

James Neave - Principal Planner  
Planning Services - West Sussex County Council  
Ground Floor Northleigh - County Hall  
Chichester - West Sussex  
PO19 1RH

Our Ref: ZG/UKOG/BB2023/S73/631

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear James,

---

**APP REF:** WSCC/046/23  
**LOCATION:** WOOD BARN FARM, ADVERSANE LANE, BROADFORD BRIDGE, BILLINGSHURST, WEST SUSSEX  
**PROPOSAL:** THE SITING AND DEVELOPMENT OF A TEMPORARY BOREHOLE, WELL SITE COMPOUND AND ACCESS ROAD INCLUDING ALL ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT (VARIATION OF CONDITION 1 OF PLANNING PERMISSION WSCC/002/22 EXTENDING THE PERMISSION BY 24 MONTHS TO ENABLE THE COMPLETION OF PHASE 4 SITE RETENTION AND RESTORATION)

---

Further to our call 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, please find below the Applicant's (UKOG) formal response to the issues raised.

#### 1: SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

I understand during your site visit you noticed water in the perimeter ditch that surround the well site.

Consistent with the Environment Agency's Onshore Oil & Gas Sector Guidance, the design and subsequent construction of the well site incorporates a tertiary containment system, consisting of an impermeable membrane across the well site, which is connected to a perimeter containment system (a series of pipes and ditches to capture surface run-off water). The tertiary containment system prevents surface water from entering the underlying soils. The pooling of water you noticed during visit is an indication that the tertiary containment system is working. Under normal circumstances, the containment system is of sufficient capacity to contain the surface run-off water and enables its natural evaporation over time.

The site is subject to an environmental permit (Ref: EPR/AB3806CG), which is regulated by the Environment Agency. Under Regulation 34(2) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, the regulator must make appropriate periodic inspections of the regulated facilities.

Consistent with this guidance, UKOG regularly monitor the site in addition to annual inspections performed with WSCC<sup>1</sup>. UKOG are ready to tanker surface water away if needed but, to date, such action has not been required as the peripheral bunding and designed slopes (as depicted on KOGI-BB-PA-XX-11 REV 3 241023: Site Ditch Construction Details) continue to capture the run-off with no evidence of exceedance (i.e. no evidence of a bund breach or historic pooling on the land that surrounds the well site as shown in the areal image).

Despite the site being non-operational, UKOG continue to monitor and manage Broadford Bridge to ensure the suspended wells are secure, the ditch and liner continue to capture run-off and the bunds remain in-tact.



---

<sup>1</sup> Attended by Kirstie May, WSCC Compliance & Monitoring Officer; the purpose of the meetings being to ensure condition compliance with the previous visit being 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

## 2: PLANTING

WSSC Arboriculture Officer has enquired if a replacement 'heavy standard' Oak tree has been planted at the site entrance and 'in-fill' hedge has been installed along the northern edge of the access track.

These commitments are recorded within **KOGL-BB-DOC-XX-01: Tree Protection Plans (Sheets 1-3)**, and **KOGL-BB-DOC-XX-02: Tree Protection Methodology**, and currently secured by the compound consent WSSC/002/22. Consent condition No.8, states the planting, 'where relevant', shall 'form part of the overall restoration of the site'. Given the site is currently in 'retention' mode (as opposed to 'restoration' mode), the Oak has yet to be planted but some in-fill hedge was installed during access track construction.

Regardless of the part installation of hedging performed to date, UKOG shall, in full compliance with condition No.8, honour the commitments made in the above named documents when the site enters 'restoration mode'.

## 3: LOXLEY WELL SITE

On the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 I sent you a copy of the Court of Appeal ruling, dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024, refusing the right of any further appeal against the decision of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to approve hydrocarbon exploration and appraisal at the Loxley Well Site, Dunsfold, Surrey. UKOG are progressing with the discharge of pre-commencement conditions and this process is on-going at the time of writing.

The Secretary of State consented Loxley in June 2022 but implementation has been delayed by the threat of appeal. Now the threat has been lifted, there is a realistic proposition the results of exploration and appraisal at Loxley can inform the future use of Broadford Bridge given that Loxley contains the same Kimmeridge formations.

The primary target at Loxley is the Portland sandstone, a conventional gas accumulation, but a secondary target is the Kimmeridge limestone, which has produced hydrocarbons to surface at Broadford Bridge and in the Horse Hill oil field, Surrey. The near identical reservoir geology shared by Loxley, Broadford Bridge and Horse Hill is shown on the geological depth maps attached at **Appendix A**. They confirm the depth, extent and thickness of the Kimmeridge formation across the Broadford Bridge discovery, Horse Hill field and Loxley discovery. The aim of exploration at Loxley over the coming months will be to confirm the presence and commerciality of hydrocarbons; the findings can then be tested and corroborated in real-time against the production performance of Horse Hill.

Therefore, the most important technical goal at Loxley is confirmation of the presence of commercial hydrocarbon deposits. Confirmation of the nature and extent of this regional system will be key to the future commercial recovery of deposits across the wider Weald Basin.

As recorded within the Planning Statement that accompanies the current application for compound retention (WSSC/046/23), the future of Broadford Bridge will be informed not only by the exploration and appraisal of Loxley but also further production at Horse Hill. At the time of writing, production from 4.No additional wells at Horse Hill has been delayed by the threat of appeal to the Supreme Court against the approval for this development issued by Surrey County Council in September 2019. A determination is due but, as with Loxley, it will take time before meaningful data relating to the performance of the well infrastructure, the mix of hydrocarbons present (gas &/or oil) and the likely flow rates across the formations can be recovered and properly interpreted. Accordingly, a further compound extension of 24 months, to keep alive the potential for further activity at Broadford Bridge, is warranted.

## 4: SITE RESTORATION OBLIGATIONS

I understand a number of neighbour notification responses assert the Applicant is financially constrained and that this risk to site restoration should be mitigated by a bond or financial guarantee. The assertions are not supported by any evidence and the use of a bond or guarantee would not be supported by national planning policy or guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework, para 217(e), calls for restoration at the earliest opportunity and to the highest environmental standard through the application of appropriate conditions. Bonds or other financial guarantees should only be sought in 'exceptional circumstances' which National Planning Guidance (NPG) defines as:

- *very long-term projects where progressive reclamation is not practicable (e.g. extremely large quarry); not relevant given the short-term and small-scale nature of the restoration works proposed;*
- *where a novel approach or technique is to be used; not relevant given that conventional exploration and appraisal works have now ceased; and*

- *where there is reliable evidence of the likelihood of either financial or technical failure; not relevant given the absence of any credible evidence (beyond assertion) to indicate failure<sup>2</sup>.*

Furthermore, the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA)<sup>3</sup> licenses the exploration of England's hydrocarbon resources. When considering a request for operatorship, the NSTA examines the licensee's financial viability (the ability to remain solvent) and financial capacity (the ability to meet known and specific costs which includes restoration and aftercare). The award of Petroleum Exploration & Development Licence 234 (which includes Broadford Bridge) to UKOG demonstrates the Applicant to be fit and proper operator.

In addition, UKOG completed the restoration of Markwells Wood exploration site, West Sussex in June 2019. Images of the site from June 2019 to May 2021 below demonstrate the Applicant to be a responsible site manager adopting and implementing a high standard of restoration.

**Markwells Wood Well Site: restoration complete in June 2019.**



**Markwells Wood Well Site: as at May 2021 with restoration planting established.**



In summary, WSCC have determined previous extension applications in compliance with NPG which advocates restoration be addressed by conditions<sup>4</sup>. The Applicant would be willing to agree to appropriate conditions.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Nigel Moore B.A. (Hons) B.Pl. MRTPI**  
 Planning Project Manager

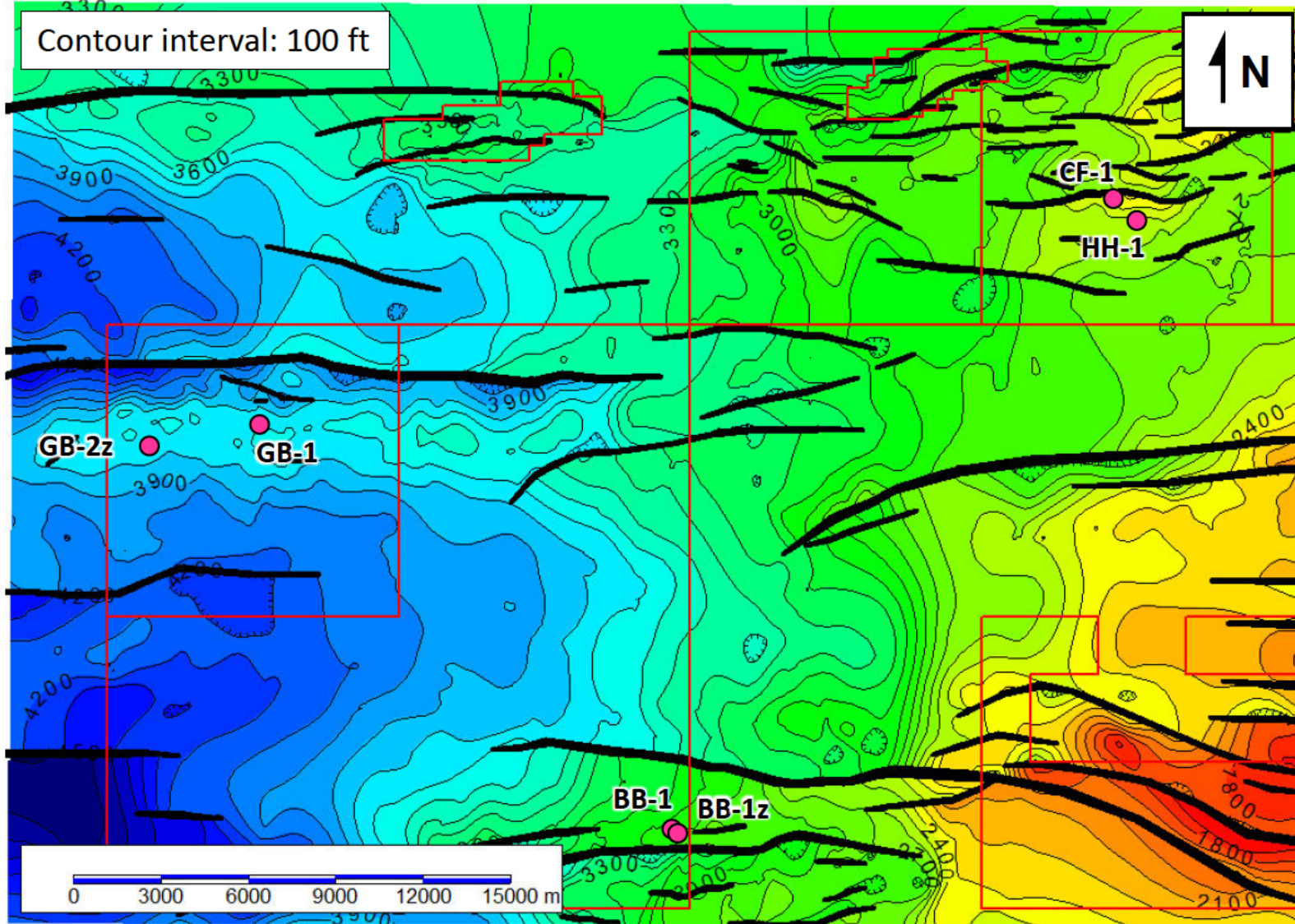
<sup>2</sup> National Planning Guidance paragraph 048 Reference ID: 27-048-20140306

<sup>3</sup> In March 2022 the Oil & Gas Authority re-branded to the North Sea Transition Authority, an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.

<sup>4</sup> National Planning Guidance paragraph 047 Reference ID: 27-047-20140306

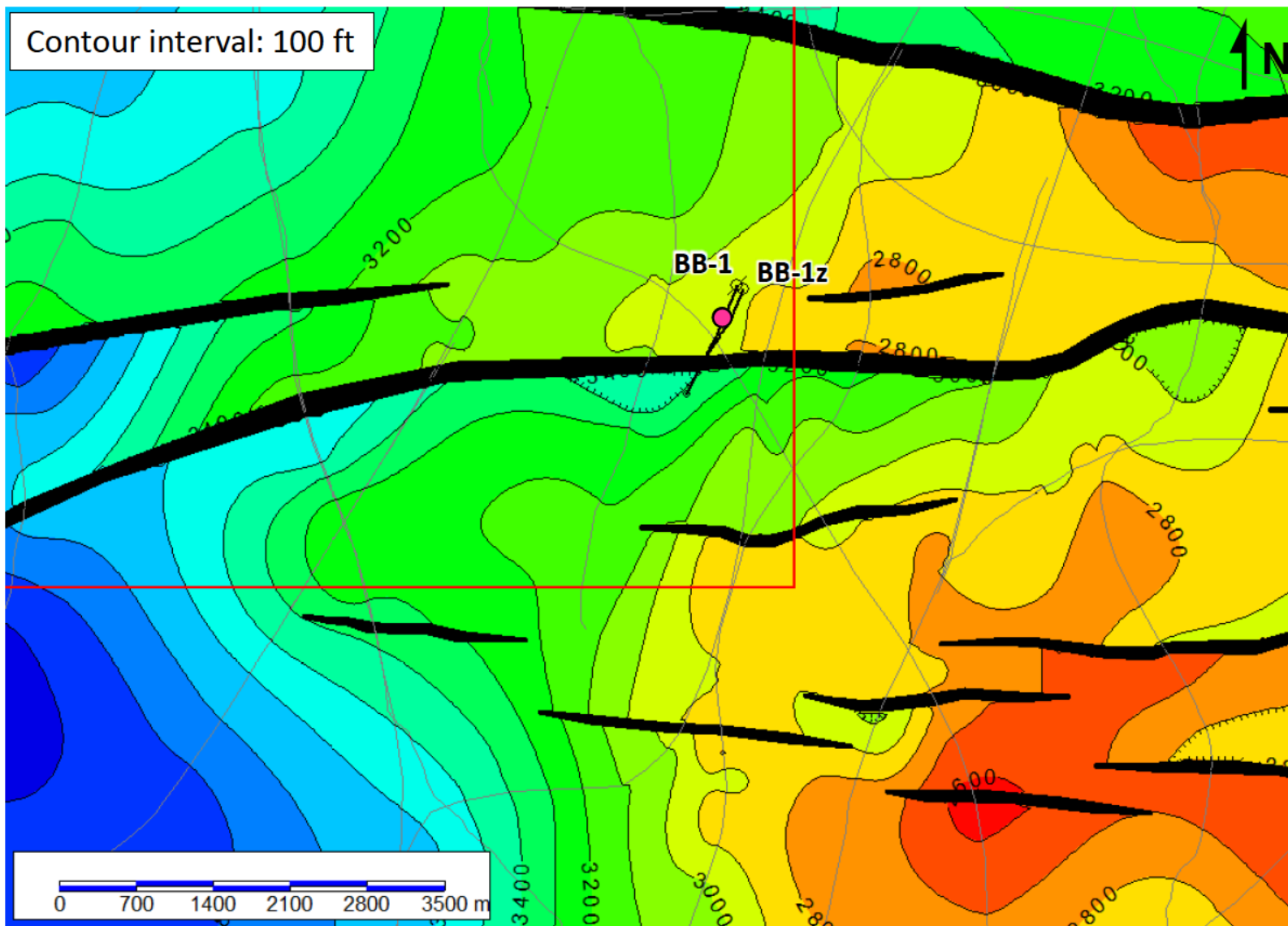
**APPENDIX A: BROADFORD BRIDGE, LOXLEY & HORSE HILL GEOLOGICAL DEPTH MAPS**

# Regional Kimmeridge Depth Map (ft)



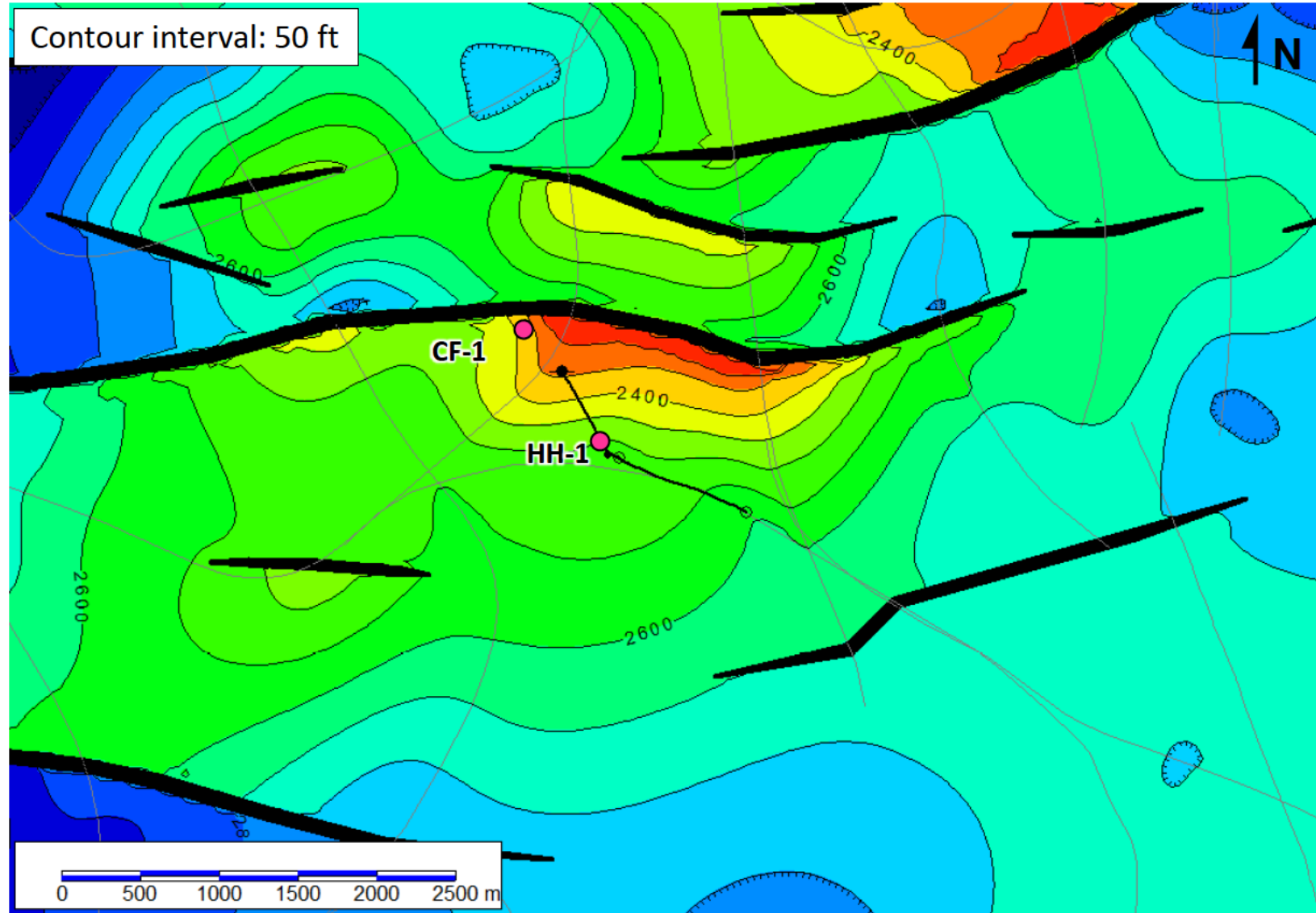
# Kimmeridge Map – Broadford Bridge

BB-1 = Broadford Bridge-1



# Kimmeridge Map – Horse Hill

HH-1 = Horse Hill-1  
CF-1 = Collendean Farm-1



# Kimmeridge Map – Loxley

GB-1 = Godley Bridge-1

