

## APPLICATION FORM FOR A DEBATE IN BACKBENCH TIME

*The Backbench Business Committee meets in public every sitting **Tuesday at 2.30pm** to hear representations from Members for debates in backbench time. Please complete this form and email it to [bbcom@parliament.uk](mailto:bbcom@parliament.uk) by 2.30pm on the preceding Friday.*

*See notes at the end of this form for guidance on your application. For applications related to e-petitions or Select Committee Statements, please contact the Committee staff.*

### LEAD MEMBER/S<sup>1</sup>

Wera Hobhouse (LD), Ben Bradley (C), Sir Clive Betts (L)

### TITLE OF DEBATE<sup>2</sup>

The use of permitted development and the nationally significant infrastructure project regime for shale gas exploration and production.

### MEMBERS WHO WILL SPEAK IN THE DEBATE<sup>3</sup> (see guidance overleaf; use additional sheet if necessary)

### WHAT TYPE OF DEBATE ARE YOU APPLYING FOR?<sup>4</sup>

- General debate (on a motion for the adjournment or “*That this House has considered [topic]*”)
- In the Chamber    In Westminster Hall (Thurs)    In either    In Westminster Hall (Tues)
- Debate on a substantive motion (expresses an opinion; can give rise to a division; Chamber only)

*That this House has considered the use of permitted development and the nationally significant infrastructure project regime for shale gas exploration and production.*

### LENGTH OF DEBATE<sup>5</sup>

90 minutes

3 hours

6 hours

(Members may tick more than one box)

### REASONS FOR THE DEBATE<sup>6</sup> (use additional sheet if necessary)

#### Topicality

On 25<sup>th</sup> October two government consultations closed on ‘permitted development (PD) for shale gas exploration’ and the ‘inclusion of shale gas production projects in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime’.

A further consultation on ‘compulsory community pre-application consultation for shale gas development’ was launched on 31<sup>st</sup> October. Dependent on the government’s response to the initial two high-level consultations on PD and NSIP, further consultations on criteria will follow.

At present, it is expected that neither proposal will be introduced through primary legislation and therefore subject to full parliamentary scrutiny. Given the importance and consequences of the proposed policies, set out below, we believe it should be subject to a 3 hour general debate in the Chamber.

#### Importance

The proposed changes contained within the initial two consultations disregard the wishes of local communities,

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remove decision making powers from local councils and strip the requirement for fracking companies to apply for planning permission for shale gas exploration.

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee produced its 8<sup>th</sup> report this session (5<sup>th</sup> July 2018) on 'Planning Guidance on Fracking' concluding that "fracking planning applications should not be brought under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime nor acquire permitted development rights".

The consultations have sparked interest across civil society with organisations as varied as the Local Government Association, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Royal Town Planning Institute, National Farmers Union, and Friends of the Earth submitting consultation responses.

The public have also heavily engaged on the proposals with over 307,000 people signing petitions on the consultations. In addition, over 600 councillors from across England and of varying political allegiances have signed a 'Let Communities Decide' letter.

### Interest

A total of 59 MPs, from across the House, attended two previous Westminster Hall Debates on 12<sup>th</sup> September (Shale Gas Exploration: Planning Permission, 30 Minutes, Lee Rowley MP [C]) and 31<sup>st</sup> October (Local Involvement in Shale Gas Development, 60 Minutes, Mark Menzies MP [C]) respectively. In the later debate, Members had only one minute and thirty seconds to make a contribution.

That interest was also highlighted at the recent APPG on the Impact of Shale Gas session on PD and NSIP (co-chaired by Lee Rowley MP [C] and Sir Kevin Barron MP [L]) which received oral evidence from CPRE, Garden Court Chambers, Friends of the Earth, Royal Town Planning Institute, North Yorkshire County Council, West Sussex County Council, Chair of Surrey County Council Planning and Regulatory Committee, Landscape Institute and South Hambleton Shale Gas Advisory Group.

### Timing

ASAP

### Department

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government | Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP  
Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy | Rt Hon Claire Perry MP

## GUIDANCE NOTES

1. **Lead Members** are those making the application and their co-sponsors; typically, one, two or three Members who will lead the debate. They can't be Ministers of the Crown, parliamentary private secretaries or principal opposition front-bench spokespersons. Members seeking debates should plan to attend a meeting of the Committee to present their application.

Any Lead Member applying for a debate and wishing to declare a relevant interest should place an R after their name and enter details of that interest into the box for further information

2. The **topic** will be the title of the debate. It should be expressed briefly, and in neutral terms.
3. **Members who want to take part in a debate** should not be Ministers of the Crown or principal opposition front-bench spokespersons. Please do not copy lists of names from related EDMs or membership of APPGs—the Members listed must have explicitly indicated that they intend to speak in the debate. Use an additional sheet if necessary. The Committee will use the list of names to gauge the likely level of cross-party interest in

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a debate. (As a rough guide, a 3-hour Chamber debate would normally require at least 15 backbench speakers.)

4. **Types of debate:** A general debate is one that takes place on a neutral, un-amendable motion and does not usually give rise to a division. If you are proposing a substantive motion, please feel free to contact the Clerks of the Committee for advice on wording. Substantive motions can only be taken in the Chamber.

The Committee can allocate one 90 minute debate each Tuesday morning in Westminster Hall, in addition to backbench time in Westminster Hall on certain Thursdays. For Westminster Hall debates, please include the names of supporting Members as for other types of application. As these debates are subject to the usual departmental answering rota in Westminster Hall (set out in the Announcements section of the Order Paper), an indication of the likely responding Department and the date on which the debate is sought would be helpful; this can be included in the box for any further information.

5. **Suggested time:** Typically 90 minutes, 3 hours or 6 hours (the latter represents a full day's debate in the Chamber and will only be granted if interest is likely to be exceptionally high). The time actually available on the day will depend on the discretion of the Chair, and on other business including ministerial statements and urgent questions.
6. **Additional information:** The Committee will select topics for debate based on all or some of the following criteria: topicality, the amount of time available and requested, why it is felt important for a debate to be held, when the topic was last debated (and how much interest there was on that occasion), breadth of interest across all parties, and why such a debate is unlikely to be secured through other routes. As substantive motions can only be taken in the Chamber, general debates will only be considered first for Westminster Hall, depending upon the availability of time for debates.

For applications related to **e-petitions** or **select committee statements**, please contact the staff of the Committee.

Please note that the Committee is normally unable to make firm allocations of debates more than nine days in advance of the debate taking place. However, early applications are helpful, especially if you would like to express interest in a particular week or month.

### CONTACT

The staff of the Committee can be contacted for any queries through [bbcom@parliament.uk](mailto:bbcom@parliament.uk) or on extensions 1881, 3751 or 2903.