

## **Cygnus Exploration Well ES Web Comments**

ES Title: Cygnus Environmental Statement  
Operator: Gaz de France Britain Limited  
ES Report No: W/2880/2005  
ES Date: November 2005  
Block Nos: 44/12-2  
Development Type: Exploration Well including contingency sidetrack of the 12.5" section

### **Synopsis**

Gaz de France Britain Limited propose to drill an exploration well located in UKCS Blocks 44/12, some 159 Km north east of Flamborough Head on the Yorkshire coast, in water depths of approximately 20 metres. The well is programmed to be drilled in early January and is expected to take approximately 90 days. It is proposed to drill the well using water based mud (WBM) and low toxicity oil based mud (LTOBM) to drill the bottom of the 17.5" section. The well will generate 1893 tonnes of cuttings, with 551 tonnes of LTOBM from the bottom of the 17.5" section being skipped and returned ashore for treatment and disposal. The hydrocarbons expected are dry gas.

It is planned to undertake a well test for up to 96 hours and a maximum of 993 tonnes of gas to be flared which would result in a maximum of 2,780 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

If commercial hydrocarbons are encountered the well will be plugged and suspended. If not, the well will be abandoned.

The EIA identified the following hazards as having the potential to cause an environmental impact:- Physical presence, Seabed disturbance, Noise, Atmospheric emissions, Marine discharges, Solid wastes, Accidental hydrocarbon spill. The ES considered these aspects in more detail and concluded that whilst the drilling of the Cygnus exploration well may give rise to environmental impacts, these are likely to be short term, localised impacts and unlikely to have a significant impact or adversely affect the draft SAC of the Dogger Bank.

### **Habitats Issues**

The proposed activities are to be undertaken within the draft boundary of the Dogger Bank SAC (dSAC). However the ES considered the potential impacts of the operations in relation to the proposed draft boundary. A screening for an appropriate assessment was also undertaken by the DTI and whilst it was concluded that the proposed operations will impact on the Dogger Bank sandbank, the scale of the proposed operations and the short term impacts, mean there is unlikely to be a significant effect and the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect the integrity of the site.

**Consultees:-** The statutory consultees for the ES were the JNCC and CEFAS.

**JNCC:-** JNCC requested further data in relation to the survey work undertaken and following the provision of this additional information they are content for the project to proceed. They also recommended that DTI undertake a screening exercise.

**CEFAS**:- CEFAS commented that there are no restrictions on drilling in this block during the proposed period and therefore recommended consent.

**Public Consultation**:- No comments were received as a result of public consultation.

**Conclusions**:- Following consultation and the provision of survey data reports provided on the 20 December 2005, we are satisfied that this project is not likely to have a significant impact on the receiving environment and in particular is unlikely to have a significant effect on any sites protected under the Habitats Regulations

**Recommendation**:- Based on the information presented in the environmental statement it is recommended the well consent should be granted.