

Construction of a temporary wellsite for the exploration of gas including drilling operation, well testing, retention of equipment and site restoration – Land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Drifffield

Planning Statement

Egdon Resources U.K. Limited

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Quality information

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Abbreviations

Table 0-1 Abbreviations used within this Planning Statement

Abbreviation	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AQIA	Air Quality Impact Assessment

Abbreviation Definition

AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AES	Annual Energy Statement
BMV	Best and Most Versatile
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BGS	British Geological Survey
BEIS	Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
BgL	Below Ground Level
CI	Carbon Intensity
CCC	Climate Change Committee
CQA	Construction Quality Assurance
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DCLC	Department for Communities and Local Government
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DAS	Design and Access Statement
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
DBA	Desk Based Assessment
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
EGS	Economic Growth Strategy
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EN-1	Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy
ERYC	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GVA	Gross Value Added
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HDPE	High-Density Polyethylene
HER	Historic Environment Record
HRA	Hydrogeological Risk Assessment
LVA	Landscape and Visual Appraisal
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserves
LPA	Local Planning Authorities

Abbreviation	Definition
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
LOAEL	Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level
MPA	Mineral Planning Authority
MWJP	Minerals and Waste Joint Plan
NCA	National Character Area
NNR	National Nature Reserves
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statement
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
NMP	Noise Management Plan
NML	Noise monitoring locations
NSR	Noise-sensitive receptors
NSTA	North Sea Transition Authority
NYC	North Yorkshire Council
NYMNPA	North York Moors National Park Authority
OGA	Oil and Gas Authority
OS	Ordnance Survey
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
PEDL	Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RLPS	Ryedale Local Plan Strategy
SOAEL	Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
TWH	Terawatt hours
TA	Transport Assessment
TwH	Terawatt Hours
UKOOG	UK Onshore Operators Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHS	World Heritage Sites
WMS	Written Ministerial Statement

Executive Summary

Egdon Resources U.K. Limited ('Egdon') is applying to North Yorkshire Council (NYC) for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the following development:

The construction of a temporary wellsite for the exploration of gas, including drilling operation, well testing, the retention of equipment and site restoration on land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffeld

Egdon was formed in 1997 and has been exploring for and producing oil and gas from UK onshore for over 28 years. Egdon is wholly owned by HEYCO Energy Group LLC, a U.S. based energy company. Egdon has been a participant of licence interests since 1997 and an approved 'Operator' of licence interests since 2000. Since 2000, Egdon has conducted the drilling operations of seventeen exploration, appraisal and development wells and has operated five producing oil and gas fields.

The proposed wellsite lies within Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence (PEDL) 347, which covers an area of 48km² to the south of Scarborough. Egdon became a licence holder and took over as the operator of PEDL347 from Cuadrilla Resources Limited in December 2023. Conventional gas indications were encountered in the Sherwood Sandstone reservoir in the Fordon-2 well drilled by BP in 1974 5 km to the east of the proposed wellsite at Foxholes.

A subsequent assessment of geological and geophysical data by Egdon indicates that a potentially significant gas resource may exist within the Triassic Sherwood Sandstone reservoir in a sub-surface structure named the Weaverthorpe Prospect. Egdon has completed an assessment of the gross recoverable gas volumes within the Weaverthorpe prospect which indicates a potential Mean case of 63 billion cubic feet (Bcf) of gas.

Egdon is submitting an application to NYC to construct and drill from a new wellsite in order to explore and flow test for the presence of gas resources, followed by well abandonment, decommissioning and site restoration. Egdon is seeking a temporary 3-year planning permission, within which the above operations will take place – noting that the actual operational periods will be relatively short. If drilling and subsequent testing does not prove that gas volumes are commercially viable, it is likely that decommissioning and site restoration would take effect sooner.

The existing access off Butt Lane into the field will be widened and extended 15m into the Site to allow for HGVs to turn safely into and out of the Site. The access has good sight lines and is suitably wide enough to cater for HGVs. It is therefore considered to be a safe and established means of access which will be sufficient to support the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development will not result in any notable adverse environmental or amenity impacts. The Proposed Development has been assessed in relation to:-

- landscape and visual amenity
- transport
- ecology and biodiversity net gain
- noise
- flood risk, hydrogeology and surface water drainage
- air quality
- lighting
- Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions
- archaeology and cultural heritage and
- agricultural land quality and soils.

All of the assessments conclude that, with the application of appropriate mitigation measures (including best practice operational measures and suitable planning conditions), there will not be any notable adverse impacts from the Proposed Development on the environment or local amenity. At the same time, the Proposed Development will deliver modest but positive economic and social impacts for the local community.

The Proposed Development has been assessed in line with local and national planning policy. It accords with the relevant development plan policies contained within the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan (2022) and the Ryedale District Local Plan Strategy (2013).

The proposal has also been found to accord with the key material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Planning Practice Guidance notes. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal is considered to be 'sustainable development' to which the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

1. Introduction

Scope

This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application submitted by Egdon Resources U. K. Limited ('Egdon') to North Yorkshire Council (NYC) in its capacity as Mineral Planning Authority (MPA). Egdon is seeking planning permission for the following development:

The construction of a temporary wellsite for the exploration of gas, including drilling operation, well testing, the retention of equipment and site restoration on land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffild, North Yorkshire

For absolute clarity, Egdon will not use the process known as High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing (commonly referred to as 'fracking') or a proppant squeeze as part of the planned operations..

Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 4, below.

The planning application comprises:

- completed planning application form, Annex 5, NYPA 15 validation checklist, justification statement and certificates;
- this Planning Statement;
- covering letter;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA);
- Transport Assessment (TA);
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA);
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment;
- Lighting Assessment;
- Noise and Vibration Assessment and Noise Management Plan;
- Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA);
- Odour Management Plan;
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment (DBA);
- Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and Soil Resource Survey;
- Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions Report;
- Statement of Community Involvement;
- Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (HRA), Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Surface Water Drainage Strategy; and
- the plans/drawings shown in Table 1-1, below:

Table 1-1 Plans / Drawings

Plan / Drawing	Plan / Drawing Title	Scale
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-01	Location Plan (Site of Application)	1:2,500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-02	Location Plan	1:10,000
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-03	Existing Site Plan	1:1,250
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-04	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Existing Site	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-05	Indicative Section Plan – Existing Site	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-06	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Construction Phase	1:500

ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-07	Indicative Section Plan –Construction Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-08	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Drilling Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-09	Indicative Section Plan – Drilling Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-10	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Well Testing Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-11	Indicative Section Plan – Drilling Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-12	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Retention Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-13	Indicative Section Plan – Wellsite Retention Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-14	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Well Abandonment Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-15	Indicative Section Plan – Well Abandonment Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-16	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Security Fencing & Gates (Construction Phase)	1:250
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-17	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Security Fencing & Gates (Retention Phase)	1:250
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-18	Indicative Site Layout Plan – Restoration Phase	1:500
ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-19	Indicative Section Plan – Restoration Phase	1:500

Referencing

For referencing purposes, the following definitions have been adopted and are utilised from this point onwards:

- **the Proposed Development** – the proposal being put forward by Egdon as described in Section 4 of this Planning Statement;
- **the Site** – the area within the red line boundary of drawing ref. 'ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-01 Location Plan (Site of Application)', comprising the proposed wellsite, the Site access track and visibility splays (1.2979 ha in area);
- **the wellsite** – comprises the earth bunds and the well cellar, where the operational activity takes place but excluding the car park, new and existing sections of access road (0.9802 ha in area);
- **the Site access track** – the new section of access track to the wellsite, off the Butt Lane (0.2637 ha);
- **the visibility splays** (0.054 ha).

Design and Access Statement

A requirement for planning applications to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement (DAS) was introduced under Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Section 42 inserts a new Section 327A into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the effect of which is to prohibit, amongst other things, a Local Planning Authority from entertaining an application unless it is accompanied by a DAS, where required.

Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 sets out the various categories of planning application to which the above requirement applies i.e.:

- major development (as defined in Article 2 of the 2015 Order); and
- dwellings or other buildings over a certain size, in designated areas.

Although 'the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits' falls within the definition of 'major development', paragraph 4(a) of Article 9 confirms that applications made for 'engineering or mining operations' are exempt.

“(2) An application for planning permission to which this paragraph applies must, except where paragraph (4) applies, be accompanied by a statement (“a design and access statement”) about— (a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.”

“(4) Paragraph (2) does not apply to an application for planning permission which is— (a) for permission to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached, made pursuant to section 73 of the 1990 Act(25); (b) of the description contained in article 20(1)(b) or (c); (c) for engineering or mining operations;”

It follows that there is no requirement for this application to be accompanied by a DAS.

Pre-Application Advice

Egdon submitted a request for pre-application planning advice to NYC on 20th August 2024, which provided details about the site history, the Proposed Development, and the relevant environmental and planning considerations. A response was issued by NYC on 15th October 2024. This outlined, among other things, the key local and national policies with which the Proposed Development would need to consider and the relevant assessments that NYC would expect to accompany a formal planning application.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

A formal request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion was submitted by Egdon to NYC, on 20th January 2025 in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (‘the EIA Regulations’), to determine whether the Proposed Development constitutes ‘EIA’ development which would require the submission of a formal Environmental Statement (ES). NYC issued a Screening Opinion on 5th February 2025 (Appendix 1 of the Planning Statement). It stated that, in the opinion of NYC, the proposed development would not have significant effects on the environment. The screening opinion concluded that the proposed development is not EIA development and that the planning application would not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Application Copies

The planning application documents are available for viewing via the Council's website (www.northyorks.gov.uk). An electronic copy of the application and the accompanying documents and plans can also be obtained from the applicant by contacting Paul Foster (info@egdon-resources.com).

2. Egdon and the Planning History of the Site

The Applicant

Egdon Resources U.K. Limited ("Egdon") was formed in 1997 and has been exploring for and producing oil and gas from UK onshore for over 28 years. It is wholly owned by HEYCO Energy Group LLC, a U.S. based energy company.

Egdon has been a participant in licence interests since 1997 and an approved 'Operator' of licence interests since 2000. Since 2000, Egdon has conducted the drilling operations of seventeen exploration, appraisal and development wells and has operated five producing oil and gas fields.

As a responsible oil and gas exploration and production business, Egdon is highly conscious of its responsibilities and is mindful of the potential risks to people and the environment. Egdon is committed to the highest standards of Health, Safety and Environmental management, protection and performance and these aspects have equal prominence with other business considerations.

For further information on Egdon, please refer to the Company's website: <http://www.egdon-resources.com/>.

Site Context

The planned site is located on agricultural land to the north of Butt Lane, near Foxholes, and is currently used for arable use. The Site lies within Petroleum Exploration Development Licence area PEDL347 in North Yorkshire. The licence covers an area of 48 km². The Site is located within the administrative boundary of North Yorkshire Council (NYC) and within Foxholes with Butterwick parish. The boundary with the East Riding of Yorkshire lies approximately 350m to the east. The Site is located approximately 850m to the east of the village of Foxholes, 2 km to the west of Wold Newton, 15 km south of Scarborough and 16km northwest of Bridlington. The Weaverthorpe prospect spans the PEDL347 and PL081 licences shown in Figure 2.1 below. Egdon is the operator and holds a 75% interest in both licences.

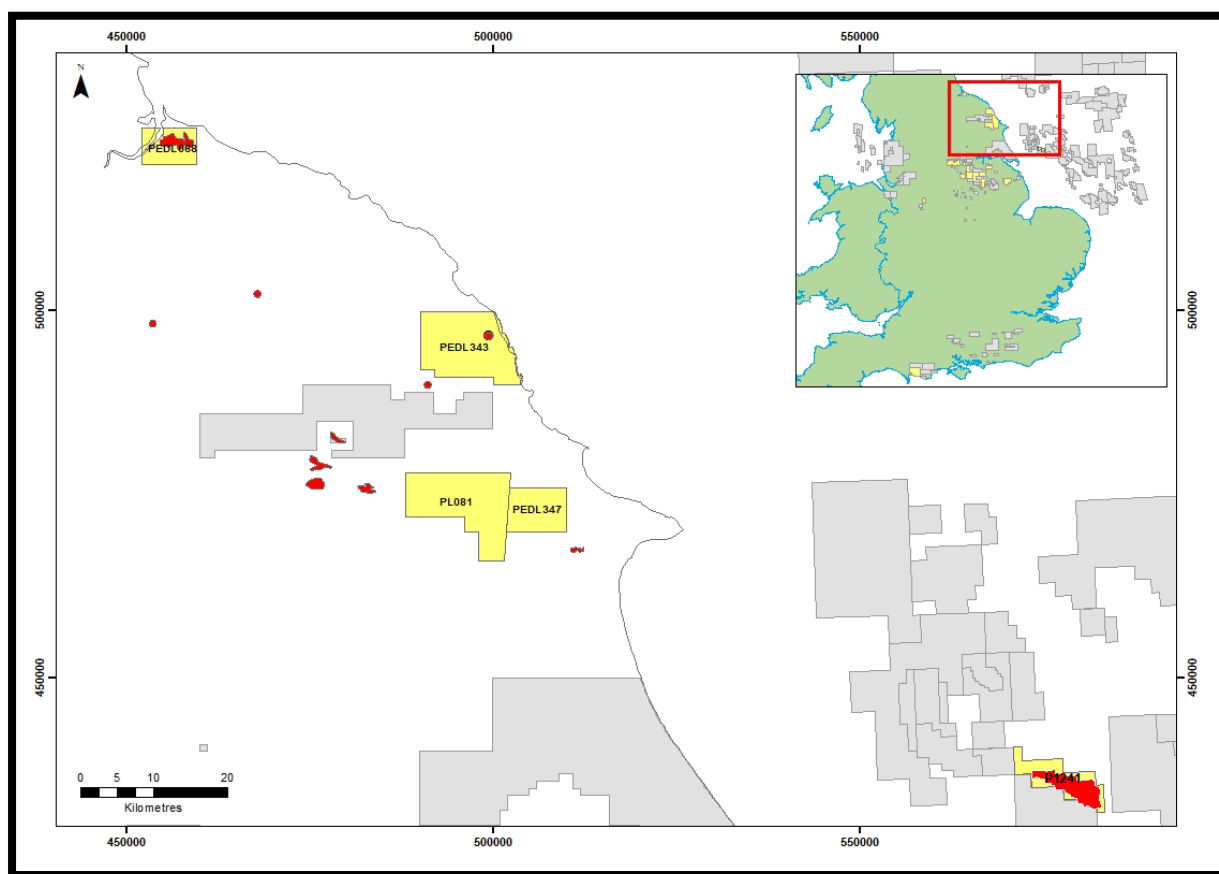


Figure 2.1 - PEDL 347

Planning History

The relevant planning history relating to the Site is summarised in Table 2-1, below.

Table 2-1 Land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes and vicinity - Planning History Summary

Application Number	Description	Decision and Date
NY/2025/0017/SCR	Screening Opinion for the construction of a temporary wellsite, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment	Non-EIA - 5 February 2025
NY/2013/0226/FUL	Construction of a temporary wellsite to drill up to two petroleum appraisal boreholes including drilling rig (max. height 50m) and associated plant and equipment".	Withdrawn - 19 September 2013
NY/2013/0116/SCR	Screening opinion for proposed exploration and appraisal Well Site	Non-EIA - 26 June 2013

3. Site and Surroundings

Site Location and Description

The proposed wellsite is located within the administrative boundaries of NYC and Foxholes with Butterwick Parish Council. The location of the Site is shown in drawing ref. 'ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-02 Location Plan'. It lies 850m to the east of the village of Foxholes, 2km west of Wold Newton and 15km south of Scarborough. The Site has access directly off Butt Lane, 850m east of the junction with the B1249.

The Site is 1.3 hectares (ha) in area. It comprises an agricultural field currently in arable use. It lies outside the defined development limit of Foxholes and is located within the open countryside. The settlement pattern outside Foxholes village is dispersed and sparse with few residential properties in the vicinity.

The entrance of the Site is at Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference TA023727. The address and postcode of the Site is Land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield YO25 3HY.

The nearest watercourse is Gypsey Race, located opposite the Site's entrance on the south side of Butt Lane.

The Site slopes from north to south; the topography within the Site varies from 70m AOD on its northern edge to 53m AOD on the southern part.

Surroundings

The Site lies within the Broad Chalk Valley Landscape Character Type. It is characterised by a broad valley landscape, often known as the Great Wolds Valley. The Gypsey Race watercourse passes along part of the valley floor. Landcover is dominated by arable agriculture with large rectilinear arable field defined by hedgerows. Woodland cover is sparse. Villages nestle in the valley while minor roads ascent the valley sides to access farmsteads at exposed locations on high ground above the valley.

The nearest residential properties in the vicinity of the Site are:

- Westfield Farm, 635m to the east;
- Residential properties in Eastfield, Foxholes, 950m to the southwest; and
- Applegarth, Smythy Lane, 990m to the east.

The nearest settlements in the vicinity of the Site include:

- the village of Foxholes, 1km to the west; and
- the village of Wold Newton, 2km to the east.

Access

Access to the Site is from Butt Lane which runs in an east-west direction from the junction with the B1249 1.1km to the west to the village of Wold Newton, 2 km to the east. Between the junction with the B1249 and the site access, Butt Lane is a two-way single carriageway road, measuring approximately 5.2 m in width. It is rural in character and is subject to the national speed limit (60 mph).

The B1249 comprises a two-way single carriageway with central line marking. It is subject to the national speed limit heading northwards, with the exception of the section through the village of Foxholes which is subject to a 30 mph limit. The B1249 connects to the A64 at Staxton.

There is an existing field entrance to the Site off Butt Lane.

Environmental Designations

The presence/absence of designations in the vicinity of the Site is summarised below. Designations have been identified using MAGIC (Defra, 2025) unless otherwise stated.

Landscape and Visual

The Site does not fall within an area designated nationally or locally for its landscape value. Natural England have proposed a new Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape. The Site does not fall within the proposed designation; the closest boundary is approximately 880 m to the north.

The Site falls within National Character Area (NCA): *27 Yorkshire Wolds*. This comprises an area of high, gently rolling ground made up of a prominent chalk escarpment and foothills. Very small parts of the area are urban in nature. Most of the land is farmed with woodland limited to small, scattered blocks on higher land and steeper slopes.

The local landscape character is classified by the North Yorkshire and York Landscape Characterisation Project (2011). The Site falls within the Broad Chalk Valley (Type 20). It encompasses a broad valley landscape, often known as the Great Wolds Valley. The Gypsy Race watercourse passes along part of the valley floor. Land cover is dominated by arable agriculture. Large rectilinear arable fields are defined by hedgerows on the valley floor and sides. Woodland cover is sparse, although some trees are located on the settlement edges and alongside the watercourse. Occasional villages nestle in the valley, linked by a minor road along the valley bottom. Minor roads and tracks ascend the valley sides to access farmsteads at exposed locations on high ground above the valley.

Land use surrounding the Site is agricultural in nature; the character of the area is open countryside with field boundaries marked by ditches and hedgerows.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The Site does not lie within any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations.

There are no Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within 2 km of the Site. The nearest statutory designated site is the Fordon Chalk Grasslands SSSI which lies approximately 3.5 km to the northeast. There are two non-statutory designated sites within 2km – Gypsy Race LWS and West Dale, Fordon LWS.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, this being land at very low risk of flooding from fluvial sources (land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from rivers or the sea).

The closest watercourse to the site is Gypsy Race, a small chalk stream. The race and the surrounding valley bottom are designated as being Flood Zone 2/3.

The Site is located within the 'total catchment' Zone 3 of a Source Protection Zone. The SPZ3 is associated with a number of abstractions, stretching from Bridlington to Driffeld Wold. The closest designated inner source protection zone (SPZ1) is 6.2 km to the south at Kilham.

The bedrock strata consists of several formations with the Flamborough Chalk Formation directly beneath the Site. It is underlain by the Welton Chalk, Burnham Chalk, Ferriby Chalk and the Hunstanton Formation. The Chalk is the uppermost aquifer which supports several nearby abstractions.

Cultural Heritage

There are no Scheduled Monuments protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979 (HMSO) present within 1km radius of the centre of the Application Site (the Assessment Area). There are no Listed buildings within the Assessment Area; the closest is the Grade II Listed Church of St Mary's in Foxholes, 1.25 km to the west.

There are no World Heritage Sites (WHS) located within 5 km of the Site, nor are there any conservation areas or non-statutory designated heritage assets (i.e. registered battlefields or registered parks and gardens) within 2 km of the Site.

Material Assets and Waste

According to the Groundsure Enviro Data Viewer (Groundsure, 2023), there are no historic or authorised landfills within 1 km of the Site.

Air Quality

The Site does not fall within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It is located within a rural setting, which infers that the Site is not located in an area where pollutant concentrations are considered to be at risk of exceeding the national air quality strategy objectives.

Public Rights of Way

According to the NYC Definitive Map (NYC, 2025), the closest Public Right of Way (PRoW) is a public footpath (ref 25.34/2/1) which is 1100m to the north-west and which runs between the B1249 and Ganton Road, Foxholes. According to the ERYC Definitive Map (ERYC, 2025), the closest PRoW is East Riding of Yorkshire is public footpath ref THWIF01 which lies 3.1 km to the south.

There are no National Trails within 2 km of the Site. Route 166 of the National Cycle Network passes through Foxholes village and lies approximately 1.1 km to the west.

Greenbelt

The Site is not located within or near the Green Belt.

Geology and Soils

The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 geology map (Sheet 54, Scarborough) indicates that the Site is directly underlain by the Flamborough Chalk Formation, with no mapped superficial deposits directly at the Site. The area is dominated by the Yorkshire Wolds, which are the northernmost Chalk hills in the United Kingdom.

The Flamborough Chalk Formation is described as a 'white, well-bedded, flint-free chalk with common marl seams' according to the BGS.

The quality of the agricultural land within the proposed site was assessed using the revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF, 1988). Land within the whole of the survey area is well drained (Wetness Class I). In a small area of land close to Butt Lane, the topsoil is slightly lighter textured than the rest of the site, being heavy silty clay loam rather than clay. With the present climatic conditions at the site and a heavy silty clay loam topsoil, this results in a moderate wetness and workability limitation which restricts the land to Subgrade 3a (6% of the total area of the Site).

The majority of the Site (94%) is Subgrade 3b quality. Water availability for growing crops is lower and hence droughtiness is also a limiting factor restricting the land to Subgrade 3b. Also, in a small area in the northwest of the survey area, the stone content of the topsoil is higher than the majority of the area. Stones act as an impediment to cultivation, harvesting and crop growth and stone contents above 15% of stones greater than 2 cm, limit the land to Subgrade 3b quality.

4. The Proposed Development

Description of the Proposed Development

The description of the Proposed Development is as follows:

The construction of a temporary wellsite for the exploration of gas, including drilling operation, well testing, the retention of equipment and site restoration on land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield

It would consist of four phases, as outlined in Table 4-1, below.

Table 4-1 Proposed Development Phasing

Phase	Summary	Operations	Duration
1	Site and Access Construction	Development of wellsite and installation of a well cellar.	5 weeks
2	Drilling	Mobilisation, drilling and demobilisation of drilling rig	8 weeks
3	Well Testing	Mobilisation of test facilities, testing of gas flows	4 weeks
4a	Success case	Suspend the well and reduce the Site working platform	4 weeks
4b	Failure Case - Wellsite decommissioning, site restoration and aftercare	Plug and decommission well and restoration of the Site to agricultural land.	6 weeks

Phase 1 - Site Construction

This would be undertaken via the following steps:

- Installation of at least three groundwater monitoring boreholes
- Mobilise low-level security accommodation, welfare facilities and security lighting
- Construction of access track
- Civils work to create wellsite platform working area, stripping and creating topsoil storage bund
- Installation of a 2.4m diameter drilling cellar to a minimum depth of 2.75m, and concrete platform
- Installation of a concrete access ramp and reconfiguration of construction compound to a car parking area for up to 12 cars
- Creation of a perimeter containment system with French drain and rodding points
- Installation of the tertiary containment system comprising High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) impermeable membrane and protection geotextiles.
- Installation of a 102mm thick HDPE interlocking matting system for the site working platform
- Installation of a 102mm thick HDPE interlocking matting system for the access track
- Installation of either 2m high Heras panels or 2.5m high 'Paladin' security fencing around the perimeter and along the length of the access track
- Installation of new farm gate, secondary access gate, and either 2m temporary Heras gates or 2.5m high 'Paladin' security gates set back from the public highway

The configuration of the site during construction is set out in drawing refs. ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-06 and ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-07.

Phase 2 – Drilling

The intent is to drill a single exploratory borehole to target the structural crest of the Weaverthorpe gas exploration prospect, within the Triassic-aged Sherwood Sandstone reservoir, at approximately 900m True Vertical Depth Below Ground Level (TVDbgl). There will be a requirement for the borehole to be deviated by up to 400m laterally to the north-west from the borehole origin at surface. Approximately the first 250m of drilling will be vertical through the Cretaceous aged Chalk Group, which will be cased off and isolated before the borehole is drilled directionally to the top of the reservoir target. Below the Chalk, the geology is made up of a series of Jurassic aged clays

(Kimmeridge Clay) and mudstones, a thin carbonate formation (Corallian Formation), and the Upper Liassic mudstones. Triassic aged marls (Penarth Group) are anticipated to be at a depth of approximately 680m TVDbgl, followed by approx. 140m of the Mercia Mudstone Group (made up of mudstone and the Muschelkalk Halite). Once the Sherwood Sandstone reservoir has been encountered, drilling will continue for approximately 200m taking the Total Vertical Depth of the borehole to 1,040m. All depths, final bottom-hole location and offset are provisional until the final surface location is confirmed and detailed drilling engineering work has been completed.

To explore for hydrocarbons, a drilling rig with a mast height of up to 38m in height, and ancillary drilling-related equipment and facilities would be brought to site. It is expected that mobilisation would take approximately one week. In addition, if required, security and welfare facilities will be installed on the southern part of the wellsite. The indicative site layout showing equipment and facilities on site is shown on drawing refs. ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-08 and ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-09. In addition, the equipment and facilities expected for all operational phases is set out in Appendix 2.

Once mobilised to site and set-up, drilling is expected to take four weeks to complete, operating 24/7 to reach the sub-surface target. Demobilisation will take approximately one week.

Phase 3 – Flow Testing

Once drilling has been completed, and depending on data gathered during the drilling operation, a well test spread would be mobilised to the Site to evaluate gas flow. The test process will involve flowing gas to surface and incinerating this gas within a shrouded ground flare. Once the test facilities are in place, flow testing is limited by the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA) to 96hrs in duration.

The indicative layout of the Site for any test phase is set out in drawing refs. 'ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-10 and 'ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-11.

Phase 4a – Site Retention

Following the completion of flow testing, in a success case the well will remain suspended with the wellhead and cellar left in place, whilst a new planning application is developed and submitted. The temporary matting will be removed, and the site working platform area reduced; aggregate will be brought in to facilitate this. To manage surface water run-off, a surface water interceptor will be installed. The reduced site area is shown in drawing refs ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-12 and ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-13. The site will be maintained on a care and maintenance basis until such point as all regulatory approvals for production are progressed or if such approvals are not forthcoming then operations will move to abandonment and restoration as detailed in Phase 4b.

Phase 4b – Well Decommissioning, Site Restoration and Aftercare

If well testing does not prove commercially viable gas volumes, the well will be decommissioned using a programme approved by the Health & Safety Executive, the EA and the NSTA. The wellbore will be filled with specialist cement plugs to surface; hydrostatically tested, installed casing strings will be cut at least 2 m below ground level and a metal plate stitch-welded across the cut-off casing. The well number will be welded on top of the plate.

The Site itself will then be restored to agricultural use; all equipment, infrastructure, membranes, aggregates and facilities will be removed in accordance with a programme of site clearance, restoration and aftercare. The specific procedure that covers for this can be found at Appendix 3 of this Planning Statement. Drawing refs. 'ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-14 Indicative Site Layout Plan - Well Abandonment Phase' and 'ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-15 Indicative Section Plan – Well Abandonment Phase' show the indicative equipment and facilities related to the well decommissioning work. The existing stored topsoil bund will be tested and reused to ensure compatibility with the surrounding land quality, and the site area returned to the landowner in an agreed condition.

Phase 4b may progress earlier, if the drilling operation does not indicate commercially viable gas volumes.

Plant and Equipment

The equipment required for each phase of the Proposed Development will vary; a full breakdown is shown in Appendix 2 (Schedule of Plant Equipment).

Operating Hours

The operating hours relating to the Proposed Development are outlined in Table 4-2, below.

Table 4-2 Hours of Operation

Phase	Phase Aspect	Duration (Weeks)	Mondays to Friday	Saturdays	Sundays, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays
1	Site Construction	5	07:00 – 17.30	07:00 – 13:00	None
2	Drill rig mobilisation and demobilisation	2	07:00 – 19:00	07:00 – 19:00	None
	Drilling borehole & completion	6	24/7 hours	24/7 hours	24/7 hours
3	Flow testing mobilisation and demobilisation	2	07:00 – 19:00	07:00 – 19:00	None
	Flow Testing	2	24 Hours	24/7 hours	24/7 hours
4a	Suspend and retain site	4	07:00 – 17.30	07:00 – 13:00	None
4b	Well-decommissioning and site restoration	6	07:00 – 17.30	07:00 – 13:00	None

Traffic and Transport

All construction and operational HGV traffic travelling to and from the Site will be via the A64, B1249 and Butt Lane. The existing access off Butt Lane has good sight lines. The access will be widened slightly to ensure that it is accessible to cater for HGVs.

The HGV movements associated with each phase of the Proposed Development are outlined in Table 4-3, below. Several assumptions have been made in the generation of these movements, as follows:

- assumes 5.5 day week for HGV movements, assuming that there are no movements on Sundays apart from during drilling and in the event of operational emergencies;
- where applicable, HGV numbers are rounded up, not down;
- individual phase durations are worst-case and are expected to be undertaken in less time; and
- phase aspects may not be immediately sequential i.e. there will be dormant periods between each phase.

Table 4-3 HGV Movements for Each Phase

Phase	Aspect	Duration (Weeks)	Total HGV Numbers	Average HGVs per day (5.5 days per week)	Maximum Number of HGVs on anyone day
1	Site construction	5	102	4	11
2	Drilling	8	214	5	18
3	Testing	4	48	3	7
4a	Suspension of well	4	145	6	13
4b	Well-decommissioning and site restoration	6	148	5	8

The traffic and transport impacts of the Proposed Development have been considered in more detail in the Transport Assessment that accompanies the application.

Waste Management

The Site is not connected to mains sewerage and all facilities (site cabins) wastes will be stored in under cabin waste tanks which are collected by a licenced waste operator using a road tanker. During drilling, semi-dry drilling mud and rock cuttings will be collected in purpose-built tanks, located on either a concrete pad or in skips, and transported from the Site by road for disposal at an authorised waste disposal facility. For the Site in general, periodic emptying of collected rainwater from the perimeter containment system and well cellar will be undertaken through licenced waste contractors. All wastes taken from the Site are to be managed in accordance with Egdon's Waste Management procedure, and governed by an issued Environmental Permit.

Site Drainage

The wellsite will be constructed as a bunded, sealed site with sufficient containment capacity to avoid possible pollutants discharging from the Site. Any risk of pollution caused by water run-off or percolation can be mitigated by using standard techniques that have proven successful at other onshore sites. A HDPE impermeable membrane will be installed across the Site under a Construction Quality Assurance (CQA) plan that will need to be approved and verified by the Environment Agency. This will ensure that there will be suitable protection of the groundwater from any pollutants, as any contaminants within surface waters will be retained within the perimeter containment system.

Consideration of site drainage has been included in the Hydrogeological and Flood Risk Assessment which accompanies the planning application. During drilling, any collected water from the perimeter system will be tankered off-site to an Environment Agency approved treatment facility.

Security and Welfare Facilities

The onshore oil and gas industry has experienced a significant increase in protest activity by those opposed to fossil fuel exploration and production. Egdon is obliged to take all precautions to maintain the safety of employees, contractors and third parties and as advised by local and national Police. For all phases, security may be required depending on the perceived level of potential protestor activity, and this may involve the need to have 24/7 specialist security operatives.

All operational phase drawings have included security provisions, with indicative security facilities and locations set out on the site plans. Note that these have been detailed as the 'worst-case' in respect of facilities and most phases will not require this level of security – such levels may not remain in place for the duration of the phases.

Lighting

The lighting requirements of the Site will vary depending on each phase of the Proposed Development. Once mobilised to site, drilling will progress 24/7 until completion. Flow testing will be undertaken on a 24/7 basis. The fully operational lighting associated with the drilling phase has been assessed in detail. The drilling phase will be when the greatest lighting impacts will occur. An assessment of its effects is provided in the Lighting Assessment which accompanies this Planning Application.

Employment

The Proposed Development will require specialist engineers and skilled operatives throughout all phases. It will also support local businesses such as electricians, pipework fabricators, construction companies, crane suppliers, road hauliers to name but a few. Local restaurants, cafes, pubs, food stores and petrol stations will also be utilised, so the development thereby supports indirect employment and the local economy.

The number of personnel on site will vary according to the security situation, however, the likely staff present onsite during each phase of the Proposed Development are indicated in Table 4-5, below. Staff are present onsite 24/7 during the drilling and testing phases.

Table 4-4 Local and Direct Economic Impacts of the Proposed Development

Phase	Summary	Operations	Roles	
			Full time	Part time
1	Site construction	Development of wellsite and installation of a well cellar.	6 x security 6 x civils	1 x Construction Manager 1 x Admin/accounting 1 x HSE 1 x Geologist 1 x Egdon Management 6 x Site services (haulers, HDPE welding, wastes, equipment servicing etc)
Totals			12	11 (7 on site, 4 off site)
2	Drilling	Drilling	6 x security 16 x drilling 10 x logging/casing/cementing/directional 1 x waste management	1 x Admin/accounting 1 x HSE 1 x Drilling Management 1 x Petroleum Engineering 1 x Geologist 1 x Egdon Management 8 x Site services (haulers, materials, wastes, equipment servicing etc)
Totals			33	14 (8 on site, 6 off site)
3	Testing	Test production by undertaking flow testing	6 x security 6 x test/supervisory personnel 2 x nitrogen lift 2 x slickline operators	1 x Admin/accounting 1 x HSE 1 x Drilling Management 1 x Petroleum Engineering 1 x Geologist 1 x Egdon Management 8 x Site services (haulers, materials, wastes, equipment servicing etc)
Totals			16	14 (8 on site, 6 off site)
4	Well decommissioning and site restoration	Plug decommission and restore the site	8 x workover 6 x civils 6 x site infrastructure/equipment/wastes	1 x Construction Manager 1 x Admin/accounting 1 x HSE 1 x Drilling Management 1 x Geologist 1 x Egdon Management 20 x Site services (haulers, materials, wastes, equipment servicing etc)
Totals			20	26 (20 on site, 6 offsite)

5. Relevant Development Plan Policies and Material Considerations

Introduction

The application for planning permission falls to be determined by the MPA, NYC, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which states that *"if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

The 'material considerations' referred to include national planning policies (mainly published in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), current and emerging National Energy Policy, emerging local planning policies (including emerging neighbourhood plans) and other relevant evidence in support of the planning application.

Development Plan

The relevant development plan documents in this case comprise the following:

- the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan (MWJP) 2022; and
- the Ryedale District Local Plan Strategy 2013.

The adopted development plan policies considered to be most relevant to the Proposed Development are outlined in the following sections.

Minerals and Waste Joint Plan

The MWJP was adopted by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) in February 2022. It covers the areas of North Yorkshire, the City of York and the North York Moors National Park and has been produced jointly by the three planning authorities. The Plan period runs until 31st December 2030.

In relation to the Proposed Development, it is considered that the following policies are relevant. This accords with NYC planning officers' view in the Pre-Application Planning advice issued on 11th June 2024.

- M16 – Key spatial principles for hydrocarbon development
- M17 – Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development
- M18 – Other specific criteria applying to hydrocarbon development
- D01 – Presumption in favour of sustainable minerals and waste development
- D02 – Local amenity and cumulative impacts
- D03 – Transport of minerals and waste and associated traffic impacts
- D04 – Development affecting the North York Moors National Park and the AONBs
- D06 – Landscape
- D07 – Biodiversity and geodiversity
- D09 – Water environment
- D10 – Reclamation and afteruse
- D11 – Sustainable design, construction and operation of development
- D12 – Protection of agricultural land and soils

An assessment of the degree to which the Proposed Development accords with the above planning policies is provided in Section 6. From this, it can be seen that the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the MWJP.

Ryedale Local Plan Strategy

The Ryedale Local Plan Strategy (RLPS) was adopted by Ryedale District Council in September 2013. In relation to the Proposed Development, it is considered that the following policies are relevant. This accords with NYC planning officers' view in the Pre-Application Planning advice issued on 15th October 2024.

- SP12 – Heritage
- SP13 - Landscapes
- SP14 – Biodiversity
- SP15 – Green Infrastructure Networks
- SP17 – Managing Air Quality, Land and Water Resources
- SP19 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SP20 – Generic Development Management Issues

An assessment of the degree to which the Proposed Development accords with the above planning policies is provided in section 6. From this, it can be seen that the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the RLPS.

Material Considerations

Material considerations in this case are considered to include the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (most recently updated in December 2024);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014); and
- Energy Supply and Climate Change National Policy Context:
 - Energy Act 2008;
 - Climate Change Act 2008
 - Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) 2024;
 - Powering Up Britain 2023;
 - British Energy Security Strategy 2022
 - Energy Security Strategy 2012;
 - Annual Energy Statement (AES) 2014;
 - Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019;
 - Climate Change Committee (CCC) Net Zero Report 2019;
 - Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future 2020;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Flood Risk Guidance;
- Written Ministerial Statements;
- Regional and local economic policy; and
- emerging local development plan documents (including any relevant emerging local neighbourhood plans).

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

A revised NPPF was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), (2024a). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 identifies three objectives for sustainable development: an economic objective – contributing to building a strong, responsive, and competitive economy; a social objective – supporting strong, vibrant, and healthy communities; and an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, and historic environment, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating climate change including transitioning to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 9 adds that these objectives are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning decisions should take local circumstances into account, reflecting the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

Paragraph 11 provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (paragraph 11(c)). That presumption is engaged in this case.

Decision Making

Paragraph 48 states:

“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.”

Paragraph 49 states:

“Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

(a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

(b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

(c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

Paragraph 85 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, which includes taking into account local business needs and wider development opportunities.

Paragraph 87 states that planning decisions should address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

To ensure that the planning process supports the growth of a prosperous rural economy, paragraph 88 of the NPPF states (inter alia):

“Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”

Paragraph 89 goes on to state:

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”

The Proposed Development is located within the countryside and enables sustainable growth and expansion. If successful, the Proposed Development has potential in helping contribute to creating local jobs and increasing prosperity. It will also assist with the twin challenges of global competition by reducing the growing level of gas

imports from abroad and assisting in meeting the continuing need for oil and gas as the UK transitions to a low carbon economy.

Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Paragraph 96 concerns promoting healthy and safe communities and states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, safe and inclusive places.

Furthermore, the drilling operation and subsequent site activities will be undertaken in accordance with the Boreholes Sites & Regulations 1995, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007, the Offshore Installations & Wells (Design & Construction etc.) Regulations 1996 and the Applicant's Health and Safety Management System.

As a responsible oil and gas exploration and production business, Egdon is highly conscious of its responsibilities and is mindful of the potential risks to people and the environment. Egdon is committed to high standards of Health, Safety and Environmental management, protection and performance and these aspects have equal prominence with all other business considerations. All operations are undertaken under the umbrella of Egdon's established Health, Safety and Environmental Management System which applies to all stages of activity. This process includes undertaking risk assessments for all activities to ensure that all potential health, safety and environmental risks are documented, and mitigation and control measures are identified and implemented.

It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with NPPF paragraph 96.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

Paragraph 109 states that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals.

Paragraph 115 states that developments should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes have been taken up, that there is safe and suitable access to the site and that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or highway safety can be effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Paragraph 116 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The Transport Assessment has concluded that the amount of traffic generated by the development will be relatively light and will not adversely affect waiting times on the existing highway network. In response to paragraph 116, the TA concludes that there will be no anticipated adverse impacts on the local highway network as a result of the Proposed Development.

Making Effective Use of Land

Paragraph 124 states that planning decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Paragraph 161 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low-carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change.

Paragraph 181 states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities (LPAs) should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Paragraph 187 states that planning decisions should contribute to enhancing the natural and local environment. This includes recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, providing net gains for biodiversity and preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from and/or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

Paragraph 193(a) states that proposals should be refused if there is harm to biodiversity, which cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Paragraph 198 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the Site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development."

Paragraph 201 states:

“The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively.”

The development proposed by this planning application is to construct a wellsite to explore for gas resources within the Triassic aged Sherwood Sandstone. The design incorporates a number of measures to help reduce the risk of adverse impact upon the natural environment to the minimum.

Section 6 of this Planning Statement discusses the need for the Proposed Development and compliance with planning policy in greater detail. The technical reports and assessments which accompany the planning application serve to demonstrate that the impact is generally positive and acceptable. The technical assessments also demonstrate that the Proposed Development will not result in any adverse impacts on the environment. Minerals can only be worked where they are found. A number of design and management measures have been proposed to ensure that impacts from, among others, noise, air quality, landscape, and lighting are avoided or reduced. Therefore, the proposal accords with the NPPF paragraphs above on conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Paragraph 207 states that when determining planning applications, LPAs should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Paragraph 215 states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The impacts of the proposed development upon cultural heritage and archaeology are summarised in Chapter 6 of the Planning Statement.

Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals

Paragraph 222 states:

“It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.”

Paragraph 224 adds that when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy. It adds that when considering proposals for mineral extraction, MPAs should:

- ensure that there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the natural or historic environment or human health;
- ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions are controlled, mitigated or removed at source and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise-sensitive properties; and
- provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards.

Both conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons are considered to be minerals of local and national importance by the Government (Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF). As stated above, minerals can only be worked where they are found.

Fundamental principles underpinning the NPPF are the need to deliver sustainable development and build a strong, competitive economy nationwide. The Government's overall commitment is to secure economic growth aimed at the creation of jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths and meeting the twin challenges of global competition and providing a low carbon future. To achieve this, the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system encourages sustainable economic growth and does not impede it.

Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

On 6th March 2014, the formerly named Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) resource. The PPG seeks to make new planning guidance easier and simpler for practitioners and the public and should be read in conjunction with the national policy contained within the NPPF. The suite of PPGs does not have the status of policy, but they are an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications. They are updated online on a regular basis.

Air Quality PPG (2019)

Paragraph 005 of the Air Quality PPG (DLUHC, 2019a)) states that:

“Whether air quality is relevant to a planning decision will depend on the proposed development and its location. Concerns could arise if the development is likely to have an adverse effect on air quality in areas where it is already known to be poor, particularly if it could affect the implementation of air quality strategies and action plans and/or breach legal obligations (including those relating to the conservation of habitats and species). Air quality may also be a material consideration if the proposed development would be particularly sensitive to poor air quality in its vicinity”.

Where air quality is a relevant consideration, paragraph 005 states that the LPA may need to establish:

- *“the ‘baseline’ local air quality, including what would happen to air quality in the absence of the development;*
- *whether the proposed development could significantly change air quality during the construction and operational phases (and the consequences of this for public health and biodiversity); and*
- *whether occupiers or users of the development could experience poor living conditions or health due to poor air quality”.*

Climate Change PPG (2019)

The Climate Change PPG (DLUHC, 2019b) advises how planning can identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in plan-making and the planning application process to address the potential impacts of climate change.

Paragraph 001 requires LPAs to *“ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered alongside the broader issues of protecting the global environment.”* Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles underpinning both plan-making and decision-making.

Paragraph 003 cites the consideration of the *“availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality”* as an example of the planning system’s means of adapting to a changing climate.

Paragraph 005 states that the impact of climate change *“needs to be taken into account in a realistic way”* such as looking at *“the potential vulnerability of a development to climate change risk over its whole lifetime.”*

Healthy and Safe Communities (2022)

The Healthy and Safe Communities PPG (DLUHC, 2022) provides advice regarding how positive planning can contribute to achieving healthier and more inclusive communities.

Paragraph 001 states that *“the design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing”.*

Paragraph 003 defines a healthy place as *“one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages. It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing”.*

Minerals PPG (2014)

The Minerals PPG (DLUHC, 2014) confirms that minerals ‘make an essential contribution to the Country’s prosperity and quality of life’.

Paragraphs 91 to 128 relate specifically to hydrocarbon extraction.

Paragraph 92 sets out the three phases of onshore hydrocarbon extraction, these being exploration, testing (appraisal) and production.

Paragraph 93 notes that planning permission is required for each phase of hydrocarbon extraction, while paragraph 94 notes that applications can cover more than one phase and paragraph 118 notes that both vertical and horizontal drilling can be included in one application.

Paragraph 95 states that the exploratory phase is to acquire geological data to establish whether hydrocarbons are present. Paragraph 98 describes exploration drilling for conventional hydrocarbons as a short-term, intensive activity, typically lasting up to 25 weeks.

Paragraph 104 is a reminder that hydrocarbon extraction can only take place in areas where the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (now the NSTA) has issued a licence under the Petroleum Act 1998. Some hydrocarbon issues may be covered by other regulatory regimes but may still be relevant to MPAs.

Paragraph 120 states:

“When determining applications for subsequent phases, the fact that exploratory drilling has taken place on a particular site is likely to be material in determining the suitability of continuing to use the site only insofar as it establishes the presence of hydrocarbon resources.”

Paragraph 124 states that account should be taken of national energy policy, making clear that “energy supplies come from a variety of sources” including onshore oil and gas, as set out in the AES (dated October 2013). Published by DECC, it sets out the then government’s priorities in delivering the UK’s energy policies. These are:

- helping households and businesses take control of their energy bills and keep their costs down;
- unlocking investment in the UK’s infrastructure that will support economic growth; and
- playing a leading role in efforts to secure international action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change.

The AES is more than eleven years old; nevertheless, it continues to be referred to in the Minerals PPG and consequently, it should be taken into account by MPAs when determining planning applications for hydrocarbons.

Natural Environment PPG (2024)

The Natural Environment PPG (DLUHC, 2024c) examines key issues in implementing policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including the landscape.

Paragraph 010 requires LPAs to “consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, and contribute to habitat connectivity in the wider area (including as part of the Nature Recovery Network).”

Paragraph 016 states that LPAs must consider “the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications”.

Paragraph 036 states that planning policy should “recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”, and that “plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.”

Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality PPG (2019)

Paragraph 016 of the Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality PPG (DLUHC, 2019d) advises that whether water is likely to be a material consideration “will depend on the Proposed Development, its location and whether there could be concerns about water supply, water quality or both.”

With regard to water supply, it advises that this would normally be addressed through the local plan and is therefore unlikely to be a material consideration for most planning applications.

With respect to water quality, paragraph 016 states:

“It is only likely to be a significant planning concern when a proposal would:

- *Involve physical modifications to a water body such as flood storage areas, channel diversions and dredging, removing natural barriers, constructions of new locks, new culverts, major bridges, new barrages/dams, new weirs (including for hydropower) and removal of existing weirs; and/or*
- *Indirectly affect water bodies, for example:*
 - *As a result of new development such as the redevelopment of land that may be affected by contamination, mineral workings, water or wastewater treatment, waste management facilities and transport schemes including culverts and bridges;*
 - *Through a lack of adequate information to deal with wastewater.”*

When assessing the impacts on water quality, they could include:

- *“The likely impacts of the Proposed Development (including physical modifications) on water quantity and flow, river continuity and groundwater connectivity, and biological elements (flora and fauna);*
- *How the Proposed Development will affect measures in the river basin management plan to achieve good status in water bodies;*
- *How it is intended the development will comply with other relevant statutory requirements relating to the water environment (such as those relating to bathing waters, shellfish waters, freshwater fish and drinking water) bearing in mind compliance will be secured through the EA’s permitting responsibilities.”*

Energy Supply and Climate Change National Policy Context

Energy Act (2008)

Oil and gas form an integral part of the UK’s energy and generation mix and play an important role in maintaining security and affordability and decreasing carbon emissions in the UK. It is important, therefore, to take into account the context of the UK’s energy and climate change policy.

The Energy Act 2008 (UK Government, 2008a) implemented the key aspects of The Energy Challenge: Energy Review Report (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 2006) and Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy (DTI, 2007), and reflects the changing requirements for energy supply and infrastructure, as well as the need for adequate protection for the environment and the UK’s population. This policy is driven by two long-term energy challenges: tackling climate change and ensuring a secure, clean and affordable energy supply.

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2024)

The Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy EN-1 was designated by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero on 17th January 2024. It replaces the original 2011 version. It has effect for the decisions by the Secretary of State on applications for energy developments that are nationally significant under the Planning Act 2008 (UK Government, 2008b). The NPS can be considered to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF confirms this and states:

“National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.”

Paragraph 2.3.3 states that the Government’s objectives for the energy system are to ensure our supply of energy always remains secure, reliable, and affordable. Paragraph 2.3.11 acknowledges the key role the UK’s oil and gas sector can play in helping the UK meet its net zero commitment. Paragraph 2.5.6 references the British Energy Security Strategy which emphasises the importance of addressing the underlying vulnerability to international energy prices by reducing our dependence on imported oil and gas.

Powering Up Britain (2023)

The most recent Government energy strategy was published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in March 2023 under the 2022 to 2024 Sunak Conservative government. It was the previous Government’s blueprint for the future energy in the UK. After decades of reliance on imported fossil fuels, it states that the new department’s mission is to replace them with cheaper, cleaner, domestic sources of energy. It acknowledges the vital role that UK oil and gas will play in the transition to net zero, making the UK more energy independent and protecting us from volatile international energy markets. The Government’s vision is to power the UK by maximising the vital production of UK oil and gas as the North Sea basin declines.

British Energy Security Strategy (2022)

The British Energy Security Strategy was published in April 2022. The Strategy sets out how the UK will accelerate homegrown power for greater energy interdependence. The long-term solution it states is to address our underlying vulnerability to international oil and gas by reducing our dependence on imported oil and gas. *“Even as we reduce imports, we will continue to need gas to heat our homes and oil to fill up our tanks for many years to come – so the cleanest and most secure way to do this is to source more of it domestically...Net zero is a smooth transition, not an immediate extinction for oil and gas.”*

Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order (2019)

The Climate Change Act 2008 (UK Government, 2008c) established a legally binding target to reduce the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% below base year levels by 2050, to be achieved through action both at

home and abroad. To drive progress and set the UK on a path towards achieving the target, the Act introduced a system of carbon budgets which provide legally binding limits on the amount of emissions that can be produced in successive five-year periods, beginning in 2008.

In July 2019, the Government passed an amendment Order which set a target of a 100% reduction in net UK emissions of targeted greenhouse gases by 2050.

The Sixth and Seventh Carbon Budgets (CCC, 2020 and 2025) are referred to below, together with an assessment of their relevance to the Proposed Development.

Climate Change Committee – Net Zero Report: The UK’s Contribution to Stopping Global Warming (2019)

The Net Zero report published by the CCC in May 2019 reassesses the UK’s long-term emissions target at the request of the Governments of the UK, Scotland and Wales. It recommended a new emissions target for the UK of net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050 which will deliver on the commitment made by the UK Government in signing the Paris Agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 2016). This is only possible if clear, stable and well-designed policies to reduce emissions further are introduced without delay.

Even with Net Zero 2050, the CCC has forecast that the UK will still require 140 Terawatt hours (TWh) in 2050 with a 10% dependency, assuming no increases in onshore oil production. There is therefore a continued recognition of the need for oil. In the report, the CCC states clearly that offshoring of greenhouse gas emissions is not acceptable. The policy framework to reduce UK industry emissions must ensure that it does not drive industry overseas, which would not help to reduce global emissions. Accordingly, the CCC’s report continues to endorse the current Government policy that the UK needs a secure long-term supply of natural gas and oil to meet our net zero targets.

The CCC stated in their technical report that net zero emissions would constitute the UK’s ‘highest possible ambition’ as called for by Article 4 of the Paris Agreement. The CCC does not currently consider it credible to aim to reach net-zero emissions earlier than 2050.

Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK’s Path to Net Zero (2020)

The Sixth Carbon Budget was published by the CCC in December 2020. It looks at the changes that the UK can expect on the journey to net zero between 2033 and 2037. The pathway requires a 78% reduction in UK territorial emissions between 1990 and 2035. The economy is forecast by the CCC to become more energy efficient with total energy use falling by around 33% between now and 2050. Demand for oil will fall significantly by 2050 (by 85%), as use is mainly restricted to the aviation sector.

The UK Onshore Operators Group (UKOOG) in their response to the release of the Energy White Paper in 2020 highlighted that using the CCC’s ‘Balanced’ and ‘Headwinds’ scenarios, import dependencies will rise by up to 40% for oil by 2050 when feedstock oil is included in the assessment (which was not included in the CCC figures for consumption). The sources of fossil fuels should be that which generate the lowest emissions footprint. This is domestically produced oil and gas with imports having an estimated volume-weighted-average carbon intensity (CI) up to 157% higher than that of UK crude production.

The Seventh Carbon Budget: Advice for the UK Government (2025)

The CCC published the Seventh Carbon Budget in February 2025. It has recommended a limit on the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions over the five-year period 2038 to 2042 of 535 MtCO_{2e}. In respect of oil and gas, emissions in the fuel supply sector were 31.1 MtCO_{2e} in 2023, 60% lower than 1990 levels. Emissions are currently dominated by fossil fuel production and refining. They are predominantly CO₂ (84%) with the remainder from methane (16%). In the CCC’s Balanced Pathway, fuel supply emissions are projected to fall, relative to 2023 levels, by 83% to 5.4 MtCO_{2e} by 2040 and to 1.6 MtCO_{2e} by 2050. The reduction of fossil fuel emissions is in part down to a switch away from fossil fuels across the economy. Oil and gas demand reduces by 65% from 2025 to 2040 as end-use sectors move away from fossil fuels.

The Balanced Pathway requires a steep decline in the consumption of oil and gas, reducing by 84% and 77% from 2025 levels respectively by 2050. A transition for the oil and gas sector is happening regardless of Net Zero, as offshore fields mature and decline in output. The reduction in fossil fuel demand will primarily reduce oil and gas imports rather than UK oil and gas production. The NSTA predicts that UK production of oil and gas will fall from 689 TWh in 2025 to 62 TWh in 2050 - if there is no further exploration, and to 103 TWh if possible new oil and gas fields are included.

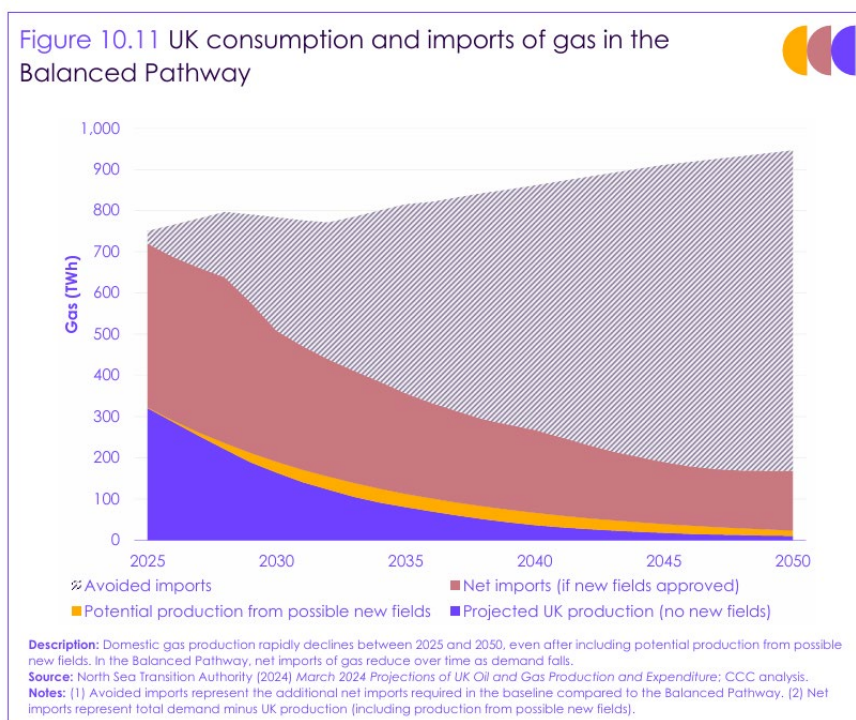


Figure 5.1: UK consumption and imports of gas 2025-2050 (courtesy of CCC)

This demonstrates (Figure 5.1), that whilst demand for gas will fall dramatically over the next 25 years, there will remain a need for fossil fuels up to 2040 and beyond. Furthermore, the majority of the reduction in supply will come from a downturn in imports compared to UK production.

This planning application is accompanied by an assessment of all greenhouse gas emissions arising from the construction and operation of the exploration wellsite at Foxholes.

Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future (2020)

The Energy White Paper was published in December 2020 (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (now the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero), 2020). It sets out how the UK will work towards net zero emissions by 2050 and aims to clarify a strategy for the wider energy system that transforms energy, supports a green recovery and creates a fair deal for customers.

Chapter 6 (Oil and Gas) states that “the UK’s domestic oil and gas industry has a critical role in maintaining the country’s energy security and is a major contributor to the economy”. It goes on to say that “projections for demand for oil and gas though much reduced is forecast to continue for decades to come”.

Written Ministerial Statements

Paragraph 6 of the NPPF states:

“Other statements of government policy may be material when preparing plans or deciding applications, such as relevant Written Ministerial Statements and endorsed recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission.”

September 2015 Written Ministerial Statement

The 2015 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) was a joint statement made by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government concerning shale gas and oil.

Although the WMS focuses on shale oil and gas production and the proposed wellsite would be appraising ‘conventional’ hydrocarbons, it includes important statements in support of indigenous oil and gas supplies. In 2014, 40% of oil consumption was from net imports. The DECC calculated that would rise to 73% by 2030. The WMS highlights the need for indigenous fossil fuels to support the UK’s transition to a low-carbon economy.

May 2018 Written Ministerial Statement

The 2018 WMS was again a joint statement between the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Its principal objective

concerned the need for shale gas to contribute to the UK's energy needs. It also set out the planning approach to shale gas. It reiterated the policy from the NPPF by stating that great weight should be given by local authorities to the benefits of mineral extraction. It added that the Government had set out definitions for 'fracking'. The Proposed Development does not involve fracking and can be considered 'conventional'.

May 2019 Written Ministerial Statement

The 2019 WMS was published in May 2019 (Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019) following the judgment of Mr Justice Dove in the case of *Stephenson vs SoS MHCLG* [2019] EHC 519 (Admin). That judgment quashed paragraph 209(a) of the NPPF. This had stated that *"minerals planning authorities should recognise the benefits of on-shore oil and gas development, including unconventional hydrocarbons, for the security of energy supplies and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy; and put in place policies to facilitate their exploration and extraction."*

The WMS confirmed that hydrocarbons were considered a mineral and so 'Chapter 17: Facilitating the Use Of Minerals' still applies. It added that the WMS of 2018 and the PPG remain in place. The Government highlighted again its commitment to the sustainable development of onshore shale gas resources and its commitment to indigenous fossil fuels.

Emerging Local Planning Policy

North Yorkshire Local Plan

The draft consultation of the North Yorkshire Plan First Conversation: Issues and Options was published in May 2025. Consultation ended on 15th July 2025. It does not cover minerals and waste.

Emerging Neighbourhood Planning

According to NYC's website, there are no designated Neighbourhood Areas or Neighbourhood Plans in preparation that are relevant to the Proposed Development.

Local Economic Policy

This section refers to the relevant regional and local economic policy documents.

North Yorkshire Council Economic Growth Strategy 2024-2029

The Strategy sets out the Council's growth ambitions over the next five years. One of those ambitions is "to attract investment and grow our economy to create new and exciting opportunities for our residents and businesses." It states that there is a leading role for the Council, taking the lead on tackling some of the big economic challenges such as net zero and energy security. One of the localised sector specialisms identified in the Strategy is mining and quarrying, which encompasses the proposed development at Foxholes. The Growth Strategy recognises that the sectors provide tens of thousands of jobs, enabling people to participate and progress in work which is essential to building an inclusive economy. North Yorkshire is recognised as a national leader in energy generation.

6. Compliance with Relevant Development Plan Policies and Material Considerations

Introduction

This section considers the benefits of the Proposed Development, and compliance with development plan policy and material considerations which relate to this.

Policy Themes

The key policy themes that are identified as being relevant to the determination of this planning application are listed below.

- principle of development;
- site location and land use;
- need;
- sustainability and climate change;
- economic and social benefit; and
- environmental and amenity issues.

The following paragraphs set out an analysis of the Proposed Development in the context of the above policy themes.

Principle of Development

The proposal is for the construction and operation of a temporary wellsite for the exploration of conventional gas. It does **not** involve any form of reservoir stimulation techniques including small-scale hydraulic fracturing. The relevant policies for determining the principle of the proposed development at Foxholes are policies M16, M17 and M18 of the MWJP.

There is no requirement for a MPA to identify a landbank of energy minerals such as gas. Consequently, each application seeking permission for energy mineral-related development must be considered on its individual merits and with due regard to the relevant development plan policies at the time of the determination of the application.

MWJP policy M16a (Key spatial principles for hydrocarbon development) is the most relevant development plan policy in the determination of this application in that it sets out NYC's approach to proposals for the exploration of conventional hydrocarbons without hydraulic fracturing.

Policy M16(a) states:

“Hydrocarbon development of the types identified below should be located in accordance with the following principles:

- a)
- *exploration, appraisal and production of conventional hydrocarbons, without hydraulic fracturing;*

Proposals for these forms of hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where they would be in accordance with Policies M17 and M18 and, where relevant, part d) of this Policy.”

The proposed development includes the drilling of a deviated borehole approximately 400m in length in a north-westerly direction. However, no part of the borehole lies below the designations referred to in the policy. Consequently, this part of policy M16 is not relevant and is not engaged.

Policy M16(d)(i) states:

“Where proposals for surface hydrocarbon development meet other locational criteria set out in this policy but fall within a National Park or an AONB or the associated 3.5km visual sensitivity zone around this zone, are otherwise considered to have the potential to cause significant harm to a National park and/or AONB, applications should be supported by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the designated area/s, unless it can be demonstrated that such an assessment is not required taking into account the particular locational circumstances of the proposed site relative to the designated area/s. Where detailed assessment is required this should include an assessment of views of and from the designated area/s from significant view points and an assessment of the cumulative impact of development in the area. Permission will not be granted for such proposals where they would result in unacceptable harm to the special qualities of the designated area/s or are incompatible with their statutory purposes in accordance with Policy D04.”

The Site lies approximately 880m south of the southern edge of the proposed Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (formerly known as an AONB). NYC advised in their pre-application advice that there is a requirement for consideration of the Site in relation to the proposed designation. Therefore, the Site lies within the 3.5km visual sensitivity zone of the proposed National Landscape designation. Accordingly, a detailed assessment, an LVIA, has been prepared which accompanies the planning application submission. The LVIA includes a wireframe photomontage and an assessment of views of the proposed development at the drilling phase from North Cotes Road (Viewpoint 3), the closest point from the proposed designation. It also includes an assessment of the cumulative impact of development in the area.

The LVIA considers that the receptor sensitivity at North Cotes Road is high. However, there are limited views towards the Site from this location owing to undulating topography and the existing roadside hedgerow. Receptors along North Cotes Road will experience no views of construction of the wellsite. During the exploratory drilling phase, there will be views of the upper parts of the drilling rig from North Cotes Road. However, the rig will not visibly protrude above the horizon, with a backdrop provided by the land rising to the south beyond the Site. Views of the other plant and machinery on site will not be visible. Views experienced by road receptors will be fleeting and through gaps in the hedgerow at points of field access. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium. The significance of effects on views from North Cotes Road during the drilling phase are judged to be moderate adverse. However, given the temporary nature of the proposed development, any visual effects would not be expected to last longer than the eight weeks for the drilling phase.

In conclusion, receptors located in the proposed Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape, other than residents or farm workers, would be restricted to the publicly accessible parts of the National Landscape. Visibility of the proposal from these locations is very limited by the local topography and intervening vegetation and at the closest point to the Site on North Cotes Road is restricted to upper parts of the drill rig only and seen as a small part of a wider panoramic view.

National planning policy acknowledges that mineral resources can only be worked where they are found. Paragraphs 209 and 211 of the NPPF are similarly supportive of the development of the country's oil and gas resources. This is mirrored in national planning policy guidance. Guidance set out in the Minerals PPG (paragraph 124) gives emphasis to the Government's view that, nationally, energy should come from a variety of sources, including onshore oil and gas, and states that when making decisions, mineral planning authorities should have regard to national energy policy.

Policy M17 of the MWJP (Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development) sets out four spatial and locational criteria which need to be taken into account when considering planning applications for hydrocarbon.

- 1) *“Accessibility and transport*
 - i) *Hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations with suitable direct or indirect access to classified A or B roads and where it can be demonstrated through a Transport Assessment that:*
 - a) *There is capacity within the road network for the level of traffic proposed and the nature, volume and routing of traffic generated by the development would not give rise to unacceptable impact on local communities, businesses or other users of the highway or, where necessary, any such impacts can be appropriately mitigated, for example, by traffic controls, highway improvements and/or traffic routing arrangements;”*

The Site has direct access off Butt Lane, a two-way single carriageway road measuring 5.2m in width. Butt Lane connects to the B1249 1.1km to the west. Drawing ref 2502-009-SK01 in the accompanying Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed access off Butt Lane can accommodate the required visibility splays from a 2.4 m set back. The Transport Assessment clearly demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity on the road network for the level of traffic proposed. A maximum 18 HGVs are expected to be generated on any one day, although the daily average will be no more than 4 HGVs, based on a 7-day week. The projected trip generation from the proposed development will add no more than 3.5% to daily HGV movements and no more than 0.5% increase in LGV movements on the B1249 over the lifetime of the development. This will result in a non-material impact upon the highway network.

- b) *Access arrangements to the site are appropriate to the volume and nature of any road traffic generated and safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users of the site, including the needs of non-motorised users where relevant;*

The access off the Butt Lane is currently a field access. The access will be widened slightly, resulting in the removal of a short section of hedgerow. The bellmouth will comprise a tarmac access junction and will have a radius of 10 metres to accommodate the movements of a 16.5m articulated vehicle. The initial section of access track to the access gate will be 6m in width. Evidence from the Crashmap website shows that there have been no collisions within the immediate vicinity of the proposed site access and one slight collision at the Butt Lane/B1249 junction. Given the temporary nature of the development, the limited number of new HGV movements, the absence of any recorded road traffic accidents and suitability of the visibility splays, access arrangements are judged to be acceptable.

- c) *There are suitable arrangements in place for on-site manoeuvring, parking and loading/unloading.*

A parking area for twelve cars is included on site. Provision is included on site for a loading and unloading area for HGV's. For abnormal loads, large vehicles will require some assistance whilst manoeuvring within the Site. Banksman will be used when required to help ensure these and any other manoeuvres are conducted in a safe manner.

- ii) *"Where access infrastructure improvements are needed to ensure that the requirements of i) a) and b) above can be complied with, information on the nature, timing and delivery of these should be included within the proposals."*

There is no requirement for any highway or infrastructure improvements.

- iii) *"Where produced gas needs to be transported to facilities or infrastructure not located at the point of production, including to any remote processing facility or the gas transmission system, this should be via underground pipeline, with the routing of pipelines selected to have the least practicable environmental or amenity impact."*

The only produced gas will be during the flow testing phase. Gas will be flared onsite during this short time so there will be no need for gas to be taken off site.

- iv) *"Where hydraulic fracturing is proposed, proposals, where practicable, should also be located where an adequate water supply can be made available without the need for bulk transport of water."*

No reservoir stimulation techniques, including small-scale hydraulic fracturing, are proposed.

2) *"Cumulative impact"*

- i) *Hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where it would not give rise to unacceptable cumulative impact, as a result of a combination of individual impacts from the same development and/or through combinations of impacts in conjunction with other existing, planned or unrestored hydrocarbons development. Applications for appraisal and production activities should specifically address for potential for cumulative impacts of development upon climate change and where appropriate, propose such mitigation and adaptation measures as may be available and are consistent with Policy D11 and the requirements of other relevant regulators."*

There are no other hydrocarbon proposals in the vicinity of the application site that would give rise to cumulative impacts. The nearest relevant hydrocarbon proposal to Foxholes is the current application for the construction of a

temporary wellsite for the appraisal of gas at Burniston (ref NY/2025/0030/ENV). This site lies 21 km to the north of Foxholes. All HGV associated with the Burniston proposal would travel to the site using the A165 and A171. It is possible that some HGV traffic travelling to and from Burniston would use the A64 to travel south. However, the numbers are likely to be relatively small and not have any material bearing on the HGV numbers generated by the planning application at Foxholes.

The second part of the policy does not apply as the proposal is for exploration. However, the planning application is accompanied by a Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions report.

The Screening Direction of 5th February 2025 stated that the primary cumulative impact would occur during the construction/operation phase which would arise from the increase in vehicle movements within the area. However, the Transport Assessment has demonstrated that traffic flows would result in a non-material impact upon the highway network. The Screening Opinion concluded that there are no issues or factors which indicate a likelihood of there being significant cumulative environmental effects from this proposal.

“ii) Well pad density and/or number of individual wells within a PEDL area will be limited to ensure that unacceptable cumulative impact does not arise. Assessment of the contribution to cumulative impact arising from a proposal for hydrocarbon development will include (but not necessarily be limited to) consideration of:

- a) The proximity of a proposed new wellpad site to other existing, permitted or unrestored well pads, and the extent to which any combined effects would lead to unacceptable impacts on the environment or local communities, including as a result of any associated transport impacts;”*

There are no other existing, permitted or unrestored well pads within the proximity of the proposed wellsite at Foxholes or within PEDL 347. Therefore, there will be no combined effects.

- b) “The duration over which hydrocarbon development activity has taken place in the locality and the extent to which any adverse impacts on the environment or local communities would be expected to continue of the development were to be permitted;”*

There has been no recent hydrocarbon development activity in the locality. Any impacts on the environment would be expected to last for no more than six months in total, if the duration of the four phases of development are added together, during the overall 3-year period the planning permission would be in place for.

- c) “The sensitivity of the receiving environment, taking into account the nature and distribution of any environmental constraints, proximity to local communities, the availability of adequate access links to the highway network and the need to ensure a high standard of protection in line with other relevant policies in the Plan.”*

The Site is not within any designated or classified areas or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance. There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas within 2km of the Site. The Site is more than 1.25km from the nearest listed building and the nearest residential property is 635m to the east. It lies in Flood Zone 1 which is acceptable for this type of development. The agricultural land quality is predominantly Grade 3b which is not best and most versatile land. The Site has suitable indirect access onto the B road highway network. The supporting technical assessments, including noise, air quality and flood risk assessments all demonstrate that there will be a high standard of protection in order to minimise any adverse impacts on residential amenity. Taking into account the temporary nature of the proposed development, the sensitivity of the receiving environment is judged to be suitable.

3) *“Local economy*

Hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where a high standard of protection can be provided to environmental, recreational, cultural, heritage or business assets important to the local economy including, where relevant, important visitor attractions. The timing of short term development activity likely to generate high levels of noise or other disturbance, or which give rise to high volumes of heavy vehicle movements, should be planned to avoid or, where this is not practicable minimise, impacts and take into account seasonal variations and peaks in traffic movements.”

The planning application is accompanied by a noise impact assessment, an air quality assessment and a lighting assessment. Each assessment concludes that there will be no significant adverse impact upon the nearest residential properties and the village of Foxholes. A construction traffic management plan (CTMP) is likely to be a

condition of any planning permission. The Transport Assessment lists a number of measures that will form the basis of a CTMP.

4) *“Specific local amenity considerations relevant to hydrocarbon development*

- i. *Hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where it would not give rise to unacceptable impact on local communities or public health. Adequate separation distances should be maintained between hydrocarbon development and residential buildings and other sensitive receptors in order to protect against unacceptable adverse individual and cumulative impacts on amenity and public health, in line with the requirements of Policy D02. Proposals for surface hydrocarbon development, particularly those involving hydraulic fracturing, within 500m of residential buildings and other sensitive receptors, will only be permitted following the particularly careful scrutiny of supporting information which robustly demonstrates how in site specific circumstances an unacceptable degree of adverse impact can be avoided.”*

The nearest residential building to the Site boundary is Westfield House which is approximately 635m to the east and falls within East Riding of Yorkshire. The nearest residential properties in North Yorkshire are in Eastfield and Smyth Lane, Foxholes, 940 and 975m respectively. The noise impact assessment, air quality assessment and the lighting assessment demonstrate that the proposed development will not give rise to unacceptable impacts upon these properties.

- ii. *“Proposals should refer to any relevant data from baseline monitoring and other available information to ensure that a robust assessment of potential impacts is undertaken, and that comprehensive mitigation measures are proposed where necessary.”*

The environmental and technical assessments that accompany the planning application each refer to relevant baseline monitoring that has either been gathered from desk-based assessments or has been gathered from site visits and the collection of monitoring data. Where necessary, each assessment has a set of mitigation measures which are recommended.

- iii. *“Proposals involving hydraulic fracturing should be accompanied by an air quality monitoring plan and Health Impact Assessment.”*

The proposed development does not include hydraulic fracturing.

- iv. *Proposals should include measures appropriate and proportionate to the development to manage waste gas emissions, including the capture and use of the gas where practicable, to ensure there is not an unacceptable impact on local communities or public health and to make practical use of any waste gas available.”*

Drawing ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-10 shows the indicative layout of the well testing phase. This includes a shrouded ground flare in the northeast corner of the Site. The flare will be 12m in height. All produced gas during the testing period will be disposed of by incinerating the gas within the flare. The environmental permit issued by the EA will regulate the amount and frequency of gas to be burnt. The Planning Application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment which addresses the scale, management and significance of emissions arising from the proposed development.

Policy M18 (Other specific criteria applying to hydrocarbon development) covers waste water and restoration issues.

1) *“Waste management and reinjection wells*

- i) *“Proposals for hydrocarbon development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated, through the submission of details relating to the management of waste water, that adequate capacity exists and adequate arrangements can be made for the management or disposal of any returned water and Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials arising from the development. Proposals should, where practicable and where a high standard of environmental protection can be demonstrated, provide for on-site management of these wastes through re-use, recycling or treatment. Where off-site management or disposal of waste is required, proposals should demonstrate that*

adequate arrangements can be made for this. Where new off-site facilities are proposed in the Plan area for the management or disposal of waste arising from hydrocarbons development, these should be located in accordance with the principles identified in Policies W10 and W11.”

Any returned drilling fluids will be sampled and analysed for levels of NORM, and a Standard Rules Environmental Permit for Radioactive Substances (RSR) will be in place as a baseline. The RSR Permit will also cover for the scenario where formation water is returned during the well test, and Egdon have established Environmental Management procedures that would apply. Any such water would also be tested for levels of NORM, and any such wastes managed appropriately through licenced waste facilities.

- ii) *Proposals for development involving re-injection of returned water via an existing borehole, or the drilling and use of a new borehole for this purpose, will only be permitted in locations where a high standard of protection can be provided to ground and surface waters; they would comply with all other relevant requirements of Policy M16 and M17 and where it can be demonstrated that any risk from induced seismicity can be mitigated to an acceptable level.”*

The proposal does not involve reinjection of returned water or the drilling of a separate borehole for this purpose. Accordingly, this part of the policy does not apply.

2) “Decommissioning and restoration

Proposals for hydrocarbon development will be permitted where, subject to other regulatory requirements, it can be demonstrated that:

- i) *Following completion of the operational phase of development, notwithstanding the requirements and obligations under any other regulatory regimes, any wells will be decommissioned, insofar as this involves the complete removal of any associated surface development, so as to both prevent the risk of any contamination of ground and surface waters and emissions to air and ensure the proper restoration and after-care of the site; and*
- ii) *All plant, machinery and equipment not required to be retained at the site for operational purposes would be removed and the land restored to its original use or other agreed beneficial use within an agreed timescale.*
- iii) *For unconventional hydrocarbon development, the Mineral Planning Authority may require provision of a financial guarantee, appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development proposed, in order to ensure that the site is restored and left in a condition suitable for beneficial use following completion of the development.”*

Egdon’s Test Site Closure and Restoration Procedure (Appendix 3) sets out in detail how the site will be restored following the wellsite operations.

In conclusion, therefore, the proposed development accords with the relevant policies in the MWJP, namely Policy M16 (a) & (d), M17 and M18. Consequently, the principle of development is acceptable.

Site Location and Land Use

There is no evidence to indicate that the Proposed Development will conflict with any of the above policies. As demonstrated under ‘Economic and Social Benefit’ and ‘Environmental and Amenity Issues’ below, the Proposed Development will deliver some economic benefit to the local community, and the potential for any notable environmental and amenity impacts to arise is considered to be low.

In terms of its setting, the Proposed Development, particularly during the drilling phase, will be incongruous and the drilling rig will be an alien feature with the surrounding area which is predominantly rural and agricultural in nature. However, it lies at least 635m from the nearest residential property. The chosen site falls within the search identified by Egdon for an exploration wellsite to test the reserves within the Triassic-aged Sherwood Sandstone reservoir. It lies outside any designated area and 880m south of the proposed boundary of the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape. The rig would be in place for no more than eight weeks. The whole development would be temporary for no more than six months, if the phases follow on consecutively.

The inset map of the Ryedale Plan 2018 shows the Site lies outside the Foxholes development limits. The Overview Map shows that the Site lies within an Area of High Landscape Value. that Policy SP1 (General Location of Development and Settlement Hierarchy) of the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy (RLPS) states that Foxholes is not a defined local service centre. Accordingly, the relevant part of the policy is as follows:

In all other villages, hamlets and in the open countryside development will be restricted to

- *that which is necessary to support a sustainable, vibrant and healthy rural economy and communities or*
- *which can be justified in order to secure significant improvements to the environment or conservation of significant heritage assets or*
- *which is justified through the Neighbourhood Planning process*

Section 3 (Aspirations and Strategy) of the RLPS states that, within the wider open countryside, the approach and ambitions includes “support for limited mineral extraction”.

The Proposed Development is minerals development; paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that minerals are a finite natural resource and can only be worked where they are found. It is considered that the proposed development is appropriate development in the countryside and in accordance with policy ENV6.

For the reasons outlined in the paragraphs above, it is considered that the proposed development is generally in accord with the relevant development plan policies and also benefits from national policy support and is, therefore, acceptable ‘in principle’.

Need

Paragraph 215 states that it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Hydrocarbons are essential not only in contributing to the UK’s energy supply but also critical in relation to the supply of materials and products we use every day. Should planning permission for the Proposed Development be granted, it would help to ensure the efficient use of minerals resources within North Yorkshire in accordance with Objectives 3 and 4 in the MWJP.

Guidance set out in the Minerals PPG (paragraph 124) gives emphasis to the Government’s view that, nationally, energy should come from a variety of sources, including oil and gas, and states that when making decisions, authorities should have regard to national energy policy. The Government’s Annual Energy Statement (AES) (October 2013) referred to in that same paragraph explains that national energy policy has two key drivers: the need for energy security and carbon emission reduction. Whilst acknowledging that renewable energy will have a part to play, the Government’s view is that oil and gas, especially indigenous oil and gas, will remain key to energy security and, at the same time, facilitate the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES) 2024, published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (now the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) provides the latest data for energy demand and production in the UK up to 2022.

Natural Gas

UK gas demand continues to fall, down 10% in 2023 compared to 2022. Consumption was at its lowest level since 1992, owing to a substantial decline in gas demand for electricity generation and lower demand from consumers. Gas production fell 9.6% in 2023 compared to 2022 as North Sea output declines, whilst imports were down 11%. Natural gas made up 36% of total energy demand in 2023 and close to two thirds of domestic demand.

Natural gas continues to play an important role in the UK energy mix. As a country, we continue to import approximately half our demand. Norway remains the UK’s largest import source, meeting 40% of the UK’s demand. The US is the second largest source, meeting 18% of demand. Nevertheless, indigenous production of gas was equivalent to 50% of demand in 2023.

The UK has experienced a declining hydrocarbon production figure since 1990. However, the Energy Security Strategy (2012) states that the Government seeks to maximise economic production of the UK oil and gas reserves to provide reliable energy supplies which are not exposed to international energy supply risks.

The Proposed Development will support the 2013 AES’s three main aims by enabling the production of indigenous oil reserves which, in turn, will help to maintain a security of supply and contribute towards the UK’s transition to a low carbon economy. Extracting indigenous oil and gas reserves is therefore in the public interest.

The most recent energy strategy issued by the UK Government is Powering Up Britain, published in March 2023 by the Sunak Conservative Government. It acknowledges that during the transition to renewable energy, UK oil

and gas will play a vital role. Prior to that, the British Energy Security Strategy, published in April 2022, was clear that the long-term solution is to address our underlying vulnerability to international fossil fuel prices by reducing our dependence on imported gas.

In summary, therefore, it is government policy that energy supplies should come from a variety of sources including onshore gas.

Security of Supply and Reduced Demand for Imports

It is not part of national policy to attempt to reduce emissions by restricting the production of hydrocarbons in the UK, nor was such an approach suggested by the CCC when dealing with the net zero 2050 position; there is no policy which provides that a net zero carbon economy in 2050 would be hydrocarbon-free.

Government policy makes it clear that gas remains an important part of the UK's energy mix. Energy policies recognise the continuing importance of fossil fuels whilst acknowledging the need to manage the UK's reliance on them, their potential environmental impacts and the risks associated with security of supply. While the Government manages the transition to a low carbon energy mix, it is the case that oil and gas will remain key elements of the energy system for many years to come, especially for transport and heating.

The CCC has acknowledged that the UK will be relying on indigenous fossil fuels even with the Net Zero UK carbon emissions target to be achieved by 2050. The CCC Net Zero Report of May 2019 states:

"The design of the policy framework to reduce UK industry emissions must ensure it does not drive industry overseas, which would not help to reduce global emissions, and be damaging to the UK economy."

The Sixth Carbon Budget – "the UK's path to net zero" was published by the CCC in December 2020. It looks at the changes that the UK can expect on the journey to net zero between 2033 and 2037. The pathway requires a 78% reduction in UK territorial emissions between 1990 and 2035. The economy is forecast to become more energy efficient with total energy falling by around 33% between now and 2050.

There is no evidence that increasing indigenous gas production will lead to higher levels of gas consumption. The Government continues to acknowledge the importance of securing home-grown supplies of energy in order to reduce imports and help to meet the gap between UK gas production and demand. The Government's target for net zero carbon emissions by 2050 still assumes and allows for the consumption of fossil fuels, with offsetting of any carbon emissions.

With that background and given the continuing role of fossil fuels in providing for UK energy needs during the transition to a low carbon economy, the Proposed Development is consistent with national energy policy.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Prior to the outcome of the Finch decision in the Supreme Court in June 2024, decision making of applications for exploration, appraisal and production considered the potential impacts on climate change directly arising from the Proposed Development from the emission of greenhouse gases. It was at the discretion of the decision-maker whether 'downstream' emissions should be taken into account.

Following the Finch decision, the consideration of downstream greenhouse gas emissions now forms part of the assessment in the EIA process. The effect of the decision makes it prudent for NYC, as the decision-maker, to take account of the assessment of both upstream and downstream greenhouse gases in this application as far as reasonably possible. This application for hydrocarbon extraction only covers the exploration phase, that is, drilling for and testing the flow of gas in the reservoir to prove the presence of, and determine the scale of the gas resource, its characteristics and whether it is likely to be commercially viable to be produced. No gas will be exported for combustion; consequently, the question of downstream gas emissions as defined by Scope 3 category 11 does not arise. However, a very small volume of gas will (subject to testing progressing) be flared on site which falls within Scope 1 (direct emissions controlled by Egdon). Therefore, the planning application is accompanied by a report, prepared by Sustain:able, a specialist environmental company, that sets out an emissions assessment of the proposed development at Foxholes.

Local Setting

The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise the impact upon the local area by using the existing local topography and natural vegetation. It benefits from lying close to the bottom of the valley floor, on a gently south-sloping site which will help reduce views of the plant and machinery from the boundary of the proposed Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape 880m to the north.

This proposal also takes account of the impact of climate change in respect of increased rainfall and the potential for increased flooding events. The FRA prepared as part of this planning application concludes that with the implementation of standard best-practice mitigation measures, the Proposed Development would not result in any adverse flood risk or drainage impacts, including when taking climate change into account. All surface water during the drilling phase will be removed from Site by a licensed waste carrier.

The Proposed Development is therefore:

- in accordance with NYC Policy D09 (3) (Water environment), which states that development which would lead to an unacceptable risk of all sources of flooding will not be permitted;
- in accordance with NYC Policy D09 (4) (Water environment), which states that development should, where necessary or practicable, include measures to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures;
- considered to be sustainable development, in accordance with NPPF Chapter 2 (Sustainable Development) and Chapter 17 (Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals); and
- in accordance with the relevant guidance in the Climate Change PPG and with NPPF Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), which states that development should be made safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

National Setting

National energy policy, most succinctly set out in NPS EN-1 and the NPPF, is aimed at reducing demand from end users and, in turn, reducing consumption. That includes reducing the need to travel, using public transport and switching to vehicles which have low or zero emissions. National policy does not require operators to reduce emissions by restricting the production of hydrocarbons in the UK. The Supreme Court decision of *R (Sarah Finch) vs Surrey CC* in June 2024 [UKSC 20] made it clear that indirect effects arising from, in particular, the combustion of fossil fuels, are capable of being significant environmental effects for the purposes of the EIA Regulations 2017. In *Finch*, the project in question was unarguably required to undertake an EIA given its scale and exceedance of the threshold in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations. The decision has clear parallels to the circumstances of this application as the extraction, namely, the exploration, of hydrocarbons is proposed. However, there will be no produced gas from the proposed development, other than for well testing. Therefore, greenhouse gas emissions (that is, Scope 3 Category 11) arising from the downstream combustion of gas is not relevant.

In its Screening Opinion of 5th February 2025, NYC did not specifically refer to the scope of greenhouse gas emissions, as an indirect effect associated with the proposed development at Foxholes. In order for NYC to take this into account in determining the planning application, the application is accompanied by an independent assessment of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. A summary of the assessment is found below.

The CCC has acknowledged in its 2019 report 'Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming' that a net zero carbon economy in 2050 would not be hydrocarbon-free. With this background and given the continuing role of fossil fuels in providing for UK energy needs during the transition to a low carbon economy, the Proposed Development is consistent with national energy policy.

The Proposed Development is therefore consistent with current government policy on climate change and the adoption of a net zero target.

Economic and Social Benefit

The Proposed Development will require specialist engineers and skilled operatives throughout all four phases of development. The number of personnel on site will vary according to the security situation; however, the likely staff present onsite during each phase of the Proposed Development are indicated in Table 4-5, above.

The employment generated will support the local economy in terms of the employee spend on everyday goods and services. In addition to onsite employment and haulier jobs, activities at the Site help to indirectly support other local companies through expenditure on goods and services needed to support day-to-day operations, such as suppliers of security and welfare facilities, skilled trades people such as electricians, construction services, site maintenance, professional fees, waste management and fuel providers. Paragraphs 2.7 and 2.29 of the RLPS state that the area suffers from a low wage economy; paragraph 2.13 states that the median weekly income for people working across the Borough is below both the regional and national averages. Paragraph 2.33 summarises the key messages for the local economy: *"There is a clear need to diversify the District's economic base in order to reduce reliance on traditional sectors and to provide resilience to further restructuring or decline. A greater range of employment opportunities especially in the type of economic activity that will help to improve wage levels will, in turn, improve the ability of local people to access the housing market and to live and work locally."*

The Proposed Development will therefore have a modest, but positive economic and social impacts upon the local community. It is considered that it accords with the North Yorkshire Council Economic Growth Strategy 2024-29 by complementing the key strengths in North Yorkshire, namely:

- a strong and diverse economy
- a highly skilled workforce and strong labour market and
- strengths in food, energy and bio renewables.

The proposed development also supports one of the three priorities within the Strategy which is to develop energy infrastructure to enable sustainable growth.

As stated in Section 5, above, NPPF paragraph 224 adds that when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy.

Environmental and Amenity Issues

The potential for any notable environmental and amenity impacts to arise as a result of the Proposed Development is considered low. The Proposed Development is very unlikely to give rise to any nuisance or wider issues of pollution, as demonstrated in the consideration of environmental and amenity issues presented below.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

A LVIA has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

The Site does not fall within an area designated nationally for its landscape value. Natural England has proposed a new Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape and the Site lies approximately 880 m to the south of the nearest boundary of the proposed designation. The RLPS shows the Site and the study area (5 km from the Wellsite Boundary) within North Yorkshire lie within the Wolds Area of High Landscape Value.

The Site falls within National Landscape Character Area: 27 Yorkshire Wolds. The Site and the study area within North Yorkshire fall within the following landscape character types (LCT):

- Broad Chalk Valley LCT 15; and
- Chalk Wolds LCT 18;

The eastern part of the study area lies in East Riding of Yorkshire. That part of the study area within the East Riding of Yorkshire falls in the Yorkshire Wolds Important Landscape Area in the ERYC Local Plan Update. The local LCTs are:

- Open High Rolling Farmland LCT 13;
- Central Dissected Plateau LCT 14; and
- Wolds Valley Farmland LCT15.

The full published character descriptions are provided within the LVIA.

Land use surrounding the Site is agricultural in nature; the character of the area is open countryside with field boundaries marked by ditches and hedgerows. There are no sensitive receptors directly overlooking the wellsite, with the closest residential property, Westfield House, located approximately 635 m to the east of the wellsite. The site is partly screened by some existing hedgerow to the south and west side and intermittent gappy hedgerows to the wider field boundaries to the north sides.

The landscape character consists of a working agricultural landscape, with small village settlements and scattered farmsteads, that is tranquil and of high quality. The landform is also distinct as chalk valley, with broad valley, limited woodland cover and steep valley sides. The landscape value of the Site is high and the magnitude of change will be high during both construction (phase 1) and exploratory drilling operations (phase 2). Therefore, the significance of effects will be major/ moderate adverse. The landscape value of the surrounding landscape within the study area is also high and the magnitude of change will be high during both construction (phase 1) and exploratory drilling operations (phase 2). Therefore, the significance of effects on landscape character of the surrounding area will be major/ moderate adverse. However, due to the temporary nature of the development, the effects on landscape character will be short term and only for the duration of the development which will be a total of 13 weeks (5 weeks for Phase 1 and 8 weeks for Phase 2).

A site visit was undertaken in April 2025 to assess the existing character of the landscape and record views from representative photo viewpoints. The visit was undertaken in good weather with good visibility.

Landscape Effects during Construction

Effects would include the mobilisation of construction activities, setting up the compound and access to the Site, these activities are anticipated to be intense for a short period of time. The character of the Site and local landscape is judged to be of high sensitivity and during construction there will be a high magnitude of change. Impacts would be temporary in nature during construction and last for 5 weeks. The significance of effects on landscape character will be major/moderate adverse.

The landscape character within the study area is also considered to be of high value and sensitivity. The surrounding character is remote and tranquil, predominantly rural with attractive elements such as rolling fields and hedgerows. During construction, there will be a noticeable change through the construction of the wellsite at a local level as above, although the development Site is a relatively small part of the wider landscape characters (Chalk Wolds, Open High Rolling Farmland, Central Dissected Plateau and Wolds Valley Farmland) and is of modest scale in this context. As such the effects of the development on the landscape character areas are unlikely to be perceived widely and its key components and characteristics are not affected. As stated above, the duration of impacts to the landscape is a consideration and due to the temporary nature of the development, the resultant effects on landscape character during construction will be short lasting for 5 weeks. The magnitude of change would be medium and the significance of effects on landscape character would be moderate adverse.

Visual Effects during Construction

Visual effects are appraised through thirteen representative viewpoints. These are shown below in Figure 6.1.

The most prominent views of construction activity will be experienced from locations to the south and south east of the Site, and in close proximity (approx. 1km) to the west. The Site is visible from locations to the south and south east, particularly by road users along Butt Lane, Skipper Lane, Octon Grange Road and PRoW users using PRoW FP THWIF01. Receptors will experience unrestricted views of construction activity on the Site from certain locations on these routes. Foxholes Community Hall is situated in proximity to the Site and users of the community hall and garden will experience clear views of construction activity. There will also be views of construction activity from points of field access along an unnamed road between the villages of Wold Newton and Thwing. Construction activity will include the construction of the wellsite, including the topsoil storage bund on the western boundary. A temporary access track will also be created which will include temporary matting and will use existing access onto the Site. Fencing and gates will also be installed, as well as security accommodation and welfare facilities. Views of construction activity would be visible as the development is located on land that rises and there is limited screening from existing vegetation.

Views of construction activity will be limited to the north, for road users and residents along North Cotes Road due to topography. Further views from the north will be limited due to undulating topography and existing vegetation. Receptors to the east will not experience views of construction activity due to existing vegetation along Butt Lane and locations beyond the village of Wold Newton will be screened by the village and views will be experienced by road users at distance and fleeting. Views from the west will be partially restricted by existing vegetation, or from local roads where views towards the Site are enabled through field access by road users who will experience long distance views that include existing detractors such as wind turbines at Boythorpe or are screened by existing woodland on higher land.

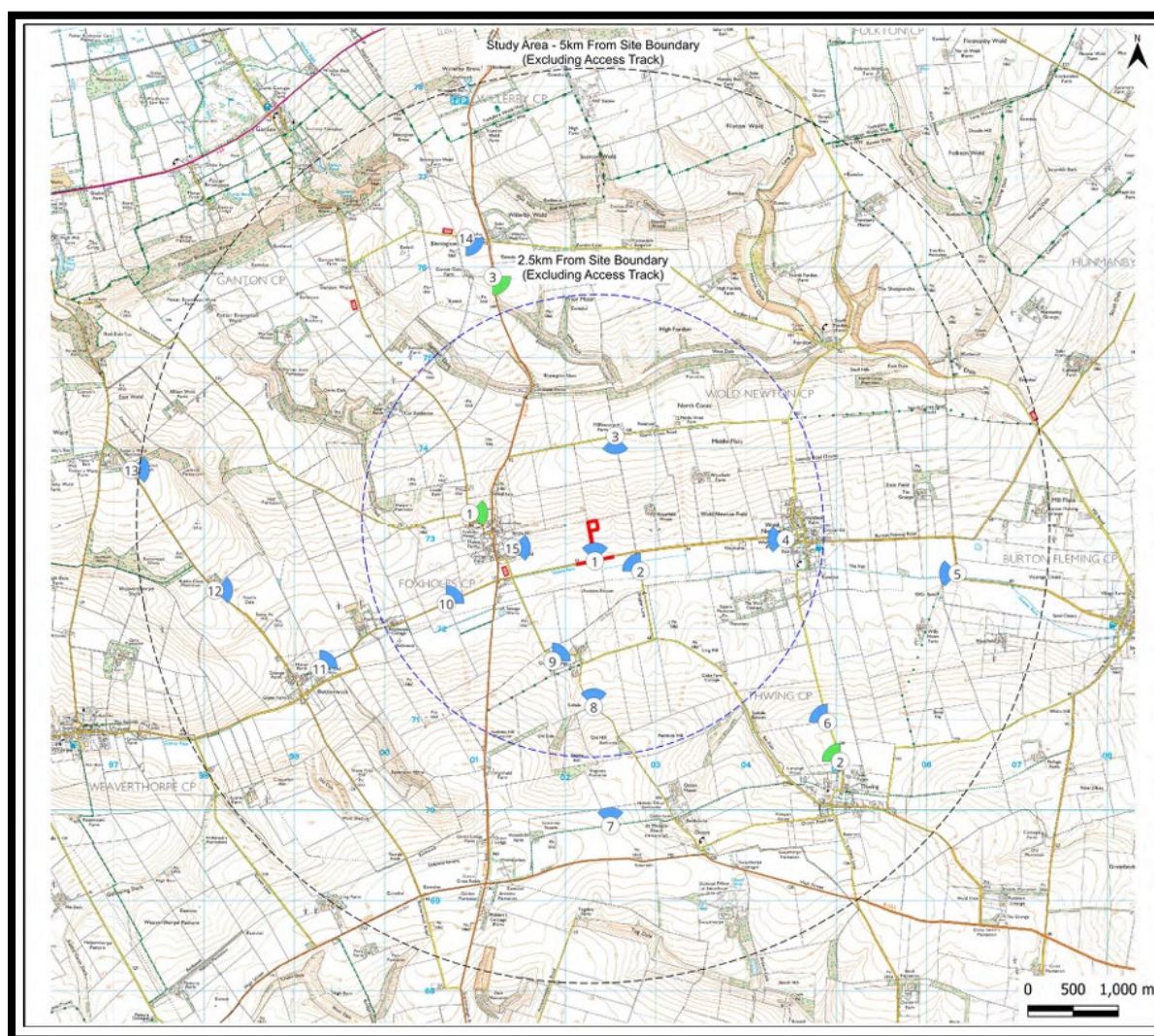


Figure 6.1 - Viewpoint Location Plan

Landscape Effects during Drilling Operations

The character of the Site and local landscape is judged to be of high sensitivity and during drilling operations, there will be a medium magnitude of change. Impacts would be temporary. The significance of effects on landscape character will be moderate adverse. As stated for construction, there will be a noticeable change through the construction of the wellsite at a local level as above, although the development Site is a relatively small part of the wider landscape character areas (Chalk Wolds, Open High Rolling Farmland, Central Dissected Plateau and Wolds Valley Farmland) and the effects of the development during operation on the landscape character areas are unlikely to be perceived widely. The duration of impacts to the landscape is a consideration and due to the temporary nature of the development, the resultant effects on landscape character during exploratory drilling operations will be short during the overall 8 week phase. The magnitude of change would be medium and the significance of effects on landscape character would be moderate adverse.

Visual Effects during Drilling Operations

In summary, it is anticipated that the most prominent views of exploratory drilling operations will be experienced by receptors from the south and southeast of the Site, and within close proximity (approx. 1km) to the west. Receptors to the south and southeast include road users along Butt Lane, Skipper Lane, Octon Grange road and users of PRoW FP THWIF01. Foxholes Community Hall represents views experienced by receptors in close proximity to the Site to the west, and users of the community hall and garden will experience prominent views of drilling operations. It is anticipated that residents on the eastern edge of Foxholes village will also experience clear views

of drilling operations from the upper storey windows and from lower level/ gardens if no existing screening on rear garden boundary. There will also be views of exploratory drilling operations from points of field access along an unnamed road between the villages of Wold Newton and Thwing. Views along Butt Lane will be prominent as the road is directly south of the Site and people travelling along the road will experience unrestricted views of drilling operations for an approximate visual envelope of 2km along Butt Lane. Road users travelling along Octon Grange Road will also experience prominent views of exploratory drilling operations, particularly those travelling north towards Foxholes. Receptors from these locations will experience prominent views of exploratory drilling operations as the development is located on land that rises and has limited screening from existing vegetation. The significance of effects of views from locations will be moderate/minor adverse for road users to the south and major/moderate adverse for PRow users of PRow FP THWIF01.

To the north of the Site, there will be views of exploratory drilling operations from North Cotes Road but will only include the top of the drilling rig. Road users will not experience open views of the Site due to the topography of the land and views of the drilling rig will be seen as fleeting views through gaps in the existing hedgerow. The significance of effect of views from this location will be moderate/ minor adverse. Further views from the north will be limited due to undulating topography and existing vegetation.

Receptors located in the future Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape, other than residents or farm workers, would be restricted to the publicly accessible parts of the National Landscape. Visibility of the proposal from these locations is very limited by the local topography and intervening vegetation and at the closest point to the Site on North Cotes Road is restricted to upper parts of the drill rig only and seen as a small part of a wider panoramic view. However, the nature of the development is temporary, lasting 23 weeks in total, so effects on the landscape character and visual amenity will be short lived. Within the surrounding study area, there are detracting features already present such as wind turbines that are permanent, and of greater visual and landscape impact than the proposed development.

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

The principal aspect of inherent mitigation is the choice of site which is suitable from both a technical perspective and which would not cause long-lasting significant adverse landscape or visual effects. The location is fixed by requirements of operation, and the Site location has been selected to minimise the impacts on landscape. The size of the development footprint on the application site is minimised to minimise effects. Other aspects of the development which have been incorporated into the design of the development with the aim of limiting landscape and visual effects include:

- Avoiding impacts to existing trees on site and adjacent land;
- Utilising the existing access means there is minimal requirement for removal of existing vegetation for forming an entrance;
- Topsoil storage bund for screening;
- Minimal intrusion of the landform through temporary matting along the access track and use of existing field access. During construction, the hedgerow along the southern site boundary, particularly to the right side of the access track, will be removed to allow widening of the existing track to allow access and facilities onto site. This is expected to be no more than 10m in length. During decommissioning, the hedgerow will be replaced on a 'like for like' or 'betterment' basis to provide suitable habitat for badger, nesting birds, reptiles and invertebrates.

Summary and Policy Compliance

During exploratory drilling operations, there will be a high magnitude of change and the significance of effects on landscape character will be major/ moderate adverse. At worse, the significance of effects on views experienced by receptors within the surrounding area will be major/ moderate adverse. However, the development is temporary and any effects on the landscape character and views from the surrounding areas will only be for the duration of exploratory drilling operations and will not be long term. Effects on the landscape character and views will also be reversible once work has been suspended, and the Site is restored back to agricultural land.

Receptors at Foxholes Community Hall to the west are high sensitivity and would experience a high magnitude of change for views towards the Site. However the nature of the development is temporary, so effects on the landscape character and visual amenity will be short lived.

Receptors located in the future Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape, other than residents or farm workers, would be restricted to the publicly accessible parts of the National Landscape. Visibility of the proposal from these locations is very limited by the local topography and intervening vegetation and at the closest point to the Site on

North Cotes Road is restricted to upper parts of the drill rig only and seen as a small part of a wider panoramic view.

Given the above, it is considered the Proposed Development will not result in notable landscape or visual impacts. The Proposed Development therefore accords with:

- MWJP Policy D06(1) (Landscape) which states that proposals for mineral extraction will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact on the quality or character of the landscape, taking into account mitigation measures;
- MWJP Policy D06(3) (Landscape) which states that permission will only be granted where it would not lead to an unacceptable impact on the undeveloped character of the Heritage Coast, unless the need for, or benefits of, the development outweigh the harm caused;
- MWJP Policy D06(4) (Landscape) which states that schemes should provide for a high standard of design and mitigation, having regard to landscape character, the wider landscape context and the setting of the site and any visual impact;
- RLPS Policy SP13 (Landscapes), which seeks to prevent the loss or degradation of the elements that are integral to the Wolds Area of High Landscape Value.
- the Natural Environment PPG, which examines key issues in implementing policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including landscape; and
- NPPF Chapter 15 paragraph 187, as outlined in Section 5, above.

Traffic and Transport

A Transport Assessment has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

The Site's southern boundary is adjacent to Butt Lane, which is subject to the national speed limit (60 mph). The site is approximately 1.1km east of the B1249 and 8.1km south of the A64.

Between the junction with the B1249 and the site access, Butt Lane comprises a two-way single carriageway road, measuring approximately 5.2 metres in width, with no central line markings. It is rural in character and is subject to the national speed limit (60 mph). Butt Lane connects to the B1249 in the west and Wold Newton to the east. Street lighting is not present, and grass verges are located on either side of the carriageway. Automatic Traffic Count surveys were undertaken on Butt Lane, within the vicinity of the site access, from 25th to 31st March 2025. They were undertaken by an independent traffic survey company, with results summarised below.

Vehicle flows on Butt Lane are relatively low. In the AM peak hour (08:00-09:00) there were 53 eastbound vehicle movements and 59 westbound vehicle movements. In the PM peak hour (16:00-17:00) there were 66 eastbound vehicle movements and 33 westbound vehicle movements. Butt Lane accommodates an average weekday flow of 626 eastbound vehicle movements and 536 westbound vehicles movements.

The weekday average speed of vehicles travelling eastbound along Butt Lane is 55.2 mph. The weekday average speed of vehicles travelling westbound along Butt Lane is 51.7 mph.

The B1249 comprises a two-way single carriageway with central line marking. It is subject to the national speed limit (60 mph), with the exception of the section routing through the village of Foxholes, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. The B1249 connects to the A64 in the north, and it connects to both the A166 and A165 in the south. The B1249 accommodates a total of 4,438 daily traffic movements. The route is already used by HGV traffic, which comprises 5.2% of total traffic.

The Crashmap website was used to obtain personal injury data for the latest five-year period to 2020. Results showed there had been no collisions within the immediate vicinity of the proposed site access and one slight collision at the Butt Lane/B1249 junction. Data available for the latest 5-year period demonstrates there are no inherent highway safety issues or accident clusters within the locality of the site.

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

It is anticipated that a total of 2,039 vehicle numbers could be made during the proposed development phases, at an average of just over 26 HGV & LGV movements per day. This will result in a non-material impact upon the highway network. The proposed development would, on average, result in a 3.48% increase in HGV movements and a 0.47% increase in LGV movements on the B1249 over the lifetime of the development. On the peak day, it would result in a 15.7% increase in HGV movements and a 1.34% increase in LGV movements on the B1249.

However, this impact would only be temporary and would still result in a non-material impact upon the highway network.

The small number of additional vehicles on the highway network as a result of the Proposed Development is well within network capacity and would not lead to a material change in road safety risk. Given this, and the absence of collisions recorded near the Site, no road safety mitigation is required.

The Proposed Development will only result in the generation of a small number of vehicle trips, and a safe and established means of access will continue to be used for the duration of the Proposed Development. It is considered that the Proposed Development would have no unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on highway capacity.

Summary and Policy Compliance

Given the above, it is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development accords with relevant policies relating to traffic and transport, including:

- MWJP Policy M17(1) (Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development), which states that permission will be granted where there is sufficient capacity within the road network, access arrangements are appropriate and there are suitable parking and loading/unloading arrangements;
- MWJP Policy D02 (Local amenity and cumulative impacts), which relates to the impacts on the amenity of local communities and residents;
- MWJP Policy D03 (Transport of minerals and waste and associated traffic impacts), which echoes Policy 17(1) and states that permission will be granted where there is sufficient capacity within the road network and access arrangements are appropriate;
- RLPS Policy SP13 (Generic Development Management Issues) which access to and movement within sites to not have a detrimental impact on road safety, traffic movement or the safety of pedestrians and cyclists; and
- NPPF paragraphs 109, 115 and 116, which relate to promoting sustainable transport and are outlined at Section 6, above.

Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

There are no statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Proposed Development. The Fordon Chalk Grasslands SSSI, lies approximately 3.5km to the northeast of the Site. There are two non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site. The Site where the proposed development is to be located is judged to be geographically separated from any designated sites. No hydrological connectivity or any other impact pathways were identified. Therefore, there is no potential impact on any designated site.

A desk study and a field survey (an extended Phase 1 habitat survey) of the Site were undertaken in July 2024 by RSK ADAS.

Habitats

The proposed Site comprises a portion of a potato field and two hedgerows. The two hedgerows on site qualified as a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) under the NERC Act 2006 but were not 'species-rich' and therefore they have been classed as 'other native hedgerows'. They did not qualify as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. These hedgerows were dominated primarily by Hawthorn and occasional roses along the northern end of the western border hedgerow, without any significant marginal habitats present. No notable understorey vegetation was associated within any hedgerow on site, which was comprised of predominantly grass, dominated vegetation with some tall ruderal vegetation in areas. The hedgerows appeared to have been recently flailed, and some contained significant gaps. The vast majority of the Site occupies a non-cereal crop field bounded by hedgerows to the north and west. Access to the Site has been covered with limestone gravel, which has been compacted over time due to consistent traffic of heavy machinery.

Protected and Notable Species

The dominant habitat on site, non-cereal cropland, had relatively low potential to support notable lowland ground nesting bird species of conservation concern in the UK during the breeding season (March – August inclusive) such as Skylark, Corn Bunting and Lapwing. No evidence of ground nesting birds, such as those mentioned above, was identified during the survey, which was undertaken during the breeding season. The hedgerows on site provide

optimal nesting and foraging opportunities for both common birds and potentially for those listed as Species of Principle Importance (SPI) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 which favour 'woody' habitats for nesting. The habitat on site may be of use as a foraging resource for wintering and migratory birds such as Fieldfare, Redwing, Meadow Pipit, Brambling and Starling, and species of wildfowl. However, given the small area of the site, the value of this land to wintering and migratory birds is considered likely to be low. The site was considered largely unsuitable / sub-optimal as breeding habitat for most species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which require quite specific habitat requirements for breeding not present on site. The hedgerows are judged to be of local importance.

Although considered sub-optimal, cropland may provide foraging opportunities for badger. Hedgerows located on the boundaries of the site provided suitable conditions for sett construction. No setts or field signs such as hairs, latrines or feeding remains associated with badgers were identified during the field survey on or in close proximity to the site. It is therefore concluded that badger are likely absent from the site.

The crop fields are considered to be of low value to bats as a foraging resource, with large expanses of uniform crop unlikely to provide an insect-rich feeding habitat or to facilitate movement to better quality foraging areas in the wider area. Boundary hedgerows on site provide greater foraging opportunities and these features may form important commuting routes to and from suitable feeding habitats in the wider area. No trees or buildings were present on site and therefore roosting bats are considered to be absent.

No habitat was considered suitable to support Water Vole or Otter was present within or in close proximity to the site and are therefore considered likely absent from the site. The cropland on site presented generally sub-optimal habitat to support reptiles, being intensively managed arable fields. However, the grassland and hedgerows provided suitable habitat for common reptiles along the field margins, including Common Lizard and Slow-worm and also provided connectivity to habitats in the wider area. Hedgerows on site provided sheltering, basking and foraging opportunities for reptiles. No reptiles, or evidence of them, was seen during the survey.

The arable field were considered sub-optimal terrestrial habitat to support amphibians, including Great Crested Newt. However, hedgerow boundaries and grassland along the field boundaries may provide some foraging, refuge and hibernation opportunities for Great Crested Newt and may facilitate connectivity to areas of suitable terrestrial habitat in the wider area. No aquatic habitat considered suitable to support Great Crested Newt was identified on site. No ponds were identified within 250 m of the site using online imagery. Great Crested Newt are therefore considered likely absent from the site. Arable farmland is considered unlikely to support notable invertebrate assemblages. The hedgerow and grassland on site may support a range of common invertebrates. However, the hedgerows were generally species-poor and lacking a notable ground layer and are therefore considered unlikely to support potentially more notable species which require expanses of 'woody' vegetation or diverse hedgerows during their life cycle. No notable invertebrates were identified during the field survey.

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

All retained hedgerows should be safeguarded during construction and operation of the wellsite, with a minimum of a 5 m buffer. In the event that hedgerow removal is required, it is recommended that a sufficient level of habitat compensation is included within proposed ADAS landscape plans, which may include the planting of additional lengths of hedgerow on site. In addition, it is possible to enhance existing (and retained) hedgerows around the site through supplementary planting of native species to increase their overall diversity and to establish better-quality marginal habitats between the current boundaries and the proposed wellsite. This may be in the form of 'species-rich' grassland or rank grassland in relation to species specific biodiversity enhancement.

If any vegetation clearance is required, it should take place outside the nesting bird season (March – August inclusive). If works during the nesting bird season is unavoidable, then the area to be cleared must receive a nesting bird check, carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist within 48 hours of the works taking place. If an active nest is found during the works a suitable buffer of 5m will be provided to avoid disturbing the nest and it will be left undisturbed until all the chicks have fledged.

The hedgerow on site provided foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. A sensitive lighting design should be created for the construction phase and operational phase to avoid illuminating features potentially used by bats for foraging and commuting including the onsite hedgerow. A number of other enhancement opportunities are referenced in the PEA.

A BNG assessment has been undertaken with regard to the Proposed Development, and has established that, with suitable onsite and offsite enhancement of hedgerow and area habitats, the statutory minimum 10% BNG gain can be achieved for the Proposed Development. See the BNG Assessment submitted with the planning application for further details.

It is considered that, with the implementation of the lighting mitigation and precautionary pre-construction measures outlined above, no adverse effects upon ecological features are likely as a result of the Proposed Development.

Summary and Policy Compliance

Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with:

- MWJP Policy D07 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), which states that proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impacts on biodiversity or geodiversity;
- MWJP Policy ENV8 (Green Infrastructure), which requires all forms of development to investigate the potential to integrate with nearby existing green infrastructure assets;
- RLPS Policy SP14 (Biodiversity) which supports in principle proposals for development that aim to conserve or enhance biodiversity through the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity features; and
- The Natural Environment PPG and NPPF Chapter 15, as outlined in Section 5 above.

Flood Risk, Hydrology and Surface Water Drainage

A Hydrogeological Impact Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment and Surface water Drainage Strategy has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

According to the Environment Agency online flood map for planning, the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, being land at very low risk of flooding from fluvial sources (land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from rivers or the sea). There is no historical evidence of fluvial flooding having occurred in the vicinity of the Site.

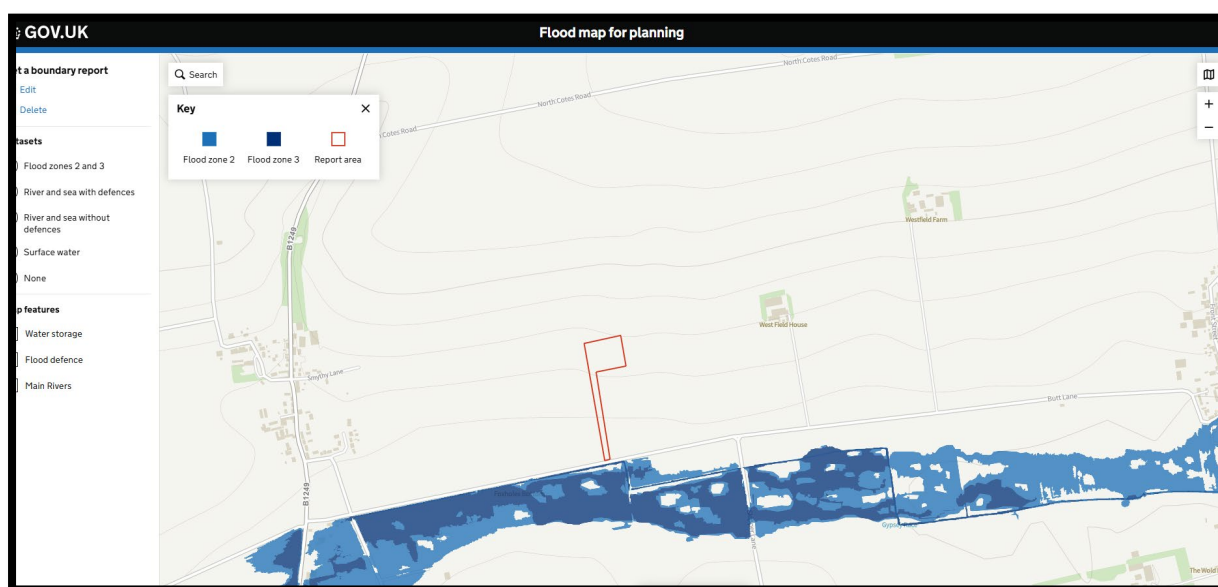


Figure 6.2 - Flood Zones in the Vicinity of the Site

The nearest watercourse is Gypsy Race, a small chalk stream to the south of Butt Lane. There are groundwater abstraction wells in the area and the Site is located within the total catchment of a Source Protection Zone. The groundwater vulnerability is classified as “high”. The Flamborough Chalk Principal Aquifer lies beneath the Site. The Site lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone but is not within a Nutrient Neutrality Catchment area.

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

Flooding

The risk of flooding can be summarised as follows:

- The Proposed Development is wholly located within the Environment Agency Flood Zone 1 (Very Low risk of flooding from fluvial and tidal sources);
- The Proposed Development is an acceptable development type in Flood Zone 1 in accordance with the NPPF and PPG;

- The risk of surface water flooding to the Proposed Development is 'Very Low', with a localised, shallow ponding possible at the site entrance during a storm event;
- Surface runoff will be managed by constructing a perimeter containment ditch which will ensure that there is 'Low' risk of surface flooding off-site.
- Flooding from groundwater, reservoirs and public sewers poses 'Very Low' risk to the Site;
- The risk of flooding post-restoration will be the same as that prior to development i.e. 'Very Low'.

The FRA demonstrates that the Proposed Development is sited in a suitable location, will result in no net loss of floodplain storage, will not impede water flows and will not increase the risk of flooding at the Site or elsewhere.

Drainage

Post-development, all runoff will be either discharged to ground or tankered off site (depending on the phase of development, as described below). The drainage simulations demonstrate that the extended wellsite platform can contain in excess of a critical 7 day, 1 in 100-year event, plus 40% climate change storm event factor, while discharging to the soakaway.

The separator and the soakaway system will be installed following the drilling and testing phase of operations – it is not viable to install before this infrastructure before this time as a concurrent discharge to ground in the vicinity is not compatible with the drilling and testing operations and therefore will be scheduled to be implemented during the retention phase. During workover and other operational phases (well operations), rainfall runoff will be stored and contained within the perimeter bund and ditch system and a wellsite platform (up to the height of the perimeter bund) and tankered off-site to an Environment Agency approved waste disposal / treatment facility. The operational procedure is to keep the containment ditch and platform empty (dry).

The Site will be manned and controlled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during drilling operations. A contracted drainage management company will have tankers on standby and available to remove water from the well pad containment drain, during the consented operational hours. The water level in the containment ditch will be monitored via the drain sumps on a daily basis and after a rainfall event by a designated member(s) of Egdon site personnel. Periods of saturation will not occur as water levels will be monitored continually and water will be tankered from the wellsite platform as required. The operational procedure is to keep the platform dry. Additional storage (a mobile tank) could be installed on-site to assist in maintaining dry working conditions, if needed.

Hydrogeology

The main risks to groundwater relate to the accidental release of contaminants introduced during the drilling process and the possible creation of preferential vertical pathways through the multi-layered aquifer units. The uppermost aquifer, the Chalk, is the most significant in terms of receptors, as it is a highly productive unit which supports several nearby abstractions. The Chalk aquifer will be screened off during the first stage of drilling, when the risks to it are greatest. The risks to the Chalk are mitigated by the site construction approach, including the installation of impermeable membrane and protection geotextiles placed at surface and the well cellar, the use of only water based drilling fluids when drilling through the formation, and by casing off the formation once the well reaches a depth of 280 m from surface. The well design ensures that when completed, three separate well casing strings will provide protection to the Chalk from both drilling fluid and formation fluids from underlying strata.

The potential risks to groundwater from the above-surface activities are likely to be low due to the passive managed protective mitigation measures proposed. These include maintaining the integrity of the surface impermeable membrane and protection geotextiles, maintenance of the perimeter containment ditch and soil berm with impermeable anchor trench as well as the controlled removal of water to prevent accumulation in excessive quantities. In addition, as the well is a gas exploration borehole, there will be no production or storage of hydrocarbons on Site, further limiting the potential for a pollution event.

Before any drilling operation starts, baseline groundwater quality data will need to be established. As part of the permitting regulations, Egdon will prepare and submit a Groundwater Monitoring Scheme to the Environment Agency for approval. The scheme will set out a conceptual hydrogeological model and the location of at least three groundwater monitoring boreholes that will be set into defined target near-surface groundwater formations. The depth and indicative site location of each borehole is shown on the plans and drawings.

The groundwater monitoring boreholes are likely to be installed over the course of one week, working days only and using a small self-propelled percussive or rotary rig.

Once installed, there would be a period of 4 weeks to allow settling. Groundwater samples will be subject to third-party analysis for at least three months before any drilling operations. This is to ensure that sufficient data is captured to determine baseline water quality. Water quality will then be analysed on an ongoing basis at a frequency defined within an Environmental Permit, to compare against the baseline and to ensure that the installed environmental protection measures are effective and that site operations are not impacting upon groundwater quality.

Summary and Policy Compliance

Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with:

- MWJP Policy M17 (Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development), which states that applications for appraisal activities should address the potential for cumulative impacts of development upon climate change;
- MWJP Policy D02 (Local amenity and cumulative impacts) which states that minerals and waste development will be permitted where there will be no unacceptable impacts on emissions to water;
- MWJP Policy D09 (Water environment) which states that proposals for minerals and waste developments will be permitted where there will be no unacceptable impacts on surface or groundwater quality and/or surface or groundwater supplies and flows;
- RLPS Policy SP17 (Managing Air Quality, Land and Water Resources) which requires new development not to cause an unacceptable deterioration of water quality and to protect surface water and groundwater from potentially polluting development;
- NPPF Chapter 2 (Sustainable Development) and Chapter 17 (Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals); and
- the Climate Change PPG and with NPPF Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), which states that development should be made safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Air Quality

An AQIA has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

The Site does not fall within an AQMA. It is located within a rural setting, which infers that the Site is not located in an area where pollutant concentrations are considered to be at risk of exceeding the national air quality strategy objectives. NYC does not undertake automatic air quality monitoring in the Foxholes area. Therefore, the maximum values from the DEFRA air quality archive have been used within a 1km radius of the proposed wellsite.

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

The predominant source of pollutant releases during site operations will be from the use of diesel fuel in mobile plant and stationary engines and from the incineration of produced natural gas. This is largely undertaken during the drilling and testing phases which cover a 12-week period. Releases of nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter and sulphur dioxide were therefore considered. The assessment was undertaken using the UK ADMS 6.0 modelling system, with an operating regime considered to provide unlikely worst-case conditions for pollutant releases and air quality impact.

Maximum pollutant process contributions from site operations occur within the wellsite boundary. Beyond this location, process contributions reduce significantly with distance. It is not considered that statutory air quality standards would be applicable around the area of maximum impact, or around and just beyond the site boundary, due to the infrequency of human exposure and limited access.

At neighbouring locations of residential occupation, where long term human exposure might be expected, it is considered that pollutant process contributions from the proposed site operations are insignificant. In all cases the predicted environmental concentration of all pollutants is less than, and in some cases substantially less than, a third of the applicable standard. Bearing in mind the precautionary assumptions made in the assessment, it is considered unlikely that pollutant process contributions from the proposed exploratory operations at the Weaverthorpe wellsite will pose any risk to, or have any meaningful influence on, the continued attainment of air quality standards at the nearest locations of human exposure.

At the nearest designated and local ecological sites requiring assessment, which are sensitive to nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen and acid deposition, process contributions are considered unlikely to pose any threat

to, or have any substantial influence on, the attainment of critical levels and critical loads. Necessary assumptions made to undertake the modelling are considered to have the effect of substantially overestimating the process contribution to ambient concentrations. It is considered that the predicted process impact reported herein is a conservative assessment and the conclusions reached therefore incorporate a reasonable margin of comfort despite the inevitable uncertainty of such modelling studies.

It is likely that the construction activities associated with the development of the wellsite will give rise to dust emissions. It is expected, based on Institute of Air Quality Management methodology, that with adequate mitigation measures in place the risk of dust impact from all proposed development operations will be 'negligible'. Increases in road traffic brought about by the construction activities and subsequent site operation are assessed to have a neutral impact on air quality based on the guidance within National Highways' Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development will not result in any adverse impacts with regards to air quality.

Summary and Policy Compliance

Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with:

- MWJP Policy M17 (Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development), which states that hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where it would not give rise to unacceptable impact on local communities or public health; proposals involving hydraulic fracturing should be accompanied by an air quality monitoring plan;
- MWJP Policy D02 (Local amenity and cumulative impacts) which states that minerals and waste development will be permitted where there will be no unacceptable impacts on emissions to air;
- MWJP Policy D14 (Air Quality) which states that proposals for mineral and waste development will be permitted provided that there are no unacceptable impacts on the intrinsic quality of air and the management and protection of air quality;
- RLPS Policy SP17 (Managing Air Quality, Land and Water Resources) which permits development if the individual or cumulative impact on air quality is acceptable and appropriate mitigation measures are secure; and
- the Natural Environment PPG, which examines key issues in implementing policies to protect and enhance natural environment, including air quality; and
- NPPF Chapter 15 paragraph 199 and the Air Quality PPG, as outlined in Section 5, above.

Noise

A Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

The nearest sensitive receptors are between 635m and 975 from the centre of the wellsite. The noise assessment identifies three noise-sensitive receptors (NSRs) relevant to the Proposed Development:

- NSR1: Westfield House;
- NSR2: 7 Eastfield, Foxholes; and
- NSR3: Applegarth, Smythy Lane, Foxholes

Unattended noise monitoring was undertaken between 6th and 8th March 2025. Attended measurements were also made at NSR1 and NSR2. Background noise levels are re-produced in Table 6-1, below.

Receptor	Noise Monitoring Location	Mean Background sound levels L_{A90T} (day/night)
NSR1	NML1	36/23
NSR3	NML2	40/22

Table 6-1 Background Sound Levels for Operational Assessment

The nearest NSRs in the area surrounding the proposed development site experience significant levels of road traffic noise during the daytime from the rising 800m long section of the B1249, immediately to the south of Foxholes village. It is considered that the area cannot therefore be categorized as being valued for tranquillity.

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

Noise modelling has been undertaken for each phase of the Proposed Development with respect to the three NSRs:

- Construction - During wellsite construction and restoration activities under Phases 1 and 4, the highest level of noise predicted is 44dB, equal to the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) for daytime construction noise (50 dB) and much lower than the threshold of Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) for daytime construction activities (65 dB).
- Drilling - During the drilling (Phase 2), the night period is when the potential noise impact is greatest. The highest predicted noise level would be 38 dB at NSR1, which is below LOAEL for nighttime works (45 dB). Additionally, drilling noise levels would be below 42 dB, suggested as a potential nighttime noise level limit by PPG-M, for minerals extraction operational activities over the long term. Therefore, the noise impact resulting from the proposed drilling would be acceptably low.
- Flow Testing – Testing gas flows will occur over a 24/7 period and so the night period is when potential noise impact is greatest. The highest modelled noise level is 37 dB at NSR1, well below the nighttime LOAEL and SOAEL values of 40 dB and 45 dB respectively. The noise impact is considered to be low.

Whilst the potential for noise impact to ecological receptors was considered, this is a matter that applies, in the case of terrestrial ecology, primarily to bird species and then only at nationally designated areas. The nearest designated area is Fordon Chalk Grasslands SSSI 3 km northeast of the site. The noise impact from the development to this location at 10 dBA is very low.

An outline Noise Management Plan (NMP) has been developed and is appended to the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. The NMP sets out the protocol in the unlikely event of a noise issue being raised as a result of the development.

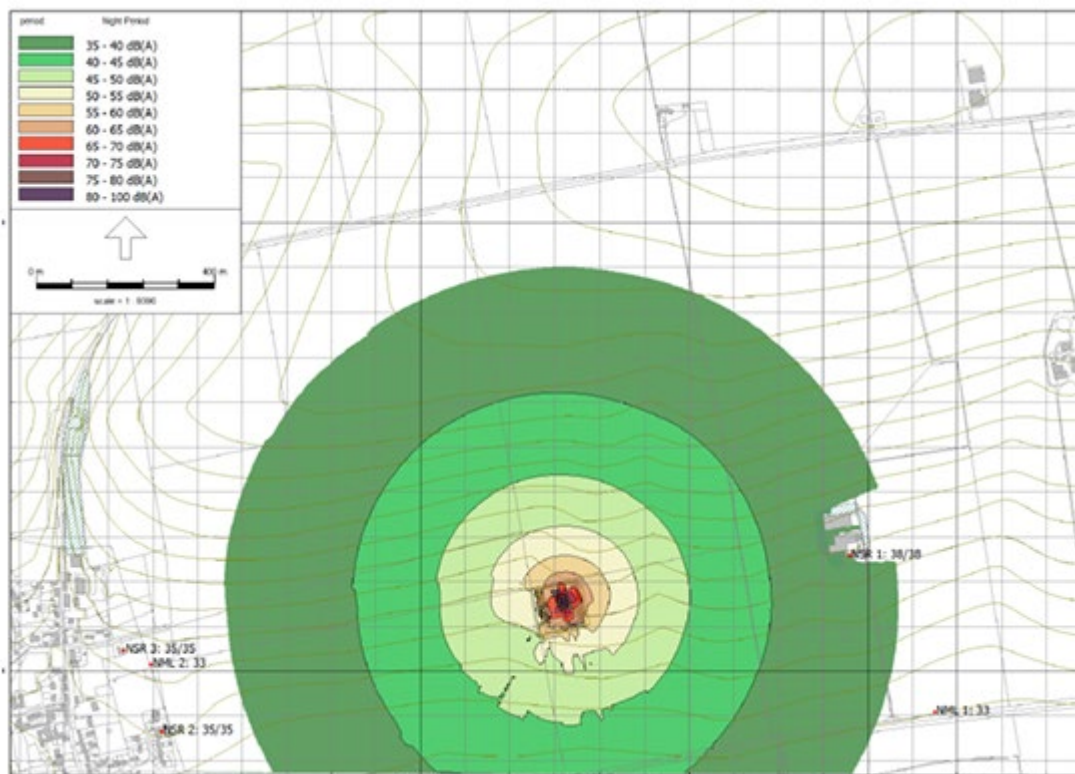


Figure 6.3 - Predicted noise contours during night-time drilling

As outlined above, noise associated with the Proposed Development is predicted in practice to be below, in all cases, being lower than both the SOAEL and LOAEL thresholds. There will be no adverse noise or vibration impacts on any nearby receptors as a result of noise emissions from the Proposed Development.

Summary and Policy Compliance

Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with:

- MWJP Policy M17 (Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development) which states that hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where a high standard of protection can be provided to the local economy and where short term development activity likely to generate high levels of noise should be planned to minimise impacts; hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where it would not give rise to unacceptable impact on local communities or public health;
- MWJP Policy D02 (Local amenity and cumulative impacts) which states that minerals and waste development will be permitted where there will be no unacceptable impacts as a result of noise and vibration;
- RLPS Policy SP19 (Generic Development Management Issues) which states that new development should not have a material adverse impact, including noise, on the amenity of occupants of neighbouring land or the wider community; and
- NPPF Chapter 15, as outlined in Section 5, above.

Lighting

A Lighting Assessment has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. This assesses the capacity of the Proposed Development to introduce intrusive lighting effects (light spill), on nearby residential and ecological receptors. The lighting scheme for the drilling phase has been modelled to determine the degree of light spill as this is the phase when the most external lighting will be used. The model incorporates the appropriate lighting as required for staff security, safety and operation purposes whilst taking sensitivity of the dark, rural nature of the area into account.

Baseline

A desktop assessment has been prepared to examine the existing baseline lighting conditions both within the Application Site boundary and in the immediate surroundings. The Lighting Assessment identified fifteen potentially sensitive human receptors that could be affected by the presence of external night-time lighting during the drilling phases Proposed Development. Twelve of the receptors are residential properties located in Foxholes between 940 and 1,020m from the Site. The other three are residential properties lying to the east, north and south-west of the site. All fifteen receptors are judged to have medium sensitivity.

One ecological sensitive receptor was identified for assessment – the two hedgerows located on the northern and western sides of the site boundary which are judged to have low receptor sensitivity.

Sky glow mapping prepared by CPRE in 2016 shows that the skies above the Site are currently relatively dark with some light pollution in Foxholes village. Existing sources of lighting are typically highway lighting and consist mostly of LED light sources. The character is considered to be mixed “rural” of a “low district brightness”. The Site would generally be classified as an E2 Environmental Zone, taking all observations and guidance into account. However, the boundary of the proposed Yorkshire Wolds Landscape Character lies 880m to the north. Consequently, the Site and its immediate surroundings have been assessed as an E1 Environmental Zone. With a “dark” lighting environment. The maximum value of vertical illuminance is therefore 2 lux pre-curfew (7 am to 9 pm) and less than 0.1 lux post curfew.

Potential Effects and Mitigation

Lighting will be required to a limited degree during the construction and well testing phases. The focus of the assessment is on the drilling phase when both the degree of lighting and the time period will be the greatest of all four phases. WSP have also applied a worse-case approach as well in terms of luminaires and topography.

The three key parameters applicable to lighting at the Site are luminous intensity (LI), equivalent to glare, upward light ratio (ULR) or sky glow, and light spill. This incorporates an appropriate number of lighting units and level of illumination required by Egdon to satisfy their obligations under Health and Safety legislation.

The 3-D model of the drilling phase is reproduced below (Figure 6.3). This incorporates an appropriate number of lighting units and level of illumination required by Egdon to satisfy their obligations under Health and Safety legislation. The drilling phase exhibits a ULR of 1.7% which exceeds the guidance ULR in environmental zone 1. However, in the context of the site and the high levels of illumination required for Health & Safety purposes, the level of ULR is deemed to be low and of a temporary nature which should not have any negative effects following the drilling phase on the immediate surrounding environment.

The maximum luminous intensity to the observer is 600. The LI calculated at each of the receptors is judged to be acceptable. In addition, the LI calculations for the seven viewpoints with the clearest views of the Site are also

satisfactory. None of the sensitive receptor sites or viewpoints receive luminous intensity values in excess of the guidance.

There is minimal light spill of light to the immediate surrounding area, notwithstanding the high levels of illumination required for safe working. Levels of illumination emitted beyond the site boundary are between 0.50 and 2.43 lux, which are deemed to be low and acceptable on a short-term basis.

In relation to hedgerows, the PEA states that the site is considered suitable but sub-optimal for reptiles and bats. Further surveys are not considered necessary as the hedgerow on site is to be retained and reasonable avoidance. The hedgerows will not be adversely affected by the lighting scheme due to the short duration of the drilling phase with any effects being temporary and negligible. Lighting will be implemented in such a way as to limit the potential impacts upon ecology within and in the vicinity of the Application Site.

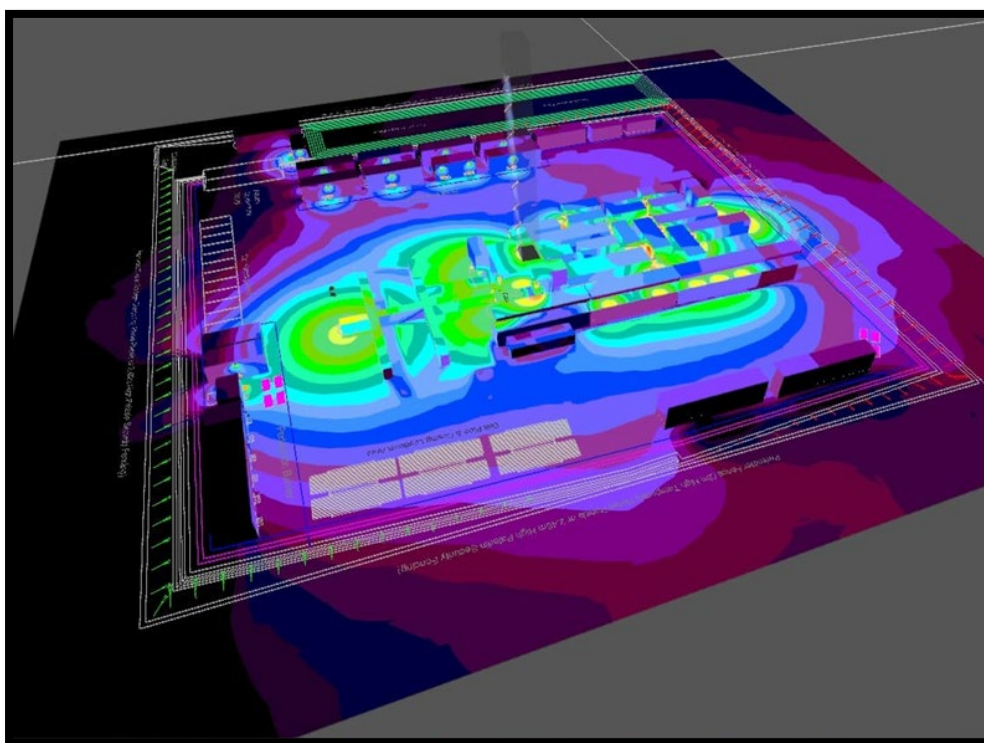


Figure 6.4 - Drilling phase of site layout (light spill)

In conclusion, the lighting associated with the drilling rig, working areas and compounds etc. is compliant with the requirements of ILP GN01 and CIE150:2017. The site is well shielded from view to sensitive receptors, so direct views of the lighting across the Site will be limited or negligible. Owing to the height of the rig and provision of lighting along the length of the mast section, it is likely that the mast section may be visible in some instances due to the luminaires lighting the structure of the rig rather than any direct view of the luminaires but given the short duration of the drilling phase the effect will be temporary and negligible.

Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with:

- MWJP Policy M16 ((Key spatial principles for hydrocarbon development), which requires proposals for surface hydrocarbon development within 3.5km visual sensitivity zone of the National Park to be supported by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the designated area;
- MWJP Policy D02 (Local amenity and cumulative impacts), which requires applications involve lighting to demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact on local amenities including site lighting;
- MWJP Policy D06 (Landscape) which requires proposals to provide for a high standard of design and mitigation to reduce impacts on dark skies and
- RLPS Policy SP20 (Amenity) which states that new development should not have a material adverse impact on the amenity of the wider community.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

An Archaeological DBA has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. The Assessment area is taken as an area of 1km radius from the centre of the Application Site. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

There are no Scheduled Monuments and no Listed buildings within the assessment area. The closest listed building to the wellsite is the Grade II Listed Church of St Mary's in Foxholes, 1.25km to the west. Wold Newton conservation area lies approximately 2km to the east. There are extensive cropmarks in the assessment area, although none in the Site itself. LiDAR data indicates potential east-west orientated ridge and furrow in the field, as well as two nearby dry stream valleys and a possible quarry site. The North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record identifies a number of prehistoric (before AD43) and Roman remains (AD 43-410) within the assessment area. The Application Site is in close proximity to an Iron Age burial pit and two Roman or prehistoric ditches. However, there are no archaeological features within the Application Site.

A walkover survey was undertaken by APS on 8th April 2025. A detailed magnetic gradiometer survey, also known as a geophysical survey, was undertaken at the same time. Other than a fragment of ridge and furrow cultivation, the survey only recorded linear anomalies with the Application Site boundary.



The drilling rig has the potential to be distantly visible from designated heritage assets. However, the temporary nature of the drilling phase and the distance mean that it will not have a significant negative impact on their setting. The area is rich in Prehistoric and Roman remains. However, neither cropmarks nor the geophysical survey suggest any substantial remains are present under the proposed wellsite. There is a low potential to encounter archaeological remains of these dates. Towards the southern part of the proposed access track, cropmarks and geophysical survey suggest there are archaeological features very close to the project boundary and the probability of encountering archaeological features is moderate. These are likely to be of local significance.

Given the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development is acceptable in terms of cultural heritage.

Summary and Policy Compliance

Given the above, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with:

- MWJP Policy D08 (Historic environment), which states that proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they will conserve and, where practicable, enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of the area's heritage assets including their setting;
- RLPS Policy SP12 (Heritage), which states that when considering development proposals, the Council will seek to protect features of local historic value and interest throughout Ryedale; and
- NPPF paragraph 207, as outlined in Section 5, above

Soils and Agricultural Land

An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and Soil Resource Survey has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and accompanies the application. The key findings are summarised below.

Baseline

The Natural England Regional ALC map for the Yorkshire and The Humber (ALC003) (Natural England, 2010) shows that the Site is located within an area of ALC Grade 2 'very good' land. ALC Grades 1 to 3a are classified as BMV land. The 1:250,000 scale reconnaissance soil map of the area shows the whole site to be mapped as Andover 1 Association soils, described as 'Shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Deep calcareous and non-calcareous fine silty soils in valley bottoms. Striped soil patterns locally.'

Potential Effects and Mitigation (if required)

A soil survey was undertaken in March 2025, in which soil profiles were examined up to a depth of 120 cm at ten locations within the wellsite and access track. A soil pit was also dug at a representative location to assess subsoil structure and soil characteristics. The survey identified one soil type within the study area, described as comprising of:

comprises generally a very calcareous, moderately stony, clay or in the south a heavy silty clay loam topsoil. The topsoil usually overlies fragmented chalk with dark yellowish brown, clay between the chalk fragments. This upper subsoil in turn usually overlies a light yellowish brown/white weathered chalk lower subsoil which grades into hard chalk bedrock. The chalk stones throughout the profile range in size from small to large. Profiles of this soil type are well drained and are assessed as Wetness Class I.

The quality of the agricultural land within the survey area was assessed using revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF, 1988). Land within the survey area is well drained. Within part of the area proposed as the access track, the topsoil is slightly lighter textured than the rest of the Application Site. The present climatic conditions at the site and a heavy silty clay topsoil results in a moderate wetness and workability limitation which restricts the land to ALC Subgrade 3a (i.e. best and most versatile land).

Land within the majority of the Application Site has a clay topsoil. With the present climatic conditions at the site and a clay topsoil this results in a significant wetness and workability limitation which restricts the land to Subgrade 3b. Additionally, at a small number of locations within the survey area where the soil profile is shallow over the underlying hard chalk, water availability for growing crops is lower and hence droughtiness is also a limiting factor restricting the land to Subgrade 3b (i.e. not best and most versatile land). Also in a small area in the northwest of the survey area the stone content of the topsoil is higher than the majority of the area. Stones act as an impediment to cultivation, harvesting and crop growth and stone contents above 15% of stones greater than 2 cm limit the land to Subgrade 3b quality.

In summary, 6.2% of the surveyed area is subgrade 3a and 93.8% is subgrade 3b. Therefore, the vast majority of the soil within the Application Site is not best and most versatile land.

No agricultural land is to be permanently sterilised by the Proposed Development. The soil that is to be removed will be stored on a short-term basis as topsoil bunds and reinstated once works have been completed. All above-ground equipment and infrastructure shall be removed, and the wellsite will be restored to agricultural use or to an approved new use appropriate for the area as appropriate.

Given the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in an adverse impact on soils. It therefore accords with:

- MWJP Policy D12 (Protection of agricultural land and soils), which states that best and most versatile agricultural land will be protected from unnecessary and irreversible loss; development proposals will be required to demonstrate that all practicable steps will be taken to conserve and manage on-site soil resources; and
- RLPS Policy SP17 (Managing Air Quality, Land and Water Resources) which states that land resources will be protected and improved by protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land from irreversible loss; and
- NPPF Chapter 15, paragraph 187.

Population, Health and Security

As a responsible operator, Egdon is highly conscious of its responsibilities and is mindful of the potential risks to people and the environment. Egdon is committed to high standards of Health, Safety and Environmental management, protection and performance and these aspects have equal prominence with all other business considerations. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure that workers are aware of the risks associated with the Site. This includes standard practice health and safety measures as well as any site-specific issues.

The Site is not on publicly accessible land. It would be closed off to the public and would remain so during for the four phases of the Proposed Development, with a security gate and security personnel onsite as required.

Drawing reference ZG-ER-WRP1-FH-PA-16 shows the site will be surrounded along each perimeter by a 2.5m high 'Paladin' mesh panel security fence. A pedestrian emergency exit gate will be located on the eastern perimeter to allow for contractors and visitors to leave the site in an emergency situation. The main entrance to the Site will have 2.5m high mesh panel security gates to manage and control access and egress.

A thorough public engagement and consultation programme was devised and implemented on behalf of Egdon in May 2025 around the Proposed Development. The proposal generated considerable interest with 59 visitors attending the Foxholes Community Hall for a drop in event. Further details of this programme are detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement submitted alongside this Planning Statement.

The technical assessments that accompany the planning application demonstrate that the risk of the Proposed Development giving rise to any material adverse impacts upon the health of the local community in relation to road safety, air quality, noise, lighting, groundwater contamination, waste water or flood risk are negligible. The temporary nature of the development and the relatively short time periods for each phase is an important material consideration in assessing the potential risk to health. It is not considered that the Proposed Development would incur any adverse impacts upon the health and wellbeing of nearby residents.

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development accords with:

- MWJP Policy M17 (Other spatial and locational criteria applying to hydrocarbon development), which states that hydrocarbon development will be permitted in locations where it would not give rise to unacceptable impact on local communities or public health;
- MWJP Policy D02 (Local amenity and cumulative impacts) which states that proposals for minerals and waste development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impacts on the amenity of local communities and residents, local business and users of the public rights of way network as a result of public health and safety;
- RLPS Policy SP19 (Generic Development Management Issues) which states that new development proposals which will result in an unacceptable risk to human life, health and safety will be resisted; and
- Chapter 8 of the NPPF (which concerns promoting healthy and safe communities) and the Healthy and Safe Communities PPG.

Public Rights of Way and Recreation

According to the NYC Definitive Map (NYC, 2025), the closest Public Right of Way (PRoW) is a public footpath (ref 25.34/2/1) which is 1,100m to the north-west and which runs between the B1249 and Ganton Road, Foxholes. According to the ERYC Definitive Map (ERYC, 2025), the closest PRoW is East Riding of Yorkshire is public footpath ref THWIF01 which lies 3.1 km to the south.

There are no National Trails within 2 km of the Site. Route 166 of the National Cycle Network passes through Foxholes village and lies approximately 1.1 km to the west.

No closures or diversions are required as a result of the Proposed Development. Given their distance from the Site, it is considered unlikely that there would be adverse impacts to PRoW as a result of the Proposed Development.

Suspension, Retention, Restoration and Aftercare

Following the end of the well testing phase, the well will be suspended and results of the flow test will be evaluated to determine whether there are potential commercially viable reserves of gas present. In a success case, the well will remain suspended and the well head and cellar left in place, whilst a new planning application is prepared and submitted. The temporary matting will be removed, and the site working platform reduced; aggregate will be brought in to facilitate this. To manage surface water run-off, a surface water interceptor will be installed. The Site will be maintained on a care and maintenance basis until such point as all regulatory approvals for production are progressed or if such approvals are not forthcoming then operations will move to abandonment and restoration.

In a failure case following testing (or failure to gain regulatory approvals as per above) the well will be fully decommissioned by setting cement plugs in the casing to surface, cutting the conductor below ground level and capping the casing with a welded plate. The well cellar will be removed, as will the perimeter/tertiary containment systems and the temporary matting (or aggregate). The site will be restored to its original land condition and contours.

A Site Closure and Restoration Procedure is attached at Appendix 3 of this Planning Statement. The well will be plugged, hydrostatically tested, and sealed using an programme approved by the Health & Safety Executive, the EA and the NSTA.

The Site itself will then be restored; all equipment, infrastructure, membranes, matting, aggregates and facilities will be removed. The stored topsoil bunds will be tested and reused to ensure compatibility with surrounding land quality. The Site area will then be returned to the landowner.

The Proposed Development therefore accords with:

MWJP Policy D10 (Reclamation and afteruse), which permits proposals where it can be demonstrated that they would be carried out to a high standard and provide for the longer-term implementation and management of the agreed form of restoration and afteruse; and

Paragraph 127 of the Minerals PPG, which advises that for hydrocarbon extraction sites where expected extraction is likely to last for a short period of time, the MPA should impose a detailed set of planning conditions.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusions

This Planning Statement accompanies an application by Egdon to NYC under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for planning permission for the construction and operation of a temporary wellsite for the purposes of the exploration of gas on land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes.

The potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Development have been assessed in the accompanying technical assessments, prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations and industry guidance. The application is accompanied by a number of technical and environmental reports which assess the likely impacts arising from the four phases of the proposed development upon landscape and the transport network, together with cumulative impacts. They demonstrate that the proposed mitigation, including monitoring, will prove effective, and the Proposed Development will not result in any material adverse impacts.

The Proposed Development has been assessed in line with local and national planning policy and is found to accord with the relevant adopted development plan policies contained within the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan (2022) and the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy (2013). Both local and national policy recognise the need for indigenous hydrocarbon extraction to ensure the security of energy supply and reduce national demand for imports, as well as the local economic benefits.

The Proposed Development has also been found to accord with key material considerations, including the NPPF, the relevant PPG, relevant energy supply and climate change national policy context documents and emerging local planning policy development plan documents. Therefore, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is considered that the planning application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which this Planning Statement accompanies can be approved by NYC without delay.

The planning balance is therefore strongly in favour of granting planning permission.

Appendix 1 – North Yorkshire Council Screening Opinion



Planning

Community Development
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 8AH

Tel: 0300 131 2 131

e-mail:

planning.control@northyorks.gov.uk

www.northyorks.gov.uk

Contact: Cameron Clarke Alonso

Our ref: NY/2025/0017/SCR

5 February 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2017: REGULATION 6 (Screening request)

Request for a formal Screening Opinion for the construction of a temporary well site, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment at land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield, YO25 3HY on behalf of Egdon Resources UK Limited.

I refer to your request dated 20 January 2025 in connection with the above proposal. In accordance with the above regulations North Yorkshire Council is required to adopt a Screening Opinion to establish whether the above development should be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

The development has been considered on its own merits and on the basis of what is being proposed by Egdon Resources UK Limited. The proposed development **is not** listed in Schedule 1 of the above Regulations. With regard to Schedule 2 of the above Regulations the Council is of the opinion that the proposed development falls within the description provided within Schedule 2 **category 2d and 2e** of the above Regulations. Having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 of the above Regulations the characteristics of the proposed development, the environmental sensitivity of the location; and the types and characteristics of the potential impact have been assessed and based on the scale, nature and location of the development it is considered that the proposed request for a formal Screening Opinion for the construction of a temporary wellsite, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment at land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield, YO25 3HY **WOULD NOT** have significant impacts upon the environment. Further details are provided in the attached 'Screening Opinion Checklist'.

Under the powers delegated to the Head of Planning Services, this letter therefore confirms that the Council is of the opinion that the proposed development **is not EIA development** and **need not** be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Should you amend any aspect of the proposed scheme, then a new screening opinion will be required. If you have any queries arising from the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

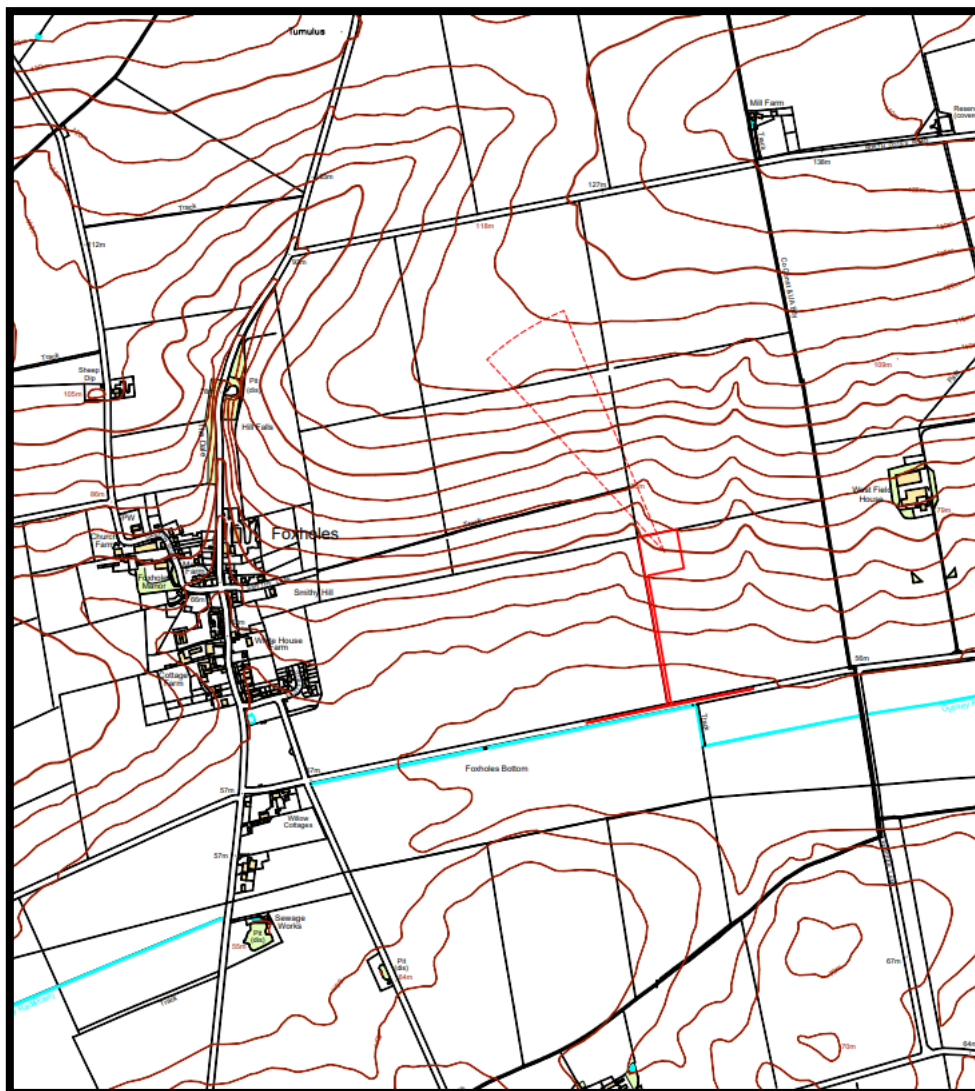
Cameron Clarke Alonso
Planning Officer

Screening Opinion Checklist

PART 1: Details of proposed development

<u>NY Ref:</u> NY/2025/0017/SCR	<u>Case Officer:</u> Cameron Clarke Alonso	<u>Date:</u> 20 January 2025
<u>Site Location:</u> Land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield, YO25 3HY		<u>Description of proposed development:</u> Request for a formal Screening Opinion for the construction of a temporary wellsite, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment
<u>Site Area/Floor Space:</u> Slightly above 1 hectare		

Application Site Plan



PART 2: Is a Screening Opinion required?

(Click here to view NPPG Screening Flowchart)

		Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017	Yes	No
1	Detail of development (See: Development covered by the regulations)	Do you have sufficient information to define the size and type of development (a plan, description of type/nature/purpose and possible environmental effects)?* • YES (proceed to step 2) • NO - either take the precautionary principle and assume the worst case or, request more information confirming 30 day deadline will not commence until received; *Note - development as changed or extended may also need an EIA (Schedule 2, category 13)	X	
2	Is it Schedule 1 development?	• YES – The development is listed in Schedule 1 category EIA mandatory (Screening Opinion not required and no need to complete Part 3 (items 1-5) (Schedule 3- not applicable) • NO -If the development is not listed in Schedule 1 it may be listed in Schedule 2 (proceed to step 3)		X
3	Is it Schedule 2 development? (Schedule 2, Column 1) (See: Interpretation of project categories)	• YES - The development falls/could fall within category 2: Extractive industry (d) Deep drillings and 2 (e) Surface industrial installations for the extraction of coal, petroleum, natural gas and ores, as well as bituminous shale. (proceed to step 4) • NO – If the development is not listed in Schedule 2 it is outside the scope of the Regulations and a screening opinion is not required and EIA not required.	X	
4	4(a) Does the development exceed the applicable threshold/criteria? (Schedule 2, Column 2)	The threshold/criteria is/are category 2d (i) and 2e) 2d (i) – In relation to any type of drilling, the area of the works exceeds 1 hectare. 2e – The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares. • YES - in this case the proposal does exceed the applicable threshold/criteria as the area of the site is above 1 hectare. • NO – in this case the proposal does not exceed the applicable threshold/criteria	X	

	4(b) Is the development located in, or partly in, a 'sensitive area' as defined by Reg 2(1) of EIA Regs 2017? (e.g. SSSI, Nat Park, AONB, SAC, RAMSAR, Scheduled Monument)	• NO - The development is not within a SSSI but is within the Risk Impact Zone for a SSSI.		X
5	If yes to 4(a) which applicable threshold criteria Does the development fall within the indicative thresholds/criteria? (see Annex: Indicative thresholds, NPPG)	The indicative thresholds/criteria are: 2 (d) - Drilling operations involving development of a surface site of more than five hectares. [Exploratory deep drilling on its own is unlikely to require Environmental Impact Assessment] 2 (e) – Development of a site of 10 hectares or more or where production is expected to be more than 100,000 tonnes of petroleum per year. Key issues to consider (as per PPG) are: 2 (d) Regards should be had to the likely wider impacts on surrounding hydrology and ecology. 2 (e) Scale of development, emissions to air, discharges to water, the risk of accident and the arrangements for transporting the fuel.		X
6	Conclusion	• If you have answered 'YES' to (2) it is Sch 1 development and an Environment Statement is required in every case therefore screening not required and there is no need to complete Part 3 (items 1-5) (Schedule 3- not applicable)– proceed to Part 3 (item 6) • If you have answered 'YES' to the threshold/criteria (4a) a screening opinion is required – proceed to Part 3 • If you have answered 'NO' to the threshold/criteria (4a) and the development is located in, or partly in, a sensitive area (4b) a screening opinion is required – proceed to Part 3 • If you have answered 'NO' to the threshold/criteria (4a) and the development is not located in or partly in, a sensitive area (4b) it is not 'Schedule 2 development' - screening opinion not required. Screening opinion required? Yes	X	
7	LPA/SOS Screening	Has the SoS issued a screening direction		X
		If yes is the SO/SD positive		N/A
8	Has the applicant supplied an ES for the current or previous app			X

PART 3: Is EIA required?

Category	Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)	(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
		Briefly explain answer to Part 2a and, if applicable and/or known, include name of feature and proximity to site (If answer in Part 2a / 2b is 'No', the answer to Part 3a / 3b is 'N/A')	Is a significant effect likely, having regard particularly to the magnitude and spatial extent (including population size affected), nature, intensity and complexity, probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact and the possibility to effectively reduce the impact? If the finding of no significant effect is reliant on specific features or measures of the project envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment these should be identified in bold.
Natural Resources	1.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	The proposed development land is within land identified as agricultural land, which through the operation and development of the site would undergo changes that would affect the topography of the site for a period of 3 years.	No – The proposed development is time limited and once the 3 years of works is complete the site would be restored back to agricultural land, which could be controlled via condition.

	1.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes – The current use of the site is agricultural land, which is classified as having an Agricultural Land Classification of grade 2. The proposal should therefore include details of proposed stripping, storage and management in order to maintain the soils for use in restoration. The proposal is for the exploration of conventional hydrocarbons, which would involve the extraction of gas which is a non-renewable resource.	No – Although the proposed development would have a significant impact on the grade 2 agricultural land (very good quality), it is for a period of 3 years and it is considered that it can be mitigated through conditions and restoration. Therefore, detailed soil assessments would be required to verify the current quality of the soils. The requirement of restoration is considered to be able to be appropriately controlled through the use of conditions. In terms of the extracted gas, although gas is a non-renewable resource, the proposed development would only extract sufficient gas to confirm its existence at the location and to assess the sites viability.
	1.3 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Yes – The land of the proposed site is classified as Agricultural Land grade 2. The agricultural land would be removed for a period of 3 years.	No - Although the proposed development would have a significant impact on the agricultural land, it is for a period of 3 years and it is considered that it can be mitigated through conditioning and restoration.
Waste	2.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes - It is considered that a small amount of waste would be produced during the construction phase and a larger quantity during the restoration phase when materials which have been used to form the hardstanding etc are removed from site.	No – It is unlikely that there would be a significant effect as it is expected that any waste generated from the construction and decommissioning phase with any waste transported off site for disposal at an appropriately permitted site which would be controlled through planning conditions.

Pollution and Nuisances	3.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No – the proposed development would not release any substances into the air. The operations would be controlled by the relevant permits.	N/A
	3.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes- the proposal would produce noise, especially during the construction phase where soil stripping and the laying of the hardstanding would occur as well as the installation of the required equipment. There are likely to be impacts as a result of the traffic attending site throughout the operation. There could also be impacts in terms of landscape and visual impact through lighting and dust. Lighting would be required during the operational phase, including the drilling phase which would require 24-hour light during the expected three-week drilling operation. In addition, further lighting at night would be required for flow testing with a limit of 96 hours under NSTA requirements. Lastly vibration would be present throughout the operational drilling phase.	No - there is potential for an impact in relation to noise, traffic, lighting, air quality and vibration which would need to be mitigated by a noise, lighting and travel assessments. There is potential for vibration during the drilling of the exploratory borehole, but this is not expected to be significant at the appraisal stage. The planning application should be accompanied by the appropriate technical assessments and management plans to ensure the issues are addressed appropriately and conditioned as part of the planning process.

	3.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes- The project could lead to contamination during drilling operations as the site is located on the Chalk Principal aquifer. Aside from this the proposed development would be designed and constructed with an impermeable membrane installed as a tertiary containment. This would provide mitigation against the risk of any materials permeating into sub-surface soils or ground water. The proposal has no plans to discharge water from the site area.	No- It is not considered that a significant effect would be caused as a result of the proposed drilling operations, protection of the site and the aquifer would be controlled through conditions, working practices and environmental regulations.
	3.4 Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No	N/A

Population and Human Health	4.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Yes - Although the site would extract hydrocarbons as this is an exploratory well it would be below the thresholds, therefore not considered to have the potential to create any major risk. Access to the site through the use of HGV's would commence via the A64 to B1249 and then Butt Lane, the increased traffic as a result of the proposal during the three-year period could potentially increase the impact of accident risk, however this is considered to be low. The maximum number of HGV a day would not exceed 6 HGVs on a two way trip during the entire operation of the site, with the highest number occurring during the sites suspension and area reduction. The total number of vehicle trips would occur no more than 27 weeks as the development is temporary (3 years).	No – Although the proposed development and its effects are temporary in nature, temporary in nature, the forthcoming planning application would be accompanied by a transport assessment which would consider the impact of the Proposed Development on the local highway network.
	4.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	Yes – The nearest residential properties are West Field House, approximately 620m to the east and properties in Eastfield, Foxholes (920m). Impacts could arise from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development as well as the movement of HGVs.	No – It is considered that impact could be minimised through the use of conditions would safeguard the potential risks associated with noise, dust and water contamination, in place to protect against the risks to human health.

Water Resources	5.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes – Although the site itself is not within a designated flood zone, the site is sloped from north to south. The field directly south of the site, beyond Butt Lane, features a watercourse (Gypsey Lane) falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3, indicating a medium to high probability of flooding. Additionally, the entrance to the proposed site is classified as having a 1 in 100 chance of surface water flooding. The aquifer below is not believed to be affected in volume during operations	No – There is potential for the site to contribute to flood risk in the area; however, this is considered manageable through conditions and good design, such as the proposed plan, which includes an impermeable membrane as tertiary containment.
Biodiversity (Species and Habitats)	6.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))).	Yes – The site is located in open agricultural land with no ecological designations within the site itself, however there is a minor watercourse (Gypsey Lane) which could potentially be affected by the proposal. Aside from this the site lies 3 km to the southwest of the Fordon Chalk Grasslands.	No - There are no designations within the site and the proposed development is limited to a 3-year period and would be restored back to agricultural land. It is not considered that there would be a significant impact on biodiversity and through the use of appropriate mitigation during construction and operation, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would give rise to significant effects on ecology and biodiversity. An Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment would be required as part of the planning application. The BNG would include mitigation and ensure that 10% net gain is achieved with appropriate on and off site mitigation and alleviation.

	6.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Yes - The site consists of an agricultural field adjacent to a minor watercourse, which could show signs of species that might use the area for breeding, nesting, etc	No - Significant effects from the proposed development are considered unlikely. The proposal primarily involves the use of an agricultural field with relatively low ecological value. A planning application would need to be supported by a full Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, including mitigation measures. The BNG assessment would ensure a 10% net gain is achieved through appropriate on-site and off-site mitigation With appropriate mitigation measures conditioned during construction and operation, the proposed development is not expected to have significant effects on ecology and biodiversity.
Landscape and Visual	7.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project? 1 Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes - The Site does not fall within an area designated either nationally or locally for its landscape value. However, the Site is located 900m to the south of the proposed boundary of the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (formerly Area's of Outstanding Natural Beauty).	No – Although the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) has not yet been confirmed the proposal would be temporary in nature, due to its proximity to it, it is considered that the landscape is distinctive and likely to be sensitive. Therefore, a planning application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Through the use of appropriate mitigation including screening of the proposed site, conditioned during construction and operation, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would give rise to significant effects on landscape and visual impact.

	7.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)	Yes – The site is located in open agricultural land with the drilling rig standing as the tallest structure on the site, measuring 38 metres in height. In terms of visibility the proposal is approximately 850m to the east of the village of Foxholes and 2 km to the west of Wold Newton, with the nearest residential property of West Field House, 620m to the east. Although the site is far in between these areas, the drilling rig would be easy to see from any direction. The development would also be highly visible to users driving along Butt Lane and the two roads connecting to Foxholes, which are the B1249 and Octon Grange Lane.	No - The proposal involves constructing a 38-metre-tall drill on a relatively flat field, which, if permanent, would have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape. However, the entire operation, from the start of drilling to the demobilization of the flow testing, would be temporary, lasting nine months within the three-year permission period. The site would then be either suspended or restored after the operation/testing phase. The drill itself would be in place for a maximum of six weeks—one week for construction, four weeks for operation, and one week for dismantling. Overall, given that the drill would be in place for a maximum of six weeks, the development's impact on landscape and visibility would be limited
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Cultural, Heritage Archaeology	8.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	No – The nearest feature of historic importance is the grade II listed Church of St Mary 2 km from the site within the village of Foxholes. A pre-application with written advice was issued on the 15th October 2024, which included the NYC Principal Archaeologist's comments. These are: <i>'The proposed site is within a prehistoric landscape. Most of the archaeological sites in this landscape are known from marks in the ripening crops. Weaving either side of Butt Lane is a later prehistoric or Roman trackway flanked by drainage ditches. Either side of this trackway are square and rectangular enclosures which are likely to have hosted settlement. The landscape is also peppered with small circular burial mounds, two of which lay adjacent to the proposed access road. Although these remains are now ploughed flat the archaeological deposits are of significance and can include human remains.'</i>	No – In terms of the impacts caused to the nearest listed building, it is considered that the distance and temporary nature of the application would not significantly impact its setting. Taking into account the consultees comments, no significant impact are expected to arise provided that the following recommendations are carried out: The proposal should properly be assessed for its impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest. It should firstly take the form of a desk-based assessment which summarises existing knowledge. The desk-based assessment should also consider the impact of the proposal on the setting of heritage assets. In addition to this it is recommended that an archaeological field evaluation takes place. This should include a geophysical survey and trial trenching to properly establish the significance of the archaeological resource and the impact of the proposal upon it. If any features of importance are discovered further assessment can be controlled through conditions and working practices.
Transport and Access	9.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	No – The SusTrans national cycle route is over 500m from the proposed development and the nearest public footpath is over 1000m from the proposed development.	N/A

	9.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – All HGVs would travel to and from the site via the A64 and the B1249 before making their way to Butt Lane. The increased traffic as a result of the proposal during the three-year period could potentially affect congestion. In the pre application stage the Highway Authority stated that the application should include a transport statement assessing trip generation, construction traffic routes, and potential highway works. In addition, improvements to passing places on Butt Lane may be necessary with the junction of Butt Lane and the B1249 may require visibility enhancements or temporary traffic management to ensure safe access.	No – Although the proposed development and its effects are temporary in nature, the forthcoming planning application would be accompanied by a transport assessment which would consider the impact of the Proposed Development on the local highway network and any improvements that may be required. This would be enforced through conditions.
Land Use	10.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	Yes - The site lies within a rural area and there would be a loss of agricultural land where the proposed development would be located for the proposed 3 year period.	No – a significant effect is not considered likely, through the use of Biodiversity Net Gain regulations it would be ensured that a study of the land is carried out to calculate its value and ensure that 10% net gain is achieved. There may be some impacts from the construction, drilling and restoration phases in terms of noise and dust and vehicle movements which could be managed through the implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) secured by condition and other conditions to limit the impact on residential amenity.

	10.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No – Through a search of the online search of the online planning register of North Yorkshire Council it appears that there are no plans for future land uses on land near the location which could be affected by the proposed development.	N/A
Land Stability and Climate	11.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No - there are no known threats to the site location.	N/A
Cumulative Effects	12.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase?	Yes - The primary impact that could result in the cumulation of impacts during the construction/operation phase of the proposed development would be the increase in vehicle movements within the area.	No - It is not considered that a significant impact would arise as a result. It is acknowledged that any effects that may arise could be largely mitigated through the use of conditions including the requirement for a transport assessment and Construction Environmental Management Plan.
Transboundary Effects	13.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	Yes - the Site is located 900m to the south of the proposed boundary of the proposed Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (Formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	Yes - The impact of the proposal within 900m would need to be addressed in a Landscape and Visual Assessment Mitigation could be provided through screening, which could be secured by condition. However, the screening would not fully conceal the 38 metre tall drilling rig. Nonetheless, due to the temporary nature of the development, this is not considered to have a significant effect

Conclusion	The proposal falls within category 2 (d) and 2 (e) of Schedule 2 as described in the regulations.		
	The foregoing consideration of potential significant impacts on nearby receptors is sufficient to suggest that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. Given the location, size, and temporary nature of the development, it is clear that any issues can be addressed and mitigated through the use of tailored conditions		
	It is considered that the likely impacts identified for the proposed development which includes the construction of a temporary well site, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment at land north of Butt Lane does not warrant the preparation of a formal Environmental Statement.		
Environmental Statement required?		Yes	No X

The determination and full reasons must be made available to the public via the Council's Online Planning Register and Area Office's Planning Register.

Appendix 2 – List of Plant and Equipment

Weaverthorpe development; site equipment per phase

Phase	Phase duration	Equipment Description	Duration on site within phase
Phase 1: Site Construction	5 weeks total	1 x security cabin/welfare unit	5 weeks
		2 x security sleeper units	
		1 x generator	
		1 x fuel bowser	
		1 x water bowser	
		1 x toilet block	
		2 x 20tonne excavators	
		1 x D4 dozer	
		2 x 9tonne dumpers	
		1 x vibrating roller	
		1 x civils contractor welfare unit	
		1 x civils contractor tool store	
		1 x self-propelled rotary or percussive rig for water monitoring boreholes	1 week

Phase	Phase duration	Equipment Description	Duration on site within phase
Phase: 2 Drilling	8 weeks	Security facilities:- 6 x sleeper units 2 x welfare units 1 x security office 1 x generator 1 x fuel bowser 1 x toilet block 1 x water bowser 1 x security welfare unit at access track	8 weeks
		Drilling Rig and mast	
		Poor Boy degasser	
		Mobile lighting towers	
		Dog house & tool house	
		Pipe racks	
		Drilling fluids chemical trailer	
		Welfare cabins/offices:- Drilling Supervisor, Rig Manager, Fluids Engineer, directional drilling, toilet block	
		Top Drive HPU	
		Mud pumps x 2	
		Mud pump engines x 2	
		Drilling fluids/hopper/mix tank/settling tank/water tank/shaker tank/cuttings tank	
		Fire water tank	
		Camp generator	
		Rig generator, fuel tank, oil store, rig store, rigging loft, MCC, pump store, Koomey unit & workshop	
		Mud logger unit	
		Service company accommodation, crew canteen, crew changing room, potable water tank & fuel tank	
		Fork lift truck/telehandler	

Phase	Phase duration	Equipment Description	Duration on site within phase
Phase 3: Testing	4 weeks	Security facilities:- 6 x sleeper units 2 x welfare units 1 x security office 1 x generator 1 x fuel bowser 1 x toilet block 1 x water bowser 1 x security welfare unit at access track	4 weeks
		Temporary bunding	
		Mobile lighting towers	
		Wireline truck	1 week
		Wellhead choke manifold arrangement, temporary hard iron pipelines	4 weeks
		Heater vessel	
		3 phase separator	
		2-3 x stock tanks	
		Knock-out pot	
		Shrouded ground flare	
		Well test lab, workshop	
		Generator and banded fuel tank	
		Compressor	
		Crew welfare cabins x 3-4, toilet block	
		Camp generator	
		Potable water tank	
		Supervisor office	

Phase	Phase duration	Equipment Description	Duration on site within phase
Phase 4a: Suspend site	4 weeks	Security facilities:- 2 x sleeper units 1 x welfare unit 1 x generator 1 x fuel bowser 1 x toilet block 1 x water bowser 1 x security welfare unit at access track	4 weeks
		1 x civils welfare unit	
		1 x civils contractor tool store	
		2 x 20tonne excavators	
		1 x D4 dozer	
		2 x 9tonne dumpers	
		1 x vibrating roller	

Phase	Phase duration	Equipment Description	Duration on site within phase
Phase 4b: Restore site	6 weeks	Security facilities:- 1 x welfare unit 1 x mobile lighting tower	6 weeks
		Workover rig	2 weeks
		Workstring/pipework racks	
		Koomey unit	
		Fluid pumping unit	
		Fluids tanks x 3	
		Generator	
		Fuel tank	
		Toolstore	
		Cabins/welfare units for Workover supervisor, crew canteen, office, toilet block	
		Camp generator	
		Fuel bowser	
		Potable water bowser	
		1 x mobile lighting tower	
		Slickline Unit	1 week
		1 x civils welfare unit	4 weeks
		1 x civils contractor tool store	
		2 x 20tonne excavators	
		1 x D4 dozer	
		2 x 9tonne dumpers	
		1 x vibrating roller	

Appendix 3 – Site Closure and Restoration Programme

Egdon Resources U.K. Limited

Environmental Management System

SITE CLOSURE AND RESTORATION PROCEDURE

FIRST ISSUE DATE	July 2016
ISSUED BY	Egdon Production & HSE Manager
REVISION NUMBER	2

Purpose of this document

Egdon undertake exploratory drilling for, and flow testing and long-term production of, oil and gas from onshore sites in the UK. A site may need to be decommissioned and restored back to its original condition/use as a result of the following scenarios:-

- After drilling, where the well has been deemed not-commercial
- After or during flow testing, where volumes of oil or gas recovered are not sufficient to progress to a long-term facility
- Where production from an established site has depleted to the point where the site is no longer commercially viable

If and when this decision is taken, this procedure sets out the processes that will be applied in order to mitigate and manage any potential environmental impacts from the decommissioning and restoration of an Egdon site.

Environmental Hazards

This procedure sets out:-

- How the well(s) will be sealed ("abandoned"), in terms of the processes applied to the borehole(s) to make it permanently safe and seal against any potential for environmental impact
- How the equipment, facilities, infrastructure and made ground will be managed when decommissioning and restoring a site
- The restoration and aftercare that will be applied to a site

An environmental risk assessment is undertaken in respect of site closure and reinstatement activities, to cover the two operational scenarios - namely after drilling has concluded and after a period of either test or full production. Following the risk assessment, which is appended to this procedure, the key measures that will mitigate and prevent any environmental impacts that arise from site decommissioning and restoration are set out within this document.

The processes set out within this procedure are referenced when equipment and facilities are to be decommissioned, from the point after all hydrocarbons, produced waters, chemicals and other treatments or fluids have been removed from site.

Associated documents

Groundwater borehole reinstatement drawing
Site Closure Risk Assessment
Incident Management Procedure
Incident Form
Waste Management Procedure

Site Management

During equipment and facilities decommissioning, the main contractor on site is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is followed, and adhered to. When contractors are used to restore the site, Egdon will engage the services of a Consultant Structural and Civil Engineering company as Egdon's contracted management representatives to oversee the restoration process – this is usually the same organisation that would design and oversee the original site build (if it is an Egdon site built for a drilling operation). Adherence to the details and requirements of this procedure will then be the responsibility of Egdon's appointed management contractor.

Site Contractors

Site contractors will comply with the following environmental requirements:-

- Egdon Site Rules must be adhered to
- All measures must be taken to prevent any pollution, spills or littering
- Any spills to be managed in accordance with Egdon's Incident Management procedure
- Fuel bowsers must be double skinned
- Drip trays must be used under taps/connections
- Spill kits must be on site
- Egdon Incident Forms must be used in the event of any spillage or health/safety/environmental incident
- All wastes must be managed in accordance with Egdon's Waste Management procedure
- All wastes must have Waste Transfer Notes

The sections covering decommissioning of groundwater monitoring boreholes and equipment, facilities and installations include tables that set out the individual processes and measures to mitigate against environmental impacts. These tables also clarify the responsibilities for each individual process, in terms of Egdon responsibilities, and the responsibilities of the site contractor.

Stages

Site Closure and Restoration will progress in the following stages:-

1. Well/borehole sealing ("abandonment")
2. Pre-restoration environmental monitoring
3. Groundwater monitoring borehole decommissioning
4. Equipment, facilities, installations and site decommissioning

5. Site restoration
6. Site aftercare

Well/borehole Sealing

When the decision is made to restore the site either to its former or an approved new use appropriate for the area, a full detailed programme is developed and is subject to independent examination. The well(s) will be plugged, hydrostatically tested, and sealed (“abandoned”) using an agreed programme or method approved by the Health & Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA).

Once confirmed that a well is to be abandoned, this may be progressed whilst the drill rig is on site (exploratory drilling phase) or by mobilising a workover rig to site (production or flow test phase). Subject to the detail of the program, the following principles as summarised within Table 1 below will apply:-.

Table 1:- Well Abandonment Summary

Scenario	
Post drilling (dry-hole scenario)	Post production/production test
Process	
For water-based mud in hole: select cement preflush. For oil-based mud in hole: select OBM displacement programme.	Circulate with produced water and kill well
	If rod pump in place, ensure rod BOP in place
	POOH (Pull out of hole) with sucker rods and insert pump
	Install BOP on tubing bonnet
	POOH with completion and tubing
Number of cement plugs depends on programme and well	
RIH to 1st plug setting depth with cement string, set cement plug number 1 from / to defined depths in final plan	
For plug top in open hole: tag top of plug with workstring. For top of plug inside casing: pressure test cement plug – specifics defined in programme	
Pull cement string back to second plug depth and set second cement plug as defined in programme	
As before: tag or pressure test cement plug as appropriate – specifics defined in programme	
Pull string to third and subsequent plug depth and set and test cement plug from / to depths per programme with final plug finishing at cellar floor.	
Rig down drilling or workover rig	
Clean out cellar and cut casing strings at least 2m below top of cellar. Stitch-weld metal plate across the cut off casing. Weld well number on top of plate	
Backfill well cellar with gravel or top soil as part of site restoration	

Pre-restoration environmental monitoring

Wells – exploratory or production boreholes

In advance of building of new Egdon sites (post 2016) soil samples will be taken and analysed to establish baseline conditions. The analysis methodology and sample depths will be determined in advance via specialist environmental bodies/consultants, and may involve sampling of soils below the proposed impermeable liner depth.

For post operational sites, monitoring may be applied in accordance with Table 2 below.

Table 2

Aspect	Applies to	Procedure	Responsibility
Stored topsoil	All sites	- Sample and analysis, compare to baseline data - If comparison shows significant variation, agree treatment programme to reconcile soils	Egdon Egdon
Exposed soils following removal of membrane	All sites	Sample and analysis, compare to baseline data	Egdon
Sub surface soils around wellbore	Post drilling – dry hole, no testing phase	If no gas evident, no monitoring around wellbore	
	Post test phase Post production phase	Soil sampling and analysis, to include for gas content, in accordance with pre-agreed sampling and monitoring plan	Egdon
Site surface aggregates - stone	All sites	Sample and analysis, compare to baseline data	Egdon

Groundwater Monitoring Boreholes

If Groundwater Monitoring Boreholes are installed as per the environmental permitting regime, samples of water from the boreholes will be taken and chemically analysed. The results will be compared and assessed against:-

- the samples taken when the boreholes were first installed
- the samples taken during operations

Before any restoration works starts, consultation will be undertaken with the Environment Agency (EA) to confirm that groundwater quality has not been affected by site operations. Approval must be sought from the EA before any site works progress.

Surface waters

If surface waters have been subject to water quality analysis under the environmental permitting process, final samples will be analysed and the results compared against previous monitoring rounds. Again the Environment Agency will be consulted in advance of site works starting.

RSR

If the site has been subject to Radioactive Substances Regulations (RSR) permitting (production operations only), site surface background readings will be taken by Egdon's RPS or the appointed RPA/RWA and compared with baseline data. This will determine whether there are increased levels of NORM present that affect the decommissioning of the site and the management of the surface aggregates.

Sub-surface soils and landscaping

If sub-surface soil samples were taken in advance of the original site build, further samples may be taken before decommissioning and analysed and compared with baseline data.

Before any of the following processes are applied, consultation may take place with environmental specialists and the Environment Agency to determine what, if any, remediation treatments will be applied to the site in order to ensure that the soil condition is in accordance with any originally-tested samples and also comparable with soils surrounding and adjacent to the site.

If the site is long-established, there may be significantly-established natural screening by way of tree, shrubs and vegetation which may support wildlife and birds. The outline measures as detailed below assume that the soil banks will be re-used to restore the site, but there may need to be discussions with the Planning Authority, the Environment Agency and Natural England to determine whether it is appropriate to use any stored soils, effectively taking out whatever foliage exists and therefore impacting on what will be natural habitat. If it is deemed that the banks and trees/shrubs are to remain in-situ, the site will need to be restored by bringing in top soil and treating/enhancing as appropriate.

The outline processes set out within the Restoration and Aftercare section are applied subject to the requirements of, and agreement with, the landowner.

Equipment, facilities, installations and site decommissioning

This section covers the decommissioning of the following aspects:-

- Groundwater Monitoring boreholes
- Equipment and facilities – storage tanks, production lines, pumps, welfare units etc
- Surface water management - containment ditches, interceptors etc
- Surface aggregates and built materials – concrete, blockwork, surface stone etc
- Sub-surface impermeable membrane and geotextiles

The risk assessment has identified the control and mitigation measures needed in order to prevent environmental impacts when decommissioning all of the above and these measures are detailed within each relevant section below.

For any wastes transferred off site, Waste Transfer Notes must be obtained and copies sent to Egdon.

Groundwater monitoring boreholes

There are specific decommissioning requirements in relation to groundwater monitoring boreholes, to ensure that the boreholes are fully sealed to mitigate against the boreholes becoming a pathway for contaminant migration into groundwaters and aquifers. There may be a number of both shallow (up to 10m depth) and deeper (up to 80m depth) boreholes on site, and the locations of these are documented within the Environmental Management System for each site.

The process for borehole decommissioning must consider the geological setting, borehole construction, hazards and intended after-use of the land. As such, the abandonment procedure will vary from site to site. Notwithstanding this, Table 3(a) and Table 3(b) provide an indicative process for borehole decommissioning, in line with current guidance, together with the responsibilities for each individual process. In support of this process, drawing reference 3257BGM 01 (appended to this document) provides a cross sectional schematic of a typical decommissioned borehole, which is considered the primary decommissioning objective, save for any site-specific variations deemed necessary and justified.

If the decommissioning schematic is not as applied on a specific site, a drawing or plan of the decommissioned borehole must be produced by the consultant hydrogeologist, and retained by Egdon.

Table 3(a):- Decommissioning of shallow groundwater boreholes

Shallow boreholes and installation retrievable	
Procedure:- removal of installation	Responsibility
1. Excavate around borehole to 2m below ground level, 1m diameter 2. Remove headworks 3. Pull installation clear 4. Infill borehole to 2m from top of borehole (4m below ground level) with either high-permeability or low permeability material or grout, depending on natural ground conditions. 5. Infill 2m to top of borehole with cement 6. Create concrete cap extending around top of borehole 0.2m deep, so that concrete is flush with top of borehole 7. Deeply inscribe "WELL" on cement/concrete cap 8. When set, complete restoration to site with sub/topsoil in accordance with original contours	Site Contractor – all sections

Table 3(b):- Decommissioning of deeper groundwater boreholes

Deeper boreholes and installation not retrievable	
Procedure:- retain installation	Responsibility
1. Excavate around borehole to 2m below ground level, 1m diameter 2. Remove headworks 3. Cut casing to minimum 1.8m below ground level 4. Infill borehole to 2m from top of borehole (4m below ground level) with granular fill such as bentonite, sand, shingle, pea gravel etc. 5. Infill 2m to top of borehole with cement 6. Create concrete cap extending around top of borehole 0.2m deep, so that concrete is flush with top of borehole 7. Deeply inscribe "WELL" on cement/concrete cap 8. When set, complete restoration to site with sub/topsoil in accordance with original contours	Site Contractor – all sections

Equipment and Facilities

Table 4 below sets out the procedures that will be applied when decommissioning equipment and facilities on an Egdon site. Responsibilities for each step are also defined.

Table 4

Aspect	Applies to	Procedure	Responsibility
Storage tanks, pipelines and equipment used that has had hydrocarbon flow or contact	Production/ test sites	• Undertake NORM monitoring as per Site Closure sections of RSR procedures • Clean or flush through/purge all equipment • When breaking containment, secondary containment measures such as drip trays and temporary bunds must be used • Any waste sent off site recorded and Waste Transfer Notes obtained	Egdon Site contractors Site contractors Site contractors
Tank containment bunds	Production/ test sites	• Undertake NORM monitoring as per Site Closure sections of RSR procedures • Transfer any standing fluids to storage tanks • Pressure wash using detergents to clean down tanks and equipment within bund • Pressure wash bund walls and floors to remove any contamination/staining • Use suction tanker to clear any fluids within bunds	Egdon Site contractors Site contractors Site contractors Site contractors

Well cellars	All sites	- Undertake NORM monitoring as per Site Closure sections of RSR procedures¹ - Empty well cellars with suction tanker - Clean internal cellar surfaces with pressure washer, offload via suction tanker - Any waste sent off site recorded and Waste Transfer Notes obtained	Egdon Site contractors Site contractors Site contractors
Temporary bunding	All sites	- Use suction tanker to clear any fluids within bunds - Scrape any solid material i.e. sand and dispose of as hazardous waste if evidence of oil contamination - Dispose of impermeable liner as hazardous waste if oil contaminated - Any waste sent off site recorded and Waste Transfer Notes obtained	Site contractors – all sections

Surface water containment/discharge systems

Egdon sites will have containment systems in place to prevent discharge or run-off of surface waters beyond the confines of the site itself. The actual mechanisms installed will depend on the status of the site, in terms of whether the site is being restored after drilling, when the site will not be progressed to a test phase, or following production or a production test. Table 5 (below) details the processes for all types of site.

Table 5

Aspect	Applies to	Procedure	Responsibility
Containment ditches – open system	All sites	- Use suction tanker to skim off any hydrocarbons or contamination on contained waters then transfer this off site as waste product - Allow clean water to discharge via interceptor if levels high enough - If residual water is clean, pump into surface watercourse using pump/ hose	Site contractors – all sections
Containment ditches – French drain system	All sites	- Excavate stone down to retained water level and/or drainage pipe – monitor for hydrocarbon contamination - If stone is contaminated, transfer offsite as waste material - If water level above any pipe has hydrocarbon or contamination skin, use suction tanker to skim off contamination then transfer this off site as waste	Site contractors – all sections

¹ Applies to production sites only

		• Allow clean water to discharge via interceptor if levels high enough • If residual water is clean, use access chamber and pump into surface watercourse using pump and hose • Excavate and retain drainage pipes	
Surface water interceptor	Production sites	• Undertake NORM monitoring as per Site Closure sections of RSR procedures • Close all valves to isolate interceptor • Use suction tanker to clear contents, then clean or circulate fluids internally, followed by complete emptying via suction tanker • Excavate interceptor and dispose of via licensed waste contractor	Egdon Site contractors Site contractors Site contractors
Residual concrete (interceptor, ditches)	All sites	• Segregate as waste stream, send offsite for recycling as hard core	Site contractors

Surface aggregates and built materials

All sites will have concrete used to build the wellpad(s) and well cellar(s), and production sites will have purpose-built tank bunds and tanker loading bays built to construction specifications. All sites will have been constructed with surface stone or aggregates to create a flat working platform. Table 6 details the processes that will be applied with regard to management of these materials during site closure.

Table 6

Aspect	Applies to	Procedure	Responsibility
Well cellars	All sites	• After cleaning, remove concrete sections down to 2m below surface level, break up and segregate for offsite transfer as hardcore	Site contractors
Well pads	All sites	• Clean down with pressure washer/chemicals • Transfer contained cleaning fluids offsite as waste via licensed waste contractor • Break up/remove concrete and segregate for offsite transfer as hardcore	Site contractors – all sections
Concrete plinths, bund walls	Production sites	• After cleaning down, break up up/remove concrete, blockwork and cement and segregate for offsite transfer as hardcore	Site contractors
Surface aggregates (stone, sand)	All sites	• Undertake NORM monitoring as per Site Closure sections of RSR procedures • Sample and analysis of surface aggregates, compare with baseline results	Egdon Egdon

		• Visually inspect surface stone for oil or contamination	Site contractors
		• Isolate and excavate contaminated areas, separate from clean stone and dispose as hazardous waste	Site contractors
		• Maintain Waste Transfer Notes for all materials transferred offsite as waste	Site contractors

Site impermeable membrane and geotextiles

Impermeable membranes may be either clay-based self-sealing products, or heavy gauge plastic sheeting designed to prevent percolation of liquids into soils and strata. They may be used in conjunction with geotextiles to stabilise the surface of a site, and end of site management of these materials is detailed within Table 7.

Table 7

Aspect	Applies to	Procedure	Responsibility
Clay-based membrane	All sites	• Once stone is removed, inspect (visually) for oil contamination • If contaminated, isolate sections separate from uncontaminated material and transfer offsite • If not contaminated take offsite to non-hazardous waste disposal site • Ensure licensed waste contractors are used and Waste Transfer Notes obtained	Site contractors – all sections
Plastic-based membrane	All sites	• Once stone is removed, inspect for oil contamination • If oil patches evident, clean by washing down into ditch system • Once clean, plastic can be segregated for recycling or re-use	Site contractors – all sections
Geotextiles	All sites	• Transfer off site as waste – may be contaminated	Site contractors

Sub-site soils

Once all surface-laid materials have been removed, leaving a “bare” site with exposed soils, Table 8 below sets out the processes that will be applied in respect of any environmental issues that may affect soils beneath the site area.

Table 8

Aspect	Applies to	Procedure	Responsibility
Immediate soils below liners	All sites	• Site inspection to determine any oil contamination • If evident, complete Egdon Incident Form and advise Egdon management • Await instructions • If contaminated, contact Environment Agency to review and agree next steps • On Egdon authority, excavate contaminated areas, noting depth and spread • Treat as hazardous/contaminated waste	Site contractors Site contractors Site contractors Egdon Site contractors Site contractors

Litter

During all activities, site contractors will ensure that the site area is kept tidy at all times and no litter is left or allowed to migrate to adjacent areas. All site-associated materials will be removed from site at the end of activities.

Site Restoration and Aftercare

When all materials have been removed from the site and the sub-site soil is confirmed to be uncontaminated the site will be restored to its original agricultural or other use by reinstating any stored sub-soil and top-soil and any associated drainage using the following procedures. These procedures assume that any stored soils are reused.

In advance of any restoration, there needs to be a mechanism to ensure that the restored area soils are compatible with, and are of similar condition (ph, nutrient levels etc) to soils adjacent to the site area. If soil samples were taken before the site was originally built, then that analysis data will be used as the baseline.

Samples will be taken from any stored topsoil, and analysed to then compare with the baseline. If there is no baseline record, then additional samples will be taken from adjacent land and this will be the baseline. The analysis will be compared, and this will inform any need for soil conditioning or improvement to ensure that the stored soil, that will be re-used on the site area, has the same (or similar) qualities as the surrounding land.

Sub-Soil Cultivation.

Any weed growth on any subsoil stockpiles will be eliminated by non-persistent, contact weed killer such as "Roundup", prior to the re-grading of the sub-soil to reform the falls and gradients which existed prior to occupation of the site. The formation will be subsoiled, using a crawler or four-wheel drive tractor, drawing a winged, deep tine cultivator to a depth of 600 mm at 1000 mm centres, so as to achieve a good heave across the full width of the site.

1. Work will be carried out in suitable conditions, and as far as practical at right angles to the field drainage system (if any). Any extraneous material brought to the surface will be removed to a tip with stones picked up to approximately 75 mm across any direction.
2. Works for the replacement and spreading of the topsoil to an even depth will be carried out following the fine grading of subsoil and following an inspection by the Landowner or their Agent. The planning officer would also be asked to approve the finished profile and levels.

Replacement and Cultivation of Topsoil.

3. Any weed growth on the topsoil stockpiles will be eliminated by non-persistent, contact weed killer such as "Roundup". Topsoil will then be spread from the stockpile, using agricultural machinery, crawler or four-wheel driven tractors. Topsoil will be spread to a uniform depth over the whole site, to avoid the formation of depressions which could hold water, and to grade to the original levels.
4. All operations will be carried out when both the ground and topsoil are at or within the plastic limit of the soil, being dry and crumbly.
5. All topsoil areas within the site, including areas not affected by construction operation will be ploughed and cultivated to ensure that all stones, rubble, vegetation and other extraneous material larger than 75mm across any direction are removed from site to a suitable tip.

6. The topsoil will be worked to a fine tilth by rotovator or harrowing to not less than 100 mm depth. Subject to a soil sample analysis, three (3) tonnes of lime, or sufficient to achieve a pH level between 6 and 6.5, will be applied and 375kg of 20-10-10 fertiliser per hectare (less if seeding carried out in the autumn to reduce leaching into nearby watercourses). Seeding will be with perennial ryegrass or an agricultural alternative to the Landowner's satisfaction.
7. If it should prove necessary to import topsoil into the site, disease and pest free material as near as practicable to that on site will be used. All topsoil will be to BS 3882 and subject to the approval of the Landowner.

Reinstatement of Fences & Gates.

8. Any fences and gates removed during the use of the site will be replaced with new materials which match as closely as practicable those previously existing on site – if applicable.
9. Any hawthorn hedge removed to create the site originally will be replanted with container grown "quicks" spaced in a double row of plants 23 centimetres (9 inches) apart. A tannalised or pressure-treated timber post and four rail fence with livestock and rabbit proof netting will be constructed on either side of the newly planted hedge. .

New Field Drainage.

10. If necessary, a scheme of field drainage in the site area will be prepared and agreed with the Landowner, to comply with DEFRA requirements, and for works to be carried out by a specialist land drainage contractor in year two, or earlier at the request of the Landowner.
11. Any construction header drains installed to intercept the field drains will be retained and rodded to check their integrity prior to their incorporation as part of the drainage reinstatement scheme.
12. Either perforated plastic pipe or clay tiles with a minimum diameter of 110 mm will be laid at the bottom of the trench surrounded by and backfilled with clean-washed 10 to 20 mm pea-gravel [depending on drainage machine to be used], and will be backfilled to within 225 mm of surface allowing for settlement for the gravel. Drains will be laid to the maximum available falls and at depths not less than 600 mm cover.
13. Any outfall of the drainage system will consist of 2m lengths of frost-resistant plastic pipe set into a suitable headwall (concrete or gabion) with a splash plate, discharging at water level into the ditches.
14. If it is not possible to lay drains at a depth of at least 600 mm of cover, Egdon will consult with the Landowner and his written approval will be sought to an amended specification.

Management and Aftercare

15. The whole former operational site will be returned to agriculture after completion of the works, subject to the Landowner's agreement. If required annual inspections will be made in August/September of each year, for a period of five years, with the Landowner or their Agent, to review the progress and crop productivity of the restoration area.

Subsequent Management

16. In normal circumstances, the Landowner will take the land back into his control and apply the same agricultural plan as for the adjacent land. Additional treatment including the addition of fertilizer will be subject to the Landowner's assessment of the reinstated area.

In the event that the Landowner declines to take the land back into his control until after the expiration of the five year management plan, the following process options will be applied.

A If Subject to Grass Planting.

Year 1

17. The site will be rolled with a light, grassland roller and spread with a compound fertilizer as recommended by soil sample analysis.
18. The grass will be cut for silage or hay in May/June and subsequently grazed.
19. Any weeds will be sprayed with an appropriate weed killer.
20. If applicable, all stock/cattle will be removed before the end of October or earlier if the season is wet and all stock will be removed in adverse weather conditions to prevent poaching.

Year 2

21. Fertilizer, as indicated by soil sample analysis, will be applied in spring and summer.
22. Any areas where the grass sward has not established will be re-seeded.
23. Grass produced will be cut for silage or hay or grazed in a controlled manner.
24. Any weeds will be sprayed with an appropriate weed killer.
25. The need for further subsoiling or a comprehensive field drainage scheme will be considered at the annual inspection. If subsequent subsoiling or installation of field drains is carried out, the areas affected will be cultivated, any large stones removed and the areas affected will be seeded with a suitable grass mixture.
26. Stock/cattle will be removed before the end of October or earlier if the season is wet and all stock will be removed in adverse weather conditions to prevent poaching.

Years 3 to 5 inclusive

27. Repeat steps 23 to 26 inclusive above.

B If Subject to Arable Planting.

Year 1

- a. Initial treatment will be carried out as described above.
- b. Appropriate crops will be planted with appropriate compound and/or nitrogen fertilizer as recommended by soil sample analysis.

- c. The crop will be assessed prior to harvest with regard to production levels and compared to production levels from adjoining undisturbed land.

Year 2

- d. Any localised settlement that is creating problems will be regraded or filled with topsoil.
- e. Annual inspection will consider the need for further subsoiling or a comprehensive field drainage scheme.
- f. If subsoiling or installation of field drains is carried out, the areas affected will be cultivated, and any large stones removed.
- g. Appropriate crops will be planted.
- h. The crop will be assessed prior to harvest with regard to production levels and compared to production levels from adjoining undisturbed land.

Years 3. 4 & 5

Repeat steps e, g. & h. above.

C If subject to Woodland Planting.

To be advised following consultations with the applicable regulatory bodies.

AMENDMENTS

Location (Page)	Change Description	Reason for Change	Revision	Date
6	Added in optionality to decommission boreholes away from prescribed drawing	To cater for any geological conditions or risks that may arise if adhering to the drawing	1	April 2020
Header and page 1	Revised layout and replaced logo	New Egdon logo	2	March 2024
12	Added reference to the requirement to analysis soils that will be re used	Not included within original procedre		

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