

## Fracking Engagement Top Tips

It is CPRE Lancashire's belief that if shale gas and oil development is permitted, operations ought to have minimal impact on rural landscapes, avoid unsustainable use of natural resources and pollution, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions. Above all, it must be carried out with an acceptable degree of risk.

This top tips document highlights key issues from CPRE Lancashire's experience of hydraulic fracturing, or 'fracking', for shale gas due to recent planning applications by Cuadrilla to frack in its area. It is relevant to both shale gas and oil development. It should be read in conjunction with CPRE's [Fracking Explained](#), [Shale Gas Policy Guidance Note](#), and our [national asks on shale gas and oil](#), which include calls for a robust and transparent regulatory regime.

The Lancashire Branch's work in this area has so far included:

- [Influencing the Government's Infrastructure Act 2015](#) (via national office);
- Responding to [Public Health England's consultation on its review of Shale Gas Extraction](#);
- Responding to [Lancashire County Council's Planning Policy on Shale Oil & Gas consultation](#);
- Responding to [the Environment Agency's draft environmental permit consultations at two proposed exploration sites](#);
- Responding to [Lancashire County Council concerning planning applications by Cuadrilla to monitor, drill wells and frack gas as part of an exploratory stage](#); and,
- Liaising with stakeholders - local residents, environmental organisations, Government departments/regulators (including Water UK, the Department of Energy & Climate Change and the Oil & Gas Authority) and operators.

### Climate Change

In keeping with the Climate Change Act 2008, CPRE Lancashire supports reduced energy demand, and a transition from fossil fuels to cleaner renewable energy sources. It accepts that, in the short-term, shale gas could have a transitional energy role (as it emits less carbon dioxide per unit of energy generated than coal); however, it is sceptical that any shale gas infrastructure will be abandoned at the end of a safe transition period, and it fears the cheap coal substituted in the UK by shale gas will be burned elsewhere. We will keep this issue under review.

### Advice on Key Regulatory Issues

CPRE is calling for a unified and adequate regulatory regime to implement in full the recommendations of the [Joint Report of the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering](#). However, while this Report is a key document on shale gas hydraulic fracturing, which has been accepted by both government and industry, it is not a statutory instrument, or even a material consideration in the context of planning applications. Regulation remains an outstanding issue; the industry wishes to self-report to diverse independent regulators (namely the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and the Oil and Gas Authority), and CPRE Lancashire's solution is for statutory regulation administered by a single regulatory authority.

Where possible Branches should engage in pre-application consultation. It is crucial that Branches ensure that each planning application for a shale gas or oil well pad and associated monitoring is subject to a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Risk

Assessment (ERA). The EIA and RA will evidence whether sites are appropriate or not for fracking, and will identify what impacts can be avoided, reduced or mitigated.

Branches should oppose shale gas or oil developments in or under protected areas, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and environmental designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Proposals in the Green Belt must not harm the purposes of the Green Belt or reduce its openness.

Branches should advocate the use of previously developed land (brownfield) rather than greenfield sites, including farmland, being bulldozed for shale gas or oil developments.

Branches should oppose sites that lack direct access to the strategic road network. In the case of Roseacre Wood, CPRE Lancashire suggested Cuadrilla enter an agreement with the MOD to utilise its land to create a better route for HGV movements, thereby halving the HGV truck movements along unsuitable narrow lanes.

Branches should try to successfully convince the developer to improve the screening of the sites (higher hedgerows, more tree and shrubs planted, use of a smaller rig painted in a dull grey rather than brilliant white) to minimise the visual impact of the landscape. CPRE Lancashire was successful in achieving this at two proposed fracking sites.

Branches should recommend the use of planning conditions. For example, see the [0096 letter](#) for Preston New Road recommending 22 planning conditions; 7 lessen surface impacts (noise and light pollution, limit traffic and avoid water contamination and site restoration); 10 are focused on underground activity (**a key condition limits exploration to specific very deep target formations**); and 5 relate to local community benefit and minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions.

Branches should call for real-time monitoring of the penetration of fracking fluid to ensure it stays within the target shale horizon, and stringent standards on fugitive methane emissions. This is essential to ensure shale gas or oil hydraulic fracturing is undertaken safely, and that at all stages, the handling of natural gas is exemplary.

Branches must specify a condition for decommissioning wells and monitoring boreholes – including an upfront financial guarantee – to ensure full restoration of the land both physically, and original land use designation to prevent the long-term industrialisation of rural places.

#### Advice for Stakeholder Engagement and Media

Undoubtedly fracking is a controversial topic; some people are vociferously opposed, others rather more quietly in favour. Many local residents and environmental organisations base their opposition on the climate change consequences and the potential for environmental pollution and associated adverse impacts on health, residential amenity and on property prices. Those who are pro-shale point to the potential advantages of job creation, economic development, supply chain benefits and the potential for farm diversification in a time of depressed food prices. CPRE Lancashire listens to all concerns and carefully considers the available evidence.

It is important that Branches consider each application in the context of their local environment and make the decision whether to support with conditions or to object.

Branches should issue press releases at key points in the planning process and keep their website up-to-date so that supporters and the wider public stay informed of CPRE's role. However, this can be a challenge in what can be a fast-moving area of work.

More detailed information can be found at: [www.cprelancashire.org.uk/campaigns/energy-and-waste/shale-gas](http://www.cprelancashire.org.uk/campaigns/energy-and-waste/shale-gas)

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