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☰ Robert Goodwill

Member of Parliament for Scarborough and Whitby

New mine could bring 5,000 jobs

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Tuesday, 18 January, 2011

MINERAL rights between Scarborough and Whitby have been sold in a move which could lead to the opening of the first UK Potash mine in 40 years and **the creation of up to 5,000 jobs**.

Sirius Minerals has completed a deal to buy York Potash and now holds mineral rights on 600 sq km of land on the coast.

The company, which specialises in potash exploration and development and has three potash projects in Australia and the USA, is now set to undertake test drilling and seismic surveys in the area.

Sirius says exploration work will be carried out to determine the potential for a new potash mine between Scarborough and Whitby, which bosses believe could create 1,500 development and construction jobs and 1,000 operational jobs in the mine, as well as supporting hundreds more in the supply chain.

The project is still in its early stages but if it goes ahead Sirius estimates agricultural potash, which is a powdery salt used in fertilizers, could be extracted from the new mine for the next 50 years.

Chris Fraser, who founded York Potash last year and is now managing director and chief executive of Sirius, said: "Demand for potash is undergoing significant growth. Potash is an essential component in the fertilizers that we all rely on for cost effective food production.

"The York Potash project, subject to successful testing, could become a new and strategically important potash mine for the UK.

"This will help the UK to meet its own needs, giving it security of supply and, importantly, creating a project of local, regional and national economic significance.

"This is just one step on a longer journey but we are confident that our vision for a high-quality, modern and efficient potash mine in North Yorkshire can be achieved and would deliver an asset of true national importance."

Scarborough MP Robert Goodwill welcomed the news.

He said: "This is absolutely brilliant news as this investment could create one of Scarborough's largest employers.

"We have been saying there will be private sector jobs that come and replace some of the losses in the state sector and this could see that happening in Scarborough with thousands of jobs.

"This is the best possible news, however we will have to bear in mind the delicate environment in North Yorkshire and take precautions to protect it."

The UK is currently only served by the Boulby Mine, which is also in North Yorkshire and is operated by Cleveland Potash Limited.

Sirius say subject to successful completion of the exploratory and surveying work, it is anticipated that details will be developed for a suitable extraction point and mine head with accompanying infrastructure.

Planning permissions will then be sought with a view to making the York Potash project operational "as soon as is practically possible".

The project's proposed exploration area would extend approximately between Scarborough and Whitby across the 600 sq km land allocation.

However no timetable has been set for submission of a planning application to Scarborough Council to develop the mine nor for the intended start of mining operations.

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Robert Goodwill Member of Parliament for Scarborough and Whitby

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