

NICOL

Decommissioning Programmes

FINAL VERSION – 11 January 2021

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Terms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
CA	Comparative Assessment
CoP	Cessation of Production
Dia	Diameter
DP	Decommissioning Programme
DSV	Diving Support Vessel
E	East
EA	Environmental Appraisal
EMT	Environmental Management Team
ENE	East-Northeast
ES	Environmental Statement
ESE	East-Southeast
EU	European Union
FFS	Fishing Friendly Structure
FPSO	Floating Production Storage and Offloading
FPV	Floating Production Vessel
HSE	Health & Safety Executive
HSES	Health, Safety, Environment & Security
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Seas
in	Inch
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
kg/m	Kilogrammes per metre
Km	Kilometre
LAT	Lowest Astronomical Tide
LSA	Low Specific Activity Scale
LWIV	Light Well Intervention Vessel
m	Metre
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MCDA	Multi Criteria Decision Analysis
mg/l	Milligrams per litre
mm	Millimetre
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MS	Marine Scotland
n/a	Not Applicable
N	North
NE	Northeast
NORM	Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material
NSP	Norwegian Boundary Sediment Plain
NW	Northwest

Abbreviation	Explanation
OBM	Oil Base Mud
ODU	Offshore Decommissioning Unit
OEI	Offshore Environmental Inspectorate
OGA	Oil & Gas Authority
OGUK	Oil & Gas UK
OPRED	Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning
OSPAR	Oslo Paris Convention – Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic
OPF	Organic-Phase Drilling Fluids
OIW	Oil in Water
P&A	Plug and Abandon (Wells)
PL	Pipeline
PLET	Pipeline End Termination
Premier Oil	Premier Oil E&P UK Limited
PWA	Pipeline Works Authorisation
Repsol Sinopec	Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited
Rockrose	Rockrose UKCS4 Limited
ROV	Remotely Operated Vehicle
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCAP	Supply Chain Action Plan
SE	Southeast
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SFF	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
SIMOPS	Simultaneous Operations
SPA	Special Protection Areas
SSIV	Subsea Isolation Valve
Te	Tonne
TFSW	Trans Frontier Shipment of Waste
UKCS	United Kingdom Continental Shelf
UTA	Umbilical Termination Assembly
WBM	Water Base Mud
WONS	Well Operations Notification System

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Decommissioning Programmes

This document contains the Decommissioning Programmes for the Nicol Field subsea installations and pipelines.

Note that the Nicol Field decommissioning is part of a programme of decommissioning activities for the Greater Balmoral Area. Each field comprising the Greater Balmoral Area has its own Decommissioning Programmes.

1.2 Requirement for Decommissioning Programmes

Installations:

In accordance with the Petroleum Act 1998, the Section 29 notice holders of the Nicol subsea installations (see Table 1.2) are applying to the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning (OPRED) to obtain approval for decommissioning the installations detailed in Section 2.1 and 2.2 of this programme. (See also Section 8 - Partner Letters of Support).

Pipelines:

In accordance with the Petroleum Act 1998, the Section 29 notice holders of the Nicol pipelines (see Table 1.4) are applying to OPRED to obtain approval for decommissioning the pipelines detailed in Section 2.3 of this programme. (See also Section 8 – Partner Letters of Support).

In conjunction with public, stakeholder and regulatory consultation, the Decommissioning Programmes are submitted in compliance with national and international regulations and OPRED guidelines. The schedule outlined in this document is for an eight year decommissioning project plan due to begin in 2021.

1.3 Introduction

The Decommissioning Programmes have been prepared to support the decommissioning of the Nicol Field, which is part of a wider suite of Decommissioning Programmes for the Greater Balmoral Area.

The licensees have submitted to OGA for consideration a Cessation of Production document which demonstrates that all economic development opportunities have been pursued for; the field and associated infrastructure, current and future development opportunities, and consideration of access to current infrastructure.

A Cessation of Production application for the field has been discussed with and submitted to the Oil and Gas Authority, and was approved on the 23rd April 2018.

The Greater Balmoral Area consists of the Premier Oil operated subsea Fields; Balmoral, Brenda, Nicol, Stirling and Glamis, all of which are tied-back to the Balmoral Floating Production Vessel (FPV). Two further subsea Fields, Burghley and Beaully, which are operated by Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited, are also tied-back to the Balmoral FPV. Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited, as operator, will submit Decommissioning Programmes for Burghley and Beaully.

The Nicol Field is a subsea development located approximately 210 km to the northeast of Aberdeen in UKCS Block 15/25a, where water depth is approximately 152m at LAT. Nicol lies approximately 10 km

northwest of the Brenda Field and 16 km west of the Balmoral FPV. The Nicol Field is tied back to the Brenda manifold where production is commingled and transported to the Balmoral FPV, and first production came online during June 2007. The Balmoral FPV is the processing centre for the produced fluids, and hydrocarbons are exported via pipeline to the Forties Pipeline System.

The main components of the Nicol subsea field consist of; two production wells, several pipelines, two pipeline end termination (PLET) units, one each for gas lift and production pipelines, one power/control umbilical and an associated umbilical termination assembly (UTA) structure.

Following public, stakeholder and regulatory consultation, the Decommissioning Programmes are submitted without derogation and in full compliance with OPRED and Oil & Gas UK guidelines. The decommissioning programme explains the principles of the decommissioning activities and is supported by a Comparative Assessment (CA) of decommissioning options and an Environmental Appraisal (EA).

1.4 Overview of Installations/Pipelines Being Decommissioned

1.4.1 Installations

Table 1.1: Installations Being Decommissioned			
Field:	Nicol	Production Type (Oil/Gas/Condensate)	Oil/Gas
Water Depth (m)	152	UKCS blocks	15/25a
Surface Installations			
Number	Type	Topsides Weight (Te)	Jacket Weight (Te)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Subsea Installations		Number of Wells	
Number	Type	Platform	Subsea
5	2 x FFS 1 x UTA Structure 1 x Production PLET 1 x Gas Lift PLET	N/A	2
Drill Cuttings pile(s)		Distance to median	Distance from nearest UK coastline
Number of Piles	Total Estimated volume (m ³)	km	km
Please refer to Section 3.7 Drill cuttings		42.6 (UK/NOR median)	173.2

Table 1.2 Installations Section 29 Notice Holders Details		
Section 29 Notice Holders	Registration Number	Equity Interest (%)
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	02761032	70.00 %
Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited	00524868	18.00 %
JX Nippon Exploration and Production (U.K.) Limited	03288689	12.00 %
Premier Oil UK Limited	SC048705	Exited

1.4.2 Pipelines

Table 1.3: Pipelines Being Decommissioned		
Number of Pipelines	4	(See Table 2.3)
Number of Umbilicals	3	(See Table 2.3)

Table 1.4: Pipelines Section 29 Notice Holders Details		
Section 29 Notice Holders	Registration Number	Equity Interest (%)
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	02761032	70.00 %
Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited	00524868	18.00 %
JX Nippon Exploration and Production (U.K.) Limited	03288689	12.00 %
Premier Oil UK Limited	SC048705	Exited

1.5 Summary of Proposed Decommissioning Programmes

Table 1.5 Summary of Decommissioning Programmes		
Selected Option	Reason for Selection	Proposed Decommissioning Solution
1. Topsides		
n/a	n/a	n/a
2. Floating Facility		
n/a	n/a	n/a
3. Subsea Installations		
Group 12*: Small Subsea installations: UTA Structure, FFS (2 off), PLET (2 off). Full removal.	Leaves a clear seabed and meets regulations.	Full Removal. Returned to shore for recycling or appropriate treatment and disposal.
4. Pipelines, Flowlines & Umbilicals		
Group 2*: Trenched but not backfilled Umbilicals. Full removal.	Assessed under Group 4	
Group 3*: Trenched & Buried Rigid Flowlines. Leave in situ.	Comparatively assessed as preferred option. The rigid flowlines are sufficiently trenched and buried and stable posing no risk to marine users. Minimal seabed disturbance, lower energy use, reduced risk to personnel engaged in the activity.	Leave in-situ. Exposed ends & areas of exposure to be removed & returned to shore for disposal. Local rock placement to mitigate snag hazard from cut ends.
Group 4*: Trenched & Buried Flexible Flowlines & Umbilicals. Full removal.	Leaves a clear seabed and meets regulations.	Full Removal. Returned to shore for recycling or appropriate treatment and disposal.
Group 5*: Flexible Jumpers. Full removal.	Leaves a clear seabed and meets regulations.	Full Removal. Returned to shore for recycling or appropriate treatment and disposal.
Group 7*: Rigid Spool pieces. Full removal.	Leaves a clear seabed and meets regulations.	Full Removal. Returned to shore for recycling or appropriate treatment and disposal.
Group 9*: Control & Chemical Jumpers. Full removal.	Leaves a clear seabed and meets regulations.	Full Removal. Returned to shore for recycling or appropriate treatment and disposal.

Table 1.5 Summary of Decommissioning Programmes		
Selected Option	Reason for Selection	Proposed Decommissioning Solution
Group 13*: Subsea Mattresses – flexible concrete mattresses with polypropylene rope. Complete removal and recycling.	Leaves a clear seabed and meets regulations.	Full Removal. Returned to shore for recycling or appropriate treatment and disposal.
5. Wells		
Wells will be plugged and abandoned to Premier Oil E&P UK Limited standards which comply with “Offshore Installations and Wells (Design and Construction, etc.) Regulations 1996” and align with Oil & Gas UK Guidelines for the Suspension and Abandonment of Wells (Issue 6, June 2018).	Meets HSE regulatory requirements in accordance with O&G UK and OGA guidelines.	A Master Application Template (MAT) and the supporting Subsidiary Application Template (SAT) will be submitted in support of activities carried out. Applications to abandon the wells will be submitted through the Well Operations Notification System (WONS). Additionally, planned work will be reviewed by a well examiner to Premier Oil E&P UK Limited standards, then submitted to the HSE for review.
6. Drill Cuttings		
Screening of cuttings requirements based on desktop exercise and pre-decommissioning habitat assessment survey data.	Compliance with OSPAR Recommendation 2006/5 requirements.	Given lack of any OBM discharges and physical cuttings pile, any cuttings should be left to degrade naturally.
7. Interdependencies		
Subsea infrastructure flushing and cleaning to be completed prior to removal of the Balmoral FPV, and prior to commencement of subsea decommissioning operations. Decommissioning activities to be coordinated to minimise simultaneous operations (SIMOPS).		

* Refers to the Inventory Group Categories as defined in the Comparative Assessment Report

1.6 Field Location Including Field Layout and Adjacent Facilities

Figure 1.1: Field Location in UKCS

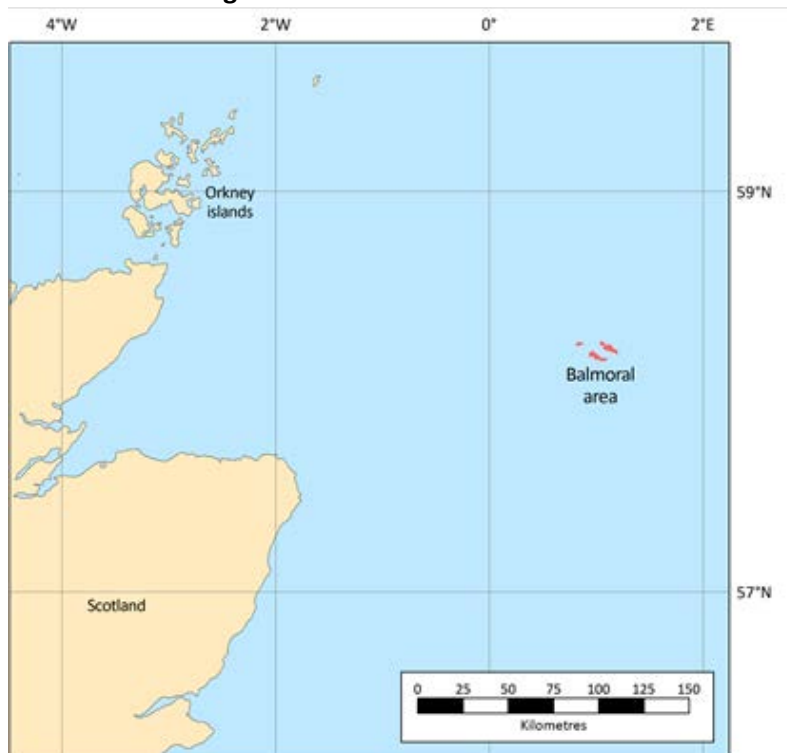


Figure 1.2: Field Layout

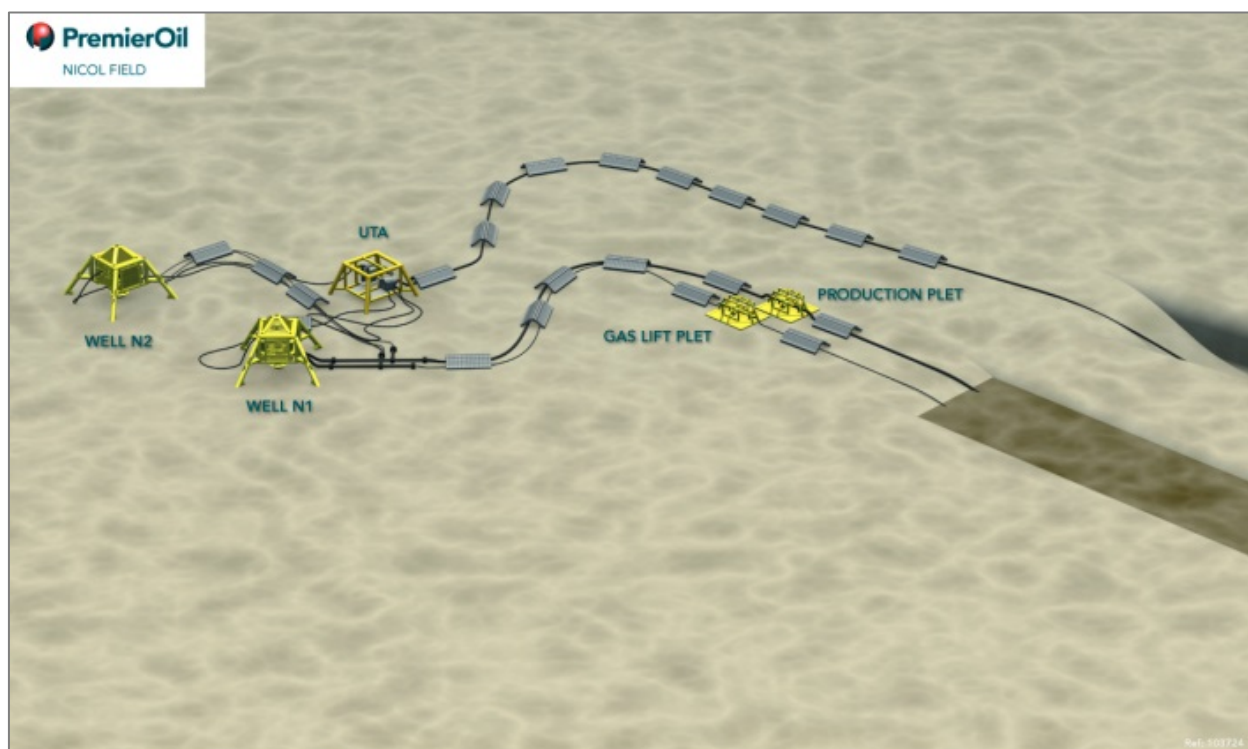
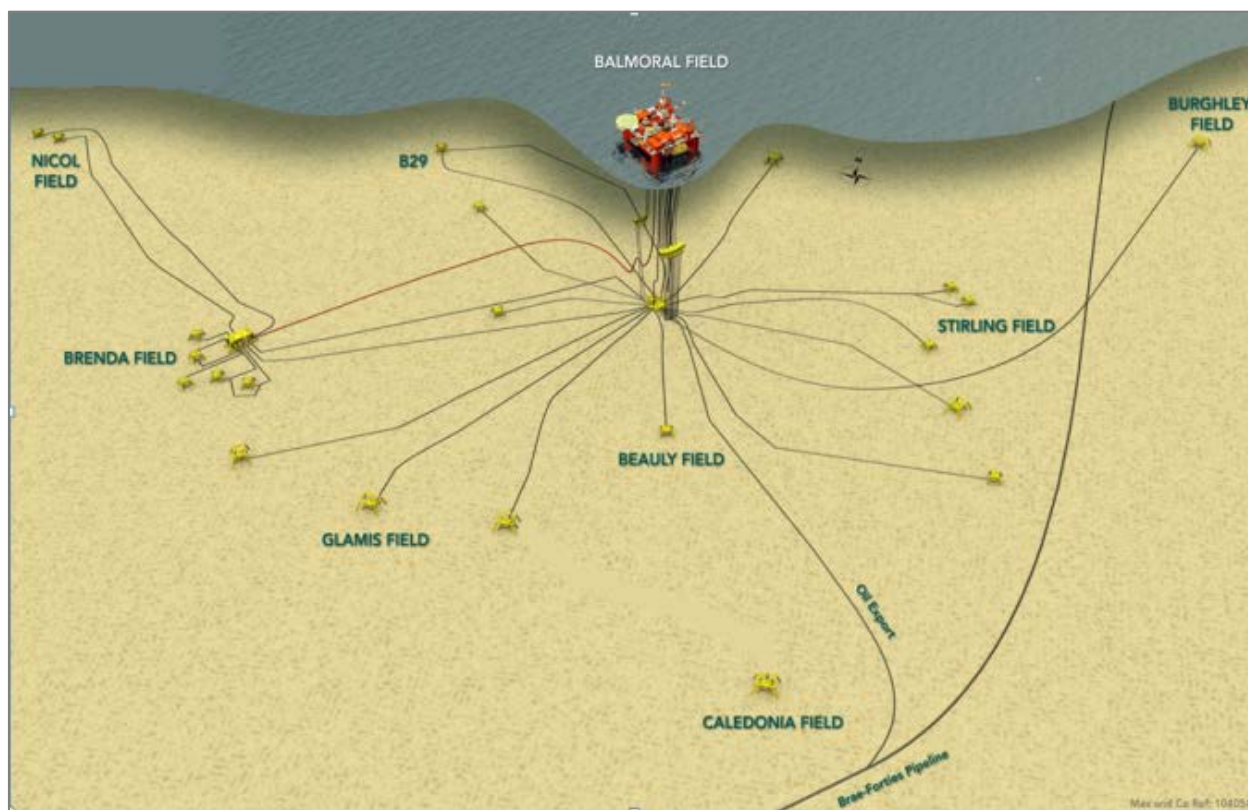
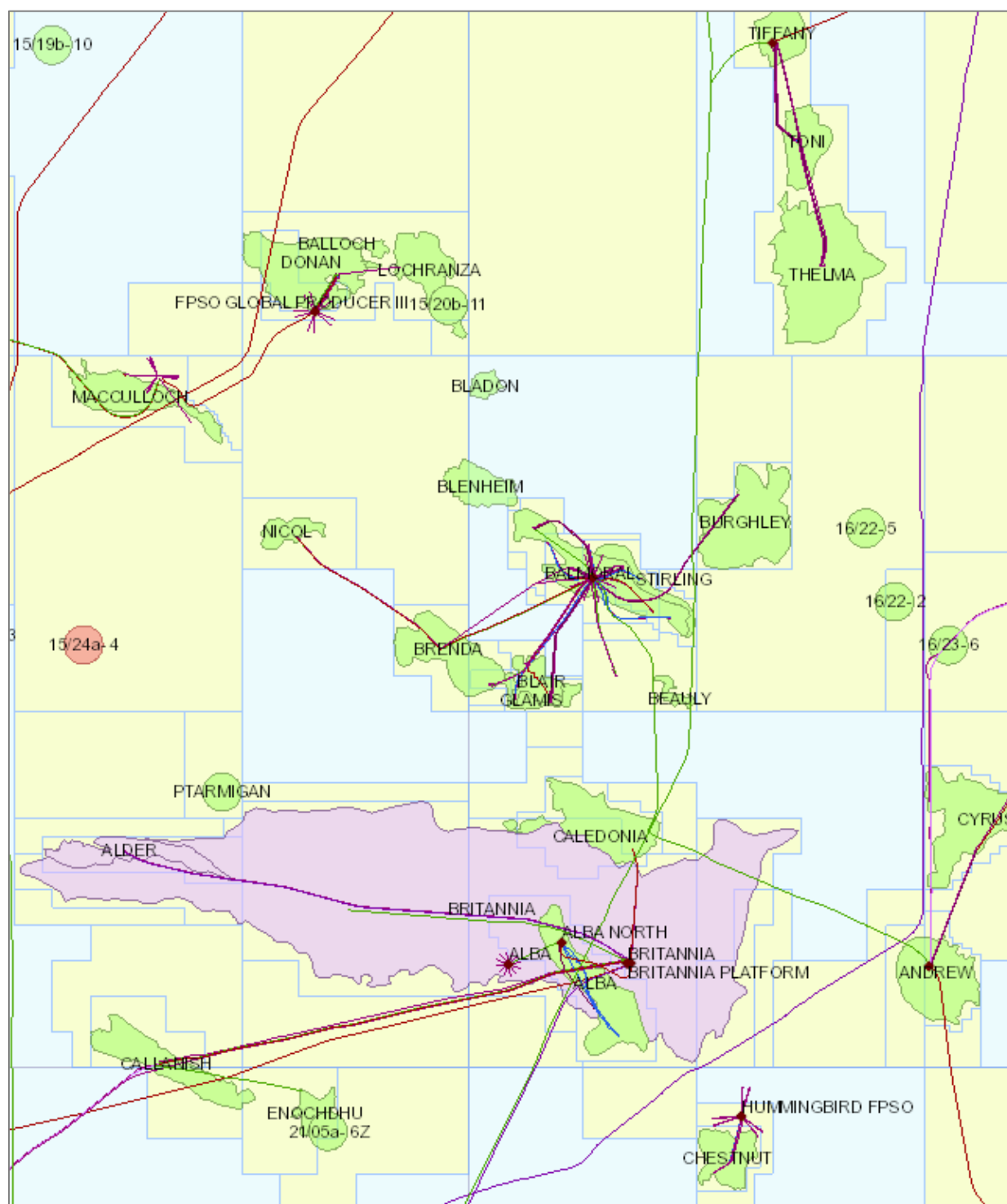


Table 1.6 Adjacent Facilities					
Operator	Name	Type	Distance/Direction	Information	Status
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	Brenda	Subsea	9.5 km, SE 130°	Oil & gas production co-mingled with Brenda and tied back to Balmoral FPV	Operational
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	Balmoral	FPV	15.5 km, E 100°	Oil & gas processing centre for subsea fields tied back to Balmoral FPV	Operational
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	Balmoral	Subsea	15.5 km, E 100°	Oil & gas production tied back to Balmoral FPV	Operational
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	Glamis	Subsea	14.2 km, SE 128°	Oil & gas production tied back to Balmoral FPV	Shut-in
Premier Oil E&P UK Limited	Stirling	Subsea	18.3 km, E 101°	Oil & gas production tied back to Balmoral FPV	Operational
Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited	Beaully	Subsea	18.1 km, ESE 115°	Oil & gas production tied back to Balmoral FPV	Operational
Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited	Burghley	Subsea	22.9 km, E 86°	Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited	Burghley
Premier Oil UK Limited	Caledonia	Subsea	23.9 km, SE 135°	Premier Oil UK Limited	Caledonia
Impacts of Decommissioning Proposals					
The Nicol field will be decommissioned in a programme of activities comprising the Balmoral, Glamis, Brenda and Stirling Fields. Decommissioning activities are planned so they will not affect the decommissioning of other fields or the operation of other developments in the area. The environmental appraisal will consider the potential cumulative implications of decommissioning activities in context of the other activities in the area including oil and gas and other industry.					

Note: Adjacent facilities refer to those potentially impacted by this programme.

Figure 1.3: Adjacent Facilities



1.7 Industrial Implications

The Nicol decommissioning activities are part of the Balmoral Area Decommissioning Project which will be managed by Premier Oil in Aberdeen. All decommissioning activities will be planned to realise synergies and efficiencies in offshore execution.

A Supply Chain Action Plan (SCAP) has been produced for these decommissioning programmes in accordance with OGA guidance. The SCAP has been submitted to and approved by the OGA. Premier Oil have some pre-existing Master Service agreements with specialist contractors, which were the result of previous tender exercises. These contractors will be asked to quote for services to support the decommissioning activity in the first instance. Other specialist services will be competitively tendered or novated. Suppliers' offers will be assessed along many criteria, among which are capacity to execute the work safely; the commercial offer and experience of carrying out this type of operation on the UKCS.

2 DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS TO BE DECOMMISSIONED

2.1 Installation: Surface Facilities (Balmoral FPV)

The Nicol subsea field is produced via the Brenda subsea manifold which in turn is tied back to the Balmoral FPV. The Brenda and Balmoral Decommissioning Programmes are separate Decommissioning Programmes, and are not included in this document.

2.2 Installations: Subsea including Stabilisation Features

Table 2.1: Subsea Installations and Stabilisation Features					
Subsea installations	Number	Size (m)/ Weight (Te)	Location		Comments/Status
Xmas Trees & Fishing Friendly Structures (FFS)	2	N1 9.8m x 9.1m x 5.7m 52.7 Te	WGS84 Decimal	58.24788	FFS integrated with Xmas tree
				0.84522	
			WGS84 Decimal Minute	58° 14.873' N	
				00° 50.713' E	
		N2 9.8m x 9.1m x 5.7m 52.7 Te	WGS84 Decimal	58.24803	FFS integrated with Xmas tree
				0.84488	
			WGS84 Decimal Minute	58° 14.882' N	
				00° 50.693' E	
UTA Structure	1	L8.2mxW8.2mxH4.4m 18 Te	WGS84 Decimal	58.24808	The installation is secured to the seabed by suction pile.
UTA Structure Suction Pile		Dia 7m x H4m 44.4 Te		00.84537	
			WGS84 Decimal Minute	58° 14.885' N	
				00° 50.722' E	
Production Pipeline End Termination	1	L5mxW3.6mxH1m 14.5 Te	WGS84 Decimal	58.24792	
				00.84445	
			WGS84 Decimal Minute	58° 14.875' N	
				00° 50.667' E	
Gas Pipeline End Termination	1	L5mxW3.6mxH1m 14 Te	WGS84 Decimal	58.24797	
				00.84595	
			WGS84 Decimal Minute	58° 14.878' N	
				00° 50.757' E	

2.3 Pipelines Including Stabilisation Features

Table 2.2: Pipeline / Flowline / Umbilical Information									
Description	Pipeline No. (as per PWA)	Dia. (in)	Length (km)	Description of component parts	Product Conveyed	End Points From To	Burial Status	Pipeline Status	Current Contents
Production Flowline	PL2350	6"	9.576	Steel	Produced Fluids	Nicol Well N1 To Brenda Manifold	Trenched & buried	Operational	Hydrocarbons
Gas Lift Flowline	PL2351	3"	9.583	Steel	Dry gas	Brenda Manifold To Nicol Well N1	Trenched & buried	Operational	Hydrocarbons
Umbilical	PLU2352	3.5"	9.519	Umbilical	Various	Brenda Manifold To Nicol Well N1	Trenched Not Backfilled	Operational	Methanol, HW443 and Corrosion Inhibitor
Flexible Jumper	PL2350JN2	4"	0.0604	Composite Flexible	Produced Fluids	Well N2 To Well N1	Surface Laid	Operational	Hydrocarbons
Flexible Jumper	PL2351JN2	2.5"	0.0596	Composite Flexible	Dry gas	Well N1 To Well N2	Surface Laid	Operational	Hydrocarbons
Controls Jumper	PLU2600	0.37" 0.37" 0.49"	0.043	Umbilical	Various	Nicol UTA To Well N2	Surface Laid	Operational	HW443 and Methanol
Controls Jumper	PLU2601	0.37" 0.37" 0.49"	0.026	Umbilical	Various	Nicol UTA To Well N1	Surface Laid	Operational	HW443 and Methanol

Table 2.3: Subsea Pipeline Stabilisation Features				
Stabilisation Feature	Total Number	Weight (Te)	Locations	Exposed/Buried/Condition
Concrete mattresses	85	339	PL2350, PL2351, PL2350JN2, PLU2352, PLU2601	Exposed, in good condition
Grout bags*	560	14	PL2350, PL2351 at Brenda Manifold, Nicol PLETs and well N1; PLU2352 at Brenda Manifold and Nicol UTA Structure; PL2350JN2, PL2351JN2 and PLU2600 at well N2	Exposed, in good condition
Rock Dump	n/a	1,450	PL2350, PL2351	Exposed

*Estimated using GVI footage and as-built drawings.

2.4 Wells

Table 2.4 Well Information					
Platform Wells		Designation	License	Status	Category of Well
n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Subsea Wells					
WONS Name Current bore	Premier Oil Well Name	Designation	License	Status	Category
15/25a-N1W	15/25a-N1W	Producer	P233	Operating	SS 3-3-3
15/25a-N2U	15/25a-N2u	Producer	P233	Operating	SS 3-3-3

The well categories are indicative and require to be evaluated in accordance with the OGUK Well Decommissioning Guidelines, Issue 6, June 2018. This work is ongoing at the time of submission.

2.5 Drill Cuttings

(See Section 3.7 for further information)

Table 2.5: Drill Cuttings Pile(s) Information		
Location of Pile Centre (Latitude/Longitude)	Seabed Area (m ²)	Estimated volume of cuttings (m ³)
n/a	n/a	n/a

2.6 Inventory Estimates

Table 2.6 and 2.7 provides an estimate of the total weight of materials associated with the Nicol installations and pipelines, including approximately 40 tonnes of steel associated with each of the Nicol Xmas trees.

A further breakdown of the inventory estimates for the subsea installations and pipelines is provided in Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 respectively.

Table 2.6: Inventory of material associated with Nicol installations		
Item	Description	Weight Te
Metals	Ferrous (steel - all grades)	295.2
	Non-Ferrous (copper, aluminium)	0.2
Total (Tonnes)		295.4

Table 2.7: Inventory of material associated with Nicol pipelines		
Item	Description	Weight Te
Metals	Ferrous (steel - all grades)	551
	Non-Ferrous (copper, aluminium)	0.6
Concrete	Aggregates (mattresses, grout bags)	339
Plastic	Rubbers, polymers	170.7
Hazardous	Residual fluids (hydrocarbons, chemicals)	trace
	NORM scale	trace
Total (Tonnes)		1061.3

Figure 2.1: Pie Chart of Estimated Inventories (Installations)

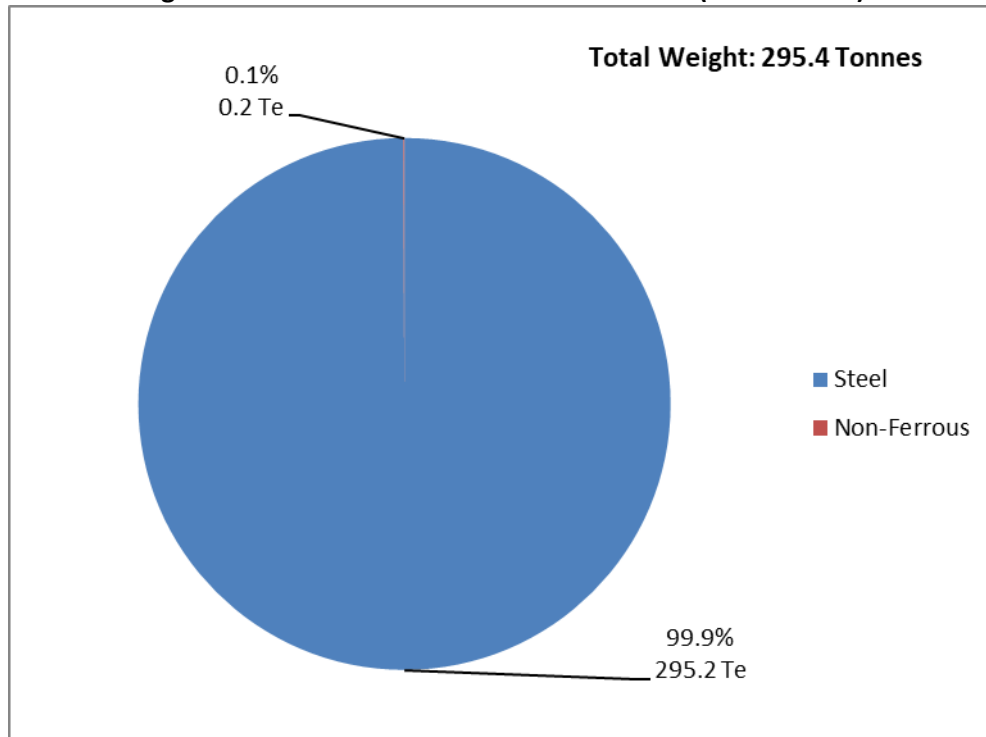
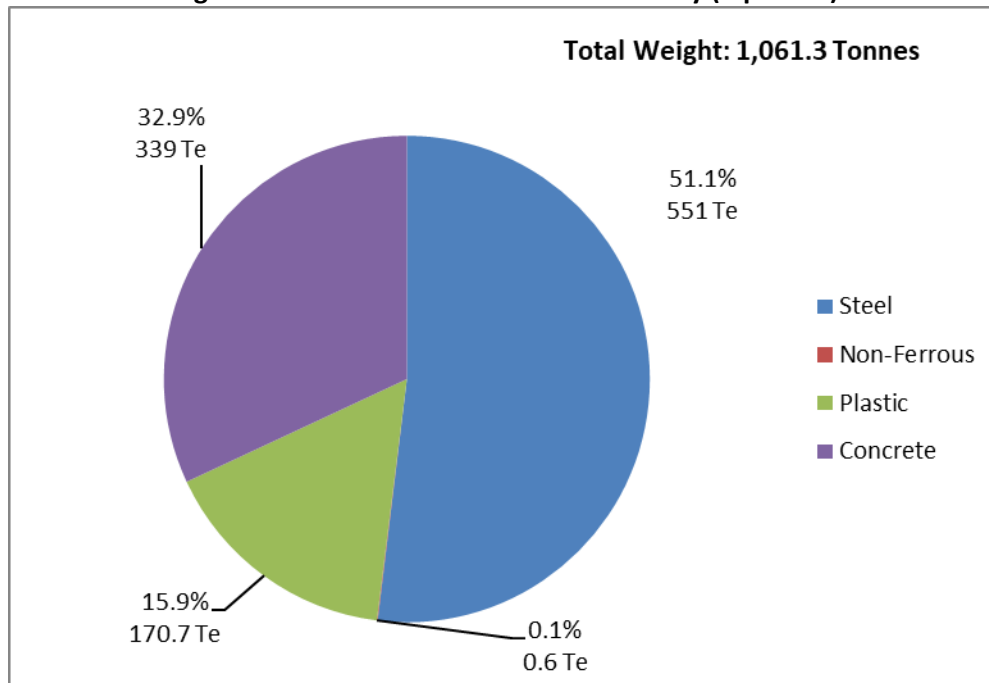


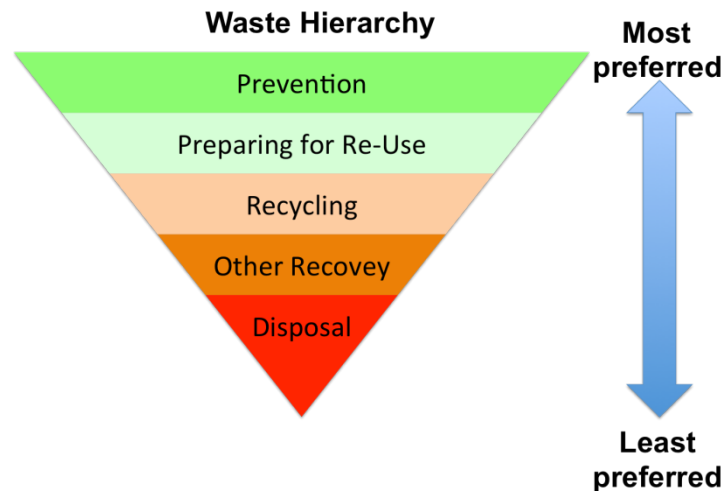
Figure 2.2: Pie Chart of Estimated Inventory (Pipelines)



Please refer to Greater Balmoral Area Decommissioning Environmental Appraisal for further details.

3 REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL METHODS

Decommissioning of the Nicol field will generate a quantity of waste. Premier Oil is committed to establishing and maintaining environmentally acceptable methods for managing wastes in line with the Waste Framework Directive and principles of the waste hierarchy:



Recovered infrastructure will be returned to shore and transferred to a suitably licenced waste treatment facility. It is expected that the recovered infrastructure, i.e. PLETs, UTA structure, flowlines, umbilical and jumpers will be cleaned before being largely recycled.

Concrete mattresses and grout bags that are recovered, will be cleaned of marine growth if required, and either reused, recovered as aggregate for infrastructure projects or disposed of in landfill sites.

An appropriately licensed waste management company will be identified through a selection process that will ensure that the chosen facility demonstrates a proven track record of waste stream management throughout the deconstruction process, the ability to deliver innovative reuse / recycling options, and ensure the aims of the waste hierarchy are achieved.

Geographic locations of potential disposal yard options may require the consideration of Trans Frontier Shipment of Waste (TFSW), including hazardous materials. Early engagement with the relevant waste regulatory authorities will ensure that any issues with TFSW are addressed.

Premier Oil will engage with other companies and industries to identify potential reuse opportunities. However Premier Oil believes that such opportunities are best achieved through the tendering and selection of a waste management contractor with the expert knowledge and experience in this area.

3.1 Floating Production Vessel (FPV)

Not applicable to the Nicol Field Decommissioning Programmes.

The decommissioning of the Balmoral Field, including the Balmoral FPV, are separate Decommissioning Programmes.

3.2 Jacket(s)

Not applicable to Nicol subsea field decommissioning.

3.3 Subsea Installations and Stabilisation Features

Table 3.1: Subsea Installations and Stabilisation Features			
Subsea Installations and Stabilisation Features	Number	Option	Disposal Route (if Applicable)
Xmas Trees & Fishing Friendly Structures (FFS)	2	Full recovery as part of decommissioning campaign	Return to shore for recycling
Manifold(s)	0	N/A	N/A
Template(s)	0	N/A	N/A
Concrete Mattresses	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grout Bags	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rock Dump	N/A	N/A	N/A
PLET	2	Full recovery as part of subsea campaign	Return to shore for recycling
UTA Structure	1	Full recovery as part of subsea campaign	Return to shore for recycling

3.4 Pipelines

Decommissioning Options:

1A - Leave as-is	2A – Remove Exposed Ends/Exposures & Rock Placement	3A – Disconnect & Retrench Entire Line	5B – Reverse Reel No Deburial
1B - Remove Exposed Ends & Local Rock Placement	2B – Remove Exposed Ends/Exposures & Burial	3B – Disconnect & Full Rock Placement	5C – Deburial & Cut and Lift
1C - Remove Exposed Ends & Trench/Bury	2C – Trench/Bury Ends & Exposures	4 – Re-use in New Development	5D – Deburial Lift & Cut on Vessel
1D - Accelerated Decomposition	2D – Rock Placement Ends & Exposures	5A – Deburial & Reverse Reel	5E – Lift & Cut on Vessel

Table 3.2: Pipeline or Pipeline Groups Decommissioning Options			
Pipeline or Group (as per PWA)	Condition of line/group (Surface laid/Trenched/Buried/ Spanning)	Whole or part of pipeline/group	Decommissioning options considered
Group 3: Trenched & Buried Rigid Flowlines PL2350, PL2351	Trenched & Buried (See burial profile in appendix 2)	Whole	1B, 2A, 3A, 3B and 5C
Group 4: Trenched & Buried Flexible Flowlines & Umbilicals PLU2352	Trenched & Buried	Whole	1B, 2A, 3A, 3B, 5A and 5C
Group 5: Flexible Jumpers PL2350, PL2351, PL2350JN2, PL2351JN2	Surface Laid	Whole	Full Removal
Group 7: Rigid spool pieces PL2350, PL2351, PL2350JN2, PL2351JN2	Surface Laid	Whole	Full Removal
Group 9: Control & Chemical Jumpers PLU2352, PLU2600, PLU2601	Surface Laid	Whole	Full Removal

Comparative Assessment Method:

Comparative Assessment is integral to the overall planning and approval of decommissioning options. Premier Oil's strategy for the Comparative Assessment process is aligned with the Oil & Gas UK Guidelines for Comparative Assessment in Decommissioning Programmes and OPRED Guidance Notes for the Decommissioning of Offshore Oil & Gas Installations and Pipelines.

Premier Oil has scoped all of the infrastructure into logical groupings. All feasible decommissioning options for each of the infrastructure groups have been identified, assessed, ranked and screened, utilising the OPRED Guidance Notes for the Decommissioning of Offshore Oil and Gas Installations to carry forward credible decommissioning options to be assessed through the comparative assessment process.

The comparative assessment process uses five assessment criteria, which are; Safety, Environment, Technical, Societal and Economic to compare the relative merits of each credible decommissioning option for each group of infrastructure. The assessment criteria are equally weighted to balance and represent the views of the each of the stakeholders.

An independent consultancy utilising its bespoke Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) process was employed to facilitate comparative assessment workshops. The workshops were attended by specialists from the Operator, Field Partners and representatives from key stakeholders namely:

- Scottish Fishermen's Federation
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Marine Scotland
- Oil and Gas Authority
- OPRED EMT
- OPRED ODU (observers)
- Premier Oil E&P UK Limited
- Repsol Sinopec North Sea limited
- Rockrose UKCS4 Limited
- ConocoPhillips (U.K.) Limited now Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited

At each workshop, each decommissioning option for each infrastructure grouping was assessed against each of the assessment criteria utilising a pairwise comparison system. The relative importance of each of the criteria was assessed in a qualitative way, supported by quantification where appropriate.

The process provides for differentiation between decommissioning options in each infrastructure group taking account of stakeholder views.

Outcome of Comparative Assessment:

Table 3.3: Outcomes of Comparative Assessment		
Pipeline or Group	Recommended Option	Justification
Group 3: Trenched & Buried Rigid Flowlines PL2350, PL2351	Leave in place and Remedial rock dump	Overall, options 1B and 2A are assessed as the most preferred options. The scores obtained are so close it is impossible to separate them. They have been assessed as the equal most preferred option against the Environmental, Technical, Societal and Economic criteria. Overall given that option 2A eliminates exposures as well as exposed ends, this will form the decommissioning option for this group.
Group 4: Trenched & Buried Flexible Flowlines & Umbilicals PLU2352	Full Removal	Overall, Option 5A is assessed as the most preferred option. It has been assessed as the equal most preferred option against the Technical, Societal and Economic criteria. Whilst overall it is only marginally preferred to options 1B and 2A, given that option 5A is a full removal option, this will form the decommissioning option for this group.
Group 5: Flexible Jumpers PL2350, PL2351, PL2350JN2, PL2351JN2	Full Removal	Items are surface laid and recoverable
Group 7: Rigid spool pieces PL2350, PL2351, PL2350JN2, PL2351JN2	Full Removal	Items are surface laid and recoverable
Group 9: Control & Chemical Jumpers PLU2352, PLU2600, PLU2601	Full Removal	Items are surface laid and recoverable

3.5 Pipeline Stabilisation Features

Table 3.4: Pipeline Stabilisation Features:			
Stabilisation Features	Number	Option	Disposal Route (if Applicable)
Concrete Mattresses	85	Full Removal - It is intended that the mattresses be recovered to shore, however, in the event of practical difficulties OPRED will be consulted.	Recover and transport ashore for recycling or other waste treatment as appropriate.
Rockdump	1,450 Te	To remain in place.	n/a
Grout bags	560	Full removal is intended with an option to reuse on location.*	Recover and transport ashore for recycling or other waste treatment as appropriate.

*A number of grout bags may be redeployed/repurposed locally as snagging hazard mitigation.

3.6 Wells

Table 3.5: Well Plug and Abandonment
<p>The wells for the Field covered by this Decommissioning Programmes will be plugged and abandoned, as listed in Section 2.4 (Table 2.4), in accordance with the Oil & Gas UK Well Decommissioning Guidelines, Issue 6, June 2018.</p> <p>A WONS application update will be submitted along with an appropriate suite of permit applications, via the UK Energy Portal, in support of each well abandonment.</p>

3.7 Drill Cuttings

Drill Cuttings Decommissioning Options:

Table 3.6 Drill Cuttings Decommissioning Options				
How many drill cuttings piles are present?				Two (see below for further details)
Tick options examined: <input type="checkbox"/> Remove and re-inject <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leave in place <input type="checkbox"/> Cover <input type="checkbox"/> Relocate on seabed <input type="checkbox"/> Remove and treat onshore <input type="checkbox"/> Remove and treat offshore <input type="checkbox"/> Other				
Review of Pile characteristics	Pile 1	Pile 2	Pile 3	Pile 4
How has the cuttings pile been screened? (desktop exercise)	Y	Y	n/a	n/a
Dates of sampling (if applicable)	n/a	n/a		
Sampling to be included in pre-decommissioning survey?	N	N		
Does it fall below both OSPAR thresholds?	Y	Y		
Will the drill cuttings pile have to be displaced in order to remove the jacket?	n/a	n/a		
What quantity (m ³) would have to be displaced/removed?	n/a	n/a		
Will the drill cuttings pile have to be displaced in order to remove any pipelines?	n/a	n/a		
What quantity (m ³) would have to be displaced/removed?	n/a	n/a		
Have you carried out a Comparative Assessment of options for the Cuttings Pile?	n/a	n/a		

Comparative Assessment Method:

No comparative assessment is required under Stage 2 of OSPAR Recommendation 2006/5 on a Management Regime for Offshore Cuttings Piles in relation to decommissioning of the Nicol field, as discussed further below.

There are only two wells in this satellite development; 15/25a-N1W and 15/25a-N2U, situated approximately 30m apart. These were drilled in 2006 and 2009, respectively, after the prohibition of untreated oil base mud discharge to sea under OSPAR Decision 2000/3 on the Use of Organic-Phase Drilling Fluids (OPF) and the Discharge of OPF-Contaminated Cuttings. These are sidetrack wells, the riserless tophole sections of which were originally drilled with seawater and sweeps (spud mud). The sidetrack production wells were then drilled with oil base mud (OBM) with all cuttings generated and associated OBM contained on the rig and shipped to shore for disposal. All other wells in the field consist of isolated exploration or appraisal wells. In accordance with OSPAR Recommendation 2006/5, as only WBM cuttings were discharged to sea in association with the wells and there have been no other discharges that could contaminate the cuttings, no further investigation is necessary. Therefore, no further sampling-based evaluation of pile characteristics or comparison of potential management regimes for cuttings is justified and any cuttings present can be allowed to degrade naturally.

It should be noted that, given the limited level of drilling in the field and the use of dispersive WBM, it is not anticipated that any significant cuttings accumulation has taken place. Subsea imagery was gathered around the Nicol wells as part of a pre-decommissioning habitat assessment survey undertaken over the Balmoral development in 2016. No evidence of any drill cuttings deposition was observed in this imagery.

Outcome of Comparative Assessment:

Not applicable - see above for details.

3.8 Waste Streams

The Premier Oil - Waste Management Strategy specifies the requirements for the contractor waste management plan. The waste management plan will be developed once the contract has been awarded during the project execution phase. The plans shall adhere to the waste stream licensee conditions and controlled accordingly. Discussion with the regulator will ensure that all relevant permits and consents are in place.

Table 3.7: Waste Stream Management Methods	
Waste Stream	Removal and Disposal method
Bulk liquids	Bulk flushing/de-oiling by either round-trip flushing from/to the Balmoral FPV or utilising DSVs to flush to the Balmoral FPV. Waste fluids will be processed by the Balmoral FPV and may be discharged to sea under appropriate permit.
Marine growth	Some marine growth may be removed offshore. Onshore disposal will be managed by the selected waste management contractor.
NORM/LSA Scale	NORM contaminated material may be removed and discharged offshore under appropriate permit, or returned to shore to be disposed of by the selected onshore waste management contractor.
Asbestos	n/a
Other hazardous wastes	Will be recovered to shore and will be managed by the selected waste management contractor and disposed of under appropriate permit. The inventory of hazardous materials will identify hazardous materials present and Premier Oil's risk management process will be used to prevent spills offshore.
Onshore Dismantling sites	Appropriate licenced contractor and sites will be selected. Facility selected must demonstrate proven disposal track record and waste stream management throughout the deconstruction process and demonstrate their ability to deliver innovative recycling options.

Table 3.8 Inventory Disposition			
	Total Inventory Tonnage (Te)	Planned tonnage to shore(Te)	Planned left <i>in situ</i> (Te)
Pipelines	947	379	568
Subsea Umbilical	114	114	0
Subsea Installations	295	295	0

All recovered material will be brought onshore for re-use, recycling or disposal. It is not possible to predict the market for reusable materials with any confidence; so, the figures in Table 3.9 are disposal aspirations.

Table 3.9 Recovered Inventory Reuse, Recycle, Disposal Aspirations			
	Reuse	Recycle	Disposal
Pipelines	<5%	>95%	<5%
Subsea Umbilical	<5%	>95%	<5%
Subsea Installations	<5%	>95%	<5%

Please refer to the Greater Balmoral Decommissioning Environmental Appraisal for further details.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

4.1 Environmental Sensitivities (Summary)

Table 4.1: Environmental Sensitivities	
Environmental Receptor	Main Features
Conservation interests	<p>The project area is located outside of any conservation sites, and the nearest such sites are the Scanner Pockmark SAC (9 km) and the Norwegian Boundary Sediment Plain MPA (29 km). Both of these conservation sites have been designated for the protection of seabed habitats and features: submarine structures formed by leaking gases and ocean quahog habitat and aggregations, respectively. Whilst there was evidence of some pockmark features and ocean quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>) presence from the site specific environmental survey data, there was no evidence of submarine structures associated with leaking gases or aggregations of ocean quahog which would constitute OSPAR or Annex I protected features. The closest known such ocean quahog aggregation is approximately 24 km west of the project area.</p>
Seabed Habitats and Fauna	<p>The water depths across Balmoral fall between roughly 138 m to 152 m LAT (Fugro, 2018a). The seabed generally comprises poorly sorted coarse to medium silt with moderate carbonate and low organic content. Hydrocarbon levels showed a similar distribution across the survey area and was considered typical of low level weathered petroleum residues commonly found in CNS sediments.</p> <p>The majority of the survey area was characterised as the European Nature Information Systems (EUNIS) biotype complex, 'Circalittoral fine mud (A5.35)' (Fugro, 2017b). The Scottish Priority Marine Feature (PMF) 'Burrowed mud' and its component habitat 'Seapens and burrowing megafauna in circalittoral fine mud' were prevalent throughout the project area (Fugro, 2018b).</p> <p>There are numerous seabed depressions present across the area, although none of the more than 40 depressions investigated in the Fugro (2018a) and Gardline (2005) surveys were found to support Methane-Derived Authigenic Carbonate (MDAC) or associated communities that could classify these depressions as the Annex I habitat 'Submarine structures made by leaking gases'. Assessment for the presence of the OPSAR protected/threatened habitat, 'Seapen and burrowing megafauna communities,' suggested that the seabed surrounding the project area is a strong example of this habitat and burrows generated by megafauna were 'abundant' (on the SACFOR scale) during the 24 transects run within the survey area. These burrows could possibly be attributed to Norwegian lobster (<i>N. norvegicus</i>), however, no individuals were observed during the surveys and thus the presence of such megafauna cannot be confirmed.</p>

	<p>Equally, other burrowing crustaceans or polychaetes could have generated the burrows; burrowing prawns (<i>C. subterranea</i>) were recorded during the surveys for example (Fugro, 2018a).</p> <p>Juvenile ocean quahog were found in low numbers across the majority of stations (the maximum in any single sample was seven individuals). However, no adults were identified nor any aggregations of the quahog, indicating the survey area is not of particular importance to this species (Fugro, 2018b). No other protected habitats or fauna were identified during the surveys.</p>
Fish	<p>The Greater Balmoral Area is located within the spawning and nursery grounds of cod, mackerel, Nephrops and Norway pout (Coull et al., 1998; Ellis et al., 2012). Additionally, the following species are likely to have nursery grounds near or within the project area: anglerfish, blue whiting, European hake, haddock, herring, ling, sandeel, spotted ray, spurdog and whiting (Coull et al., 1998; Ellis et al., 2012). However, fisheries sensitivity maps indicate that the probability of significant aggregations of juveniles of these species in the offshore project area is low (Ellis et al., 2012).</p> <p>Aires et al. (2014) provides modelled spatial representations of the predicted distribution of 0 age group fish. The modelling indicates the presence of juvenile fish (less than one year old) for multiple species: anglerfish, blue whiting, European hake, haddock, herring, mackerel, horse mackerel, Norway pout, plaice, sprat, and whiting. However, the probability of juvenile fish aggregations occurring across the Greater Balmoral Area is low to very low (< 0.2) for all species.</p>
Marine Mammals	<p>Harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>), white-beaked dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>), white-sided dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i>), and minke whale (<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>) are known to regularly occur in the waters surrounding the project area, either as residents or regular visitors (Hammond et al., 2017; Reid et al., 2003). Harbour and grey seal densities are very low across the region comprising Balmoral due to its distance from shore (SMRU and Marine Scotland, 2017).</p>
Seabirds	<p>The seabird species most commonly observed in the waters surrounding the project area include: northern fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>), Manx shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>), European storm-petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>), northern gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>), Arctic skua (<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>), great skua (<i>Stercorarius skua</i>), black-legged kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>), Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), common guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>), razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>), little auk (<i>Alle alle</i>) Atlantic puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) and pomarine skua (<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>). Herring gulls (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), common gulls (<i>Larus canus</i>), and great and lesser black-backed gulls (<i>Larus marinus</i> and <i>Larus fuscus</i>, respectively) also use the area in winter (Kober et al., 2010).</p> <p>The Seabird Oil Sensitivity Index (SOSI) identifies areas at sea where seabirds are likely to be most sensitive to surface pollution; the SOSI values in Blocks 15/25 and 16/21 are classed as low throughout the year, with an increase to medium in Block 15/25 in June (Webb et al., 2016). No SOSI data is available during the months of November or December for this region.</p>

Commercial Fisheries	<p>Balmoral is located in International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) rectangle 45F1 (Scottish Government, 2019). Commercial fishing effort and landings were dramatically higher to the west of the project area than in 45F1, when considering totals and averages for the five most recent fishing years (2014-2018; Scottish Government, 2019). Within this time period, pelagic species comprised the greatest total and average live weight and shellfish made up the largest total and average value of landings for UK and foreign vessels landing into the UK (Scottish Government, 2019).</p> <p>According to fishing data from the Scottish Government (2019), the waters comprising the Greater Balmoral Area are fished for a variety of species by both UK and foreign vessels. ICES rectangle 45F1 is predominantly targeted for deep-water demersal and pelagic species, whilst the adjacent ICES rectangle 45F0 experiences a much greater amount of pelagic fishing. For the last five fishing years, the total landings value was greater in ICES rectangle 45F0 than 45F1 by nearly £6.4M, and the live weight of those landings were greater by approximately 10,000 Te because of this discrepancy. Trawls (both pelagic and demersal) were the most utilised gear in rectangle 45F1 and was attributable to more than 99% of total fishing effort in the ICES rectangle 45F1, with <1% of fishing effort comprising seine nets (Scottish Government, 2019). Based on the low to moderate levels of demersal trawling across the pipelines associated with Balmoral (Rouse et al., 2018), it is likely that these data primarily characterise midwater trawling effort targeting pelagic and some demersal species.</p>
Other Users of the Sea	<p>Across the region comprising Balmoral, sea users other than commercial fisheries mainly relate to offshore Oil and Gas. There are nine surface installations located within 40 km of the Balmoral FPV, the closest of which is the Alba North platform located 19 km to the southwest. Shipping density across the project area is very low and consists mainly of cargo and supply vessels.</p> <p>The closest submarine cable to the Greater Balmoral Area is the TAMPNET CNSFTC cable, which is located 40 km to the south of the project area (KIS-ORCA, 2019). The NorthConnect power cable, a subsea HVAC power cable connecting Long Haven Bay, Scotland (near Peterhead) to Norway will be located several kms north of the project area. Construction works for this North Sea spanning cable are due to take place between 2021 and 2024. As cable installation will be on a prescribed route outwith the project area, there is minimal potential for interactions with the proposed decommissioning activities within the Greater Balmoral Area.</p> <p>There are two unknown wrecks in the vicinity of the project area, approximately 5km southeast and 4 km northwest of the project area; additionally, there is one named wreck (Elhanan T) located approximately 8 km from the project area. This wreck is classified as a non-dangerous wreck (NMPi, 2019).</p> <p>There are no military restrictions or known military or renewables activities within the vicinity of the project area.</p>
Atmosphere	<p>The majority of atmospheric emissions for the decommissioning of the five fields and FPV associated with the Greater Balmoral Area are attributable to vessel use or are associated with the recycling of material returned to shore. The worst case estimate for total CO2 emissions generated by the decommissioning activities for all of the assets in the Greater Balmoral Area is 83,380 Te, of which 50,757 Te</p>

	is related to vessel emissions. This equates to 0.65% of the total annual UKCS vessel emissions (excluding fishing vessels) when considering 2017 data (7,800,000 Te; BEIS, 2019). The remaining 32,623 Te CO ₂ will be generated through the life cycle of the project materials; those recovered and not reused or left in situ.
Onshore Communities	Waste generated during decommissioning will be transported to shore in an auditable manner through licensed waste contractors, as managed under the Balmoral Late Life Project (BLLP) waste management plan. Wastes will be treated using the principles of the waste hierarchy, as defined in the BLLP, focusing on the reuse and recycling of wastes where possible. Raw materials will be returned to shore with the expectation to recycle the majority of the returned material. There may be instances where infrastructure returned to shore is contaminated (e.g. by NORM, hazardous, and/or special wastes) and cannot be recycled. In these instances, the materials will require disposal. However, the weight and/or volume of such material is not expected to result in substantial landfill use.

4.2 Potential Environmental Impacts and their Management

Environmental Appraisal Summary:

The EA addresses potential environmental and societal impacts by characterising the likelihood and significance of interactions between the proposed decommissioning activities and the local environment, whilst considering stakeholder response. The EA also details mitigation measures designed to abate potential impacts in accordance with Premier's Environmental Management System (EMS) and Health, Safety, Environment and Security (HSES) Policy. Key potential environmental and societal impacts which were considered to be 'potentially significant', and thus requiring further assessment, were identified through an environmental issues identification (ENVID) workshop; they include: impacts to water quality; seabed impacts; and impacts to commercial fisheries. These potential impacts have undergone detailed assessment within the EA. The following environmental and societal impacts were screened out from further assessment due to existing controls limiting the likelihood of potential significant impacts: emissions to air; vessel presence; underwater noise emissions; resource use; onshore activities; waste; and unplanned events. The justifications for screening out these impact pathways are detailed in the accompanying EA.

The EA concludes that the recommended options to decommission the Nicol Field subsea installations and pipelines can be completed without causing significant impact to environmental or societal receptors.

Overview:

Table 4.2 describes the potential impact pathways identified from the relevant infrastructure to be decommissioned, alongside the proposed management measures in place to mitigate against them.

Table 4.2: Environmental Impact Management

Activity	Main Impacts	Management
Small Subsea Installations Removal (incl. Stabilisation Features)	<p>Seabed impacts from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cutting of piles below the seabed; cut and lift removal; and removal of grout bags and stabilisation materials. <p>Impacts to commercial fisheries from project activities excluding access to fishing grounds.</p>	<p>Vessel use will be optimised/minimised for the decommissioning activities and managed per Premier's existing vessel management procedures, including a vessel work programme.</p> <p>The 500 m safety exclusion zone will remain in operation during the decommissioning activities reducing risk of non-project related vessels entering into the area where decommissioning activities are taking place. This safety exclusion zone will be removed following the completion of the relevant decommissioning activities enabling fisheries to regain access to grounds. Fishing activities have the potential to increase in the area once the 500 m safety zones surrounding the existing substructures are re-assessed.</p> <p>Use of established contractors with appropriate capability, licences and maintenance procedures will be selected and audited. Other sea users will be notified in advance of activities occurring and Premier keeps manned bridges.</p> <p>The infrastructure is currently shown on Admiralty Charts and the FishSafe system. When decommissioning activity has been completed, updated information will be made available to update Admiralty Charts and FishSafe system.</p> <p>All pipeline routes and installation sites will be the subject of oilfield debris clearance and as-left verification surveys when decommissioning activity has concluded.</p>
Decommissioning Rigid Flowlines (incl. Stabilisation Features)	<p>Seabed impacts from decommissioning of rigid flowlines <i>in situ</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cutting ends and recovery of lengths of flowlines; deposition of new rock armour to protect ends and previously cut exposures (where required); and 	<p>Operations will be conducted as carefully as possible to minimise sediment disturbance, avoiding dragging of items on the seabed where possible.</p> <p>Rock dumping will be carefully managed, e.g. through use of an ROV to limit the areas covered (reducing unnecessary spreading) and depth of coverage to that required to ensure no snagging hazards remain.</p> <p>The infrastructure is currently shown on Admiralty Charts and the FishSafe system. When decommissioning activity has been completed, updated information will be made available to update Admiralty Charts and FishSafe system.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear seabed verification which may require direct intervention (e.g. overtrawling). <p>Snagging risk associated with pipelines decommissioned <i>in situ</i>.</p>	<p>Any snagging risk to other sea users will be minimised by continual monitoring of degrading structures or free spans (type and frequency to be determined through a risk-based approach but will be agreed with OPRED).</p> <p>All pipeline routes and installation sites will be the subject of oilfield debris clearance and as-left verification surveys when decommissioning activity has concluded.</p>
Decommissioning Surface-laid and Buried Flexible Flowlines and Umbilicals (incl. Stabilisation Features)	<p>Seabed impacts from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal of surface laid flexible flowlines, umbilicals and jumpers, rigid spoolpieces and flexible risers; • reverse-reeling of buried flexible flowlines; • removal of stabilisation features; and • clear seabed verification which may require direct intervention (e.g. overtrawling). <p>Impacts to commercial fisheries from project activities excluding access to fishing grounds.</p>	<p>Operations will be conducted as carefully as possible to minimise sediment disturbance, avoiding dragging of items on the seabed where possible.</p> <p>Excavated areas remediated and any berms created profiled to mitigate snagging risks to other sea users.</p> <p>Vessel use will be optimised/minimised for the decommissioning activities and managed per Premier's existing vessel management procedures, including a vessel work programme.</p> <p>The 500 m safety exclusion zone will remain in operation during the decommissioning activities reducing risk of non-project related vessels entering into the area where decommissioning activities are taking place. This safety exclusion zone will be removed following the completion of the relevant decommissioning activities enabling fisheries to regain access to grounds.</p> <p>Use of established contractors with appropriate capability, licences and maintenance procedures will be selected and audited. Other sea users will be notified in advance of activities occurring and Premier keeps manned bridges.</p> <p>The infrastructure is currently shown on Admiralty Charts and the FishSafe system. When decommissioning activity has been completed, updated information will be made available to update Admiralty Charts and FishSafe system.</p> <p>All pipeline routes and installation sites will be the subject of oilfield debris clearance and as-left verification surveys when decommissioning activity has concluded.</p>

5 INTERESTED PARTY CONSULTATIONS

Consultations Summary:

Table 5.1 Summary of Stakeholder Comments		
Who	Comment	Response
Informal Consultations		
Various Stakeholders	<p>Premier Oil has engaged with interested parties and stakeholders who participated in comparative assessment workshops, held 16th November 2017, including:</p> <p>Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF), Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Marine Scotland, Oil and Gas UK, OPRED EMT, OPRED ODU (observers), Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited, Rockrose UKSC4 Ltd, Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited, Premier Oil E&P UK Ltd.</p> <p>In addition, meetings held with SEPA and the SFF.</p>	N/A
Statutory Consultations		
Various Statutory Consultees	<p>Following statutory consultation (21st September – 8th November 2020), Premier received a number of guidance notes, questions and actions relating to the five Greater Balmoral Area Decommissioning Programmes and supporting documents from the consultees.</p>	<p>All consultee comments have been satisfactorily addressed throughout OPRED's process and minor updates to the Decommissioning Programmes and supporting documents have been implemented where appropriate.</p>
Public	No comments received.	N/A

6 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

6.1 Project Management and Verification

A Project Management team will be appointed to manage suitable contractors for the decommissioning of the Nicol subsea infrastructure. Standard procedures for operational control and hazard identification and management will be used. The work will be coordinated with other decommissioning operations in the Greater Balmoral Area. The Project Management team will monitor and track the process of consents and the consultations required as part of this process. Any changes in detail to the offshore removal programme will be controlled by the Premier Oil Management of Change processes and discussed and agreed with OPRED.

6.2 Post-Decommissioning Debris Clearance and Verification

During site clearance activities, reasonable endeavours will be made to recover any dropped objects and items subject to any outstanding Petroleum Operations Notices. All recovered seabed debris related to offshore oil and gas activities will be returned for onshore disposal or recycling in line with existing disposal arrangements. A post decommissioning site survey, to verify decommissioning activities have been completed, will be carried out across the designated 500m safety zones of installation sites and 100m corridor (50m either side) along each pipeline over its length.

The clear seabed will be validated by an independent verification trawl over the installation sites and pipeline corridors, non over-trawl techniques such as Side Scan Sonar (SSS) / ROV or by the post decommissioning survey. A dialogue will be opened with OPRED at the appropriate time to establish the most suitable method for completing this task.

6.3 Schedule

Project Plan:

The high level Gantt chart Figure 6.1 provides the overall schedule for the Greater Balmoral programme of decommissioning activities, which includes the following Fields operated by Premier Oil; Brenda, Nicol, Glamis, Stirling, and Balmoral.

Prior to the removal of the FPV, Premier Oil will also flush the subsea pipelines associated with the Repsol Sinopec North Sea Limited operated Burghley and Beaulieu fields.

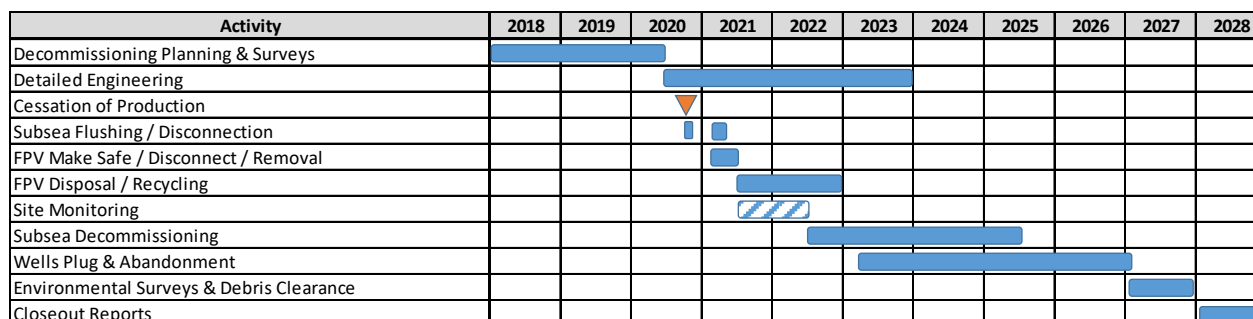


Figure 6.1: Gantt Chart of Project Plan

6.4 Costs

An overall cost estimate following UK Oil & Gas Guidelines on Decommissioning Cost Estimation (Issue 3, October 2013) will be provided to OPRED.

6.5 Close Out

In accordance with the OPRED Guidelines, a close out report will be submitted to OPRED and posted on the Premier Oil website, reconciling any variations from the Decommissioning Programmes within one year of the completion of the offshore decommissioning scope. This includes debris removal and, where applicable independent verification of seabed clearance, and the first post-decommissioning environmental survey.

6.6 Post-Decommissioning Monitoring and Evaluation

A post-decommissioning environmental seabed survey, centred around the well locations, will be carried out. The survey will focus on chemical, physical and biological changes disturbances and be compared with the pre decommissioning survey. Results of this survey will be available once the work is complete, with a copy forwarded to OPRED.

All pipeline routes and installation sites will be the subject of oilfield debris clearance and as-left verification surveys when decommissioning activity has concluded. All snag hazards created by drilling and/or production related activities will be removed or mitigated as part of the execution of the Decommissioning Programmes.

The main risk from infrastructure remaining in situ is the potential for interaction with other users of the sea, specifically from fishing related activities. Where the infrastructure is trenched below seabed level or trenched & buried below, the effect of interaction with other users of the sea is considered to be negligible.

The infrastructure is currently shown on Admiralty Charts and the FishSafe system. When decommissioning activity has been completed, updated information will be made available to update Admiralty Charts and FishSafe system.

When decommissioning activities have been completed, and where applicable, the safety zones around offshore infrastructure will be removed.

The licence holders recognise their commitment to undertake post-decommissioning monitoring of infrastructure left in situ. After the post-decommissioning survey reports have been sent to OPRED and reviewed, a post-decommissioning monitoring survey regime, scope and frequency, will be agreed with OPRED.

7 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Table 7.1: Supporting Documents	
Document Number	Title
AB-BL-XGL-LL-SE-RP-0001	Greater Balmoral Area Decommissioning Environmental Appraisal
AB-BL-XGL-LL-ZZ-RP-0004	Greater Balmoral Area Decommissioning Comparative Assessment Report

8 PARTNER LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited



Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited
Rubislaw House
Anderson Drive
Aberdeen
AB15 6FZ

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

FAO: Mrs. Debbie Taylor

22 January 2021

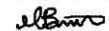
Dear Mrs Taylor,

Letter of Support: Nicol Decommissioning Programmes

Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited hereby confirm that Premier Oil E&P UK Limited ("Premier") is authorised to submit, on our behalf, the abandonment programmes relating to the Nicol Field subsea installations and pipelines, as detailed in document no. AB-BL-PMO-LL-PM-PG-0003 revision B05, dated January 2021 and titled "Nicol Decommissioning Programmes", as directed by the Secretary of State in your letter of 8 January 2021.

We confirm our agreement to the proposals detailed in the Nicol Decommissioning Programmes dated 11 January 2021, which is to be submitted by Premier, in so far as they relate to those facilities in respect of which we are instructed to submit a programme under Section 29 of the Petroleum Act 1998.

Yours faithfully



Michael Burnett

Decommissioning Manager, Strategy & Intergration
Chrysaor Production (U.K.) Limited

JX Nippon Exploration and Production (U.K.) Limited



JX Nippon Exploration and Production (U.K.) Limited
Saddlers' House, 6th Floor, 44 Gutter Lane, Cheapside, London EC2V 6BR

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

FAO: Mrs. Debbie Taylor

26 January 2021

Dear Sirs,

Letter of Support: Nicol Decommissioning Programmes

JX Nippon Exploration and Production (U.K.) Limited hereby confirms that Premier Oil E&P UK Limited ("Premier") is authorised to submit, on our behalf, the abandonment programmes relating to the Nicol Field subsea installations and pipelines, as detailed in document no. AB-BL-PMO-LL-PM-PG-0003 revision B05, dated January 2021 and titled "Nicol Decommissioning Programmes", as directed by the Secretary of State in your letters of 8 January 2021.

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Yours faithfully



Yukio Tasaka
Director and General Manager
JX Nippon Exploration and Production (U.K.) Limited

Tel: 020 8049 5100 Fax: 020 8049 5101 Email: noex@jx.noex.co.uk

Registered in England & Wales as Above. Reg. No. 3298689, VAT Reg. 539 3881 06

Premier Oil UK Limited

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Premier Oil UK Limited
Upper Denburn House
Prime Four Business Park
Kingswells Causeway
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Email premier@premier-oil.com
Website www.premier-oil.com

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

FAO: Mrs. Debbie Taylor

15 January 2021

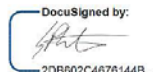
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Yours faithfully

DocuSigned by:

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Gareth Webster
Director
Premier Oil UK Limited

APPENDIX I - COPIES OF THE PUBLIC NOTICES

The Press and Journal:

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Petroleum Act 1998

Decommissioning Programmes for the Balmoral Area installations and pipelines

In accordance with the provisions of the Petroleum Act 1998, Premier Oil E&P UK Limited (Premier) has submitted, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, the draft Decommissioning Programmes for the installations and pipelines associated with the Balmoral, Glamis, Stirling, Brenda and Nicol Fields (the "Balmoral Area Fields"). It is a requirement of the Act that interested parties be consulted on such decommissioning proposals.

The Balmoral Area Fields are located in blocks 15/25a, 15/25b, 16/21a and 16/21b of the Central North Sea, approximately 225km northeast of Aberdeen. The Balmoral Area Fields were developed as subsea tiebacks to a Floating Production Vessel (FPV), with produced oil exported to shore via the Forties Pipeline System.

The facilities covered by the five Balmoral Area Decommissioning Programmes are:

- The Balmoral FPV facility,
- All subsea installations, and
- All subsea pipelines associated with the Balmoral, Glamis, Stirling, Brenda and Nicol Fields.

Premier hereby gives notice that the Decommissioning Programmes for the Balmoral Area Fields are available on its website at www.premier-oil.com, or alternatively a hard copy of the documents may be requested by contacting Premier during office hours on 01224 618900.

Representations regarding these Decommissioning Programmes should be submitted in writing to the person named at the address below, or via email to abzdecommissioning@premier-oil.com, by the consultation closing date of 1st November 2020. Submissions should state the grounds upon which any representations are being made.

Date: 21st September 2020
Pieter voor de Poorte
Premier Oil,
Upper Denburn House,
Prime Four Business Park,
Kingswells Causeway, Kingswells,
Aberdeen, AB15 8PU

The Daily Telegraph:

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Petroleum Act 1998

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Date: 21st September 2020

Pieter voor de Poorte
Premier Oil,
Upper Denburn House, Prime Four Business Park,
Kingswells Causeway, Kingswells,
Aberdeen, AB15 8PU

APPENDIX II – DEPTH OF BURIAL PROFILE

