

Policy MS17: Proposals for Oil and Gas Exploration and Appraisal

OPTION 1

Proposals for exploration and appraisal of onshore oil and gas will be permitted where they meet all of the following criteria:

- Well sites and associated facilities are sited in the least sensitive location from which the target reservoir can be accessed
- It has been demonstrated that possible effects that might arise from the development would not adversely affect the integrity of sites designated or recognised for their landscape, historic heritage or biodiversity interests
- The application demonstrates that there would be no adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure
- The application provides an indication of the extent of the reservoir and the extent of the area of search within the reservoir
- Exploration and appraisal operations are for an agreed temporary period
- Well sites and associated facilities are restored at the earliest opportunity if oil and gas is not found in economically viable volumes, or they are developed within an agreed time frame.

OPTION 2

Proposals for the exploration and appraisal of onshore gas and oil will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that the development would satisfy all of the following criteria:

- Well sites and associated facilities are sited in the least sensitive location from which the target reservoir can be accessed;
- The applicant has demonstrated that all potential adverse environmental, social and economic impacts can be mitigated to levels which are acceptable to the Mineral Planning Authority;

- The applicant has demonstrated that the integrity of the geological structure is suitable;
- An indication of the extent of the reservoir and the extent of the area of search within the reservoir is provided to the Mineral Planning Authority;
- The exploration and appraisal operations are for an agreed, temporary length of time; and
- Well sites and associated facilities are restored at the earliest practicable opportunity if oil and gas is not found in economically viable volumes, or they are developed within a time frame which has been agreed in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority.

Policy MS18: Proposals for Oil and Gas Production and Ancillary Development

Proposals for hydrocarbon production well sites and facilities, and other related ancillary development, will be permitted where they meet all of the following criteria:

- A full appraisal programme for the oil and gas field has been completed to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority;
- A framework for the full development of the field is submitted for approval by the Mineral Planning Authority;
- Facilities required for hydrocarbon production sit within the agreed development framework, are justified in terms of their number and extent, and are progressively installed wherever possible;
- Extraction, processing, dispatch and transport facilities are sited, designed and operated to minimise environmental and amenity impacts and provide proportionate environmental enhancements;
- Any adverse impacts, both individual and cumulative, can be avoided or mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority;
- It has been demonstrated that possible effects that might arise from the development would not adversely affect the integrity of designated

and non-designated biodiversity sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects;

- It can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure, including any disturbance to former coal mining shafts and seams that could result in additional adverse impacts from those sources;
- Existing facilities are used for the development of any additional fields discovered unless the applicant satisfies the Mineral Planning Authority that this would not be feasible and any adverse impacts can be mitigated;
- Where a proposal uses existing production facilities, the integrity of the existing infrastructure can be demonstrated, having regard to local environmental factors;
- The development includes the use of pipelines for the transport of the oil or gas unless it is demonstrated that this is not feasible. In such cases rail or road will be considered but in the case of road it will only be allowed where it has been demonstrated that it would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the environment or highway safety.