

Rough's return for gas storage gets go-ahead as steps are taken to ease energy crisis

Rough's return to providing vital gas storage to enhance the UK's energy security situation has moved a step forward.

The North Sea Transition Authority has granted the required approvals and consents to Centrica for phase one of the site, off the East Yorkshire coast. The organisation, formerly Oil and Gas Authority, has confirmed the Hessle-based team now has all the required regulatory approvals to begin gas storage operations.

As revealed in May, [Centrica was seeking a "rapid hardening of hydrogen policy" to enable it to play a key role](#) in the short term, as it builds the business case to make the strategic switch to storing the low carbon fuel that is set to be produced at huge scale on the Humber.

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It was seen as bringing long term certainty for the facility, which is operated from the Easington terminal. Winter supply fears have been widely aired due to the Russian dominance of the gas market in Europe, with tensions high due to sanctions imposed in response to President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

A £1.6 billion plan to transform the site for holding hydrogen was put forward more than a year ago, and since then a clutch of hydrogen production projects have emerged, with [ABP and Air Products revealing the latest](#), for Port of Immingham,

yesterday.

Rough has operated since the Seventies, and as discovered gas depleted, chambers were switched to storage, with first use in 1985. Centrica acquired it in 2002, ending storage in 2017, beyond its initial design life – as the market couldn't support the investment and model. Final production from the field is anticipated to come to a close next year, though Tolmount field processing has recently begun, ensuring Easington continues to play a critical role.

Business Energy Kwasi Kwarteng, who has asked Drax to retain coal-burning options for the coming winter – underlining the concern sparked by the Ukrainian invasion by Russia and geopolitical implications of sanctions and responses – has welcomed the news after “months of work”.

Centrica hasn't commented on the latest step in the regulatory process, but it is understood the aim to have Rough open for the winter remains.

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