

Scottish Coal Proposal to Open Cast mine at Airfield, Planning application 09/00349 FUL

Ideas for your objection letter

Policies

- The site is not designated as an Area of Search for minerals in the recently adopted Midlothian Local Plan. There must therefore be a presumption against the granting of planning consent in accordance with national planning policy.

Health Impacts

- Inconclusive assurances made by Scottish Coal on the effects of dust on health, especially children and those who have bronchial and asthmatic conditions.
- Scientific studies in Derbyshire showed a 33% rise in asthma among primary school children living within 1 mile of an open cast mine.
- This coal is going to Cockszie, one of the worst emitters in Europe of nitrous oxide and sulphur gases which are proven to cause asthma, lung and heart disease.
- Proven health studies recently carried out at Douglas shows disturbing evidence of higher rates of cancers, heart disease and other ill health among those living close to open cast mines.
- Concerns about toxic effects of industrial diesel from 44 tonne laden articulated lorries, making 126 runs per day and massive earth moving equipment. Industrial diesel emissions are linked to heart attacks and lung damage.
- Significant research in Psychoneuroimmunology has concluded that rises in stress and anxiety levels can result in ill health, disease and wellbeing impacts both now and in the future.

Landscape/visual impact

- Airfield is part of a designated Area of Great Landscape Value one of only five in Midlothian likewise nearby Ormiston Glen, East Lothian, which are both rich in woodland, flora and wildlife which once damaged can never be fully restored.
- Airfield is designated prime agricultural farming land. Recent governmental concern over the rate at which prime farming land is disappearing under development projects.
- Their assurances that there will be no visual impact is unbelievable, Airfield is used regularly by walkers, cyclists, horse riders, joggers and bird watchers. It is an important green space for recreation & healthy exercise for urban & country dwellers alike.
- Restoration will never replicate the current landscape / natural habitat. Their record on restoring sites is very poor, where sites are often left pending further applications for extensions. Some sites simply become wasteland e.g. Blindwells former open cast site by Tranent.

Ground Stability / Safety

- Concerns about the effects of blasting & subsidence it may cause. The area around and directly beneath Cousland is honeycombed with craters and workings from old limeworkings. Last year a child fell into a collapsed lime working while playing football in the village playing field.
- Both Midlothian Council and Scottish Coal have only the sketchiest knowledge of where these workings are. Can Midlothian Council give assurances of the safety of the resident?
- Scottish Coal report that any potential dangers to health and safety will be 'mitigated by good working practices and effective site management' however just last year they were fined £400,000 for breaches of health and safety when two of its workers were crushed to death.

Transport

- There will be 126 journeys to and from the site each day travelling towards the A68 on quiet country roads; these 42 tonne laden articulated Lorries travel will exiting by the ascent of Fordel Dean and join the A68 bypass at the Fordel Junction already a site of accidents and poor design.

Cumulative Impact

- Existing cement works which exits onto the B6124
- In addition there will be the possible cumulative impact of trucks from the proposed bing reshaping and new Recycling plant at Smeaton Bing some traffic using B6124
- Proposed infill at Chalkieside adjacent to Smeaton Bing site
- Plus construction traffic from a proposed retail development at Fordel Junction
- Two possible sites of new housing in Cousland all impacting on local roads
- Large horsebox transporters from the Equestrian Centre.