

Submission from M Laschet reference 3338 for EA 2 windfarm

A lot of local testimony has been presented emphasising that the fragile coastline and ecology of this area of the Sandlings is not suited to major industrial projects. The flora and fauna and the marine environment would be all at risk. The National Biodiversity Databank has been trawled for extensive evidence supporting these claims in many submissions from local people already sent to the Planning Authorities.

The area would be ruined if multiple energy projects are built over many years destined for Friston village. In September 2020 it was proposed to erect Multiple Purpose Interconnectors to maximise the potential of offshore wind and minimise the impact on the infrastructure of communities. However brownfield sites equipped with modern amenities and accessible by new highways would be preferable to the limited and vulnerable conditions in the Friston district which the Prime Minister implies as being wholly unsuitable in his recent pledge to protect our environment. The BBC news online reported the Prime Minister saying: "it's more important than ever to enhance our natural environment and protect our precious wildlife and biodiversity".

Eighteen groups concerned with wildlife and ecology (including the RSPB and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust) claim that the current planning system is not fit for purpose. Fragile ecosystems must be given time to recover. Luke Clarke of Renewable UK says "we must develop offshore wind in an environmentally sensitive way" and "build projects in the right locations and in an appropriate way."

North of the junction of the A14 and A12 the latter is well below par for a major road taking heavy traffic for the multiple projects planned for the east coast. As well as energy developments there are plans for Enterprise Zones, many housing estates and much increased road and rail traffic from Felixstowe Docks. The present small scale infrastructure would be unable to cope. For example if the Orwell Bridge was closed by accidents or high winds traffic would be diverted through Ipswich town centre resulting in congestion. The A12 is too narrow for the volume of HGVs needed to service the developments and gridlock may occur with increases in civil and commercial vehicles.

In January 2020 the Scottish and Southern Energy Renewables Nine Point Plan maintained that the Point to Point approach to developing grid infrastructure is not fit for purpose. It is too inefficient to deliver the 40 GW of offshore wind targeted by the Government by 2030. An integrated approach is needed to connect to the electricity system. The National Grid itself in the UK Offshore Energy Strategic Environment Assessment Paragraph 193 notes: "if co-ordinated development does not occur and projects are considered on a piecemeal basis, the overall network design and substation extension requirements are certain to lead to a suboptimal solution with significant increase in the impact on onshore network".

In 2015 the National Grid with other Energy Developers led the Integrated Offshore Transmission Project. It considered setting up an Offshore Ring Main or a Co-ordinated Radial Connection. There was no support from Ofgem nor was there due consideration given to co-ordination or the environment. Nothing was done. Now would seem to be the best time for debate and decisions about short and long term efficiency and economy regarding connections to the national grid.

Finally I should like to take issue with National Grid's response to the Examining Authority's Written Questions in which they say they will not attend Issue Specific Hearings 1&2.

A thorough examination of the matter in hand will be impossible if National Grid fails to take part. The full extent of what is being examined is not yet known. According to County Councillor Russ Rainger it is suspected that National Grid may not have planning regulation for their projects.

I am respectfully calling for the Examining Authorities to write to the Secretary of State strongly urging the National Grid Electricity Transmission to attend the Issue Specific Hearings 1&2 and to answer the Written Questions which they have failed to do so far.

Michael Laschet

