

The Proposed Development is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The principal issues to be addressed are therefore national as well as local.

Nationally significant infrastructure in this context should be taken to include all four of the offshore wind farm projects now planning to connect to the onshore transmission grid in Norfolk with the aim of reducing emissions by supplying demand – not in Norfolk, but in London and the south east – together with the available onward grid transmission capacity which they will necessarily share.

The ExA will therefore be unable to determine the planning balance (i.e. the need, or the benefit of the proposed development weighed against its negative impacts) without a soundly based estimate of the available onward transmission capacity; expected energy curtailment due to the lack of such capacity; and the consequential ability of the Proposed Development to achieve its stated aims. These outcomes are critically determined by the allocation of the grid connection point, the onshore grid capacity, and any proposed reinforcements.

In this context, currently proposed onshore grid reinforcement projects, such as East Anglia Green, and the recently proposed addition of industrial scale battery storage at the Norwich Main substation, should be seen as operationally linked and should be considered as associated development.

These considerations appear to fall within the scope of Issue Specific Hearings 1 and 2. Assuming that the matter is not pre-determined, the outcome of these hearings could, in principle, require a major change to the draft Examination Timetable issued by the ExA.