

Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm Position Statement North Norfolk District Council Requested Requirement to Address Perceived Tourism Impacts



Applicant: Norfolk Vanguard Limited

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Deadline 8

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Photo: Kentish Flats Offshore Wind Farm

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1 TOURISM IMPACTS

1.1 Introduction

1. This document has been prepared in response to evidence provided by North Norfolk District Council at Deadline 7 related to the potential for tourism impacts within North Norfolk resulting from the construction of Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm (the Project).
2. This note includes the assessment criteria set out within the Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1) and a summary of the assessment that was undertaken, including key project design decisions (embedded mitigation) that were specifically identified to minimise potential impacts to tourism within North Norfolk.
3. Potential tourism impacts associated with the construction and operation of Norfolk Vanguard were considered in full within Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 30 Tourism and Recreation submitted in June 2018 (DCO document 6.1.30).

1.2 Planning policy

1.2.1 National Policy Statement (NPS)

4. The NPS for Energy (EN-1) identifies tourism aspects¹ to be taken into account, and the associated assessment requirements. These assessment requirements are set out in Table 30.1 of ES Chapter 30 Tourism and Recreation, which is repeated below. Table 30.1 also identifies how each of the NPS EN-1 assessment requirements was taken into account within the assessment.

¹ Tourism is not identified as one of the general impact topics for assessment within EN-1, but tourism is identified within other related topics which have been captured.

Table 1.1 (from ES Chapter 30) NPS assessment requirements

NPS Requirement	NPS Reference	ES Reference
<p>The ES should include an assessment of the effects on the coast. In particular, applicants should assess the effects of the proposed project on maintaining coastal recreation sites and features.</p>	<p>EN-1 section 5.5.7 (5.5 Coastal change)</p>	<p>One of the objectives of the site selection process was to avoid valuable natural assets such as the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads National Park. This allowed it to avoid corresponding clusters of tourism and recreation assets.</p> <p>In response to consultation with stakeholders a horizontal drilling design (HDD) has been developed that will not require closure of either the coastal footpaths or the beach.</p> <p>An assessment of impact on coastal processes, marine water, and water resources is undertaken in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 Marine geology, oceanography and physical processes • Chapter 9 Marine water and sediment quality; and • Chapter 20 Water Resources and Flood Risk, respectively.
<p>Applicants will need to consult the local community on their proposals to build on open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. Taking account of the consultations, applicants should consider providing new or additional open space including green infrastructure, sport or recreation facilities, to substitute for any losses as a result of their proposal.</p> <p>Applicants should use any up-to-date local authority assessment or, if there is none, provide an independent assessment to show whether the existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land is surplus to requirements.</p>	<p>EN-1 paragraph 5.10.6 (Land use, including open space, green infrastructure and green belt)</p>	<p>As part of the consultation process the project has consulted with non-statutory stakeholders, local communities, and the public. Their responses have been instrumental in the development of the project and embedded mitigation, including a commitment to high voltage direct current and removal of the cable relay station and use of a long HDD at the landfall. This is detailed in Chapter 4 Site Selection and Assessment of Alternatives, the Consultation Report and is detailed with regards Tourism and Recreation in section 30.3 of the ES.</p> <p>The project will not build permanent above ground infrastructure on publicly accessible open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. As set out above, the long HDD ensures that closure of the beach is not required.</p>
<p>This assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic impacts, which may include: the provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities; and effects on tourism.</p>	<p>EN-1 section 5.12.3 (Socio-economic)</p>	<p>Chapter 30 considers impacts to tourism and recreation receptors. Chapter 31 Socio-Economics discusses impacts to socio-economic receptors. Both short and long-term effects are considered in section 30.8 and Chapter 31 Socio-Economics.</p> <p>The use of below ground infrastructure and siting wind turbines 47km offshore limits opportunities for potential benefit to tourism suppliers. However, due to the proposed siting of the Norfolk Vanguard landfall at Happisburgh South,</p>

NPS Requirement	NPS Reference	ES Reference
		an area recognised as an internationally important region for Lower Palaeolithic archaeology, the project has undertaken an engagement process with a specific independent academic steering group in relation to the Ancient Humans of Britain project. This engagement process aims, in part, to maximise knowledge gained from pre-construction and construction activities. Opportunities for public engagement on the basis of any data obtained are currently under consideration, with approaches similar to the Jurassic Coast and Deep History Coast projects being explored. It is hoped that this knowledge will be used by appropriate stakeholders and this engagement is discussed further in Chapter 28 Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.

1.2.2 National planning policy framework

5. Within the NPPF (2019), local planning authorities are provided with guidance for determining planning applications. This states that:

“Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.

Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- b) directly related to the development; and*
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.”*

These tests are referred to within paragraph 4.1.7 of NPS EN1 which provides that requirements should only be imposed in relation to development consent that are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be consented, enforceable, precise, and reasonable in all other respects. EN1 also states that the decision maker should take into account the guidance in Circular 11/95, as revised, on “The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions” or any successor to it, which is now the Planning Practice Guidance (as referred to in the Applicant's Summary or Oral Submissions from Issue Specific Hearing 6 (document reference: ExA; ISH7; 10.D7.2)).

1.2.3 Local planning policy

6. Local planning policy relevant to North Norfolk is set out in Table 30.2 of ES Chapter 30 Tourism and Recreation, which is repeated below (adapted to only show those sections relevant to North Norfolk).

Table 1.2 Relevant local planning policies (adapted)

Document	Policy/guidance	Policy/guidance purpose	ES reference
North Norfolk Core Strategy (2008) to 2021	Para 2.7.19	The main tourism appeal in North Norfolk is based on the unique natural environmental assets and it is also important to protect these.	One of the objectives of the site selection process was to avoid valuable natural assets such as the North Norfolk Coast Area of AONB and the Broads National Park. In addition, all statutory and non-statutory designated sites have been avoided.
	Policy SS1	The North Norfolk countryside is a principal element in the rural character of North Norfolk and is enjoyed by residents and visitors. The quality and character of this area should be protected and where possible enhanced, whilst enabling those who earn a living from, and maintain and manage, the countryside to continue to do so. Therefore, while some development is restricted in the Countryside, particular other uses will be permitted in order to support the rural economy, meet local housing needs and provide for particular uses such as renewable energy and community uses.	Impacts to recreational use of the area are considered in section 30.8. Impacts to landscape are discussed in chapter 29 Landscape and Visual Assessment.

Document	Policy/guidance	Policy/guidance purpose	ES reference
	Policy SS2	In areas designated as Countryside development will be limited to that which requires a rural location and is for renewable energy projects.	Impacts to recreational use of the area are considered in section 30.8. Impacts to landscape are discussed in Chapter 29 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
	Policy SS4	Renewable energy proposals will be supported where impacts on amenity, wildlife and landscape are acceptable.	Impacts on recreational use of the area are considered in section 30.8. Impacts on biodiversity are discussed in Chapter 22 Onshore Ecology. Impacts on landscape are discussed in Chapter 29 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
	Policy SS4:	North Norfolk has a distinctive architectural heritage and attractive rural landscapes and the Council wishes to ensure that development proposals conserve and enhance these features wherever possible.	Impacts on tourism, leisure and recreation are discussed in section 30.8. Impacts on architectural heritage are discussed in Chapter 28 Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage. Impacts on landscape are discussed in Chapter 29 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

1.3 Tourism and recreation assessment

7. The methodology for assessing potential impacts on tourism and recreation receptors was discussed and agreed in 2017 as part of the evidence plan process. The methodology followed is set out in detail in sections 30.4 and 30.5 of ES Chapter 30.
8. Tourism and recreation receptors were a key consideration during site selection and design development. These decisions are captured as commitments embedded into the project design, including:
 - The location of the landfall and onshore cable route has been designed to avoid the high value tourism assets of the Norfolk Coast AONB and the Norfolk Broads National Park;
 - Coastal towns and villages have been avoided where possible;
 - A long horizontal directional drill (HDD) has been selected at the landfall to avoid the need for closures of the coastal path and the beach at Happisburgh;

- Onshore duct installation will be undertaken in a sectionalised manner with workfronts operating from mobilisation areas distributed along the cable route. Each workfront will work on a short length (approximately 150m) each week to excavate, install ducts, backfill and reinstate, i.e. areas can be reinstated within 1-2 weeks of the works starting; and
 - The beach car park at Happisburgh will not be used by the Project construction team.
9. The presence of temporary works are anticipated to represent a temporary disturbance of low magnitude to the tourism and recreation assets in the immediate vicinity of the landfall and inland due to traffic and visual disruption. The impacts are localised, short term and reversible. The sensitivity/value of the receptors are medium (regional importance) and the magnitude of effect is low (works are visible from the tourist attraction but there are no direct impacts.) representing an impact of **minor adverse** significance, i.e. not significant in EIA terms.
10. The landfall works represent the most significant part of the Norfolk Vanguard construction works in North Norfolk. The drilling duration for the installation of ducts at the landfall under the worst case assumption is 20 weeks. This assumption does not include 24 hour working which would reduce the total duration to 14 weeks. With appropriate mitigation measures in place (noise absorption barrier) potential noise impacts associated with 24 hour working are reduced to **negligible** at the nearest noise sensitive receptors. These measures are captured within the Outline Code of Construction Practice and secured through Requirement 20(2)(e) which requires a construction noise management plan to be produced for each stage of the works and approved by the relevant planning authority prior to works commencing.

1.4 Perceived impacts upon tourism

11. Within their Deadline 7 submission North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) acknowledge that *“the environmental impacts of the proposed scheme, including those resulting from the construction phase, have been evaluated and substantially evidenced by the Applicant”*. NNDC go on to state that *“what has not even been estimated, is the quantum of impact resulting from the perception of a scheme of this magnitude”*.

12. NNDC go on to provide evidence of “*the perception impact on tourism which NNDC has experienced in other comparable circumstances*”. The example provided is of coastal erosion on the North Norfolk coast, evidenced with the following statement “*marking the areas of coastal erosion on maps appeared to make those areas less desirable destinations*”. However, this perceived effect is not evidenced beyond this statement.
13. NNDC go on to propose that a new Requirement is included within the Development Consent Order (DCO) to address the potential for a perceived impact through the Applicant contributing to various organisations responsible for promoting tourism in North Norfolk with the express purpose of generating tourist footfall and spend.

1.5 Comparable activities

14. Whilst NNDC has identified the effect of coastal erosion on tourism perceptions, a more direct comparison would be other offshore wind farm developments which have been constructed within North Norfolk. A comparison of the Norfolk Vanguard proposal alongside Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm (‘Dudgeon’) and Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm (‘Sheringham Shoal’) (all with landfalls in North Norfolk) is provided in Table 1.

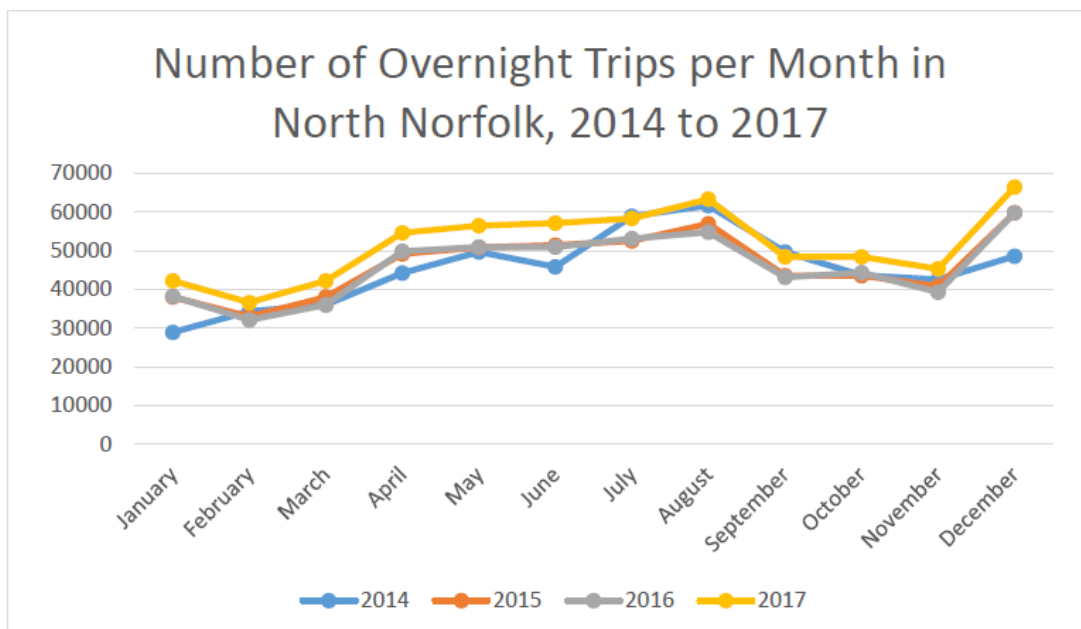
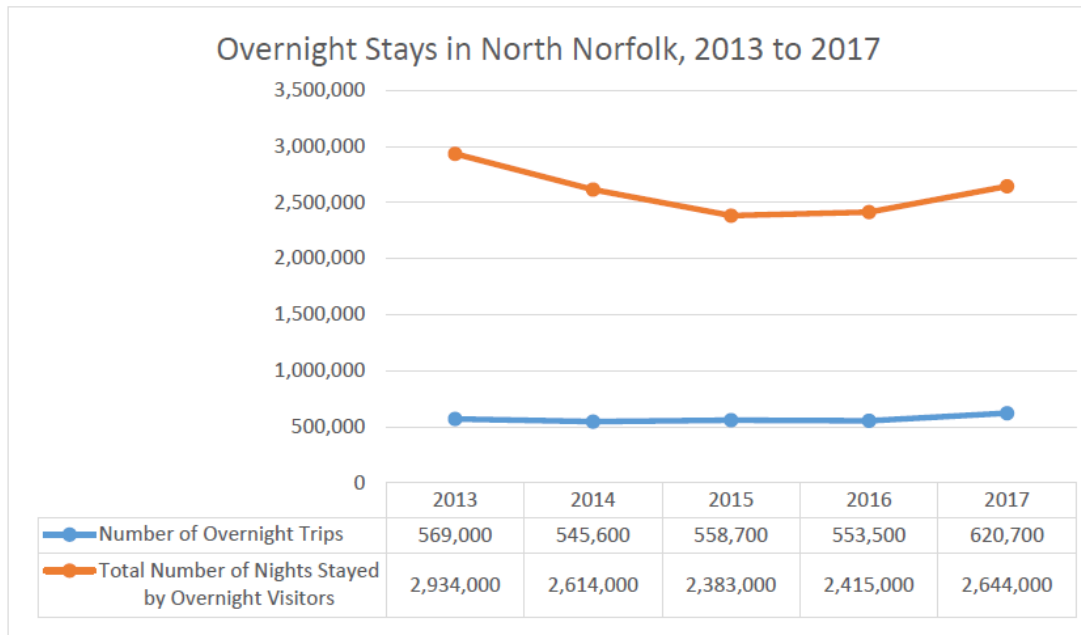
Table 1 Comparison of Relevant Offshore Wind Farm Project within North Norfolk

Parameter	Norfolk Vanguard	Dudgeon	Sheringham Shoal
Onshore construction period	2022/2023	2015/2016	2010/2011
Landfall location	Happisburgh	Weybourne	Weybourne
Landfall construction methodology	HDD from drilling compound minimum 150m inland to minimum -5.5m lowest astronomical tide (LAT) offshore	Horizontal Directional Drill from beach	Horizontal Directional Drill from beach
Landfall construction programme	14-20 weeks	12-16 weeks	2 non-consecutive weeks
Number ducts at landfall	2	Up to 4	2
Temporary restrictions for the public at the beach and coastal path	No	Yes	Yes
Proximity to designated landscapes	Approximately 6km from Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB)	Located within Norfolk Coast AONB 1.5km from Norfolk Heritage Coast	Located within Norfolk Coast AONB 1.5km from Norfolk Heritage Coast
Cable length	60km (19km in North Norfolk)	48km (20km in North Norfolk)	17km (17km in North Norfolk)

Parameter	Norfolk Vanguard	Dudgeon	Sheringham Shoal
Cable corridor working width	45m	40m	20m
Number of cable trenches	2 Norfolk Vanguard 2 Norfolk Boreas (if consented)	Up to 4	1
Cable installation programme	24 months duct installation 24 months cable pull	24 months	4 months
Cable installation construction programme breakdown	Cable duct installation undertaken in 150m sections. Approximately 2 weeks per section from topsoil strip to reinstatement	Cable duct installation undertaken in sections. Approximately 6 months from topsoil strip to reinstatement per section	Cable duct installation undertaken as a single phase and reinstated after 4 months

15. Whilst Norfolk Vanguard represents a larger offshore development, the onshore works are comparable to Dudgeon in terms of the magnitude of the development and main construction periods, and the onshore cable routes (within North Norfolk) of all three projects are similar lengths. However, key differences are that both Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal directly interacted with tourist receptors due to their presence within the Norfolk Coast AONB and their landfall HDDs requiring a drilling compound located on the beach. These beach drills required temporary beach restrictions to the public and an intrusive construction presence for tourists using the beach and coastal path. This is in contrast to Norfolk Vanguard which, as a result of community and stakeholder feedback, has committed to the use of a long HDD at landfall to avoid restrictions or closures to Happisburgh beach and the Norfolk Coast Path and to retain open access to the beach during construction, see Outline Code of Construction Practice (OCoCP) (document 8.1), secured under Requirement 20 of the DCO.
16. In addition, both Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal's onshore construction required large stretches of excavated trench to be left open for up to six months as part of the cable installation methodology. In contrast Norfolk Vanguard has committed to an onshore duct installation that will be undertaken in a sectionalised manner. Each workfront will work on a short length (approximately 150m) each week to excavate, install ducts, backfill and reinstate. On this basis each 150m length would be reinstated within 1-2 weeks of initial topsoil removal.

17. Despite the potential impacts within North Norfolk from the construction works for Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal, there is no evidence that these comparable projects led to any perceived impacts on tourism. NNDC’s evidence submitted at Deadline 6 indicates that during the period of the Dudgeon construction and beyond (2015 to 2017) tourism has in fact steadily grown. Excerpts from NNDC’s Deadline 6 submission are provided below.



Data source: Jarques, Sergi (2018) *Economic Impact of Tourism 2017 Results*, Destination Research (reproduced from NNDC submission at Deadline 6).

18. NNDC consider that the potential for the construction works to be perceived negatively, which may influence where tourists visit, should be mitigated. However, based on the directly comparable Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm, there is no evidential link that the short-term construction presence for an offshore wind farm in North Norfolk, which has been designed with embedded mitigation to avoid tourist features (beach, coastal path, AONB, coastal villages etc) and minimise construction impacts would lead to an actual or perceived impact on tourism. In fact, the Applicant is not aware of any precedent for mitigation on tourism impacts as a result of temporary construction impacts from offshore wind farms.
19. The Applicant is aware that Hornsea Project Three has a landfall and onshore cable route within North Norfolk. The Hornsea Project Three proposal makes landfall at Weybourne (within the Norfolk Coast AONB) and has not committed to a long HDD, i.e. Hornsea Project Three has the flexibility to make landfall directly on the beach and can drill or trench from there, with associated access restrictions to the public at the beach and coastal path, and an increased construction presence at those tourist receptors. Hornsea Project Three allow up to 32 months for their landfall works (in comparison to 20 weeks for Norfolk Vanguard). Furthermore, Hornsea Project Three has retained the flexibility to deliver the project using high voltage alternating current (HVAC) technology. As a result the proposal includes a HVAC booster station – a permanent above ground structure within North Norfolk with an operational footprint of 30,000m² including buildings up to 12.5m tall. HVAC technology also requires more cable systems to be installed resulting in a wider cable corridor along the entire length of the onshore cable route 80m wide compared to 45m for Norfolk Vanguard.
20. Whilst the Applicant notes that NNDC similarly challenges the Hornsea Project Three reported tourism impacts and objects to their option to make landfall on the beach, the Examining Authority found no reason to recommend such a Requirement in its schedule of changes to the draft DCO for Hornsea Project Three.

1.6 Lawfulness of proposed tourism Requirement

21. The Applicant considers that the Requirement as currently drafted does not meet the tests of the NPPF, or the PPG (or therefore EN1) as set out above. In particular:
 - a. *Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition... Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms*
22. It is clear from the above analysis that there are no tourism impacts, whether perceived or actual, for which mitigation is required to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Embedded mitigation has been designed into the project to avoid significant effects on tourism receptors.
 - a. *directly related to the development*
23. The mitigation proposed cannot be said to be directly related to the Project. NNDC has presented no evidence that the construction of offshore wind farms gives rise to perceived tourism impacts. In fact, the Applicant's evidence shows that during and following the onshore construction periods for the last two offshore wind farms with landfalls in North Norfolk, tourism has steadily increased.
 - a. *fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development*
24. The draft Requirement requires the undertaker to make a financial contribution to be apportioned between Tourism Information Centres, Visit North Norfolk, Visit Norfolk and any other relevant organisations supporting and promoting tourism in North Norfolk. However, there is no mechanism, either set in policy or agreed between the Applicant and NNDC which allows the quantum of such a contribution to be calculated (or apportioned between organisations). Without this it cannot be said that such a contribution is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind as it is not known what level of contribution will be sought by NNDC.
25. If NNDC had concerns as to perceived tourism impacts from development, then it might have been expected that a Supplementary Planning Document which set out these concerns and, perhaps even more importantly, which sets out an open and transparent evidence-based mechanism for calculating (and apportioning) such contributions would have been adopted. This is clearly not the case. In any event, as set out above, the Applicant does not consider that any financial contribution is warranted in this case or therefore that any contribution would be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

26. The Applicant is therefore firmly of the view that it would be wholly unreasonable to require mitigation for perceived tourism impacts which have no evidence base, and by way of an unquantified financial payment with no agreed or adopted mechanism for its calculation post consent.

1.7 Opportunities outside of the DCO process

27. The Applicant has discussed how, separate to and outside of the DCO process, NNDC may wish to engage in the Applicant's community benefit proposals to support local initiatives related to tourism and has held constructive meetings with NNDC related to this.
28. Possible areas of work which have already been discussed by the Applicant and a relevant officer of NNDC include:
- Collaborating on narrating the story of the dynamic history of the Norfolk coast, for example as part of NNDC's Deep History Coast Project;
 - A potential advertising campaign which aligns NNDC's progressive attitude toward climate crises and human adaptation / mitigation with the Applicant's own journey towards enabling fossil free living within one generation;
 - In kind support of climate adaptation plans relating to the primary tourism facility, managed by Happisburgh Parish Council – the beach car park.
29. In addition there have been preliminary discussions, which the Applicant would like to follow-up and expand upon, at an appropriate time post-consent relating to ensuring that workers involved in construction activities for Norfolk Vanguard can be appropriately accommodated by local hospitality businesses, and procure other services, such as for example catering, from local companies interested in becoming part of the local supply chain, representing a potential benefit to local businesses
30. However, the Applicant is not progressing these on the basis of any perceived tourism impacts, but as part of wider ongoing community benefit opportunities that sit outside of the DCO process.

1.8 Conclusion

31. Potential tourism impacts associated with the construction and operation of Norfolk Vanguard were considered in full within Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 30 Tourism and Recreation submitted in June 2018 (DCO document 6.1.30).
32. Embedded mitigation measures have been committed to by Norfolk Vanguard to minimise potential impacts to tourism receptors, including: avoiding the Norfolk Coast AONB and the Norfolk Broads National Park; avoiding coastal towns and villages where possible; use of long HDD at the landfall; onshore duct installation undertaken in a sectionalised manner; and a commitment that the beach car park at Happisburgh will not be used by the Project construction team.
33. Residual impacts to tourism receptors were assessed as no greater than **minor adverse** significance, i.e. not significant in EIA terms, with impacts considered temporary in nature and fully reversible.
34. NNDC consider that there is the potential for the construction works to be perceived negatively which should be mitigated. However, based on other comparable offshore wind farm developments in North Norfolk (Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm and Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm) there is no evidential link that the short-term construction presence for an offshore wind farm in North Norfolk would lead to an actual or perceived impact on tourism. In fact, the Applicant is not aware of any precedent for mitigation on tourism impacts as a result of temporary construction impacts from offshore wind farms.
35. Further to this Hornsea Project Three proposes to construct and operate an offshore wind farm that will require a landfall and onshore cable route within North Norfolk. In contrast to Norfolk Vanguard, the Hornsea Three proposal includes a landfall within the Norfolk Coast AONB; the potential for HDD works to take place on the beach with closures to the beach and coastal path; the inclusion of a permanent above ground booster station in North Norfolk covering 30,000m², and an 80m wide cable corridor. However, the Examining Authority found no reason to recommend a Requirement for Hornsea Project Three to mitigate for perceived impacts to tourism.

36. The NPPF 2019 outlines that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. This is reflected within paragraph 4.1.7 of EN1, which also states that the decision maker should take into account the Planning Practice Guidance which replaced Circular 11/95 ("The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions"). Based on the findings of the tourism impact assessment and the evidence of comparable projects in North Norfolk which show there is no perceived tourism impact which arises from the construction of offshore wind farms, the Applicant is firmly of the view that the suggested tourism Requirement does not meet these tests and that is not necessary and not relevant to the development. Further, it would be wholly unreasonable and lack precision to require mitigation by way of an unquantified financial payment with no agreed or adopted mechanism for its calculation post consent.