

LET COMMUNITIES DECIDE

CAMPAIGN BRIEFING

What's going on?

The government recently announced a proposal to change planning rules which would categorise fracking exploration and drilling as 'permitted development' - a category designed for non-controversial developments such as minor home improvements. The change would effectively exempt fracking companies from the need for local planning permission.

If these changes go ahead, fracking companies could start drilling across large swathes of the country without local planning consent, threatening communities and the climate in the process.

This flies in the face of local democracy and threatens to slash community involvement in decision-making. We can't allow fracking to be forced on communities, and our countryside to be turned into a gasfield.

What can we do?

This is too risky to ignore, and a threat on this scale needs a massive response, rooted in local community power.

The government is consulting on these plans over the summer; that gives us a short window of opportunity to get organised, and show that we won't allow our democracy to be trampled on.

Working in our communities - and together with councillors and MPs - we can defeat these proposals, protect our local democracy, and prevent the industrialisation of our countryside. **Let's do it!**

How can we do it?

To defeat these proposals, we need to build a strategic and broad-based opposition - and fast.

This will be a non-partisan campaign drawing together people from across traditional political divides in pursuit of a common goal: the government dropping this proposal.

A number of organisations and groups have already joined forces to help initiate this campaign. But no-one knows your local political situation and community better than you and other local people. It's important that campaigns are designed based on local knowledge, and united by a common goal and underlying strategy.

So here's the strategy:

- 1. Persuade key local elected representatives** - MPs, councillors and council leaders - to speak out publicly on the issue, and to apply pressure privately to ministers to drop the proposal.

This will involve local groups and individuals (that's you!) engaging MPs, councillors and council leaders of all political persuasions in dialogue to enrol them as champions of the cause. As the party of government, it will be particularly crucial to secure the support of Conservative MPs and councillors, and to be hearing primarily Conservative voices raised in public opposition to the proposal.

It is local councils who would be affected by this proposal, losing key decision-making powers. We will stand side by side with them, encouraging and supporting them to apply political pressure and use their influence to shift the government's position.

- 2. Develop and sustain a high profile local public campaign** to demonstrate overwhelming public opposition to this plan.

At a local level this may include public meetings and rallies, local media stories, photo opportunities, talks and film screenings, community awareness raising, letter writing, creative stunts, street stalls and petitioning, and whatever creative means you and your community can generate together.

The campaign is a crucial one for every part of the country. Whether your area is currently directly threatened by fracking or not, everybody's contribution will be vital.

Timeline and key dates

The campaign to Let Communities Decide starts now, and will run through until the government decision on the proposal later in the year. The government's consultation is our best chance to influence government decision makers - it is likely to be launch in the third week of July, and run for around three months.

To be effective, local campaigning needs to be ongoing throughout the period. In addition though, there are a couple of key events for your diary:

16th July: Campaign webinar

A free video link session on the evening of Monday 16th July to help equip local communities and groups to get involved in the campaign.

23 - 30th July: Campaign Launch Week

This is a great chance for people everywhere to get under way in the campaign, and stuck into organising campaign events and activities in your own community, while joining a nationwide push.

A great starting point for the campaign could involve local outreach activities such as organising a street stall, leafleting, going door to door in your community or organising a meeting. Other activities might include public meetings, media opportunities, petitioning, community awareness-raising, creative stunts; rallies; solidarity events with local authorities and more.

Autumn (date TBC): Proposed national 'moment'

As the consultation closes, sometime in September or October we're planning another national push. These events will demonstrate how much opposition to the proposals there is nationwide, and bring the campaign to the doorsteps of the decision makers. More details to come.

Support and resources

A small campaign team will be on hand to offer support to local campaigns and will be helping to tie everything together to make sure that we create a national outcry.

We can help with campaign ideas, planning and trouble-shooting, suggest tactics for key targets, help find speakers for meetings and events, and more.

Contact us via sebastian.kelly@350.org or fracking@foe.co.uk.

We're also working on producing **online and print resources** to support the campaign. Some resources that that will be made available are:

- **Campaign briefing** (this document!) - An outline of the campaign, its aims, strategy, key moments, resources, and how to get started with a local campaign.
- **Guide to working with elected representatives** - How to engage MPs and councillors, bring them on-side and enrol them in the Let Communities Decide cause. Includes what to ask them to do on the campaign's behalf.
- **Campaign guide** - Includes step-by-step guides to activities such as organising a public meeting or a media event, campaigning tips and an example timeline.
- **Media pack** - With key campaign message, a press release template and top tips for engaging your local media.
- **Briefings for MPs and councillors** - Documents to help your elected representatives understand the issue and enrol them in the fight.
- **Campaign leaflets and stickers** - Once available these can be posted to you by the central campaign team.
- **Online councillor open letter sign up** - Hosted on the campaign [website](#), this tool will allow your local councillors to sign up to an open letter opposing the proposal.

Many of these resources will be available [on the campaign website](#). We'd also love to hear from you about what else you think would be useful. Please get in touch if you think there's anything we've missed.

What happens next?

Let's get going! Here are some good first steps for getting the campaign going in your local area:

- Bring a core group of people together for a **meeting** to talk through and plan how to kick start the local campaign.
- **Talk** to as many people as possible in your community about the issue, and involve them in the campaign. Leafleting, street stalls, going door to door in your street or neighbourhood
- Promote online **petitions** locally - or start your own local petition against the proposal. Sign and share the national online petitions [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Contact your local MP**. Ask to arrange a meeting, or make an appointment to attend one of their constituency surgeries to raise your concerns and bring them on board. Ideally, bring a group of people together to attend the surgery who represent different walks of life in the community. Having such as health professionals, farmers, business people, teachers, community workers and leaders in your delegation will help demonstrate the breadth of concern within their constituency.
- Organise a **public meeting**. Get some speakers, publicise widely, invite your local MP and councillors along, and use it to spread awareness and campaign activities.
- Contact your local **county councillors** and get them involved as champions of the cause, speaking out locally and using their influence to lobby against the proposal.

Don't forget to get in touch if you have any questions or need some support. Thanks for reading, now let's get out there and do it!