

# Rowlands Castle Parish Council

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Dear Sirs

## **Consultations on Shale Gas Exploration/Production and inclusion in NSIP Regime**

At its Meeting on 3 September 2018, Rowlands Castle Parish Council (RCPC) considered the Government's consultations on shale gas development and changes to the planning system.

RCPC recognises the importance of oil and gas as primary sources of energy and the central role they play in the UK economy. It is also conscious of the need to maintain a sustainable supply of these sources and reduce dependence on imports.

There are many forms of oil and gas exploration and extraction, including those for shale gas and the method commonly known as 'fracking'. Many of these forms can be contentious. They can provoke strong feelings amongst those living in the vicinity and wider area of any such site, proposed or existing, often for very understandable reasons.

For this reason, RCPC believes it is vital that permission for such exploration and development remains with local authorities, as the Minerals Planning Authority (MPA), and the communities they serve. RCPC strongly objects to central government's recent proposals on the principles of:

- i) granting permission for non-hydraulic shale gas exploration development through a permitted development right; and
- ii) MPAs no longer being the determining authority for any shale gas production proposals within its administrative area, with decisions being made at national level by the Planning Inspectorate instead.

It considers these proposals as 'fast-tracking' potentially contentious hydro-carbon development, taking power away from local MPAs. The proposals also encourage suspicions that these proposals are just the first phase of central government's plan to remove decision-making powers from local MPAs and into the hands of central government organisations on such matters. The proposals are totally contrary to the spirit of the Localism Act 2011 and should be rejected.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these consultations.

Yours faithfully

Lisa Walker  
Clerk to Rowlands Castle Parish Council