

Glengorm gas field

Not many people disagree with my argument that all the time we need to burn or use gas as a feedstock it makes more sense to use gas from nearby from our own gasfields than to transport it miles across the oceans of the world in an LNG carrier or to draw on continental supplies that also depend on Russia.

I do get asked how realistic this is, given the way the North Sea is running down. It is true that recent years have not seen the same huge discoveries the drillers discovered in the earlier years of the development of this great resource. It would be wrong to say there is no new gas to find or to produce. Recent years have seen important discoveries made. The Jackdaw field is a substantial find which is ready to develop, with gas pipes running nearby and the Shearwater platform with available capacity to process the raw output.

There is a potential upgrade of Goddard in the southern North Sea, and development of Lancaster as an extension to Hurricane. There are the Glengorm and Glendronach finds west of Shetlands. In total the Oil and Gas Authority tells us over the last three years the industry found an additional 500m barrels of oil equivalent between oil, gas and gas liquids. That was with much reduced drilling.

On top of this is the more contentious issue of the Bowland shales in northern England. So little drilling has been allowed there that estimates of how much gas is available range from a very useful 2.7 trillion cm to a massive and game changing 37.6tcm.

The Conservative Manifesto promised "to introduce new measures to reduce (energy) bills". Encouraging and permitting more exploration and development wells in the North Sea would be a way of helping do this, which would also create plenty of new well paid UK jobs and save all those LNG carbon generating miles of travel.