



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP
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27th March 2020

Dear Matthew and Steve,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 March to the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, regarding the recent engagement session you had with officials and various parties working within the offshore coordination space. I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

I clearly write to you at an unprecedented time for the nation and for our economy. The Government is working around the clock to provide guidance, support and direction to the public. We have set up a dedicated Business Support Helpline (0300 456 3565) and webpage should you need further information on our response to COVID-19 at: www.businesssupport.gov.uk/. More general advice on the full range of measures, support and advice can be found on the Government's website at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

I am grateful to you for maintaining a high level of engagement with ongoing developments in the coordination of offshore energy infrastructure. The Government's ambition is that offshore transmission is delivered in a way which is efficient, attractive to investors and provides value for consumers, while impacts on other users of the sea space and the impacts of transmission infrastructure (both onshore and offshore) are acceptable.

Our ambition was set out in last year's Offshore Wind Sector Deal¹, which committed the Government and sector to work together to address strategic deployment issues including onshore and offshore transmission issues. Notably since the Sector Deal's launch last March, the industry has published two papers setting out the parameters that they consider need to be addressed to mitigate the grid transmission barriers to deployment.

Further, as you mentioned, Ofgem's Decarbonisation Action Plan² of February 2020 commits to work with the Government and industry to review the frameworks for connecting offshore wind generation, and to explore whether a more coordinated offshore transmission system could reduce both financial and environmental costs. Alongside this publication, the sector and Government departments met to discuss the environmental, consenting, licencing and regulatory barriers to more coordinated infrastructure.

¹ Offshore Wind Sector Deal - www.gov.uk/government/publications/offshore-wind-sector-deal;

² Ofgem's Decarbonisation Action Plan - www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/ofgem-s-decarbonisation-action-plan.

In addition, following its commitment in the Sector Deal, the Crown Estate has been engaging with stakeholders in the UK to define the outcomes, goals and delivery routes for a funded Strategic Enabling Actions Programme to meet the challenge of increasing offshore wind deployment in the UK in a co-ordinated and sustainable way. This Programme is being delivered with my Department as strategic programme partner, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as a supporting partner.

As you have rightly pointed out, timing is critical. In the context of our decarbonisation plans to get us to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, a strategic approach from all parties involved is crucial to working toward the Committee on Climate Changes recommendation of 75GW offshore wind. My Department and the relevant parties involved are making the strategic coordination of offshore energy infrastructure an increasingly key priority. My Department is committed to working towards appropriate solutions to the various timescales projects are at.

I appreciate you writing to highlight your main concerns, which you presented to officials and other interested parties at the engagement session on 2 March, and agree that continued engagement with yourselves and those you met with is crucial to moving forward. My officials have taken away these areas of concern and intend to make regular updates to you at the BEIS chaired Suffolk Energy Coastal Delivery Board (SECDB). I suggest this forum is used for you to input your views and for my officials to update you regularly on our progress.

You will appreciate, however, that we are currently in unprecedented times and the next SECDB has been cancelled in line with Government advice. With the next SECDB due to take place on 30 June, officials are exploring the options of providing updates via teleconferencing and are thinking carefully about how we continue to engage on these important matters.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope you have found this information useful and thank you again for your continued engagement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kwasi Kwarteng', written in a cursive style.

RT HON KWASI KWARTENG MP
Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth