

California Quarry Question and Answer Sheet-- July 2014

Question	Answer
<p>Is the proposed exploration drilling considered to be EIA development?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>As detailed in the National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014) which specifically considers the issue of when an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for hydrocarbon extraction. The guidance states that a screening exercise should be carried out to determine whether a proposal for onshore oil and gas extraction requires an EIA.</p> <p>The guidance states that "whilst all applications must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, it is unlikely that an EIA will be required for exploratory drilling operations which do not involve hydraulic fracturing".</p> <p>In accordance with the guidance, a screening opinion was obtained from Dorset County Council which confirmed that the development is not EIA development due to the temporary nature of the impacts, and therefore the application did not need to be accompanied by an EIA.</p>
<p>What are the traffic impacts of the drilling including safety and amenity implications?</p>	<p>As part of the planning application submission, a Transport Assessment was undertaken which evaluated the traffic impact during the construction, drilling and testing phases of the development. During the site construction period, there will be a steady and relatively low level of HGV traffic spread over an extended period of five weeks i.e. the site construction period. There will be a modest percentage increase in total traffic volumes of less than 30%, although the HGV traffic movements will increase by 50% along Steer Road.</p> <p>Rig assembly and de-assembling will produce the highest concentrated periods of traffic generation when the effect of traffic is most likely to be felt and percentage increases on HGV traffic flow will be more than 30% for all the roads</p>

other than the High Street.

During this phase, road-side parking will be restricted to one side of Steer Road, Wills Road and Priest's Road to allow the rig vehicles to travel up the road. Traffic management will be in place to ensure that HGV's travelling in different directions do not meet on these minor roads.

The drilling phase will produce an initial higher volume of traffic flows, but this will drop away after the first few days to a much lower level that will cause negligible effect. Similarly, the traffic generated by the testing phase will have negligible effect.

With regards to mitigation, throughout the development, traffic escorts and banksmen will be used to provide sufficient mitigation to allow the HGVs to pass safely through Corfe Castle. Restriction of on-street parking will be enforced for the duration of the drilling phase and HGV access to the site is proposed from the north only, with traffic using the A351 and other roads on the approved route only.

Question	Answer
What is the visual impact of the drilling and what are the implications on the Dorset AONB and Heritage Coast?	<p>Although the drill rig would be visible from some near and distant views, this visual impact would be limited to a short period of up to 8 weeks when the drilling rig is operational. Views of the site are restricted as the intervening effects of landform, vegetation and buildings provide screening. Much of the land within approximately 700m east of the site would provide some degree of screening.</p> <p>In terms of the implications on the Dorset AONB and Heritage Coast, it is considered that because of the temporary nature of the development, to facilitate drilling of the proposed well, it will represent a minimal visual intrusion, and cause only a temporary localised disruption on the landscape character. Such disruption will not comprise the character of the surrounding Dorset AONB and Heritage Coast.</p>
Will there be any impact on the Durlston Country Park?	<p>In view of the wellsite's proximity to the Durlston Head Country Park, ecological and air quality assessments have been undertaken and submitted in support of the planning application. Together, these assessments demonstrate that, with the implementation of suitable mitigation measures, the development is considered to have a negligible air quality impact, and that no adverse ecological effects are anticipated to occur as a result of the development.</p> <p>In terms of visual impact the site is screened from the surrounding countryside by intervening vegetation and changes in topography. In view of its enclosed nature, it is considered that the development to facilitate exploration on the site will represent a minimal visual intrusion and cause only a temporary localised disruption on the landscape character. Such disruption will not comprise the character of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>With regards to air quality, appropriate dust mitigation measures will be utilised on site to further minimise any potential emissions. These include the following:</p>

- All vehicles to switch off engines when not in use– no idling vehicles;
- Regular vehicle cleaning and specific wheel washing on leaving site and damping down of haul routes;
- All loads entering and leaving site will be covered;
- On-road vehicles to comply to national and EU emission standards;
- All non-road mobile machinery to use ultra-low sulphur diesel where available;
- Minimise movement of construction traffic around site;
- Hard surfacing and effective cleaning of haul routes and appropriate speed limit around site; and

No significant impact is anticipated during the construction and drilling phases due to emissions from site plant equipment. However, as a precaution, air quality monitoring will also be undertaken at the boundary of the site during the construction phase and the drilling phase to confirm no significant adverse effects occur.

With regards to ecology, on the basis of the survey work undertaken it is assessed that the habitats within the application site have the potential to support common breeding birds but do not have the potential to support other notable or protected species or groups, including bats, badgers, reptiles, invertebrates and great crested newts. Any vegetation to be removed from the site is undertaken outside the nesting season (March-September) to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

Post development works, the proposed wellsite will be restored to species-rich calcareous grassland.

Question	Answer
Will there be any impact on the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site?	<p>The site is situated approximately 500m from the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. In view of the wellsite's proximity to the World Heritage Site ecological and air quality assessments have been undertaken and submitted in support of the planning application. Together, these assessments demonstrate that, with the implementation of suitable mitigation measures, the development is considered to have a negligible air quality impact and that no adverse ecological effects is anticipated to occur as a result of the drilling.</p> <p>In terms of landscape and visual impact, the development includes the temporary erection of a tall structure, some 50m high, in the form a drilling rig. It is expected that the rig would be partially visible from a wide area for a temporary period of up to 8 weeks. However, the intervening effects of screening from the high ridgeline across Nine Barrow Down and Ballard Down would limit the frequency with which long distance views are experienced.</p> <p>Please see the above answer for a detailed description of the air and ecology mitigation methods.</p>
Will there be any impact on tourism?	<p>Petroleum production has been taking place for over 50 years in Dorset. Existing sites located in the Purbeck area at Kimmeridge Bay, Wytch Farm and Wareham have not prejudiced the development of the sustainable tourism industry in Dorset. There should be no incremental impact from this project.</p>

Question	Answer
Will there be any impacts on any of the existing Rights of Way?	<p>The existing Public Rights of Way and the impact of development were considered at planning application stage. These include the South West Coast Path that lies approximately 500m to the south at its closest point to the development site. The Public Right of Way (PRoW) which runs north-south along the proposed wellsite's eastern boundary. In addition, the PRoW running north-south approximately 60m away from the wellsite's western boundary.</p> <p>The results of the landscape and visual appraisal show that the area proposed for potential development will not result in significant adverse impacts when viewed from the majority of the surroundings, as a consequence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A landscape character of comparatively very low sensitivity within the centre of the study area / the most densely populated area (i.e. Swanage) with little or no potential intervisibility with the proposed development, and which is able to accommodate a degree of change; • The tightly restricted Primary Zone of Visual Influence (the area within which the proposed wellsite would have a visual influence), constrained by landform and vegetation; • The relatively discreet and contained location of the wellsite within the existing patchwork of field boundaries and mature vegetation around and immediately adjacent to the site; • The medium distance views gained from the surrounding countryside to the south, south west and south east potentially seen with the proposals set against existing mature vegetation either as a backdrop or an immediate adjacency; • The limited number of sensitive receptors within the Zone of Visual Influence and potential use of mitigation to reduce impacts; and • The existence of a strong enclosing framework of hedgerows and trees that has the potential to integrate low level development with the local landscape, especially where existing field boundaries are maintained or improved.

Question	Answer
What are the potential noise impacts and will there be any impact on tranquillity and residential amenity?	<p data-bbox="544 325 2013 496">A Noise Assessment was prepared and submitted alongside the planning application. The Assessment which undertook several noise surveys both at day and night found that the noise levels would remain comfortably within a night time noise limit of 42dB LAeq,5min and a daytime noise limit of 55dB LAeq,5min for permanent installations even at the closest residential properties.</p> <p data-bbox="544 555 2013 772">Modern onshore drilling rigs are designed and operated in such a way as to minimise noise emissions to the community. The diesel engines, generators and pumps are fitted with effective noise control equipment including acoustic enclosures and high performance exhaust silencers, and rig baking systems are designed to minimise impact noises. It is not anticipated that additional noise mitigation is expected to be necessary for the proposed limit to be met at all local noise sensitive properties.</p> <p data-bbox="544 831 2013 911">The Assessment concluded that the drilling of the proposed well will not give rise to noise nuisance at any nearby residential properties.</p>

Question	Answer
Will there be any groundwater contamination?	<p>Reference to the BGS/Environment Agency interactive mapping of Groundwater confirms that the development site is not within a groundwater protection zone. The site will be constructed as a bunded sealed site with sufficient containment capacity to avoid possible pollutants from discharging into any nearby ground water sources.</p> <p>All surface runoff within the site would fall to the surrounding ditch, and spill kits would be located on site.</p>
Will there be any light pollution issues?	<p>To ensure safe operations and ensure the stability of the well, the drilling operation would be carried out for 24 hours per day. In order to operate 24 hours a day, lighting would be required during the hours of darkness. The lighting scheme will comply with Health and Safety legislation and be sensitive to the area.</p> <p>The lighting scheme will incorporate the use of visible rig lighting using both high level and low level lighting. The design of the rig itself and the position of the luminaires combine to not only shield the luminaires from external view but also direct the light where it is required and minimise any obtrusive light, that is, by directing the light downwards.</p> <p>Floodlights will only be activated in the following scenarios:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any emergency work requiring out-of-hours attendance; and • In the event of an intruder alarm, when the lights will be activated if motion sensors are triggered, but will be managed via a timer system set to 15 minutes or less. <p>It is not expected that there will be any light pollution as a result of the development.</p>

Question	Answer
Will there be any air quality issues?	<p>An air quality assessment was undertaken and submitted with the planning application. The air quality report presents an assessment of the potential air quality impacts from additional vehicle trips, construction plant and drilling plant emissions, construction activities (e.g. earthworks), and additional evaluation phase vehicle trips.</p> <p>The air quality assessment concluded that following the implementation of suitable mitigation measures the development is considered to have a Negligible overall air quality impact on human health and ecosystem sites.</p> <p>In respect of mitigation methods, appropriate dust mitigation measures will be utilised on site to further minimise any potential emissions. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All vehicles to switch off engines when not in use— no idling vehicles; • Regular vehicle cleaning and specific wheel washing on leaving site and damping down of haul routes; • All loads entering and leaving site will be covered; • On-road vehicles to comply to national and EU emission standards; • All non-road mobile machinery to use ultra-low sulphur diesel where available; • Minimise movement of construction traffic around site; • Hard surfacing and effective cleaning of haul routes and appropriate speed limit around site; <p>No significant impact is anticipated during the construction and drilling phases due to emissions from site plant equipment. However, as a precaution, air quality monitoring will also be undertaken at the boundary of the site during the construction phase and the drilling phase to confirm no significant adverse effects occur.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>Will there be any impacts on biodiversity? Will the drilling of the exploration well impact the Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)?</p>	<p>As noted above, in view of the wellsite's proximity to South Dorset Coast SSSI, St Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC and the Durlston Head Country Park SNCI, ecological and air quality assessments were undertaken and submitted in support of the planning application. Together, these assessments demonstrate that, with the implementation of suitable mitigation measures, the development is considered to have a negligible air quality impact and that no adverse ecological effects is anticipated to occur as a result of the proposals.</p> <p>In respect of the SNCI, the boundary of the site includes restored grassland which is part of California Farm SNCI. The botanical value of the grassland within the site is low due to grazing and trampling by livestock. Post development works, the site will be restored to species-rich calcareous grassland. No adverse effects on the SNCI are considered likely as a consequence of the development.</p> <p>As stated within the Ecology Survey submitted with the planning application, habitats within the site have the potential to support common breeding birds but do not have the potential to support protected species including great crested newts, bats, badgers and reptiles. As recommended, any vegetation to be removed from the site will be undertaken outside the nesting season (March-September) to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.</p> <p>As stated in the Air Quality Assessment no impacts on the Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of St Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC or Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC are predicted. No adverse effects on the adjacent SAC are considered likely as a consequence of the development.</p> <p>In terms of visual impact the site is screened from the surrounding countryside by intervening vegetation and changes in topography. In view of its enclosed nature it is considered that the drilling will represent a minimal visual intrusion</p>

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<p>Will there be any impact from the drilling on the neighbouring holiday let and camping business?</p>	<p>A site suitable from which to drill the sub-surface prospect was selected to minimise the impact on neighbours. As stated above the project has to meet strict conditions regarding noise, light and traffic. Under a condition of the planning permission, the site construction and drilling activities are only allowed during the winter months and so will avoid the main tourism season.</p>