

Item 7

Hydraulic Fracturing in B&NES

9th June 2014

Paper for Parishes Liaison Meeting 18th June 2014

Philip Mansfield – Group Manager Building Control

email: phil_mansfield@bathnes.gov.uk tel: 01225 477541

1. As of the date of this report there have been no more planning applications in respect of exploration for coal bed methane (CBM)/shale gas in the B&NES area or in the area surrounding B&NES.
2. To recap if companies want to explore for CBM/shale gas they first need to acquire a Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence (PEDL) from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). DECC offer these licences in rounds. The 13th round of licences were issued in 2008 and there are four PEDL licences covering parts of the B&NES area and further south into the Mendips.
3. The licences run for an initial period of 6 years and then can be extended for further periods at the request of the licence holder and providing DECC are satisfied that the licence holder has made attempts to pursue the work programme detailed in each licence. Otherwise the licences will be relinquished.
4. As of the date of this report DECC have confirmed that three of the licences have been relinquished but the fourth, PEDL 227 has been extended by a year. This covers the central/south of the B&NES district over Mid Somer Norton and into Mendip District.
5. The relinquished licences could be re-issued on the 14th round licence issue.
6. DECC have recently consulted on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the next round of licences, the 14th round issue. This covers most of the other areas that were not already licensed. It is not clear yet when the 14th round licences will actually be opened for offer.
7. A web page on the B&NES web site has been created to provide further information on this matter www.bathnes.gov.uk/fracking
8. Philip Mansfield will be attending the meeting to answer questions and to show maps which detail the licence areas. However these can also be viewed on the UK Onshore Geophysical library web site: <http://www.ukogil.org.uk/webmap/index.html>
9. B&NES Building Control and Planning Policy team have been working with neighbouring councils and the Environment Agency to form an Energy Minerals Group to enable the sharing of information and provide a consistent approach across the region. They have produced a Topic Paper which gives further information about this subject. This can be found on www.bathnes.gov.uk/fracking web page
10. Planning Policy context – B&NES is in the process of preparing a Placemaking Plan. This will complement the Council's Core Strategy by setting out the planning requirements for the delivery of key development sites within the District. It will also update and review the planning policies used in the determination of planning applications to ensure there is a robust and up to date planning policy framework in place for the period up to 2029. It is

intended that the Placemaking Plan will include a policy framework for considering planning applications for each of the phases of development relating to the extraction of shale gas and coal bed methane (unconventional gas resources). Consultation on policy options will take place in November 2014. To keep up to date with progress on the Placemaking Plan visit our dedicated webpage www.bathnes.gov.uk/placemakingplan