Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-7055U
UKOP Doc Ref:1462871

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning

ITHACA (NE) E&P LIMITED
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Registered No.: 01483021

Date: 4th November 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
Cygnus 44/12a-AAK planned well

I refer to your amended application dated 3rd November 2026, reference DR/2628/3 (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: 2026.11.04 11:49:54 GMT
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

Cygnus 44/12a-AAK planned well

DR/2628/3 (Version 1)

Whereas ITHACA (NE) E&P LIMITED has made an application dated 3rd November 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 applications: WONS/17153/0/PIDA/1 (Conductor piling) and WONS/18921/0/IDA/1 Version 1 and WONS/18921/0/C/1 Version 1 (Drilling operations)

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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 2 March 2026 until 31 May 2027.

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 Mitigation measures

All conductor driving operations should be undertaken in accordance with the relevant sections of the current Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 2010 'Statutory nature conservation agency protocol for minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from piling noise', and must be undertaken in accordance with the following conditions:

(a) Prior to the commencement of conductor driving operations marine mammal search must be undertaken to determine whether any marine mammals are located within 500 metres (m) of the sound source. The duration of the pre-conductor driving search must be at least 30 minutes. (Further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(b) Following completion of the pre-conductor driving search, a 'soft start' must be undertaken, to reduce the possibility of causing injury to marine mammals. The duration of the soft start must be a minimum of 20 minutes. If any marine mammals are detected within 500 m of the sound source during the pre-shooting search, the soft start must be delayed until it has been confirmed that the marine mammals have moved out of the 500 m zone. (Further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(c) If any marine mammals are detected within 500 m of the sound source during the pre-conductor driving search, conductor driving operations must be delayed until it has been confirmed that the marine mammals have moved out of the 500 m zone (further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(d) If conductor driving operations are suspended for any reason for a period of more than 10 minutes, a marine mammal search and soft start procedure must be undertaken prior to the resumption of the conductor driving operations. The duration of the search must be at least 30 minutes. If any marine mammals approach within 500 m of the sound source during the search, the resumption of conductor driving operations must be delayed until it has been confirmed that the marine mammals have moved out of the 500 m zone, and a further soft start (minimum duration of 20 minutes) must be undertaken prior to the resumption of the conductor driving operations (further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines). If conductor driving operations are suspended for a period of more than 30 minutes the resumption of conductor driving operations must be delayed until a pre-shooting search and soft start procedure have been undertaken in accordance with conditions 5(a) and 5(b).

(e) A marine mammal observer (MMO) must be available to undertake visual monitoring during any pre-conductor driving search or soft start procedure undertaken during the hours of daylight. Conductor driving operations must be delayed if poor visibility prevents the visual monitoring. The MMO must not have a dual role during any periods of visual monitoring required as a condition of the Screening Direction, e.g. undertaking the duties of a Fisheries Liaison Officer (further

information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(f) MMOs must be trained marine mammal observers and must be familiar with acoustic survey techniques and the requirements of the JNCC guidelines and reporting forms; and must be aware of the marine mammal species likely to be encountered in the area (further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(g) A proven passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) system, i.e. one that has been successfully demonstrated to be able to detect vocalising marine mammals, must be available on the source vessel to undertake acoustic monitoring if any search or soft start procedure is undertaken during the hours of darkness or during periods when visual observations are not effective because of the weather conditions or sea state. Conductor driving operations must be delayed if it is not possible to undertake the acoustic monitoring during the relevant periods (further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines). If Ithaca commence conductor driving operations (or-re-start operations) during times of poor visibility (including night-time conditions), an Infra-Red (IR) device allowing for visual observation in low light must be used in addition to the PAM system and the pre-shooting search must last one hour instead of the 30 minutes quoted in the JNCC guidance. Two trained MMO/PAM operatives (JNCC compliant) must be available offshore, enabling seamless switching between visual (MMO) and acoustic (PAM) monitoring.

(h) PAM operatives must be familiar with acoustic monitoring techniques and the requirements of the JNCC guidelines and reporting forms (further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(i) Acoustic monitoring must be maintained during the hours of darkness, or when visual observations are not effective because of the weather conditions or sea state, for the duration of the conductor driving operations.

(j) Agreed lines of communication must be established between MMOs, PAM operatives, the conductor driving contractor and the vessel's officers and crew, as appropriate, to facilitate the visual and/or acoustic monitoring of marine mammals in accordance with the consent conditions (further information can be found in the JNCC guidelines).

(k) A conductor driving close-out report must be made directly through the UK Marine Noise Registry (https://mnr.jncc.gov.uk/) within 12 weeks of the date of expiry of the Screening Direction. If the conductor driving operation is cancelled for any reason, a close-out report must still be submitted to confirm that conductor driving was not undertaken.

6 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.

7 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.

8 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).

9 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
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [redacted]

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SCHEDULE OF SCREENING DIRECTION DECISION REASONS

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

This post screening direction amendment (ref: DR/2628/3) relates to a change to the project for which a screening direction was previously issued.

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/2628/3:

The application was varied to change the proposed timing of operations as follows:

Conductor driving will now take place between 10th November 2026 and 31st January 2027. The end of drilling operations has been extended to the 31st May 2027.

Conductor driving operations will take place outwith the summer season. Therefore, impacts on the summer area of the SNS SAC are not anticipated and coordination with the 2026 underwater noise coordination forum is not required.

No additional change in environmental impacts is expected from what has already been described.

DR/2628/2:

The application variation was submitted to include the following changes:

- Renaming the well from "44/12a- Slot 1" to "44/12a-AAK"
- Drilling the 44/12a-AAK well
- Cementing the 44/12a-AAK well;
- Completing the 44/12a-AAK well;
- Cleaning the 44/12a-AAK well;
- Undertaking a well test on the 44/12a-AAK well; and
- Extending the end-date of proposed operations to 31st March 2027 to account for operational delays in drilling operations.

The sections of text that follow have been updated to include consideration of the above changes.

DR/2628/1:

The application variation was submitted to change the potential end-date of conductor driving operations to the 31st July 2026. No change in environmental impacts is expected from what has already been described.

Summary of the project

Conductor driving:
Driving of a 30" conductor into the seabed at the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform (44/12a- Slot 1 well) from the Valaris Norway jack-up rig in the Southern North Sea.
Operations are expected to last less than one day, with a three-day contingency.

Drilling of the following sections:
- Cleaning out the 30" conductor with water-based mud (WBM)
- 26" section using WBM
- 17.5" section using low toxicity oil-based mud (LTOBM)
- 12.25" sections using LTOBM
- 8.5" section using LTOBM
- 6" section using LTOBM
- Contingency mechanical side-track from the 17.5" section with LTOBM as a worst-case
- Contingency re-spud with WBM (at the 30" or 26" section)
- LTOBM cuttings will be treated with a Thermal Treatment Unit (TTU) to recover base oil. Treated LTOBM cuttings residual solids and water will be discharged. Where offshore disposal criteria are not met, the cuttings residual solids and water will be skipped and shipped for disposal onshore.
- Well cementing operations
- Well completion operations
- Well and wellbore clean-up operations
- Well test which will be up to 96 hours long and combust up to 2,000 tonnes of hydrocarbons

Description of the project
This project involves the driving of a conductor (44/12a- AAK) at the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform from the Valaris Norway jack-up rig. The impacts associated with

the placement of the jack-up rig have been previously considered in DR/2500, DR/2528 and DRA/2634.

Conductor driving will only be taking place in one day, with a three-day contingency and drilling activities will take place thereafter.

This application covers the activities associated with driving the conductor and drilling the 44/12a-AAK well outlined in the summary of the project above. Drilling activities comprise drilling, cementing, completing, cleaning and testing the 44/12a-AAK planned well at the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform from the Valaris Norway jack-up rig.

It is estimated that drilling activities will take up to 182 days to account for operational delays. WBM will be used for conductor cleaning and drilling the 26" section. WBM cuttings will be discharged into the marine environment. LTOBM cuttings will be treated with a TTU to recover base oil. Treated LTOBM cuttings residual solids and water will be discharged. Where offshore disposal criteria are not met, the cuttings residual solids and water will be skipped and shipped for disposal onshore. Casings will be cemented. The well will be completed and cleaned up. A well test will be undertaken.

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 proposed well is located at the Cygnus field, next to the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform in the Southern North Sea (SNS), in UKCS Block 44/12, approximately 162 kilometres (km) from the UK coastline, and 36 km from the UK/Netherlands Median Line, in a depth of approximately 22 metres (m).

Surficial seabed sediments in the area are generally slightly gravelly sand and sand, with a small area of gravelly sand. The wave height in the area ranges from 1.51 to 2.10 m.

The Cygnus field is located within the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is designated due to the presence of the Annex I habitat 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time', and the SNS SAC which is designated for harbour porpoise.

Low to moderate densities of harbour porpoise and white-beaked dolphin have been

identified throughout the year. Low densities of minke whale and long-finned pilot whale have been recorded in the area throughout the year. Grey and harbour seals may be encountered in low numbers.

Seabird oil sensitivity in the vicinity of the Cygnus field ranges from low to extremely high throughout the year.

The proposed operations will coincide with fish spawning and/or nursery activity for a number of commercial fish species. The project area is primarily used for demersal and shellfish fishing and the fishing effort in the area is considered low.

There are several oil and gas fields nearby. The nearest marine cable is less than one kilometre away from the Cygnus field. The nearest renewable energy site is the Dogger Bank A Offshore Wind Farm Project, located 14 km to the northwest. The CCS license reference CS021 is located approximately 15 km east of the proposed operations. There are two wrecks located 15.8 km northwest and 17.1 km southwest from the proposed operations. Shipping density in the area is high.

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.

All the proposed activities will take place within the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform 500-m safety zone and therefore impacts to other sea users due to physical presence are not expected.

Discharge of offshore chemicals associated with the proposed activities have been assessed as not likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

There will be a disturbance of the seabed as a result of driving the conductor into the seabed. Seabed disturbance from locating the drilling rig has been previously considered in DR/2500, DR/2528 and DRA/2634. The Valaris Norway will continue to exclude 346.36 m2 of the seabed through the continued placement of one of the spud cans in sandbank habitat. This will be a temporary impact as the sandbank will be available again on departure of the Valaris Norway on conclusion of drilling activities at the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform.

WBM cuttings generated during drilling operations will be discharged to the marine environment and settle in close proximity of the well. LTOBM cuttings will be treated with a thermal treatment unit to recover base oil. Treated LTOBM cuttings residual

solids and water will be discharged. Where offshore disposal criteria are not met, the cuttings residual solids and water will be skipped and shipped for disposal onshore.

It is estimated that up to approximately 1,338,273.72kg of WBM cuttings and 2,463,439.27kg of treated LTOBM cuttings will be discharged to the marine environment. The discharge plume released from the drill cuttings is expected to settle quickly out of the water column and any dissolved contaminants will disperse quickly. Residual oil on cuttings will degrade over time. This could result in the smothering and mortality of benthic fauna which will result in some short-term temporary impacts. However, benthic communities are expected to regenerate the area impacted by drill cuttings over time. Therefore, the impacts from seabed disturbance from this discharge are considered to not be significant.

Underwater noise generated from conductor driving the is expected to cause a permanent hearing shift in marine mammal hearing up to 29 m from the sound source and a behavioural disturbance up to 5 km from the sound source. An effective deterrence range of 5 km has been considered. The JNCC guidelines "Statutory nature conservation agency protocol for minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from piling noise" will be adhered to. This includes the use of a marine mammal observer and passive acoustic monitoring. Therefore, any noise generated will not have a significant impact, and it is concluded that this project is not expected to have a likely significant effect on the site in relation to harbour porpoise and its supporting habitat and prey or other marine mammals.

The proposed operations do not contravene any relevant marine plan policies.

Although not a planned activity, a worst-case major accident scenario resulting from a well blowout was modelled and assessed. The probability of a well blowout from the proposed operations is very low. Therefore, it is considered that the control and safety measures in place minimise the risk of a hydrocarbon spill which could have a significant impact. The proposed operations carried out as planned are not likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

Atmospheric emissions directly attributable to the planned activities are expected to rapidly disperse and are not likely to have a significant impact.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the operations. The nearest boundary (UK/Netherlands Median Line) is located approximately 36 km of the area of operations.

The cumulative impact arising from driving the conductor of the 44/12a- AAK planned well have been shown to not be significant.

Decision
Taking the above considerations into account, the Secretary of State has concluded that the change to 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
Not Applicable.