



Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP
Secretary of State for Business,
Energy & Industrial Strategy

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Dear Secretary of State

Strategic planning around offshore wind developments in the southern North Sea and anticipated impacts on communities in the East Suffolk and North Norfolk local authority areas

As the Leaders of East Suffolk Council and North Norfolk District Council, we were copied into correspondence sent to you by George Freeman MP for Mid-Norfolk and Therese Coffey MP for Suffolk Coastal on 28th October 2019; highlighting the significant environmental challenges East Anglia now faces in accommodating onshore infrastructure associated with the much needed growth in offshore wind generation in the southern North Sea.

We recognise that you subsequently proposed a review of the grid connection allocation policy but respectfully suggest that any development of an Offshore Ring Main (ORM) may be at least 10 years from being able to be delivered. This is a serious concern for our two councils as both areas are, and will continue to be, subject to numerous offshore wind generation schemes seeking to access the National Grid in, or across, our districts. This will result in significant impact on communities in our areas through multiple construction programmes covering large areas impacting on agricultural and tourism businesses and causing short, if not long-term, environmental damage through removal of hedgerows, disturbance to soil structure etc in areas of high landscape character and ecological value. The letter to you from George Freeman MP and Therese Coffey MP eloquently sets out the impacts that will occur in our areas and these should not be underestimated nor, and as importantly, the strength of local feeling that is emerging against these proposals, as it appears to the communities that their voices will not be heard through DCO Examination processes given the essential need for this renewable source of power.

It is calculated that with all the offshore wind that is in place, under construction and proposed, approximately 40% of the UK's electricity (approximately equally distributed between our two councils) will be routed via onshore cable connections coming ashore through our two districts. Additionally, East Suffolk also hosts nuclear generation at Sizewell B and will be likely to host the new Sizewell C station, subject to the DCO being granted, probably later in 2021, given their current published timescales for submission.

It should also be recognised that in addition to all the clean energy cited above, North Norfolk also hosts the Bacton Gas Terminal which handles over one third of natural gas supply into the UK from domestic gas fields in the North Sea and from the Continent via interconnector pipelines. The Bacton Gas Terminal facility is critical national infrastructure for the UK energy supply and is anticipated to have a further thirty-year life, being an important element of our energy security and the UK's transition towards a zero-carbon economy by 2050.

Our two councils have, to date, positively embraced the offshore wind developments in the southern North Sea, recognising their national importance as we move towards a zero carbon energy market; and the economic opportunities and benefits they are also bringing to the regional economy in Norfolk and Suffolk - particularly in port towns such as Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth; but also in the wider supply chain across the two counties.

Notwithstanding these strategic benefits and opportunities for Suffolk and Norfolk, the number and scale of offshore wind proposals now coming forward is raising increasing concerns amongst communities in East Suffolk and North Norfolk where the impact of new landfall points, cable corridors and related infrastructure and potentially grid connections are considered to be significant such that our two councils strongly believe that we should be appropriately recognised for our significant contribution to securing the nation's future clean energy needs.

Our concerns in this regard relate to the fact that our two councils are now facing multiple offshore wind proposals, promoted by numerous energy companies, all developing their individual schemes in what appears to be an uncoordinated system, where strategic planning and cumulative impacts are not able to be properly assessed. (see attached summary of all the offshore wind schemes coming through our two council areas).

This lack of coordination is currently resulting in many of our local communities facing major programmes of engineering works required to lay many kilometres of cable runs across sensitive landscapes and the industrialisation of areas of high landscape value and sensitive / designated countryside for the development of grid connection infrastructure with no local benefit whatsoever to offset such significant impacts. These impacts are/will be compounded by the lack of quality transport infrastructure to access these relatively isolated locations by heavy plant and machinery for the whole of the lengthy construction periods.

At the heart of the significant concerns our councils have to the consenting route of the current and emerging proposals is the process of grid connection allocation which then dictates how individual schemes are subsequently developed. A number of agencies – your Department, Ofgem, The Crown Estate, National Grid Systems Operator, National Grid Electricity Transmission and individual developers and Offshore Transmission Owners - influence the way in which offshore windfarms connect to the National Grid, but no one agency or organisation appears to take an overview to ensure the most efficient, economic and environmentally responsible approach to delivering new offshore capacity and other key new energy infrastructure proposed in an area. This is compounded as such decisions are then presented as a fait accompli during the DCO process.

In seeking to highlight and address this challenge, the Deputy Leader of East Suffolk Council, Cllr Craig Rivett along with Therese Coffey MP, met with Kwarsi Kwarteng, MP and Minister of State for Energy on 16th October 2019 to highlight the cumulative impacts of the offshore wind proposals landing in just East Suffolk. He was very receptive to our concerns and asked for his civil servants to prepare a briefing note on the potential for the Offshore Ring Main and to set up a meeting with the Chief Executive of National Grid to understand the grid connection offer process in more detail. It was also confirmed at that meeting that Kwarsi Kwarteng MP was advised by civil servants that it would be at least 10 years before an economic and deliverable ORM could be in place. This places an even greater need for the review you have announced you wish to be undertaken to be commenced as soon as is practical.

In our view, the current approach to the provision of onshore infrastructure leads to significant adverse impacts on the environment and the local (usually tourism) economy where landfall is made and then the

associated substantial new buildings (required for AC transmission systems) and infrastructure required to establish the connections to the grid. These include an inability to have a long-term approach to an offshore grid, an inability to achieve efficiencies in cable routes, and inefficiency and confusion at Examination stage when several schemes are assessed independently. If this approach continues, we believe it will destroy many cherished parts of our districts, as most, if not all, of the known schemes yet to commence will be likely to be going through the DCO process in the next five years and certainly well ahead of any definite plans for an ORM as current proposals cannot be prepared in anticipation of an ORM being in place.

This significant delay to deliver a viable ORM, or have an alternative process/approach in place, will not offset the challenges we, as local authorities, now have to face with offshore wind farm operators looking to secure approval for their Development Consent Orders in the next five years. Proposals which have reached the DCO stage have been granted time limited licenses from the Crown Estate, have firm offers for connections in to the National Grid in place, with a clear remit to deliver their projects to help the UK have a secure and stable energy supply as well as meet our climate change obligations. It therefore appears to our councils that the known offshore developments will almost certainly happen, and, in making these decisions, limited weight will be given to the individual and cumulative impacts of the developments on the host communities in our respective districts. This will result in significant local harm, with huge local disruption and inconvenience to local, host communities with no mechanism to fully and properly mitigate, or compensate, for the impacts of our areas hosting at least half of the nation's essential energy infrastructure in our districts.

We would therefore welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss with you and your ministerial colleagues, the challenges we face at a local level in seeking to support the development of these major new energy projects and work with your government to develop and manage the delivery of a strategically robust approach to energy infrastructure delivery onshore in our areas. We appreciate that the currently known offshore schemes are unlikely to be delayed until a viable ORM is in place; nevertheless a strong partnership approach acknowledging the role national and local government has in embracing the opportunities these schemes can play in meeting carbon reduction targets as well as properly acknowledging the role our communities have in hosting schemes and meeting this goal would be welcomed.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Steve Gallant | Leader
East Suffolk Council



Cllr Sarah Bütikofer | Leader
North Norfolk Council

cc Peter Aldous MP
Duncan Baker MP
Therese Coffey MP
George Freeman MP
Kwarsi Kwarteng MP and Minister of State for Energy

Offshore Wind Farm Projects across East Suffolk / North Norfolk

Operating stage							
Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Output Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Wind Farm Details
Galloper	Operational since March 2018	2038 (approx. 30-year lifespan)	innogy SE	353 MW	East Suffolk	Landfall at Sizewell O+M facility: Harwich International Port	56 x 6.3MW turbines
Greater Gabbard	Operational since September 2012	Not known	SSE	504 MW	East Suffolk	O+M facility: old Waveney fish market in Lowestoft	140 x 3.6MW turbines
Sheringham Shoal	Operational since October 2012	2032 (approx. 20-year lifespan)	Equinor	312 MW	North Norfolk	Landfall: Weybourne O+M facility: Egmore Cable corridor to Salle in Broadland District. PTVs based at Wells Harbour.	88 x 3.6MW turbines
Dudgeon	Operational since October 2017	2042 (approx. 25-year lifespan)	Equinor	402 MW	North Norfolk	Landfall: Weybourne O+M facility: Great Yarmouth. Cable corridor to Necton in Breckland District.	67 x 6MW turbines
Race Bank	Operational since February 2018	2043 (approx. 25 year lifespan)	Orsted	580 MW		O+M facility: Grimsby Landfall in the Wash Onshore Substation at Walpole. Very close to Wells-next-the-Sea with impacts for Wells fishermen etc but no direct impact on District.	91 x 6MW turbines

Construction stage							
Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Output Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Wind Farm Details
East Anglia ONE	Full operation expected 2020	Expected 2050 (approx.) 30 years	SPR	714 MW	East Suffolk	Cable route Bawdsey to Bramford O+M Facility: Lowestoft Port	102 x 7MW turbines
Consented							
Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Output Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Wind Farm Details
East Anglia THREE	Consented 2017	Expected 30-year lifespan	SPR	<1,400 MW	East Suffolk		110-172 x 7-12MW turbines
Projects due for/at examination							
Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Output Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Wind Farm Details
East Anglia ONE NORTH	DCO examination 2020, application submitted October 2019	Expected 30-year lifespan	SPR	<800 MW	East Suffolk		67 x 12-19MW turbines
East Anglia TWO	DCO examination 2020, application submitted October 2019	Expected 30-year lifespan	SPR	<900 MW	East Suffolk		75 x 12-19 MW turbines
Hornsea Project Three	Awaiting Decision – Examining Authority issued recommendation to Secretary of State 02/07/19. Deadline for decision now 29/02/20.	Not known	Orsted	2.4 GW	North Norfolk	Landfall proposed at Weybourne. Onshore cable route to new grid connection substation at Swardeston.	300 x TBC MW turbines

Vanguard	Awaiting Decision - Examining Authority issued recommendation to Secretary of State in 10/9/19. New deadline for decision set.	Not known	Vattenfall	1.8 GW	North Norfolk	Proposed landfall at Cart Gap near Happisburgh, onshore cable route to new grid connection substation at Necton in Breckland.	90-200 x 9-20MW turbines
Boreas	Examination began 12/11/19, due to finish 12/05/20.	Expected 30-year lifespan	Vattenfall	1.8 GW	North Norfolk	Following Vanguard scheme. Landfall proposed at Cart Gap, connection at Necton.	90-257 x 7-20MW turbines
Known / emerging projects							
Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Output Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Wind Farm Details
Galloper Extension (Five Estuaries Wind Farm)	Introductory / very early	Expecting to be operational by 2030	innogy SE	<353 MW	East Suffolk	Offered grid connection at Friston, offer is under consideration Cable route, landfall location, and onshore substation not yet known Rough timeline: Commencing stakeholder engagement Nov 19-Jan 20, scoping and HRA screening Mar-Apr 20, public consultation May 20. PEI Q3 21. DCO application Q2 2022. DCO consent Q4 2023.	
Greater Gabbard Extension	Introductory / very early Q2 2023 proposed for DCO submission. National Grid will	Not known	Innogy RWE (renewables subsidiary) and SSE	<504 MW	East Suffolk		

	confirm grid offer at end of Q1 2020.						
Sheringham Shoal	Scoping report released October 2019 (joint with Dudgeon)	Not known	Equinor	Will be 800 MW, combined with Dudgeon	North Norfolk	Landfall being explored at Weybourne or between Mundesley and Bacton. Grid connection offer at Norwich Main, south Norwich. Joint development with Dudgeon, common transmission infrastructure	
Dudgeon Extension	Scoping report released October 2019 (joint with Sheringham Shoal)	Not known	Equinor	Will be 800MW, combined with Sheringham Shoal	North Norfolk	Landfall potentially Bacton/Weybourne, connection at Swardeston Joint development with Sheringham Shoal	
Race Bank Extension	Not awarded an agreement for lease following plan-level HRA	Not known	Orsted	<573 MW		Export cable through the Wash, due north of Wells-next-the-Sea, connecting to NG at Walpole Main Station. O+M base at Grimsby. Visible from North Norfolk and potential impact on North Norfolk fishermen.	

Related Projects

Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Details
Nautilus Interconnector	Expected DCO submission Q2 2020	Could be operational by 2028	National Grid Ventures	1500 MW	East Suffolk	Connected at Sizewell Connected to Belgium	

Eurolink Interconnector	Introductory / early		National Grid Ventures	1600 MW	East Suffolk	Connected at Sizewell Connection to Holland	
Related Projects							
Project	Stage	Time of operation	Operator	Capacity	Council Area	Other notes	Details
Sizewell C	DCO application expected submission Q2 2020	Likely operation commences 2030	EDF	3340 MW	East Suffolk		Expected timeline: Construction expected to begin 2021, lasting 9-12 years

