

The *I'm tired/busy/my head hurts* guide to objecting to the IGas Ellesmere Port planning application

CWaC planning reference code [17/03213/MIN](#)

On 21st July the onshore oil and gas company IGas applied for planning permission for an extended well test at the Portside site in Ellesmere Port. You can object to this planning application. **The current deadline for objections is 28th August 2017.**

In 2010 IGas secured planning permission to drill a well 900m vertically for coal-bed methane exploration and production. They exceeded this distance by over 1,000m by drilling to 1,949m vertically into the shale bed.

The testing process applied for this time is intended to last 88 days. A further planning application would be necessary to develop the site for full production.

Important to note is that the Portside site is 1.7 km from the centre of Ellesmere Port, 400m from residential properties, only 270m from the Mersey Estuary SSI site, and less than 100m from an industrial unit. Ellesmere Port has already been registered as an 'Air Quality Management Area' due to significant levels of air pollution.

The application itself is likely to be heard by full planning committee (rather than by an individual officer under delegated powers), due to the recent changes on procedures in relation to Unconventional gas extraction.

If we want to halt the progression of 'fracking', we need to object to the industry's developments every step of the way. Every objection to this application will help.

Please consider giving up a small amount of your time to complete a planning objection, online or by post – click a link below and **MAKE A DIFFERENCE** today.

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How to object online

If you're reading this online, [click here](#) and it will take you directly to the right planning application page. You'll have to register with the site to comment, but all you need is your postcode and email address. If the link doesn't work, see below.

To register:

- Click on 'Register here'
- Enter your details and follow all the instructions to create your account and password.
- An email will then be sent to the email address you registered – click the link to activate the account. Once this is done you can log in with the password you just created, and it should take you straight back to the 17/03213/MIN page. If not, just re-input the ref. number in the search box once you're logged in.

Alternatively, type this address into a web browser (like Internet Explorer):

<https://pa.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/online-applications/>

then enter **17/03213/MIN** in the search box and press 'Search' (see image below).

Follow the same steps outlined above to register, and you're all set.

Making your comment online

Once you're logged in, click 'Make a comment'.

Select your 'Commenter Type' _____
(usually 'Member of public')

'Stance' = 'Object'

'Reason for Comment' =
whichever you feel relevant.

'Your Comment' = Enter your views on why you are objecting to the application. It's a good idea to think about what you want to write before you type it in, or pre-type it in a program like 'Word' and cut and paste it in, as there is a time restriction on the site.

- You can save at any time on the portal.
- You can also select to have an email sent to you confirming your comments (recommended).
- **Once you have finished make sure you select the 'Submit' box.**

Read our tips for objecting and ideas for your comments on the next pages.

If you have any problems regarding making your comment, contact CWaC planning for advice.

It's also a worthwhile exercise to send copies of your objections to your local councillors and MPs.

How to object by post

General tips for objecting to planning applications

- **Put it in your own words** – copies (or responses that are clearly from a template) may be ignored.
- Focus on the ‘material considerations’ – **what will happen if this application goes ahead**. (These points are likely to carry more weight than those relating to developments that you believe could subsequently happen, they would require new planning applications).
- **Make your objection site-specific**. Include references to the size and location of the project; how it will function and the relationship of the site to its immediate surroundings. (Avoid wider concerns about issues such as government energy policy as they will be ignored).
- It’s probably best to focus on what’s being proposed in this application – the equipment and the effects of the testing process – and avoid mentioning the long term effects of fracking.
- The more objection points the better!
- When objecting to the planning application in writing, include your name and address or your objection may not be counted.
- Do NOT use bullet points in your response as they will not show in your comment.
- If you mention possible withdrawal of insurance cover, increase in insurance premiums or negative impact on house values, please be aware that these may not be treated as relevant planning issues – although the local economy certainly is.
- It may be best to type your comment first in a text editor like Word, then copy and paste it into the comment box. This will stop you losing your comment (as this screen times out after 5 mins).
- Do not use any formatting, like bullets/numbering or bold text, as this will not show.
- Number your points (typed on the keyboard) so that they can be addressed individually.
- Your objection can be as long or short as you like – the most important thing is to **DO IT** and **WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED** to press **‘SUBMIT’**.

Ideas for your ‘COMMENTS’ section

Don’t worry about the accuracy of your writing; the important thing is to get your point across. If you’re stuck on how to start you could open with something like:

I object to the planning application ref 17/03213/MIN – development on land at the end of Portside North, Ellesmere Port for the following reasons...

You then need to write your specific reasons for your objection.

REMEMBER, focus on what’s being proposed in this application – the equipment and the effects of the testing process, NOT ‘fracking’.

You could include some of the following. Choose the ones you really care about, change the order of the points in your comments and **put them into your own words** – remember if all the applications look the same ‘Planning’ won’t take them seriously.

Air Quality

Ellesmere Port is already in a ‘Air Quality Management Area’.

Flared gas from the development will include methane, VOCs, BTEX chemicals (known carcinogens), NORMs & particulates which IGas have not included in their application.

Water

Well integrity – 50% of wells fail within 15 years & all fail eventually.

Portside lies on Sherwood sandstone, the Sherwood Aquifer is classified as ‘Major Aquifer, High Vulnerability’ & is a potential water source.

Cheshire is heavily faulted providing conduits for contaminants to enter water sources. IGas have failed to address this in their application.

Light & Noise

The site will be a 24/7 operation with flaring, high pressure pumps, diesel generators & HGV movements. The site is only 600 m from residential properties. Exposure to noise pollution is linked to cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment and sleep disturbance.

Traffic

Significant increase in HGV & LGV movements resulting in air pollution, increased risk of RTAs & chemical spills.

Wildlife

Mersey estuary SSSI is 270m from the well site & is one of Britain’s top ten wetland sites home to native & seasonal birds.

Community

There has been no consultation for shale gas extraction in advance of this application. This goes against national, local & industry guidelines.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

No EIA has been conducted as is required for shale gas exploration when:

Flow period is greater than 96 hours
Site is close to a sensitive location (270m from Merseyside SSSI, RAMSAR and SPA site, and 600 m from residential properties, an industrial unit and a major motorway).

Climate Change

Methane is a potent GHG (Green House Gas) – Unconventional Gas Exploration & Extraction runs contrary to the Paris Climate Agreement and Climate Local Agreement (CWaCC approved 2012).

Unsustainable Development

Will not contribute to local employment
The site would be contaminated rendering the land unusable
Short term production, with long term negative environmental and health impacts.

Other Considerations

Documents are missing from the application around – flood risk, noise, waste management, management of emergencies, mitigation of the applicant ceasing to operate or trade, details of chemicals to be used.
Risk of seismic activity – applicant has not demonstrated attention to geology and mitigation of this risk. This is of particular concern given the proximity of the M53 & high-risk industrial centres.
Lack of properly resourced regulatory bodies.
Negative impacts to mental health. Lack of trust & confidence leading to stress & anxiety. Fears of loss to value of property & insurance not covering damage resulting from UGE operations.