

WIND FARM UPDATE

Monday 10th January 2022

1. Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal extensions

An online briefing event for town and parish councils took place on Wednesday 8th December from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. Several parish councils took part, some for the first time. Many questions were raised but very few were answered. There is no clear timetable for any further information.

The main concern now is the proposed use of the B1113 for construction traffic to gain access to the cable route during cable laying operations over a period of up to two years, and the potential for displaced traffic on other local roads such as Catbridge Lane. This may include a four week road closure and a large scale traffic diversion. If the project is built in two stages, this will happen twice.

2. Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas

On Friday 10th December 2021 the Secretary of State approved the development consent order for the Norfolk Boreas offshore wind farm. The Planning Inspectorate's report was also released for the first time and showed the Examining Authority had recommended refusal. This is the third time the Secretary of State has set aside the recommendations of the Planning Inspectorate. The six week period allowed for the start of another judicial review ends on Friday 21st January 2022. There is no clear timetable for Norfolk Vanguard, which does not currently have development consent.

3. East Anglia One North and Two

The deadline for a decision for these two wind farms off the coast of Suffolk, which lie within the same zone as Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas, has been delayed until Thursday 31st March 2022.

4. Hornsea Three

The Secretary of State is consulting on the offshore and coastal environmental impacts of the Hornsea Three project until Friday 21st January. Meanwhile, the details of the onshore substation and proposed battery storage are now with South Norfolk Council for approval. In November 2021 South Norfolk Council decided that a full environmental impact assessment is required for the battery storage and this has been submitted. In total, there are seven planning application references for the Hornsea Three project. These are listed overleaf with their expected decision dates. There is no new information available about the proposed UK-Denmark interconnector substation.

5. New pylon route to London

The onshore transmission grid upgrades through Suffolk (Bramford to Twinstead) have entered the formal planning process. In the absence of an efficient offshore ring main, these upgrades and the associated battery storage would be required to handle the power from wind farms connecting in Norfolk. South Norfolk Council has confirmed that National Grid has recently started the planning application process for the Norfolk section of the proposed new overhead pylon route to London.

6. Offshore Transmission Network Review

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is responsible for the operation of the planning system including large infrastructure projects such as offshore wind farms, and is now conducting its own review of potential changes to the system. This seems to be partly a result of the Norfolk Vanguard judicial review. Mulbarton Parish Council and several other groups responded to an online consultation for this review on 17th December. This was the fourth national consultation by a government department within a period of three months covering essentially the same ground.

Hornsea Three construction traffic

Disruption due to construction of the onshore substation and work along the onshore cable route would continue for two to three years if the project is built in a single phase, or up to six years if it is built in two phases. There could also be a gap of two to three years between the two phases.

In earlier documentation the applicant stated that all crossings of the public highway would use HDD (Horizontal Direct Drilling – a method of tunnelling under the road). If this still applies, then there would be no planned long term road closures or diversions of the B1113. Construction traffic would however use the B1113 for access to the cable route haul road for a period of up to six years.

The combined effect is expected to be a doubling of heavy goods vehicle traffic on the B1113 for up to six years and displacement of local traffic onto other roads.¹ A total of 430m of roadside hedgerows would be removed to allow abnormal loads to access the substation construction site.

Hornsea Three onshore substation

There are seven planning applications relating to Hornsea Three, and more are expected. These will follow Part 3 of the Development Consent Order shown on the Hornsea Three project page of the Planning Inspectorate website (EN010080-003266, pages 39-45, 31st December 2020).²

Part 3 of the development consent order requires the applicant to submit an explanation of the choice of HVDC or HVAC transmission for each phase of the project, and to obtain in advance the approval of South Norfolk Council for the details of the onshore substation including the phases of construction, the layout, scale, proposed finished ground levels, external appearance and materials, hard surfacing and highway access, parking and drainage. A landscape plan and work programme is also required and the construction traffic management plan must be approved in advance by both South Norfolk District Council and Norfolk County Council. All these details must also be in line with the design objectives and principles of the project as described in the original application.

The planning applications submitted to South Norfolk District Council can be found online:³

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Status</u>
2017/1781	Pre-application statutory consultation	Closed on 20 September 2017
2018/1325	Development Consent Order application	Closed on 30 December 2020
2021/2145	Screening opinion for battery storage	Closed on 1 November 2021
2021/2223	Pre-construction archaeology surveys	Open to 25 January 2022
2021/2573	Pre-construction environmental surveys	Open to 17 March 2022
2021/2706	Environmental impact of battery storage	Open to 13 January 2022

Hornsea Three onshore grid connection

The proposed battery storage installation and the new overhead pylon route to London were not submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and are not included within the Development Consent Order.

In the event that the Offshore Transmission Network Review recommends integrated offshore transmission for Round 3 offshore wind projects, the Hornsea Three onshore cable route, substation, storage batteries, and new pylon route to London would not need to be located in South Norfolk.

¹ Detailed traffic information can be found in reference document EN010080-001620, issued on 23rd January 2019.

² <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/hornsea-project-three-offshore-wind-farm/>

³ <https://info.south-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/>