Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-7025U
UKOP Doc Ref:1435328

Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment
& Decommissioning

NEO ENERGY RESOURCES UK LIMITED
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LONDON
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EC3A 8BF

Registered No.: 00825828

Date: 11th February 2026

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero

AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [redacted]
Fax

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
PIPER B FIELD - DRILLING PLATFORM PRODUCER WELL 15/17/T (from Donor well 15/17-B12).

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference DR/2620/0 (Version 3), dated 11th February 2026 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 opred@energysecurity.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

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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

PIPER B FIELD - DRILLING PLATFORM PRODUCER WELL 15/17/T (from Donor well 15/17-B12).

DR/2620/0 (Version 3)

Whereas NEO ENERGY RESOURCES UK LIMITED has made an application dated 11th February 2026, 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/18307/0/GS/1 (Version 1).

Effective Date: 11th February 2026

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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 11 February 2026 until 31 July 2026.

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 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:

N/A

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
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AB10 1BJ

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SCHEDULE OF SCREENING DIRECTION 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 Project

- Drilling of the Piper Target T well as a sidetrack from the existing Piper B well 15/17-B12.

- Slot recovery and drilling of a 12 1/4" and 8 1/2" section using water based mud (WBM). A contingency option is also included to reduce this to a 6" hole. Cuttings and mud will be discharged to sea.

- Well completion.

Description of project

This project covers the drilling of the Piper 15/17-T (Target T) well which is a sidetrack to the existing Piper B well 15/17-B12. The well will be drilled and completed from the Piper platform and already has a 500 m safety zone enforced. The project is expected to take ~78 days with ~33 days of drilling, commencing February 2026.

The 15/17-B12 well is currently phase 1 abandoned with a suspension cap and retrievable plug. After removing the suspension cap the existing 10" x 9" production casing will be cut and recovered. This slot recovery operation is planned to be

implemented with seawater and discharged to sea, however, a xanthan biopolymer system may be utilised if there are concerns with hydrostatic imbalance (identifiable by the logging operation).

After slot recovery the well will be drilled in 12 1/4" and 8 1/2" sections using WBM. An estimated 286,800 kg or 119.5 m3 of cuttings will be discharged to sea from the platform. An alternative contingency option is presented to the 8 1/2" section which is to drill a 6" section.

The well is to be completed with a 7" production liner. In the event of the contingency 6" hole being drilled, the well will be completed with a 4 1/2" liner. The well will then be cleaned up and perforated, Xmas tree installed and handed over to production. No well test is planned.

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 Piper field is located in Block 15/17 of the central North Sea and is located approximately 155 km from Scotland and 72 km from the UK/ Norwegian median line. The water depth at the Piper field is approximately 146 m. The annual mean significant wave height in the vicinity of the Piper field ranges between 2.31 and 2.32 m, with a mean spring tidal range of 1.32 - 1.37 m. Wind speed within Block 15/17 ranges from 8.0 to 8.5 m/s 100 m above sea level in summer, to 12.5 to 13.0 m/s in winter. The seabed habitat at Piper is predicted to be deep circalittoral mud/offshore circalittoral mud.

There have not been any recent full seabed surveys undertaken in the area of the Piper field. The platform has been in place since 1992 and is a built up region of the Central North Sea. Nearby survey data and information from the UK Offshore Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment has been used to estimate the seabed environment in the vicinity of the Piper platform. More recent infield ROV surveys from 2022 and 2023 supplement the environmental survey information available. The benthic environment in the vicinity is silty mud/sand and fine sand. The seabed epifauna was characterised by sea pens (e.g. *Pennatula phosphorea* and *Virgularia mirabilis*) and anemones (e.g. *Urticina felina* and *Bolocera tuediae*) with crustaceans such as *Nephrops norvegicus* and hermit crabs (*Pagurus* sp.) dominating the megafauna. SACFOR analysis was not carried out as part of the survey, and this represents a gap in the information available. Seapens were not in

the top ten species identified across the survey area and a small number of *P. phosphorea* and *Virgularia mirabilis* samples logged against the sampling stations in the vicinity of the Piper platform.

According to available data, there are no known specified Annex I habitats, such as 'reefs' (bedrock, biogenic and stony) or 'sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time' in the area of the Piper field. However, areas of gas seepage and associated pockmark features in the North Sea, may fall in line with the Annex I definition of 'submarine structures made by leaking gases'. "Submarine structures made by leaking gases" have been recorded within nearby surveys. Twenty-two pockmarks in this area contained areas of high reflectivity within the depression and were investigated further. None of these displayed any signs of active gas seeps such as bacterial mats or bubbles and no aggregations of methane derived authigenic carbonate (MDAC) were observed. Based on available information, none of the specified Annex I habitats are known to occur in Block 15/17.

The nearest protected area to the proposed well location is the Central Fladen NCMPA, located 42 km northwest of the Piper platform. The NCMPA includes a particular type of mud habitat that is characterised by feather-like soft corals called sea pens, and the burrows made by crustaceans such as mud shrimp and the Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*). Burrowed mud is an interesting and important marine habitat that supports a rich community of animals.

Spawning grounds for cod, Norway pout, and Norway lobster coincide with ICES rectangle 45F0 and Block 15/17. Block 15/17 and ICES rectangle 45F0 also coincide with nursery grounds for a number of species such as anglerfish, blue whiting, cod and European hake, where juvenile fish may congregate with older individuals. The spawning period for these species overlaps the proposed operations.

In the vicinity of Block 15/17 minke whale, killer whale, common dolphin, white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin, Risso's dolphins and harbour porpoise are sighted. Of these species only minke whale, killer whale, white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin and harbour porpoise have been sighted specifically within Quadrant 15. Operations covered by this permit will coincide with low to very high levels of seabird sensitivity for the Block 15/17.

Fishing activity is low in the area, ca. 1.1% of UK overall fishing effort, as is commercial shipping, demersal landings and value for the ICES rectangle 45FO were 2,198 tonnes (ca. 0.4% of UK landings) and £3,981,133 (ca. 0.5% of UK total value) respectively of UK landings for 2023. The Piper field is located in a heavily developed region for oil and gas, with the CoP Saltire platform 6.8 km away. The nearest renewable energy site is the MarramWind Limited site located 48 km from the Piper Platform. There are no telecommunications cables in the vicinity. There are no historic wreaks in the vicinity, although there are 13 wrecks or obstructions within 10 km of the Piper platform and no military restrictions within 40 km.

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, including impacts arising from atmospheric emissions, seabed disturbance, physical presence, noise, 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 Piper Target T well is to be drilled from the Piper platform which already has a 500 m exclusion zone in place and is in an area considered to be of low importance to the UK fishing industry. The area does not experience high shipping density, and the drilling campaign is of a relativity short duration, any impacts on other sea users is not considered to be significant. Appropriate notifications will be made and maritime notices posted prior to the commencement of the operations

Seabed impacts due to the discharge of 286,800 kg of WBM drill cuttings is expected to have significant thicknesses (over 6.5 mm) and are expected to occur approximately 130 m from the well based on site specific drill cuttings modelling. This 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 and therefore the impacts from seabed disturbance have been assessed as not likely to have significant effect.

Norway lobster are benthic spawning species and are therefore more at risk from activities that disturb the seabed. The distribution of Norway lobster is limited by the extent of suitable muddy sediment in which the animals construct their burrows. Recent scientific evidence indicates that the area is unfavourable for cod spawning. Norway pout are a pelagic spawning species and therefore less vulnerable to disturbance. There are no periods of concern for the block. Due to the localised seabed disturbance, significant effects on fish and shellfish species are considered unlikely.

Given the nature and scale of the proposed project, it is considered unlikely that a significant impacts to either marine mammals or seabirds would occur.

As the project will take place from an established platform within an existing 500m safety zone, is not likely that any other users of the sea would be significantly impacted.

Significant impacts on the Central Fladen NCMPA are considered unlikely due to the distance of the project from the NCMPA.

Offshore registered chemicals will be used and discharged during the drilling of the well. The use and discharge of the chemicals have been risk assessed and modelled

in accordance with other regulatory requirements. The use and discharge modelling shows a low risk to the environment from the chemicals. Use and discharge of chemicals is not expected to have a significant impact on the environment.

There are no underwater noise impacts anticipated due to the operations.

There are no transboundary impacts expected due to the localised nature of the operations. As operations are to be carried out from the Piper platform, it is not expected that atmospheric emissions would significantly exceed those arising from normal operating procedures at the platform. However, there will be a contribution to atmospheric emissions from increased vessel and helicopter traffic at the platform over the course of the campaign. Atmospheric emissions from the project equate to ca.0.014% of estimated oil and gas industry GHG emissions in 2023. Given the low contribution to overall emissions, the impact of atmospheric emissions on localised air quality is expected to be negligible.

The well to be drilled is a production well, and an assessment has been included within the project proposal to assess as a worst case, a well blow out within the Piper Bravo field, and the subsequent potential for a Major Environmental Incident (MEI). The assessment concluded that there is a potential for an MEI to occur, however the risk of an oil spill event as a result of a well blow out from well 15/17-T is minimal, and the developer has suitable mitigation in place to prevent such an occurrence.

The drilling operations do not contradict any of Scotland's National Marine Plan objectives and policies.

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.

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:

Not applicable.