Dear Louise

Thank you for your letter of 10 November, about offshore helicopter safety. You asked specifically about the Committee's request that the Government commission independent research to examine improvements and threats to offshore helicopter safety.

SINTEF is the largest independent research organisation in Scandinavia. The Helicopter Safety Study 3 that it produced, following on from two earlier studies, was carried out at the request of the petroleum industry and coordinated by the Norwegian Oil Industry Association. The project was financed by the petroleum industry.

As you know the UK Civil Aviation Authority has also carried out a thorough review into the safety of offshore helicopter operations in the North Sea, which was carried out with the cooperation of the Norwegian authorities, the offshore helicopter industry and oil and gas industry.

The Civil Aviation Authority has made a number of recommendations aimed at improving the overall safety of offshore helicopter operations in the North Sea, which are currently in the process of being implemented. We will need to give sufficient time for these new measures to come into effect before we can monitor their overall impact on the on safety performance of offshore helicopter operations.

The UK has a well established and well respected Mandatory Occurrence Reporting Scheme that already provides valuable data about the safety of the offshore helicopter fleet. The newly established Offshore Operations Safety
Forum to will take into account this information when working for substantial improvements in the safety of helicopter operations on the UK continental shelf.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT GOODWILL