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

Eclipse Energy

Ormonde Gas Development 113/28a and 113/29a

Background

EECL intends to develop an offshore cogeneration project bringing two gas field reservoirs into production alongside the installation of a 30 turbine offshore wind farm. This is a summary of the review of the gas field only.

Exploitation of the gas reservoirs will be undertaken via two drilling centres; Ormonde South and Ormonde North. Both locations lie in about 20m of water and approximately 10km west of the nearest coastline at Walney Island, Barrow in Furness.

The two gas fields will be developed consecutively, the second being brought on stream once the first is depleted. Thus drilling operations at the North location will take place about four years after those at Ormonde South (for which the anticipated spud date is May 2007).

Two wells will be drilled at both locations and drilling operations are expected to last about a month at each location. All drilling operations will be from a jack up drilling rig and will use water based muds. Cuttings generated from the drilling operation will be discharged to sea, a total of about 280 tonnes of cuttings and associated mud are expected from each well. Once drilled, a relocatable production facility, the Gas Turbine Platform (GTP), will be used to draw off the gas and generate electricity onboard the platform via gas turbines.

The GTP will be a minimum facilities platform and will not be permanently manned. The GTP has been designed to be relocatable and for this reason a jack up design has been chosen. Once production operations have ceased on Ormonde South, the GTP will be relocated to Ormonde North.

After the drilling of the wells, a well test may be carried out. If required, a multi-rate test consisting of three eight-hour

flow periods will be planned over a seven day period at a maximum flowrate of 708,000 cubic metres per day. In the event of a well test being required the produced gas would be flared to the atmosphere. EECL have stated their commitment to using state of the art well test equipment to maximise combustion efficiency and minimise the risk of hydrocarbon carry over from the flare. There will be no offshore flaring of gas during production.

Sensitivities

The original environmental statement identified a range of potential environmental hazards and outlines proposed mitigation measures, including:

- Physical presence
- Seabed disturbance
- Noise and vibration
- Atmospheric emissions
- Marine discharges
- Loss of containment
- Solid Waste
- Cumulative impacts

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

Recommendation

Overall the environmental statement is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed operation. It is recommended that consent is given to the project.

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