

STOP PRESS – GOVERNMENT FRACKING REPORT FINALLY RELEASED

On Thursday 1st July, the Government finally released the long-awaited DEFRA report entitled **"Draft Shale Gas Rural Economy Impacts Paper"**. This report was originally released last year, but was redacted (censored) 63 times. The government was widely criticised for not giving the public access to the whole report, and after months of pressure from many organisations and MPs, including Anne McIntosh in the House of Commons last January, the Information Commissioner finally ordered the government to release the report in full and unredacted.

This means that local communities finally have the opportunity to see the sections of the report that the Government had censored, some of which are quoted below. Please draw your own conclusions about how this industry would affect agriculture, tourism and life in Ryedale.

QUOTES FROM GOVERNMENT REPORT ON SHALE GAS AND THE RURAL ECONOMY:

"Shale gas may transform a previously pristine and quiet natural region, bringing increased industrialisation. As a result, rural economy businesses that rely on clean air, land, water and/or a tranquil environment may suffer losses from this change, such as agriculture, tourism, organic farming, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation."

Fracking "may reduce the number of visitors and tourists to the rural area, with an associated reduction in spend in the local tourism economy."

"There is a risk that even if contaminated surface water does not directly impact water supplies, it can affect human health indirectly through consumption of contaminated wildlife, livestock, or agricultural products."

"Properties located within a 1-5 mile radius of the fracking operation may also incur an additional cost of insurance to cover losses in case of explosion on the site."

"Those residents owning property close to the drilling site may suffer from lower resale prices due to the negative perception being located near the facility and potential risks."

"A study in Texas concluded that house prices valued at more than \$250,000 and within 1,000 ft of a well site saw their values decrease by 3-14%."

"House prices in close proximity to the drilling operations are likely to fall. There could be a 7% reduction in property values within one mile of an extraction site."

"Evidence from the US indicates that leakage of waste fluids from the drilling and fracking processes has resulted in environmental damage."

Some sectors of the economy "may lose business due to increased congestion or perceptions about the region."