

Environment Agency opens consultation on draft permit decision for Cloughton gas exploration proposal

- Europa Oil and Gas Limited have applied for a temporary exploration wellsite, known as Cloughton 2, near Burniston, North Yorkshire.
- The company proposes to drill a test borehole to assess the potential for conventional gas extraction.
- The consultation, opening today, will run for six weeks and locals and residents are invited to comment before a final decision is made.

The Environment Agency has today (Monday 3 August) opened a public consultation on its draft decision to grant an environmental permit for a temporary exploration wellsite known as Cloughton 2 near Burniston, North Yorkshire after carefully assessing an application submitted by Europa Oil and Gas Limited. The Environment Agency have released the following details:-

"The company is proposing to drill a test borehole to assess the potential for conventional gas extraction."

"The permit includes the potential use of a well stimulation technique known as proppant squeeze. This is used to improve the flow of gas from rock by injecting a mixture of gelled water-based fluid and sand into the well under pressure to open small cracks in the rock."

"Although the technique uses similar principles to hydraulic fracturing, the proposed activity is different from the shale gas hydraulic fracturing covered by the Government's current suspension."

"Whilst planning permission for the proposal was refused by North Yorkshire Council in May 2026, planning permission and environmental permitting are separate legal processes with different responsibilities and legal tests."

"While the local planning authority decides whether a development should be allowed under planning law, the Environment Agency must determine whether the proposed activities meet the requirements of environmental legislation and whether they can be carried out without causing unacceptable harm to people or the environment."

"Because these are separate regulatory processes, the Environment Agency is legally required to assess the permit application independently of the planning decision."

"The draft decision follows a detailed technical assessment of the application by specialist officers and has considered the operator's application, supporting technical information as well as the consultation responses received during the first public consultation."

"The consultation provides an opportunity for people to comment on the draft decision before a final decision is made. All relevant responses will be considered before the Environment Agency reaches its final determination."

As the consultation falls during the summer holiday period, it will run for longer than the standard consultation period to allow people additional time to consider the documents and provide their views."

Ian Foster, Environment Agency Area Manager for Yorkshire said:

"We recognise there is significant public interest in this application, particularly following the local planning authority's decision to refuse planning permission."

"The Environment Agency has a different legal role. Our responsibility is to independently assess whether the application meets the requirements of environmental legislation and whether the proposed activities can be carried out without unacceptable risks to people or the environment.

"Our assessment is evidence-based and we have published the reasons for our draft decision. We encourage anyone with an interest in the application to read the consultation documents and provide their views before we make our final decision."

The Environment Agency may only refuse an environmental permit application where it does not meet one or more of the legal requirements under environmental legislation, including where the proposed activity would pose an unacceptable risk to people or the environment. Where those legal requirements are met, the Environment Agency is legally required to issue a permit.

The consultation will remain open until September 23rd 2026. All consultation documents can be viewed through the [Environment Agency's Citizen Space consultation website](#) and residents are invited to leave comments online. Those unable to access the information online can contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506.