

Norfolk Boreas Deadline 13 submission
Helen & Chris Monk – IP 2022628

This is an expanded version of the oral submission made on 16th July, with additional notes following the meeting with Vattenfall on 21st July.

We thank the Inspectors and the Case Team for organising the OFHs.

This individual submission is from the perspective of living in the centre of the High St pinch point. During the hearings on both 2nd and 16th July, while working from the bedroom with the window ajar, you may have heard traffic noise in the background; here it was necessary to use earpieces to be able to hear proceedings over that noise.

If these schemes go ahead the forecast is for over 200 additional worker vehicles passing early in the morning, for a 7 o'clock start, returning after 1900 as they finish their working day. Please try to imagine that.

It's not unreasonable to expect to be able to open your window but that will be impossible. We fear the consequences for both physical and mental health of residents, especially in the post Covid world where more people are working and schooling from home.

Can we develop some points made in the Oulton OFH on 14th July. In their passionate statement the residents of the Old Railway Gatehouse talked about the inadequate "mitigation" offered to them; limited double glazing and an acoustic wall. It was mentioned that this property sits at a distance of 4 metres from the road.

Councillor Peck pointed out that some properties in Cawston were nearer than that, and we have now measured for our property – the distance from our single glazed, wooden, window to the road is ... **2.20 metres**.

There have been no suggestions of any "mitigation" for residents in Cawston at all. The ExA asked what sort of mitigation we might suggest. We think this applies to both the village as a whole and to individual residents who are most affected. In a small village like Cawston there are many infrastructure projects which would improve residents' quality of life but struggle for funding; the Parish Council could provide a list.

For the worst affected residents one might also consider a fund to cover structural surveys – with a commitment to pay for any repairs deemed necessary as a result of the increased traffic, high quality and sympathetic acoustic glazing to doors and windows, and help with external maintenance like window cleaning, exterior painting and minor repairs, which will be needed more often.

If the costs were shared by the 3 current schemes (with a 4th in the offing), this would cost relatively little and gain a lot of goodwill.

The ExA asked whether Hornsea 3 had undertaken any structural surveys; we are not aware of anything like that.

Councillor Peck also talked about support, recognising the impact on High Street businesses and loss of revenue which may force them to close. This point has been flagged up from the start of the process.

Another issue that has been mentioned by several residents here is the worry that emergency vehicle response times may be delayed; this is especially relevant at the moment when the care home in the village is being used for Covid patients.

The ExA asked if we could provide more detail on this and for the location of the care home. We have approached the local ambulance and fire services for their comments and will report them once received. The care home is located on Paul Engelhard Way, NR10 4FB, off Chapel Street near the winery.

Whether or not we agree with his judgement, the Secretary of State has decided to approve the Norfolk Vanguard application, and is “minded to approve” Hornsea 3, despite recommendations from both ExAs that they should be rejected.

He decided that (*this is an edited quote from para 3.4 of his letter – our emphasis*)

*3.4 – “... the proposed Development would have a number of adverse impacts during its construction and operation particularly in relation to traffic impacts at Cawston (when considered with the potential impacts of any traffic that might be generated by the proposed Hornsea Project Three offshore wind farm) but that **the overall benefits of the proposed Development outweighed the harm.**”*

This may sound acceptable at a metropolitan distance but it does not play well if you are the people suffering the harm, with no attempt being made to alleviate the damage. Some people are describing Cawston as “collateral damage” in the Applicants drive for profit; we prefer the phrase “concentrated losers”.

The SoS letter is the first time it has been acknowledged that these proposals will cause significant harm in individual communities, after years of denial by the Applicants with their self-serving assessments of “no impact” or “minor” or “negligible” outcomes.

We ask that they live up to the claims they repeatedly make about respecting local communities, listening to consultations, etc, and recognise that “option 2” – which was their suggestion – should be adopted, since a “technically possible” highway intervention scheme will cause so much harm.

After making the above points at the OFH we hoped for a positive response from the Applicant at the meeting the following week. These hopes were dashed. It was clear that there was no intention to make any movement towards improving the situation in Cawston. CPC will give a fuller account but on the specific points raised above we add these comments:-

- VF made it clear that Options 2, 3 & 4 were never real alternatives from their point of view, which begs the question of why they raised them in the first place. They also explained the formal position about the Order limits; we understand this point but do not accept that an alternative way forward could not be developed if there was a will to do so among the key players, including Government.
- In discussing mitigation measures VF stated that the Old Railway Gatehouse proposals were optional and made by Orsted Hornsea 3. We got the impression that Vattenfall would not have been so generous. They suggested that the same situation did not apply in Cawston, repeating the line of “no significant impact”, despite the Secretary of State’s comments.
- A quote from the notes of the meeting, which we find breath taking in its complacency, is *“For relatively brief periods of time you may feel that you are being imposed upon, because you live right next to a major road in NorfolkThe schemes aren’t coming through your village for several years, the impacts will be for weeks or months at a time, rather than continually over years...”*.
 - There is no way that any rational assessment would call the B1145 a major road; along its length there are pinch points, sharp and dangerous bends like those at Salle Beck and dangerous junctions like the crossroads in the centre of Reepham.
 - We have lived here for 14 years and seen traffic levels increase considerably. Wind farm traffic will make another step change in the levels and mix of traffic.
 - Cumulatively we are facing up to 11 years of disruption over three or four schemes; some are also suggesting building in two phases. Each one will send high volumes of traffic through Cawston for many months; this is hardly the “relatively brief” disruption suggested.

While Hornsea 3, Vanguard and Boreas are committed to applying the final traffic scheme for Cawston, the present HIS was only published, reluctantly, during the course of the Boreas examination and is now being examined for the first time. It has not “evolved” as VF suggest; rather it looks like a desperate attempt to find something that NCC would accept as “technically possible” after the shortcomings of the earlier schemes were exposed. The flaws in this one are still emerging.

The Vanguard decision does not mean that Boreas should automatically be waved through. Cumulative impacts continue to accumulate scheme on scheme. There are still serious issues to be resolved.

Helen & Chris Monk
Cawston 28/7/20