

Oulton Parish Council Representation

Open Floor Hearing 1

17th January 2023 Blackfriars Hall Norwich.

Oulton Parish Council (OPC) have actively participated in three offshore wind farm projects. We have attended Hearings and submitted written responses as and when information was requested.

Parish Councillors are volunteers, we have had to become well informed over these past years and we certainly do not take on these examinations lightly. We make sure we provide reasoned arguments, detailed and relevant information.

However, project by project we are seeing more complex cumulative issues. It is fair to say we are all a little battle weary.

Damage limitation has been our eventual remit for our communities. There has to come a point where burdening the same areas with multiple infrastructure projects, breaks communities and with it its volunteers.

Yet here we are again with the **Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Project**.

Equinor were keen to point out, that they are going to share a cable route and infrastructure, therefore they claim it fits in with the coordinated approach as part of the Offshore Transmission Network (OTN).

This project however will still in effect be another point to point construction. This goes against the conclusions from the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR), which stated that a more coordinated offshore approach to the Grid would lessen the impact from point to point projects on local communities onshore.

It should be noted that East Anglia was scoped out of the OTNR, why?

Oulton is currently about to be impacted this year by **Hornsea Three's Main Construction Compound**, with its associated traffic, for the entire duration of the cable route construction.

This will be Followed later in the year by **Norfolk Vanguard & Boreas**, with their onshore cable route and cable logistics area.

Oulton also has a consented solar farm, which is about to be constructed on the same site where Sheringham and Dudgeon propose to run their cable route.

For one property, *cumulative impacts* will be a daily occurrence over several years.

They have yet to see whether mitigations carried out to lessen the impact of 214 daily HGVs from consented projects will be adequate, or whether additional traffic and construction from Sheringham and Dudgeon will have further impacts.

For another property the cable route proposed for Sheringham and Dudgeon will run beside their property, along with the impact of proposed Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) going under the solar farm next to their property, at a depth yet to be agreed, along with the only access to their property crossed by a cable route.

These scenarios are replicated across Norfolk from this project and other already consented projects.

Communities will experience localised delays on the road network from cumulative traffic over several years.

I question then, the implications of multiple projects on agricultural land take and disruption from these projects on agri-businesses and other commercial enterprises.

The supply chain's ability to deliver to multiple projects and the environmental impact of supplying the materials needed.

As well as the cumulative impact from large volumes of traffic from this project and consented projects, on local communities.

Consented offshore wind projects will be generating power which will go into a grid which has not been upgraded, and cannot use all of its generated capacity.

On very windy days projects will be asked to stop generating, because of overcapacity, and will receive ¹constraint payments.

These payments are paid for by the UK energy consumer.

This is the 'Cart before the horse' scenario.

National Grid (NG) are proposing to upgrade the grid with the East Anglia Green (EAG) project, but that project has yet to be examined or determined. Given the proposed output from consented projects, being greater than the current NG capacity, then it would appear to conveniently predict the final outcome for EAG. I would also question the reasoning behind bringing power 60km onshore and then moving that power out of Norfolk by 180km of pylons to London.

Cumulative impact will need to feature heavily in this examination.

Susan Mather
Chair Oulton Parish Council

¹ Constraint payments- ref: 'Mission Zero, Independent Review of Net Zero' by Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP.....

The Review heard from potential investors in renewables projects who are constrained by an inability to connect to the network at both transmission and distribution levels. It is essential that electricity network capacity keeps pace with renewable generation ambition otherwise we will lose the confidence of investors, and consumers will be stuck paying costs of constraint management for years to come. UK consumers are already paying too much to constrain wind output. National Grid ESO modelling has estimated that constraint costs could increase from around £500 million per year in 2021 to a peak of between £1-2.5 billion per year in the mid-late 2020s, before falling away at the end of the decade when new major transmission investments are assumed to come online. A policy and regulatory framework that continues a 'business as usual' approach will not be able to deliver the step change foreseen to meet our net zero ambitions. Government analysis suggests that overall electricity demand could increase from its current level of 330 TWh per annum to between 450-500 TWh by 2035 and between 570-770 TWh by 2050. **In order to secure investment in transition and development of the electricity network, the Government and Ofgem must move faster, avoiding a piecemeal project-by-project approach and towards a wider programmatic framework.**