

## **GRANGEMOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (GCC) UOG COMMUNITY DISCUSSION**

- **Group:** The Community Council and the Peoples of Grangemouth.
- **Date of meeting:** Wednesday 13<sup>h</sup> April 2017, 7-9:00pm.
- **Location address / postcode:** Grangemouth High School, Tinto Drive, Grangemouth, FK3 0HW
- **Number of attendees:** 80.

### **(i) UOG Community Discussion Process**

1. Leaflets notifying residents of the meeting were posted through doors throughout Grangemouth and Skinflats, and left in public places: libraries, clinics etc.
2. The consultation began with a 50 minute introduction for residents following information slides set out in Scottish Government's Discussion Pack for large groups, and was presented by Roland Playle and Jamie McKenzie Hamilton from the Community Chartering Network (CCN).

On the basis that residents new to the subject would benefit from a variety of UOG perspectives, a matrix was put together for the purpose. This showed the information summarising the research commissioned by Scottish Government (as set out in their handout cards in the Group Discussion Pack), alongside summaries of legal submissions from the Dart Energy PLI. The matrix was included in the presentation, and as a handout.

In prior pilot consultations aimed at understanding what processes can help facilitate effective community discussion, it was found that framing conversations around shared assets and values helped to bring forth responses which were grounded in the community experience as a whole. This finding is consistent with empirical research conducted by the Common Cause Foundation (<http://valuesandframes.org>). For this reason, a list of generic community assets and values that arose through the Community Chartering experience of Falkirk communities ([http://faug.org.uk/community\\_charter.pdf](http://faug.org.uk/community_charter.pdf)) was also presented and handed out.

3. The presentation was followed by 50 minutes of open circle discussion led by Roland Playle and Jamie McKenzie Hamilton, each facilitating one group. The contents of the discussion was split roughly equally between benefits and risks of UOG.
4. Outcomes were written up by the facilitators. [These were first verified for accuracy with councillors and participants, and then broadcast for residents who may have been unable to attend].

Precise details of the materials and process employed can be made available on request to [uogconsultation@charteringnetwork.org](mailto:uogconsultation@charteringnetwork.org).

**(ii) Outcomes.**

**1. Overall, and in light of the available evidence, what do you think would be the main benefits, if any, of an unconventional oil and gas industry in Scotland?**

The main potential benefits put forward by residents, or emerging in discussion were:

**No benefits** Over 70% of participating residents perceived no potential benefits of UOG whatsoever to the community of Grangemouth.

**Energy Security**

A number of points were raised in light of UOG and energy security. The short-term nature of the UOG industry (between 5 – 15years) meant that for most residents, this equated to only a short-term consideration to the question of energy security. The instability and insecurity offered by free market price determination and the EU network market were discussed as barriers to energy security that created uncertainty in prices and led most to question whether the industry would provide energy security. Furthermore, many doubted whether the industry, in particular INEOS, would act in either the national interest or the local community's interest and voiced mistrust in INEOS' incentives of providing benefits beyond its own corporate interests. This concern was echoed by many who saw that INEOS exerted significant power and influence over their community and questioned whether offering more opportunities for a private company such as INEOS constituted security in the national interest. Whilst many agreed that it would not be in the national interest to rely on external sources of energy, most felt that this (as well as others outlined below, in particular the risks) pointed to a reason to invest in a national renewable industry and infrastructure, which they saw as a longer-term solution to energy security. In conclusion, almost all participants rejected energy security as a potential benefit of the UOG industry.

**Jobs**

Employment benefits were considered during discussions. There was a general belief that there would not be a significant rise in the number of local jobs provided by the UOG industry, however some felt that current local jobs may be maintained by it. Almost all present however, felt that the main benefits seen in employment would be 'DIDO' work (Drive in Drive Out) i.e. for people who lived outside of Grangemouth. Some cited the fact that INEOS had refused to confirm how many local jobs they could actually provide when asked by the Community Council and almost all agreed that without significant guarantees in place, this could not be considered as a significant benefit. In conclusion, based on what was known, the vast majority felt that there was not a significant beneficial impact of UOG on local employment, and it was dismissed as a potential benefit.

**Cheaper Fuel**

The idea that the UOG industry would lower the price of household energy was explored and through discussion and reflecting on the Scottish Government's perspective that there is

‘unlikely’ to be lower energy prices, this was dismissed as a potential benefit. The supply of fuel was understood as being not for domestic use, but for petro-chemical industries and manufacturing processes.

### **Other Economic Benefits**

Participants explored other economic benefits related to the UOG industry, however, there was concern that the UOG industry, led by INEOS, would not bring about significant economic benefits in the local or national interest. It was raised that INEOS did not pay its full share of taxes in the UK, due to being a company with an off-shore base and that the main motives of the company were to raise profits against a short-term timetable of extraction. In this light it was felt that the main economic benefits would be seen by INEOS and not the local community. The potential benefits seen to the national economy did not constitute a significant enough advantage compared to the potential risks, for most present. Some spoke of a more preferable situation being one where the energy was owned by a national or community energy programme where profits would directly benefit communities and stay in Scotland, however it was also seen that problems related to transparency and lack of expertise would exist and that the same level and type of risks (as outlined below) would still be faced. With regard to the renewable industry, despite investment in renewables being a riskier and slower venture, it was accepted by many that this would provide more meaningful longer-term benefits even though ‘there will have to be a slow down’ should this preferred route be taken. Overall, it was seen that there were better avenues to develop local and national economic benefits than through UOG.

### **Information lacking**

Many participants mentioned that they had received unclear or contradictory information from different stakeholders and many raised the issue that they were unable to properly assess the potential benefits for the community. One person suggested the possibility of piloting UOG on a small-scale in the Grangemouth area in order to assess the risks and benefits, much like a ‘controlled experiment’, however most felt the industry had to offer clear guarantees of benefits and that the information provided by Scottish Government did not show significant enough benefits for people to see the UOG industry as an advantage to themselves or the community.

## **2. Overall, and in light of the available evidence, what do you think would be the main risks or challenges, if any, of an unconventional oil and gas industry in Scotland?**

### **Environmental Pollution**

Environmental pollution, in particular air and water, was one of the most commonly cited risks mentioned by residents. These concerns were raised with regard to fugitive emissions, accident, leakages, from waste materials and to the type of chemicals being used in the industrial processes. The concerns were strengthened by the news of the instances of pollution and accidents that had been reported from the USA and Australia, such as the Condamine River in Queensland. The concern was raised about how many ‘unknowns’ existed in such a new industry and how residents had experienced pollution from other

industries in the past in Grangemouth. Concerns with the regulatory bodies was mentioned in relation to the issue of both environmental and human pollution and is listed below. The fact that accidents, leakages or any unintended incidents could not be mitigated once they had occurred, was cause for serious concern amongst many and further deepened the sense of danger many felt with the industry. “Once pollution is there, there are health impacts and we cannot clean the environment or regenerate it” was the view of one resident pointing to the fact that many had expressed how they felt safer if the oil and gas was not extracted.

## **Health**

Concerns to human health, both as an extension of environmental pollution and as a distinct risk of its own, were raised by many residents. As above, instances of pollution already experienced in Grangemouth were discussed, in particular bad smells surrounding the neighbourhood for significant periods of time and the ‘Oran incident’ where a large-scale fly infestation caused great disruption and significant concern to residents. The concern to human health, as above, related to the lack of security residents feel the regulatory bodies offer them and this concern has particular significance to the invisible nature of fugitive gas emissions. How would residents know when harmful gases had escaped near to their homes, places of work and their children’s schools? How would they know that any accidents could be stopped immediately? The risk to human health perceived by many was communicated as a risk to people’s own lives and therefore seen as a significant cause for concern and protection. In this sense, many people felt their basic and fundamental sense of security was being challenged by the possibility of the UOG industry operating in their community.

## **Cumulative Community Impacts**

The cumulative impacts of having to host the UOG industry further were raised as a concern, both in relation to the environmental and human health risks mentioned above and to the quality of life within the community as a whole. With regards to environmental and human health, many people felt that there was not enough information about how this would be monitored, if at all. “How can this be measured?”, “who would be measuring this and keeping an eye on this?” were some questions asked. It was pointed out that there was no baseline data available, concerning cumulative impacts to be measured against and those who raised the concern felt convinced that there was not anyone looking at cumulative impacts at all. The concerns of cumulative impacts, seen in relation to the risks they have on people’s quality of life in the community were seen in terms of the changes that a UOG industry would bring about when active in close proximity to community life. Aspects such as noise, the increase in transport (at the frequencies presented in the Scottish Government data), unfavourable changes to the landscape and the change in the make-up of the community etc. These changes were seen as indicators of increased levels of stress, frustration and therefore illness both mental and physical in the community. Most felt that their community would be worse off if the UOG industry was active in their area.

## **Ineffective Regulation / Profit Motive**

During discussions, the topic of regulation emerged as one of the most frequently cited concerns and was returned to on many occasions. Due to past experiences, many residents

did not believe that the regulatory authorities, particularly SEPA, had the capacity to effectively safeguard community members' security (health) and their interests. Examples of instances when SEPA had not been able to protect people adequately were cited, such as those mentioned above and while it was understood that there were regulatory structures in place, doubt was raised by many as to whether SEPA had the expertise or capacity to monitor such a new industry, particularly in a time of public spending cuts. Mention was made of the Air Quality Action plan where, despite multiple repeated breaches of air quality regulations in the Grangemouth area, it took 4 years for meaningful enforcement from regulators. This was held as an example of how, even with monitoring and legislation, safety was not guaranteed by the regulators. Many also voiced their fears that, because of the lack of resources available, the industry would in effect be 'self-regulating', while others commented about their concerns that this was always in part the case, due to the need for disclosure by the industry in regulatory processes. Discussions were had about this aspect of the regulatory process and residents repeatedly voiced their lack of trust in the industry, particularly INEOS, to report incidents and accidents accurately, particularly because of the profit motivated nature of its venture. Many people doubted that the industry carried community members' interests in their operations at all. In light of this and people's understanding of regulatory processes, it was seen that the levels and structures of accountability and transparency that had either been presented or that were available concerning the UOG industry, were not at all sufficient to allay peoples' concerns for safety. Many felt that these concerns also rang true to their experiences of living in a highly industrialised area and doubted this would be any different with the UOG industry. Some stressed this level of risk and their concern due to the industry being a new industry with 'many unknowns'. "It's just an experiment on local people" was one resident's voicing of this concern. The lack of trust expressed with regard to the regulatory bodies and the industry also extended to the Local Authority for some. Some residents felt that the industry had too much power or freedom to do as they wished and were beyond the ability of the Local Authority to exert measures to safeguard people and the environment. Several people voiced concerns about whether the tax-payer would be left with the costs of the clean-up in the case of bankruptcy, particularly where accidents causing pollution had occurred or before decommissioning was complete.

### **Unknown Hydrogeology**

One often cited risk was the concern about the geological context of the Grangemouth area. Many felt that not enough was known about the geology of the area and the fact that many coal mines existed that were 'unmapped'. Several people cited examples of how accidents had already occurred in the wider area because of this. People also talked about fault lines, which were highly complex geological formations. These concerns related to subsidence, earthquakes and the difficulty of mitigating fugitive emissions. The uncertainty of a geology that was unstable in places, added to the concerns that accidents could occur resulting in pollution with long-term and harmful effects. This concern was also extended to the water table which some saw as being extremely difficult to clean up, should there be any instance of pollution.

## Others

Other risks raised by residents were **Landscape and Habitat Destruction**, due to the intensity of the drilling / frequency of wells and issues related to pollution mentioned above. **Noise** pollution caused by drilling in proximity and heavy traffic of frequent large-scale vehicles. **Property Damage** was also mentioned by many particularly due to the proximity of drilling sites to housing. These concerns related to the structures of the buildings as well as the depreciation in the value of housing. **Traffic** was mentioned in relation to health concerns as well as noise issues, particularly in relation to recent news about diesel emissions. Some talked about the effect on children and others also mentioned how roads would become far busier. Some people also mentioned how **Not Enough Information about Chemicals** had been provided in Scottish Government's presentation materials particularly those associated with health impacts such as BTEX (Benzene) and EDCs.

### **3. If you have any other comments on the issues as discussed in this consultation, please provide them here:**

This section forms the main substance of our consultation and revolves around the OUR MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENT questions (or what we think the Scottish Government need to take into account when considering the future of unconventional oil and gas development in Scotland).

There is one main message or question to the Scottish Government which arose from our consultation:

**Our community rejects any social license for the UOG industry to operate in our area, will the Scottish Government respect our collective position?** In light of the above risks raised, a significant majority of us feel that the potential risks far outweigh the benefits based on what we know. "What are the red lines and what would Government need to know to ban it" is one community member's way of capturing this feeling. We consider the risks to human and environmental health to be significant and considerable and our position is stressed further by our lack of trust in the regulatory authorities and the industry to put our interests first and protect us and our locality from harmful effects and the serious consequences that we believe will follow. Our concerns are borne of our past experiences here in Grangemouth and this lack of trust extends to the ability of the Local Authority to keep the industry under control. We believe that to explore a new energy resource such as this, requires a stable government and should not be being discussed in the atmosphere of the political uncertainty we are currently experiencing. We have reached a general consensus that there has not been enough clear and unbiased information given to us to make informed decisions, including the contradictory, unclear and uncertain articulation of the benefits, locally and nationally. The majority of us also feel that the information provided downplayed key aspects of fracking, including the potential risks through leakage, waste and the effects of chemicals on environmental and human health, as well as the types of chemicals that the industry will use. We also want the Government to carry out research and provide information on the negative consequences experienced in other countries, such as the US where UOG has taken place. We do not have sufficient assurances that UOG will or can be conducted in a safe and transparent manner and that our community will not pay the ultimate and longer-term price of the damage or disruption we believe will be caused by the industry acting in such a heavily populated area of Scotland. On this basis and for the reasons mentioned above, we are clear that we do not want to see a UOG

industry established or active in our area. A significant majority of us do not grant a social licence for UOG in the Grangemouth area.