

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Climate Change Committee
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SZ

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29 January 2021

Deep Coal Mining in the UK

Dear Secretary of State,

My Committee notes that you have chosen not to call in the recent decision of Cumbria County Council to grant planning permission to a new Cumbrian coal mine to 2049. As you said in the House of Commons on the 11th January, "it is a decision on whether it meets the bar to bring in a case and have it heard on a national scale, or whether, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, it is better left to local democratically-elected councillors".

Local democracy has an important role to play, as the CCC has consistently emphasised, but local decisions can also have national and international implications.

The opening of a new deep coking coal mine in Cumbria will increase global emissions and have an appreciable impact on the UK's legally binding carbon budgets. The mine is projected to increase UK emissions by 0.4Mt CO₂e per year.¹ This is greater than the level of annual emissions we have projected from all open UK coal mines to 2050.

The decision to award planning permission to 2049 will commit the UK to emissions from coking coal, for which there may be no domestic use after 2035. 85% of the coal is planned for export to Europe.¹ Our recent Sixth Carbon Budget Advice² has the following implications for coking coal use in the UK:

- Coking coal should only be used in steelmaking beyond 2035 if a very high proportion of the associated carbon emissions is captured and stored.

¹ Cumbria County Council, October 2020, *Public Reports Pack*, <https://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=10597>

² Climate Change Committee, December 2020, *Sixth Carbon Budget* <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

- Coking coal use in steelmaking could be displaced completely by 2035, using a combination of hydrogen direct reduction and electric arc furnace technology to meet our recommendation that UK ore-based steelmaking be near-zero emissions by 2035.

It is not the CCC's role to act as a regulator or a planning authority, but we would urge you to consider further the UK's policy towards all new coal developments, for whatever purpose.

This decision also highlights the critical importance of local councillors and planning authorities considering fully the implications of their decisions on climate targets. In this regard, I would ask that we discuss the provision of guidance to local authorities. The CCC stands ready to provide whatever advice you feel is needed.

I acknowledge that there are always interrelationships and trade-offs with wider objectives, including the notable increase in local employment expected from this commercial development. It is for Ministers to decide how the effort to reach Net Zero should be allocated across the economy, but it is also important to note that this decision gives a negative impression of the UK's climate priorities in the year of COP26.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Deben
Chair, Climate Change Committee