

NoFiBS guidance – WSCC Planning Time Extension and Flare Amendments

Urgent – please take a moment to email WSCC after reading this briefing. Everyone’s input will help to keep the oil and gas industry away from our village

This document is provided by NoFiBS in good faith to guide you when making a response to the current consultation. You are of course free to say what you like when you respond. Your own thoughts are most important, and your own words will make more impact.

What are the planning amendments?

Cuadrilla have applied to West Sussex County Council to amend the planning permission granted in 2010. There are two amendments which are being publicly consulted on and will be decided by committee in October:

1. WSCC/063/13/BA - Amendment of condition 3 of WSCC/027/10/BA to vary the type of flare used during the testing process
2. WSCC/061/13/BA - Amendment of condition 2 of WSCC/027/10/BA to allow additional time to complete the drilling and testing programme and restore the site

Why is it important I respond? The original planning application in 2010 received no public responses as the application was not publicised very well and the general public did not properly understand the meaning of hydrocarbon exploration. It is therefore important, whatever your concerns or questions to voice those to the council.

How do I respond? Write two separate letters or emails quoting the Planning Application Ref No.

Email: planning.applications@westsussex.gov.uk

Letter: County Planning, West Sussex County Council, County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RH

When do I need to do it? Closing date for responses is Thursday 15th August

Responding to the Consultation:

It is important to state clearly in the first sentence of your email or letter your objection.

For example: I object to Application WSCC/061/13/BA on the grounds of unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment

Guidance from Friends of the Earth:

http://foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press_for_change/stop_fracking_balcombe_40940.html

Application Number: WSCC/061/13/BA and WSCC/063/13/BA

Location: Lower Stumble Hydrocarbon Exploration Site, London Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6JH

Proposal: Amendment of condition 2 of WSCC/027/10/BA to allow additional time to complete the drilling and testing programme and restore the site and amendment of condition 3 of WSCC/027/10/BA to vary the type of flare used during the testing process.

I object to the extension to the original planning permission on the grounds of unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural environment together with:

- the lack of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the initial application;
- the lack of detailed information with regard to environmental impacts, particularly on potential protected species at or near the site;
- the failure of the existing conditions to deal appropriately with air quality and water impacts.

I note that the local authority's screening decision not to require an EIA for the extension to the planning permission restricts the information on impacts available to the local authority's elected members when making their decision at the planning committee meeting. I believe that the local authority should instead seek to have a full assessment of impacts given the contentious nature of the activity and its location in a sensitive area.

National planning guidance has changed since permission was given in 2010 and therefore paragraph 144 of the National Planning Policy Framework is relevant. It states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should "ensure in granting planning permission for mineral development, that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health [...]"

My objection to the variation of time condition (extension) and flare condition (height) is on the grounds of the following unacceptable adverse impacts:

Groundwater quality

Background levels of methane in groundwater locally are already high and any escape of gas into the groundwater could lead to unacceptably high levels.

Water impacts

The application contains inadequate information about water use and impacts on water.

Air Quality

The application contains inadequate information about air quality impacts, in particular fugitive methane emissions, and the risks are therefore unknown.

Wildlife impacts

Bats and reptiles are likely to be near or on this site (it is close to ancient woodland) but because of a lack of a full report the Council cannot know whether protected species will be affected by the works, in particular the increased amount of time-related disturbance, and the increased height of the flare.

In addition, Government guidance on greater flexibility for planning permissions (2010) states: "This process is not a rubber stamp. Local planning authorities may refuse applications to extend the time limit for permissions where changes in the development plan or other relevant material considerations indicate the proposal should no longer be treated favourably."

Please keep me informed on the outcome of these applications.

Contact NoFiBS@btinternet.com

- If you would like further information to any of the areas of concern listed above
- If you have the skills and time to create a one page summary to help other people

Contact Us:



Balcombe Facebook: No Fracking in Balcombe Society:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NOFIBS/>

Frack Free Sussex: <https://www.facebook.com/FrackFreeSussex>

Email

Balcombe Contact Us: NoFiBS@btinternet.com to find out about meetings, what you can do to help and for any questions or ideas you may have to stop drilling in Balcombe

NoFiBS (No Fracking in Balcombe Society) is a group of village residents who have come together over concerns about unconventional gas and oil exploration in the area. Please note that no-one is pretending to be an expert. We all need to help each other respond to the threat of drilling and its associated activities as best as we can.

Contact: nofibs@btinternet.com