

I object to planning application WSCC/045/20 for the following reasons:

1. The application is for a 30 month test period, which is unprecedented in the UK where testing is generally restricted to 90 days to allow for delays. This looks suspiciously to be an attempt to move into production without requiring all the additional requirements this would typically require.
2. Both Angus Energy and WSCC Highways have erroneously taken “significant” daily HGV movements as greater than 20 two-way movements, whereas the actual definition is:

“Significant HGV movements per day” is defined as 20 or more one-way HGV movements per day

This should also require a full Traffic Assessment which should include assessment of additional vehicle pollution
3. I was a member of a group monitoring traffic movements during the September 2018 testing period. Management of traffic movements was chaotic with vehicles being turned away because the site could not accept any more HGVs. On one occasion this resulted in one vehicle doing 6 round trips in total. There were also several occasions where HGVs were queuing on the road, awaiting their turn to be allowed access. Several vehicles had to continue travelling towards Cuckfield because they could not enter the site. We received reports of the road being blocked at Whiteman’s Green, Cuckfield, because one of these HGVs was stuck on the roundabout, trying to turn around. Many of these vehicles were far larger than anything we see travelling through the village and caused significant problems whilst travelling through the village, with one vehicle coming close to hitting overhead power cables; the driver had to clamber onto the vehicle to ensure it wouldn’t hit the cables. This vehicle had also picked up branches from trees on its way to the site.
4. The application proposes that all HGV traffic to and from the site at Lower Stumble, will travel from the M23 and along the B2036 through the village. All this traffic will therefore go past the Primary school, which is below the level of the road and just the width of the pavement away from outside play areas. It is simply criminal that so many massive HGVs are allowed to crawl past a primary school, belching out toxic fumes that will inevitably find their way into the school and hence into the lungs of our vulnerable young people.
5. Either flaring or venting will inevitably spew toxic fumes out into the countryside, with the prevailing wind blowing it towards our village. I have seen farm animals in nearby fields that will be vulnerable to any such air pollution as well as any water pollution from the site.
6. There are many public footpaths around Balcombe, which is a popular area for walkers, who will be at risk from the pollution from the site, along with local animals and birds. Fields growing food crops are immediately to the South and to the West of the site; these are all being put at risk from this application.
7. The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The WSCC Joint Minerals Plan, adopted in July 2018 is quite specific about mineral exploration in AONBs and other ‘special’ sites. It defines several points to be considered for any such activity to be permitted. This application fails all of the conditions for approval. It is not in the public interest; massive HGVs will have a significant impact on the village and its inhabitants and it promises unacceptable impacts on air pollution. The potential volumes of oil estimated in the planning

application are a mere drop in the ocean when compared with the total volume of oil used in the UK. In no way can this source of fossil fuels be considered of strategic importance.

8. The UK government has passed legislation, committed to meet targets for addressing climate change. WSCC recognises this government commitment and has made its own commitments. To continue to look for and exploit yet more sources of fossil fuels is absurd, when placed against the imperative and immediate need to address the impacts of climate change on the planet and everything that lives on it. Extraction of fossil fuels from unconventional sources is highly energy demanding. Given the energy required to search for and extract the oil which is then tankered off site, it is quite possibly less efficient than shipping in oil extracted from conventional sources.
9. The integrity of the bore hole drilled by Cuadrilla was found to be poor when assessed on their behalf by a third party. There is suspicion that the 'unexpected water' Angus Energy reported could be due to the poor integrity of the bore hole which could leave it open to external water sources. Perhaps they have compromised the water table.
10. The London to Brighton railway line is just 90 metre from the bore hole. It is also higher than the site making it more vulnerable to any air pollution escaping from the flair. A major incident on site could result in the railway line being closed.
11. A hydrology report commissioned by FFBR, highlights the inadequacies of Angus Energy's application with regard to water protection.
12. The government no longer supports this industry. On the 19th June 2020 Kwasi Kwarteng observed that the government had 'moved on' and was looking to more sustainable forms of energy generation. WSCC should follow the example now being set by this government.

We know that the impacts of climate change are real and here now. We know that it is essential that we reduce our dependence on fossil fuels both for energy and in the manufacture of plastics, now prevalent in our oceans. This is your chance as our Council Officers and Councillors to take a stand on this climate emergency, for both the people who you claim to represent and for future generations, including your own families. I urge you to make the only sensible decision and deny this application.

I also urge Angus Energy to consider the merits of their application with regards to the impact on Balcombe and climate change and to think about using their skills and expertise in helping to develop more sources of renewable energy, thereby contributing to the mitigation of climate change rather than adding to the problem. Repower Balcombe, a local renewable energy cooperative, established following Cuadrilla's initial drilling activities, has contributed to reducing Balcombe's use of fossil fuel generated energy, by funding and installing seven solar arrays installed, mainly on local school, since 2015. I urge WSCC to follow their example by refusing this application.

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