

**Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson  
Interim Executive Director for Place**

Report to:	<b>Planning and Regulation Committee</b>
Date:	<b>14 January 2019</b>
Subject:	<b>Monitoring of Operations at Biscathorpe Oil Exploration Site</b>

**Summary:**

This report sets out the monitoring of activities at the Biscathorpe Oil Exploration site since construction works commenced at the beginning of October 2018.

The report notes that some breaches of planning control have occurred since the development commenced which have now largely been resolved by the submission of a further planning application or measures taken to address the breaches identified.

The works carried out on the site have incorporated the construction of the access road, site compound and well pad drilling platform. These works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

**Recommendation:**

That the comments of the report are noted and that a further report is brought to a later Committee detailing the progress of the development during the drilling phase.

**Background**

1. Temporary planning permission ((E)N59/2259/14) was granted on 16 March 2015 for the construction of a new access track, and well site, with associated portable cabins for the storage of equipment and staff office accommodation and for the the drilling of an exploratory borehole, the undertaking of production tests for conventional hydrocarbons and for the retention of the site and well head valve assembly gear for evaluation. Commencement of development was confirmed on the 28 February 2018.
2. Planning permission (reference: N/059/00531/18) was granted May 2018 to allow an extension to the end date for the completion of the development by three years (until 28 February 2021) and to amend approved drawings so as to allow the retention of security and welfare cabins during the production testing phase.

3. A further retrospective planning permission (N/059/02114/18) was granted 3 December 2018 for the temporary installation of six site security and welfare cabins, four water bowsers, generator and associated facilities on land close to the oil exploration site.
4. In accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 17, Class KA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2016, Egdon Resources UK Ltd notified the Mineral Planning Authority (acknowledged 5 November 2018) of its intention to drill preparatory groundwater monitoring boreholes associated with the petroleum exploration operations.
5. These water monitoring boreholes have been drilled in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Agency.
6. At the Planning and Regulation Committee on 3 December 2018 following the Committee's resolution to grant retrospective planning permission for the security cabins the Committee requested that a report be brought to the next meeting setting out the outcome of the Council's weekly monitoring of the site.
7. Set out below are the dates of the monitoring visits that have been undertaken and the progress of the works since construction commenced in early October.

9 October 2018

- Identified that a number of security/welfare cabins associated with the development had been located adjacent to the planning permission area. A retrospective planning application to retain the cabins in this location was submitted to the Minerals Planning Authority on 09/10/2018 ;
- Works were being carried out to create the access and kerbing to the entrance.
- Archaeologists were on site carrying out a watching brief during the soil strip of the access track.
- A complaint was received in relation to an alleged delivery taking place after 1pm on Saturday 6 October. This complaint was investigated. The case was closed due to no evidence being found to substantiate this complaint.
- During the site inspection, it was identified that soil had been deposited onto the public highway from the site. Road sweepers were scheduled to clean the road later that day to ensure compliance with part 10.0 (Control of Dust and Dirt on Public Highway) of the Traffic Management Plan.
- During the site inspection, the access road was being constructed. It was identified, that the traffic signage has not been erected as required by condition 16. The Operator was instructed to arrange for the signage to be installed by 19 October 2018.

18 October 2018

- Bund construction had commenced, no issues identified.
- No further complaints received in respect of out of hours working. No noise complaints received.
- The gates had been erected at the access.
- The access had been constructed.
- The vegetation adjacent to the access had recently been cut back by the farmer.
- During the site inspection, it was identified, that the directional signage had not been erected. It was noted that all other signage detailed in the approved plan had been erected. Condition 16 required that all signage was to be erected before the construction of the access road. The Operator was instructed to arrange for the remaining signage to be installed by 25 October 2018.

25 October 2018

- The entrance had been constructed in accordance with approved details. Works were nearing completion to the hard standing of the site compound and had been carried out in accordance with the approved details. A cut and fill operation (removing soils to the required depth which are then to be replaced with stone) was being carried out to the well pad. Works undertaken in accordance with the approved details.
- Archaeological contractors were on site during the site visit. They were there observing the cut and fill operation on the well pad construction.
- No further complaints received in respect of out of hours working. No noise complaints received.
- During the site inspection, the distance between the previously erected gates and the nearside edge of the carriageway was measured. The gates have been set back to the required 15 metres and do not open over the highway.
- Site access is now in use and has been used since the beginning of the week to take delivery of materials to the site.
- The site inspection identified that all signage has been erected in accordance with the approved details. All signs have been retained and the operator carries out weekly checks to ensure that all signs remain situated in the approved location and face the correct way.

2 November 2018

- Works are nearing completion to the hard standing of the site compound and have been carried out in accordance with the approved details. The construction of the well pad is nearing completion.
- Construction of the compound ditches has begun and has been carried out in accordance with approved details.

- No further complaints received in respect of out of hours working. No noise complaints received. A copy of the noise monitoring survey was submitted to the Planning Authority on 30 October 2018. No issues were identified.

9 November 2018

- Works are nearing completion to the hard standing of the site compound and have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- The construction of the well pad is nearing completion.
- The well cellar has been installed in accordance with the approved details.
- Archaeological groundworks are complete and monitoring has now ceased on site. The final report is expected to be submitted to the LCC Historic Environment team before the end of 2018.
- No further complaints received in respect of out of hours working. No noise complaints received.

15 November 2018

- During the site inspection, it was identified that a mobile welfare unit has been brought to the site for the use (when required) of the security guards, due to an increased need for security to spend more time at the site entrance.
- During the site monitoring visit, the liner was being installed to the compound area. The liner is created with an impermeable seal which diverts all site run off into the sealed perimeter interceptor ditches and collection pipes prior to being collected by tankers for disposal. The installation of the liner is being monitored by an independent CQA Inspector.
- Construction of the compound ditches has begun and the surface water run off interceptor pipe has been installed in accordance with approved details.
- A letter of complaint was received reporting out of hours working. During the investigation, there was no breach identified or evidence that a breach had taken place.
- No noise complaints received.

6 December 2018

- Since the previous site monitoring visit, the installation of the liner has completed the concrete ramp to allow HCVs to access the well pad from the compound area has been installed, the construction of the well cellar has been completed, and the perimeter ditches have been filled with gravel in accordance with the approved details. During the site monitoring visit, the groundwater monitoring boreholes were being installed. The installation process was being overseen by a geologist who was taking samples at every half meter. The stone was being

spread, levelled and compacted over the compound area in accordance with the approved details.

- Construction of the compound ditches and surface water drainage system has been completed in accordance with approved details.
- The installation of the security fencing is nearing completion. No further complaints received in respect of out of hours working. No noise complaints received.
- The six site security and welfare cabins, four water bowsers, generator and associated facilities previously located on land adjacent to the well site compound have been relocated to the compound area and the site returned to its former condition.

13 December 2018

- Since the previous site monitoring visit, the installation of the groundwater monitoring boreholes has been completed. Samples have been collected from the boreholes to provide a benchmark for when drilling commences and no negative results were found.
- In preparation for the main drilling rig, the surface conductor rig has been installed on the site and drilling has commenced to enable the installation of the well casing. Works are expected to be completed by 17 December 2018.
- The installation of the security fencing has been completed.
- Cabins have been positioned on the site. Some of the cabins are due to be removed and replaced on a like for like basis.
- Lighting has been installed on the site. No complaints have been received.

#### Community Liaison Group

8. The Community Liaison Group met for the first time on 3 December and was a productive meeting. One of the matters raised related to the availability of the monitoring information. It was agreed that this information can be put in the public domain and a mechanism of the most appropriate method to achieve this is being discussed.
9. The next meeting will take place in mid-January which will incorporate a site visit so the community group can see the site during the drilling operations to get a better understanding of what takes place at a drilling exploration site.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the contents of the report are noted and that a further report is brought to a later Committee detailing the progress of the development during the drilling phase.

This report was written by Eloise Shieber, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or [dev\\_planningsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:dev_planningsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

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