DECOMMISSIONING THE BRENT FIELD

Decommissioning the Brent Field requires us to:

- plug and make safe 154 wells;
- remove and recycle over 100,000 tonnes of topsides; and
- recover debris and any oil trapped in the storage cells.

We must also make recommendations to the UK Government based on a comparative assessment of alternative options for:

- the Brent Alpha jacket;
- 28 inter-field pipelines;
- the drill cuttings piles; and
- three concrete gravity base structures and their cell contents.

www.shell.co.uk/brentdecomm

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A COMPLEX MAJOR ENGINEERING PROJECT

The North Sea is a harsh environment of strong winds and rough, cold seas. It is a challenging place to work, and decommissioning the enormous Brent structures will require advanced engineering and significant investment.

We are working hard to find the best solutions for decommissioning the field in a safe, responsible and cost effective way. Since 2007 Shell has engaged broadly with a wide range of interested parties to discuss the project and the issues associated with different decommissioning options. Brent will be Shell's largest decommissioning project to date.

HISTORY OF BRENT

The Brent Field lies off the north-east coast of Scotland, midway between the Shetland Islands and Norway. It is served by four large platforms – Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta.

When the Brent field was discovered in 1971, it was one of the most significant oil and gas finds made in the UK North Sea. Brent has created and sustained thousands of jobs, contributed over £20 billion in tax revenues, and provided the UK with a substantial amount of its oil and gas. At its peak in 1982 the field was producing more than half a million barrels a day – enough to meet the annual energy needs of around half of all UK homes at that time.

The expected operating life of the field was 25 years, but with continuous investment and a redevelopment in the 1990s, the field celebrates 40 years of production in November 2016.

REGULATION

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is the body that regulates the decommissioning of offshore oil and gas installations and pipelines in the UK. Shell is now carefully planning the Brent field's decommissioning process following a tightly defined regulatory process. Our task is to find a way to carry out this work that will:

- ensure the safety of people working on the project and users of the sea
- have minimal impact on the environment now and in the future
- be technically achievable
- consider the impact on affected communities, and
- be economically responsible.

DECOMMISSIONING IS A DIALOGUE

The expertise and input of over 180 organisations – including non-governmental organisations, fishermen, community groups, as well as representatives of local and national government bodies – has made a significant contribution to informing our approach to the development of recommendations for decommissioning.

We have also worked with industry bodies and technical experts to explore the full range of options and test our recommendations. Since 2007 an Independent Review Group, has been in place, led by Professor John Shepherd from Southampton University. Professor Shepherd appointed a team of leading academics from across Europe whose role has been to objectively review all the scientific and engineering assessments of the various decommissioning options proposed, thereby validating the science underpinning our recommendations. The IRG has reviewed over 300 major reports and raised over 3000 review comments requiring a response from Shell.