Written evidence submitted by the Bryning with Warton Parish Council (RUT0192)

Bryning with Warton Parish Council which is situated on the Fylde Coast, Lancashire wish to submit the following representations for consideration by the committee in regard to the role of tourism in supporting rural growth in England.

I write to you on behalf of the Parish Council

1. **Access, Infrastructure, Local environment and character.**
   1.1 The Fylde Area has long been an area associated with high tourism in the North of England and much of the local economy is owed and reliant to such, From the coastal resorts of Lytham and St Annes, surrounding peaceful rural villages frequented often for static and touring caravan sites with the advantage of the close proximity to the neighbouring high profile attractions of Blackpool, easy access to the Ribble valley, Lake District and the historic City of Lancaster. Unfortunately excessive residential planning is being allowed to proliferate some of the rural areas without the necessary support of suitable highways and roads to accommodate the ever increasing traffic demands. The consequence of which will have a marked effect on local tourism particularly in the southern Fylde area as road congestion is ever growing as both the local and national population increases. Any further growth in local tourism will naturally increase existing problems.

   1.2 Much importance is being attributed to the new Western Distributor Road, North of Preston, Lancashire which will feed on to the A584 as in some way will be relieving congestion but where it enters the village of Warton, ‘Lytham road’ it becomes single carriageway, through to the town of Lytham. It is already struggling to meet the demands of existing traffic, both, during the week for the work force and service vehicles to BAE Systems, Warton, and through traffic for Lytham St Annes, but, also and particularly seasonally at weekends to access the aforementioned resorts and the surrounding rural villages. In addition to which the designated ‘Warton Enterprise Zone’ and significant residential developments, approved village growth currently standing at 85%, will only increase local road network problems mirroring those experienced and expected in the more heavily populated urban areas of the major cities.

   1.3 Despite the principle of ‘Sustainability’ throughout planning guidance and legislation it appears to be applied and interpreted in an extremely limited context by the developers and planning authorities. The Highways Authority of Lancashire and Fylde Borough Council planning authority seem ill equipped, or lack the necessary powers, to mount legitimate common sense objections to such developments and in the fear of costly damaging legal appeals are reluctant to mount robust rejection of such damaging residential developments. It has been commented both at County and Borough Council levels that it seems the developers have all the powers!

   1.4 While clearly this is an issue of many facets the role of tourism should not be overlooked in both maintaining and sustaining the local rural area of Fylde. DEFRA should have greater influence on the impact of significant planning developments in rural areas and the infrastructure should accompany permitted growth.
2. **Infrastructure, Local environment and character:**

2.1 Impact of Shale Gas Extraction.

As highly emotive an issue as it, and whether it is supported or not, the Parish Council feel that any inquiry into the role of tourism in supporting rural growth cannot ignore the impact the actual means of facilitating Shale gas Extraction will have on rural areas. The logistics of site and transportation alone are admitted by the industry will negatively impact on local tourism. The scale of which is projected to be a significant percentage amounting to millions of pounds a year, in Lancashire. Any potential gains to the local economy may significantly be offset by the losses caused to tourism to rural areas by these factors before any consideration to the scale of operations needed to make the process viable and any potential damages caused by the process itself.

2.2 Many rural areas on the Fylde will be vastly undesirable by frequent unsightly ‘rig sites’ or the close proximity of such to tourist caravan and camping sites. It is would be clearly against the aims of the committee inquiry to discount the impact this would have on the smaller rural businesses which accommodate and facilitate such tourism. Will the Shale Gas Extraction industry providers find it uneconomically viable if compensation is required to reimburse all other businesses that are negatively impacted by their operations?

DEFRA must ensure that these considerations are taken into account and they obviously have a major role in any consideration and setting the national policies in how the Government progresses this issue.

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