

**PE1537/H**

Petitioner Letter of 20 April 2015

Dear Convener and Committee Members

In response to Scottish Enterprise [SE] and East Lothian Council's [ELC] further submissions to our petition, we would like to comment and elaborate on the ongoing issue of the lack of public consultation, future developments for the site and the outcome of the proposed Marine Energy Park.

Our petition calls for three items to be considered, a halt to the proposed energy park, full public consultation on any future development and no expansion on the existing energy footprint. To date only one item has been fulfilled with the other two in serious jeopardy of being ignored by Scottish Enterprise and East Lothian Council.

#### Public Consultation

Neither party, in any of the evidence given, has acknowledged their failure to engage the public when concerns were raised about the energy park proposals, despite this being contrary to the Scottish Government guidelines on community engagement within the planning process. These guidelines clearly define the need to engage communities throughout the planning process, stating that success within the planning framework can be achieved by active participation with planners, developers and planning authorities engaging with communities. The level of public inclusion and consultation which has gone before has resulted in little confidence that the public would be fully consulted on any future development.

Despite the Cockszie site being declared by both parties as "nationally significant", both ELC and SE carried out the minimum "community engagement" legally required and continue to do so. The scale of both the proposed and future development of the site, with the threat of diminishing community green space and designated countryside land, destroying areas of national historic value and the local environment of neighbouring private households, warrants further scrutiny from the Scottish Parliament.

We feel it is therefore justified that a full public consultation takes place on any future plans for the Cockszie site, allowing the communities to share, promote and discuss their vision, and work with ELC, SE and other parties to establish a clear master plan for the future. This would benefit the community and local economy, providing local jobs and safeguarding community green space, as well as promoting local history and tourism. To date, the local community remain excluded from any

such discussions. We would therefore ask the Committee to continue their investigation into the plans of SE and ELC, who as an elected body, continue in their failure to engage with the community.

### Future Developments

We have recently been made aware through the national press and online websites of the proposed Cockenzie Development Company [CDC] development for a Cruise Liner Terminal - a list of these links are given at the end of this document.

Prior to this announcement, SE stated their intention to work with ELC and others to explore alternatives, including port related activities. ELC were reported in the East Lothian Courier of September 2012 as preferring a cruise liner terminal, supporting the concept, and on many occasions councillors stated this publicly. ELC, through evidence, made several "oversights" including misleading claims that Cockenzie had deep water, to further the council's own ambitions for a port. The community, whilst embracing industry, would not want an industrial freight port when other sites along the Forth coastline are more adequately suited to this.

Representatives of SE, in their announcement to the group stating that the Energy Park proposal had been abandoned, did stress that they viewed ELC as the representatives of the Community and were not planning any engagement with the community as a whole or with any other local groups, including the CRA or Community Councils. This is significant as SE now intend to assist with the development of alternative proposals for the site. If they are not made to reconsider this position then it is very likely that we will find ourselves in much the same position we found ourselves in with the Energy Park.

Also of note - very soon after the news of the Energy Park proposal being abandoned was revealed on 30th March, David Leven of Scottish Enterprise was reported as saying that he had not ruled out "a cruise liner port". The community is therefore left to wonder if this had been the plan all along, and the Energy Park was simply a feint.

Our communities are not against job creation, local development or industrial use of land. Indeed we accept development of the existing site of the power station and coal plant, should Scottish Power not proceed with the gas fired power station. We welcome any proposals that would create jobs, benefit the local economy and use the existing energy footprint. We also request the committee ensure that our environment, open community spaces and historical sites are protected for future generations and not developed without public consultation. We ask that the

community vision for the area is considered as part of a master plan for the site and would request the Scottish Parliament help us with this. For countless generations, local industry and communities have harmoniously co-existed in Cockenzie, Port Seton and Prestonpans, and this remains our vision for the future, whilst protecting existing livelihoods such as the fishing industry and other local businesses.

Our communities have already collated ideas on how they would like to enhance visitor experience to the area, boost the local economy, create full time employment, promote and protect local history and local arts. Our 'Vision' document has been put together based on the information gathered by the Coastal Regeneration Forum and by CRA consultations & vision sessions over the past 10 months. One point of note on any port-based development however would be that the communities have already agreed they would be against extensive dredging, damaging local beaches, environment and fishing industry, given there is no deep water channel at Cockenzie as people were previously led to believe by ELC. We therefore ask to be given the opportunity to share our Vision and work with other parties to fulfil the potential the area has to offer.

We also note that Inch Cape, who have obtained outline planning permission to build a substation on the Battle of Prestonpans site (which is part of the proposed development site), are beginning investigative works. This site should be protected, and the CRA, Battle of Prestonpans Battle Trust, the Battlefield Trust and wider historic communities are opposed to any development of this site of historic national importance. We support a proposed development of a Garden of Remembrance to commemorate and protect the site.

### ELC MIR

Despite the 'national significance' assigned by ELC to the Cockenzie site, they have refused to adequately address this by extending the public consultation in the MIR. Since ELC held their MIR public consultation (whilst the Marine Energy Park development was being proposed), these plans have been abandoned, invalidating this particular aspect of the public consultation for the site. It is critical that a further public consultation for any future development of the site be opened and extended. The community want to be part of the decision-making process given the scale of the recent proposals. Despite clearly having alternative plans for the site, both parties have failed to disclose these to the committee.

### Summary

We believe that the Scottish Parliament should continue to investigate the continued lack of public consultation of this area of "national significance" that would allow all

parties to work together to promote sensible, economically viable alternatives that create real local jobs and protect historical sites and community assets. We urge the Public Petitions Committee to continue to investigate the plans for Cockenzie as we believe the public continue to be excluded from this democratic process, going against the principles of the Aarhus agreement.

Some of the sources of information on the latest 'Port' development as follows -

**The Scotsman**

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/cockenzie-site-targeted-for-cruise-ship-terminal-1-3743112>

**World of Cruising**

<https://www.worldofcruising.co.uk/developers-reveal-cruise-ship-terminal-plan-for-cockenzie/>

**The Daily Record**

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/developers-plan-pump-300m-turn-5510479>

**Urban Realm**

[http://www.urbanrealm.com/news/5403/%C2%A3300m\\_Cockenzie\\_cruise\\_ship\\_terminal\\_plan\\_unveiled.html](http://www.urbanrealm.com/news/5403/%C2%A3300m_Cockenzie_cruise_ship_terminal_plan_unveiled.html)

**The Times**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/.../article4409484.html>

**East Lothian Courier**

<http://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/prestonpans/articles/2015/04/02/529172-scottish-enterprise-were-not-abandoning-cockenzie-and-east-lothian/>