

I will attend on behalf of West Malton Against Fracking.

My submission:

" We support the 500m set back from sensitive receptors including homes, schools, workplaces, shops, leisure (footpaths, bridleways, minor roads), protected wildlife, this distance supported on planning grounds: air pollution, noise pollution, odour impact, light pollution, traffic, wildlife impact, loss of amenity.

North Yorkshire is the LARGEST English county in area because it is the most rural and sparsely populated. Its farming and tourist industry, its property market and residents, absolutely rely on clean air and low background noise, and dark skies, to maintain their livelihoods and quality of life. Villages choose to remain without street lighting to retain dark skies. Traffic volumes remain low, and night time noise and traffic is very low. These give weight to a 500m set back as justified for this particularly rural tourist/agricultural dependent county. Our economy depends on its reputation. The public perceive fracking as high impact with close proximity, and our professional planners agree. Armed with hundreds of academic studies on the health impacts of fracking wherever it is studied on nearby receptors, typically comparing people 1km or less away with those much further away (eg a million birth records showing low birth weight incidence 22% higher close to fracking sites), people local to hear realise that their own experience of negative health impacts close to drilling sites are part of a trend that would clearly be repeated elsewhere, and the local experience of impacts being higher closer to site (with significant impacts felt up to 1km away) are not isolated but part of a pattern that happens wherever drilling for gas happens.

So km5, a conventional well close to Little Barugh, had night time noise (traffic, workmen shouting and swearing in the middle of the night) and night time drilling that could be felt by villagers, night time light that kept people awake on a village without streetlighting. Close proximity to site.

km8 or km3 (same site) gave out repeated odour issues, leading to at least one hospital visit from a family living under half a mile away, and no communication from the company until pressed after the event: this happened repeatedly. These odour events have happened with conventional operations but would repeat far more with unconventional as far more drilling would be done compared to conventional wells, hence the need for a decent setback distance to reduce the intensity and frequency of impact. I have personally smelt one very unpleasent odour incident on the footpath south of the km8 site: the gas engineer told me there had been a major leak to a pipeline that required specialist team from London to fix, but the HSE told me methane does not smell (but omitting to tell me the mercaptan and other gases with it such as hydrogen sulphide do smell).

Fracking releases a whole host of hydrocarbons into the air eg BTEX benzene toluene which are carcinogenic when inhaled and can cause respiratory difficulties, all borne out in the scientific evidence of hundreds of studies. So set back has strong health historical scientific and planning support, as well as democratic validity, keeping away from all the sensitive receptors who have not even given their informed consent to being the UK guinea pigs, and who have not received any baseline health questionnaires to date to assess what impact fracking is having on their health. If the breaking of all the traffic management plan provisions at km8 is any guide, other conditions and regulations will be ignored with impunity, therefore the cumulative impact of unacceptable air and noise and light impacts

need to be managed with a robust set back, which would act to mitigate some of the worst impacts on sensitive receptors. It would also enable the government to have a greater chance of meeting legally binding standards on air pollution which they have repeatedly been taken to court and lost every case: they have been forced by courts to come up with an action plan (UK government v ClientEarth).

We know that onsite NOx pollution levels have exceeded legal limits at km8, though the company have failed to demonstrate at what distance these exceedences cease to be exceedences and therefore acceptable in legal terms for sensitive receptors to breathe. Given there is a footpath that hugs the site boundary, this is another example of air quality regulations not being observed or enforced. This is further evidence of the necessity, in the face of government policy, of planning needing to make a planning judgment on a set back distance that puts the onus on the operator to demonstrate how they can comply with the law on air pollution for sensitive receptors, given the evidence of likely impacts intrinsic to the process of drilling, fracking and extraction of shale gas.

Ian Conlan
West Malton Against Fracking