

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 13th December 2017

Electoral Division affected:
Fylde East, Fylde West, Wyre
Rural Central

Fylde Borough: application number. LCC/2014/101
Development of a site for drilling up to four exploratory wells, hydraulic fracturing of the wells, testing for hydrocarbons, abandonment of the wells and restoration, including provision of access roads and improvement of accesses onto the highway, security fencing, lighting and other uses ancillary to the exploration activities, including the construction of a pipeline and a connection to the gas grid network and associated infrastructure.
Land west, north and east of Roseacre Wood and between Roseacre Road, Roseacre and Inskip Road, Wharles.

Report to determine the need for a site visit in respect of additional information received on revised access routes.

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Executive Summary

Application: Development of a site for drilling up to four exploratory wells, hydraulic fracturing of the wells, testing for hydrocarbons, abandonment of the wells and restoration, including provision of access roads and improvement of accesses onto the highway, security fencing, lighting and other uses ancillary to the exploration activities, including the construction of a pipeline and a connection to the gas grid network and associated infrastructure.

Land west, north and east of Roseacre Wood and between Roseacre Road, Roseacre and Inskip Road, Wharles

Recommendation – Summary

That members visit the proposed access routes prior to considering the revised access routes to the site at the meeting on 24th January 2018.

Background

In 2014 a planning application was submitted for the development of an exploration well site on land off Roseacre Road involving the drilling of up to four boreholes, hydraulic fracturing of the boreholes and then testing for any hydrocarbons that might be produced. The application was supported by an Environmental Statement.

At a meeting of the County Council's Development Control Committee on 23 June 2015, it was resolved to refuse planning permission due to unacceptable noise and highway impacts.

The applicant appealed against this decision and a public inquiry to determine the appeal, along with two other appeals relating to another similar development at Preston New Road, was held in February and March 2016.

The Secretary of State announced his decision on the appeals by way of a letter dated 6th October 2016. In respect of the Roseacre Wood Exploration Works appeal, the Secretary of State considered that with the exception of highway safety, all other impacts could be controlled to acceptable levels. In relation to highway matters, the Secretary of State concluded that the development would have a serious adverse impact on the safety of people using the public highway and on the evidence presented to the public inquiry, it was not possible to conclude that the harm could be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels. However, the Secretary of State concluded that these conclusions largely resulted from the failure of the appellant to demonstrate that their mitigation of impacts was workable in practice.

The Secretary of State has therefore decided to reopen the public inquiry to allow the appellant the opportunity to submit further evidence on highway impacts and for other parties to respond to such evidence. Subject to being satisfied that the highway impacts can be adequately mitigated, the Secretary of State is minded to allow the appeal.

Advice

Since the Secretary of State announced his decision, the appellant has reassessed their access proposals to the Roseacre Wood site. The original planning application subject to the appeal, proposed that all access to the site would be from the A583 via Clifton Lane, Station Road, Dagger Road, Salwick Road and Inskip Road to reach the proposed exploration site via a private road within the MoD's High Frequency Communications Site.

The applicant's revised access proposals were submitted on 29th November 2017 and are the subject of a current consultation exercise that extends until 10th January 2018.

The applicant proposes to retain the Dagger Road access to the site as well two new access options:

- From the A585 using the B5269 to Elswick village and then using Roseacre Road to reach the site
- From the A585 using the B5269 through Elswick village and Inskip village and then Higham Side Road to access the exploration site through the MoD site.

Further traffic management measures are proposed on Dagger Road to address the issues that have been previously identified on that route.

The public inquiry is scheduled to reopen on 10th April 2018. Prior to that, the County Council will need to consider the revised traffic proposals and come to a conclusion as to whether the grounds for its original objection have been overcome or if any additional issues are raised given the new access routes that are now proposed. It is intended that a report detailing the planning and highways implications of the revised access routes including the results of the consultation exercise will be on the agenda for the meeting of the Development Control Committee on 24th January 2018. The conclusions of the Committee after considering that report will form the basis of any evidence that is presented by the County Council to the reopened public inquiry.

Given that revised access routes are now proposed, it is considered that members should visit the site and proposed access roads prior to considering the proposal at the meeting on 24th January 2018.

Recommendation

That the Committee visit the site prior to considering the revised access proposals at the meeting on 24th January 2018.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
LCC/2014/0101		

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Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate
N/A