



Oil & Gas Authority

21 Bloomsbury
London WC1B 3HF

Ann Stewart

By email to: request-591344-3d95b9f4@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: FOI-2019-0053

15 August 2019

Dear Ms Stewart,

Thank you for your e-mail of 22 July in which you asked the following:

"I have seen a copy of your Document "Retention Areas, (updated June 2019)".

In it the comments for Licence PEDL 126 state "submit a planning application for an appraisal well by 31 December 2016, drill a horizontal well by 30 June 2020 and submit Markwells Wood Field Development Plan by 30 June 2021"

Are you aware the this well was abandoned and plugged during the winter of 2018/2019? The site has been restored and tree planting is due to take place in the autumn of 2019? This work was completed well before the date on your updated document.

Please will you confirm that there will be no further attempt to drill at Markwells Wood.

Would you also please explain how an important regulatory authority, such as yourself, issued what I assume is an incorrect statement.

Does the oil company, UKOG, have a legal obligation to inform you that they have abandoned the site and did they do so?

Do you have a legal obligation to supervise the abandonment and plugging of a well to ensure this has been done to safe standard.

Have you carried out any inspection of the work to ensure that all was done correctly?"

Your request contains some general questions about the status of PEDL126, which do not ask for specific information which the OGA may hold. We will answer these as general correspondence alongside your question about plans to drill at Markwells Wood – which is considered as a request for information held by the OGA.

We shall answer your questions as follows:



Oil & Gas Authority

Please will you confirm that there will be no further attempt to drill at Markwells Wood.

The OGA does not hold this information. You may wish to contact the operator, UKOG, for an update on its planned activity on the licence.

Would you also please explain how an important regulatory authority, such as yourself, issued what I assume is an incorrect statement.

The Retention Area (RA) work plan for PEDL126 was agreed on 27 July 2016. Although the plans for other licences have been updated since that time (most recently the date noted on the website document - updated June 2019), this plan has not changed.

There is a commitment on the PEDL126 Retention Area agreed work plan for the licensee(s) to drill a well by June 2020. Before that time the licensee(s) may choose to relinquish the licence or seek local planning permission to drill another well instead of sidetracking the Markwells Wood 1 well as initially proposed. In such circumstances, the OGA would consider a change to the existing RA work plan. Therefore the statements on the OGA website are accurate according to the information we have been given.

Does the oil company, UKOG, have a legal obligation to inform you that they have abandoned the site and did they do so?

Do you have a legal obligation to supervise the abandonment and plugging of a well to ensure this has been done to safe standard.

Have you carried out any inspection of the work to ensure that all was done correctly?"

The OGA agreed to the plugging and abandonment of the well, and we were notified when the work was completed. The Health and Safety Executive review the well abandonment engineering and the site restoration is a matter for the Local Authority (and therefore the OGA have no obligation to inspect this).

This concludes the OGA's consideration of your request.

Appeals procedure

If you are unhappy with the way the OGA has handled your request, you may request an internal review. A request for an internal review should be made within 40



Oil & Gas Authority

working days of the date of receipt of the response to your request and should be addressed to:

FOI Manager
Oil and Gas Authority
21 Bloomsbury Street
London
WC1B 3HF
Email: foirequests@ogauthority.co.uk

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications with regard to this request.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the internal review, you may contact the Information Commissioner at www.ico.org.uk or at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

FOI Officer