

Green groups welcome changes to Councils' fossil fuels and minerals plan

Press Release

2 February 2023

Green groups across Derbyshire have welcomed proposed changes to the draft Derbyshire and Derby Minerals Local Plan which will be approved by Derbyshire County Council's Cabinet today [1]. This plan is crucial to whether planning applications to extract minerals and fossil fuels (including by fracking) receive approval or not. While the changes don't go as far as campaigners had pressed for, the Councils have amended the plan to "*raise the bar for what may be needed to address the climate change imperatives, whilst still complying with national planning policy.*"

These changes are in response to the groups' campaigns. According to the Cabinet paper [1] around 70% of the over 3,000 submissions on a consultation on the plan came from an organised campaign relating to climate change and fossil fuel issues. This was organised jointly by Derbyshire Climate Coalition [2] and the Derbyshire Mineral Plan Community Action Group (DMPCAG) [3] with support from Friends of the Earth late last year.

Although the groups were disappointed that the plan stops short of saying "no" to fossil fuel extraction, which would go against government policy, the Council have said: "*The approaches suggested reflect some of the concerns of the Derbyshire public over climate change and hydraulic fracturing but also look to future-proofing policies as the climate change agenda comes more to the fore.*"

Carol Hutchinson from DMPCAG who represent most of the anti-fracking groups in the area said "*We are pleased the Council has finally listened to us, and we particularly welcome the more precautionary approach to fracking including a proposed setback of 500m for any fracking well from people's homes. This is something our group have been pushing for for many years.*"

Laura Stevens from Derbyshire Climate Coalition who helped organise a mass email, supported by Friends of the Earth, said "*A broad range of environmental community groups across the County have again shown the power of people joining together and working for positive change. However, we need more people to get involved, if you are concerned about the climate emergency, please do consider getting involved in your local campaign group.*"

Richard Dyer, Friends of the Earth East Midlands campaign organiser said "*It is great to see that Derbyshire and Derby Councils have listened to the thousands of local people who have raised concerns about the climate emergency and the need to halt fossil fuel extraction. The minerals plan process still has a way to run, both Councils must continue to do everything in their powers to protect local people as far as possible from the scourge of fossil fuel and minerals extraction*"

Notes to Editor

1. The cabinet meeting is at 2.30pm, Thursday 2 Feb and the paper can be found here (item 9) <https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=1171&Ver=4>
2. Derbyshire Climate Coalition is formed of over 30 subsidiary local and county wide groups, see <http://derbyshireclimate.org.uk/groups/>
3. Derbyshire Mineral Plan Community Action Group (DMPCAG, includes Creswell Against Fracking, Dronfield and Coal Aston Against Fracking, Eckington Against Fracking, Bolsover Against Fracking & Barlborough Against Fracking)