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Cc: info@norfolkboreas.co.uk; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Examination and consents for Norfolk Boreas and Norfolk Vanguard
Date: 18 April 2020 18:01:48

To

18th April 2020

- BEIS
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Dear Sirs,

Re: Examination and consents for Norfolk Boreas and Norfolk Vanguard

Context

I have become aware that a small number of parties are requesting a delay to the Norfolk Boreas NSIP examination process. Through the planning process, Vattenfall have regularly engaged with the regulators, planning authorities, the local community and industry in the public domain since October 2016. I have attended many of the public consultations and supply chain meetings. I believe that all parties have had ample time to reflect on the issues, feed into the project design, and see that their comments have been properly discussed and where appropriate changes made.

A delay to the examination process for Norfolk Boreas (or indeed any further delay for the Norfolk Vanguard DCO decision) would likely mean Norfolk projects may not be ready to bid for the Government's support mechanism in 2021, which provides a pipeline of opportunity detailed in the [Offshore Wind Sector Deal](#). This pipeline of projects is vital to the sustainability of the underlying UK supply chain which was originally intended to deliver 30GW of Offshore Wind by 2030.

Subsequently, a 40GW target, was announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in his successful general election campaign in December 2019, increasing the collective challenges for all. A helpful review by SSE, published 15/04/20 is here [Charting a path to 40 GW of Offshore Wind needs a plan](#)

However, it is vital that the existing projects which are well advanced, having followed diligent and thorough consultation steps should not be disrupted. These will sustain, strengthen, and build the supply chain, capacity and skills base required. Moving forward and aligned with the anticipated offshore wind projects resulting from the Crown Estate's Round 4 leasing, all

reasonable steps to consider a new offshore grid network off the east coast, should start now so that if appropriate and feasible, it would be designed to be in place to link new future projects expected to be delivered towards the back end of the 2020s.

Personal Statement

I am making my personal representation underpinned by the following industry experience:

- Founder and CEO from 2001 to 2012 of [EEEGR](#), the East of England Energy Group
- Chair of OWIG, [Offshore Wind Industry Group](#), Supply Chain Focus in Scotland, 2017-18,
- Trustee and longest serving Board Member of [Petans](#) (17 years)
- Lead for the [Coastal Energy Internship Programme](#)

I do not intend to detail here the background key facts about the projects which are all available in the public domain, but can confirm from my personal experience that Vattenfall appear fully committed to working collaboratively to deliver 60% UK content by 2030. I have attended and participated in many of the events and consultations and indeed have spoken at several with various industry and skills development hats on. Most recently I contributed to this workshop <http://bit.ly/SupplyReport20> ; here is a [link to full report](#). And so, I have no hesitation in clearly stating that I have a vested interest as a member of the local energy supply chain through its various companies, in seeing these excellent projects proceed.

What is perhaps not so clear is that we all, as a country, through local communities and as individuals, have a vested interest in these projects. Sadly, the UK is “locked down” due to the catastrophic challenges brought about by the global and national response to Covid-19. Whilst I draw no specific parallels, the impact of delay has been brought into harsh and sharp focus. Further, acknowledging the heroic efforts of many through the NHS and key workers making up a skeleton supply chain, from drivers, through warehouse, and farmers to check outs work against all odds, it is often forgotten that none of this response could be delivered without a secure, reliable energy system, often just taken for granted. And within that, the increasingly vital role of electricity which powers all from ventilators, monitors and lighting, through communications, banking and commerce.

In December 2019, momentum for Offshore Wind was high and the government recognised that Energy Transition was deliverable against timelines and project costs which just 5 years ago would not have even been contemplated. Indeed, the target for delivery was raised from 30GW to 40GW. The previous 12 months had also brought the importance of the climate into everyone’s regular conversation. The term “Climate Emergency” was used with increasing frequency. Without making any political statement; “Brexit got done”. And unseen by most of the public, as a hugely important consequence, the need to ensure that as a nation we had security of supply for our energy systems.

The outcome of the challenges ahead and ability for business to exit from the lockdown and begin to trade again will very significant. The energy supply chain will be vital to this process, as will investor confidence. Projects such as Vanguard and Boreas will be critical to the workflow for communities as it builds the clean green energy system for the future. Vital in reducing emissions whilst providing security of indigenous supply.

The government is faced with unprecedented challenges to maintain the economic well-being for the country. I was reminded of a leader article which I wrote for the Eastern Daily Press, early

in 2010, following on the heels of the financial crash in 2008, as EEEGR prepared for our Supply Chain Conference “A Sea of Opportunity”. Interestingly, this title was adopted by OWIC, for their Offshore Wind Sector Deal submission.

In summary, I observed the whilst we can immediately print money, as in Quantitative Easing, (and now furlough and various Covid-19 support mechanisms), we cannot create Quantitative Energy, which has a long planning timeline, leading into delivery through a skilled and hopefully local supply chain, during construction, and then onto a 25-30 year operational life. As we move forward and Planning Inspectors consider challenges and objections tabled against these projects, it is my sincere hope that wisdom prevails and the strategic importance of the decisions they make, impacting both the economy and security of supply, in these troubled times are set in the appropriate context. We will all need to work together in harmony to energise the future.

If we are to move forward to deliver a secure, affordable, reliable lower carbon economy, providing the certainty required for a sustainable and skilled supply chain, whilst increasing green electricity through the process of Energy Transition, **this is not the time for prevarication or delay.**

John Best

