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28th April 2010

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Dear Henry,

The Future of the BGS Core Store, Edinburgh

First I must apologise for the long delay in your receipt of this reply to your letter of 23rd February. I regret this was caused by an internal misunderstanding here at Oil & Gas UK, which of course is no excuse at all.

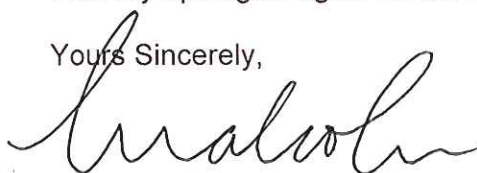
There clearly were serious imperfections on the consultation process which BGS undertook in respect of this matter. For its part Oil & Gas UK failed to engage essentially because we had not been made aware that DECC had transferred responsibility for the oil and gas cores to BGS and hence we did not appreciate that these were affected by the proposed BGS project. If we had been properly consulted and made fully aware of the facts last year then most likely we would have wished to fully explore the case for the maintenance of a store in Edinburgh.

However, in practice, it seems to us that the time for a meaningful debate on whether the store should be relocated to a new facility at Keyworth has now passed. DECC has clearly accepted that such a move is not in conflict with the Government's objectives regarding the core and has left this matter for BGS to manage. Furthermore, in the interests of safety and long term sustainability, we do believe it is important that a new and better store than the facility at Gilmerton is established. We also understand that the new build at Keyworth is now underway with commitments to contractors made and construction having begun. Practically speaking therefore, at a time of very serious constraint on Government spending, we see no real prospect of the Keyworth project being cancelled and replaced with a new project located elsewhere.

With the above in mind we believe that now we should see what we can do to help mitigate the effects of the transfer from Edinburgh upon the academic and technical community and in that regard our data subsidiary, Common Data Access, is looking to see what it can do to help make photographic images of the core available. These could come from existing records and possibly as a result of digital photographic images taken by BGS as part of the transfer process. Beyond that it is difficult to see what more in practical terms we can do to help but please do let me know if you feel that there is.

With my apologies again for the delay in our response,

Yours Sincerely,



Malcolm Webb
Chief Executive