

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5308U
UKOP Doc Ref:1226715



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

PREMIER OIL UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: SC048705

Date: 22nd September 2022

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

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bst@beis.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020**

TOLMOUNT EAST - PRODUCER WELL 42/28d- 14

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference DR/2299/0 (Version 1), dated 26th August 2022 has been issued under regulation 6 of the above Regulations. The screening direction notice, and any relevant conditions and comments are attached. A copy of this screening direction will be forwarded to the application consultees, the Oil and Gas Authority and published on the gov.uk website.

If you have any queries in relation to this screening direction or the attachments, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] or email the Environmental Management Team at bst@beis.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020**

**SCREENING DIRECTION CONFIRMING THAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT IS NOT REQUIRED**

TOLMOUNT EAST - PRODUCER WELL 42/28d- 14

DR/2299/0 (Version 1)

Whereas PREMIER OIL UK LIMITED has made an application dated 26th August 2022, under The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020, and whereas the Secretary of State has considered the application and is satisfied that the project is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment; in exercise of the powers available under regulation 6, the Secretary of State hereby directs that the application for consent in respect of the project need not be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment, provided that the project is carried out as described in the application for the screening direction and in accordance with the conditions specified in the attached schedule.

In giving a screening direction under regulation 6 of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State accordingly gives agreement to the Oil and Gas Authority to the grant of consent for the project as detailed in the application, WONS/14421/0/GS/1.

Effective Date: 22nd September 2022



THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2020

SCHEDULE OF SCREENING DIRECTION CONDITIONS

The grant of this screening direction is conditional upon the screening direction holder complying with the following conditions.

1 Screening direction validity

The screening direction shall be valid from 23 September 2022 until 30 April 2023.

2 Commencement and completion of the project

The holder of the screening direction must notify the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (hereinafter called the 'Department') of commencement and completion of the project within two days:

- a) of commencement of the project and
- b) of completion of the project.

Notification should be sent by email to the Environmental Management Team Mailbox: bst@beis.gov.uk

3 Prevention of pollution

The holder of the screening direction must ensure that appropriate measures are taken to minimise discharges, emissions and waste, in particular through the appropriate use of technology; and to ensure that necessary measures are taken to prevent incidents affecting the environment or, where they occur, to limit their consequences in relation to the environment.

4 Inspections

Should the Department consider it necessary or expedient for an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to investigate whether the conditions of the screening direction are being complied with, the holder of the screening direction shall afford the inspector with such facilities and assistance as the inspector considers necessary to exercise the powers conferred by the regulations. The holder of the screening direction shall additionally ensure that copies (electronic or paper) of the screening direction and any other relevant documents are available for inspection by the inspector at:

- a) the premises of the holder of the screening direction; and
- b) the facilities undertaking the project covered by the screening direction.



5 Check monitoring

Should the Department consider it necessary or expedient to undertake an independent monitoring programme to assess the impact of the project covered by the screening direction, the screening direction holder shall afford the Department with such facilities and assistance as the Department considers necessary to undertake the work.

6 Atmospheric emissions returns

Following completion of the project covered by the screening direction, the holder of the screening direction shall report all relevant atmospheric emissions, such as combustion emissions, extended well test emissions or flaring and venting emissions relating to a well test, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting forms. In the case of atmospheric emissions relating to drilling projects undertaken from a fixed installation, they should be included in the annual EEMS reporting forms for the fixed installation.

7 Unauthorised deposits

Following completion of the project covered by the screening direction, the holder of the screening direction shall recover any materials accidentally or temporarily deposited on the seabed, such as debris, temporary containers, structures or deposits, or scientific instruments, and shall return the materials to land. If it is not possible to recover any of these deposits, full details of the materials remaining on the seabed must be reported to the Department in accordance with the requirements of Petroleum Operations Notice No.2 (PON2).

8 Screening direction variation

In the event that the holder of the screening direction proposes changes to any of the particulars detailed in the application for a screening direction, the holder must notify the Department immediately and submit an application for a post screening direction amendment. The post screening direction must be in place prior to the amended proposals taking effect.

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COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION FOR SCREENING DIRECTION

Section 1

The attention of screening direction holders is drawn to the following provisions regarding The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020.

1) You are deemed to have satisfied yourself that there are no barriers, legal or otherwise, to the carrying out of the project covered by the screening direction. The issue of a screening direction does not absolve the screening direction holder from obtaining such authorisations, consents etc that may be required under any other legislation.

2) The Department would draw your attention to the following comments:

DRA/954 - DR/2299/0 - 21.09.2022

JNCC has noted that although the removal and replacement of the WHPS will likely disturb residual drill cuttings there is no mention of this possibility within the EAJ therefore in a future submission Premier are requested to confirm if and how much of any remaining drill cuttings will be dispersed from the removal of the original WHPS.

3) All communications relating to the screening direction should be addressed to:

bst@beis.gov.uk

or

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]
Fax [REDACTED]



SCHEDULE OF SCREENING DIRECTION DECISION REASONS

The Secretary of State has decided that, based on the information provided, the project is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The main reasons for this decision are:

1) Decision reasons

This document provides a summary of the assessment undertaken by OPRED to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for this project. This document summarises the information considered, the potential impacts and sets out the main reasons for the decision made.

In considering whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required or not, the following have been taken into account:

- a) The information provided by the developer;
- b) The matters listed in Schedule 5 of The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Regulations 2020) (the Regulations);
- c) The results of any preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment of the project; and
- d) Any conditions that the Secretary of State may attach to the agreement to the grant of consent.

Characteristics of the Project

Having regard, in particular, to the matters identified at paragraphs 1(a) to (g) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations, the characteristics of the project include the following:

Summary of project

- i) Recovery of existing wellhead protection structure
- ii) Displacement of existing fluids and re-entry of 42/28d-14 well
- iii) Drilling of 6" side-track section with the inclusion of a 6" contingency section and an alternative 6" section location
- iv) Wellbore clean up and completion
- v) Carry out well test
- vi) Installation of Xmas tree



as set out in WONS application WONS/14421/GS/1 and associated applications.

Description of the Project

Tolmount East development Well 42/28d-14 will be drilled from the Maersk Innovator Heavy Duty Jack-up, a Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) with operations expected to last 68 days. The well will target the Tolmount East gas and condensate reservoir. The well will be completed as a Development (Producer) well.

The Tolmount East well will be re-entered to drill out cement plugs and a 6" side-track will be drilled with Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud (LTOBM). Cuttings generated from the 6" section will be returned to shore for treatment and disposal.

The existing wellhead protection structure will be recovered and a new subsea wellhead protection structure will be installed on the existing wellhead. This will allow for a new tie back and riser structure to be installed. Once all drilling, cementing and clean-up operations have been conducted a subsea Xmas Tree will be installed on the well. Following completion and wellbore clean-up operations a well test is planned. The well will subsequently be suspended until first oil.

No cumulative impacts are expected to occur with any other existing or approved projects.

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters. The risk of a major accident such as a well blowout has been assessed. The Developer has control measures in place to reduce the risk of a major accident occurring and the probability of such an event occurring is very low.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

Location of the Project

Having regard, in particular, to the matters identified at paragraphs 2(a) to (c) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations, the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the project has been considered as follows:

The Tolmount East Development is located within the Southern North Sea in UKCS Block 42/28, approximately 37 km from the English coastline, and 153 km from the UK/Netherlands Median Line, in a water depth of approximately 52 metres (m).

The Tolmount East field lies within a uniform area characterised by a relatively flat seabed predominantly comprised of silty sand sediments with varying proportions of shell fragments, whole shells and gravel. A series of sandwaves are present within the area. The wave height within the Tolmount East area ranges from 1.5 - 2.1 m.

Recent surveys indicate that sediments in the area consist predominantly of



circalittoral coarse sediments. Site surveys reported a generally low abundance and diversity of epifauna with occasional hermit crabs, sea star and brittle stars. Epifaunal diversity and abundance increases slightly with the presence of pebbles and cobbles. Infauna with the area indicates low to moderately high richness and diversity including polychaete worms, molluscs, crustaceans and echninoderms. Other conspicuous fauna included the sea urchin and bivalves.

No evidence of Annex I Habitats or Feature of Conservation Importance (FOCI) have been found in the vicinity of the Tolmount East Well. The Tolmount East well is located 1.3 km west of the SNS SAC and in the vicinity (<40 km) of five Marine Protected Areas (MPA) including, Holderness Offshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA), Flamborough Head SAC, Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA and Holderness Inshore MCZ.

Fish spawning and nursery activity will occur in the area, which may coincide with the drilling operations. Harbour porpoise, white-beaked dolphin, minke whale, bottlenose dolphin and Atlantic white-sided dolphin have been recorded in the vicinity of the Tolmount East well. Densities of these species range from high to medium throughout the year with some areas with no data available. Grey and harbour seals may be encountered within the vicinity of the well location which is 37 km offshore. Seabird vulnerability in Block 42/28 is ranges from very high to medium throughout the year. The project area is primarily used for pelagic and shellfish and the effort in the area is rated moderate.

There are a number of installations located in the vicinity of the Tolmount East well. The closest non-dangerous wrecks within 40 km of the proposed operations are located approximately 3 km, 4 km, 7 km and 8 km away from the Tolmount East well. None of the wrecks are protected and there are no Historic Marine Protected Areas (HMPA) or war graves in the vicinity of the well. There are no military exercise areas in the vicinity of the Tolmount East well. There are three submarine cables within 40 km of the Tolmount East well. The nearest submarine cable is the active Westernmost Rough power cable sited approximately 32 km away. There are a number of renewable energy developments within 40 km of the Tolmount East well including, the Westernmost Rough Wind Lease Area, the Hornsea Project Four Lease Area and the Humber Gateway Wind Lease Area. Shipping density in the area is considered to be high.

Given the location of the project, it is not likely that the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) or (viii) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations will be affected by the project.

Type and characteristics of the potential impact

In accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 5 to the Regulations, the likely significant effects of the project on the environment have been considered. Potential effects on the environment from the activities associated with the project were assessed and were restricted to impacts arising from atmospheric emissions, seabed disturbance, physical presence, planned discharges and accidental spills.



Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

There is a 500 m radius safety zone around the Tolmount East well excluding unauthorised access of vessels and prohibiting access to fishing vessels. No additional impacts to fisheries are identified as part of the operations at the proposed Tolmount East well location. Residual effects resulting from the physical presence of the Maersk Innovator MODU, the establishment of a 500 m safety exclusion zone and the support vessels at the sea surface on other sea users (shipping and commercial fishing) have been assessed as not likely to have significant effect.

The overall impacts from seabed disturbance have been assessed as not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Chemicals associated with LTOBM drill cuttings will be returned to shore for treatment and disposal, resulting in no significant impact to the offshore environment. Seabed disturbance from drilling out the cement sections could result in the smothering and mortality of benthic fauna which will result in some short-term temporary impacts however the benthic communities are expected to regenerate the area impacted by drill cuttings over time. Any specimens buried by deposition of drill cuttings, muds and cement on the seabed are likely to be able to recover to the surface before succumbing to anoxia. It is therefore unlikely that the project will have any significant impact on this species.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the project. The nearest boundary (UK/Netherlands Median Line) is located approximately 153 km north west of the project. It is not considered likely that atmospheric emissions will be detectable at this distance from the project location.

Although not a planned activity, a worst-case major accident scenario resulting from a potential well blow-out was modelled and assessed. Although the consequences of an oil spill can be severe, the probability of a large oil spill from the proposed operations is low. Therefore, it is considered that the control measures in place to prevent loss of well control minimise the risk of an oil spill which could have a significant impact and the proposed operations carried out as planned are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Atmospheric emissions will arise during the Tolmount East well drilling operations from fuel burnt for power generation on the Maersk Innovator MODU, associated support vessels and helicopters and flaring during the well clean up. It is expected the emissions will be rapidly dispersed and are not likely to have a significant impact.

Mitigation measures are in place to reduce emissions including reduction of vessel movement and minimisation of the duration of the project and control processes to minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

No cumulative impacts are expected to occur. It is considered that the drilling of the well from the MODU is not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore oil and gas activities or other users of the sea. There is no aggregate extraction, dredging, or



dumping activity. Cumulative impacts have been assessed as not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The project does not contradict any of the North East Offshore Marine Plan objectives and policies.

It is considered that the project is not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore activities or other users of the sea and no cumulative impacts are expected to occur.

Decision

Taking the above considerations into account, the Secretary of State has concluded that the project is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment and that an environmental impact assessment is not required.

2) Mitigation of significant effects

The following are features of the project or measures envisaged that the developer has proposed to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment:

N/A