

Press release: Ministers seek views on shale planning reforms

A consultation on proposed planning reforms for exploratory shale gas development in England has been launched by the government today (19 July 2018).

Seeking views on early proposals looking at the principle of whether to designate exploratory drilling for shale gas resources as a new form of permitted development, it would mean that planning consent would not be required.

With the government committed to ensuring that strong safeguards are in place, any new permitted development right would have to abide by both environmental and site protection laws and would not apply to exploratory drilling in sensitive areas (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Exploratory drilling for shale deposits are treated separately to full hydraulic shale gas extraction, both will remain subject to strict planning and environmental controls.

The 14-week consultation, open until 25 October 2018, will make sure that those with an interest in shale development can have their say and input their views.

The government will then analyse the comments and issue its response later in 2018.

A further consultation on any specific legislative reforms will follow the government's response if these are required.

Government will also consult on whether developers should be required to undertake pre-application community engagement prior to submitting a planning application for shale gas development. This consultation will be launched in autumn 2018.

View the [consultation document](#) on Gov.uk

The consultation follows the publication of a written ministerial statement on the 17 May 2018, in which the government announced a range of measures to facilitate timely decision making on shale exploration planning applications.