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Consents given under the Petroleum Act 1998 and Reviews under the Assessment of Environmental Effects Regulations 1999

Centrica

Grove Extension Project

Centrica Resources Limited (Centrica) is planning to extend the existing Grove Field within block 49/10 of the southern North Sea. The Grove East and Grove West sidetrack subsea wells will be tied back to the existing Grove normally unmanned installation. The Grove East well is approximately 3.2 km to the south east of the Grove NUI and the Grove West well is approximately 1.6km south west of the platform. In addition, the Grove South well, an extended reach well, will be drilled from the existing platform. The G3 well may be decommissioned during this phase of the development and this operation is therefore considered within this assessment.

Both Water Based Mud (WBM) and Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud (LTOBM) will be used. The discharge of WBM and associated cuttings have been modelled and the area of potential impact identified. The discharge of WBM will have a localised impact on the benthic communities present. However, habitat recovery is likely to be relatively rapid via dispersion, dilution and breakdown of chemicals. Evidence from previous wells drilled using WBM has demonstrated that the impacts are relatively short lived.

Following the extension project, Grove will produce at a planned combined gas plateau rate of 2600 tonnes per day. Export from the NUI facility is via a pipeline to the Markham Complex situated in Blocks 49/5a and 49/1b in the UK sector and Blocks J3 and J6 in the Dutch sector.

Two new 6" carbon steel pipelines and control umbilicals will be installed between the Grove NUI and Grove East (3.2km) and West (1.6km). The control umbilicals will be laid in the same trench as the gas pipelines during installation. The pipelines are to be trenched below natural seabed level using either a jetting methodology or a tracked cutting tool, supported from a dynamically positioned vessel. Rock dumping will only be required where post lay survey results

suggest that upheaval buckling may occur due to inadequate coverage of the pipeline in the trench.

Seabed imagery at all stations supported the geophysical interpretation of the site and pipeline route surveys as being of rippled fine sandy sediments with no evidence of Annex I habitats present.

Sensitivities

The environmental statement identifies a range of potential environmental hazards including:

- Physical Presence
- Seabed Disturbance
- Noise & Vibration
- Atmospheric Emissions
- Marine Discharges
- Solid Waste
- Minor Loss of Containment

Mitigation measures are in place to ensure that impacts are kept to a minimum.

Conclusion

An environmental statement was submitted to cover the proposed field development, which considered the potential implications of the development. Following consultation with the statutory consultees and the provision of additional information from Centrica, we are satisfied that this project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the receiving environment, including any habitats and species protected under relevant conservation legislation. Recommendation Based on the information present in the ES and further information received, it was advised that project consent be given on 7th July 2008.

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