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NEW CROFTON CO-OP COLLIERY

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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1. What is this document?

This is the Non Technical Summary (NTS) which is required to be produced as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment which accompanies the planning application by New Crofton Co-op Colliery Limited (NCCC) for a new underground coal mine and associated works.

2. What is being applied for?

NCCC is applying for the development of a new underground drift coal mine to remove almost 5 million tonnes of coal. The application includes underground operations and the establishment of processing plant, buildings, parking etc at the surface.

3. Who is NCCC?

NCCC is a company formed by ten original investors based on the co-operative concept whereby the workforce of around 50 people will belong to the NCCC and benefit from it. The company intends that 50% of the surpluses after extraction and distribution will be reinvested into Co-operative, social and environmental projects in the area (of this up to £10 million will go solely for the benefit of Crofton, Winterset, Ryhill and Winterset via a charitable trust).

4. Where is the site?

The site of the above surface activity is the former Anglers Coal Disposal Point off Santingley Lane, Crofton, West Yorkshire. The coal seams extend beyond this.

5. How long will it go on for?

The coal mining is predicted to last 22 years. There is an establishment phase at the beginning and a site restoration phase at the end.

6. What is on site today?

The site was an opencast coal processing site but has been allowed to regenerate into rough grassland and oak-based woodland. It also includes footpaths and the railway sidings which were used previously to transport the coal.

7. Does it conform to planning policies?

Yes. The National Planning Policy Framework specifically addresses coal extraction at paragraph 149 and its requirements have been met or exceeded as has other national and local policies.

8. What is proposed below the surface?

Modern underground coal mining is a complex but mechanised process. The general technique used is called 'Room and Pillar'. Only up to 60% of the coal is removed in 'rooms' leaving over 40% to support the ground above. A pattern of roof bolts will ensure the safety of the workforce.

9. What is being proposed on the surface?

The coal will be brought up to the surface via a 1:4 ramp into a main building which is 12 metres high. In addition, there will be coal stocking areas, a workshop, water treatment lagoons, offices, car parks etc. The coal is transported the short distance to the existing rail siding. The colliery area itself will be fenced.

10. Will there be public access?

No. The fenced colliery area is a potentially dangerous place and strict controls will be in place. However, the footpath currently across the site will be diverted through the woodland (the same distance) to allow uninterrupted use by the public. At the end of coal mining the footpath can go back onto its existing route if desired.

11. Will there be a liaison committee?

Yes. A Liaison Committee has already been established with membership drawn from Crofton, Ryhill and the Cold Heindley Parish Councils as well as Metropolitan District Councillors and members of the public.

12. Are there alternatives to this site and extraction methods?

No. The location of the old opencast coal processing site and, particularly, the existing coal rail sidings make this the best available site. There are no better alternative extraction methods.

13. What will I see?

Very little. The site is mostly surrounded by 16 metre high oak-based woodland. The tallest proposed building is 12 metres high and will be mostly hidden from views by the trees. There will be specific views from the edge of New Crofton, some very close footpaths, the railway and from the access road.

14. What effect will these proposals have on the surface and underground water?

A comprehensive study has been done to assess the possible impacts. Monitoring will be put in place and mitigation measures have been identified should they be necessary.

15. Will there be any noise?

Most of the activity is underground. Above ground any noise will only be generated between 0700 and 2200; it is predicted not to have any impact on local communities. The location of the site next to the busy rail line means that this site has high background noise levels already.

16. How will the coal be transported off site?

85% of the coal will go by train. 15% will go by lorry split between 2 routes (one through Wintersett and one through Crofton). This will represent up to 8 lorry movements (four into the colliery and four out) each day through each village.

17. What about subsidence?

The 'Room and Pillar' system has been devised, together with roof bolting, to ensure that subsidence at the surface does not happen. Nevertheless, no coal will be extracted from under residential properties.

18. Will there be any blasting?

No. There will be no blasting to extract coal. However, there is a slight chance that very limited blasting may be necessary to create the portals to the drifts and the sub surface coal bunkers. An impact assessment has shown this will have negligible impact on local residents.

19. Will there be dust and airborne particles?

Most fine particles are deposited within 250 metres of the source. This means that the potential for nuisance in this operation is negligible or non-existent. Continuous monitoring will be undertaken and mitigation measures introduced should unacceptable dust emissions be identified.

20. Will there be any impacts on health?

No. There is no predicted negative impact on the health of the local population. The provision of 50 local jobs and the substantial social and economic benefits from the charitable fund over 22 years should have positive benefits.

21. Are there archaeological sites or important old buildings nearby?

Whilst there are no archaeological remains on site, there are two Listed Buildings and the gardens of Nostell Priory close by. None of these will be affected by the proposals.

22. What will be the effect on the local plants, birds and animals?

The Ecology study has concluded that any potential impacts on the plants, birds and animals can be more than offset by the provision of additional areas dedicated to nature conservation; this includes three new ponds for Great Crested Newts.

23. Is there any impact from adding this coal mine to all the other mining that has happened before?

No. The possibility of cumulative effects has been considered and it is concluded that there will be none.

24. What are the social benefits?

The project will provide about 50 local jobs for over 22 years. The charitable fund will pump many millions of pounds into new Co-operative enterprises and community projects in the area. In addition, the charitable fund may decide to improve housing, recreation and leisure facilities, roads/footpaths etc in the area.

25. What are the economic benefits?

Apart from the approximately £90 million paid in salaries, wages and dividends over 24 years, the predicted charitable trust will receive £10 million and other funds and local investment could total £40 million.