

Planning

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Contact: Cameron Clarke Alonso

Our ref: NY/2025/0017/SCR

5 February 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2017: REGULATION 6 (Screening request)

Request for a formal Screening Opinion for the construction of a temporary well site, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment at land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield, YO25 3HY on behalf of Egdon Resources UK Limited.

I refer to your request dated 20 January 2025 in connection with the above proposal. In accordance with the above regulations North Yorkshire Council is required to adopt a Screening Opinion to establish whether the above development should be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

The development has been considered on its own merits and on the basis of what is being proposed by Egdon Resources UK Limited. The proposed development **is not** listed in Schedule 1 of the above Regulations. With regard to Schedule 2 of the above Regulations the Council is of the opinion that the proposed development falls within the description provided within Schedule 2 **category 2d and 2e** of the above Regulations. Having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 of the above Regulations the characteristics of the proposed development, the environmental sensitivity of the location; and the types and characteristics of the potential impact have been assessed and based on the scale, nature and location of the development it is considered that the proposed request for a formal Screening Opinion for the construction of a temporary wellsite, operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment at land north of Butt Lane, Foxholes, Driffield, YO25 3HY **WOULD NOT** have significant impacts upon the environment. Further details are provided in the attached 'Screening Opinion Checklist'.

Under the powers delegated to the Head of Planning Services, this letter therefore confirms that the Council is of the opinion that the proposed development is **not EIA development** and **need not** be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Should you amend any aspect of the proposed scheme, then a new screening opinion will be required. If you have any queries arising from the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Cameron Clarke Alonso

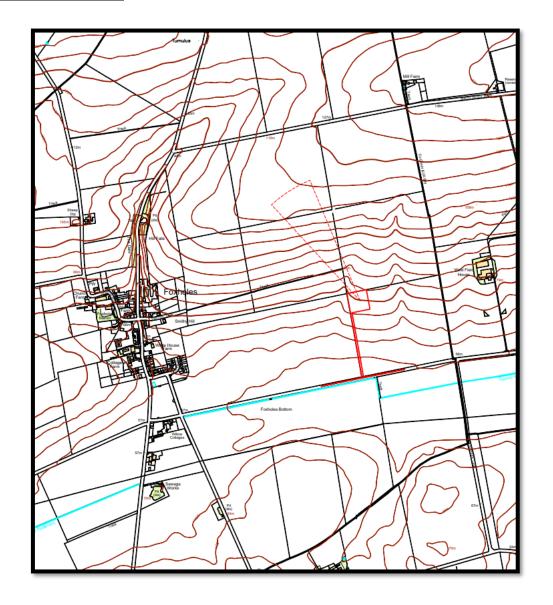
Planning Officer

Screening Opinion Checklist

PART 1: Details of proposed development

NY Ref: NY/2025/0017/SCR	Case Officer: Cameron Clarke Alonso		Date: 20 January 2025	
Site Location: Land north of Butt L	Site Location: Land north of Butt Lane,		Description of proposed development: Request for a formal	
Foxholes, Driffield, YO25 3HY		Screening Opinion for the conwellsite, operation of a drilling subsurface hydrocarbons, test equipment	rig for the exploration of	
Site Area/Floor Space: Slightly about	ove 1 hectare			

Application Site Plan



PART 2: Is a Screening Opinion required?

(Click here to view NPPG Screening Flowchart)

		Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017	Yes	No
		Do you have sufficient information to define the size and type of development (a plan, description of type/nature/purpose and possible environmental effects)?*		
1	Detail of development (See: Development covered by the regulations)	NO - either take the precautionary principle and assume the worst case or, request more information confirming 30 day deadline will not commence until received;	X	
		*Note - development as changed or extended may also need an EIA (Schedule 2, category 13)		
2	Is it Schedule 1 development?	YES – The development is listed in Schedule 1 category EIA mandatory (Screening Opinion not required and no need to complete Part 3 (items 1-5) (Schedule 3- not applicable)		Х
develop	чолориюн.	•NO -If the development is not listed in Schedule 1 it may be listed in Schedule 2 (proceed to step 3)		
3	Is it Schedule 2 development? (Schedule 2, Column 1) (See: Interpretation of	• YES - The development falls/could fall within category 2: Extractive industry (d) Deep drillings and 2 (e) Surface industrial installations for the extraction of coal, petroleum, natural gas and ores, as well as bituminous shale. (proceed to step 4)	X	
	project categories)	• NO – If the development is not listed in Schedule 2 it is outside the scope of the Regulations and a screening opinion is not required and EIA not required.		
		The threshold/criteria is/are category 2d (i) and 2e) 2d (i) – In relation to any type of drilling, the area of the works exceeds 1 hectare.		
4	4(a) Does the development exceed the applicable	2e – The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares.	X	
· •	threshold/criteria? (Schedule 2, Column 2)	• YES - in this case the proposal does exceed the applicable threshold/criteria as the area of the site is above 1 hectare.	^	
		NO – in this case the proposal does not exceed the applicable threshold/criteria		

	4(b) Is the development located in, or partly in, a 'sensitive area' as defined by Reg 2(1) of EIA Regs 2017? (e.g. SSSI, Nat Park, AONB, SAC, RAMSAR, Scheduled Monument)	NO - The development is not within a SSSI but is within the Risk Impact Zone for a SSSI.		х
5	If yes to 4(a) which applicable threshold criteria Does the development fall within the indicative thresholds/criteria? (see Annex: Indicative thresholds, NPPG)	The indicative thresholds/criteria are: 2 (d) - Drilling operations involving development of a surface site of more than five hectares. [Exploratory deep drilling on its own is unlikely to require Environmental Impact Assessment] 2 (e) - Development of a site of 10 hectares or more or where production is expected to be more than 100,000 tonnes of petroleum per year. Key issues to consider (as per PPG) are: 2 (d) Regards should be had to the likely wider impacts on surrounding hydrology and ecology. 2 (e) Scale of development, emissions to air, discharges to water, the risk of accident and the arrangements for transporting the fuel.		X
6	Conclusion	 If you have answered 'YES' to (2) it is Sch 1 development and an Environment Statement is required in every case therefore screening not required and there is no need to complete Part 3 (items 1-5) (Schedule 3- not applicable)— proceed to Part 3 (item 6) If you have answered 'YES' to the threshold/criteria (4a) a screening opinion is required — proceed to Part 3 If you have answered 'NO' to the threshold/criteria (4a) and the development is located in, or partly in, a sensitive area (4b) a screening opinion is required — proceed to Part 3 If you have answered 'NO' to the threshold/criteria (4a) and the development is not located in or partly in, a sensitive area (4b) it is not 'Schedule 2 development' - screening opinion not required. Screening opinion required? Yes 	X	
7	LPA/SOS Screening	Has the SoS issued a screening direction		X
8	-	If yes is the SO/SD positive an ES for the current or previous app		N/A X

PART 3: Is EIA required?

Category	Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons	(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?
		(Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A) Briefly explain answer to Part 2a and, if applicable and/or known, include name of feature and proximity to site (If answer in Part 2a / 2b is 'No', the answer to Part 3a / 3b is 'N/A')	(Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A) Is a significant effect likely, having regard particularly to the magnitude and spatial extent (including population size affected), nature, intensity and complexity, probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact and the possibility to effectively reduce the impact? If the finding of no significant effect is reliant on specific features or measures of the project envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment these should be identified in bold.
Natural Resources	1.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	The proposed development land is within land identified as agricultural land, which through the operation and development of the site would undergo changes that would affect the topography of the site for a period of 3 years.	No – The proposed development is time limited and once the 3 years of works is complete the site would be restored back to agricultural land, which could be controlled via condition.

	1.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes – The current use of the site is agricultural land, which is classified as having an Agricultural Land Classification of grade 2. The proposal should therefore include details of proposed stripping, storage and management in order to maintain the soils for use in restoration. The proposal is for the exploration of conventional hydrocarbons, which would involve the extraction of gas which is a non-renewable resource.	No – Although the proposed development would have a significant impact on the grade 2 agricultural land (very good quality), it is for a period of 3 years and it is considered that it can be mitigated through conditions and restoration. Therefore, detailed soil assessments would be required to verify the current quality of the soils. The requirement of restoration is considered to be able to be appropriately controlled through the use of conditions. In terms of the extracted gas, although gas is a non-renewable resource, the proposed development would only extract sufficient gas to confirm its existence at the location and to assess the sites viability.
	1.3 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Yes – The land of the proposed site is classified as Agricultural Land grade 2. The agricultural land would be removed for a period of 3 years.	No - Although the proposed development would have a significant impact on the agricultural land, it is for a period of 3 years and it is considered that it can be mitigated through conditioning and restoration.
Waste	2.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes - It is considered that a small amount of waste would be produced during the construction phase and a larger quantity during the restoration phase when materials which have been used to form the hardstanding etc are removed from site.	No – It is unlikely that there would be a significant effect as it is expected that any waste generated from the construction and decommissioning phase with any waste transported off site for disposal at an appropriately permitted site which would be controlled through planning conditions.

Pollution and Nuisances	3.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No – the proposed development would not release any substances into the air. The operations would be controlled by the relevant permits.	N/A
	3.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes- the proposal would produce noise, especially during the construction phase where soil stripping and the laying of the hardstanding would occur as well as the installation of the required equipment. There are likely to be impacts as a result of the traffic attending site throughout the operation. There could also be impacts in terms of landscape and visual impact through lighting and dust. Lighting would be required during the operational phase, including the drilling phase which would require 24-hour light during the expected three-week drilling operation. In addition, further lighting at night would be required for flow testing with a limit of 96 hours under NSTA requirements. Lastly vibration would be present throughout the operational drilling phase.	No - there is potential for an impact in relation to noise, traffic, lighting, air quality and vibration which would need to be mitigated by a noise, lighting and travel assessments. There is potential for vibration during the drilling of the exploratory borehole, but this is not expected to be significant at the appraisal stage. The planning application should be accompanied by the appropriate technical assessments and management plans to ensure the issues are addressed appropriately and conditioned as part of the planning process.

cor rele gro	Will the project lead to risks of ntamination of land or water from eases of pollutants onto the bund or into surface waters, bundwater, coastal waters or the a?	Yes- The project could lead to contamination during drilling operations as the site is located on the Chalk Principal aquifer. Aside from this the proposed development would be designed and constructed with an impermeable membrane installed as a tertiary containment. This would provide mitigation against the risk of any materials permeating into sub-surface soils or ground water. The proposal has no plans to discharge water from the site area.	No- It is not considered that a significant effect would be caused as a result of the proposed drilling operations, protection of the site and the aquifer would be controlled through conditions, working practices and environmental regulations.
the sub dar env	Are there any areas on or around e location which are already bject to pollution or environmental mage, e.g. where existing legal vironmental standards are ceeded, which could be affected the project?	No	N/A

Population and Human Health	4.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Yes - Although the site would extract hydrocarbons as this is an exploratory well it would be below the thresholds, therefore not considered to have the potential to create any major risk. Access to the site through the use of HGV's would commence via the A64 to B1249 and then Butt Lane, the increased traffic as a result of the proposal during the three-year period could potentially increase the impact of accident risk, however this is considered to be low. The maximum number of HGV a day would not exceed 6 HGVs on a two way trip during the entire operation of the site, with the highest number occurring during the sites suspension and area reduction. The total number of vehicle trips would occur no more than 27 weeks as the development is temporary (3 years).	No – Although the proposed development and its effects are temporary in nature, temporary in nature, temporary in nature, the forthcoming planning application would be accompanied by a transport assessment which would consider the impact of the Proposed Development on the local highway network.
	4.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	Yes – The nearest residential properties are West Field House, approximately 620m to the east and properties in Eastfield, Foxholes (920m). Impacts could arise from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development as well as the movement of HGVs.	No – It is considered that impact could be minimised through the use of conditions would safeguard the potential risks associated with noise, dust and water contamination, in place to protects against the risks to human health.

Water Resources	5.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes – Although the site itself is not within a designated flood zone, the site is sloped from north to south. The field directly south of the site, beyond Butt Lane, features a watercourse (Gypsey Lane) falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3, indicating a medium to high probability of flooding. Additionally, the entrance to the proposed site is classified as having a 1 in 100 chance of surface water flooding. The aquifer below is not believed to be affected in volume during operations	No – There is potential for the site to contribute to flood risk in the area; however, this is considered manageable through conditions and good design, such as the proposed plan, which includes an impermeable membrane as tertiary containment.
Biodiversity (Species and Habitats)	6.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))).	Yes – The site is located in open agricultural land with no ecological designations within the site itself, however there is a minor watercourse (Gypsey Lane) which could potentially be affected by the proposal. Aside from this the site lies 3 km to the southwest of the Fordon Chalk Grasslands.	No - There are no designations within the site and the proposed development is limited to a 3-year period and would be restored back to agricultural land. It is not considered that there would be a significant impact on biodiversity and through the use of appropriate mitigation during construction and operation, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would give rise to significant effects on ecology and biodiversity. An Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment would be required as part of the planning application. The BNG would include mitigation and ensure that 10% net gain is achieved with appropriate on and off site mitigation and alleviation.

	6.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Yes - The site consists of an agricultural field adjacent to a minor watercourse, which could show signs of species that might use the area for breeding, nesting, etc	No - Significant effects from the proposed development are considered unlikely. The proposal primarily involves the use of an agricultural field with relatively low ecological value. A planning application would need to be supported by a full Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, including mitigation measures. The BNG assessment would ensure a 10% net gain is achieved through appropriate on-site and off-site mitigation With appropriate mitigation measures conditioned during construction and operation, the proposed development is not expected to have significant effects on ecology and biodiversity.
Landscape and Visual	7.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project? 1 Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes - The Site does not fall within an area designated either nationally or locally for its landscape value. However, the Site is located 900m to the south of the proposed boundary of the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (formerly Area's of Outstanding Natural Beauty).	No – Although the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) has not yet been confirmed the proposal would be temporary in nature, due to its proximity to it, it is considered that the landscape is distinctive and likely to be sensitive. Therefore, a planning application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Through the use of appropriate mitigation including screening of the proposed site, conditioned during construction and operation, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would give rise to significant effects on landscape and visual impact.

7.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)

Yes – The site is located in open agricultural land with the drilling rig standing as the tallest structure on the site, measuring 38 metres in height.

In terms of visibility the proposal is approximately 850m to the east of the village of Foxholes and 2 km to the west of Wold Newton, with the nearest residential property of West Field House, 620m to the east. Although the site is far in between these areas, the drilling rig would be easy to see from any direction.

The development would also be highly visible to users driving along Butt Lane and the two roads connecting to Foxholes, which are the B1249 and Octon Grange Lane.

No - The proposal involves constructing a 38-metre-tall drill on a relatively flat field, which, if permanent, would have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape. However, the entire operation, from the start of drilling to the demobilization of the flow testing, would be temporary, lasting nine months within the three-year permission period. The site would then be either suspended or restored after the operation/testing phase. The drill itself would be in place for a maximum of six weeks—one week for construction, four weeks for operation, and one week for dismantling.

Overall, given that the drill would be in place for a maximum of six weeks, the development's impact on landscape and visibility would be limited

Cultural, Heritage Archaeology	8.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	No – The nearest feature of historic importance is the grade II listed Church of St Mary 2 km from the site within the village of Foxholes. A pre-application with written advice was issued on the 15th October 2024, which included the NYC Principal Archaeologist's comments. These are: 'The proposed site is within a prehistoric landscape. Most of the archaeological sites in this landscape are known from marks in the ripening crops. Weaving either side of Butt Lane is a later prehistoric or Roman trackway flanked by drainage ditches. Either side of this trackway are square and rectangular enclosures which are likely to have hosted settlement. The landscape is also peppered with small circular burial mounds, two of which lay adjacent to the proposed access road. Although these remains are now ploughed flat the archaeological deposits are of significance and can include human remains.'	No – In terms of the impacts caused to the nearest listed building, it is considered that the distance and temporary nature of the application would not significantly impact its setting. Taking into account the consultees comments, no significant impact are expected to arise provided that the following recommendations are carried out: The proposal should properly be assessed for its impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest. It should firstly take the form of a desk-based assessment which summarises existing knowledge. The desk-based assessment should also consider the impact of the proposal on the setting of heritage assets. In addition to this it is recommended that an archaeological field evaluation takes place. This should include a geophysical survey and trial trenching to properly establish the significance of the archaeological resource and the impact of the proposal upon it. If any features of importance are discovered further assessment can be controlled through conditions and working practices.
Transport and Access	9.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	No – The SusTrans national cycle route is over 500m from the proposed development and the nearest public footpath is over 1000m from the proposed development.	N/A

	9.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – All HGVs would travel to and from the site via the A64 and the B1249 before making their way to Butt Lane. The increased traffic as a result of the proposal during the three-year period could potentially affect congestion. In the pre application stage the Highway Authority stated that the application should include a transport statement assessing trip generation, construction traffic routes, and potential highway works. In addition, improvements to passing places on Butt Lane may be necessary with the junction of Butt Lane and the B1249 may require visibility enhancements or temporary traffic management to ensure safe access.	No – Although the proposed development and its effects are temporary in nature, the forthcoming planning application would be accompanied by a transport assessment which would consider the impact of the Proposed Development on the local highway network and any improvements that may be required. This would be enforced through conditions.
Land Use	10.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	Yes - The site lies within a rural area and there would be a loss of agricultural land where the proposed development would be located for the proposed 3 year period.	No – a significant effect is not considered likely, through the use of Biodiversity Net Gain regulations it would be ensured that a study of the land is carried out to calculate its value and ensure that 10% net gain is achieved. There may be some impacts from the construction, drilling and restoration phases in terms of noise and dust and vehicle movements which could be managed through the implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) secured by condition and other conditions to limit the impact on residential amenity.

	10.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No – Through a search of the online search of the online planning register of North Yorkshire Council it appears that there are no plans for future land uses on land near the location which could be affected by the proposed development.	N/A
Land Stability and Climate	11.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No - there are no known threats to the site location.	N/A
Cumulative Effects	12.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase?	Yes - The primary impact that could result in the cumulation of impacts during the construction/operation phase of the proposed development would be the increase in vehicle movements within the area.	No - It is not considered that a significant impact would arise as a result. It is acknowledged that any effects that may arise could be largely mitigated through the use of conditions including the requirement for a transport assessment and Construction Environmental Management Plan.
Transbound ary Effects	13.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	Yes - the Site is located 900m to the south of the proposed boundary of the proposed Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape (Formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	Yes - The impact of the proposal within 900m would need to be addressed in a Landscape and Visual Assessment Mitigation could be provided through screening, which could be secured by condition. However, the screening would not fully conceal the 38 metre tall drilling rig. Nonetheless, due to the temporary nature of the development, this is not considered to have a significant effect

Conclusion	The proposal falls within category 2 (d) and 2 (e) of Schedule 2 as described in the regulations. The foregoing consideration of potential significant impacts on nearby receptors is sufficient to suggest that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. Given the location, size, and temporary nature of the development, it is clear that any issues can be addressed and mitigated through the use of tailored conditions It is considered that the likely impacts identified for the proposed development which includes the construction of a temporary well site operation of a drilling rig for the exploration of subsurface hydrocarbons, testing and retention of the equipment at land north of Butt				
	Lane does not warrant the preparation of a formal Environmental Statement. Yes No				
	Lane does not warrant the preparation of a formal Environmental Statement.				

The determination and full reasons must be made available to the public via the Council's Online Planning Register and Area Office's Planning Register.