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Regulator seeks more data on Fotla as decision on Jackdaw is still awaited

The UK offshore regulator has made a second request for further information from operator Ithaca Energy about its Fotla oil development, in block 22/1b in the Central North Sea (NSR 890/3).

The Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning (Opred), in a notice yesterday (Tuesday), confirmed it is seeking more information on Fotla, which Ithaca plans to develop as a subsea tieback to the Harbour Energy-operated Britannia platform, in block 16/26a.

The regulator has only three questions for Ithaca in its latest request, with the first seeking clarity on when the development is expected to start up, which Opred says it understands is now October 2028 rather than in the fourth quarter of 2027 as was outlined in the environment statement (ES) submitted late last year.

Opred said it wants to know about any impacts on project schedules and production profiles from this change, while in a separate query it asks for confirmation of the new equity interest line-up for the P.2373 Fotla licence. Harbour Energy recently farmed in for a 45% share of the licence, with Ithaca retaining 55% and operatorship (NSR 881/1).

Given the relatively straightforward nature of these latest requests, it seems likely that Ithaca will be able to respond relatively quickly.

The movement on the Fotla process comes as industry continues to await regulatory decisions from Opred and the UK Government on Adura's major Jackdaw and Rosebank developments.

A decision on Jackdaw, in Central North Sea blocks 30/2a, 30/2d and 30/3a, is seen as particularly urgent, given expectations that it could be ready for start-up as soon as next month in time for the winter season of high UK gas demand, while the Rosebank development, in west of Shetland blocks 213/26b, 213/27a, 205/1a and 205/2a, is not expected to be completed until the first half of next year. (Continued on page 2)