

North Yorkshire Council

Strategic Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 24 April 2026 commencing at 1.00 pm.

Councillor Andy Paraskos in the Chair and Councillors Andy Brown, Caroline Goodrick (as a substitute for Councillor Tom Jones), Hannah Gostlow, Yvonne Peacock, Clive Pearson (as a substitute for Councillor Derek Bastiman), Steve Shaw-Wright (as a substitute for Councillor Bob Packham), Neil Swannick, Roberta Swiers, Andrew Timothy, Arnold Warneken (as a substitute for Councillor John McCartney), and Robert Windass.

Officers present: Catriona Gatrell (Head of Legal Planning, Property and Development), Martin Grainger (Head of Development Management), St John Harris (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Amy Taylor (Principal Planning Officer), Sam Till (Minerals and Waste Technical Advisor) and David Walker (Development Service Manager),

Apologies: Councillors Derek Bastiman (attending instead as a public speaker), John Cattanach, David Hugill, Tom Jones, Andrew Lee, John McCartney and Bob Packham.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

147 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Derek Bastiman (substituted by Councillor Clive Pearson), John Cattanach, David Hugill, Tom Jones (substituted by Councillor Caroline Goodrick), John McCartney (substituted by Councillor Arnold Warneken) and Bob Packham (substituted by Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright).

148 Declarations of interest

The Head of Legal Property, Planning and Environment reminded members that if they had already made public comments about the planning application then they may wish to make a transparency declaration to confirm that they participated in the meeting with an open mind. The Chair confirmed on behalf of the committee that all members had been lobbied on the application.

There were no declarations of interest.

149 **NY/2025/0030/ENV - Construction of a temporary wellsite for the appraisal of gas, including drilling operation, proppant squeeze and flow testing operation and site restoration, land east of the Mill Yard, Burniston Mill, Coastal Road, Burniston, Scarborough, YO13 0DB on behalf of Europa Oil and Gas Limited**

The Head of Development Management – Community Development Services sought determination of a planning application for the construction of a temporary wellsite for the appraisal of gas, including drilling operation, proppant squeeze and flow testing operation and site restoration, land east of the Mill Yard, Burniston Mill, Coastal Road, Burniston, Scarborough, YO13 0DB on behalf of Europa Oil and Gas Limited.

The Development Service Manager, David Walker began by confirming the position in

respect of the communication earlier that week from the government that following third party representations, the Secretary of State was considering whether the proposal should be re-screened because of changes in the planning application since his previous decision taken some months ago that the application did not require an Environmental Statement. Mr Walker reminded the committee that notwithstanding the Secretary of State's previous decision, the applicant had submitted an Environmental Statement in support of the application and that officers continued to regard the contents of the submitted statement to be appropriate in scope and detail. Officers' advice was therefore that should the committee reach a position at the meeting to determine the application, that this be a 'minded to' resolution pending the decision of the Secretary of State. Should the government's decision have a material bearing on the committee's resolution requiring, say, further information from the applicant, then the application would be resubmitted to the committee for determination. Should the government's decision not affect the committee's resolution, then the formal decision of the committee would be issued.

The planning officer then presented the application by first outlining the location of the proposed development and its four phases: site construction; drilling phase; testing and proppant squeeze; and decommissioning and restoration. The planning officer then provided an update to the report since the publication of the agenda in respect of the requirement within the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Legislation (LURA) legislation for planning applications to 'seek to further the purposes' of the National Parks. Members were reminded that the committee report clearly recognised the proximity of the site to the National Park and its setting and treated impacts on the Park as a material consideration throughout the assessment. The North York Moors National Park Authority after consultation on the proposal concluded that the proposal would not lead to unacceptable harm to the statutory purposes of the National Park, nor conflict with Minerals and Waste Joint Plan policies intended to protect the Park and its setting. In assessing the development the planning authority had not relied on the 'no harm' conclusions of the National Park but had actively added conditions which furthered the Park's purposes protecting the visual landscape, protecting dark skies with a sensitive lighting scheme and protection of the Cleveland Way and Cinder Track with minor/negligible impacts. In addition, Biodiversity Net Gain requirements secured a net gain from the development which would be required to be monitored for 30 years, going further than harm avoidance and positively contributing to the area, with the site required to be restored after the three-year period of the development. It was therefore considered the report demonstrated a reasonable proactive approach that satisfied the LURA obligation of seeking to further the statutory purposes of the National Park and in this instance the conditions and requirements of the application mitigated/limited/enhanced the proposal's effects on the National Park's statutory purposes.

Following the update to the report, the planning officer explained the key planning considerations which had shaped the officer recommendation. These considerations covered the full range of environmental, technical, and amenity issues raised by consultees, statutory bodies, interest groups and the public as set out in the report. Finally, the planning officer moved to the report's conclusions and recommendation. It was considered that any potential impacts on the environment could be controlled and addressed through the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and this would ensure that the council could control and monitor the site. The development was supported by the local and national policies which comprised the Development Plan and it was therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

In accordance with public speaking arrangements at planning committee, the following speakers then addressed the committee with their allotted times:

Objecting to the application:

Professor Chris Garforth (Chair of the Steering Group of Frack Free Coastal	5 minutes
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Communities and Katie Atkinson (Planning Consultant)	
Councillor Helen Bore (Newby and Scalby Town Council)	5 minutes
Councillor Karen Fanthorpe (Cloughton Parish Council)	5 minutes
Councillor Richard Parsons (Burniston Parish Council)	5 minutes
Councillor Derek Bastiman (North Yorkshire Council – division councillor)	5 minutes
Councillor Rich Maw (North Yorkshire Council)	5 minutes
Councillor Steve Mason (North Yorkshire Council)	5 minutes

Summary of issues raised:

- Significant concern about risk of induced earthquakes with no site-specific seismic survey or compelling evidence provided to show risks could be managed. Presence of known faults, recent cliff falls, and unstable coastal geology highlighted.
- The proposal constituted hydraulic fracturing under the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan and conflicted with multiple local and national planning policies, including those protecting heritage coasts, the National Park setting, and precautionary principles.
- Regarded as inappropriate industrialisation of a sensitive rural and heritage coast landscape, visible from public rights of way, the coast path, and the North York Moors National Park, harming landscape character.
- Concerns that the application failed to properly assess downstream greenhouse gas emissions, conflicted with UK net zero commitments and North Yorkshire's climate ambitions, and relied on outdated policy assumptions favouring fossil fuel extraction.
- Lack of a Health Impact Assessment despite policy requirements, with concerns about noise, lighting, air pollution, traffic, mental health impacts, and proximity to homes, including vulnerable residents.
- Risks raised regarding groundwater contamination, chemical proppants left underground, proximity to watercourses, and insufficient assessment of impacts on coastal ecosystems.
- Repeated objections to the claim that the development was temporary, arguing it was the first stage of a long-term (20+ year) industrial operation, with equipment retained on site and likely future applications.
- Criticism of a 'salami-slicing' approach in the report, with impacts assessed individually rather than considering the overall cumulative effect on the community and environment.
- Limited or no local economic benefit identified, with claims that energy security benefits were negligible, gas would be sold on global markets, and tourism and local businesses would be harmed.
- Doubts about the applicant's financial capacity to complete restoration, with calls for an independently valued restoration bond to protect the public purse.
- Key assessments (seismic surveys, environmental and health assessments) were missing or proposed post-consent.

In support of the application:

Paul Foster (agent)	5 minutes
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Alastair Stuart (applicant)	5 minutes
Jamie McGill (applicant)	5 minutes
William Holland (applicant)	5 minutes

Summary of issues raised:

- The application was for a single appraisal borehole over around five weeks, followed by testing and full restoration to farmland, with no consent for production or future development.
- Seismicity, subsurface operations and well integrity were regulated by other statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, North Sea Transition Authority) and were not matters for determination under this planning application.
- The proposal was consistent with national and local planning policy, which allowed hydrocarbon appraisal where impacts were assessed and appropriately controlled, with no planning harms outweighing the benefits identified.
- Potential impacts such as noise, traffic, lighting, air quality and visual effects had been assessed and could be effectively managed through planning conditions.
- The site was appropriately located based on geological data, with existing access from the A165 already used by HGVs and natural screening from surrounding topography reducing visual impact.
- Any impacts during drilling (e.g. rig presence, additional vehicle movements, temporary noise) were short-term, time-limited and reversible.
- Members were urged to focus on whether the surface development was acceptable in planning terms, rather than speculation about future phases, which would require separate applications and assessments.
- Evidence and testimonials were provided from the Wressle site in Lincolnshire, where similar operations had resulted in minimal disturbance, effective community relations and local benefits.
- Speakers emphasised regulation, monitoring and enforcement as safeguards, rather than reliance on trust, and committed to transparency and ongoing community engagement.
- The development would support jobs, investment, energy security and reduced reliance on imported liquefied natural gas, with claims it could displace higher-carbon imports.
- This was a proppant squeeze / low volume operation, distinct from high-volume hydraulic fracturing associated with Preston New Road, which led to seismic issues.

Members then proceeded to discuss and ask questions about the officer report and presentations. Questions centred on the following matters:

Geology, fault lines and seismicity - Members sought clarification on the location of fault lines, the extent of geological surveys and the potential for seismic events. Officers advised that while geological and seismic matters were acknowledged in the report, detailed control

and assessment sat primarily with other regulatory regimes. Members were reminded that the planning authority must assume those regimes would operate effectively and that seismic monitoring and controls would be secured through separate consents.

Air quality and emissions - Members asked detailed questions regarding nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, particulates and the potential for odour and fugitive releases. Officers confirmed that the submitted assessments had been reviewed with Environmental Health colleagues and were considered robust. It was explained that detailed air quality monitoring and management arrangements would be secured through pre-commencement planning conditions.

Noise, lighting and amenity - Members queried operational noise levels, 24-hour working during specific phases, light emissions from the rig and flare stack, and the impact on residential amenity and dark skies. Officers confirmed that noise limits, monitoring and management would be controlled by condition, that 24-hour working was operationally necessary for limited phases, and that a lighting scheme would be required and could involve consultation with relevant bodies such as the National Park Authority.

Restoration and duration - Members sought clarification on the programme of works, gaps between phases, and restoration timescales. Officers explained that although the operational phases totalled approximately 37 weeks, the permission allowed flexibility within a maximum three-year period, after which restoration would be required in accordance with approved schemes.

Groundwater and the Environment Agency - Members questioned the Environment Agency's initial objection and its subsequent withdrawal. Officers explained the discussions undertaken, the conditions proposed to address groundwater protection and confirmed that development could not commence unless the required method statements were approved in consultation with the EA.

Public health and other consultees - Members raised concerns regarding public health input and the role of statutory consultees. Officers confirmed that reliance had been placed on responses from relevant expert bodies, particularly Environmental Health, and that health impacts had been considered through the submitted assessments.

Economic considerations - Members queried the scale of employment and economic benefit. Officers advised that the economic benefits were modest and temporary and had been afforded limited weight in the planning balance.

Heritage coast and landscape - Members questioned whether the proposal constituted major development within the Heritage Coast and the weight given to landscape impact, particularly in light of a previous decision by the local planning authority to refuse an application for wind turbines at the same location. Officers confirmed that, while impacts were acknowledged, the development was considered temporary and reversible, and this had informed the recommendation.

During the discussion, it was moved, seconded and approved that any determination by the committee would be by a recorded vote.

Members then turned to reaching a determination of the application. Discussion centred on potential reasons for refusal covering the following six areas:

1. Heritage Coast and landscape harm - Members expressed significant concern that the development constituted major development within the Heritage Coast. Reference was made to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan, with particular emphasis on the requirement to protect the undeveloped and special character of the Heritage Coast. Members gave weight to

the professional assessment of the Council's Landscape Architect, concluding that the scale, height and visibility of the drilling rig and associated infrastructure would result in unacceptable harm which could not be mitigated by the temporary nature of the proposal.

2. Proximity to residential receptors and amenity impact- Members considered the proximity of the site to nearby dwellings and noted that a substantial number of properties lay within 500 metres of the site. Concerns were raised regarding noise, lighting, air quality, vibration, traffic and potential emissions, particularly during extended periods of 24-hour operation. Members concluded that the cumulative impact on residential amenity would be unacceptable.
3. Harm to the setting of the North York Moors National Park - Members highlighted the relationship of the site to the North York Moors National Park and the location of the development within the identified visual sensitivity zone. It was considered that the height and prominence of the rig, flare stack and associated lighting would adversely affect views and the wider setting of the National Park, including its dark skies designation.
4. Impact on tourism and lack of economic gain - Members debated the balance between the limited and temporary economic benefits of the proposal and the potential adverse impact on tourism. It was noted that the local economy was heavily reliant on tourism and that no robust assessment had been provided to demonstrate that economic benefits would outweigh potential harm.
5. Conflict with council climate commitments / sustainability objectives- Members discussed the proposal in the context of national and local climate commitments. Concerns were raised regarding greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane, and it was considered that the application failed to demonstrate that short-term benefits outweighed longer-term climate implications.
6. Seismic risk - Members accepted that seismicity was regulated elsewhere but were not satisfied, given the unpredictability of induced events and the proposed injection volumes, that seismic risk had been reduced to an acceptable level. Therefore reliance on other regulatory regimes was not justified given the uncertainty and expert evidence.

Members then voted to amend the motion before them by removing Reason 6. Seismic risk on the advice of the Head of Legal Property, Planning and Environment that this reason would not be defensible by the local planning authority should the committee's decision be appealed.

Decision:

That the committee be MINDED TO REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons with the final wording to be approved by the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chair and Councillors Brown, Timothy and Warneken.

1. Heritage Coast and landscape harm - The temporary nature of the development does not mitigate the harm from the 37–38m drilling and workover rigs, associated lighting and extended operations. The proposal is therefore incompatible with the special character and conservation objectives of the Heritage Coast and constitutes inappropriate development.

The development is contrary to:

- MWJP Policy D06 (Landscape)
- MWJP Policy M16(d)(ii)
- Scarborough Borough Local Plan Policy ENV7

- NPPF paragraph 191, which states that major development in a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate unless compatible with its special character.
2. Proximity to residential receptors and amenity impact - The prolonged 24 hour operations, illuminated infrastructure, vibration, air quality, HGV traffic, and associated noise and disturbance would cause unacceptable cumulative harm to residential amenity in regard to properties within 500m and to public health, particularly in this rural coastal setting.

The proposal is therefore contrary to:

- MWJP Policy M17(4)(i);
 - MWJP Policy D02;
 - Scarborough Borough Local Plan Policy DEC4;
 - NPPF paragraph 187(e).
3. Harm to the setting of the North York Moors National Park - The height, siting and lighting of the drilling and workover rigs would harm views from and the setting of the National Park and the 3.5km sensitivity zone. The proposal fails to conserve landscape and scenic beauty and has not been sensitively located or designed to minimise adverse impacts.

The proposal is therefore contrary to:

- NPPF paragraph 189, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and their settings;
 - MWJP Policy D06 (Landscape).
 - M16 (D)(i)
4. Impact on tourism and lack of economic gain - The potential economic gains have not been demonstrated to exceed the potential environmental impacts when the potentially negative impact on the tourist industry is accounted for.

The proposal is therefore contrary to:

- M17 impact on local economy
 - Scarborough Borough Local Plan Policy ENV7 (Landscape Protection and Sensitivity),
 - Scarborough Borough Local Plan Policy INF4 (Protection of the Cinder Track and recreational assets),
 - Scarborough Borough Local Plan Policy DEC4 (Protection of Amenity),
 - MWJP Policy D06 (Protecting Landscape Character), and
 - Paragraph 191 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which affords a high level of protection to Heritage Coasts and recognises that major development is unlikely to be appropriate unless compatible with their special character.
5. Conflict with council climate commitments / sustainability objectives - The proposal conflicts with the Council's adopted climate objectives and fails to demonstrate that its short term benefits outweigh the longer term implications for climate mitigation. Contrary to national and local climate commitments. Unquantified risk of greenhouse gases methane and CO₂, NPPF 157 and 163 and Minerals and waste joint plan policy M17.

The proposal is therefore contrary to:

- MWJP Policy D11
- Council Plan 2025–29
- NPPF Section 14 (climate change)
- NPPF 157 and 163

Voting record:

Councillor Andy Paraskos (Chair)	For
Councillor Andy Brown	For
Councillor Caroline Goodrick	For
Councillor Hannah Gostlow	For
Councillor Yvonne Peacock	For
Councillor Clive Pearson	For
Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright	For
Councillor Roberta Swiers	For
Councillor Neil Swannick	For
Councillor Andrew Timothy	For
Councillor Arnold Warneken	For
Councillor Robert Windass	Abstain

150 Any other items

There were no urgent items of business.

151 Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 19 May 2026

The meeting concluded at 5.40 pm.