

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-422
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00748/13

William Powell AM
AM for Mid & West Wales
Chair
Petition's committee

Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

7th May 2013

Dear William,

Our current planning policy contained in Planning Policy Wales, Minerals Planning Policy Wales, and the supporting Technical (and Mineral) Advice Notes sets out a precautionary approach, and identifies that in embracing a presumption in favour of sustainable development proposals must ensure that any potential impacts on the environment, economy, and society can be appropriately mitigated, including taking into account climate change, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Minerals Planning Policy Wales identifies that in relation to energy minerals local (mineral) planning authorities must provide as much guidance in their development plans as possible to indicate where it is likely to be environmentally acceptable for mineral resources to be worked. To achieve this degree of certainty, policies should state where such operations would not be acceptable and should provide unequivocal statements as to why, and should also provide a set of clear criteria against which any future proposals will be assessed in those areas where there is a possibility of extraction. The criteria are set out in Minerals Planning Policy Wales.

Policies should distinguish clearly between the three stages of exploration, appraisal and development. It will be necessary for an operator to obtain planning permission for each of these stages of development. Mineral planning authorities should establish with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) the areas which are licensed, and identify any environmental and other constraints on production and processing in those areas.

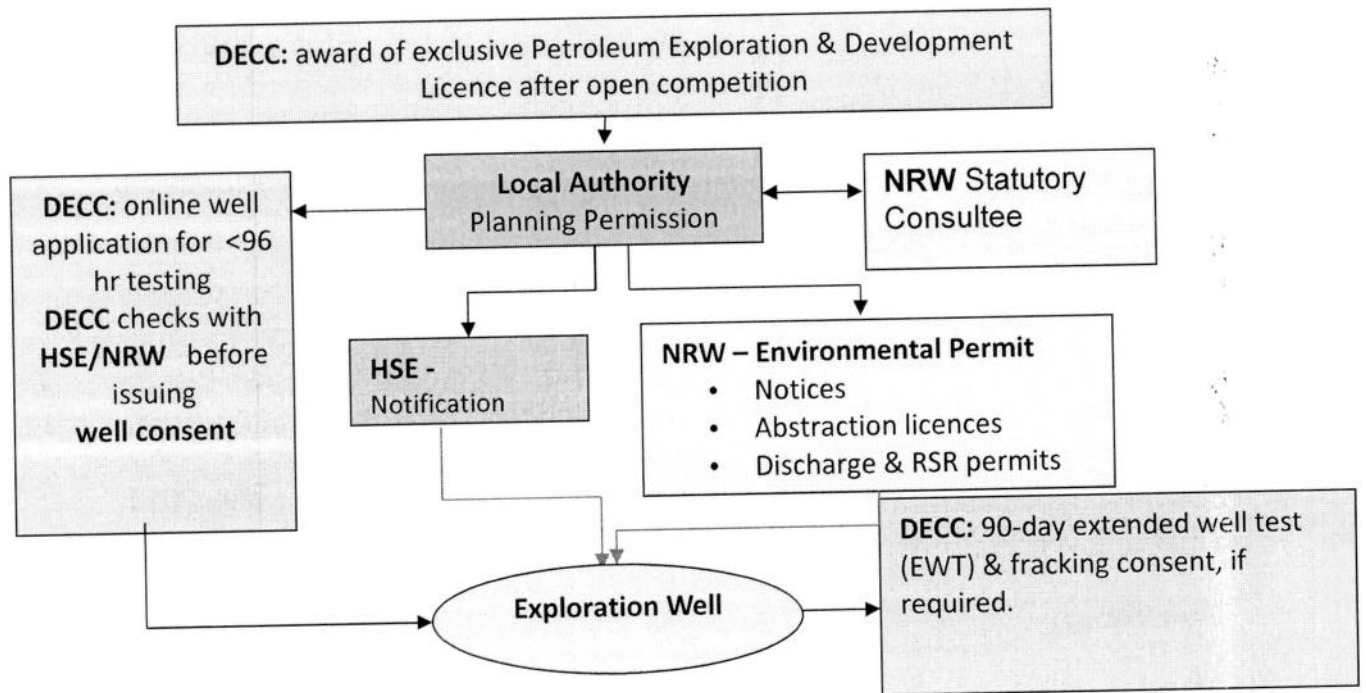
In addition to needing a relevant licence from DECC it is also necessary for an operator to obtain an Environmental Permit from Natural Resources Wales before any development can

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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take place. The diagram overleaf identifies all the required consents that an operator would need before shale gas extraction could take place.



Minerals Planning Policy Wales also identifies that in respect of groundwater and surface water issues mineral planning authorities must consult the Environment Agency [now Natural Resources Wales] and, where doubt exists, should adopt the precautionary principle in taking planning decisions on mineral development.

My officials are continuing to engage with the UK Government and the respective agencies to ensure robust and consistent evidence is developed, and are also keeping under review the need to produce new planning guidance as this evidence comes forward.

However I believe the current precautionary policy position in Wales, together with the controls provided through other regulatory bodies, provide sufficient safeguards for the environment and society.

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