

OPEN FLOOR HEARING – 29th MARCH 2023

Norfolk Parishes Movement for an OTN

Madam Chair, I represent the Norfolk Parishes Movement for an Offshore Transmission Network (OTN). I would like to make three points:

1. The Attlebridge Compound

With regard to the Attlebridge construction compound, the Applicant has put forward its proposals in the event that SEP and DEP are constructed sequentially. Sequential construction could mean a delay of several years between completion of the first project and the need to re-use the Attlebridge compound, following the start of the second project. Also, there could be an even longer gap between uses of the site should the Applicant decide to sell off its consent for the second project to another company or consortium. There is the further possibility that the second project never gets constructed at all, should the consortium decide not to proceed for whatever reason.

Faced with these possibilities, it seems unreasonable that the unrestored Attlebridge compound is left as a blot on the landscape for an uncertain period which may extend over such a long period. If the Applicant insists on building these projects sequentially, we consider that they should be required to restore the Attlebridge compound, with appropriate landscaping and planting, etc., **immediately after** the completion of construction of the first project and this should be included in the draft DCO.

2. The Compensation Fund

We note that the Applicant has yet to commit to any sort of community fund. We believe, however, that the first responsibility of the Applicant is to ensure there is full and fair compensation for the people who will be directly impacted by the construction phases of SEP and DEP. This would include affected landowners, businesses, Parish Councils and residents. We ask the ExA to make this a requirement of any approval that is given for these projects.

A community fund of the sort anticipated by Norfolk County Council should be a secondary consideration. Control of a community fund by Norfolk County Council to address its own internal objectives would not be something that we can support.

3. Cumulative Impacts

My final point is the impact of SEP and DEP and, in particular, the cumulative impacts in combination with the other NSIPs being initiated in Norfolk. This seems to us to have been given scant regards by the Applicant. I emphasise that these projects could, if consented, be the sixth or seventh time that certain communities will face a cable path being dug up in their immediate locality. The construction phase of all these projects could last well over a decade and there is no guarantee that further cable paths for new offshore windfarms or interconnectors will not be proposed in future.

I believe there are others in the hall tonight who will speak about the cumulative impacts of these projects so I will not linger further on them. I just want to highlight, however, that the electricity generated by SEP and DEP is not needed in Norfolk and will have nowhere to go once Orsted Hornsea Three and Vattenfall Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas are constructed. The Applicant has failed in its responsibility to meet its obligation under NPS EN-1, 4.9.1: "it is for the applicant to ensure that there

will be necessary...capacity...to accommodate the electricity generated”; namely, to ensure there is sufficient onward capacity within the onshore transmission grid. The East Anglia Green Energy Enablement Project proposed by National Grid is a direct consequence of the radially connected offshore windfarms but the Applicant fails to acknowledge this and yet again it is trying to duck out of its responsibilities. It is left for the people of Norfolk to suffer from the disruption while the whole country will suffer higher energy prices because of curtailment and constraint payments. The correct solution, as our campaign has consistently pointed out, is not to persist with these radial connections and to rapidly deploy a fully integrated OTN. We sincerely hope the ExA will take note of our earlier Written Representation on this matter.

We have attended each of the Open Floor Hearings and Issue Specific Hearings. It has felt at times that the representations from the Norfolk Parishes Movement for an OTN have been swamped by the massed ranks of lawyers, department specialists, experts and consultants which the Applicant has brought in to make its case. Today we have a greater representation from the people and communities affected by this DCO application but – it is still, Madam Chair, the tip of the iceberg. I ask you to imagine for a moment that all the seats in this hall are taken up by the leaders of the 96 Norfolk Parish Councils. And that standing around at the back and sides are the hundreds of Parish Councillors. And then again outside, surrounding this entire hall, many rows deep, are the **thousands** of people in Norfolk who may or may not be represented by the 96 parishes but who all share our concerns. These are the people whose lives will be impacted. These are the people who will suffer if the Traffic Management Plans and the Construction Management Plans are wrong. These are the people who will suffer if all the assertions made by the applicant are incorrect because they have been made based solely on precedent or on poor quality data or on speculation. These are the people who will “pick up the tab”. It is **these** people, Madam Chair who are relying on your Examination panel to redress the apparent imbalance of these hearings and to weigh up carefully their objections in the planning balance.

Thank you.