

Victory 48/22b-E Exploration Well ES Web Comments

ES Title: **Victory 48/22b-E Exploration Well**
Operator: **Century Exploration (UK) Limited**
ES Report No: **W/2504/2005**
ES Date: **March 2005**
Block Nos: **48/22b**
Development Type: **Single Exploration Well**

Synopsis:

The proposed Victory Exploration Well is situated in Block 48/22b in the Southern North Sea, approximately 29 kilometres north-north-east of Cromer on the North Norfolk coast. It is predicted that the reservoir target will contain gas with no hydrogen sulphide and a very low CO₂ content of 0.4 mol%

Drilling operations are planned to commence in early June 2005 and last for approximately 45 days. It is proposed to drill a single vertical well using water based mud to a depth of 2,438 metres from which approximately 1,144 tonnes of cuttings will be discharged to sea. After completion of the drilling operations the well will be tested and either plugged and suspended or abandoned depending upon results.

The well test will consist of three, eight-hour flow periods producing up to 25 mmscf of gas, which will be flared. It is predicted that there will be a small volume of condensate in the range of 10-25 bbls/mmscf.

The Environmental Statement adequately addresses the existing environment including Annex 1 Habitats under the Habitats Directive. Results from subsequent site surveys have indicated that there are unlikely to be any areas of Sabellaria and the substrate is not suitable for herring spawning.

The EIA identified the following impacts that were considered potentially significant and required further investigation:-

- Physical presence
- Seabed disturbance
- Noise
- Atmospheric emissions
- Marine discharges
- Solid wastes
- Accidental hydrocarbon spill

The ES considered these points in detail and where appropriate included evidence from other oil and gas wells. Century have also committed to a survey of the seabed after drilling to look at any drill potential cuttings pile.

Century present an outline of their environmental Management System within the ES. The system is not certified but claims to follow the intent of ISO 14001 and complies with UK and international standards.

We are satisfied that the ES addresses the impacts from the proposed development and overall no significant environmental impacts have been identified.

Public Consultation

We received two letters expressing concern of this development during the public notice period.

The North Norfolk Fishermans Society expressed concerns over the loss of fishing grounds during the drilling period. A response was sent seeking clarification over a couple of points raised in their letter and also pointed out that the area closed to fishing would only be the 500 metre exclusion zone around the rig for period of 45 days. Century are aware of the concerns being raised by the fisherman and have undertaken discussions with them. There was no response from NNFS.

The second letter was from a Y. Fuller. There were no concerns raised specific to this project.

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

JNCC:- JNCC is content for the well to proceed and conclude that this proposed operation will not significantly impact any habitat that may in future be designated as a cSAC.

CEFAS:- CEFAS recommend consent for this well. They originally advised us of restrictions during August to October to protect herring spawning stocks and therefore all drilling activity should be completed by end of July. However, following the subsequent submission of further data, CEFAS have agreed that the area is unlikely to be suitable for spawning herring and hence the restrictions have been lifted.

Recommendation:

Based on the information presented within the ES and advice from consultees it is recommended that approval should be given.