

Chair of Woodsetts Parish Council
The Pavillion
Gildingwells Road
Woodsetts
S81 8A

13 June 2018

Dear Councillor,

I write to update you on our plans to drill an exploratory well on land to the South of Dinnington Road.

As you know, our original application was recommended for refusal by planning officers on ecology grounds, and was subsequently refused at a meeting of the Planning Board due to potential impacts on ecology, along with transport concerns.

You may be aware, the council used the same two reasons as their objection at the appeal for our Harthill application. Before the Inquiry, officers asked members to withdraw the highways reason for refusal, but the reason was maintained against officer advice. During the appeal, the Council dropped their objection on ecology, following cross examination of their case.

As the two applications use the same methodology, we feel that having been tested at by an independent Inspector, our approach is now better understood by officers and that we have a good case for resubmitting the Woodsetts application, which we have done today.

This is not unusual in planning terms. Our alternative option would be to appeal the decision and go through the appeal process again on the same grounds. However, we would prefer to try and resolve these outstanding issues locally if at all possible to avoid unnecessary costs for the Council tax payer and ourselves. It should be remembered that the majority of statutory consultees either had no issues with the application, or felt that any issues could be controlled through the use of conditions.

The details of the application are largely unchanged, with all clarifications and amendments made during the consultation process summarised into one document for ease of reference. It remains solely for a technically straightforward core well to assess the geology, no hydraulic fracturing is being sought.

It will now be for the Council to determine how they wish to progress the application and consult with interested parties, we will however write to residents of Woodsetts and provide them with an update.

Finally, since the decision to resubmit our Woodsetts application was made, the Planning Inspector has determined the Harthill appeal and granted planning permission. It is disappointing how much time and Council tax-payers' money was spent on what should have been a straight-forward project to drill a core well to gain scientific knowledge, which has been agreed by many councils many times in the past to support the coal industry across the region. Ultimately, we are pleased that science has prevailed but hope that future applications can be dealt with in a more timely and reasonable fashion.

As always, if you would like further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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