

This representation responds to the Secretary of State's Norfolk Boreas consultation letter of 22nd September 2021 and the clarification issued 24th September 2021.

We urge the Secretary of State to defer their decision on the Boreas offshore wind farm until the completion of the Government's urgent offshore transmission network review. We are not requesting the offshore windfarm to not be developed, we are merely pointing out that there are much more efficient and environmentally friendly ways of implementing offshore wind within East Anglia, such as the offshore transmission network. This solution has been repeatedly brought to your attention over the course of the last few years in the DCO applications of Vanguard and Boreas. This network is currently being reviewed by the Government with the national grid ESO having recently issued an open letter confirming that projects that are not currently in contract are illegible for changes to their group connections.

We respectfully ask that the Secretary of State ensure that the environmental best option of connection through an OTN is selected for the Boreas DCO through acceleration of the regulation changes and delay to the Boreas DCO approval unless the Applicant selects the pathfinder route.

As local farmers to the Dudgeon Windfarm substation, we have experienced first-hand the damaging effects of onshore cabling to the land and local, natural environment. The OTN delivers a much more sustainable solution by reducing the amount of onshore cabling. It is worth highlighting that the proposed trench sizes for Boreas and Vanguard are five times the width of those used for the Dudgeon substation, so the potential environmental impact could, therefore, be fivefold if the offshore transmission network is not put in place and utilised.

At the beginning of October 2021, five years on from the installation of the cables, work is still being carried out to rectify the damage caused to the land during the cabling work of five years ago. This damage has had a continued detrimental effect on food produce in the area. The applicant cannot ignore or argue against the clear, evident damage which is still in place to this day.

Additionally, as local residents, we are fearful that the cumulative impacts of the introduction of Vanguard and Boreas are not acceptable. Norfolk Vanguard's DCO was quashed in high court through a judicial review on the basis of an incompetent assessment of lack of cumulative impact. We feel these cumulative impacts have still not been competently assessed for Boreas and Vanguard, with the impacts themselves far outweighing the potential benefits. The site selection for both Boreas and Vanguard, were concluded and decided upon with a commercial bias rather than the environmental impacts being considered as the weighting factors that they should have been. We strongly believe that the Boreas decision cannot be made until the redetermination of the Vanguard application has been completed and all cumulative impacts fully considered.

In conclusion, to allow individual projects to carve up the countryside would be unjust and unreasonable. The Applicant and the EXA must consider the OTN as the only viable alternative to ensure the environment and countryside is protected and safeguarded.