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

Munroe Exploration Well 44/17b

On 8 November 2002 Gaz de France Britain Limited submitted an Environmental Statement under the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipelines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999, for the proposed drilling of the Munroe exploration well in the UKCS block 44/17b, approximately 157 Km W of the English coastline and 30 Km from the UK/ Dutch Median line. The field lies in approximately 28 metres of water, and is situated 500m to the south of the South West Patch, a shallow area in the SW of the Dogger Bank. The Dogger Bank is a sandy mound slightly covered by sea at all times and is a habitat as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive, which may be suitable to be designated as a potential Special Area of Conservation. The sediments in the area comprise fine to coarse sands with various admixtures of shingle, shell and gravel, supported by the Bolders Bank Formation.

It is planned to drill a single directional well in the 1st quarter of 2004. It is expected to take 66 days to drill the well, after which it will be either abandoned or suspended. Drilling will take place from a MODU, with a combination of WBM for the top two sections (36" & 17.5") and LTOBM used to drill the lower sections of the well (12.25" &, 8.5", and 6"). Approximately 734.79 tonnes of cuttings will be discharged from the top sections of the hole to the seabed, with approximately 450.84 tonnes of LTOBM contaminated cuttings being contained and shipped to shore for processing and disposal. Reservoir information will be logged during the drilling operation and there will be no requirement to clean - up, flow or test the well.

There are no fisheries related restrictions on drilling in this block and a site specific herring spawning survey undertaken in 2002 did not identify any suitable spawning sites within 3 nautical miles of the proposed well location. Seabird vulnerability is very high during March and high during April & May. However mitigation measures are in place to minimise the potential risk of hydrocarbons entering the

marine environment.

The implications of the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations 2001 have been considered, in particular any potential effects on future candidate SAC. The application considered the effect of the proposed exploration well on sandbanks and in particular the Dogger Bank, which is a habitat type as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive. Although the proposed well is situated 500m south of the South West Patch of the Dogger Bank, the boundary of any cSAC is likely to extend beyond the 20m contour and if the Dogger Bank is selected, it is likely that the proposed exploration well will be within the boundary set. Following provision of additional information contained in a letter dated 28 March 2003, and the submission of the Monroe Baseline Survey, we are satisfied that the ES addresses the impacts from the proposed exploration well and overall no significant environmental impacts have been identified, and it is unlikely to have any significant effect on any possible future SAC. It is not considered that any further appropriate assessment is required. The review of this ES was completed on the 30 July 2003.

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