



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 October 2016

Dear Kevin

Thank you for your letter of 13 September about shale gas exploration. I recognise this is an important issue for your constituency and appreciate that it is something you have looked at closely during your time in Parliament.

The UK has a long history of onshore oil and gas development, and has a robust regulatory system to ensure it is carried out to high standards of safety and environmental protection. As a result, I am confident that we can explore and develop our shale gas and oil resources in a safe, sustainable and timely way.

All onshore oil and gas projects, including shale, are subject to scrutiny through the planning system to assess the impact on local residents. The planning system already requires shale well sites' density and proximity to towns and villages to be considered in decisions on proposals. The Government believes that were limits to be set in national planning guidance, they may not provide appropriate protections in some contexts and may rule out otherwise acceptable development in others.

While operators are expected to maximise recovery of petroleum resources within their Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence areas, each planning application is considered on its individual planning merits, taking into account the development plan for the local area and other considerations such as noise, traffic, visual impact and cumulative impacts. The expectation to maximise recovery of resources in the area is not a consideration when local authorities decide whether to grant planning permission.

Unfortunately, my diary commitments at the moment mean I am unable to discuss these issues in person. However, I would be very grateful to receive a copy of your APPG's report when possible.

Yours sincerely

David Cameron

Mr Kevin Hollinrake MP