



Cuadrilla

**Cuadrilla Bowland Limited: Planning Application to vary Condition 1 to
LCC/2023/0002**

Planning Statement

PNR-PLN-001

June 2025

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 (LCC/2023/0002) condition 1 by 24 months.

Condition 1:

The decommissioning works required by condition 11a) shall be completed by not later than a period of 18 months from the date of this planning permission. The soil treatment and replacement works required by condition 11 b) and c) shall be completed within a period of 2 years from the date of this planning permission.

The planning application comprises:

- The completed planning application form and relevant certificates
- This Planning Statement

Existing drawings will remain extant for stage 1 and 2 development phases described in this planning statement.

1.1 The Application

The Proposed Development is for a time extension to maintain the existing site for environmental monitoring and subsequent restoration. The two gas exploration wells on the site have been plugged with cement in accordance with government regulations and the site cleared of all equipment and material. The Proposed Development will not include further drilling or hydraulic fracturing. The proposed time extension is for a further 24 months to allow sufficient time to complete monitoring requirements as required by the Environment Agency and subsequent site restoration. The permission currently requires the site to be restored by 30th June 2025.

1.2 Screening Assessment

The Applicant has conducted its own screening assessment based on the previously submitted request in June 2022 to Lancashire County Council (“LCC”). The scale and scope of this application is of equivalence, with the added reduction of activity due to the two hydrocarbon boreholes now being plugged with cement and decommissioned. The Applicant has concluded that due to the limited change in site status the application is not 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 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 a subsidiary 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 natural gas production site in Elswick, Lancashire.

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

2.1 Site Status

The two (2) hydrocarbon wellbores have been safely plugged and decommissioned. The site will now enter a period of suspension for post abandonment monitoring to verify, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, that wells have demonstrated isolation, and that no lasting environmental harm has been caused by the hydrocarbon wellbores. As a minimum, 12 months groundwater and wider environmental monitoring is required.

The last remaining flare stack has been removed from the site as well as the stored surplus sand. Access to the two hydrocarbon boreholes and the wider site is required to allow for the environmental monitoring period to continue.

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 Plumpton. 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 Plumpton	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 Plumpton 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)
LCC/2023/0002	Material Amendment	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission LCC/2014/0096 to allow the date of final restoration of the site to be postponed until 30th June 2025 at Preston New Road Exploration Site, off Preston New Road, Little Plumpton, Westby with Plumpton	08/06/2023 (Issued)

4.0 Site Surroundings

The Proposed Development is located 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 lies 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 2 stages and does not include further construction, drilling or hydraulic fracturing:

- Stage 1 – Environmental monitoring and data collection
- Stage 2 – Site demolition and restoration

The Proposed Development is for a 24-month time extension to allow reasonable and sufficient time to manage the above two 2 stages.

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

5.1 Stage 1 - Monitoring

Decommissioning of the hydrocarbon wellbores has been undertaken in accordance with Oil and Gas UK Guidelines on Well Abandonment, and according to an abandonment plan submitted to the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Oil and Gas Regulator (NSTA). The wellheads have been removed and the casing/ cement cut to 2 m below ground level to allow for subsequent restoration of the site to agriculture use.

As required by CAR Form AB3101MW/0548234, issued 3rd April 2025 the Environment Agency require groundwater to be monitored at the approved on-site locations every month for the first 3 months post well decommissioning, reverting to quarterly after this time. As a minimum, monitoring post abandonment should be for a period of 12 months. Surface water monitoring will continue. Monitoring is expected to start in June 2025.

There are eight groundwater monitoring locations within the limits of the site boundary. Furthermore, the two decommissioned hydrocarbon wells require monitoring for methane emissions above the decommissioned wellbores.

It is anticipated that after the minimum of 12 months monitoring, Cuadrilla will be permitted to apply to the Environment Agency to surrender the environmental permit. Until the permit surrender is completed and approved by the Environment Agency the monitoring regime remains an ongoing requirement.

Stated within the Environment Agency decision document, 2015, the EA requires a site closure plan informed by the monitoring results. The closure plan will cover reinstatement as per the planning permission.

The site must remain secure during this period and permanent access remain to sample and monitor groundwater boreholes and the hydrocarbon wellbores as per EA permit condition 3.5. If monitoring results indicate the need to revisit the site, access must be provided to all wellbores.

5.1.1 Stage 2 – Demolition & Restoration

After a period of environmental monitoring the site will be demolished and restored. This stage 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 in the centre of the site will be deconstructed and then removed by a licensed waste contractor. Surface aggregate, drainage pipework and other infrastructure would be removed. 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. Restoration of the site would then be completed with a reseeded programme and the site 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.

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 December 2024), 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.

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.

6.2 Material Considerations

Material considerations in this case are considered to include the:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (most recently updated in December 2024);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014).

6.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

A revised and updated NPPF was published in December 2024. 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.

Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals

Chapter 17, paragraph 223 and 224, states that minerals development should:

h) ensure that worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place.

e) provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions. Bonds or other

financial guarantees to underpin planning conditions should only be sought in exceptional circumstances;

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 ten 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.*”

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

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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".

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.*

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 Environment Agency post abandonment monitoring requirements for a minimum of 12-months and;
2. Upon the end of the site's life, to allow for a 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 time extension being requested is considered reasonable to allow for Stage 1 activities (environmental monitoring) to be completed and further time to plan and deliver Stage 2 (site restoration). Once stage 1 environmental data has been collected and verified, the plugging and decommissioning of the two hydrocarbon wellbores will have been successfully demonstrated, and, it is the Applicants intention to then commence Stage 2.

To verify environmental compliance, the Environment Agency have confirmed, by CAR Form AB3101MW/0548234, that groundwater is to be monitored at the approved locations every month for the first 3 months post well decommissioning, reverting to quarterly monitoring after this time. As a minimum, monitoring post well decommissioning should be for a period of 12 months. Surface water monitoring will continue alongside the groundwater monitoring.

Environmental monitoring, after the successful decommissioning of the wells, is an important step in the thorough and full lifecycle approach to managing site closure to a high environmental standard. To begin site restoration with outstanding and ongoing environmental monitoring requirements would be premature and would not follow a logical approach.

By commencing demolition of the site before the monitoring is complete risks a potential for contamination of monitoring data from surface demolition activities. Works will include the removal of the HDPE site wide membrane, use of heavy plant and machinery, removal of foundations, removal of the drainage network, and works in close proximity to the existing hydrocarbon wellbore cellar (large concrete structure 4m deep).

A critical objective of the groundwater monitoring is to verify that the plugging of the two hydrocarbon wellbores has demonstrated isolation. Monitoring data includes dissolved methane gas as well as groundwater chemistry. The depths of the groundwater borehole monitoring screens vary across the site from shallow receptors (9m deep) to deeper boreholes (21m to 30m deep).

Cuadrilla remain responsible for permit compliance and are proposing to complete the full monitoring regime from baseline to surrender. Delaying the demolition and restoration works until the environmental monitoring has been completed will improve data integrity and ensure that that groundwater and surface water data has not been affected by surface activities.

In the unlikely scenario that the environmental monitoring demonstrates that the hydrocarbon boreholes require accessing to address any well decommissioning issues, a restored site would introduce further redevelopment work and a new planning application to access the boreholes.

Once the 12 months monitoring is completed, Cuadrilla will be able to commence demolition and site restoration works, on the current assumption the monitoring data verifies that the hydrocarbon boreholes have been plugged and decommissioned successfully.

Cuadrilla is committed to the demolition and restoration phase of works and has already made a staged progress with the removal of the final flare stack and over 100tonnes of sand bags. The site no longer

has vertical structures and remains in a state of suspension with occasional site visits for monitoring purposes.

In 2015, the Environment Agency PNR decision document¹ provided assurance to the community and explained the approach to monitoring once the site was scheduled for closure. The document 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.

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.

The Applicant notes that LCC were consulted during the Environment Agency determination of the permit back in 2015. At the time LCC stated that the Agency should consider public consultation period before the surrender of permit and long-term monitoring.

The need for the time extension is consistent with planning policy requirement of high quality and high environmental standards monitoring to inform the site closure plan and alignment with the Environment Agency minimum monitoring period.

Development Management & Countryside

The Proposed Development accords with CS5 with an existing condition to restore the temporary site back to its original condition. 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. 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 consistent with 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.

¹ <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)

Chapter 17, paragraph 223 of the NPPF, Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals, requires minerals development to achieve high quality restoration and aftercare in accordance with high environmental standards. The Proposed Development aligns with this policy requirement. By implementing long term monitoring, it reflects the need to complete the final stage of environmental monitoring for the only multi-stage hydraulically fractured wells in the UK.

The restoration is to be done at the earliest opportunity once the environmental monitoring requirement has been satisfied.

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 is 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 site operations will be isolated and are of a short term and temporary nature. With the compensated and enhancement measures already implemented the final restoration phase will remove the planted hedgerows and returning the site back to its original condition. As a result, there is not anticipated to be any significant effect on biodiversity.

The Proposed Development accords with the local development plan policies.

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.

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. The 12m high flare stack has been removed from site leaving the 4m sound wall being retained until restoration can begin. The sound wall also acts as a screening wall for the site painted to a colour specification that blends into the surrounding landscape.

In conclusion the Proposed Development of a time extension accords with local planning policy.

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 Chapter 14 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.

In conclusion the Proposed Development of a time extension accords with local planning policy.

Traffic

The Proposed Development makes no changes to the well 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. There will be no HGV movements during Stage 1 well suspension works.

Stage 2 (site restoration) 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, 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.

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 environmental monitoring (stage 1) activities. The Proposed Development will require small generators (diesel powered) for stage 2 (site restoration). The engines 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 restoration 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 total duration of generators associated with the operational phases will be less than six months in total.

Road traffic associated with the Proposed Development would also produce emissions to air during stage 2, similar to a small construction site. 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 199 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 224 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.

Stages 2 operational hours will adhere to the extant condition 19 and noise conditions 26, 28 and principally condition 29.

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 224 when developing noise limits, recognise that some noisy short-term activities, which may otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, are unavoidable to facilitate minerals extraction;
- 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.

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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:

- NPPF Chapter 17 states in paragraph 224 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 1, LCC/2023/0002 overall time duration, but maintain all other conditions in the planning permission granted. The proposed amendment is requesting a 24-month extension to allow for 2 stages of development to be completed. This application does not request for further construction, drilling or hydraulic fracturing activities.

The Proposed Development accords with the policies of restoration and to achieve the high standard of environmental protection by completing stage 1 (environmental monitoring) before stage 2 (site restoration) is commenced. On balance a 24-month time extension is considered 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.

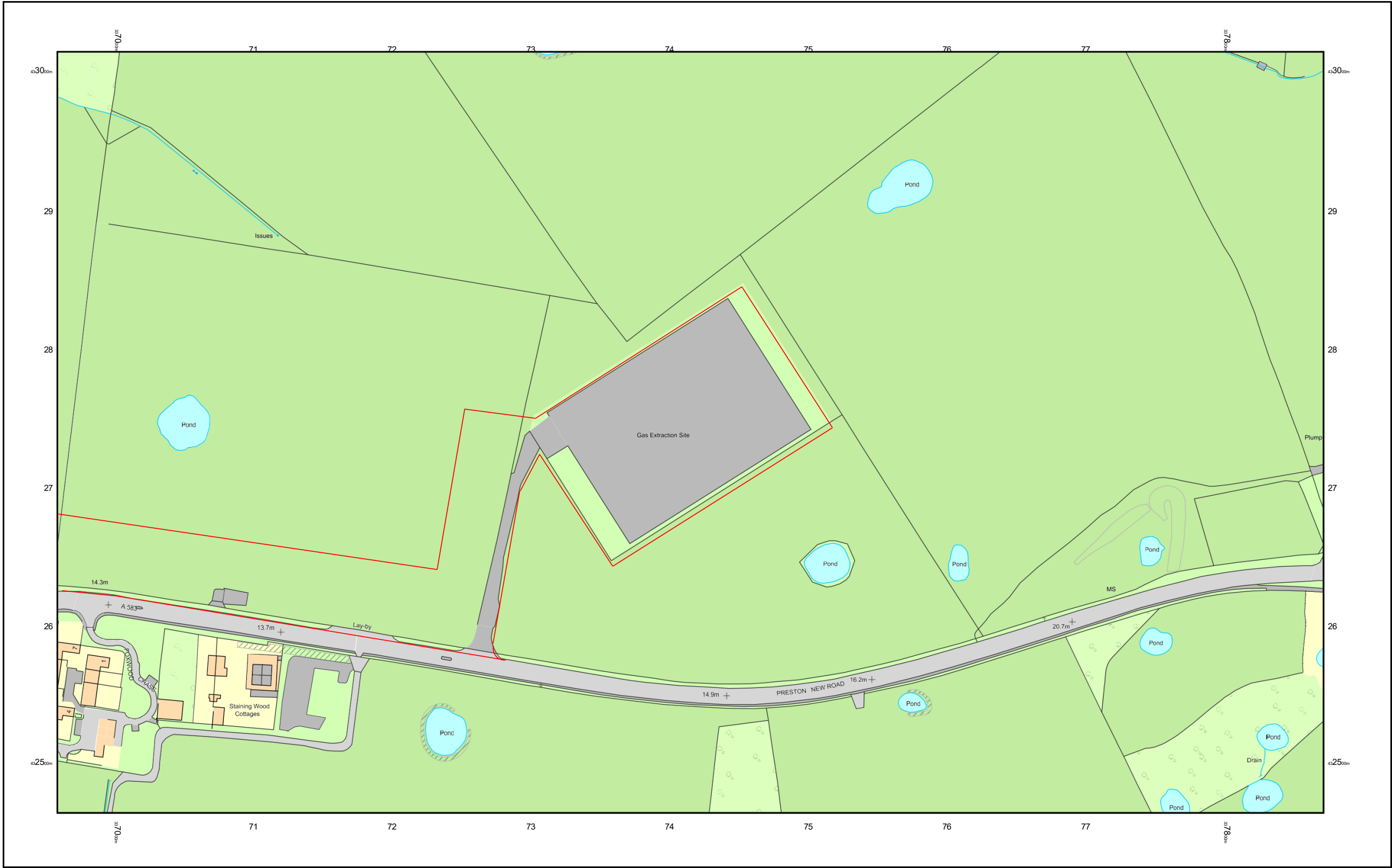
Refusal of the time extension will create inconsistency with the Environment Agency minimum monitoring requirements and the site closure plan. It is the Applicants intention to demonstrate that a high environmental standard has been achieved by long term environmental monitoring. Consequently, the Applicant is required to deliver a minimum of 12-month groundwater monitoring regime along with wider environmental monitoring.

By granting permission for a time extension this will allow for monitoring to be completed before site restoration is commenced.

The planning balance is therefore strongly in favour of granting the requested 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

