



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Kevin Hollinrake MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth
and Climate Change

**Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy**
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

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Dear Kevin,

Thank you for your email dated 29 June, addressed to the Secretary of State, enclosing correspondence from the Yorkshire Landowners, regarding shale gas extraction. The Secretary of State has asked me to respond.

The Government has always been clear that the exploration of shale gas reserves could only proceed if the science shows that it is safe, sustainable and of minimal disturbance to those living and working near to sites. The recent request to the British Geological Survey does not indicate a change to this position.

However, in response to Putin's barbaric acts in Ukraine and against the Ukrainian people, the UK needs to keep all of its energy options open. Shale gas and new approaches could be part of the UK's future energy mix, but the Government will be led by the science. Therefore, the Government has commissioned the British Geological Survey to advise on the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction.

This request has been made to assess if any progress in the scientific understanding which underpins Government policy on hydraulic fracturing has been made, and to allow the Government to consider next steps.

The Government is clear that this should be a desk-based exercise by the British Geological Survey, and so no drilling of any further test wells or seismic monitoring will take place.

I hope you and the Yorkshire Landowners will find this reply helpful.

Yours ever

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change