



Ministry of Housing,  
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23 May 2019

Dear Clive,

I am writing in response to your letter in relation to the Government's response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee 'Planning guidance on fracking' (HC767) ('the Report').

I appreciate that the Committee hoped to receive our response no later than 8 February 2019. I can assure you that further positive progress has been made on providing a full comprehensive response to the Report, and we are working proactively with BEIS to achieve this.

You may know that on the 14 May 2019 the High Court handed down its final judgment on the judicial review challenge to paragraph 209(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Government is now considering its response to the Report, having due regard to the judgment.

I would like to reassure the Committee that we will provide the Government's response as soon as possible.

**KIT MALTHOUSE MP**

# Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Kit Malthouse MP  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning  
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30 April 2019

Dear Kit,

I am writing further to your letter of 8 February regarding the Government's response to the Committee's report on *Planning guidance on fracking* (HC767), which was published on 5 July 2018.

As detailed in the Osmotherly Rules, the Government is expected to respond to select committee reports within two months of publication though "where a report is complex or technical in its nature, or is dependent on other reports and / or external events, the response may require longer". The Rules also state that "only in exceptional circumstances should a response be deferred for more than six months after the Report's publication". In your preceding letter of 15 August 2018, the Committee received a formal request to extend the response deadline by five months due to various ongoing consultations and legal action relating to this topic. While we were content to accept your request for an extension to 8 February 2019 on this occasion, we were nonetheless disappointed that the Government was unable to respond in full by the original deadline of 4 September 2018.

Your letter of 8 February explained that significant progress in developing the Government's response to our report has been made but work between MHCLG and BEIS was still ongoing and the Government would provide a response "as soon as possible". At the time, the Committee was hopeful it would indeed receive that response soon. However, now that nearly another three months have elapsed and it is now ten months since the report's publication, the Committee is agreed that I should now write to you to express our extreme disappointment that the Government response has still not proved forthcoming. I ask that the Government now publish its response to our report on *Planning guidance on fracking* as a matter of urgency and provide an explanation for the further delay since your letter of 8 February.



**Clive Betts MP**  
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee