



MEDIA STATEMENT

25th July 2018

BGS POSITION – HYDRAULIC FRACTURING CONSENT

Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, Claire Perry has issued Hydraulic Fracturing Consent to Cuadrilla Resources for Preston New Road in Lancashire, with effect from 24th July 2018, subject to conditions:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728724/hfc-decision-cuadrilla-letter.pdf

Consent for hydraulic fracturing in Lancashire means that it is possible that shale gas may be extracted commercially in the area.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) is the national centre providing impartial, objective and authoritative geoscience data, information and knowledge to the UK Government and other stakeholders. The BGS has been responsible for quantifying the resources of shale gas and oil in selected parts of the UK including the Bowland Shale in central England in 2013, the Weald Basin, Wales and the Midland Valley of Scotland in 2014, and the Wessex area in 2016.

The BGS has studied the geological conditions in the north-west of England. Through the Environmental Baseline Monitoring (EBM) Survey, the BGS and its research partners are monitoring baseline conditions of groundwater, seismicity, air quality, ground motion, soil gas and radon. The purpose of the EBM is to establish if any changes that occur can be linked to hydraulic fracturing, and the EBM will continue during any operational extraction and after completion. Further information:
www.bgs.ac.uk/research/groundwater/shaleGas/monitoring/lancashire.html

In a separate study, the BGS has calculated the underground vertical separation between aquifers that carry potable water and prospective shale gas layers, in a series of maps intended for the guidance of planners, policy makers and shale gas exploration companies. The work was recently extended to a 3D groundwater vulnerability and risk screening assessment. Further information: www.bgs.ac.uk/research/groundwater/shaleGas/aquifersAndShales/home.html

QUOTES FROM PROF MIKE STEPHENSON – DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Prof. Mike Stephenson is the lead geoscientist at the BGS and a key adviser to Government, regulators and stakeholders on shale gas geoscience. Most recently he addressed the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the impact of shale gas (second session 24th July 2018).
NB These quotes were made today (25th July) in response to the announcement.

“Britain will need a cautious approach to shale gas development if commercial amounts of gas are found.”

“Overall, natural gas, potentially including shale gas, provides a lower carbon fossil fuel than coal when burnt in power stations, and provides a backup for the intermittency of renewables. But shale gas exploitation must be done to very high levels of environmental assurance.”

“The science being carried out on UK shale gas resources, environmental monitoring and subsurface development by the BGS and other research institutions will provide regulators and government with the evidence they need to achieve that environmental assurance.”

Ends



For further details or to arrange media interviews please contact:

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Notes for Editors

The following are available for interview:

- Professor Mike Stephenson, British Geological Survey

For additional information go to: www.bgs.ac.uk/shalegas/

British Geological Survey

The British Geological Survey (BGS) is a world leading applied geoscience research centre that is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and affiliated to the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). BGS core science provides objective and authoritative geoscientific data, information and knowledge to inform UK Government on the opportunities and challenges of the subsurface. It undertakes national and public good research to understand earth and environmental processes in the UK and globally. The BGS annual budget of approximately £60 million pa is funded directly by UKRI, as well as research grants, government commissions and private sector contracts. Its 650 staff work across the UK with two main sites, the head office in Nottingham and Lyell Centre, a joint collaboration with Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. BGS works with more than 150 private sector organisations, has close links to 40 universities and sponsors about 100 PhD students each year. Please see www.bgs.ac.uk.