1. I am responding to this enquiry as an individual very concerned about the damaging effect that fracking would have on rural tourism in England, and also in the rest of the UK.

2. I live in North Yorkshire and was astounded how North Yorkshire County Councillors seemed to ignore all objections and evidence provided against fracking and voted to allow fracking to be undertaken at Kirby Misperton. I know the area well and had been planning to move to Pickering but following the decision have put all plans of moving on hold.

3. In the interests of brevity I am not going to repeat the many arguments against fracking that I submitted to the North Yorkshire Planning enquiry and trust these will be assumed.

4. Residents living with fracking on their doorstep will have their lives negatively affected and I cannot see how the rural tourism industry will not be affected similarly.

5. Fracking is extremely unpopular with only 21% of the population supporting the process, according to the latest surveys & the government’s proposal to pay up to £10,000 to residents living near well has been seen for the cynical bribe that it is.

6. If the majority of people do not want to live with fracking on their doorstep then who will want to holiday in industrialised areas of our countryside? Businesses reliant on tourism will struggle to survive and will result in a lack of rural investment, depressed economies and rural depravation.

7. Tourism provides millions of permanent jobs for the rural economy but fracking would only provide a small number of short-term jobs at each well-site and most of those would go to specialists brought in for short duration. Fracking in the USA has been shown to be a boom-and-bust industry and does not create long-term jobs.

8. The English countryside is home to many high quality food producers & any introduction of fracking nearby will probably diminish their customers faith in their abilities to continue to provide quality produce. Demand from national and local business outlets, food fairs, farmers markets etc. will decrease again leading to reduced rural employment.

9. It is clear to me that widespread fracking will have a very damaging effect on tourism in rural areas, and I believe that the shale gas industry is one of the greatest threats facing rural tourism in England including my own beloved North Yorkshire.

10. I feel that Defra has a duty to oppose such developments within government, and should be working to promote sustainable, low-impact tourism in order to preserve the English countryside. Defra has failed to properly complete a comprehensive report on the effect of fracking on the rural economy including the rural tourism sector.
Therefore I recommend that the EFRA Select Committee should –

- commission a new independent report of the impact of the shale gas industry on all aspects of the rural economy, including rural tourism.

and

- until such a report is produced, the EFRA Select Committee should demand an immediate moratorium on fracking and other forms of unconventional gas production.

*August 2016*