



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Department for Business, Energy &
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Ruth Hayhurst

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28th February 2017

Dear Ruth Hayhurst

Ref No: FOI2017/04363

Thank you for your email of the 14th February 2017 where you requested the following information:

The 2014 Autumn Statement (paragraph 1.121) said:

"The government is taking steps to ensure that the UK leads the way with shale gas regulation. Shale gas could increase the UK's energy security, support thousands of jobs, reduce carbon emissions, and generate substantial tax revenue. The government will therefore provide a new £5 million fund to provide independent evidence directly to the public about the robustness of the existing regulatory regime. This will also ensure the public is better engaged in the regulatory process."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/sy...>

I should be grateful if you would:

- Confirm whether any of this money went to BEIS or its predecessor departments
- If so, provide information about how the £5m has been spent
- Provide links to the resulting independent evidence funded by the £5m
- Provide information about how this evidence has been disseminated to the public

Having considered your correspondence, we are of the view that we are unable to respond to you by providing copies of recorded information. It is therefore not appropriate to provide an answer under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI). In these circumstances such correspondence is treated as 'normal course of business' enquiries, and we provide replies outside of the disclosure regimes. This is in accordance with the guidance given in the ICO publication 'Freedom of Information & Environmental Information Regulations – Hints for Practitioners handling FOI/EIR requests', available on the ICO website via the following link:

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1643/foi_hints_for_practitioners_handing_foi_and_eir_requests_2008.pdf

We have considered each of your questions in turn below:

- *Confirm whether any of this money went to BEIS or its predecessor departments*

The Autumn Statement 2014 announced £5m funding for 2015-16 to “provide independent evidence directly to the public about the robustness of the existing [shale gas] regulatory regime”. The Department of Energy and Climate Change (now the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), received £1.7m to establish independent environmental monitoring.

Part of the £5 million funding was also received by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency. They may be able to provide further detail on how their funding was spent.

- *If so, provide information about how the £5m has been spent*

The Department grant-funded a research consortium led by the British Geological Survey to expand an existing Lancashire-based programme, which was gathering a baseline of environmental data, to North Yorkshire, where a planning application for a shale gas project had been submitted.

The researchers are gathering data on features including water and air quality, seismicity and ground motion in and around sites in the Fylde (Lancashire) and Kirby Misperton (North Yorkshire), for which planning applications for shale gas wells have been made. Data gathering began in the Fylde in January 2015 and in Kirby Misperton in August 2015.

The monitoring is characterising the environmental baseline before any hydraulic fracturing takes place. Data gathered during any future shale gas projects can be checked against this “baseline” data. This allows any significant changes to be flagged for further scrutiny.

- *Provide links to the resulting independent evidence funded by the £5m*
- *Provide information about how this evidence has been disseminated to the public*

The investigations are independent of any monitoring carried out by the industry or the regulators, and information collected is freely available to the public on the BGS website:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/research/groundwater/shalegas/monitoring/home.html>.

Information about this work is also provided on Youtube and BGS attends public meetings to explain its work.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxpzCdkdwTWB5nJlzPedcht_-zjHA6O-7.

Yours sincerely,

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy