

# Press release: Natascha Engel appointed as Commissioner for Shale Gas

Former MP Natascha Engel was today (5 October 2018) announced as the new independent Commissioner for Shale Gas.

The government understands the development of shale gas exploration and production sites is an issue which directly affects local communities and recognises the need to provide those communities with impartial, fact-based information.

Taking up her post this week, Natascha Engel will be a direct communication link between local communities, the shale gas industry and the industry regulators. The commissioner will be a contact point for residents, to listen to their concerns, refer them to relevant and factual research and help improve communication with regulators and industry.

Natascha Engel, Commissioner for Shale Gas, said:

If extracted safely, shale gas has the potential to be a new, domestic source of energy for the UK. But there is a need for clear, impartial information to be provided to all parties and in particular those local communities most affected by shale gas development.

As the Commissioner for Shale Gas, I look forward to working closely with communities, regulators and industry to ensure facts are easily accessible as the process of shale exploration continues to develop.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said

It's important we get the facts straight on shale gas and that communities can access the best scientific information when engaging with the developers and regulators.

This new role will provide a single point of contact for local residents to get the information they need and have their questions answered.

As the UK makes progress towards shale gas production, proving a streamlined way for developers to engage with our robust regulators will increase efficiency and help to continually improve our already world-leading regulations in this area.

The UK regulatory regime for shale gas is considered among the most robust and stringent in the world.

Regulators ensure the shale gas industry meets the relevant environmental criteria to operate responsibly in the UK and that these regulations keep pace with the development of shale gas exploration.

The commissioner will work closely with the shale gas regulators, although will be distinct from them, as it is not a regulatory role and has no powers of enforcement or investigation. To preserve the independence of the regulators, the commissioner will not comment on any specific regulatory decisions.

The appointment comes as the government announced the set up of a Shale Environmental Regulator Group, which will bring the regulators (Oil and Gas Authority, Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency) together as a virtual body. The Shale Environmental Regulator Group will act as one, coherent, single face for local authorities and industry, helping to resolve regulatory issues on sites and sharing best practice with local authorities considering shale gas applications.

## **Natascha Engel**

Natascha Engel was Member of Parliament for North East Derbyshire from 2005 to 2017.

She has first-hand experience of the local impact of shale gas developments and also has experience of working closely with industry, regulators and government on how to best engage local communities on this important topic.

An email address for the Shale Commissioner will be made available shortly.

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## **[News story: Members of LLWR workforce collect prestigious health and safety accolade](#)**

Members of the LLWR workforce were on hand to collect the organisation's fourth President's Award for its exceptional performance in 2017, in a RoSPA ceremony in Glasgow.

Accolades are based on an organisation's individual occupational health and safety performance and the President's Award was conferred in recognition of LLWR receiving a 13th consecutive Gold Award.

Elaine Burrage, LLWR's Health & Safety (H&S) Manager, said: "In order to achieve a Gold Award we have to declare our safety statistics to RoSPA, but

that is only part of the judging criteria.

“RoSPA also want to understand and assess our H&S management system, how we are continuously improving the health and safety of all those involved in our activities, ensuring that we provide adequate training to the correct standards, ensuring that our contractors and others affected by our work are kept safe at all times and how we monitor our performance and the health of our workforce.

“These are only a few of the criteria they assess us on.”

Russell Beckwith, Low Level Waste Operations Manager, one of those chosen to attend the ceremony, said: “Being asked to represent LLWR and accepting the President’s Award for 13 years of outstanding performance was a proud moment.

“For us to be associated with companies that seek to achieve excellence in health and safety performance and keep that standard going for this considerable length of time just goes to prove the high standards we set ourselves, not just ensuring that we all go home safely to our families, but also that what we are doing is being recognised on the national stage.”

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## [Policy paper: Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide \(NO2\) in UK \(2017\): air quality directions](#)

The directions require specified local authorities to carry out studies or to implement actions to meet legal limits for nitrogen dioxide in the shortest possible time, and sets deadlines.

These are supporting documents of the [Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide \(NO2\) in UK \(2017\)](#).

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## [News story: Consultation on Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems \(I-VMS\) for fishing boats under 12m](#)

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) are [seeking views](#) on proposals to introduce Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (I-VMS) for

all licensed British fishing boats under 12 metres in length, operating in English waters. This also covers English boats operating outside of English waters.

VMS has been used as a monitoring system for UK vessels of 12 metres and over since 2013. The system records the location, speed and heading of a vessel using GPRS technology. Introducing I-VMS for under 12 metre vessels will provide a more accurate picture on fishing location and activity, which will help inform future fisheries management and sustainability.

The data could also allow fishermen to market their produce as sustainably caught, providing consumers with greater awareness of where their fish has come from and helping them to make more informed decisions.

Fisheries Minister George Eustice said:

“Monitoring systems play a crucial role in developing a framework for fisheries management that is both profitable and sustainable – and that allows all sections of our fleet to thrive.

“I now encourage everyone with an interest to have their say by [responding to the consultation](#).”

It is proposed that the initial cost and installation of the equipment will be met by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in order to minimise cost to industry.

The six week consultation will close on 14 November 2018.

Interested parties are invited to share their views either [online](#) or by post to:

UK Fisheries Control and Enforcement Team

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

2nd Floor Foss House

1 – 2 Peasholme Green

York

Y01 7PX

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# Press release: RSPB to host flood scheme information evening on 11 October

Environment Agency staff have teamed up with RSPB Sandwell Valley and local RSPB volunteer, Andy Purcell, to present further information about Phase 2 of the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme.

Attendees are invited along to RSPB at Tanhouse Avenue, from 5pm, where they will have the opportunity to see how the Environment Agency is progressing with the construction work in Sandwell Valley Country Park. Guests will be treated to a presentation by Andy, who has captured drone images of work since construction started.

Following the presentation, Environment Agency staff will highlight progress to date and next steps, followed by a Question and Answer Session at the end.

Josh Harris, Environment Agency project lead for the scheme said:

We have been working closely with our partners and the local community, to ensure that we keep everyone informed. The drone footage will provide a very interesting aspect to the information we give, and we look forward to speaking to people and listening to any feedback that they may have to offer.

Cathy Taylor, Site Manager at RSPB Sandwell Valley said:

We are looking forward to the Environment Agency sharing project updates with our team and the public at the RSPB Sandwell Valley visitor centre. Our volunteers are interested to hear what has been happening recently and the plans for what is coming up for the flood scheme. We are also looking forward to showing the Environment Agency our newly improved marsh as this work was made possible thanks to their supporting it as an environmental improvement associated with the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme.

If you are unable to attend the event, but would like more information about the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme, please visit [our webpage](#) or contact the Environment Agency project team at [witton.frms@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:witton.frms@environment-agency.gov.uk).

Along with flood defences and flood management schemes, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can check their risk and register to receive free flood

warnings by visiting the [Environment Agency flood information pages](#) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.