

Cumbrian Greens welcome County Council decision to reconsider coal mine decision



Green Party

12 February 2021

Penrith and Eden Green Party are cautiously celebrating the news that Cumbria County Council will reconsider the application for a new deep coal mine on the Copeland coast near Whitehaven.

Green Party Councillor and campaigner Ali Ross said:

“We are outraged that the Government has failed to intervene in this case – which is clearly of national and global importance – and at a time when the UK is supposed to be leading on climate action as chair of COP26.

“It is abundantly clear that the grounds on which Cumbria County Council approved this planning application are totally flawed. The mine will not be ‘carbon neutral’ as claimed by the developers. Far from it, it will result in massive carbon emissions that will further destabilise our already dangerously unbalanced climate.”

Cllr Ross also refuted the commonly cited argument that the coking coal from this mine is essential to the future of steel production in the UK:

“Less than 15% of the coal from this mine is actually destined for the UK market; the rest will be exported. Steel production is currently one of our most carbon intensive industries and that has to change. Low carbon production technology exists and is well on its way to commercial use. The UK should be speeding up that process, not slowing it down by investing in more outdated coal sources.”

Cllr Ross also challenged the suggestion that the coal mine was necessary to protect local jobs:

“Of course we are all sympathetic to County Councillors’ desire to create jobs in West Cumbria, but this project never looked likely to deliver the massive opportunities that were promised.

“Coking coal is a climate destroying fuel that would inevitably result in the

community being let down again. The Government should be providing jobs in green technologies instead.

“Cumbria has enormous potential for renewable energy, green transport infrastructure and retrofitting homes to bring them up to good energy efficiency standards – to name but a few. What West Cumbria needs is investment and training that will create long-term jobs for a sustainable future.”

The Council stated that its decision was made in light of the recommendations from the Government’s Climate Change Committee [1], issued in December, regarding the UK’s future greenhouse gas emissions. The application will now go back to Committee for a fourth time.

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

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