I have lived in Sheriff Hutton for almost forty years, and was employed in Malton for thirty of those years. When I moved to North Yorkshire from Kent, I was impressed by the natural beauty of this area of the country, and was able to enjoy a small part of this wonderful county during my daily journey to and from work. Over half of my travel distance was on the back road from Sheriff Hutton to the junction with the A64.

I am responding to this enquiry because I am concerned about the effects of fracking on the rural community of which I am part, and which is currently threatened by fracking.

With particular reference to the terms of this enquiry, I believe that this operation, if allowed to go ahead, will seriously damage the tourism which is so vital to the economy of North Yorkshire in particular, and to the rest of the country in general.

I am of the firm opinion that fracking density as envisaged by the would-be operators would result in the large scale industrialisation of the countryside, because to produce gas in any significant and commercially viable quantity will require a high number of wells. This will damage not only the visual aspect of the countryside, it will also result in a great increase in heavy lorry journeys over unsuitable minor roads, with all the consequent delays, damage and increased accident risk these would entail. This undoubtedly will deter tourism.

Furthermore, fracking would be allowed within 400 metres of homes and businesses, resulting in air, noise and light pollution from the 24 hour operation. The disturbance caused to wildlife will further diminish the attractiveness of areas of fracking to tourists. Inevitably, all this would dramatically affect visitor numbers and reduce income for the commercial activities which rely on them. The gains from any increase in employment from fracking operations will be far outweighed by the losses in employment in tourism.

There have been a number of well publicised papers on the risks to health from fracking

- Fracking is banned or restricted by moratoria in many other countries, such as France, Germany, Bulgaria, Holland and Scotland, and in US states such as Maryland and New York State.
- These bans and moratoria are mainly because the health impacts of fracking on public health are considered to be too dangerous.
- Dr. Howard A. Zucker, NY State Health Commissioner, who recommended a fracking ban in his home state after a six-year study, said, "Would I let my family live in a community with fracking? The answer is no. The potential risks of fracking are too great. In fact, they are not even fully known."
- New studies from John Hopkins University show that people living near fracking wells are four times more likely to have asthma attacks and premature births.
- If fracking were allowed across the English countryside, many people would be discouraged from visiting because of health concerns for themselves and their families.

Defra’s own report on the likely impact of fracking on tourism, published in July 2015, predicted losses in property values in fracking areas, and included the possibility of reduced visitor numbers. Studies which have influenced the State of Victoria, Australia decision to ban fracking have shown that for every 10 new jobs created in fracking, 18 have been lost in agriculture alone.

In conclusion, I believe that a new independent report on the impact of fracking on rural areas must be commissioned, and its findings fully taken into account in planning decisions, before any further fracking applications are considered.
September 2016