

Fracking – Good or Bad?

Fracking allows drilling firms to access oil and gas trapped in shale rock. These fossil fuels are non-renewable sources of energy and could be used in power stations to create electricity for homes, businesses and industries.

Fracking uses high-pressure water to shatter shale rocks and release the natural gas and oil. This is then piped to the surface to be used in industry.

Soon, areas across northern England and the Midlands could face fracking after new licences were awarded for oil and gas exploration. Two North East sites identified are near Middlesbrough; however, there are no sites currently identified further north.

Twelve companies have been given licences to explore for oil and gas in the UK. The biggest winner is Swiss chemicals company Ineos, which has been offered 21 blocks — all of which are designated for shale gas exploration. Ineos is privately-owned multinational company. Whether or not exploration can actually go ahead is subject to local planning consent and against

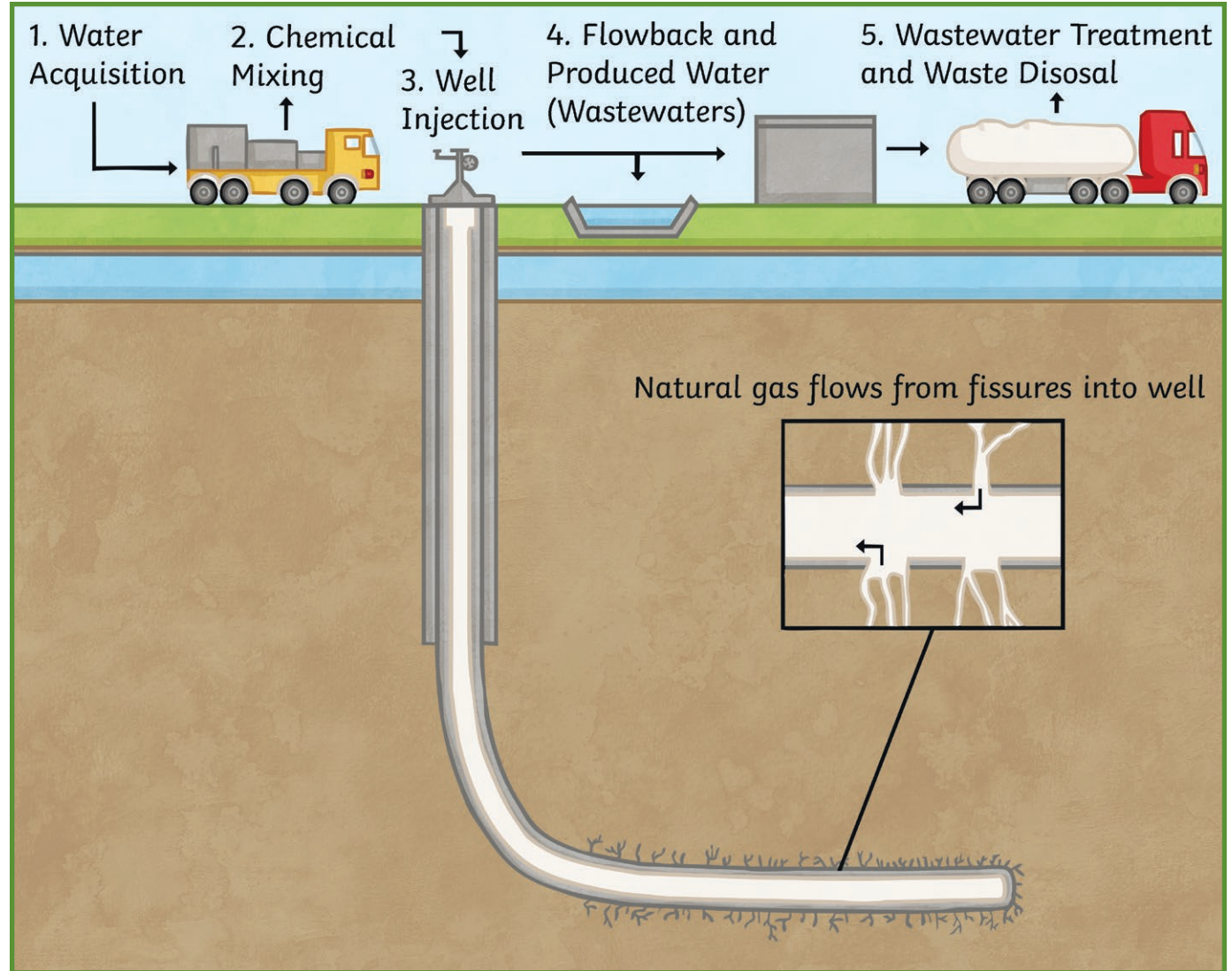


Figure 1: How water is used in the process of fracking.

much opposition, the government announced plans to fast-track fracking applications earlier in 2017.

The UK Energy Minister Lord Bourne said: “As part of our long-term plan to build a more resilient economy, create jobs and deliver secure energy supplies, we continue to back our onshore oil and gas industry and the safe development of shale gas in the UK. It’s important we press on and get shale moving, while maintaining strong environmental controls. Investment in shale could reach £33bn and support 64,000 jobs, creating financial security for hardworking people and their families, whilst providing a cost-efficient bridge to lower-carbon energy use.”

People argue that fracking is simply distracting energy firms and governments from investing in renewable sources of energy and encouraging continued dependency on fossil fuels. Fracking has been linked to Earth tremors and some believe that the contaminated water used in the process could leak into underground water supplies. page on to the Go Respond template. If there is no regular comprehension, design the

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‘38 Degrees’ is one of the UK’s biggest campaigning organisations, with over 2.5 million members. In 2016 over 100,000 of their members called on the UK government to publish the report (that has so far been kept secret) on the impact of fracking in the UK. They have also teamed up with the Campaign for National Parks to organise walks in every



Figure 2: Campaigners against fracking.

national park in England to raise awareness of this issue. They say that the National Parks are the country’s best wild spaces – but they’re at risk: “The Government has gone back on its word to protect them from fracking and they’ve slashed budgets. It’s forcing park authorities to sell off land and look for money from private companies.”

The environmentalists argue that this undermines the government’s earlier promise to allow local people to make decisions about fracking within their local area. Earlier this year, a Durham University study rated Northumberland National Park as a doubtful future prospect in the quest for viable oil and gas reserves, so why is fracking being considered here?

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