Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6648U
UKOP Doc Ref:1392312

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning

BACTON CCS LIMITED
E N I HOUSE
10 EBURY BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON
ENGLAND
SW1W 8PZ

Registered No.: 15143797

Date: 16th April 2025

Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [redacted]
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www.gov.uk/desnz
opred@energysecurity.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2020
WELL C48/30 - Hewett CCS Appraisal Well

I refer to your amended application dated 16th April 2025, reference DR/2559/1 (Version 1).

It has been determined that the proposed changes to the project is not likely to result in a significant effect on the environment, and therefore an environmental impact assessment is not required.

A screening direction is therefore issued for the changes to the project. An amended schedule of conditions, comments, and main reasons for the decision on the amended application, 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 opred@energysecurity.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

Signature Not Verified

Digitally signed by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Date: 2025.04.16 17:01:31 BST
Reason: On behalf of the Secretary of State
Location: Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning

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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

WELL C48/30 - Hewett CCS Appraisal Well

DR/2559/1 (Version 1)

Whereas BACTON CCS LIMITED has made an application dated 16th April 2025, 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/17415/0/IDA/1.

Effective Date: 16th April 2025

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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 15 April 2025 until 30 November 2025.

2 Commencement and completion of the project

The holder of the screening direction must notify the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (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: opred@energysecurity.gov.uk

3 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials

Rock deposits

8,628 tonnes of clean, inert rock material, containing minimal fines, (The quantity of rock deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary stabilisation or protection, and any surplus rock must be returned to land).

4 Location of stabilisation or protection materials

MoDU

Within 500 metres radius of the legs of the jack-up mobile drilling unit located at:

53 degrees 00 minutes 10.648 seconds North
001 degrees 50 minutes 10.482 seconds East

5 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.

6 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.

7 Monitoring

Bacton CCS Limited must monitor the drill site area to determine the long-term effect of the rock pads/berms on the sandbank habitat. To achieve this, Bacton CCS Limited must:

1. Undertake rig-based ROV monitoring whilst Valaris 72 is on location.

2. Undertake a baseline survey (digital data) after Valaris 72 demobilisation at a time to be agreed between Bacton CCS Limited and OPRED but will be expected to align with other planned survey activities in the area.

3. Bacton CCS Limited will submit a study, using baseline survey data to assess sediment mobility/burial time and (if required) identify other mitigations plus associated monitoring plan / frequency. This will also be used to inform any future monitoring frequency to be implemented based on study recommendations.

8 Monitoring

The results of any pre or post-placement surveys carried out to confirm the necessity for the deposits covered by the screening direction and/or to confirm the accurate positioning of the stabilisation or protection materials, should be forwarded to the Department following completion of the surveys

9 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.

10 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.

11 Deposit returns

The holder of the screening direction shall submit a report to the Department following completion of the deposit covered by the screening direction, confirming the quantity of materials deposited and the estimated area of impact, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting form. Where no deposits are made, a 'nil' return is required.

12 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).

13 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/1118 - DR/2559/0 (Version 2) - 15 April 2025

Please note the additional monitoring condition attached to the permit outlining the requirement for Bacton CCS Limited to monitor the drill site area to determine the long-term effect of the rock pads/berms on the sandbank habitat.

DRA/1118 - DR/2559/1 (Version 1) - 16 April 2025

It is acknowledged that due to an error in the rock density used in the application the worst-case rock density has been corrected to 3.0 tonnes/m3 from 1.6 tonnes/m3, resulting in an increase in rock mass to be used for this project from 4,601.6 tonnes to 8,628 tonnes. This change has no effect on the worst-case seabed disturbance area or volume, therefore the worst-case seabed disturbance assessment remains unchanged.

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

opred@energysecurity.gov.uk

or

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero
AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [redacted]
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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

The following provides a summary of the assessment undertaken to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for this project, 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 the change to the project DR/2559/1

This post direction amendment (DR/2559/1) relates to changes made due to an error in the rock density used in the application which has been corrected to 3.0 tonnes/m3 from 1.6 tonnes/m3. This has resulted in an increase in rock mass to be used for this project from 4,601.6 tonnes to 8,628 tonnes. This change has no effect on the worst-case seabed disturbance area or volume, therefore the worst-case seabed disturbance assessment remains unchanged.

Following the first carbon storage licensing round (September 2023), Eni UK Limited secured the Storage License for the Hewett Field (CS008). This CS Licence was transferred by Eni UK Ltd. to Bacton CCS Limited (Bacton CCS) as per asset transfer agreement (executed as a deed) dated July 2nd, 2024. The CS License includes a defined Work Program of appraisal activities relating to the storage sites to be undertaken as a precursor to a future application for a Storage Permit, including the

drilling of an Appraisal Well (AW) on the Hewett field. Eni UK Limited (herby referred to as Eni) will provide appraisal well drilling and completion for the C48/30 AW for Bacton CCS pursuing to the terms of the service agreement in place between the parties.

Drilling of an appraisal well C48/30- Hewett CCS Appraisal Well from the Mobile Drilling Unit (MODU) Jack-up Vessel Valaris 72 under WONS reference WONS/17415/0/IDA/1. The works will involve:

- Locating of a jack-up mobile drilling rig

- Drill 26" x 36" Section using seawater sweep and run 28" x 30" conductor

- Drill 24" Section with water-based mud (WBM) and run 18 "

- Drill 8 " x 17 " Hole with LTOBM (Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud) and run 16" liner

- Drill 8 " x 14 " Hole with LTOBM and run 13 " casing

- Drill 8 " x 12 " Hole with LTOBM and run 9 " liner

- Drill 8 " Hole with LTOBM and run 7" casing

- Drill 6" Hole with LTOBM

- Perforation of the 9 5/8" casing of the C48/30 appraisal well and carry out two injection tests using nitrogen. One in Bunter Sandstones and one in Hewett Sandstones. Each injection phase will last a maximum 24 hours with three periods of injection each of which will be 8 hours.

- Permanently Plug and Abandon (P&A) the well, including cutting and removing the conductor tubing at 3m below the seabed to ensure no structure remains proud of the seabed.

For safety purposes, in advance of the rig being located, there is the requirement for the placement of rock pads to stabilise the rig. The worst-case estimate is that will require the placement of 8,628 tonnes of rock on the seabed, covering an area of 2,363m2. Rock (2-8" grading) will be deposited on the seabed via a chute from a specialised vessel. This rock, in the form of small clasts, will form stable pads on the seabed, providing a level and stable surface upon which to place the spud cans. Without the rock pads the rig could become dangerously unstable and the project would be unviable for safety reasons.

Description of the project

Bacton CCS Limited have been granted a Carbon storage licence (CS008) in order to reuse and repurpose depleted hydrocarbon reservoirs in the Hewett field. Bacton CCS Limited have applied to drill a Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Appraisal

Well (AW) at the Hewett field. The proposed drilling works will be undertaken using the Valaris 72, a Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU), specified as a Jack-up Vessel (JUV). The purpose of the AW is to gather information regarding the mechanical and lithological properties in the overburden (Haisborough, Bunter shale) and the reservoir (Bunter and Hewett Sandstone), as well as postproduction conditions to de-risk the CCS project. The proposed C48/30 AW is planned as a "stand alone" vertical well to be permanently plugged and abandoned (P&A) after data acquisition.

The uppermost 36" and 24" sections will be drilled using seawater and sweeps and water-based mud (WBM). The conductor pipe installed to isolate shallow and possibly unconsolidated formations. All remaining sections 17.5", 14 , 12 , 8 and 6" sections will be drilled using low toxicity oil-based mud (LTOBM). No milling fluids and clean up chemicals will be discharged as they will be injected into the C48/30 AW. The milled swarf and cement returned to the surface will be separated from the milling fluid and skipped and shipped to shore.

Following the extended nitrogen injectivity test, the well is to be permanently abandoned and no infrastructure will remain at the well location.

The proposed works are expected to be undertaken within the period April - 31st October 2025. Drilling operations are expected to take 121 days for the C48/30 AW. The rig is expected on location in May and the rock pads are planned for placement in mid-April.

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 proposed C48/30 appraisal well (AW) is located in UKCS Block 48/30 between the 48/29-A platform and 52/5-A platform which has been decommissioned and removed. It is approximately 28 km from the Norfolk coast and 87 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line. Due to the presence of sandwaves water depth within the survey area ranges from 21.5 to 30 m at Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT). Water depth at the C48/30 AW well is approximately 24 metres (m)

The primary seabed sediments identified in the vicinity of the planned appraisal well are mobile fine to coarse grained sand with shell fragments with a mean particle size ranging from 349 micro m to 594 micro m. Annual mean significant wave height is 1.21 m to 1.50 m. Residual currents of up to 3 knots (1.5 m/s) have been recorded in the area. Bedforms across the area are predominantly northeast to southwest orientated sand waves with heights of 2.5 to 6 m and wavelengths of 60 to 140 m.

Benthic surveys carried out in 2019 and 2024 identified habitats corresponding to the seabed classification under European Nature Information System (UNIS) (EUNIS) and included Atlantic circalittoral coarse sediment sand (MC321), Atlantic deep circalittoral coarse sediment sand and offshore (MC321), Atlantic infralittoral sand

(MB52) and Atlantic circalittoral sand (MB52). The seabed habitat at the proposed AW location is classified as the EUNIS biotope MC52 Atlantic circalittoral sand which is characterised by sand with varying proportions of shell fragments and small-scale ripples and a range of echinoderms including the sea pea urchin (*Echinocyamus pusillus*), polychaetes and bivalves. Recent survey data indicate a sparse epifaunal community associated with mobile sands made up of hermit crabs (Paguridae), crabs (Brachyura) and faunal turf.

The well site is within the within the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which contains the protected features 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time' and 'Reefs', and the Southern North SAC which protects harbour porpoise. The proposed works are located 10km to the west of the Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA) for the foraging areas of the little tern, sandwich tern and common term and 12 km of the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC. Outer Thames Estuary SPA is located 39 km south of the C48/30 AW and Seabird species originating from these SPAs may therefore also forage within the offshore waters of the proposed C48/30 AW area during the breeding bird season. The well site is 21.6 km from the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds offshore marine conservation zone (MCZ), protected for various seabed habitat features.

Three distinct epifaunal assemblages have been identified across the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton Special Area of Conservation (SAC) SAC, coinciding with areas of *S. spinulosa* reef (at Haisborough Tail, Haisborough Gat, and between Winterton Ridge and Hewett Ridge) and sandbank troughs. Epifaunal diversity was limited to just nine taxa at sandbank flank sampling sites, however at reef trough sites and sandbank crest sites, assemblages were more diverse and included dense aggregations of brittle stars (*Ophiuroidea*).

Recent geophysical survey data (multibeam echo sounder bathymetry and backscatter) collected were assessed for presence of potential *S. spinulosa* reef. *S. spinulosa* reef has not been detected within the vicinity of the C48/30 AW.

The C48/30 AW location is located 10 km from the Greater Wash Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and is therefore within the foraging range for a number of qualifying species. The proposed C48/30 AW location overlaps with low to moderate density distributions of black-legged kittiwake, herring gull, lesser black-backed gull, common guillemot, northern fulmar, northern gannet, and razorbill. The European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) database indicates that seabird densities within the immediate vicinity of the proposed C48/30 AW are low during the breeding season (March-September) and 7 individuals per km during winter (November-March). The seabird sensitivity to oiling in the vicinity of the C48/30 AW well is low to high during the proposed operational window. A nesting bird survey conducted on the confirmed that no nesting birds were present on the Hewett field.

Five species of cetaceans have been spotted in the waters around the Abbey well which is situated within SCANS IV Block NS-C in which harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin, white-beaked dolphin, common dolphin and minke whale and have been

recorded. Harbour porpoise is the only cetacean species expected to be found in relatively high numbers in the vicinity of the proposed well. Grey and harbour seals may be encountered in the area with high densities of grey and low densities of harbour seal. However, the densities at sea are lower for grey seals from November and April for pupping, breeding and moulting seasons.

The C48/30 AW is located within ICES Rectangle 34F1 which will coincide with the fish spawing and/or nursery activity for a number of species including Atlantic cod (Gadus morhua), Atlantic herring (Clupea harengus), Atlantic herring, Dover sole, European plaice (Pleuronectes platessa), Lemon sole (Microstomus kitt), sandeel (Ammodytidae sp.), thornback ray, horse mackerel, whiting, sole (Solea solea) and sprat (Sprattus sprattus). Due to the dominance of sandy sediments the immediate vicinity well location, the potential for disruption to demersal spawning species with preference for gravels, such as Atlantic herring, is unlikely to occur. Sandeel may be present and spawn within the immediate vicinity of the AW due to preference of sand-dominated substrates. ICES rectangle 34F1 is identified as not being of high commercial value for fishing species including Atlantic herring (*Gadus morhua*). ICES Rectangle 34F1 is more important as a fishing ground for shellfish species, with brown crab (*Cancer pagurus*) having the highest landed weight, followed by common cockle (*Cerastoderma edule)* and Lobsters (including European lobster and European spiny lobster.

There are 2 wrecks within a 750 m radius of the proposed well and 8 known shipwrecks located in the vicinity of the well. None of these have been given special protection and they are not expected to be impacted by the operations. The nearest subsea telecommunications cable is approximately 25 km northwest of the well location. This has been decommissioned. No offshore wind farm cables are located in the vicinity of the proposed C48/30 AW. The closest military Practice and Exercise Area (PEXA) is a Royal Air Force Department Danger Area approximately 60 km to the north. There are no known active dredging or disposal areas in the vicinity of the proposed well. The nearest dredging area is North Cross Sands approximately 39 km south of the C48/30 AW.

The density of shipping traffic in the well location is considered to be very high in Block 48/30, although it should be noted that the proposed operations will have a 500 m safety exclusion zone in place during the operations.

The Central and Southern North Sea is a hub for large offshore wind infrastructure projects, however, the closest wind farm arrays to the proposed C48/30 AW location are Dudgeon (35km) and Sheringham Shoal (42km). The Norfolk Vanguard array is located approximately 33km southeast of the proposed well.

The proposed well location is located in an area well developed by the oil and gas industry. The Hewett field is located within UKCS Blocks 48/29, 48/30, and 52/5, within which Eni is responsible for all platforms. The 52/5-A, 48/29-FTP, 48/29-A, and 48/29-Q platforms all serviced the Hewett field, and are scheduled to be decommissioned.

All but one pipelines in the vicinity of the proposed C48/30 AW location are licenced to Eni, with the exception of the Leman 49/27 AP to Bacton A1 Gas Pipeline (PL23) located approximately 2km southeast of the AW.

The closest third party oil and gas platform to the proposed C48/30 AW location is the Leman F platform (owned by Perenco), at approximately 20km northeast of the well location.

Given the location of the project, the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) and (viii) of Schedule 5 are not likely to 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, including 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.

The well will be drilled from the Valaris 72 MODU. There is currently no existing 500m safety zone in place as there is currently no infrastructure at the C48/30 AW location. A 500m safety zone will be in place once the MODU arrives on location, which will exclude unauthorised access of vessels and prohibits access to fishing vessels.

An Emergency Response Rescue Vessel (ERRV) will be on site and in addition to providing emergency support to the Valaris 72, it will also act as a guard vessel advising other users of the presence of the drilling operations. The conductor/well head will sit proud of the seabed, consequently a fishing friendly protection structure will be placed over the conductor, which will protect the well from fishing interaction. A Consent to locate will be in place prior to the commencement of the operations and all appropriate notifications to mariners will be made prior to drilling activities.

There is very high vessel traffic in block 48/30 and moderate levels of fishing activity so there will be some displacement of vessels from the 500m zone established around the MODU. This displacement will not cause a significant impact on sea users as the total area effected is small and the 500m zone will only be in place while the MODU is on location until 31st October 2025. In summary it is considered that the drilling of the CS48/30 AW is not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore activities or other users of the sea either alone or in combination with other projects or activities.

Seabed disturbance from the presence of the MODU from the placement of spud cans, anchors and anchor chains and a subsea workbasket is approximately 2,100 m2. For safety purposes, in advance of the rig being located, there is the requirement for the placement of rock pads to stabilise the rig. The worst-case estimate is that will

require the placement of 8,628 tonnes of rock on the seabed, covering an area of 2,363m2. Further seabed disturbance will occur from the drilling operations, discharge of WBM and drill cuttings. The presence of equipment on the seabed is likely are likely to result in the mobilisation of seabed sediments. The sediment layer will be penetrated, leading to substrate disturbance, habitat loss and the release of sediments into the water column (increased SSC), which will be transported and dispersed in suspension by currents and deposited over various distances, affected by the tidal excursion.

After the initial disturbance, the plume will be immediately subjected to turbulent dispersion within the high energy environment. In the worst-case scenario, finer sediments will be transported to a maximum of 13 km. The size of the plume and the extent of the sediment deposition is expected to be significantly smaller due to the coarser nature of the sediment type (seabed primarily comprising sand (>63 m)) and therefore potentially limiting dispersal. The cuttings layer is not expected to significantly alter seabed composition or impact benthic fauna. The currents in the well area are expected to aid quick dispersal of the cuttings which are not expected to form a persistent layer. The total area of disturbance including the drilling activity, cuttings and WBM deposition, rig placement and pre-lay rock pads and workbasket estimated to be 4,465.14 m2 (0.0045 km2).

Discharge of offshore chemicals associated with the drilling of the well, cementing and completion operations have been assessed as being unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Noise generated from the project activities will not be significant, and it is concluded that the project is not likely to have a significant effect on the Southern North Sea SAC in relation to the site's Harbour porpoise population, its supporting processes or prey. The seabed disturbance associated with the drilling of the well represents 0.000122% of the SAC.

The CS48/30 AW well is located within the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC which contains the protected features 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time' and 'Reefs'. The total seabed disturbance associated with the CS 48/30 AW represents 0.00031% of the SAC. Seabed disturbance associated with the deposition of rock pads equates to 0.00016% of the SAC. It has been determined that the project will have some effect on the SAC, however, it has been concluded that any effects will not be significant.

The proposed operations will utilise an emergency rescue and response vessel (ERRV), supply vessels, anchor handling vessels, helicopters and a MODU. The emissions may result in a short-term deterioration of the local air quality, but due to the relatively short duration of the work, and that the exposed conditions in the area will rapidly disperse the emissions, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant impact. The impact of emissions on climate is not expected to be significant.

The main risk associated with the proposed works is from diesel spillage from stored inventories of diesel on the MODU and support vessels. No additional hydrocarbon

spill risk is associated with the proposed C48/30 AW is anticipated. An assessment has been included within the project proposal to assess the worst-case oil spill scenarios and the subsequent potential for a Major Environmental Incident (MEI). The assessment concluded that there was no potential for an MEI to occur, as the risk of a significant oil spill event is minimal. The developer has suitable mitigation in place to prevent such an occurrence.

The drilling operations are in accordance with the East offshore marine plan objectives and policies.

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the proposal to drill the C48/30 appraisal well.

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:

It has been concluded there are no significant effects that require mitigation.