

WIND FARM UPDATE

Monday 6th September 2021

1. Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal extensions

Mulbarton Parish Council has proposed that the substations for these projects should be built in the now disused gravel pit at Mangreen, which has direct HGV access onto the A140. There has been no reply from Equinor, and the formal statutory consultation period for this project has closed.

2. Cumulative impacts

National Grid is now proposing the following new developments at the Dunston Woods site:

- Hornsea Three substations

- Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal extension substations

- UK-Denmark interconnector substation

- New overhead pylon route to London

If all these projects go ahead, there would be a 50-acre industrial development alongside the B1113, constructed over a period of about 15 years. The pictures overleaf show what it could look like.

The developers of the Hornsea Three wind farm did not disclose the impacts of all these projects to the Planning Inspectorate. National Grid did not take part in the Hornsea Three planning enquiry.

3. Offshore transmission

The alternative is to use the original plan of offshore transmission from the wind farm projects to major brownfield sites, such as disused power stations at Bradwell in Essex, and the Isle of Grain in Kent. Earlier studies carried out by National Grid have shown this would be the cheapest option.

Mulbarton Parish Council has made further representations to the government proposing that only the offshore part of the Hornsea Three project should be built now, with a fresh planning process for all of the onshore work, taking into account the cumulative impact of all the projects being planned.

This would also cover the Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas wind farms and other projects in Suffolk.

4. Ofgem consultation

Ofgem, the industry regulator, is holding a consultation on what it thinks the conclusions should be from the government's urgent review of offshore transmission. These conclusions are based on the idea of using fewer cables to feed even bigger substations, coming ashore at 'energy hubs' in areas like East Anglia. National Grid has identified Dunston Woods as one of the sites, because Hornsea Three has already been approved. It will then take ten years to build the new pylon route to London.

National Grid's earlier work shows this is the worst option for meeting climate change targets.

The main reasoning behind the idea is that, because all the projects are being built separately, there is no more room left to bring cables ashore for any future projects. Ofgem, as the industry regulator, is responsible for this problem, which was foreseen ten years ago. It was one of the main reasons for planning offshore transmission, instead of allowing the use of so many different landing points.

Mulbarton Parish Council is preparing an urgent response to the Ofgem consultation, which closes on 8th September. Other parish councils and community groups in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex will also be submitting responses.