

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
COMMITTEE****PETITIONS RECEIVED OBJECTING TO THE EXPLORATION FOR AND USE
OF SHALE GAS AND COAL BED METHANE IN BASSETLAW AND
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Council of the decision made at Environment and Sustainability Committee on 2nd April 2015 in respect of the petitions presented to Chairman of the County Council at the Council meeting on 22nd January 2015.

Petitions: opposition to the exploration for and extraction of unconventional hydrocarbons (including shale gas and coal bed methane)

2. Two petitions relating to shale gas fracking and unconventional hydrocarbons were presented to Council on the 22nd January 2015.

The first petition contains 907 signatures and states:

'We call on the local council to reject all shale gas fracking and coal bed methane exploration applications. Look at the strong body of evidence that these are both as yet unproven as safe, and are in fact dangerous to public health and urge those in power to spend money on renewable energies, not short term retrograde procedures. The ignorance of few will cost the health of the many, and for what? Money?'

The second petition contains 915 signatures and states:

'We the undersigned do not wish to see the extraction (or exploratory work to extract) of any fossil fuels by unconventional means in any part of the district of Bassetlaw, North Nottinghamshire. This includes hydraulic fracturing to extract shale gas, the extraction of coal bed methane and the process of underground coal gasification.'

3. Whilst the petitions express concern and opposition to the exploration of unconventional hydrocarbons, the petitions submitted did not make specific reference to either, the emerging Minerals Local Plan or a specific planning application. As such the petitions cannot be formally registered to a planning application or the Minerals Local Plan.
4. Similar issues to those contained in the petitions have been raised through objections to the hydrocarbons policy at the Preferred Approach consultation stage of the Minerals Local Plan and as such these will be considered as part of the Minerals Local Plan process.

5. At Environment and Sustainability Committee on 2nd April 2015, the following response was agreed to be sent to the petition organiser:

“The County Council acknowledges receipt of the petitions, on the 22 January 2015 in relation to the opposition to unconventional hydrocarbon exploration and or extraction in Nottinghamshire. As the minerals planning authority, Nottinghamshire County Council will consider all planning issues in determining any possible future planning applications for shale gas development. The County Council will also be considering unconventional hydrocarbons in its preparation of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan. Members of the public will have the opportunity to comment on any future planning applications and future stages of the preparation of the Minerals Local Plan.”

Other Options Considered

6. The report is for noting only.

Reason for Recommendation

7. To inform Council of the decision of the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 2nd April 2015.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

9. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

10. The production of a Minerals Local Plan and associated documents is a statutory requirement.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Council note the decision made at Environment and Sustainability Committee on 2nd April 2015.

Jayne Francis-Ward

Corporate Director, Policy, Planning and Corporate Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Lisa Bell, Planning Policy Team Manager, 01159 774547

Constitutional Comments

11. Because this report is for noting only no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan Preferred Approach (October 2013);

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All