

Briefing

Making a better job of it

Why renewables and energy efficiency are better for jobs than fracking

The fracking industry claims that it will create many thousands of jobs for local people. But these claims appear exaggerated, and investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy would create more jobs.

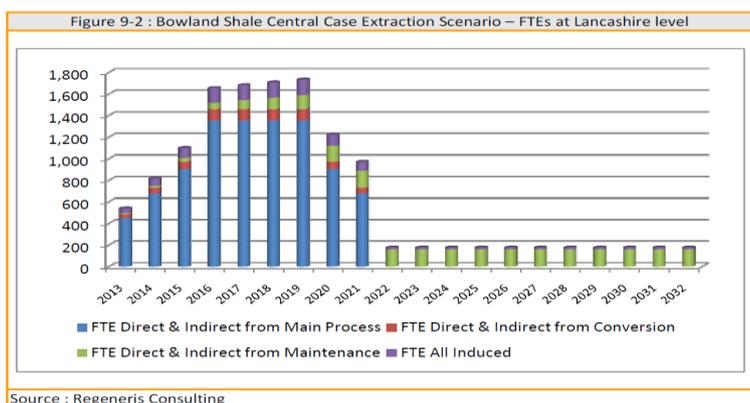
Fracking job creation claims are over-stated, as has often been the case in the US

The key report quoted by the industry and its supporters in Government claims that fracking will create over 1,100 jobs per well pad. But peer-reviewed evidence assessing job creation from shale gas extraction in the US (based on how many jobs are created for a given amount of gas extracted) suggests the actual figure could be much lower, with a maximum of around 400 jobs per wellpad. Thus the industry and its supporters appear to be over-stating job creation claims

Any job creation from fracking is likely to be short-term, whereas the risks posed are long-term

Despite the many years of disruption to local people from Cuadrilla's proposed test-drilling in Lancashire, the two sites would only support 11 net jobs each for the testing period.

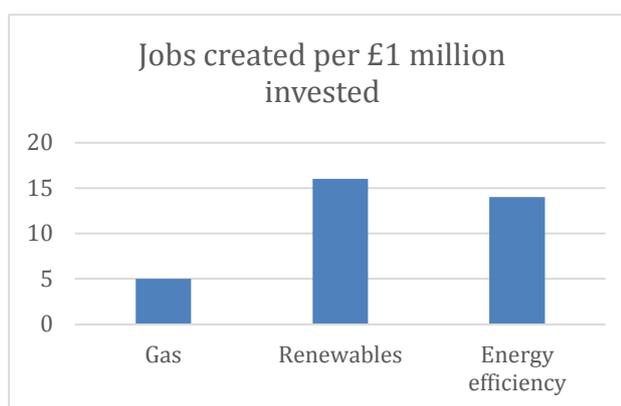
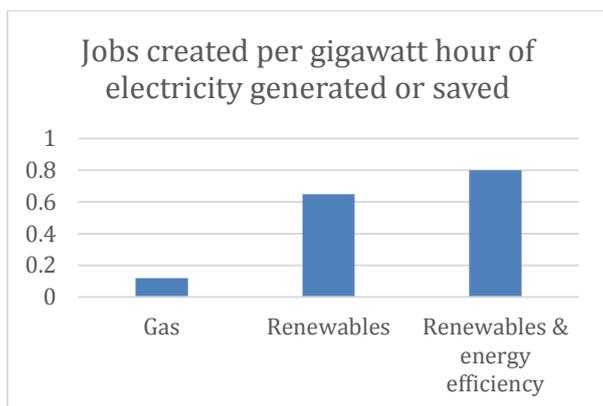
And possible job figures quoted for any production phase are peak figures which fall off rapidly. For example, research for Cuadrilla claims shale gas production in Lancashire would create 1,700 jobs – but this figure is for one year only, and falls to under 200 only three years afterwards. But the potential impacts of fracking are long-term: communities will face environmental risks for many years after the jobs have ceased to exist.



The fracking industry makes no assessment of the possible negative impacts on other key local sectors such as agriculture and tourism, which employ 10% of the local workforce. These industries could suffer from the impacts or perceptions of fracking.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency create more jobs than fossil fuels

Recent analysis by the UK Energy Research Centre shows that renewable energy and energy efficiency are a better jobs bet than fossil fuels in terms of both money spent and power generated or saved. They create over six times as many jobs as gas per unit of power generated or saved, and around three times as many jobs for the same investment.



Renewable energy and energy efficiency in the North West could support another 24,000 jobs

Renewable energy has already created around 10,000 jobs in the North West, such as over 200 jobs in the construction of Scout Moor onshore wind farm near Rochdale, and in installation of offshore wind such as the Gwynt y Môr wind farm. Key elements of the supply chain such as Cammell Laird on Merseyside and Siemens in south Manchester are already in the North West.

Developing a further 10 GW of renewables (including onshore and offshore wind and solar) - just a small percentage of the total potential - could support 14,000 further jobs. This could be higher still with more ambitious plans. And a bold energy efficiency programme, focusing initially on low income fuel-poor households, could create 9,800 jobs in the North West by 2020.

Conclusions

Claims that fracking in the UK will lead to huge and long-lasting job creation are another part of the shale gas hype. And after any short-term jobs benefits, communities would face long-term risks. But fracking could delay or inhibit investment in real solutions to our energy crisis, particularly renewables.

Thousands of jobs could be created in the North West in renewables and energy efficiency. But this would be put at risk if the Government continues its 'all out for shale' approach and councils approve planning applications such as Cuadrilla's applications at Roseacre and Preston New Road.

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