



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

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Dear Mr Bungard

Thank you for your letter of 22 February to the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP regarding shale gas development. I am replying as this falls within my Ministerial responsibilities. I note Gloucestershire County Council's resolution regarding this matter, and am grateful for the opportunity to respond. I must also apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The Written Ministerial Statement made on 16 September 2015, which can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/pb7f3yj>, set out the Government's view that there is a need to explore and develop our shale gas resources in a safe, sustainable and timely way, and the steps it is taking to support this. Government remains fully committed to the development and deployment of renewable technologies and to energy efficiency but we need gas, the cleanest of all fossil fuels, to support our climate change target by providing flexibility and helping to reduce the use of high-carbon coal.

Petroleum exploration and development will only take place in areas covered by Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences, which give developers exclusive rights to explore for petroleum resources in the area. You may be aware that two licences have been offered as part of the Oil and Gas Authority's recent 14th Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing Round, covering five licence areas in Gloucestershire. More information on specific licences and the broader process is available on the Oil and Gas Authority website.

Local government continues to lead the process for considering planning proposals for shale gas exploration. As you are aware, any decision on whether to grant planning permission must be made in accordance with the development plan for the local authority area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with planning concerns raised by local people being such a consideration.

Yours sincerely
James Wharton
JAMES WHARTON MP