



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Claire Perry MP
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Dear Leaders of Suffolk County and Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils,

Thank you so much for your letter dated 29 November 2018 to Greg Clark MP, detailing your concerns regarding the number and scale of major energy infrastructure projects proposed for the Sizewell area. I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

Government policy provides the overarching framework to encourage investment in the electricity system to ensure that it remains fit for purpose as it experiences a period of unprecedented change in how energy is generated, used and stored. How the policy framework is implemented is determined by the commercial decisions of companies investing in energy infrastructure. This approach helps to minimise the costs of these significant projects to consumers.

While it is ultimately a decision for offshore developers as to where and when they wish to bring forward particular projects, we should explain that National Grid, as GB Electricity System Operator, does have a role in coordinating the development of the GB electricity transmission system, and this takes account of the work by the Government and Ofgem on a coordination policy for onshore and offshore development.¹ Of particular note, National Grid has published an assessment of potential connection options for the Nautilus and Eurolink interconnector projects alongside the other proposals to connect in the Sizewell/Leiston area, as listed in your letter, to ensure coordination across projects.²

As you will be aware, the proposed East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two offshore wind farms and Sizewell C nuclear power station projects (and their associated onshore infrastructure) are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, as defined in the Planning Act 2008. For the projects to proceed, applications for the necessary development consent will therefore have to be made to the Secretary of State in due course. I am aware that National Grid Ventures has decided to progress its own request to the Secretary of State under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 in due course, in respect of the two proposed interconnectors to connect to the National Grid at Sizewell.

¹ You can find further information at:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/electricity/transmission-networks/offshore-transmission/offshore-transmission-policy-design/coordination-policy>

² <http://sases.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/National-Grid-Briefing-Note-Interconnectors-Sizewell.pdf>

Should the Secretary of State decide to direct the proposed projects under section 35 to be treated as development for which development consent is required, they will then be considered under the Planning Act 2008 process.

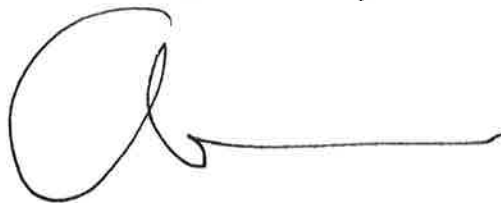
Applications for development consent will need to include supporting environmental impact assessments that will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration in the first instance. Each subsequent project that reaches the planning stage will need to consider already constructed developments and those in the pipeline. You will appreciate that when such applications are made, they will be publicised and there will be an opportunity for anyone who wishes to make representations about the applications to do so. Developers may be asked to consider provision of contributions for infrastructure through planning obligations in the form of section 106 agreements, which assist in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Once the Planning Inspectorate's consideration of the applications is complete, it will submit separate reports with findings and recommendations to the Secretary of State for BEIS who will then decide whether to grant or refuse development consent for the projects.

The individual project pages on the Planning Inspectorate's national infrastructure planning portal, note that the applications for East Anglia Two³ and East Anglia One North⁴ wind farms are not expected to be submitted until early 2019 and early 2020, respectively. I am aware that there is currently no date set for submission of the proposed Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station planning application⁵ and understand there are currently no details given on the Planning Inspectorate's planning portal in respect of the potential offshore wind farm extensions you also refer to in your letter.

Given the quasi-judicial role of the Secretary of State in determining any such applications, I hope you will appreciate that I cannot comment on specific concerns raised in regard to the proposed location of the infrastructure and any potential environmental impacts, as this could be seen as prejudicing the outcome of any proposals subsequently submitted for decisions through the planning process. However, in taking the decisions on any development consent applications, the Secretary of State will follow the relevant requirements in the Planning Act 2008 and have regard to a wide range of matters which are both important and relevant to his decisions.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A' followed by a long horizontal line.

THE RT HON CLAIRE PERRY MP
Minister of State

³ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-two-offshore-windfarm/>

⁴ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-one-north-offshore-windfarm/>

⁵ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/sizewell-c-new-nuclear-power-station/>