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

Wenlock Development

Background

ATP Oil & Gas (UK) Ltd. intend to develop the Wenlock gas field by the installation of a normally unattended installation (NUI) and the drilling of initially one, but up to a maximum of 3 development wells with a new 36.1 Km, 8" export pipeline & 3" piggy back chemical injection line to the Inde AC platform in block 49/23. The Wenlock field is located in the southern North Sea in block 49/12a, approximately 95 Km north east of Mundsay in Norfolk and 45 Km from the UK/Dutch median line.

It is proposed to drill a single horizontal development well 49/12aN-G, with two further wells potentially being drilled later in field life, contingent on the success of the first well. A combination of water based mud (WBM) and Low toxicity Oil Based Mud (LTOBM) will be used to drill the wells with LTOBM planned for the 12.25 & 8.5" section of the first horizontal well. A maximum of 885 tonnes of cuttings associated with WBM will be discharged to sea with 422 tonnes of LTOBM generated from the 12.25 sections, which will be skipped and shipped ashore. Drilling is expected to take approximately 3 months and is planned between October 2006 to February 2007.

Dry gas is anticipated from the Wenlock Field and it is expected to produce for approximately 8 yrs, with first gas programmed for Q1 2007. A maximum of 2.27 million standard cubic metres per day are expected to be produced for the first 8 months. Gas and associated fluids will be exported from the Wenlock NUI to the Parenco operated Inde AC platform via a new 36.1Km, 8" carbon steel pipeline which will be jet trenched. From there it will be transported via existing infrastructure to the Bacton Terminal for conditioning and then into the National Transmission System. A dynamically positioned vessel will be used to install the pipeline and the operations are likely to take between 6 to 7 weeks, commencing August 2006. Installation of the NUI will

be undertaken by an anchored heavy lift vessel, with works commencing in August 2006.

Habitats Issues

Much of the Wenlock Development is within the proposed draft boundary of the North Norfolk Sandbanks dSAC, which encompasses the whole linear sandbank structure comprising a series of ten main sandbanks, rather than just individual banks. The drilling location, NUI, the cable crossing and the pipeline T piece, are within the boundary but not on a sandbank or other qualifying feature of the dSAC. 85% of the proposed pipeline is within the dSAC boundary but only 5.5% is on the qualifying feature as it crosses the Indefatigable "2" Bank. In total 39.84 hectares within the dSAC will be impacted by the proposed development, which equates to approximately 0.009% of the dSAC. The proposed development will have the following impacts on the North Norfolk Sandbank dSAC:-

- physical disturbance from the siting of the drilling rig spud cans & NUI platform legs and anchoring of the rig and installation vessel for the NUI
- potential impact from smothering due to drill cuttings
- smothering and physical disturbance from the installation of the pipeline
- use of concrete mattresses at a cable crossing and contingency rock dumping for rig stabilisation or upheaval buckling on the pipeline will introduce hard substrate which will encourage a change in the benthic communities.

During the site survey, *Sabellaria spinulosa* was also identified 50 m from the NUI location. Additional survey work confirmed that there was no indication of *Sabellaria* along the pipeline route and although 4 separate areas of *Sabellaria* were identified within the one square Km platform site survey, they were discrete colonies and there was no indication of larger reef structures which would be required in order to qualify as an Annex 1 habitat.

The ES provides a good assessment of the environment and the above potential impacts, however additional information was requested in relation to rock dumping and produced water. Following the provision of further information on the 28 July 2006 and the undertaking by the DTI as the competent authority of a screening exercise for an appropriate assessment, it has been concluded that the impacts are likely to be short term and are limited in scale and overall the development is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the structure and function of the North Norfolk relevant site..

Recommendation

We are satisfied that the project is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact and, in particular, that it will not have a significant adverse effect on the marine environment in general or on any protected sites or species covered by the "Habitats Regulations", in particular on the North Norfolk Sandbank dSAC. It is recommended that the development is approved.

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