

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 11th July 2018

Electoral Division affected:
Fylde East

Fylde Borough: Application number. LCC/2014/0101

Construction and operation 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 to land west, north and east of Roseacre Wood and between Roseacre Road, Roseacre and Inskip road, Wharles.

Agricultural land that forms part of Roseacre Hall, to the west, north and east of Roseacre Wood, and land that forms part of the defence high frequency communications service (DHFCS) site between Rosacre Road and Inskip Road, off Roseacre Road and Inskip Road, Roseacre and Wharles, Preston

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Executive Summary

Construction and operation 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 to land west, north and east of Roseacre Wood and between Roseacre Road, Roseacre and Inskip road, Wharles.

Agricultural land that forms part of Roseacre Hall, to the west, north and east of Roseacre Wood, and land that forms part of the defence high frequency communications service (DHFCS) site between Rosacre Road and Inskip Road, off Roseacre Road and Inskip Road, Roseacre and Wharles, Preston

Recommendation – Summary

- 1) That the conclusions of the report be noted
- 2) That the Committee delegate authority to officers to allow a response to be provided to the Secretary of State taking into account any further observations that are received subsequent to the meeting of the Committee.

Background

In 2014 a planning application was submitted to the County Council for the development of a hydrocarbon exploration site at Roseacre Wood near Elswick. The application provided for the construction of an exploration well pad and access from Roseacre Road, the drilling of four boreholes into the Bowland Shale and hydraulic fracturing of the boreholes and subsequent testing to monitor the flow rates of any hydrocarbons produced.

Access to the site was to have been from the A583 and then passing through Clifton village and then northwards along Station Road, Dagger Road, Salwick Road, Inskip Road and then across the Inskip Ministry of Defence site to enter the proposed exploration site.

The application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement which presented information on a wide range of planning and environmental issues to aid determination of the planning application.

The planning application was reported to the County Council's Development Control Committee on 24th June 2018 when planning permission was refused due to unacceptable highway impacts.

This decision was then the subject of an appeal to the Secretary of State. The appeal was heard by way of a public inquiry held in 2016. Following the inquiry, the Secretary of State determined that he was minded to allow the appeal but that the public inquiry should be reopened to hear further evidence on highway issues, he being dissatisfied that the applicant's highway mitigation measures would fully address the impacts on other road users. The public inquiry was therefore reopened and took place in April 2018 to hear additional highway evidence.

Prior to the inquiry being reopened, the appellant produced revised traffic proposals involving the site being accessed via three routes (named red, green and blue) as opposed to the original proposals where only one access route was proposed.

The Secretary of State determined that the reopened inquiry was only to hear highway evidence and that no other issues would be debated.

However, because over four years will have passed between the original Environmental Statement being submitted and when the Secretary of State will make his final decision on the proposals, the appellant has produced an updated Environmental Statement and Planning Statement addendum. This information is currently the subject of consultation with any responses being forwarded to the Secretary of State so that he can take into account any issues raised before he makes his final determination on the appeal.

The Inspector is currently writing his report following the reopened public inquiry. The report will be submitted to the Secretary of State later this summer and it is expected that the appeal will be determined before the end of 2018. The applicant's updated Environmental Statement along with any observations on this document made by the

County Council and any other statutory consultees will therefore be available when the Secretary of State finally considers the proposals.

Consultations

Lancashire Constabulary; No observations to make

Cadet Gas: No objection.

Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Services; Agree that there is no significant change to the cultural heritage baseline conditions and that the revised timeline for the development should not mean any change to the archaeological implications of the development.

National Air Traffic Control; No safeguarding objection.

The results of any further consultations that are received will be reported on the 'update sheet'.

Advice

The additional information is in two documents:

- A Supplementary Environmental Report to update the Environmental Statement supplied in support of the original planning application. The report considers the following issues; air quality, archaeology and cultural heritage, greenhouse gas emissions, community and socio economic, ecology, hydrology and ground gases, induced seismicity, landscape and visual amenity water resources, public health and cumulative and in combination impacts. The report does not consider traffic as the appellant produced an extensive assessment document to support their revised routing proposals that were discussed at the reopened public inquiry.
- A Planning Statement Addendum includes information on changes to planning policy since the original application in 2014 including a written ministerial statement in January 2018 and publication of an emerging Fylde Local Plan covering the period between 2011 and 2032.

In terms of the supplementary environmental report, for each topic area the applicant has reassessed the baseline position (if necessary by undertaking updated surveys) and then examining the impacts of any changes in legislation or standards that would apply to the project (for example air quality standards). The results of this exercise were then compared against the findings of the original Environmental Statement.

For all topic areas, the base line position remains largely unchanged when compared to the previously assessed 2014 position. There are some changes in local landscape due to the construction of some new buildings close to the site, minor changes in non designated heritage assets, changes in population levels and other

economic data used for the socio economic assessment and minor changes in ecology and updated public health data for the local area.

Of more significance are the changes that have been made to various environmental standards since the original planning application and Environmental Statement. These include new emission standards for non road mobile machinery, revised guidance on the modelling of air quality impacts and revised guidance on the way in which climate change impacts are used to calculate peak river flows and rainfall intensity.

The applicant has compared any changes in baseline data and applicable standards to the conclusions of the 2014 Environmental Statement. The applicant does not consider that there are any such changes that would require amendment of the conclusions of the original Environmental Statement in terms of the significance of any environmental effects.

The main changes since the 2014 planning application relate to traffic and associated impacts. The issues in terms of highway safety, noise, air pollution and severance arising from the revised traffic management proposals were all assessed through the applicant's Traffic Addendum which formed part of the evidence to the public inquiry. These issues, particularly those relating to highway safety, were the focus of the County Council's continued objection to the proposal and formed the basis of the evidence that was presented to the reopened public inquiry.

Noise did not form part of the County Council's case for opposing this development. The applicant has not undertaken a reassessment of baseline noise conditions. However, it is not considered that background noise levels would have decreased in the area such that noise from the site will now be significantly more apparent than was previously the case. The absence of updated background noise measurements could allow noise to be introduced as a grounds for objection to the development.

The changes included within the Planning Statement Addendum relating to Central Government Policy and emerging development plan policies are not considered to be significant and do not introduce significant new issues that were not previously considered.

It is considered that the changes to the other non highway issues are very minor and would not result in any new objections being raised to the development.

At present, the updated Environmental Statement and Planning Statement Addendum is the subject of consultation with a range of consultees. Given the nature and conclusions of the new information, it is considered that no significant issues of substance can be raised. However many responses are still awaited and it is therefore requested that delegated authority be given to allow officers to prepare a response to the Secretary of State if further consultation responses are received subsequent to the committee.

Recommendation

- 1) That the conclusions of the report be noted.

- 2) That the Committee delegate authority to officers to allow a response to be provided to the Secretary of State taking into account any further observations that are received subsequent to the meeting of the Committee.

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