

# **SCOTTISH POWER RENEWABLES EA1N & EA2 OFFSHORE WIND FARMS EIP**

**OPEN FLOOR HEARING 2, SESSION 1, 14:00, 8 OCTOBER**

## **COUNCILLOR RICHARD ROUT SPEECH**

**(Approximately 5 minutes based on 125 words per minute)**

### **Introduction**

My name is Richard Rout and I am the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council.

### **Relationship with East Suffolk Council**

We have heard from my colleague at East Suffolk Council about their views upon the submitted DCO applications. Suffolk County Council shares similar concerns although for the sake not repeating these, I will mainly concentrate ~~more~~ upon those aspects for which the County Council has a remit.

### **Climate Emergency**

Suffolk County Council declared a climate change emergency in March 2019 and following this is seeking to achieve carbon neutrality both for the County Council and more broadly across Suffolk by 2030 which will require significant action involving ~~aeress~~ a range of stakeholders. It is acknowledged by the County Council that offshore wind farms will make a significant contribution towards meeting this goal.

### **Economic Development**

Coastal communities in Suffolk and other parts of the UK have suffered disproportionately economically over recent decades and the County Council is making significant efforts to revitalise these communities. The iconic new 'Gull Wing' bridge to be delivered by the Lake Lothing Third Crossing Development Consent Order in Lowestoft is an exemplar project in this regard. It is also acknowledged that offshore wind farms provide a significant economic boost to these communities during construction and in the longer term during the operations and maintenance phase.

### **Onshore Development**

As part of the proposals onshore buried cables and substations will be required. In particular, the substation proposals at Friston will no doubt be centre stage in the forthcoming proceedings. It is in the evaluation and scrutiny of these aspects of the proposals that the County Council has the biggest part to play. In particular, the County Council's remit in respect of Highways, Public Rights of Way, Archaeology and as Lead Local Flood Authority means it has knowledge and expertise on these matters.

### **Statements of Common Ground**

Inevitably there are some negative aspects to the developments which require suitable and satisfactory mitigation in order to be acceptable. Although it is

acknowledged that mitigation is embedded in the Development Consent Order applications, the County Council is of the view that this does not in many cases go far enough. Officers have engaged heavily with the applicants with a view to improving the mitigation put forward and the County Council looks forward to later technical sessions of the Examination where the detailed issues can be explored. The key issues of remaining concern include the following.

### **Highways**

As proposed, the level of HGV traffic required to construct and decommission the substation haul road would result in the existing A1094/A12 junction arrangement being unsafe. The mitigation proposed in the DCO application of reducing the speed limit controlled by an existing speed camera and improving road markings and signage is inadequate.

### **Public Rights of Way**

The cable routes and substation development will result in the permanent loss of a public right of way which also forms the one thousand year old parish boundary and affords views of Friston Church. The submitted DCO proposals in no way offer a suitable alternative. The cable route would also cause a significant adverse impact upon the public rights of way between landfall and the substation with no real compensatory public rights of way being proposed elsewhere.

### **Archaeology**

The DCO order limits are tightly drawn in certain areas where the archaeology importance has not been assessed properly. If features of significant archaeological importance were found in these areas the deliverability of the cable route in that alignment might not be possible if preservation in situ was required. The applicant points to difficulties in obtaining landowner permission, but with respect this does not overcome the issue.

### **Floods**

In 2019 Friston experienced a significant flood event including flooding to dwellings. Although obviously the applicant cannot be held responsible for these events, unfortunately the existing DCO proposals for the management of surface water from the proposed substation site are vague to the extent that it is not possible to ascertain if they are acceptable.

### **Offshore Transmission Network Review**

It would be remiss of me to not mention an issue that has been of great concern with all concerned locally with these proposals. Suffolk is expected to host the landfall of a significant amount of the Governments ambitious offshore windfarm expansion targets of achieving 40GW by 2030. Currently there is 10GW. With these two DCO applications the substation would form a connection opportunity for other offshore windfarm and interconnector schemes currently in the pipeline. The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy is currently reviewing how such schemes should be connected and it is our firm belief that it would have been

preferable for these schemes to have been included within that review. As it is, any outputs of the review will need to feed into the Examination as and when they emerge.

### **Sizewell C**

Finally, the proposed new nuclear SZC DCO application proposes a vast project which will have significant impacts on the local area and only serves to exacerbate issues including highways issues as well as potential impacts upon the tourism trade. Cumulative effects will therefore need to be carefully assessed.

### **Summary**

Thus, whilst the County Council welcomes the proposals because of both the renewable energy benefits and the economic opportunities they bring, it does have some serious areas of concern with regard to the impacts of the proposals and how they are currently intended to be addressed. The County Council very much hopes that the Examination process will enable a 'win-win' solution to be achieved for the environment, the economy, and for Suffolk.