



Cuadrilla Bowland Limited: Planning Application to vary Condition 2 to extend the time at Preston New Road Exploration Site

Planning Statement

PNR-PLN-001

December 2022

Version 1.0

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1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a section 73 planning variation by Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd to Lancashire County Council (as Mineral Planning Authority (MPA)) to extend the time duration of existing planning permission (APP/Q2371/W/15/3134386) condition 2.

Condition 2:

The site development works comprising the drilling operations of four vertical/lateral exploration boreholes, initial flow testing, extended flow testing, decommissioning and site restoration shall be completed within a period of 75 months from the commencement of the development as defined by this planning permission. All drilling and hydraulic fracturing operations shall be completed within a period of 30 months from the date of commencement of the drilling of the first well in accordance with condition 3.

The planning application comprises:

- The completed planning application form and relevant certificates
- This Planning Statement
- Amended stage 1 suspension drawings.

The existing drawings in condition 4 will remain extant for stage 2 and 3 development phases described in this planning statement.

1.1 The Application

The proposed development will be for a time extension to maintain the existing site and two (2) suspended wellbores followed by the subsequent decommissioning of the two (2) existing wells and site restoration. The proposed development will not include further drilling or hydraulic fracturing. The proposed time extension is seeking to extend the period of 75 months by a further 24 months to allow sufficient time to complete desktop research, decommission and restore the site. Condition 2 requires the site to be restored by April 2023.

1.2 Screening Assessment

A screening request was submitted in June 2022 to LCC requesting that the application not be an EIA development for the purposes of Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

The conclusion from Screening Opinion issued by LCC in July 2022 states:

The main environmental impact arising from the proposal would be the landscape / visual impacts due to the exploration site being retained over a longer period. However, the period of additional retention would be relatively short and the site is not located in an area of designated landscape sensitivity. The proposal would not affect the ability to restore the site once the exploration boreholes have been plugged. The other potential impacts in terms of ecology, pollution and nuisance and traffic would be minor and not of a significance to require a need for EIA.

2.0 The Applicant

Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd is part of Cuadrilla Resources, an independent UK onshore oil and gas exploration company formed in 2007 which is focused on discovering and recovering natural gas from shale rock.

Cuadrilla is owned 96% by AJ Lucas, an Australian specialist service provider to the energy, mining and infrastructure sector and the remaining 4% by Cuadrilla employees (including former employees). The company currently has onshore exploration licences in the North and South of the UK including an existing production site in Elswick, Lancashire.

Spirit Energy holds a 25% interest in PEDL 165 which includes the Preston New Road (“PNR”) exploration site.

Since the start of PNR operations, Cuadrilla has directly spent £14.6 million with suppliers based in Lancashire, and a further £1.37 million of indirect spend to Lancashire based sub-contractors. The local community has benefited by £240,000 from the two wells drilled and hydraulically fractured, and a further £277,000 sponsorship to local causes in the community. Cuadrilla will continue to work with local partners and suppliers throughout the lifecycle of the PNR site.

2.1 Site Status

The PNR site and two (2) wellbores remain safely suspended. A well suspension notice issued by the North Sea Transition Authority (“NSTA”), in April 2022 allows for the continued suspension and the ability to re-enter both wells (PNR1z and PNR2) subject to NSTA notification, until 30th June 2023. The suspension notice replaces the pre-existing NSTA plug, and abandonment notice to decommission both wells.

During the well suspension period Cuadrilla has agreed a work programme with the NSTA which involves:

- (i) Defining the key controls on induced seismicity.
- (ii) Improving the seismic imaging of natural faults & fractures
- (iii) Supporting, as appropriate additional research requirements emerging from the British Geological Survey (BGS) scientific review of shale gas commissioned by the government in April 2022.

Cuadrilla has confirmed to the NSTA that in completing the above it will provide access to data, to its operational expertise and, as required, access to the only hydraulic fractured wellbores in the Bowland Shale.

3.0 Planning History

Cuadrilla Bowland applied for planning permission, LCC/2014/0096, in June 2014 to construct and develop an exploration site near Little Plumptton. The relevant planning history is summarised in table 2.1.

Both applications were refused by the LCC Development Control Committee in June 2015. Cuadrilla Bowland appealed the decisions to the Planning Inspectorate which subsequently granted permission for both developments on the 6th of October 2016.

Several conditions were attached to the permission which required discharge before each phase of development. These are outlined in the summary table (2.1).

The main exploration site application was supported by application LCC/2014/0097 to develop a seismic monitoring array in a 4km radius of the proposed development. The seismic array was implemented and utilised during the hydraulic fracturing phase of the development.

Table 2.1 Summary Planning History for Preston New Road Exploration Site

Application Number	Type	Application Details	Date of Decision
LCC/2014/0096	Full Application	Construction and operation of a site for drilling up to four exploration wells, hydraulic fracturing of the wells, testing for hydrocarbons, abandonment of the wells and restoration, including provision of an access road and access onto the highway, security fencing, lighting and other uses ancillary to the exploration activities, including the construction of a pipeline and a connection to the gas grid network and associated infrastructure to land to the north of Preston New Road, Little Plumptton	29/06/2015 (Refused)
APP/Q2371/W/15/ 3134386	Appeal	Appeal a: appeal made by cuadrilla Bowland limited exploration site on land that forms part of Plumptton Hall Farm, west of the farm buildings, north of Preston New Road, off Preston New Road, Preston, Lancashire application ref: LCC/2014/0096	06/10/2016 (Granted)
LCC/2014/0096/1	Discharge of Condition	Compliance with conditions 8, access arrangements, 10, wheel cleaning facilities, condition 11 traffic management plan, 12 construction method, 13, scheme for survey of baseline highway conditions, 26, noise management plan, 28, noise monitoring methodology, 32a, dust control, 33 lighting, 34, external colour of equipment, 36 security fencing, 37 ecology, 40 landscaping, 43 archaeology,	04/01/2017 (Approved)

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Application Number	Type	Application Details	Date of Decision
		48 community liaison group of permission LCC/2014/0096	
LCC/2014/0096/2A	Discharge of Condition	Approval of details reserved by condition 33 of permission LCC/2014/0096/1 relating to lighting submission of a lighting impact assessment (phase 2 lighting)	28/07/2017 (Approved)
LCC/2014/0096NM1	Non Material Amendment	Non-material amendment of permission LCC/2014/0096 to allow up to a maximum of nine single convoy deliveries or removals to be carried out outside the hours specified in condition 19 provided they are carried out only in relation to works phases c, d, e or f as set out in planning condition 3	13/12/2017 (Granted)
LCC/2014/0096/3	Discharge of Condition	Application for the approval of details reserved by conditions 6a and 33 of permission LCC/2014/0096 relating to removal of drill rig and lighting scheme for fracturing stage	14/09/2018 (Approved)
LCC/2014/0096/4	Discharge of Condition	Approval of details reserved by condition 6 (e) of permission LCC/2014/0096 relating to the time scale for restoration following the decommissioning of the two PNR shale gas exploration wells and removal of pressure gauges.	10/02/2022 (Approved)
LCC/2014/0096/2B	Discharge of Condition	Approval of details reserved by condition 33 of permission LCC/2014/0096/1 relating to lighting submission of a lighting impact assessment (phase 3 lighting)	10/02/2022 (Approved)
SCR/2022/0003	Screening Opinion	Screening opinion request to extend the time scale of condition 2 of existing planning permission APP/Q2371/W/15/3134386	26/07/2022 (Issued)

4.0 Site Surroundings

The proposed development is located approximately equidistant between Blackpool and Kirkham south-west of the Fylde coastal plain. Situated approximately 500m from the village of Little Plumpton and approximately 1 kilometre west of the village of Great Plumpton and approximately 2 kilometres south-east from junction 4 of the M55.

Moss House Farm is located approximately 800 metres to the north-west of the site, on the northern side of Moss House Lane. A couple of hundred metres further along the road lays Moss Cottage. About 400 metres to the south-west of the site is Staining Wood Farm. Several residential properties are located approximately 500 metres to the south-east of the Site in the village of Little Plumpton and 900 metres to the east in the village of Great Plumpton. Another residential area is situated approximately 1,200 metres to the west at Carr Bridge.

Commercial/industrial facilities near Moss House Lane site include Blackpool Fylde Industrial Estate and Whitehills Business Park, which are situated adjacent to M55 Junction 4 on the south-west of the junction.

No statutory designations are located within the proposed development site or within a 3km radius surrounding it. The following designations have been identified within a 10km radius surrounding the site:

Marton Mere Blackpool Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – located approximately 3.2km north-west.

- Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI and LNR – located approximately 6.4km south-west.
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar Site – located approximately 6.7km south.
- Ribble Estuary SSSI – located approximately 6.7km south.
- Newton Marsh SSSI – located 8.7km south-east.
- Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar - located approximately 6.7km to the north.
- Wyre Estuary SSSI - located approximately 6.7km to the north.
- Liverpool Bay SPA – located approximately 7.4km to the west.

The existing site is connected immediately to the south by an access and egress track onto the A583 by a tarmac bell mouth. Surrounding the site and access track is agricultural fields used for pasture and livestock farming.

A site location plan is presented in Appendix A which illustrates the existing well site and surrounding agricultural location. Appendix B provides a 3km radius of site designations to provide a location context.

5.0 Proposed development

The proposed development will comprise 3 stages and does not include further drilling or hydraulic fracturing:

- Stage 1 – Well suspension, wellhead maintenance, data collection.
- Stage 2 – Decommissioning of PNR 1z and PNR 2 wells
- Stage 3 – Site restoration

Combining the NSTA notice timeline and site work activities, the proposed development is applying for a 24-month time extension to allow reasonable and sufficient time to manage all 3 stages. Figure 5.1 provides a high-level timeline of each stage.

The application will not seek to change any other conditions of the extant planning permission.

5.1 Stage 1

Currently the two wells and the site are suspended, which means both wells are inactive but can be re-entered if required. The site and wellheads will be subject to maintenance which includes environmental monitoring, checking and testing well barriers as well as visually inspecting security fencing and site drainage.

Maintenance visits will take place between the hours of 0700 - 1800 Monday to Friday and 0700 – 1300 on Saturday, with no working on Sunday or Bank or Public Holidays, unless in an emergency.

This stage of operations allows the wellbores and site to remain in situ as desktop research and policy regarding the industry develops. On expiry of the suspension notice in June 2023, the NSTA may (a) agree a plan to re-use one or both wells, (b) agree a plan to bring one or both wells into production or (c) require one or both wells to be plugged and abandoned.

The choice of options will be dependent on the outcome of the technical studies and evolving government policy regarding the security and provision of natural gas supply.

5.2 Stage 2

Decommissioning of the wells will be undertaken in accordance with Oil and Gas UK Guidelines on Well Abandonment and according to an abandonment plan to be agreed with the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and an independent Well Examiner. The wellheads will be removed and casing/ cement cut to 2 m below ground level to allow restoration of the site to agriculture use. A workover rig, or equivalent rig, will be mobilised to the site to plug and abandon the wells. The rig height will be in accordance with existing condition 35. The phase will operate in accordance with the existing planning conditions as issued by the Planning Inspectorate, Appeal Reference APP/Q2371/W/15/3134386. A period of groundwater and surface water monitoring, as required by the Environment Agency permit, will follow on after well decommissioning.

It is anticipated that a period of 4-6 months will be required to procure equipment and secure regulatory consent for the decommissioning programme and then a further 4-6 weeks to decommission each well, approximately 8-12 weeks of well activity in total. Once the wells are decommissioned it is anticipated up to a 12-month period of post decommissioning environmental monitoring will be required.

Recent communication from the Environment Agency has indicated that an estimated time to allocate an officer for a permit surrender application is between 22-24 weeks, ~6 months (this is not to assess the application but to allocate a resource to review the application). Once allocated a technical review will be undertaken by the Environment Agency officer(s), which could in theory add an additional 1-2 months to the process of surrendering the permit. Accounting for 6-12 months of post well abandonment

groundwater and surface water monitoring, the surrender process could reasonably take 12-18 months to complete.

5.2.1 Stage 3 – Restoration

After a period of environmental monitoring the site restoration is scheduled to take approximately 4 months depending on weather conditions.

Removal of residual equipment will take place within the existing site security fencing. The concrete pad and cellar will be deconstructed and then removed by a licensed waste contractor. Surface aggregate, drainage pipework and other infrastructure would be removed. Any potentially contaminated equipment would be removed from the site prior to removal of the impermeable geotextile/ HDPE lining. All site equipment and infrastructure would be reused or recycled where possible, or alternatively removed from the site by licensed waste contractor.

The soil storage bunds would be used to level and restore the site surface. Field drainage would be re-installed as required by the landowner. The site would then complete its restoration with a reseeded programme and prepared for aftercare. Access tracks and any road amendments (if required) would also be restored as agreed with the landowner and Highways Authority, or retained for continued use, subject to necessary planning consent.

An aftercare plan would be put in place as per condition 44, 45 and 46 to ensure appropriate restoration of the site back to agricultural land.

Figure 5.1: Proposed Development Timeline

Stages/ Dates	2023									2024				2025	
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Stage 1 operate under NSTA notice															
Decision from NSTA															
Stage 2 Well Decom															
EA GW Monitoring /permit surrender															
Stage 3 Restoration															

6.0 Relevant Development Plan Policies & Material Considerations

The application for planning permission falls to be determined by the MPA (LCC) in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which states that “if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

The ‘material considerations’ referred to include national planning policies (mainly published in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated July 2021), relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), current and emerging National Energy Policy, emerging local planning policies (including neighbourhood plans) and other relevant evidence in support of the planning application.

6.1 Development Plan

The relevant development plan documents in this case comprise the:

- Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Core Strategy (CS), dated February and adopted March 2009;
- the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Part 1 (JLMWLP), dated September 2013;
- and those policies of the Fylde Borough Local Plan (FBLP) dated October 2018 and adopted in December 2021 following a partial review.

The adopted development plan policies considered to be most relevant to the proposed development are outlined in the following sections.

Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Core Strategy

- CS1 ‘Safeguarding Lancashire’s Mineral Resources’, and
- CS5 ‘Achieving Sustainable Minerals Production’

Policy CS1 seeks to safeguard mineral resources by providing that areas with mineral resources with the potential for extraction will be identified as Mineral Safeguarding Areas and protected from permanent sterilisation by other development; recognises that mineral resources may have economic, environmental or heritage value; that minerals will only be extracted where they meet a proven need for materials with those particular specifications; and also that the Mineral Planning Authorities will work with industry and others to ensure the best available information supports these principles.

Policy CS5 seeks to achieve sustainable minerals production by encouraging alternatives to the bulk transportation of minerals by road; by safeguarding existing or potential facilities where they offer potential for the use of rail, water or other means to transport minerals; and by setting criteria for the consideration of proposals. These include the protection and enhancement of natural resources, historic assets, and landscape; the protection of amenity and infrastructure; the prevention of flooding, and provision for restoration. It encourages concurrent mineral working and the beneficial reuse of waste materials.

Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- DM2 ‘Development Management’

Policy DM2 sets out the principles that will govern the management of development, and that applications will be supported where any material, social, economic or environmental impacts that would cause demonstrable harm can be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels. It expresses support for applications which, for example, make a positive contribution to the economy; to biodiversity,

geodiversity and landscape character; and the reduction of carbon emissions, and sets out some ways in which these goals can be achieved.

Fylde Borough Council Local Plan

- GD4 'Development in the countryside',

The policy sets out that development in countryside areas will not be permitted unless it falls under certain categories, including schemes essentially required for development appropriate to a rural area or essentially needed for the continuation of an existing project which would not harm the character of the surrounding countryside.

- EC2: 'Employment Opportunities',

The policy applies to all development for employment use and recognises that land availability for employment opportunities in the borough is limited but requires factors to be addressed which include the character and amenity of surroundings and the nature of the business proposed.

- ENV1 'Landscape',

The policy which sets out Development needs to respect and enhance the special significance of areas of biodiversity and landscape importance. The policy lists a number of requirements to demonstrate how the development enhances areas of biodiversity and landscape importance in rural areas.

- ENV2 'Biodiversity',

Policy provides that development which would have an adverse impact protected species and their habitats will not be permitted; and conditions or obligations will be used to protect or secure alternative habitats.

- ENV5 'Historic environment',

Policy details relating to a heritage asset should be supported by a Heritage Statement. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the asset's importance and provides details of sites and locations of heritage importance.

- CL1 'Flood alleviation, water quality and water efficiency'

The Framework provides details of preventing inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development away from areas at highest risk. The application of the Sequential Test will be required, the aim of which is to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The 2021 partial review paragraphs 159-169 of the NPPF framework replaces the policy.

- CL2 'Surface Water Run-Off and Sustainable Drainage'

The policy details how new development should utilise SuDs and manage discharge at greenfield runoff rate from rainwater sources to minimise pollution from overland flow and runoff, as well as the volume of water that enters the Ribble Estuary. The 2021 partial review paragraphs 159-169 of the NPPF framework replaces the policy.

- INF1 'Service accessibility and infrastructure'

The policy defines infrastructure with a broad definition which includes Energy: gas and electricity generation and lists how the policy protects and creates sustainable communities.

The Fylde Council Local Plan details the following information regarding shale gas exploration, production and distribution:

1.54 The potential for shale gas has been identified across the Fylde Coast area with exploration wells. Companies seeking to undertake exploratory investigations, and to subsequently test for and extract onshore oil or gas, including shale gas, must apply for planning permission from LCC. The County Council advertises the planning applications it receives and there is the

opportunity to make representations on individual proposals. Fylde Council is consulted on these planning applications as a statutory consultee.

1.55 Lancashire County Council continue to work on a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for Lancashire which will include Onshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production and Distribution. The industry is still in the exploration phase. If a shale gas production industry is developed in Fylde, the Council acknowledges it will need to consider the scale and rate of shale gas development and review any cumulative impacts.

6.2 Material Considerations

Material considerations in this case are considered to include the:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (most recently updated in July 2021);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014); and
- Energy Supply and Climate Change National Policy Context:
 - Energy Act 2008;
 - Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) 2011;
 - Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future 2020; and
- Written Ministerial Statements (HCWS295) and (HCWS346)

6.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

A revised and updated NPPF was published in July 2021. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 identifies three objectives to sustainable development: an economic objective - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy; a social objective - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and an environmental role - contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating climate change including transitioning to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 8 adds that these objectives should not be undertaken in isolation because they are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways to secure net gains across the three different objectives.

Paragraph 11 provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (paragraph 11(c)). That presumption is engaged in this case.

Paragraph 11(d) states that where there are no relevant development plan policies or where the policies which are most important for determining the planning application are out-of-date, decision-makers should grant planning permission unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development

proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

Paragraph 85 goes on to state:

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”

Effective Use of Land

Paragraph 119 states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change.

Paragraph 167 states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities (LPAs) should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Paragraph 174 states that planning decisions should contribute to enhancing the natural and local environment. This includes recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, providing net gains for biodiversity and preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from and/or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

Paragraph 180 states that proposals should be refused if there is harm to biodiversity, which cannot be suitably mitigated.

Paragraph 185 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution and health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the Site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.”

Paragraph 188 states:

“The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively...”

Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals

Paragraph 209 states:

“It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.”

Paragraph 211 adds that when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy. It adds that when considering proposals for mineral extraction, MPAs should:

ensure that there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the natural or historic environment or human health;

ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions are controlled, mitigated or removed at source and to establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties; and

provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards.

Both conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons are considered to be minerals of local and national importance by Government (Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF). As stated above, minerals can only be worked where they are found.

Fundamental principles underpinning the NPPF are the need to deliver sustainable development and build a strong, competitive economy nationwide. The Government's overall commitment is to secure economic growth aimed at the creation of jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths and meeting the twin challenges of global competition and providing a low carbon future. To achieve this, the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system encourages sustainable economic growth and does not impede it.

Ground Conditions and Pollution

Paragraph 185 states

Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;;

The revised 2021 Fylde Local Plan refers to the framework for managing noise pollution levels. Further guidance is provide under the PPG.

6.2.2 Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

On 6th March 2014, the formerly named Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) resource. The PPG seeks to make new planning guidance easier and simpler for practitioners and the public and should be read in conjunction with the national policy contained within the NPPF. The suite of PPGs does not have the status of policy but they are an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications. They are updated online on a regular basis.

Minerals PPG (2014)

The Minerals PPG (2014) confirms that minerals ‘make an essential contribution to the Country’s prosperity and quality of life’. Paragraphs 91 to 128 relate specifically to hydrocarbon extraction.

Paragraph 92 sets out the three phases of onshore hydrocarbon extraction. These being exploration, testing (appraisal) and production.

Paragraph 103 advises that the production life of an oil and gas field can be up to 20 years, possibly more. Paragraph 103 further states that following production, the facilities should be dismantled, and the Sites restored to their former or an appropriate use.

Paragraph 104 is a reminder that hydrocarbon extraction can only take place in areas where the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (now the NSTA) has issued a licence under the Petroleum Act 1998. Some hydrocarbon issues may be covered by other regulatory regimes but may still be relevant to MPAs.

Paragraph 120 states:

“When determining applications for subsequent phases, the fact that exploratory drilling has taken place on a particular site is likely to be material in determining the suitability of continuing to use the site only insofar as it establishes the presence of hydrocarbon resources.”

Paragraph 124 states that account should be taken of national energy policy, making clear that *“energy supplies come from a variety of sources”* including onshore oil and gas, as set out in the Annual Energy Statement (AES) (dated October 2013). Published by the DECC, it sets out the then government’s priorities in delivering the UK’s energy policies. These are:

helping households and businesses take control of their energy bills and keep their costs down;

unlocking investment in the UK’s infrastructure that will support economic growth; and

playing a leading role in efforts to secure international action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change.

The AES is eight years old; nevertheless, it continues to be referred to in the Minerals PPG and consequently, it should be taken into account by MPAs when determining planning applications for hydrocarbons.

Natural Environment PPG (2019)

The Natural Environment PPG (2019) examines key issues in implementing policies to protect and enhance natural environment, including landscape.

Paragraph 010 requires LPAs to *“consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, and contribute to habitat connectivity in the wider area (including as part of the Nature Recovery Network).”*

Paragraph 016 states that LPAs must consider *“the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications”*.

Paragraph 036 states that planning policy should *“recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”, and that “plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.”*

Noise Emissions (2014)

The Noise emissions PPG also links to the Noise Policy Statement for England and provides guidance to protecting sensitive and nearest receptors.

Paragraph 021: *Mineral planning authorities should aim to establish a noise limit, through a planning condition, at the noise-sensitive property that does not exceed the background noise level (LA90,1h) by more than 10dB(A) during normal working hours (0700-1900).*

Paragraph 022: *Increased temporary daytime noise limits of up to 70dB(A) LAeq 1h (free field) for periods of up to 8 weeks in a year at specified noise-sensitive properties should be considered to facilitate essential site preparation and restoration work and construction of baffle mounds where it is clear that this will bring longer-term environmental benefits to the site or its environs.*

Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality PPG (2019)

Paragraph 016 of the Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality PPG (2019) advises that whether water is likely to be a material consideration “*will depend on the proposed development, its location and whether there could be concerns about water supply, water quality or both.*”

With respect to water quality, paragraph 016 states:

“It is only likely to be a significant planning concern when a proposal would:

- *Involve physical modifications to a water body such as flood storage areas, channel diversions and dredging, removing natural barriers, constructions of new locks, new culverts, major bridges, new barrages/dams, new weirs (including for hydropower) and removal of existing weirs; and/or*
- *Indirectly affect water bodies, for example:*
 - *As a result of new development such as the redevelopment of land that may be affected by contamination, mineral workings, water or wastewater treatment, waste management facilities and transport schemes including culverts and bridges;*
 - *Through a lack of adequate information to deal with wastewater.”*

When assessing the impacts upon water quality, they could include:

- *“The likely impacts of the proposed development (including physical modifications) on water quantity and flow, river continuity and groundwater connectivity, and biological elements (flora and fauna);*
- *How the proposed development will affect measures in the river basin management plan to achieve good status in water bodies;*
- *How it is intended the development will comply with other relevant statutory requirements relating to the water environment (such as those relating to bathing waters, shellfish waters, freshwater fish and drinking water) bearing in mind compliance will be secured through the Environment Agency’s permitting responsibilities.”*

Air Quality PPG (2019)

Paragraph 005 of the Air Quality PPG (2019) states that:

“Whether air quality is relevant to a planning decision will depend on the proposed development and its location. Concerns could arise if the development is likely to have an adverse effect on air quality in areas where it is already known to be poor, particularly if it could affect the implementation of air quality strategies and action plans and/or breach legal obligations (including those relating to the conservation

of habitats and species). Air quality may also be a material consideration if the proposed development would be particularly sensitive to poor air quality in its vicinity".

Where air quality is a relevant consideration, paragraph 005 states that the LPA may need to establish:

"the 'baseline' local air quality, including what would happen to air quality in the absence of the development;

whether the proposed development could significantly change air quality during the construction and operational phases (and the consequences of this for public health and biodiversity); and

whether occupiers or users of the development could experience poor living conditions or health due to poor air quality".

6.2.3 Energy Supply and Climate Change National Policy Context

Energy Act (2008)

Gas forms an integral part of the UK's energy and generation mix and play an important role in maintaining security, affordability and decreasing carbon emissions in the UK. It is important, therefore, to take into account the context of the UK's energy and climate change policy.

The Energy Act (2008) implemented the key aspects of the Energy Review (2006) and the Energy White Paper (2007) and reflects the changing requirements energy supply and infrastructure, as well as the need for adequate protection for the environment and the UK's population. This policy is driven by the two long-term energy challenges: tackling climate change and ensuring secure, clean and affordable energy supply.

6.2.4 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2011)

NPS EN-1 was published by the formerly named DECC in July 2011 to provide national policy for consideration of proposals for energy infrastructure dealt with by what was formerly the Infrastructure Planning Commission (now the Planning Inspectorate (PINS)), under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008. The Statement can be considered to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF confirms this and states:

"National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications."

Paragraph 2.2.20 states that it is critical that the UK continues to have secure and reliable supplies of energy as the UK makes the transition to a low carbon economy. It goes on to say that the country needs a diverse mix of technologies and fuels so the UK does not rely on one sole technology. Paragraph 2.2.23 acknowledges that the UK should reduce its dependence on fossil fuels but that they are essential during the transition. Paragraph 2.2.25 highlights the security supply challenges, which states that gas production and supply are being increasingly politicised.

6.2.5 Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future (2020)

The Energy White Paper was published in December 2020. It sets out how the UK will work towards net zero emissions by 2050 and aims to clarify a strategy for the wider energy system that transforms energy, supports a green recovery and creates a fair deal for customers.

Chapter 6 (Oil and Gas) states that *"the UK's domestic oil and gas industry has a critical role in maintaining the country's energy security and is a major contributor to the economy"*. It goes on to say that *"projections for demand for oil and gas though much reduced is forecast to continue for decades to come"*.

6.2.6 Written Ministerial Statements (HCWS295) and (HCWS346)

The Secretary of State for BEIS statement made on 22 September 2022 in response to the British Geological Survey report, *Recent scientific advances in the understanding of induced seismicity from hydraulic fracturing of shales*¹, accepted that more data from exploratory sites is required and recent research from the USA demonstrates the importance of geomechanical modelling to identify faults.

In April this year, HM Government commissioned the British Geological Survey to advise on the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction, to assess progress in the scientific understanding which underpins government policy, and to allow ministers to consider next steps.

The report makes clear that forecasting the occurrence of felt seismic events remains a scientific challenge for the geoscience community. It also makes clear that to improve our understanding we need more exploratory sites to gather the necessary data.

*The Government is therefore lifting the pause on shale gas extraction and will consider future applications for Hydraulic Fracturing Consent with the domestic and global need for gas, and local support for developments, in mind.*²

A further statement was made by the Secretary of State for BEIS on 27th October 2022 which stated:

The Government is confirming today that we will again take a presumption against issuing any further hydraulic fracturing consents. This position, an effective moratorium, will be maintained until compelling new evidence is provided which addresses the concerns around the prediction and management of induced seismicity. This is in line with the commitment made in the 2019 Conservative Manifesto.

While future applications for hydraulic fracturing consent will be considered on their own merits by the Secretary of State, in accordance with the law, shale gas developers should take the Government's position into account when considering new developments.

¹ BGS Report:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1105675/BEISInducedSeismicityReportOR220501A.pdf

² Energy Update Statement made on 22 September 2022, HCWS295

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-09-22/hcws295>

7.0 Compliance with Relevant Development Plan Policies & Material Considerations

This section considers the need for a time extension. In summary the benefits of the time extension are:

1. Alignment of the planning permission with the NSTA suspension notice enabling technical studies to be completed whilst maintaining access to the only UK based fractured horizontal wells.
2. Maintains the option to access establish horizontal wells into a natural gas reservoir for research or commercial extraction of natural gas, subject to a separate planning application.
3. The proposed development will utilise an existing site, encourage effective and appropriate use of the land and represents sustainable use of an established site; and
4. Upon the end of the site's life, to allow for reasonable timeframe for all site infrastructure to be removed, and the site to be restored back to its original condition.

Principle of the Development & Need

The principle of the development is accepted with planning permission granted by appeal for the drilling and hydraulic fracturing of four (4) exploration hydrocarbon wells, plugging and decommissioning of the site, see planning history in section 2.

The development is considered appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely environmental effects (see sections below) and the sensitivity of the receptors in the vicinity.

European wholesale natural gas markets have seen record price increases driven by a supply shortage and the Ukraine conflict. The proposed development, whilst not specifically applying for the extraction of natural gas at this point, enables the NSTA notice work to be completed. Depending on the outcome of the NSTA work programme, a decision will be made in accordance with the 3 options outlined in section 5.1. What decision is made by the NSTA will require a time extension to deliver either one of the options.

Cuadrilla successfully drilled the UK's first shale gas horizontal wells which produced high-quality natural gas. The PNR site is unique as the only site in the UK which has two horizontal wells fractured in the Bowland Shale. Government policy makes it clear that gas remains an important part of the UK's energy mix. Energy policies recognise the continuing importance of fossil fuels whilst acknowledging the need to manage the UK's reliance on them, their potential environmental impacts and the risks associated with security of supply. It would, therefore, be prudent to maintain access to the site given the current context of uncertain global natural gas supplies.

The time extension being requested is reasonable to allow for stage 1 activities to be completed and further time to plan, deliver and monitor stages 2 and 3. The timeframe presented accounts for wider regulatory requirements including surrendering the Environment Agency permit. The Environment Agency PNR decision document³ states:

The Environment Agency has the power to impose further conditions if we think that they are reasonable and necessary to ensure that we are satisfied that well[s] can be decommissioned and that there will be no risk of pollution and the permit can be safely surrendered. The permit will remain in force until it is surrendered.

³ <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/onshore-oil-and-gas/information-on-cuadrillas-preston-new-road-site/> Cuadrilla Preston New Road Decision Document and Annex Mining Waste Permit AB3101MW (pages 16, 64)

Routine ground gas and groundwater monitoring will be required to continue post decommissioning as considered appropriate given the site history and site condition report. The frequency of monitoring will be determined based upon the information gathered throughout the operations and the requirements of the site condition report.

The decommissioning stage is sometimes referred to as well abandonment; the use of the term well abandonment at this stage is distinct to any application to surrender the permit. The permit itself cannot simply be abandoned and the obligations under it will remain until we accept that the permit can be surrendered.

Section 7.7

This monitoring requirement is for an indefinite period of time and will continue unless the condition is varied or the permit surrendered. We would not accept an application to vary monitoring condition unless we consider that the proposed variation provided for adequate environmental protection. We would not accept an application to surrender the permit unless we are satisfied that the statutory test is met. The operator would need to demonstrate that the necessary measures have been taken to avoid a pollution risk from the operation of the regulated facility and to return the site to a satisfactory condition.

Development Management & Countryside

Policy CS1 places an obligation on MPA to work with industry to ensure ‘the best available information’ supports the principles of extraction where there is a proven need for that material. This includes natural gas, as a mineral for generating electricity and heat.

Furthermore, the written ministerial statement, 27th October does not ban the technique of hydraulic fracturing, but outlines a conditional moratorium requiring “evidence” defined as “science [that] shows categorically that it can be done safely”. The two recent Written Ministerial Statements, firstly lifting the moratorium and then subsequently reimposing, indicates a divergence within national government regarding the interpretation of evidence required to define safety. Positioning the NSTA notice and policy CS1 together will ensure the best available information is generated, subject to government policy, which could allow for future minerals (natural gas) to be extracted in a sustainable manner. The benefit of maintaining the only hydraulically fractured horizontal wells until June 2023 therefore outweighs the temporary and short-term nature of stage 1 activity.

Government policy makes it clear that gas remains an important part of the UK’s energy mix. Energy policies recognise the continuing importance of fossil fuels whilst acknowledging the need to manage the UK’s reliance on them, their potential environmental impacts and the risks associated with security of supply. While the Government manages the transition to a low carbon energy mix, it is the case that natural gas will remain a key element of the energy system for many years to come, especially for electricity and heating. It is no part of national policy to attempt to reduce natural gas development by restricting the production of hydrocarbons in the UK, nor was such an approach suggested by the Climate Change Committee net zero 2050 position. There is no policy which provides that a net zero carbon economy in 2050 would be hydrocarbon-free. Therefore, the importance of allowing the site to be maintained during the NSTA notice period remains consistent to national policy to extract natural gas in a sustainable and safe manner.

The proposed development also accords with CS5 with an existing condition to restore the temporary site back to its original condition. The proposed development existing environmental protection measures will remain in place including the sound wall, site wide impermeable liner and existing landscape improvements. The site also operates under an Environmental permit which requires groundwater and surface water monitoring throughout all stages of the proposed development.

Policy DM2 requires demonstration that all material social, economic, and environmental impacts that would cause harm can be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels remains. Due to the minimal

activity alongside the existing control measures previously approved the proposed development accords with policy DM2.

Regarding wider development management policy compliance, GD4 Development in the Countryside, remains as outlined within the appeal conclusions, in that the specific policy conflicts with the proposed development, however the proposed development would be in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The time extension is utilising an existing site making it the most sustainable use to access horizontal fractured wells for a temporary period.

Heritage

The proposed development does not intend to extend the red line area or introduce new aspects of development which would impact policy ENV 3. The site is existing and there are no proposed operations which can impact archaeology of value. The development was constructed in accordance with planning condition 43.

Biodiversity

There are no statutory designations identified within the site or within close proximity to the site (i.e. within a 3km radius). Marton Mere is located 3.2km north-west of the site and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR). In relation to internationally designated sites, the following sites have been identified within a 10km radius of the site:

- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site located approximately 6.7km south.
- Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar (and Wyre Estuary SSSI) located approximately 6.7km to the north.
- Liverpool Bay SPA located approximately 7.4km to the west
- The Lytham Moss Biological Heritage Site (BHS) which is approximately 2.1km south west of the main Site is a non-statutory designation but is functionally linked to the SPA sites as it supports pink-footed geese and whooper swans.

The proposed development will maintain the existing biodiversity mitigation measures as per condition 37 and 39. The site operations will be isolated and are of a short term and temporary nature. With the compensated and enhancement measures already implemented the proposed development will maintain the ecology enhancement during stages 1-3, however the final restoration phase will remove the planted hedgerows and compensation areas returning the site back to its original condition or as described in section 7 of the Biodiversity Management Plan. As a result, there is not anticipated to be any significant effect on biodiversity.

The proposed development accords with the local development plan policies and NPPF:

- Policy DM2- that the proposals will, where appropriate, make a positive contribution to Biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character
- NPPF Chapter 15, which at paragraph 174 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk
- NPPF Chapter 15, which at paragraph 179 promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Landscape & Visual Impact

The site is located in the coastal plain status with no designated landscapes, including national parks, AONB's within 5km of the site.

The existing site benefits from an implemented landscape management plan, condition 40 and 41 which includes a range of screening trees and plants which has enhanced the existing landscape features. This landscaping will remain in place for the proposed development time extension.

Most of the proposed development is low lying, temporary and short term with the restoration phase restoring the site back to its original condition. Therefore, it is not anticipated to be a significant effect on the setting of landscape or visual features. During stage 2 a rig will be located at the site for approximately 8-12 weeks. The rig height is conditioned to 36m which will be a temporary and reversible impact upon the landscape.

In conclusion the proposed development of a time extension accords with local planning policy. The requirement to comply with extant planning conditions through the implemented landscape management plan and rig height restriction ensures that the following policies are met:

- Policy CS5 provides that developments should ensure that the amenity, health, economic well-being and safety of the population are protected by the introduction of high operating standards, sensitive working practices and environmental management systems that minimise harm and nuisance to the environment and local communities throughout the life of the development.
- Policy ENV1 provides that development will have regard to its visual impact within its landscape context and proposals will ensure that existing landscape features will be conserved, maintained, protected and wherever possible enhanced through increased tree and shrub.
- NPPF Chapter 15, paragraph 174 of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

Furthermore, the proposed development is located on previously developed land, which integrates into the existing environment and contains a number of measures to screen the site from nearby receptors and is therefore considered to constitute good design.

Water Resources

The existing site is located within flood zone 1 designation with the development located within the lowest area of flooding. The site therefore accords with NPPF paragraph 159 to 169 and previous policy CL1 Flood alleviation, water quality and water efficiency' which states:

- The Framework provides details of preventing inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development away from areas at highest risk. The application of the Sequential Test will be required, the aim of which is to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.

The site discharges clean and uncontaminated rainwater from a containment ditch during the suspension phase of operations. This has been agreed in writing with the Environment Agency requiring a discharge rate at greenfield runoff flow rate. A permit condition requires the site to close the discharge valve if a flood alert is issued along Carr Bridge brook preventing a contribution of rainwater into the brook during peak periods. The site will continue to discharge rainwater under the conditions of the Environment Agency permit discharge consent. The proposed development accords with NPPF paragraph 159 to 169 and previous policy CL2 which states:

- The policy details how new development should utilise SuDs and manage discharge at greenfield runoff rate from rainwater sources to minimise pollution from overland flow and runoff, as well as the volume of water that enters the Ribble Estuary.

Traffic

The proposed development makes no changes to the plug and abandonment stage highway movements which remains a discrete and short-term temporary stage. The restoration phase movement of HGV's is anticipated to be the peak movement from the site which is an inevitable requirement of the proposed development to maintain compliance with policy CS5.

The proposed development vehicle movement are infrequent and temporary in nature which will be managed by the existing Traffic Management Plan (TMP). There is no capacity restriction for the frequency of movements. Stage 1 well suspension HGV movement for wellhead maintenance is ad hoc, approx. 1 to 2 per month.

Stage 2 mobilisation/ demobilisation a maximum of 10 HGVs per day reducing to 3 HGVs per day during the plugging and decommissioning of the wellbores.

Stage 3 is anticipated to have the highest frequency of HGV movements. The number of HGV movements will peak up to a maximum of 5 per hour during the removal of stone or a maximum of 40 per day. This will be a short-term period of ~4 weeks. The hours allowing HGV are controlled by condition 19 which will be adhered to via the TMP.

There are no viable or reasonable alternatives to access the site using alternative modes of transport. Due to the short term and temporary duration of stage 2 and 3, the proposed development accords with CS5

The site is accessed by the A583 with a single bus stop located to the west of the bell mouth entrance. The bus stop will not be impacted by the proposed development. It is not anticipated to be a significant effect on traffic or transport.

The proposed development accords with the local development plan policies and NPPF:

- DM2 – Development Management for the control of the numbers, frequency, timing and routing of transport related to the development.
- NPPF Chapter 9; In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location, and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Air Quality

The baseline for the site is that it is not located in an Air Quality Management area or within the local vicinity of proposed development. There are no emissions from the well suspension stage 1 activities. The proposed development will require small generators and rig engines (both diesel powered) for stage 2. The rig and generators will be temporary and produce minor localised emissions to air, likely to include NOx, SOx, PM10 and PM2.5, CO and VOC during the well decommissioning stage. Generators would be sized appropriately for site energy requirements and would be efficient, with emissions reduced as far as possible. These would be similar to generators on a small construction site. The duration of use is several weeks during the wellbore plugging stage. Emissions from the rig would also be reduced through choice of an efficient rig appropriate for the operation, with minimal emissions.

The total duration of generators associated with the operational phases will be less than eight months in total.

Road traffic associated with the proposed development would also produce emissions to air during the temporary stage 2 and 3 phases, similar to a small construction site. There will be no operational flaring or venting during the proposed activities. The scale of the proposed activities is such that significant effects to air quality are not anticipated.

The proposed development is unlikely to give rise to significant air quality effects and therefore complies with:

- DM2 – Development Management for the control of emissions from the proposal including dust, noise, light and water.
- NPPF Chapter 15, which at paragraph 174 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;
- NPPF Chapter 17, which relates to facilitating the sustainable use of minerals and at paragraph 211 states that MPAs should, when considering proposals for mineral extraction, ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source; and
- the Air Quality PPG (2019),

Noise, Vibration & Lighting

The baseline for the site remains as previously assessed with no changes to the nearest residential receptor since the planning permission was granted in October 2016.

Stage 2 and 3 operations will generate light and noise. The proposed development will not include hydraulic fracturing; therefore vibration impacts have not been assessed.

Stages 2 and 3 operational hours will adhere to the extant condition 19 and noise conditions 26, 28 and principally condition 29. A separate lighting plan will be discharged in accordance with condition 33 for the rig during stage 2 and 3.

The scale of the proposed activities is such that significant effects to noise and light are not anticipated. There are no planned night-time operations therefore eliminating the impact of noise on residential receptors during stage 2.

The proposed development is unlikely to give rise to significant noise and lighting effects and therefore complies with:

- DM2– Development Management for the control of emissions from the proposal including dust, noise, light and water.
- NPPF 17 paragraph 210 when developing noise limits, recognise that some noisy short-term activities, which may otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, are unavoidable to facilitate minerals extraction;
- NPPF 17, paragraph 211 ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source, and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties.
- PPG for noise emissions, paragraphs 021 and 022 specifically the temporary daytime noise limits of up to 70dB(A) LAeq 1h (free field) for periods of up to 8 weeks in a year at specified noise-sensitive properties should be considered to facilitate essential site preparation and restoration work and construction of baffle mounds where it is clear that this will bring longer-term environmental benefits to the site or its environs.

Cumulative and Combined Effects

Cumulative effects have the potential to arise where two or more developments are proposed within close enough proximity to lead to effects on the same receptor. Due to the minor scale of the proposed development, and the Site's remoteness in relation to the nearest other development, it is not expected that any cumulative effects would occur.

Combined effects may arise where several different effects resulting from the proposed development have the potential to affect a single receptor. From a review of each of the technical disciplines, it is considered that due to the limited number of human receptors in the vicinity and the well screened nature of the Site, and the minor scale of the proposed development, there is little potential for combined effects upon to arise as a result of the proposed development.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with:

- DM1 - to achieve the Spatial Vision, and to provide for the level of need and spatial distribution for the provision of minerals and waste treatment and disposal as set out in the Core Strategy,
- FLP paragraph 155, Council acknowledges it will need to consider the scale and rate of shale gas development and review any cumulative impacts at production.
- NPPF Chapter 17 states in paragraph 210 that developments should set out criteria to ensure that operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts, taking into account the cumulative effects of multiple impact from individual sites.

8.0 Planning Balance & Conclusion

This Planning Statement accompanies an application submitted by Cuadrilla Bowland Ltd to vary condition 2, overall time duration, but maintain all other conditions in the planning permission granted in 2016. The proposed amendment is requesting a 24-month extension to allow for 3 stages of development to be completed in a reasonable timeframe. This application does not request for further drilling or hydraulic fracturing activities.

The proposed development offers a unique context by the fact that the site provides access to the only two horizontally fractured wells in the UK, that successfully flowed natural gas. With the dynamic nature of government policy, set in the context of an energy crisis, the short-term time extension to allow further study work outweighs the impacts of maintaining a suspended site. Furthermore, to accord with the policies of restoration and wider environmental protection for stages 2 and 3 to be delivered, on balance a 24-month time extension is a reasonable duration.

The existing site does not give rise to environmental impacts beyond those that have been previously assessed and conditioned by the extant planning permission.

The proposed development has been assessed in line with local and national planning policy and is found to accord with the relevant adopted development plan policies contained within the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (JMWLP) Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) (2016) (specifically policies DM2, CS2, CS5), the Fylde Council Local Plan (revised 2021) (specifically policies GD4, ENV1, ENV2, ENV5, replaced CL1, CL2 by the NPPF framework,).

The proposed development has also been found to accord with key material considerations, including the NPPF and the relevant PPG.

Refusal of the time extension is inconsistent with the NSTA notice and impracticable to deliver a planned plugging, decommissioning and site restoration by April 2023. It will also be unattainable to achieve the timelines outlined by the Environment Agency permit surrender process. It should be noted that as of September 2022, the moratorium on hydraulically fracturing was lifted and then reintroduced in late October 2022, therefore delaying stages 2 and 3 activities of this application.

By granting permission for a time extension this will allow for the progressive work to be completed in accordance with the NSTA notice, allow for stage 2 and 3 to be planned, delivered, and monitored in line with the existing planning conditions and wider regulatory requirements.

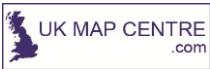
The planning balance is therefore strongly in favour of granting the variation.

Appendix A Site Location Plan

Cuadrilla Bowland Limited - Preston New Road
Supplied by: www.ukmapcentre.com
Serial No: 240909
Centre Coordinates:337415,432737



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0m 1cm = 25m 125m
Scale 1:2500



Appendix B Site Designations

