



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 9 December 2019

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT DURING THE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER PROCESS FOR SCOTTISHPOWER RENEWABLES EAST ANGLIA ONE NORTH AND EAST ANGLIA TWO OFFSHORE WINDFARM PROPOSALS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. ScottishPower Renewables have submitted two separate nationally significant applications for offshore windfarm developments off the East Suffolk coast with onshore infrastructure from Thorpeness to land immediately north of Friston. The applications were submitted to the National Infrastructure Unit of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on the 25 October 2019 and accepted on 22 November 2019
2. The proposals have been the subject of pre-application consultation with the local authority and four formal rounds of public consultation, the last ended in March 2019. We are a statutory consultee in the decision-making process, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy will make the final decision on the proposals based on the recommendation of the Examining Authority (appointed by the PINS) following an examination process.
3. This report provides background to both of the projects, a summary of the current position of the Council in relation to the projects, and seeks advice and support from the Strategic Planning Committee in relation to future consideration and process through the Development Consent Order (DCO) procedure of the proposals by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Councillor Craig Rivett, and his advice to Cabinet on these matters.
4. The recommendation is that Strategic Planning Committee supports Councillor Craig Rivett as the Cabinet Member responsible for the offshore windfarm projects, in presenting a proposal to Cabinet for delegated authority to respond speedily throughout the DCO process in due course.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	<p>Directly: Aldeburgh & Leiston,</p> <p>Indirectly: Southwold, Wrentham, Wangford & Westleton, Kessingland, Carlton Colville, Kirkley & Pakefield, Harbour & Normanston, Gunton & St Margarets, Lothingland, Rendlesham & Orford.</p>
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Cabinet Member:	<p>Councillor Craig Rivett</p> <p>Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development</p>
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Supporting Officer:	<p>Naomi Goold</p> <p>Senior Energy Projects Officer</p> <p>01394 444535</p> <p>naomi.goold@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p>
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 East Suffolk Council are supportive of the principle of offshore wind development, both in terms of seeking to reduce carbon emissions and creating sustainable economic growth in East Suffolk, this includes providing for long term employment for some of our coastal communities, provided this can be achieved without significant damage to the environment, residents and tourist economy of Suffolk.
- 1.2 East Anglia One North is an offshore wind farm project located approximately 36km from Lowestoft in an area of 208km² with a potential generating capacity of up to 800 megawatts generated by turbines up to 300m high above sea level. There will be a cable run from the offshore element coming ashore at Thorpeness on the East Coast and travelling westwards to connect into a new substation proposed to be constructed immediately to the north of Friston, a small village. The proposal includes a separate National Grid substation that is essential to connect into the overhead powerlines that run from Sizewell B to Bramford – north west of Ipswich.
- 1.3 East Anglia Two is an offshore wind farm project located approximately 33km from its nearest point to the coast, Southwold, in an area of 218km² with a potential generating capacity of up to 900 megawatts generated by up to 75 wind turbines up to 300m high above sea level. As above there will be a cable run from the offshore element coming ashore at Thorpeness on the East Coast and travelling westwards to connect into a new substation proposed to be constructed immediately north of Friston. The proposal similarly includes a separate National Grid substation that is essential to connect into the overhead powerlines as above. However, each project must apply for the National Grid substation in order to connect into the overhead powerlines but only one National Grid substation will be constructed should both DCO's be consented.
- 1.4 Each project will have their own separate substation alongside the National Grid substation. The proposals assess different scenarios for construction including the projects being constructed simultaneously or consecutively. Construction consecutively could involve the first project being delivered and the land fully reinstated prior to the delivery of the second project.
- 1.5 East Anglia One North will have the generating capacity for approximately 710,000 households, East Anglia Two for approximately 800,000 households.
- 1.6 Under the Climate Change Act 2008, UK Government set a 2050 target to reduce CO2 emissions by 80%, in June 2019 new legislation was signed that commits the UK to a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. Clean growth is at the heart of this aim and supporting and promoting renewable energy over older and dirtier energy resources, is a key component of the plan.
- 1.7 ScottishPower Renewables have recently opened an Operations and Maintenance base in Lowestoft which is the onshore base for servicing their existing offshore windfarm which has just begun generating electricity – East Anglia One. Construction of the East Anglia One windfarm is due to be fully completed in 2020. They also have consent for, but have not

yet commenced construction of, a further offshore windfarm East Anglia Three. These previous consents and those applied for in these applications form the East Anglia Array where seabed rights were awarded as part of the Crown Estate's Round 3 process.

2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The proposals are considered Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) as established under the Planning Act 2008; consent for an NSIP takes the form of a DCO. The Planning Act 2008 makes provision for National Policy Statements (NPS), which set out the policy framework for determination of NSIP applications. The three NPSs of relevance are EN-1 (Overarching NPS for Energy), EN-3 (NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure) and EN-5 (NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure).
- 2.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2019 does not contain any specific policies for NSIPs but remains a material consideration.
- 2.3 The 2013 Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document contains policies of relevance. Policy SP12 'Climate Change' is of particular relevance which encourages schemes which create renewable energy where consistent with the need to safeguard residential amenity, the environment and the landscape.
- 2.4 The new Local Plan (covering the former Suffolk Coastal area) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on Friday 29 March 2019, the examination hearings took place between 20 August and 20 September 2019. The Local Plan includes Policy SCLP3.5 'Proposals for Major Energy Infrastructure Projects'. This policy identifies the need to mitigate the impacts arising from such developments and will be used to guide East Suffolk Council in due course. This policy has outstanding representations and was discussed with the Inspector and representors during the examination hearings, so at this stage the weight which can be attributed to this policy is reduced. The Inspector's Report is awaited but it is anticipated that the new Local Plan will be adopted early 2020. NPSs will however usually override local planning policy.
- 2.5 The 2019 Waveney Local Plan contains some policies of relevance. Policy WLP8.27 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy' which is supportive of renewable energy schemes acknowledges in the introductory text that the impacts of renewable energy developments can go beyond the immediate locality where the onshore development is proposed. It is therefore important to give consideration to the wider impacts. Although the onshore infrastructure of the projects is confined to the area subject of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, the offshore infrastructure will be visible at times along much of the East Suffolk

coastline and the socio-economic impacts of the projects are more likely to be felt at the northern end of the East Suffolk district.

- 2.6 Suffolk County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP2) recognises the 'Energy Coast' as a key area for growth and development and that the transport sector will be reliant on the development of renewable energy to power electric vehicles.

3 PROPOSALS

Offshore Elements

- 3.1 East Anglia One North: At Stage 4 the Councils jointly wrote to ScottishPower Renewables raising concerns with the significant effects predicted offshore by the East Anglia One North project when viewed cumulatively with East Anglia Two. These concerns were in relation to the effects of East Anglia One North on seascape, landscape and visual effects and were objected to in relation to cumulative effects with East Anglia Two.
- 3.2 East Anglia Two: At Stage 4 the Councils jointly wrote to ScottishPower Renewables objecting to the significant effects predicted offshore of the East Anglia Two proposal on seascape, coastal landscapes, character and qualities of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and cumulatively with East Anglia One North. It was predicted that the East Anglia Two project would result in a significant change to the sea views from key viewpoints on the AONB coast with the horizon cluttered with turbines. An impact which would be continuously experienced along the coastline further exacerbated when viewed in combination with East Anglia One North and other existing wind farm arrays.
- 3.3 East Suffolk Council's responsibility offshore is limited to the mean low water mark. However, the turbines offshore are considered to have an impact onshore by virtue of their visibility from the shore, in particular from within the AONB. As such, we work with other statutory consultees such as Natural England and seek to be aligned in our approach to the offshore elements of both projects and the potential impacts they may have onshore. We also work as a partner of and alongside the AONB Partnership.

Onshore Elements

- 3.4 East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two: Onshore the impacts of both projects are almost identical given their co-location of the substations immediately to the north of Friston and shared cable route from the landfall to substation site. At Stage 4 the Councils wrote jointly to ScottishPower Renewables objecting to the overall impact of the onshore substations of both proposals individually and cumulatively on the village and environs of Friston, including on archaeological and heritage assets, landscape character, visual effects, noise and residential amenity. It was stated the development of the substation site would permanently change the character of the landscape and have significant visual effects with the setting of the village and the relationship between historic buildings and their farmland setting permanently changed. The development would also introduce a

noise source within an existing tranquil location which at the noise limit set would unacceptably increase the background noise levels.

- 3.5 At Stage 4 the Councils considered that the impacts on the cable route were predominantly capable of being mitigated in the long term but we needed evidence of the measures necessary to mitigate impacts during the construction period including the transport impacts.
- 3.6 At Stage 4 we registered our concerns about both projects and the impact in relation to the loss and sterilisation of good quality agricultural land at Friston in order to accommodate the substations for the projects and the impact of the proposal on the Grade II listed building, Aldringham Court, and its landscape setting from the cable route.
- 3.7 We also sought further information from ScottishPower Renewables on both projects in relation to a number of matters:
- (i) Impacts on air quality during the operational and construction phases of the projects, justifications for assessment scope and modelling results and cumulative impacts with Sizewell C;
 - (ii) Gaps in the information available on flood risk impacts and flood alleviation;
 - (iii) Noise sources on site including National Grid infrastructure and mitigation;
 - (iv) Highways modelling assessments and assumptions utilised, highways mitigation proposed and how this would be implemented and secured;
 - (v) Coastal processes associated with the cable landing point;
 - (vi) Ground contamination mitigation,
 - (vii) Ecology mitigation and justification for scope of assessments;
 - (viii) Archaeological surveys and results;
 - (ix) Impact of projects on heritage assets including assessment of coastal heritage assets;
 - (x) Socio-economic assessment assumptions and employment predictions, labour displacement effects, current skills shortages and mitigation strategies proposed;
 - (xi) Impact on tourism and recreation during the construction and operation phases and mitigation strategies;
 - (xii) National Grid connection infrastructure; and
 - (xiii) Cumulative impacts of the projects with other projects.
- 3.8 At Stage 4 we agreed to continue working with ScottishPower Renewables to identify the means by which the impacts of the proposals could be mitigated and/or compensated. We also required ScottishPower Renewables to work closely with other promoters to consider how mitigation across other schemes can be co-ordinated/combined to minimise the impact of the totality of developments in the local area. Finally, we proposed to seek a wider compensation package from promoters and the Government that deals with the broader impacts on community, environment, and businesses of this and other energy projects in the area.
- 3.9 The applications for DCO were both submitted on the 25 October 2019 to PINS and accepted on 22 November 2019. The application documents were published on the PINS website only a couple of days prior to the acceptance date, therefore our technical experts are currently reading through the proposals and assessing the submissions. It may be that

a number of the above concerns have been addressed in the submissions, it may be that they have not. As such, it is not possible at this stage to definitively state our position on the two DCO's. In this report we refer to our published position at Stage 4 of the public consultation and our expectations of the DCO process. During the DCO process several documents will be made public in relation to the projects including our Relevant Representations, Written Representations and Local Impact Reports, these will be drafted having reference to the submitted DCO documentation.

4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 4.1 The vision for East Suffolk includes maintaining and sustainably improving the quality of life for everyone growing up, living in, working in and visiting East Suffolk. East Suffolk has a long history of hosting nuclear power stations, and we recognise the opportunities for the UK and more locally of hosting offshore wind farm and we have been supportive to date in relation to Galloper, Greater Gabbard, East Anglia One and East Anglia Three. The offshore wind industry is limited in the jobs that it offers in the longer term, however by encouraging the operating and maintenance bases to be located in our area this encourages the supply chain to locate locally also and is a boost to our economy. A Memorandum of Understanding has been previously agreed with ScottishPower Renewables in relation to skills and employment support in the region and there are a large number of positive stories in relation to this. It will be key for the proposals for East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two to build upon this existing base in order to support East Suffolk Council in addressing critical success factors identified in the Business Plan.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 East Suffolk Council has signed a Letter of Intent with ScottishPower Renewables which enables us to recharge officer time spent across various service areas on the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two projects. This enables us to fully engage with ScottishPower Renewables on the specific technical details of their project in order to identify and mitigate potential adverse impacts arising from their development proposals. We also work collaboratively with Suffolk County Council and other statutory consultees in order to ensure we are speaking with one voice where possible in order to emphasise our position in certain areas. The monies paid to this authority by ScottishPower Renewables are reinvested in the service areas and used to backfill posts where necessary. By doing this, we aim to avoid the use of consultants (where we can) and maintain the knowledge and expertise in-house.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 This report has not carried out its own Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), as a consultee in the DCO process, we are not responsible for ensuring it has been carried out suitably,

and ScottishPower Renewables will be responsible for carrying out their own EqIA on their consultation process.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 East Suffolk Council has not carried out our own consultation with town and parish councils and we are not obligated to do so. However, we have visited (or offered to and been declined) all town and parishes potentially impacted by the proposals – some have engaged more with us than others. There are a number of action groups in relation to the proposals and we have engaged with them where appropriate. We have also carried out internal consultation with technical officers in areas including: economic development, coastal management, landscape, ecology, and environmental health in order to combine with technical responses from SCC officers in areas including highways, archaeology, flood risk, education and skills in order to engage fully in the pre-application process with ScottishPower Renewables.
- 7.2 ScottishPower Renewables continue to engage with officers on the proposals and there are a number of documents to be produced over the coming months that will require further collaboration.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Alternative options were considered in the early stages of proposals but at this stage we are presented with the proposals, it is not for us to consider alternative options to that provided by ScottishPower Renewables in their proposals.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is important for East Suffolk Council to be able to be proactive and reactive on very short timetables throughout the DCO process particularly during the six-month examination section where the ability to respond quickly to questions raised by the Examining Authority (PINS) is essential.
- 9.2 As such, Strategic Planning Committee is asked to endorse the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development in working with the Head of Planning and Coastal Management throughout the DCO process for East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two, in responding to written questions, agreeing Statements of Common Ground, agreeing our Relevant Representations and Written Responses and submitting our Local Impact Reports as well as any other correspondence/documentation required of East Suffolk Council during the process. This request will be taken to East Suffolk Council Cabinet in January

2020. Suffolk County Council will be taking a similar request to their Cabinet within the same timeline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Strategic Planning Committee endorses and supports the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development in seeking delegated Authority, in conjunction with the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, from Cabinet in order to:
 - (i) Be agile in responding to requests for information and documents during the Development Consent Order process for the East Anglia One North proposal including representing the Council/authorising technical officers to represent the Council at Hearings; and
 - (ii) Be agile in responding to requests for information and documents during the Development Consent Order process for the East Anglia Two proposal including representing the Council/authorising technical officers to represent the Council at Hearings.

APPENDICES - None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
22.11.19	East Anglia One North application documents	Planning Inspectorate's website - https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-one-north-offshore-windfarm/
22.11.19	East Anglia Two application documents	Planning Inspectorate's website - https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-two-offshore-windfarm/
26.03.19	ESC and SCC Phase 4 Consultation Response	East Suffolk Council's website - https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Offshore-Windfarms/Phase-4-Consultation-Response-from-SCC-and-SCDC-26.03.19.pdf