



The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State
Department for Business, Energy, and
Industrial Strategy

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Our ref:
Date: 25/07/2022
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Dear Rt Hon Greg Hands MP; Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change,

Joint statement from North Falls, Five Estuaries and National Grid: Commitment to exploring coordinated network designs in East Anglia

Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council, (the Councils) are writing to you to set out our concerns regarding the joint statement published by North Falls, Five Estuaries and National Grid¹ and the current lack of tangible outcomes from the Early Opportunities workstream of the Offshore Transmission Network Review, (OTNR) in relation to East Suffolk.

The Councils understand that Five Estuaries and North Falls, along with the interconnectors of National Grid Ventures (Nautilus and Eurolink) and the offshore bootstrap of National Grid Electricity Transmission (Sea Link), are now in discussions to coordinate their projects. It is also understood that these discussions are being held as part of the focused work in East Anglia, being carried out by your department with Renewables UK.

Based on the joint statement, the Councils are disappointed that, although the commitment to explore options is helpful at this late stage in the Early Opportunities Workstream, these projects have not yet put themselves forward as Pathfinders, unlike the other Pathfinders that have been formally identified. It is essential that greater pressure is put upon the developers to commit to the projects becoming Pathfinders, to deliver tangible early outcomes 'on the ground', from the Offshore Transmission Network Review.

Secondly, it appears that one potential outcome of these discussions between the parties, may be that North Falls and Five Estuaries connect to the onshore transmission network via an offshore node of one of the multipurpose interconnectors, or NGET's bootstrap, Sea Link.

The Councils are extremely concerned, that as it stands, East Suffolk, unlike North Norfolk, has not benefited from a reduction in onshore infrastructure through a Pathfinder project. Furthermore, that

¹ [Joint statement from North Falls, Five Estuaries and National Grid: Commitment to exploring coordinated network designs in East Anglia](#)

coordination of North Falls and Five Estuaries with an interconnector, should not lead to any additional infrastructure in East Suffolk, or additional harm to Suffolk's environment and communities. The Councils consider that such a coordinated solution must only be achieved, and would only be acceptable, without additional harm to Suffolk.

Furthermore, the Councils consider that the creation of such an important strategic node on the transmission network would require a new, wide-ranging, and comprehensive settlement for the community; adequately reflecting both the burden being placed on our communities², their consequently pivotal contribution to the national net zero target, and the significant reduction in harm, to other communities and the environment elsewhere that such a coordinated solution would produce.

The Councils recognise that participation in the Early Opportunities workstream is voluntary, and that discussions between the parties are commercial and in confidence. The Councils also recognise that there will be a consultation regarding community benefits generally, towards the end of 2022. However, the Councils wanted to take this opportunity to set out their concerns at the earliest time, given the circumstances in East Suffolk, with its proliferation of energy generation and transmission projects.

We noted your contributions to the recent debate in Westminster Hall on new pylons in East Anglia and your announcement that Nick Winser CBE will be the UK's first Electricity Commissioner. We agree and recognise as you commented, "He will play a pivotal role in ensuring that we have the right infrastructure to transmit electricity to where it is needed". We would also welcome the opportunity to directly engage with the Commissioner to highlight the challenges east Suffolk and the wider region face.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Craig Rivett
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Economic Development
East Suffolk Council



Cllr Richard Rout
Deputy Leader and Cabinet
Member for Finance &
Environment
Suffolk County Council

cc. Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-62235221>