

Planning Application ref NY/2025/0030/ENV

Response to Letter from Friends of the Earth, dated 18th December 2025

The letter from the Friends of the Earth (FoE) refers to a number of proposed changes to the December 2024 version of the NPPF. It asks NYC to delay consideration of the above application until the NPPF is updated.

Europa Oil and Gas (EOG) agrees with FoE in that NYC should take account of the publication of the draft NPPF in the determination of the application. Both the publication of the new draft NPPF and the direction of travel proposed by the Government is a material consideration which should be given weight in the determination any planning application where it is relevant. However, the details of the proposed changes may change when the consultation responses have been considered by Government. As a result, any decision-maker should be careful in not relying upon specific changes proposed in a draft document.

For the most part, FoE have applied a highly biased and nuanced perspective to their interpretation of draft NPPF. By way of example, FoE has failed to even acknowledge policy S5. This gives decision-makers a clear presumption in favour of approving development proposals for mineral extraction outside settlements unless the benefits would be **substantially outweighed** by any adverse effects. It is apparent from the formal consultation responses and the absence of objections from statutory consultees that there are very few adverse effects associated with the proposed development at Burniston, and none that outweigh the benefits.

FoE point to policy M3 as being of particular significance. It claims that removing “great weight” to the benefits of onshore oil and gas “will fundamentally change the planning balance for Europa’s application.” In practice, however, the planning balance remains firmly in favour of granting planning permission because:

- Policy M5 specifically enables decision-makers to approve development which facilitates the appraisal of gas within licensed areas;
- Conventional and unconventional gas remains a mineral of national and local importance which is necessary to meet society’s needs; and
- Policy S5 requires decisions to be in favour of sustainable development, including all forms of mineral extraction.

There is no justification for delaying this planning application until the final version of the NPPF is published. The range and scope of the changes proposed is significant, demonstrated by the 225 questions which consultees are invited to respond to by Government. The reasonable expectation is that it is likely to take some time for Government to consider and take account of the consultation responses. When considering proposals, local planning authorities should issue timely decisions. The draft NPPF is not a reason to delay decision-making; after all, one of the main reasons for the Government making these policy changes is to support the commercial development needed to drive growth.

In summary, it is clear that the draft NPPF is not a reason to delay the determination of the application. The planning balance remains firmly in favour of granting planning permission for this development.

Europa Oil and Gas

5th January 2026