

Statement to the APPG for Shale Gas Regulation and Planning – in relation to the session held on 7th June 2016 on planning.

This statement is from groups representing people living around Cuadrilla’s proposed fracking sites at Roseacre Wood and Preston New Road in the Fylde area of Lancashire. In 2015, Lancashire County Council refused Cuadrilla permission to frack at both sites. The company appealed and, following a public inquiry before a planning inspector this year, the Secretary of State or a Minister from the Department for Communities and Local Government will make a decision on the applications.

“During Cuadrilla’s application process, it was clear to the public and the Lancashire community that fracking would have a negative impact on the countryside, bringing noise, air and light pollution as well as impacting house prices and the tourism industry. A recent government survey shows that support for fracking is plummeting across the UK and the majority of people in the local community do not want fracking to happen in Lancashire, after years of protest and thousands of formal objections. We don’t need fracked gas to secure Britain’s energy future. Fracking will pollute this countryside and contribute to climate change. We need renewable energy, like wind and solar, tidal as well as batteries to store the clean energy. Another reason for our concern is due to clear gaps in the regulatory framework which leave communities exposed to the negative impacts of the shale gas industry.

“With regards to the planning process, it is clear from our perspective that the UK has an established planning process that is and should be comprehensive to take into account the range of different factors that are relevant to applications. And yet in Lancashire after the local council went through that process, both the council itself and the public, when looking at the evidence available to them that they had meticulously assessed in that same planning process, rejected fracking.

“We recognize that the Government views shale gas as a national priority and that the Secretary of State wants to decide on matters considered of national significance – but in this case it feels like we have been given the run around because of an ideological commitment to fracking. Local people have invited the Secretary of State, Greg Clark to meet with them and discuss the decision his Department will be making and have received no response. It appears the Government is making a mockery of the entire planning process if they simply ‘call in’ these applications and make a final decision – denying people like us a voice in the process.

“We want to re-iterate our call to the Government to listen to the people of Lancashire and Lancashire County Council and respect their decision in this matter.”

ENDS

June 2016