

Annex: to minutes 24.01.23

Report on Offshore Wind Farm updates.

Orsted Hornsea Three

The works to the southern end of The Street have been completed. These were carried out as part of the Highway Intervention Scheme, to allow HGV's to be able to access the Main Construction Compound. Also mitigation work has been carried out on the property which will be impacted by Noise & Vibration of traffic going to the Main Compound.

The Chair received an email on 24th January from *Orsted Hornsea Three* that the construction work to set up the Main Construction Compound will commence on **30th January until 1st March**, when the main construction of Hornsea Three will commence operations for the construction of the cable route.

Orsted have given contact details if there are any queries.....

please email us at community@hornsea3.co.uk or call us on 0800 158 2354.

The compound works notice is available to see on OPC website. <http://www.oultonparishcouncil.co.uk/community/oulton-parish-council-15017/windfarms/>

Orsted Community Benefit Fund

Orsted are holding a series of workshop which will explain how their community fund will be implemented. OPC will be attending a workshop in Reepham on Wednesday 1st February.

Grantscape who will oversee the funding are sending a representative to OPC next meeting on 7th march.

Currently only those areas which are highlighted on the cable route map are eligible, along with ports in the east coast and Oulton because of the location of Orsted's Main Construction Compound

Orsted Community Information Events

Orsted will be holding local community information events between Wednesday 25 January and Wednesday 15 February 2023. These events are an opportunity for stakeholders and the local community to learn more about planned construction works for Hornsea Three and meet with our project team.

You can come and speak to the project team at the following locations:

Location and address	Date	Time
Norwich Blackfriars Hall, Andrews Hall Plain, NR3 1AU	Wednesday 25 January	11am - 7pm
Holt Community Centre, Kerridge Way, NR25 6DN	Friday 27 January	11am - 7pm
Mulbarton Village Hall, The Common, NR14 8AE	Tuesday 31 January	11am - 7pm

Cawston Village Hall, Cawston, NR10 4BW	Friday 3 February	11am - 7pm
The Bure Valley Community Centre, Iteringham, NR11 7AX	Thursday 9 February	11am - 7pm
Hall for All, Church Street, Weston Longville, NR9 5JU	Friday 10 February	11am - 7pm
Easton College, Bawburgh Rd, Easton, NR9 5DU	Monday 13 February	11am - 7pm
Weybourne Village Hall, Beach Lane, Weybourne NR25 7AH	Wednesday 15 February	1pm - 7pm

Equinor Sheringham & Dudgeon Extension Project

The **Preliminary Meeting for Equinor SEP/DEP** took place at **10am on Tuesday 17th January, at Blackfriars Hall, Norwich**. This is the procedural meeting to set out how the Examination will proceed and it gives Interested Parties (IP) the opportunity to request issues to be included in the examination. Alison Shaw & Susan Mather attended on behalf of OPC and made the following statement...

EQUINOR: Prelim. Meeting – Jan. 17th 2023

General Statement from Oulton Parish Council

In relation to Item 3: Principal Issues

1. As this is the **fourth** Offshore Wind Farm project affecting Norfolk, **cumulative impacts of this project, taken in-combination with the construction of all the other consented projects, will have to be considered during the examination of every relevant issue.**

Examples of such issues are in sections: 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, 21 and 22.

We would be grateful for clarification as to whether the ExA is intending to include such consideration of cumulative impacts of other consented DCOs in this examination.

2. In Principal Issue 1, we seek clarification on whether “viability of the grid connection” will include consideration of an alternative connection point e.g. at Walpole? Oulton PC and the Norfolk Parishes Movement have urged Equinor for well over 2 years to re-negotiate their grid connection – before they submitted for a DCO - to a less damaging site, closer to the coast, such as Walpole. But they have refused to consider this, without providing any compelling reason.

3. Further to the above, we believe it to be imperative now, in the interests of transparency, to compel National Grid to engage publicly with this NSIP process, to attend hearings and to be asked to explain, in open forum, why such a grid allocation cannot be re-negotiated, in the light of current circumstances, with the agreement of both sides. The stakes are too high now for local communities along a third 60 km cable trench, for this avenue not to be explored. It is the least these communities deserve.

Open Floor hearing 1

On Tuesday 17th January 2pm at Blackfriars Hall Norwich, the Open Floor Hearing 1 took place and is the official start of Equinor SEP/DEP Examination.
Alison Shaw and Susan Mather read out the following statements.....

Statement at the Open Floor Hearing for Equinor: 17/1/23

Good afternoon.

I am speaking to you today principally as a resident of Oulton, but I am also a longstanding member of Oulton Parish Council and a founder member of the Norfolk Parishes Movement for an OTN.

I would like to speak briefly on 3 points:

1. Cumulative effects on the health of individuals and the well-being of communities (Principal Issue 21)
2. Cumulative erosion of confidence in the NSIP planning process over the past 5 years
3. Viability and justifiability of the grid connection point (Principal Issue 1).

Firstly, cumulative effects on the health of individuals and communities (Principal Issue 21):

6 years ago, at the age of 67, I retired from my work as a teacher, looking forward to cultivating my vegetable garden and reading the huge pile of books beside my bed. But this was not to be.

This SEP/DEP proposal is the fourth such NSIP application to hit Norfolk.

During the whole of these past 6 years my disposable time and energy has been consistently **dominated** and regularly **overwhelmed by**, the need to research and respond to this successive wave of piecemeal NSIP applications for offshore wind farms – through organising meetings, attending hearings and writing detailed, evidence-based submissions to over 40 PINS deadlines.

My health has been affected, my wellbeing has been eroded and I have been robbed of my peace of mind. And I am not alone in that.

For the sake of my own mental and physical health, and that of my family, I cannot contemplate engaging again for another 6 months at this pitch. Other people will bravely step into the breach, but the cost is enormous.

At a Parish Council level, I yearn for the days when we used to have time to look after our footpaths, and contribute active support to community projects. Instead, our parishes are neglected, and we now have difficulty even in recruiting new councillors – as our current preoccupations are not enticing.

In this respect, without any one of these projects yet having got fully underway with construction – **the cumulative negative effects on communities have already been devastating**. Up and down the cable routes for Hornsea Three, Vanguard/Boreas, and now SEP/DEP – lie communities who are debilitated, demoralised and depleted of optimism about their future.

Many will not now engage with **this** NSIP process, not for lack of interest or concern, but for lack of ability to muster the resources to do so.

This is a seriously damaging situation and I hope the ExA will examine it seriously.

Secondly, the cumulative erosion of confidence in the planning process:

I have been tempted to appear before you today dressed as a kittiwake, if only to draw attention to the fact that, over the past 4 years and 3 other 6-month NSIP examinations, we have learned to our cost that seabirds are afforded better protection in international environmental law, than is afforded by **UK** planning law to its own human communities.

This has been a startling discovery.

Try - as other Panels have - to seriously consider the weighting they should give in the planning balance to the damage caused by these projects to the onshore environment and communities, every Panel has felt obliged in the end **to set those impacts aside** in favour of the benefit of the renewable energy produced. Only the fate of kittiwakes has prompted the recommendation to refuse.

-Which has of course, in every case, been overturned by successive Secretaries of State.

This result must have been painful for the PINS Panels concerned...

But it is *acutely* painful for us to contemplate that this ExA might simply tread the same unprofitable path.

The power imbalance in the NSIP process is stark.

The Applicants have deep pockets, salaried permanent staff, and intimate knowledge of – and privileged access to – every part of the arcane process from The Crown Estate leasing round, through CION and DCO and CfD, to final construction.

Individuals and communities have absolutely none of these resources.

Bravely however, they have sought to participate in the process – as PINS invites them to do – only to be, in the end, **ignored**.

This experience over several years has been severely damaging to the faith that communities and individuals now have in **the fairness of the planning process** - and that loss of faith can only do damage to a key element in the democratic consensus of this society.

However, this is not a cry for pity – this is an urgent appeal for an outbreak of rationality.

Despite all of the above, we have learned to have the utmost respect for the conscientious and forensic way in which successive Panels have examined the issues generated by these applications. Their failure to have a positive effect on the final decision has not reflected badly on their work, but on the limitations of the NSIP process itself.

However, the SEP/DEP project is readily capable of a better solution, which leads me to my final point:

I would like to comment on the viability - and justifiability - of the grid connection point (Principal Issue 1).

The SEP/DEP project has one unique characteristic in terms of Norfolk, in that it is a near-shore wind farm, close to The Wash, and an alternative, much less damaging, onshore grid connection could be made available. There is considerable evidence for the viability of a connection at Walpole or the adjacent Sutton Bridge and written evidence will be submitted to the Examination on this issue from several Interested Parties.

A grid connection at Walpole would eliminate **at a stroke** the extensive damage to the onshore environment and communities of Norfolk, represented by the use of Norwich Main. It would also avoid entirely the unfortunate suspicion of a predetermination of consent for the EAG project, to guarantee sufficient capacity for the onward transmission of electricity generated by SEP/DEP, when added to Hornsea Three.

I will leave a discussion of the detail of such a transfer of grid connection to another time: suffice it to say now that I urge the ExA to break free of this cycle of repetitive overturning of their NSIP decisions, and thoroughly explore a change to the grid connection point.

I'm sure you are aware that there are relevant planning precedents for both a split decision (approving the *offshore* and refusing the *onshore* works) - and for a recommendation to refuse on grounds of inappropriate grid connection.

In the pursuit of clarity on this issue, it will be essential for the ExA to request the active participation in this Examination of National Grid, who have thus far resisted all efforts to involve them in explaining what is, in effect, **their handiwork**.

We all know that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, but far **more** eggs are being broken here, **than is necessary**.

Thank you for your time.

Alison Shaw

Oulton

Norfolk 17th January 2023

Oulton Parish Council have actively participated in Three offshore wind farm projects. We have attended Hearings and submitted written responses as and when information was requested.

Parish Councillors are volunteers, and we have had to become well informed over these past years and we certainly do not take on these examinations lightly. We make sure we provide reasoned arguments and detailed and relevant information.

However, project by project we are seeing more complex cumulative issues, It is fair to say we are all a little battle weary.

Damage limitation has been our eventual remit for our communities. There has to come a point where burdening the same areas with multiple infrastructure projects, breaks communities and with it its volunteers.

Yet here we are again with the **Sheringham And Dudgeon Extension Project**.

Equinor were keen to point out, that they are going to share a cable route and infrastructure, therefore they claim it fits in with the coordinated approach as part of the Offshore Transmission Network (OTN).

This project however will still in effect be another point to point construction. This goes against the conclusions from the **Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR)**, which stated that a more coordinated offshore approach to the Grid would lessen the impact from point to point projects on local communities onshore.

It should be noted that East Anglia was scoped out of the OTNR, why?

Oulton is currently about to be impacted this year by Hornsea Three's Main Construction Compound, with its associated traffic, for the entire duration of the cable route construction.

This will be Followed later in the year by Norfolk Boreas & Vanguard, with their onshore cable route and cable logistics area.

Oulton also has a consented solar farm, which is about to be constructed on the same site where Sheringham and Dudgeon propose to run their cable route.

For one property, *cumulative impacts* will be a daily occurrence over several years, they have yet to see whether mitigations carried out to lessen the impact of 214 daily HGV's from consented projects will be adequate, or whether additional traffic and construction from SAD will have further impacts.

For another property the cable route proposed for Sheringham and Dudgeon will run beside their property, along with the impact of proposed Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) going under the solar farm next to their property, at a depth yet to be agreed, along with the only access to the property crossed by a cable route.

These scenario are replicated across Norfolk from this project and other already consented projects.

Communities will experience Localised delays on the road network from cumulative traffic over several years.

I question then,

The implications of multiple projects on agricultural land take and disruption from these projects on agri-businesses and other commercial enterprises.

The supply chains ability to deliver to multiple projects and the environmental impact of supplying the materials needed.

As well as the cumulative impact from large volumes of traffic from this project and consented projects, on local communities.

Consented offshore wind projects will be generating power which will go into a grid which has not been upgraded, and cannot use all of its generated capacity.

On very windy days projects will be asked to stop generating, because of overcapacity, and will receive constraint payments.

These payments are paid for by the UK energy consumer.

This is the 'Cart before the horse' scenario.

National Grid (NG) are proposing to upgrade the grid with the **East Anglia Green (EAG)** project, But that project has yet to be examined or determined, with the proposed output from consented projects, being greater than the current NG capacity, then it would appear to conveniently predict the final outcome for EAG.

I also question the reasoning behind bringing power 60km onshore and then moving that power out of Norfolk by 180km of pylons to London.

Cumulative impact will need to feature heavily in this examination.

Susan Mather

Chair, Oulton Parish Council

Equinor SEP/DEP Issue Specific Hearing 2 - Onshore Matters

On Friday 20th January the Chair attended the ISH 2 - Onshore Matters via Microsoft teams.

The main issues put forward on behalf of Oulton residents, were Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) which will impact several residents.

In the Noise and Vibration assessment eight locations have been identified as sensitive receptors.

The largest HDD crossings will be under the River Bure and the Solar Farm site.

The main concerns are whether there will be a need for overnight work and noise and vibration, and whether two drills will be required.

Other issues highlighted were cumulative traffic impacts with Vattenfall, this is dependant on when the construction for SEP/DEP is carried out.

The applicants Equinor have put forward four scenarios for construction.

Scenario 1 & 2 which is either SEP or DEP is constructed in isolation

Scenario 3 SEP & DEP are constructed concurrently

Scenario 4 SEP & DEP are constructed sequentially

The issue of scenarios have called into question Equinor SEP/DEP as a coordinated project. The applicants have stated that SEP/DEP are separate companies, and the scenario outcome will not be decided until post consent, this will also be dependent on whether they are able to apply for Contract for Difference (CfD) together or they have to apply separately.

The applicants have also stated that they would not pre-duct, in the case of one project pre ducting for the other. This calls into question the environmental impact for the land. Therefore there is the possibility of a long build timeline if scenario 4 was considered. OPC will be submitting a response to the ISH 2 at Deadline 1 on 20th February, along with submissions to the Preliminary meeting, Open Floor Hearing 2 and suggestions for Accompanied Site Visit 2.