

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SITE MONITORING REPORT 2017



PRESTON NEW ROAD SHALE GAS EXPLORATION SITE

MONITORING VISIT – 5 October 2017

SITE REFERENCE NO. – 5/M.2/93

Development Management Group
Lancashire County Council
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Site Name	Preston New Road	File Ref	5/M.2/93
Inspector's Name	Jonathan Haine	Date	5 Oct 2017
Site Operator Address	Cuadrilla Resources Preston New Road, Little Plumpton, Preston.	Met with	Ian Browne
		Photos taken	Yes
		Weather Conditions	Dry, sunny, windy
Monitoring Visit	Fee	£332	Time
			14.00–16.00

Site History

Planning permission for the development of an exploration wellsite for shale gas was granted by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 6 October 2016.

The planning permission is subject to 49 conditions, a number of which require details of various matters to be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. These schemes were approved by the County Council on 4 January 2017.

Development works on the site commenced on 5 January 2017.

Since the previous monitoring visit, the site compound had been completed, perimeter fencing completed and the drill rig erected on the site. During the visit, the drill rig was being used to carry out casing and cementing of one of the boreholes.

Compliance with Planning permission LCC/2014/0096 dated 6 October 2016 – Current Situation

Requirement No	Subject matter	Comments
1	Time limits for commencement	Commencement within 3 years of the date of the permission – development has already commenced (on 5 January 2017)
2	Time limits for completion of the development	Development has to be completed and site restored within 75 months of commencement date (Condition 3)
3	Notice of Commencement of development	In compliance – written notice of the commencement of the development was supplied to the County Council on 4 January 2017. Notice of commencement of drilling was provided (commencing conductor casing on 31 May 2017)

4	Development carried out in accordance with approved drawings and documents	<p>Development appears to be in general accordance with approved documents – see other conditions for detail.</p> <p>Since the previous monitoring visit, the site compound had been completed and all perimeter security and noise attenuation fencing completed. The drill rig had been brought onto the site and the first two boreholes had been drilled to a depth of around 1500 metres (approximately 50% of final depth). A noise attenuation wall (10 metres in height) had been erected on the western side of the drill rig.</p> <p>The temporary compound used for initial site construction works had also been restored.</p>
5	Copy of decision notice and approved plans made available in site office	Site office now established. Electronic version of planning permission was available together with approved drawings.
6	Details for removal of plant upon cessation of each phase	The condition requires details for the removal or disassembly of the drill rig prior to the commencement of the drilling operation. The details were submitted on 6 July 2017 and confirm that the rig will be removed after the first two boreholes have been completed.
7	Condition not used	
8	Scheme for construction of site access	<p>Scheme approved on 4 January 2017. The access has been completed and surfaced in accordance with approved drawings. Landscaping had been undertaken to the rear of the radii kerbs (hedge planting).</p> <p>The hedge alongside the A583 had not been lowered along the full length as shown on the approved drawing. Only a short length to the west of the access point had been reduced in height. However, the visibility in both directions is acceptable and retaining the hedge at its current height will assist in screening the exploration site from the A583.</p> <p>Some complaints had been received about lorries turning left from the entrance crossing into the centre of the A583. There did not appear to be any obstruction within the bellmouth that would prevent HGV's adhering to the kerb line. This matter has been referred to Cuadrilla for them to raise with drivers.</p>
9	Condition not used	

<p>10</p>	<p>Wheel cleaning measures</p>	<p>A scheme to comply with Condition 10 was approved on 4 January 2017. The approved measures have never been installed. However, Cuadrilla have submitted an amended scheme of wheel cleaning measures to supersede the scheme that was originally submitted. The scheme does not include a wheel cleaning machine but does provide for a range of other measures to prevent mud from being tracked onto the public highway. LCC needs to determine this scheme.</p> <p>During the visit, the carriageway of the A583 was in acceptable condition and there was no evidence of mud or other debris being tracked out of the site access.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Submission of traffic management plan</p>	<p>Traffic management plan approved on 4 January 2017. An amendment to the TMP (version 11) has been subsequently approved which allows departures from the routing contained in the approved TMP where the departures are agreed with the police. There have been a number of incidents where HGVs have departed from the normal routing arrangements where it has been necessary, in order to avoid road closures or other security issues. It does not appear that there have been any highway safety issues arising from the departures from the normal routing arrangements.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Construction method statement</p>	<p>The temporary construction compound used for the initial access and site construction works has now been restored. The restoration works had been undertaken to an adequate standard to allow the area to be used for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>The acoustic fencing and security fencing had been installed around the perimeter of the compound. The colour of the panels of the noise fencing was in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>The temporary heras fencing was still in place around the boundaries of the drilling compound and the site access. The operator should take steps to remove this fencing at the earliest opportunity.</p>

		A number of skips were in position in the compound to allow for segregation and recycling of different waste materials. Issues had been raised with liquids leaking out of the skips when transported to other sites for recycling/disposal – this is an issue for the EA to address with the operator which I understand has been done.
13	Scheme of monitoring of baseline highway conditions	Scheme submitted and approved on 4 January 2017. It is understood that the first baseline survey was undertaken on 23 December 2016. The video recording has been made available to LCC Highways as a record of road conditions at the commencement of the project. A further highway survey undertaken prior to drilling operations commencing was received on 26 June 2017.
14	Condition not used	
15	Stripping of soils	Topsoil had been stripped from the entirety of the compound area and used to form soil storage mounds at either end of the compound.
16	No soils exported from site	In compliance – no soils exported.
17	Landscaping of soil mounds	The topsoil mounds had been formed and had been satisfactorily graded and shaped. Seeding had been carried out which had been successful over the majority of the mounds. Some areas require reseeding where the seed had not germinated.
18	All soil mounds to be retained in weed free condition	Soil mounds were in acceptable condition and did not contain significant weed cover.
19	Hours of operation	Limitation to 07.30–18.30 M–F and 08.30-12.00 Saturdays for construction activities. Drilling works had now commenced which are not subject to the above restriction. A number of complaints had been received about importation of the drill rig outside approved hours. Cuadrilla are to apply to LCC TO give them some more flexibility as to the hours they can use for the movement of HGV's on/off site.
20	Condition not used	
21	Condition not used	
22	Disposal/storage of surface water run off	Lined perimeter ditches were in place to capture all water arising on site. A tanker was on site during the visit to transport intercepted water off site for treatment/disposal. The levels of water on site were being controlled below the top of the ditches and no water was discharging off site from the compound.

23	Containment and disposal of foul drainage	Temporary toilet facilities are on site for use by site personnel.
24	Buffer zones between edge of drilling compound and perimeter ditches	The perimeter ditches were located within the perimeter noise attenuation fencing. There was no obstruction of the ditches by any plant or equipment. However, it was noted that there is now a lot of plant and equipment stored within the site and the operator should ensure that the 1 metre standoff specified in the condition is complied with.
25	Condition not used	
26	Noise management plan	Scheme approved on 4 January 2017. Mitigation for the drilling rig had been provided in the form of the 10 metre high wall within the compound itself and the surrounding noise mitigation fencing and also cladding on the drill rig itself.
27	Condition not used	
28	Noise monitoring methodology	<p>Two permanent noise monitoring points are in position at the site. One is close to A583 and another is in the field closer to the drilling compound.</p> <p>The monitoring points have been activated and are monitoring for the noise levels stated in Condition 28. The monitoring point closest to the compound also provides for audio recording. The monitoring stations automatically download the noise information and the County Council is able to view the monitoring information on line in the event that complaints are received.</p> <p>Some noise complaints have been received regarding night time noise, but it has been difficult to establish from the monitoring data if the levels specified within the condition have been breached. Discussions have taken place with the operator relating to possible changes to the noise monitoring equipment so that it would allow better differentiation of background noise levels and site noise. The operator's proposals on this are still awaited.</p>
29	Noise levels (general noise levels)	Noise levels during the site visit were acceptable although no drilling works were being undertaken. The rig was being used to case and concrete the borehole and some noise was apparent from the top drive on the rig although it was only very occasional.

30	Noise levels (tones and impulsive noise)	The noise from the top drive did have a distinct tonal element and some complaint/comment had been received about this noise. Cuadrilla should ensure that the noise from this part of the rig does not exceed the levels in Condition 30.
31	Maintenance of plant, equipment and machinery	In compliance – all plant being used appeared to be well maintained and was not generating undue levels of noise or exhaust emissions.
32	Condition not used	
32A	Dust management plan	Dust management plan approved on 4 January 2017. Dust monitoring equipment has been installed at the site and is being used to record levels of dust. Equipment includes frisbe type gauge, a directional dust monitor and a monitor to record particulates. During the visit, the access road and site compound was not generating any dust due to damp/wet ground conditions.
33	Lighting	Lighting scheme for drilling rig has been approved (28 July 2017). Lighting erected and operated in accordance with approved scheme.
34	Details for colours of plant, equipment and acoustic fencing	Details approved on 4 January 2017. Colour of acoustic fencing was acceptable and complied with approved details.
34A	Prohibition on display of any corporate logos	In compliance.
35	Restriction on height of drilling rig	In compliance – rig appears to be at or below the approved height.
36	Design and location of security fencing	Scheme provides for erection of 2.0 metre high heras fence around site boundary. Now that the 4 metre high security fencing has been erected, there is now no requirement for the heras fencing which should be removed as soon as possible.
37	Biodiversity Mitigation Strategy	<p>Strategy was approved on 4/1/17. Hedgerow removal to create access was undertaken outside of bird nesting season. There is no further hedgerow to remove.</p> <p>It is understood that the Ecological Clerk of Works has been present during construction works and has undertaken various surveys as proposed in the Mitigation Strategy. A bat and breeding bird survey was submitted on 21 July 2017 and a repeat bat survey submitted on 24 October 2017.</p>
38	Condition not used	
39 and 40	Prohibition on trees and hedgerows being removed during bird breeding season	Trees and hedgerows required to construct access were removed in the first week of the development therefore outside of the bird breeding season. See also comment under Condition 37 regarding further hedge works.

41	Scheme of landscaping	<p>Scheme approved on 4 January 2017. Most of these works were completed in the 2016/17 planting season. There are some outstanding works which were not possible to complete due to the location of the site compound – these will need to be undertaken in the next planting season 2017/18. All planting works appeared to have been carried out satisfactorily with use of appropriate species and correct protection measures.</p> <p>Cuadrilla have recently submitted a report to the County Council outlining the results of an inspection of the landscaping works that have been undertaken. The recommendations in the report with regard to outstanding works and required maintenance/replacement of planting should be followed in the current planting season.</p>
42	Condition not used	
43	Archaeology	<p>Archaeology scheme approved on 4 January 2017. Soil stripping had been completed. It is understood that an archaeologist was present during these soil stripping exercises.</p> <p>A summary report setting out the results and findings of the archaeological recording was submitted on 11 October 2017 and is acceptable.</p>
44 and 45	Restoration	No restoration works required at present time.
46	Restoration (reduction of access to agricultural access)	No restoration at present time.
47	Aftercare	No requirement for aftercare at the present time.
48	Community Liaison Group	Scheme for CLG was approved on 4 January 2017.
49	Reporting of breaches of condition	No material breaches of condition with public health implications have taken place. Other breaches of condition such as right turn movements have been reported to the County Council by the operator.

Issues and Actions

Since the previous monitoring visit, substantial work had been undertaken at the site, the site compound and perimeter fencing had been completed and the drilling rig had been brought onto the site. Two boreholes had been commenced. It was understood that the first borehole would be a vertical hole to take cores and the second borehole would incorporate a lateral along the horizons of interest. At the time of the visit, it was understood that both boreholes had been drilled to approximately 50% of their maximum depth and were currently being cased prior to drilling recommencing.

The heras fencing that was erected around the entire boundary of the site is no longer necessary and should be removed as soon as ground conditions allow.

The development works being undertaken appeared to be in general compliance with the planning conditions. All noise and dust mitigation measures have been employed and appear to be largely effective.

Since the previous meeting the hours of working condition had been breached during the operations to import the drill rig. The reasons for the breach are understood but should not reoccur on a regular basis. Cuadrilla have applied for a non-material amendment to Condition 19 to allow some flexibility for vehicle movements outside the hours specified in Condition 19.

A small number of noise complaints had been received. However, the current noise monitoring scheme does not appear to be sufficient to allow the cause of the complaint to be properly identified. This appears to be due to the relatively high background noise levels compared to the 39 dB(A) noise level within the condition. The County Council and Cuadrilla have discussed what amendments should be made to the noise monitoring equipment and the operator's proposals are awaited.

Dust controls on the access road appeared to be largely effective and the measures being employed to control the passage and routing of HGVs accessing the site also appeared to be effective. All HGVs visiting the site during the visit entered and left the site in accordance with the routing within the TMP.

It is noted that Cuadrilla have reviewed the success of the landscaping works that were undertaken in winter 2016/17. The report submitted to the County Council following the review contains a number of recommendations which should be followed in the current planting season to ensure that the landscaping works are successful and that any outstanding works are completed.

Date of Next Visit

To be arranged

Inspector's Signature

J Haine
27 October 2017