From: Andrew Norton [redacted]
Sent: 18 November 2021 08:04
To: Secretary Of State (Kwasi Kwarteng) <Secretary.State@beis.gov.uk>
Subject: EAST SUFFOLK, PROPOSED NAUTILUS INTERCONNECTOR, WIND FARMS LANDFALLS EA1N AND EA2 AND SIZEWELL C

Dear Secretary of State.

I have received material, summarising these proposals, produced jointly by 'Save Our Sandlings' (SOS), 'Suffolk Energy Action Solutions' (SEAS) and 'Substation Action I East Suffolk' (SAES?).

I am a Suffolk resident who knows the fragile natural amenities of the area. I am a retired Senior Planning Officer with Waveney District Council and gained nearly four decades experience of dealing with planning applications for major infrastructure projects, such as a giant onshore wind turbine, a large new waste water treatment plant and major road schemes. Some of these statutorily required Environmental Impact Assessments and it fell to me to scope, screen and assess the results on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. So I feel able to make some, helpful representations concerning these projects. I don't know where they yet are in the formal planning process, but the above interest groups think it likely that the applications will ultimately be decided by the Secretary of State or his Inspector, either by referral by the LPAs or by ministerial Call In.

I gained a BA(Hons)(London External) Degree in Geography with Economics at Cambridge Tech. in [redacted] and a Post Grad Diploma in Environmental Planning at Chelmer IHE in [redacted]. (These institutions now together form Anglia Ruskin University.) For the DipEP I wrote a thesis on the rôle of planning in the designation, preservation and enhancement of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB/Heritage Coast and the Dedham Vale AONB. (A copy should hopefully be in the University's student library.)

These are my thoughts, which are general principles, rather than a detailed critique of the present proposals, on which other more local interests are best able to comment.

1.My first reaction was that this is an understandable attempt to combine the land infrastructure of three different electricity transmissions in one area, to keep it as compact as possible and thereby avoid a more widespread series of negative impacts. I start from the view that it is vital to abandon fossil-based generation and to major on renewables, but with nuclear power as only a temporary expedient until renewables and clean biomass digestion take over completely.

2. Sizewell C is, I'm sure, treated now as a fixture, albeit there are still many opponents tothe principle of nuclear and to the impacts of this particular location and its road and other supporting infrastructure.

3. That said, is it really necessary for either or both Nautilus and the current and future offshore wind generation to make landfall here too. I totally agree with the view of SOS, SEAS AND SAES that this will be 'the largest complex of energy infrastructure in the UK' with inevitable potential to get much larger and that, in this sensitive area of landscape, ecology and concomitant tourism, it would bring 'needless destruction'. The AONB and Heritage Coast designations reflect not just local, but national recognition of an area demanding upmost care. Yes, it is also in the national interest to ensure a reliable, long term, non fossil supply of electricity. But I do not see that these two aims are mutually exclusive. They are both very important to the nation's quality of life.

4. I don't know how advanced are the discussions (or commitments?) regarding the undersea transmission cable routes from the wind farms and Nautilus. How flexible are these options? Surely sea bed options can be flexible and have the overwhelming advantage of making not a single visible impact, apart from the necessary landfall substation/s. The latter of course can be readily disguised with green roofs, cut and fill bunding etc. if a landfall location demands this. I realise that there are financial cost implications, but these must be weighed against costs borne by the environment and the local agriculture and tourism economies.

5. If such flexibility is not possible, it is vital that it is fully explained why. Otherwise the credibility of the current proposals are totally undermined, with the lingering suspicion that agreements between government and commercial agencies have already been 'set in stone' without any public participation.

6. If it is still flexible, options for alternative landfall sites must surely be explored. The harm done by the present proposals is not debatable and the only minor justification could be achieved by even the most concerted amelioration efforts.

7. As with the case for all new development, the best options are brownfield opportunities.If these are in short supply, a landscape context of large, nearby, man-made structures is a reasonable compromise, since their impact has already been made and that of further structures would be incrementally less than in open countryside. This brings to mind two possible alternatives :

A. Landfall at Felixstowe. The town and port, especially, are visually dominant and thiscontinues with the A14 corridor and, of course, Ipswich. Both towns are obviously ripe for short, low loss transmission of power. Some guidance is needed as to whether there is

any spare capacity in the giant HV pyloned cables stretching out from Sizewell B. Any case for a new overhead HV line, has to be set against this, I admit. However, the A14 corridor does contain much development already, including the dual carriageway and eye-distracting lorry traffic. But, of course, none of this is an issue if the cables are buried.

B. Lowestoft and/or Lowestoft are not too far away either. And many of the same reasonsfor choosing them also apply, especially if one takes into account the wide spread of present and future offshore wind farms both north-east of here. Re the Nautilus Interconnector, the extra distance to/from Belgium does not appear to be significant. Again, it all depends on where the sea bed cables, serving each wind farm, will run and at which points they feed into Nautilus. I'm presuming that the authorities are not countenancing a separate landfall for each wind farm as that way madness lies, doesn't it? Is there a master plan for a dendritic system to link all wind farms to, preferably, one main landfall cable? Or is this future already sold? I sincerely hope not. If it has been sold, it must be thoroughly explained why such a grave error has been made and by whom.

If the worst should happen i.e. the present proposals are approved, every effort should be made to mitigate their serious impact. Substations etc. must be disguised or hidden. New cables should be buried and the trenches should be backfilled quickly with every opportunity taken for 'planning gain' in the form of the planting of native trees and other landscape and wildlife-friendly vegetation. Obviously the continued need for prime agricultural land must be considered. And after the recent COP26 conference, and well before it, the public interest in the climate change crisis has grown exponentially. So there is a very good case for an information/study centre on the subject to be made in the immediate vicinity. This could include promoting the rural and coastal treats the area offers, so long as these are still worth being proud about. It could be a tourist destination in its own right, good for the local economy and a mecca for school and student visits. I believe Sizewell already has a visitor centre. I haven't been but I imagine it majors on nuclear (?)

I hope these thoughts are of some help, and good luck with your endeavours which I wholeheartedly endorse

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