

Date: 8 August 2019
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Sent by email to:
coyne-webb.jobshare@beis.gov.uk

Amanda Webb and Matt Coyne
The Department for Business, Energy
and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Dear Ms Webb and Mr Coyne

I refer to the letter from Rt Hon Claire Perry MP dated 23 April 2019 (received here on 21 June). In it, there is an offer for us to meet with BEIS officials to discuss the concerns that we have, as expressed in the letter sent to the Secretary of State by the Leaders of Suffolk County Council and the former Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils on 29 March 2019. It was suggested that we contact you to set up such a meeting.

In order to help set the framework for such a meeting, it is useful to set out again the issues that we would wish to explore with you. We do recognise the quasi-judicial role of BEIS in applications for Development Consent Order. We will be pressing the Planning Inspectorate and the Examination Panels to take full account of the in-combination impacts of multiple schemes and will continue to follow-up the implications of this with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

What we would wish to discuss with you at this time is the issue raised in the Offshore Wind Sector Deal and quoted in Ms Perry's letter of 23 April looking at the strategic deployment issues, including onshore and offshore transmission. Our concern is that the nature of the existing regulatory framework discourages the adoption of new uses of transmission technology that could well reduce the impact on onshore environments and be less costly to the consumer.

We have discussed these proposals with businesses in the offshore wind industry and with Government agencies and consider that there are likely to be practical opportunities to take this forward.

Therefore, from our perspective, the agenda could focus on the following issues:

- 1) Weakness and opacity of the CION process – the need for changes to this.
- 2) The opportunity for hybrid offshore projects, linking together offshore wind schemes as well as inter-connectors, to reduce environmental harm whilst minimising costs.

- 3) The need to take a more strategic look at the locations where cables come to land and connect with the grid, rationalising these and taking a longer term view of these opportunities rather than, as seems to us at the present, a series of ad hoc decisions that appear to be taken by National Grid based solely on available capacity rather than strategically looking to the long term.
- 4) The need for guidance from Government to the industry and stakeholders regarding community benefits from offshore wind farms in line with that previously produced for projects onshore.

As well as the team we have met before, we consider that it might be helpful to include Mr Yuen Cheung or someone else from the BEIS Offshore Wind Team. We are aware that the Crown Estates is also looking at this issue and it might also be useful to include a representative from the Marine Planning and Consents Team. A further organisation which is likely to be of assistance in this discussion would be Ofgem.

It may well be that there are other appropriate people who you consider should be at such a meeting and we would be delighted if they could be involved.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Matthew Hicks
Leader of Suffolk County Council



Cllr Steve Gallant
Leader of East Suffolk Council