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

Talisman

BEATRICE BRAVO DRILLING PROGRAMME

Pursuant to Regulation 5(8) of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gives notice that, being content that the requirements of the above Regulations have been satisfied, he has, pursuant to Licence P187, granted a consent to Talisman Energy (U.K.) Limited to the getting of petroleum and the construction of installations in relation to the development of the Beatrice Bravo Drilling programme. The consent for the Beatrice Bravo Drilling programme took effect from 26/06/01 and shall last until 31/12/01.

Background

Talisman Energy UK Ltd propose to drill and complete two development wells from the Beatrice Bravo platform using a jack-up rig. The wells will be sidetracks of existing production wells and will be drilled with low toxicity Oil Based Mud. Drilling is expected to last for a total period of approximately 100 days.

During the EIA process, Talisman identified two environmental aspects which would result in significant impacts and required further investigation. These aspects were acoustic disturbance to marine mammals and oil spills from the drilling rig or associated vessels. The Jack-up drilling rig will be on location for approximately 100 days. To minimise acoustic disturbance to marine mammals, equipment on the rig will be well maintained to ensure that noise generated is kept to a minimum. Drilling activities will be covered by the existing Beatrice Field Oil Spill Contingency Plan. This deals with oil spills, and the response, in detail. The ES adequately summarises the results from the OSCP as well as addressing project-specific mitigation measures.

The sidetracks will be drilled using Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud which will be contained within a totally closed system onboard the rig and shipped to shore for disposal. The ES included sufficient chemicals to cover a mechanical of geological 8 ½" hole contingency sidetrack should this be necessary. The wells will not be tested but will be immediately put into production.

It was advised that an appropriate assessment for the Moray Firth candidate SAC would not be required. The ES presents a detailed account of all environmental impacts associated with the development. No significant environmental impact was identified.

Recommendation

Overall, the ES is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development. Recommend that consent for the development is given.