

## **SCRUTINY STUDY OF THE POTENTIAL FOR FRACKING IN PENDLE**

To - Scrutiny Management Team

Date of meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2015

Notes of - Committee Administrator

### **UPDATE REPORT**

#### **Background**

1. In January 2015, the Team commenced a review on the practicability, likelihood and desirability (or otherwise) of possible shale gas exploration and exploitation in this area.
2. The Team had agreed to continue the study in this municipal year, therefore it had been included in the work programme for 2015/16.
3. At the May meeting Members considered a summary of the work that had already taken place.
4. This work had established that exploration could only be carried out under licence.
5. At that point in time there were no licences covering Pendle.
6. However, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) was expected to announce licence awards later in the year.
7. Therefore the Team agreed to defer a decision on how to progress with the scrutiny study to this meeting of the Team.

#### **Current activity in Lancashire**

8. An oil and gas company applied for planning permission to develop two new sites in Lancashire to explore for shale gas by drilling, hydraulically fracturing, (fracking) and testing the flow of gas.
9. One of the sites was on Preston New Road, Little Plumpton, Fylde West and the other was at Roseacre Wood, Roseacre, Fylde East.
10. The applications included –
  - an application for drilling, fracking and extended flow testing of the gas with a direct connection to a local gas transmission pipeline. If extended testing was thought to be

viable and was carried out, it was proposed that the sites would have four vertical bore holes each with lateral boreholes extending from them, within a defined quadrant as projected to the surface.

- Two associated applications for monitoring arrays for each of the sites. The monitoring arrays are designed to monitor seismic movement and water quality.

11. In June, 2015 the County Council's Development Control Committee decided on planning applications for shale gas development at the two sites at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton and Roseacre Wood and for the associated applications for the monitoring arrays to each site.
12. The application to drill, frack and test at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton was refused on the grounds of noise and visual impact.
13. The committee also refused a separate application for the same site to enable the oil and gas company to monitor its operations because of impact on the landscape.
14. The application to explore for shale gas at Roseacre Wood by drilling, hydraulically fracking and testing the flow of gas was refused in line with officers' recommendations that the proposal would have an unacceptable and potentially severe impact on the road network, both in terms of traffic and the increased danger to other road users.
15. The committee approved a separate application for the same site to enable the oil and gas company to monitor its operations.

#### **Licence awards**

16. The Department of Energy and Climate Change is yet to announce the licence awards for what will be the 14th onshore round.
17. Any update on this will be reported at the meeting.
18. The Team is now asked to consider whether it wishes to continue this study.

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References [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)