gas%20Risk%20Assessment%20Letter%20-%202023%20Let%20to%20Kier%20\(Gas%20Risk%20Assess\)%20-%20006%2006%2014.pdf](http://www.dlppanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.28%20-%20Post%20submission%2030.4.20%20-%20Gas%20Risk%20Assessment%20Letter%20-%202023%20Let%20to%20Kier%20(Gas%20Risk%20Assess)%20-%20006%2006%2014.pdf)

With regards to the above Gas Risk Assessment; there never was a problem with regards to Gas when the mines were worked. Please read Post by Ken Wain December 19th 2013 Sheffield History Professor

<https://www.sheffieldhistory.co.uk/forums/topic/14512-dent-main-coliery-birley-moor-road>

“Because the Colliery was gas free the miners were allowed to use acetylene lamps as working lights.”

“The workings at the colliery were always in orange coloured "Ochre Water" due to the iron deposits in the workings, the water being continually pumped from the pit.”

Please read evidence supplied to the Inspector at the inquiry. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-05Floodriskassessment.pdf> The photo of Ockre Dyke does not give the full justice to the extent of the Ochre coloured water which flooded down stream. This video does: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> this video was taken at the same time as downstream flooding occurred in Beighton, Rotherham and Fishlake.

Please also look at the effect that flooding has on citizens living down stream <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-03thisistheaccountofoneofthevictimsoffloodinginfishlake.pdf> One or two points made by Jenny Palmer, regarding flooding. “the press, HRH Prince Charles and Boris Johnson visits.” “It not being an exaggeration to say that it is a miracle nobody lost their life.” “Coordinating remedial works, carrying out flood samples for Uni. of Lincoln (cadmium deposits found across the landscape)” Officials upstream need to take more do care and attention, if we are to stop downstream flooding.

Please look at this video, taken 21st January 2021 the last day of the inquiry. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6ABoXGUgR4> Fishlake flooding again. Public Inquiry Information: There is extensive flooding in the fields around Fishlake but about 9mins into this video, it shows the erosion to the tow path at the side of the river Don. This is a frightening prospect.

I look forward to your response

Kind regards

Michael Meredith

