Staffordshire County Council’s Statement

Day 2:

PLANNING FOR HYDROCARBON EXTRACTION

Issue: Whether the plan is consistent with NPPF guidance for hydrocarbon development
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1. Does Policy 5 provide an effective means of managing hydrocarbon development with reference to the NPPF and PPG?

1.1 Yes. The approach of the new Plan is considered appropriate given that the development of hydrocarbon in the county remains in a relatively early stage in Staffordshire. There is one site with permission to carry out natural gas extraction production from a conventional gas reservoir in the Staffordshire Moorlands but yet to be implemented; and an operational site within Stafford Borough with permission to extract abandoned mine methane from the former Florence Colliery in Stoke-on-Trent. There is a current permission for coal bed methane exploration at Keele University, near Newcastle under Lyme.¹

1.2 National guidance sets out an expectation that local plans should include criteria-based policies for each of the exploration, appraisal and production phases of hydrocarbon extraction. These policies should set clear guidance and criteria for the location and assessment of hydrocarbon extraction within the Petroleum Licence Areas.² Policy sets out specific requirements for the assessment of hydrocarbon proposals although it is acknowledged that proposals would also need to be assessed against the requirements for assessing impacts of mineral development under Policy 4. The Policies and Proposals Map identifies licence areas where the policy would apply.

1.3 Representations have been made by the Coal Authority in respect of Policy 5 recommending changes on the basis of best practice used in other Plans. These changes are accepted by the Council (refer to CD1 Tracked proposed changes version of the new Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015 to 2030) - Final Draft - June 2015).

¹ Refer to chapter 4 of the new Plan and Summary of recent Coal Bed Methane (CBM), Coal Mine Methane (CMM) and Natural Gas sites in Staffordshire (updated to 30-4-15)
² Refer to Paragraph 106 Reference ID: 27-106-20140306 of PPG