

# LOCAL DEMOCRACY **AND** YOU

How will the government's new proposals on fracking affect local democracy in Yorkshire?

Why is an exploratory fracking well like a garden shed?

What will happen to our countryside if fracking becomes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?

Find out the answers overleaf – and then come along to one of these free **public talks** to find out how you can respond to the government's consultations and how to raise this issue with your councillors.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 7.00 pm**

**HOVINGHAM VILLAGE HALL**

**Main Street, Hovingham YO62 4LF**

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 7.30 pm**

**GILLING EAST VILLAGE HALL**

**Pottergate, Gilling East YO62 4JJ**

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September 7.30 pm**

**AMPLEFORTH VILLAGE HALL**

**West End, Ampleforth YO62 4DU**

**Tea, coffee and cakes served at every venue!**



## When is an exploratory fracking well like a garden shed?

**Permitted Development** is the part of the UK planning system which allows people to carry out low-impact improvements on their property without having to apply for planning permission. It was introduced to allow people to make modest improvements to their homes (such as a loft conversion, building a conservatory or putting up a garden shed) without having to apply to the local council for planning permission.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May the government issued a Written Ministerial Statement proposing that non-hydraulic exploratory drilling for shale gas (which is the first step in establishing a full-scale fracking industry in the area) should also be classed as Permitted Development. This would mean that a large exploratory well pad – along with a huge drilling rig, large numbers of HGV movements and increased noise and air pollution for local residents – would only need permission from the landowner, and **fracking companies would not have to apply for planning permission from the local planning authority.**

## What is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?

The Written Ministerial Statement also proposes that full-scale industrial fracking becomes a **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)**, like HS2 or the motorway network. **This would mean that full-scale commercial production of shale gas would not be decided by democratically elected local councils.** It would instead be imposed on communities by the Secretary of State in Westminster and the government-appointed Planning Inspectorate – and could involve compulsory land purchases. After an initial consultation, local people and our democratically elected local councils would have no say in what happens to their countryside.

## The House of Commons Select Committee has got it right!

Following the Written Ministerial Statement, the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee issued its own report entitled 'Planning Guidance on Fracking'. The report concluded: "***Shale gas development of any type should not be classed as a permitted development. Given the contentious nature of fracking, local communities should be able to have a say in whether this type of development takes place, particularly as concerns about the construction, locations and cumulative impact of drill pads are yet to be assuaged by the Government.***" On NSIP, the Select Committee was equally forthright, saying: "***Fracking planning applications should not be brought under the NSIP regime,***" and that "... such a move is likely to exacerbate existing mistrust between local communities and the fracking industry."

**Please come along to one of the talks overleaf to find out more about the government's proposals to override local democracy and impose fracking on local communities – and how you can help prevent this from happening.**

**IT'S YOUR COUNTRYSIDE – HAVE YOUR SAY!**