



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2AW

www.gov.uk/decc

Our ref: EIR 14-0714

22nd July 2014

Dear

Thank you for your e-mail of 6th May, where you requested the following information

All correspondence such as e-mails, letters and details of meetings including agendas, minutes and internal briefing papers between

Duarte Figueira, Head of the Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil and senior executives from the following companies:

- ***IGAS***
- ***Centrica***
- ***Dart Energy***
- ***Cuadrilla***
- ***Viking UK***

On the subject of unconventional oil and gas extraction, including fracking and coal bed methane from 1st January 2013 until today

We have considered your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), because the information you are seeking falls, within the definition of “environmental information” as stated in the EIRs.

Some information is already published and can be viewed at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-of-energy-climate-change&publication_type=foi-releases

{Classification}

There is some additional information which is being withheld. DECC considers this material is exempt from disclosure under Regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIRs which relates to material which is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents or incomplete data; and Regulation 13(1) of the EIRs which relates to personal data. To the extent that these exceptions do not apply, redacted copies of this information is attached at **Annex A** of this letter.

Regulation 13(1) of the EIRs provides an absolute exception from disclosure for personal data, which then falls to be dealt with under the Data Protection Act (DPA). Personal data of third parties can only be disclosed under the data protection principles. In particular, the first data protection principle requires that disclosure must be fair and lawful and must comply with one of the conditions in Schedule 2 of the DPA. We do not think it is fair to release the names and contact details of DECC staff below Senior Civil Service level, or staff in other organisations, and do not think that any of the relevant conditions in Schedule 2 of the DPA apply.

The rationale for engaging the exception under regulation 12(4)(d) is that material which is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents, or incomplete data it is often in the public interest for public authorities to have a “safe space” within which to think through and develop policy. In considering the public interest we have applied a presumption in favour of disclosure as required by regulation 12(2) of the EIRs.

In this case, some of the information we possess relates to policy that is still under development and falls within the scope of policy formulation. The Government is still in the process of evaluating the UK’s shale gas resources and their potential role, if produced, in energy policy. Policy development is an iterative process which requires officials to propose, test, and refine proposals through the life cycle of the policy development. In our view, disclosure of this material would affect the “safe space” needed to effectively consider the necessary matters relating to unconventional oil and gas extraction, including fracking and coal bed methane policy and would hinder officials from bringing policy formulation to a proper conclusion. Additionally, in this case disclosing such information could compromise the willingness of Government Ministers and companies to share information with each other; and could inhibit the ability of officials, to exchange views and advice in future, including with external parties, which would have adverse impact on the conduct of Government business and in the quality of decision making.

Having considered the balance of public interest, we have concluded that the public interest in maintaining the “safe space” outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information in this instance.

Appeals procedure

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information, you may request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter. If you wish to request an internal review, please contact: The Information Rights Unit, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET. Email foi.requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Office for Unconventional Gas and Oil (OUGO)

Annex A

From: REDACTED REDACTED [mailto:REDACTED REDACTED @centrica.com]

Sent: 08 January 2014 12:25

To: Figueira Duarte (Energy Development)

Subject: Shale Gas - SAF

Duarte,

Good afternoon,

We have a very small forum of specialists about 10 people in total, (IGas, Cuadrilla, Viking, Celtique Dart Chevron) on shale gas and the security challenges that may be faced in the future, we have a meeting on the 23rd Jan and wondered if anybody from DECC would be interested in giving us a 30 min brief of DECCs angle and what has been horizon scanned in this regard.

Can you advise who we might approach on the matter bearing in mind the flash to bang time...

Many thanks

Kind regards

Yours ever,

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☎ **For Emergencies call** REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED

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Please consider the environment before printing this email

From: REDACTED REDACTED [mailto:REDACTED REDACTED@centrica.com]
Sent: 04 February 2014 17:24
To: Figueira Duarte (Energy Development)
Subject: Bowland shale gas announcement

Dear Duarte,

I wanted to get in touch following Cuadrilla's announcement today about the proposed location of two new shale gas exploration sites in the Fylde, Lancashire (Roseacre Wood and Preston New Road).

Cuadrilla intends to apply for planning permission to drill, hydraulically fracture and test the flow of gas on each of the two sites.

As joint venture partners in the Bowland Basin exploration licence, Centrica believes today's announcement is an important step in exploring a new source of UK gas and helping deliver jobs and investment to the North West.

Our priority is to work with Cuadrilla to ensure thorough local engagement and the highest operational standards.

At the end of last year we held a series of information days and events in Fylde, which have been really helpful in informing our local plans locally. Over the coming weeks there will be a number of ways that residents and local people can comment on the proposals; there will be a series of public events, an online community map to comment on the sites, and public involvement in the planning application process. I attach a series of materials that Cuadrilla is today hand delivering to residents, which gives more information about the sites, consultation process and shale gas.

Centrica has also developed a set of Operating Principles for onshore natural gas exploration and extraction, which will be applied to the Bowland project. These are based on advice from the Royal Society, Royal Academy of Engineering and British Geological Survey amongst others and will help us to maintain the highest standards in our work. You can find Centrica's operating principle at www.centrica.com/naturalgas.

Centrica already has a number of operations in the North West, including a number of offshore platforms in the East Irish Sea, Barrow Wind Farm, Barrow onshore terminals and Heysham support base. These operations have created a significant number of jobs and investment in the local economy. Last year our work in the North West contributed an estimated £180m to GDP, supported over 25,000 jobs and led to the purchase of goods and services worth £870m from more than 760 local businesses. We hope shale gas can help further support jobs and investment in this region and across the UK.

If you have some time in the next few weeks, I think it would be valuable to meet and discuss this announcement and the Bowland project in more detail.

Please let me know if there are any dates and times that particularly suit you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

REDACTED

From: REDACTED REDACTED

Sent: 08 March 2014 16:49

To: Duarte.Figueira@decc.gsi.gov.uk; REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED

Cc: REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED

Subject: Unconventional Gas Aberdeen - note to speakers

Dear speaker (session starting 9am Weds 26th March)

I will be chair of this session. My role will be to run the session on-time and ensure you have all you need in terms of details.

I will also introduce you to the conference audience which will be made up of people from industry, associated or related industries as well as students, politicians and others. Subject knowledge will vary from active operators to people wishing to learn more about the business.

I will use bio provided to prepare a brief introduction for each speaker which I will share with you ahead of the conference.

Over the years, conferences have learned, that short audience Q&A is not a very effective way to get the most insight so, like many conferences we have done away with this. Instead there will be an extended 'sofa-session' at the end of this session with speakers joining a facilitated conversation together on the topic of the session. I hope some of you will be available for this. Please let me know if you would like to join this 'open conversation'.

REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED will facilitate this session's conversation.

Timing will be critical so I and the co-chair will indicate time to keep us on-track and ensure all speakers in the day get their opportunity during the time participants plan to be at conference.

One more request: If you have a brief 120 character summary of your key message and could provide it we would use it to send out to twitter followers 'live' at conference. We will use remaining characters to assign it.

Very much looking forward to seeing you there. In the meantime please let me know if you have questions or if I can help with preparation in any way.

Conference link is <http://www.unconventionalgasaberdeen.com/> and we are on twitter @UnconGas14 (so follow us!).

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Website: www.centrica.com

From: REDACTED REDACTED [mailto:REDACTED REDACTED@centrica.com]
Sent: 13 March 2014 13:41
To: Figueira Duarte (Energy Development); REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED
Cc: REDACTED REDACTED; REDACTED REDACTED
Subject: RE: Unconventional Gas Aberdeen - note to speakers

As previously stated, we will hold informal, facilitated 'open conversations' at conference to tie subjects together rather than Q&A at each individual presentation. Would you be willing to participate. They are very effective and a forum for constructive discussion NOT debate. Please let me know. Thanks. Mark.

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From: REDACTED REDACTED [mailto:REDACTED REDACTED @centrica.com]
Sent: 27 March 2014 13:06
To: Figueira Duarte (Energy Development)
Subject: UG14 thanks

Dear Duarte - many thanks for attending the conference. First and foremost I hope it was useful for you.

It was certainly a great addition to the meeting to hear your perspective on the status and future of onshore gas development. I can see how OUGO is making a difference.

Having worked in Poland as well as UK it is interesting to note how simple UK roadmap is .. Maybe more interesting is hearing people think it is complex in UK!

Thanks again and best wishes. Let me know if I can help in any way.

REDACTED