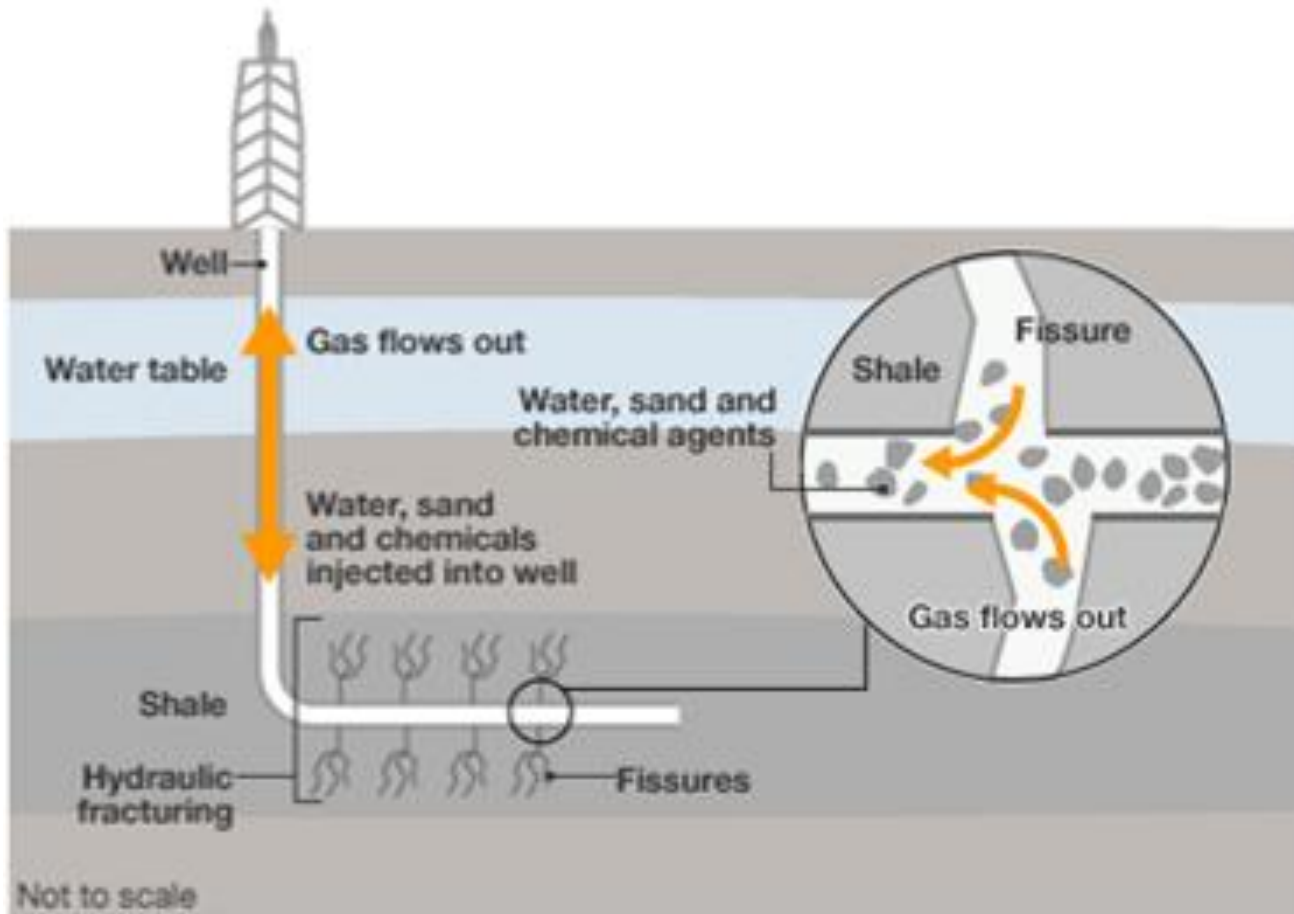


Shale gas, fracking and the role of local authorities

Tony Bosworth
Friends of the Earth



How is shale gas extracted?



Key impacts

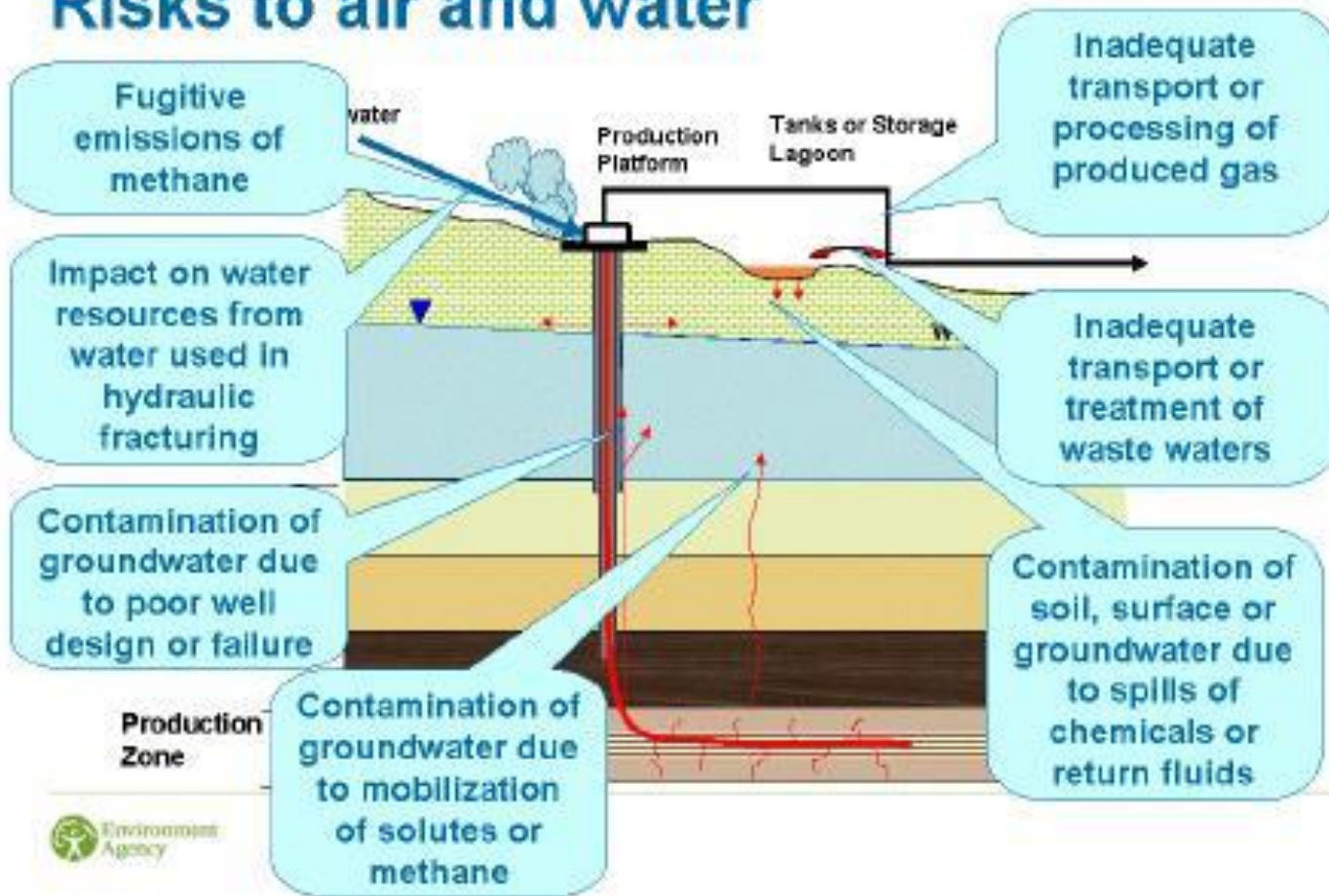
“Fracking may result in unavoidable environmental impacts even if unconventional gas is extracted properly, and more so if done inadequately. Furthermore, increased extraction and use of unconventional gas is likely to be detrimental to efforts to curb climate change”

– UN Environment Program

- **Climate change**
- **Water**
- **Air pollution**
- **Jobs and economy**



Risks to air and water



State of play in UK

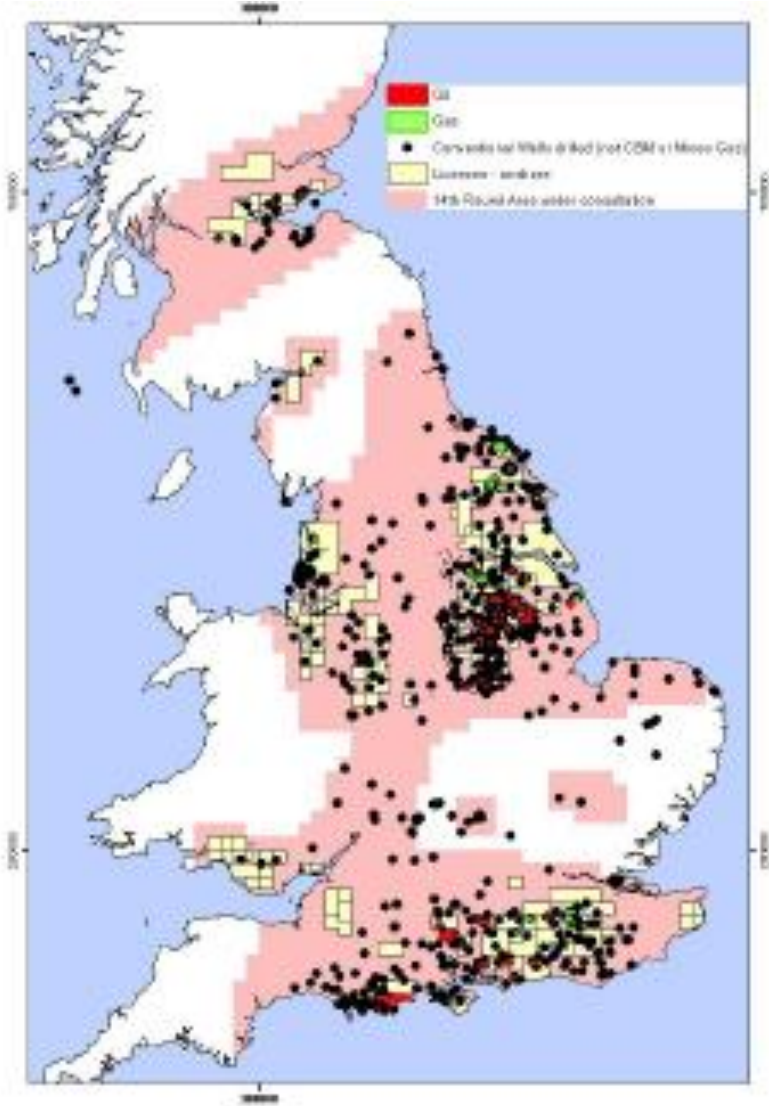
Exploratory drilling and fracking only

- Lancashire – Cuadrilla drilled 4 sites and looking for more
- Sussex – Cuadrilla wants to drill in Balcombe (note: shale oil)
- IGas in Cheshire
- Coastal Oil & Gas in Kent, Glamorgan
- Tamboran in County Fermanagh

Where next?



Coming soon to an area near you?



Gaining consent – the process

- Licence from DECC
- Planning permission from County / Unitary Council
- Regulators:
 - Environment Agency – drilling, water, waste permits
 - Health & Safety Executive – responsible for well integrity



National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework does not contain specific policy regarding fracking
- Budget 2013 announced new planning guidance – fear this is aimed at fast-tracking process
- Government proposed decision-making on shale gas production going to Planning Inspectorate but has just decided against



Planning and fracking

Strongest planning objections:

- **Climate change impacts**
- **Precautionary principle (particularly in application to groundwater contamination)**
- **Minerals plans should include a specific policy on the application of the precautionary principle to all applications on fracking – unless it can be proven that there will be no groundwater contamination that the development should not go ahead.**



NPPF and climate change

“Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions”

(para 93)

“Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.”

(para 94)



NPPF and minerals

“Local planning authorities should ... set out environmental criteria ... to ensure that permitted operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural environment or human health, including ... impacts on the flow and quantity of surface and groundwater and migration of contamination from the site; and take into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality”

(para 143)



Precautionary principle

- EU Water Framework Directive and environmental law provide for the precautionary principle to be considered in planning
- *“The presumption in relation to groundwater should broadly be that it should not be polluted at all [...] It is essentially a precautionary one”*



What can local authorities do?

- **Implement the precautionary policy in planning – Minerals plans and development decisions**
- **Make ‘Frack-Free’ declaration**
- **Work with neighbouring authorities**
- **Respond to consultations on planning guidance and community benefit**
- **FOE seminar with interested councils in October?**



Help shape Government planning guidance

- **Planning guidance being drafted**
- **Key starting points: climate change and precautionary principle**
- **Subject to public consultation**
- **Write to Planning Minister Nick Boles MP**





**Friends of
the Earth**