

***Response to the Further information supplied by Island Gas to Nottingham County Council Planning committee with respect to drilling at Misson Springs, North Nottinghamshire.(ES/3379)***

Under the Planning Policy MP 12 Hydrocarbons and Minerals of Notts County Council, it states that applications “will be supported provided they do not give rise to *any* unacceptable impacts on the environment or residential amenity”. This is the overriding consideration.

It is clear from the thousands of objections to this development that this application has to be refused because the residents of North Nottinghamshire have given clear interpretations about unacceptable impacts.

**Site selection**

The choice of site by Island Gas has been more determined by where it will be suitable from their point of view to drill for gas, rather than taking account that this is in Flood Risk Zone Three a. Their argument is based on one in a hundred year arguments. The flooding of the Somerset levels has shown that within climate change that is clearly proceeding, it is easily possible to have high levels of rainfall suddenly occur. To choose a site *with any risk* of flooding is unacceptable and the emphasis in the policy is on the word “any” unacceptable impact on the environment. Even one impact that is “unacceptable” should make the application invalid.

No evidence by the company is given as to searches made elsewhere or approaches made for other sites in S F R A 1 and 2. Only assertions are made that it is better to use the existing brownfield site

The chosen site is only 130 m away from a valuable SSSI. It is nearer to this than residential accommodation. The only reason appears to be for choosing the site is because of the “professional judgement” of Island Gas. They have not taken into any account the need for this SSSI not to be endangered in the view of thousands of people. The view of both local residents and many who come from far and wide to enjoy this area should not be ignored. The “judgement” of the objectors should be weighted as being far greater than those with a financial conflict-of-interest in the choice of the site.

**Visual Landscape**

The photomontages on the road into the village show clearly a major visual impairment. This will be caused by not only the drilling rig height at 57.4 m but by a huge acoustic screen surrounding it. This is totally unacceptable to the local residents. The impact on the environment is completely inappropriate. It towers above the closest farm and current commercial buildings.

It will be seen breaking the natural skyline even from residential property in Finningley and be looked down upon from Gringley on the Hill. Floodlights will be seen across the valley

There are no comparable structures like this in the area. What is significant is that the company has chosen not to show any photomontage from the road entrance, where it will appear as a monstrosity. For the company to argue that this is only temporary is nonsensical. To have to see this blot on the landscape for nine months is unacceptable.

### Drainage

It is essential to keep up the water levels of the SSSI. If, because of climate change we get, not rain, but long periods of drought the ditches will be depleted of water. The company finds itself in a dilemma. On the one hand it knows it has to maintain water levels within the ditches and on the other hand it has to collect groundwater from spreading toxic effluent from flow back drilling water. That is a reason in itself why this application should be **refused**. It seriously endangers the SSSI.

### Air Quality

A recent peer-reviewed academic study in the United States has shown that methane emissions around the area of drilling sites for gas has had a serious effect on the health of infants and young children. **Island gas has not established any current base quality line for air**

*The study — the first to specifically focus on how shale oil and gas drilling affects children ability to breathe — concludes that starting in the womb, children's developing respiratory systems are particularly at risk from five airborne pollutants associated with fracking and drilling.*

*“We conclude that exposure to ozone, [particulate matter], silica dust, benzene, and formaldehyde is linked to adverse respiratory health effects, particularly in infants and children,” the researchers wrote in the study, titled “Potential Hazards of Air Pollutant Emissions from Unconventional Oil and Natural Gas Operations on the Respiratory Health of Children and Infants” and published in **Reviews on Environmental Health**.*

Wind will blow such emissions towards the village school which is just up the road from the site. Island gas acknowledges that there will be harm to air quality but argues that it's only going to happen for nine months instead of the year. This is a specious argument, as is the one about the dispersal of unwelcome emissions in surrounding woodland “before reaching the SSSI”. Strong winds blow across this flatland and can easily be swept upwards via the acoustic tunnel and deposit emissions on the SSSI. We have no evidence from the company as to how they will be able to mitigate emissions or at what release level methane leaks will be contained.

The United States government has introduced regulations for the immediate closure of leaks of methane across all fracking wells. There is nothing proposed in this application as to how leaks will be dealt with and enclosed solely to the site. In fact they cannot and there will be an effect on the conservation status of the SSSI.

### Ecology

#### *Birds*

*We counter assert that there will be an effect on birds in the area, not only when they are nesting but flying over. The area has a range of important and rare species of bird and no survey has been done by the company as it was asked to do so. The noise, lights, the smell, and the emissions will have a profound effect on birds as will the air vibrations.*

*The proposed decibel levels of 60 dB for sound have not been tested on bird populations to see if they are quite prepared to stay while breeding with this level of noise in the background. **Evidence of current noise levels on the boundary of the site have not been given as baselines.***

Reptiles and Amphibians

Again, assumptions have been used instead of an actual survey of the rare reptiles in the area which was asked for by the planning officers. Trained naturalists should be brought in to look at the levels and the ditches.

There is considerable concern that with the need for the company to protect groundwater from escaping from the site that in periods of drought the ditch network will start to dry up. This will have a considerable effect on reptiles and amphibians.

Bats

Once more, Island gas has given no evidence of carrying out any *physical* examinations of nearby roof spaces for the presence of bats. They only deal in assertions.

A condition should be placed upon the company that there should be no drilling at night, because to do so would affect the bat population over many miles. They will be driven away.

Transport

This application should not go ahead until all issues have been dealt and agreed with Network Rail and put down in documented form as to the procedures to be followed at the level crossing where there has been a fatality. A heavy wagon being used for the transport of wastewater could become stuck on the crossing for example. The whole matter of regular and emergency procedures have not yet been resolved. These should be made publicly available.

There is little mention of the narrowing of the carriageway section of Springs Road, which is only allowing of one vehicle to pass at a time. It is clear that this needs to be dealt with in by means of traffic lights provided by the company. There is likely to be considerable inconvenience for local residents passing by on this road because of the increase in heavy traffic.

Conclusions

**Bassetlaw against Fracking is of the view that this application has not been fully completed to show that it is acceptable and will not have unacceptable impacts on the environment.**

**The health of village children playing outside in the playing ground is being endangered for nine months by the depletion of air quality and the addition of toxic emissions to it. There are severe risks to the nearby SSSI and its ecology.**

**The transport issues have not been fully addressed at this stage**

**Adverse impacts from the scheme significantly outweigh the benefits and so the scheme does not comply with Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**

**Should this application be approved weekend working and night-time working should be disallowed as it will be stressful enough for this normally peaceful rural community and they should be allowed some break from the drilling activity.**

**submitted by DAVID LARDER Chair: Bassetlaw Against Fracking**