

Joint statement from - Cllr. Richard Parsons – Chair, Burniston Parish Council and Cllr. Derek Bastiman – North Yorkshire Council, Divisional member for Scalby and the Coast.

Councillors Call for Urgent action from North Yorkshire Council.

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 and the Government's published reform document for the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Dec 2025

On the 16th December 2025 the Government published a document outlining intended key changes to planning policy, to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Changes to the policy are of direct and significant relevance to Europa Oil and Gas Ltd.'s above application for planning permission.

The draft NPPF sets out “a more restrictive approach to the extraction of coal, oil and gas”. Of particular significance, is policy M3. As per p65 of the Consultation document, this stipulates that the **“great weight” to the benefits of mineral extraction...does not apply to development involving peat, coal, or onshore oil and gas extraction. This represents a policy change for oil and gas (i.e. the policy no longer provides that “great weight” should be given to the benefits of oil and gas extraction).**

The draft NPPF is clear that the reason for this change is the Government's position on the adverse climate impacts of fossil fuels: stating -**“We are proposing this change in recognition of the need to transition away from using fossil fuels in order to reduce climate change impacts.**

The closing date for consultation is March 10th 2026. After which it is clear that the Government will publish an updated NPPF which will guide Planning Authorities in their decision making.

In the above planning application Europa Oil and Gas Ltd rely heavily on the “great weight” position as the main part of their application. This is currently a system tilted towards approval, making it harder to refuse fossil fuel projects and easier for the Planning Authorities to reduce the value of objections. The Government NPPF reforms will mean that equal value should be given to all submitted material.

Legal advice already obtained is clear, these changes must be taken into account, this planning hearing must not be rushed.

As the end of this consultation is so close and the likelihood is that the updated NPPF will remove the “Great Weight” factor, we urge North Yorkshire Council not to rush into a planning committee hearing, which may be pushed into making a decision that the updated NPPF will not support. Wait a short time until the updated NPPF is available to take an impartial decision on this matter. Wait until everybody, whatever their position on the planning application is, understands fully what is required. A short delay enables North Yorkshire Council to make its decision on a sound legal footing, which is open and transparent, knowing they have acted on, up to date guidance from the NPPF and in the best interests of everyone.

Signed –

Cllr. Richard Parsons

Cllr. Derek Bastiman