ABB were approached by the management team of a gas processing plant to provide a plan to mothball part of the facility. The facility feeds processed gas into the gas network, providing a significant proportion of the UK’s gas supply. The facility was also feeding gas into a power station but production reduced significantly when the power station closed.

The facility management team required an independent technical study for mothballing part of the facility for 6-9 months with an emphasis on a rapid return to production. The study needed to give confidence that the mothballed part of the facility would re-start without any issues. This was key for the facility owners.

The study led to an agreement to mothball 50% of the facility.

The evaluation needed to:
- Provide confidence for the decisions / judgement made
- Establish the cost of the programme over the full timescale of mothballing to restart
- Establish plans for equipment to be mothballed
- Plan for maintenance / preservation of equipment
- Take into consideration that the majority of personnel on site were still needed to manage production
- Provide a clear statement of goals set for the organisation

ABB mothballing expertise allows for rapid return to production.
Solution
Our approach was focused on the customer’s requirement for a rapid return to service; we planned for maintaining the appropriate level of safety for access to site e.g. walkways, lighting etc. We also needed to ensure environmental standards were maintained; eliminating any need for the company to reapply for COMAH to restart the facility.

We worked with the facility engineering team to establish and agree the mothballing plan but we also used our existing inspection data (RBI, health checks, asset health checks) to develop individual schemes of preservation and the essential modifications required to preserve equipment e.g. ventilated covers. This saved time, reduced the pull on site operations and gave accuracy.

This work was optimised to balance cost, equipment deterioration and likelihood of problems on start up. This involved considering:

- Minimising modifications that cause long term damage
- Challenging manufacturer’s equipment presentation techniques - identifying specific risks for idleness of equipment
- The site resources available

Benefits
- Confidence in start-up when required
- Mothballed efficiently using ABB’s historical Risked Based Inspection (RBI) knowledge
- Saved the client between 50,000 - 100,000 GBP by challenging equipment manufacturers preservation techniques
- Environmental standards maintained - avoiding cost and time reapplying for COMAH