

**A planning application by Infrastrata plc has been submitted to Dorset County Council to drill a new exploratory well at California Quarry just south of Swanage.**

**This application is not to extract shale gas using fracking but, if successful, it will mean that Dorset's energy production will continue to focus on fossil fuels. This will increase our carbon emissions. The UK government is legally obligated to reduce its carbon emissions by 80% by 2050.**

**We hope you will join us in objecting to this application by following the guide below.**

Go to the council website at

<http://countyplanning.dorsetforyou.com/ePlanningOPS/loadFullDetails.do?apId=5152>

click on

[Online Representation Form](#)

Please use your own words to express your particular concerns.

Please find below some points that you may wish to refer to.

You may wish to read some other representations (objections) by scrolling down and clicking on

[Documents](#).

If you are having problems or if you have additional useful information please e-mail back or ring 01305 250123.

### **Climate Change**

The County Council has an obligation to consider the sustainability of all planning applications and this application does not represent a sustainable option. In May 2013, the Committee on Climate Change said it is vital to ensure we have established a low carbon energy sector by 2030. Continuing to pursue the extraction of fossil fuels in Dorset by passing this application will mean Dorset will not be contributing to this national aim but, instead, supporting an unsustainable energy source that will degrade the environment and increase global warming.

### **Long Term Energy Security**

County policies including the *Minerals Strategy* imply that, where available, the more sustainable alternative should be given preference.

Looking to renewables and to energy efficiency will give long term energy security. Dorset is well placed to exploit the energy of sun, wind and sea. Squeezing the last drops of hydrocarbons from Dorset's rocks is a very temporary fix that draws the focus and investment away from the transition to a low carbon economy.

### **Protected Areas**

The proposed well site is immediately adjacent to the AoNB, SSSI and National Nature Reserve and 500m from the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The drilling will be horizontal onshore to offshore, taking it under the Marine Research Area.

### **Durlston Country Park**

Durlston Country Park is immediately adjacent to the site. It is owned and managed by Dorset County Council. DCC have just completed a multimillion pound project, converting the castle to explanatory

centre/ restaurant etc. Adjacent industrialisation can only have a negative impact on this investment and resource.

The submission (7.9) accepts that nature reserve visitors will 'gain localised glimpsed views of the site'. They argue that because of the proximity to the coast 'users are likely to focus their attention away from the site'. (!)

### **The Thin End of the Wedge?**

This is an exploratory well with a lifetime of about 1 year. Further application would have to be made to extract oil/gas on a commercial scale. However, once a precedent has been set at this sensitive site, further applications are more likely to be approved. The production phase would involve much greater industrialisation and could be continuous for a long period. (Wytch Farm has just been extended to 2037)

In 1989 BP found oil at the adjacent Southard Quarry 1, so this is not a speculative exploration. At that time BP did not proceed to production, presumably because it was not economical to extract this difficult to access oil.

Current technology is becoming progressively more intensive, involving horizontal drilling and well stimulation (a form of hydraulic fracturing used to access the last pockets of oil/gas in conventional oil wells, as at Wytch Farm.)

### **Why no Environmental Impact Assessment?**

There is no absolute requirement for an EIA for a temporary application of this nature.

Infrastrata estimates the activity will last 49 weeks but is asking for a 3 year window. This represents a significant period of disturbance caused even by this initial exploratory phase.

In such a sensitive area it would seem reasonable to carry out an EIA.

### **Local (and not so local!) Hazards relating to the Site**

- **Water** : There is concern about contamination of ground water if the wellbore is not completely sealed off from the aquifer and remain so long after the well is plugged and abandoned. Wessex Water (see letter in Documents section of planning webpage) have some concerns about 'the proposal's potential to contaminate groundwater'. They are asking for 'robust risk assessments'.
- **Traffic**: the application estimates 800 additional HGV movements through the overcrowded streets and summer bottlenecks of Swanage and Corfe Castle during this development. Increased risk of accidents and hazardous spills. Negative impact on tourism. Fumes.
- **Air Pollution**: the application states that at certain stages, the natural gas that is found will be vented and when sufficient flared. This will produce significant air pollution affecting people and wildlife in this environmentally sensitive area. It also involves a direct release of greenhouse gases, including methane.
- **Soil**: Locally soil can be contaminated with chemicals and drilling waste from leaks, spills and run-off. Flash flooding is an increasing hazard in Dorset as weather patterns have shown in recent years. Protective measures may not necessarily be sufficient.
- **Noise and Light**: The background noise has been monitored. Traffic, drilling and production testing would represent a significant increase, with people and wildlife affected.