



## **Examination into Equinor's Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects (Generating Stations)**

### **Royal Mail response to the Examining Authority at Deadline 1 – 20 February 2023**

#### **Background**

Royal Mail has previously submitted representations on this scheme during the following stages:

- ES Scoping in February 2020;
- Section 42 consultation in June 2021;
- Supplementary statutory consultation in January 2022; and
- Supplementary Section 42 consultation in February 2022.

Under section 35 of the Postal Services Act 2011, Royal Mail has been designated by Ofcom as a provider of the Universal Postal Service. Royal Mail is the only such provider in the United Kingdom. The Act provides that Ofcom's primary regulatory duty is to secure the provision of the Universal Postal Service. Ofcom discharges this duty by imposing regulatory conditions on Royal Mail, requiring it to provide the Universal Postal Service.

Royal Mail is under some of the highest specification performance obligations for quality of service in Europe. Its performance of the Universal Service Provider obligations is in the public interest and this should not be affected detrimentally by any statutorily authorised project.

The Government imposes financial penalties on Royal Mail if its Universal Service Obligation service delivery targets are not met. These penalties relate to time targets for:

- collections,
- clearance through plant, and
- delivery.

Royal Mail's postal sorting and delivery operations rely heavily on road communications. Royal Mail's ability to provide efficient mail collection, sorting and delivery to the public is sensitive to changes in the capacity of the highway network.

Royal Mail is a major road user nationally. Disruption to the highway network and traffic delays can have direct consequences on Royal Mail's operations, its ability to meet the Universal Service Obligation and comply with the regulatory regime for postal services thereby presenting a significant risk to Royal Mail's business.

Any periods of road disruption / closure, night or day, on or to the roads immediately connected to these developments or the surrounding highway network will have the potential to impact operations and may consequently disrupt Royal Mail's ability to meet its Universal Obligation service delivery targets.



Royal Mail has 16 operational facilities within 12 miles of the proposed DCO boundary.

- Norwich Vehicle Operation Centre, NR4 6DQ;
- Norwich Vehicle Parking, NR2 4HJ;
- Bowthorpe Delivery Office, NR5 9PD;
- Norwich Mail Centre, NR1 1AA;
- Framingham Vehicle Parking, NR14 7AB;
- Norwich Delivery Office, NR7 8ZZ;
- Wymondham Delivery Office, NR18 0AA;
- Blofield Vehicle Parking, NR13 4AA;
- Wroxham Vehicle Parking, NR12 8AJ;
- Bowthorpe Vehicle Parking, NR12 7HL;
- North Walsham Delivery Office, NR28 9AA;
- North WALSHAM Vehicle Parking, NR28 9DE;
- Stalham Vehicle Parking, NR12 9AH;
- Cromer Delivery Office, NR27 9AA;
- Cromer Church Street Vehicle Parking, NR27 9HH; and
- Norwich Vehicle Operation Centre, NR4 6DQ.

#### Update on Royal Mail's position as at February 2023

Royal Mail does not wish to stop or delay the proposed works from occurring. However, Royal Mail does wish to ensure the protection of its future ability to provide an efficient mail sorting and delivering service to the public from and to the above identified operational facilities in accordance with its statutory obligations.

Royal Mail has reviewed the draft DCO and Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan ("CTMP"), both published in October 2022. Within both documents, no specific reference to Royal Mail or postal services have been identified.

In order to protect Royal Mail's position, it is requested that wording is added to the future Construction Transport Management Plan ("CTMP") to secure the following mitigations:

1. the CTMP includes specific requirements that during the construction phase Royal Mail is notified by Equinor or its contractors at least one month in advance on any proposed road closures / diversions / alternative access arrangements, hours of working;
2. where road closures / diversions are proposed, Equinor or its contractors liaise with Royal Mail at least one month in advance to identify and make available alternative highway routes for operational use, where possible; and
3. the CTMP includes a mechanism that informs Royal Mail about works affecting the local highways network (with particular regard to Royal Mail's distribution facilities near the proposed works, as identified above).



A good example of potential wording for Equinor to consider for inclusion in this scheme's OCTMP / CTMP is provided in the CTMP for Highways England's A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme:

*"2.8.1 Advanced notifications of programmed diversions and closures will be issued to major road users in the vicinity of the scheme including Royal Mail. This will include providing major road users with not less than 7 working days' notice of any road closures, diversions or alternative access arrangements that may affect travel on those routes and (if available) in all cases the agreed hours of working. This will form part of a wider communications plan associated with the scheme. The method of communication will be agreed as part of the final Construction Traffic Management Plan. Highways England will consult with Royal Mail on the content of the final Construction Traffic Management Plan."*

Any queries or information requests arising from this update statement by Royal Mail should be directed to:

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Please can you confirm receipt of this consultation response by Royal Mail.