

Response to the Ministerial Statement of May 17th 2018

I consider that the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS18) does not affect the North Yorkshire Minerals and Waste Joint Plan (MWJP)

When the plan was examined in public a number of key issues were recognised. Firstly that the industry was new and untried in this country. To accommodate this, the inspector was at pains to offer revision after five years if this was deemed necessary. The WMS18 also recognises the novelty of the industry by the use of words such as “potentially” and “could”

Secondly local concerns and worries were recognised. In the WMS18 the use of the words “reflecting local communities” makes the same point. Again the way was left clear for revision if these fears proved to be groundless.

Thirdly the inspector believed that the precautionary principle should be applied and was within the national planning framework. Although the principle is not specifically mentioned in the WMS18 it still applies as before.

The decisions on the 3.5Km Visual Sensitivity Zone and the 500m Horizontal Separation Distance were again reached after consultation with the industry and they were able to give circumstances where these distances may not be appropriate. As the WMS18 confirms, each case will be considered on its own merits. The difference may be that the applicant could have to justify why they need to breach the separation zones rather than opponents justifying why they do not.

As I understand it, the definition of fracking as set out in the MWJP is consistent with Planning Practice Guidance and as such should be allowed to stand.

As it stands the WMS18 appears to be simply an extension of commitments put forward in the Conservative election manifesto. It indicates a way of thinking and does not stand on its own as an evidence-based document that has been consulted on; the statement talks of consultation later in 2018. As such therefore, I feel that it should not have any modifying effect on the MWJP.

Peter Allen