

KEITH TAYLOR MEP
MEP for South East England

PCC Katy Bourne
Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner
Sackville House
Brooks Close
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2FZ



14 July 2017

Dear Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne,

Re: Broadford Bridge drill site at Billingshurst

Thank you for your letter dated 16 June 2017.

I was pleased to read your acknowledgement of just what a crucial issue facilitating peaceful protest at Broadford Bridge is. It is an issue that speaks right to the values underpinning British democracy. In the face of reports of excessive force and even violence being used against fracking and drilling campaigners in Lancashire and Derbyshire, where concerns are being raised about a serious erosion of trust between campaigners and officers, the issue is more important than ever.

My original letter raised particular concerns about the policing of so-called slow-walking demonstrations at the Billingshurst site. As you are aware, this is a common means of peaceful protest. I noted with interest, therefore, that you highlighted Sussex Police's experience in "managing anti-oil exploration protests" and offered assurances officers would facilitate peaceful slow-walking protests "for up to 20 minutes" and allow for the "obstruction of vehicles arriving on site".

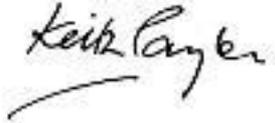
It has been brought to my attention by local campaigners, however, that the issues raised in my original letter still persist. The need for a modified speed limit and traffic management plan that balances the rights of road vehicle users, UKOG's business at the site, and campaigners' rights to freedom of assembly and peaceful protest is becoming clearer and more urgent.

Similarly, despite assurances, I have been passed evidence - which accompanies this letter - that suggests Sussex Police are not tolerating slow-walking demonstrations and are failing to communicate clearly with the protesters on site. Moreover, there are allegations that officers have responded heavy-handedly to such demonstrations. One of the allegations comes from a protester featured in the evidence submitted alongside this letter. After reviewing the evidence, can you confirm whether, in your view, the actions taken against the slow-walking protester are fair and proportionate?

Can you also confirm, as per your initial response, that Sussex Police have indeed published slow-walking guidance to protesters on the site and can I also request a copy of that guidance?

I welcome your assurances that you will "continue to challenge the Chief Constable" on this "important issue" and I look forward to receiving your timely response. Alternatively, I will be visiting the site on Thursday, 20 July and would welcome the chance to talk over the issues with you face-to-face with input from the protesters on the ground.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

KEITH TAYLOR
Green MEP for South East England

European Parliament, ASP-8G103, Rue Wiertz, B-1047, Brussels
Belgium Tel: +32 2 284 7153 E-mail: keith.taylor@europarl.europa.eu