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

Mobil North Sea Ltd **Loirston Field (Area 43) Development**

Pursuant to Regulation 5(8) of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gives notice that he is content that the requirements of the above Regulations have been satisfied. Consent has been granted to Mobil North Sea Ltd for the getting of oil and gas, in relation to the development of the Loirston Field, in accordance with the proposals set out in the environmental statement. The consent for the development took effect from December 2006 and shall remain in force for a period of two years.

Background

Mobil North Sea Ltd is planning to develop the Loirston Oil and Gas Field in block 9/13b, approximately 157 kilometres to the east of the nearest landfall at Bressay on Shetland and approximately 30 kilometres west of the UK/Norway median line. Development will entail drilling a single extended reach well from the existing Beryl Alpha installation that is located approximately 4.5 kilometres from the Loirston Field. The extended reach well will prevent the need for a sub sea tie back and therefore has the advantage that spill risk will be minimised and no new sub sea facilities, pipelines or chemical injection facilities will be required. Produced reservoir fluids will be returned to the Beryl Alpha installation where they will be commingled and treated within the existing fluids production and treatment system.

The Loirston well is due to be drilled in January 2007. Water phased fluid (WPF) will be used to drill the top section of the well and approximately 404 tonnes of WPF contaminated cuttings will be generated and discharged to the marine environment. The lower sections will be drilled with oil phased fluid (OPF) and will generate approximately 354 tonnes of OPF contaminated cuttings. OPF contaminated cuttings will either be treated and discharged to sea in compliance with current regulatory requirements, or contained and skipped and shipped to shore for treatment and disposal.

Sensitivities

An environmental impact assessment identified and addressed activities with the potential to impact on the environment. No significant environmental impacts (project or cumulative) were identified, however, drilling and produced water discharges, atmospheric emissions and accidental events were identified as aspects that required to be managed in order to minimise their impact. Mitigation and operational control measures have been identified to manage the operations and ensure any environmental impact is minimised.

Both FRS Marine Laboratory and JNCC reviewed and commented on the environmental statement and both were satisfied that there is unlikely to be a significant environmental impact arising from this development. No concerns or comments were received following public consultation.

Recommendation

The environmental statement was considered to be satisfactory and adequately assessed the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development. It was therefore recommended that consent should be given to the project.

Webmaster: [Danny Stocker](#)

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