

18 December 2020

Dear Mr Gallant

On behalf of SEAS Campaign group and its growing number of supporters, we endorse the expression of disappointment and the reasons for that, as set out in Michael Mahony's email of 17 December below. SASES has carried out excellent research and analysis and we wholeheartedly support their work.

We were surprised at the ESC's apparent lack of objection to these Applications at the Issue Specific Hearings. Given how flawed the site selection process was in the first place, and that Friston is clearly a most unsuitable location for a vast industrial complex of substations and inter-connectors, we were anticipating your rigorous analysis of the proposals, highlighting the lack of in-depth testing and research, required for the largest infrastructure project of its kind in the UK. SASES has identified many flaws, particularly in relation to the core aspects discussed at the first set of ISHs. We have also identified how many lacunae there are in terms of the Biodiversity and Habitats study as detailed by Dr Gill Horrocks and in terms of Thorpeness Landfall. For the January ISHs we will be interrogating the Tourism Case Studies and Representations made by SPR, showing that they are totally inadequate and mainly irrelevant. We will be challenging other assumptions made about Traffic, Air quality and Economic impact. SPR has failed to carry out the required tests or research on almost every issue.

Since the ISHs, we have all had a chance to read the National Grid ESO Offshore Coordination Final Report Phase One, published on 16 December 2020.

You will have seen that in the Executive Summary it says:

“ Adopting an integrated approach for all offshore projects to be delivered from 2025 has the potential to save consumers approximately £6billion, or 18%, in capital and operating expenditure between now and 2050”.*

The Note says: This means applying an integrated approach to all offshore projects that have not yet received consent”.

We also know from Page 14 of the Annex regarding “Sensitivity Study on the effect of change in the starting date of offshore grid coordination”, that Sizewell (meaning Friston area) is identified as one of the chosen infrastructure sites for their integrated 2025 programme. It does not explain in any detail why they have drawn that initial conclusion, and why Sizewell is not crucial as a location for the later 2030 option. We can deduce that new technology is making things easier all the time to integrate further and thereby reduce the number of connections. This Sensitivity study was conducted by The National HVDC centre and by EPNC. It may be that it is not yet agreed by BEIS as the chosen pathway to 2030, but is presented as a scenario. National Grid did not allow detailed questions at their Question & Answer session yesterday. We have yet to understand fully their plans. Their lack of transparency has been a concern for local communities from the outset of

these Applications. Their failure to consult with local communities for such a huge project has been noted and referenced to BEIS and other interested parties.

We have a chance right now for us all to reassess and together work towards a better solution for the environment, the well-being of local communities and for the rural economy in this particular area which is significantly dependent on tourism and visitors. Inspired by the BEIS Review and the Government's commitment to achieving 40GW wind energy by 2030, an opportunity exists right now to make a step change and to prepare an alternative scenario which uses an already industrialised site such as Bramford or Bradwell for this planned infrastructure Hub. With the benefit of new advanced technology there are better solutions available in time for EA1N and EA2. Contrary to what some interested parties say, it is not too late for EA1N and EA2.

It is regrettable that the flawed CION process has allowed this Examination to proceed thus far. We must now argue for what will safeguard those unmitigable assets that are unique and priceless. Given this new context, defined by newly announced targets and goals, we expect and hope that the ESC will strive to show their objection to these ill-conceived Applications both in written Representations and orally.

We are in favour of offshore wind energy. We are in favour of the regeneration of Lowestoft and its proactive repositioning in the world as a centre of excellence for research, development and the delivery of Renewables. Equally, we are in favour of the protection and reinforcement of

the Heritage Coast. This Coast merits its name because it has not been ruined by careless industrialisation or development. As we know from the Suffolk Coast DMO Report (September 2019), visitors are attracted to this particular part of coastal Suffolk, precisely because it is not developed. Tranquillity, Nature and iconic landscapes are its fragile assets.

You will see from our SEAS website how volunteers are working flat out to object to these Applications. We will continue to object until a more responsible and thoughtful conclusion is drawn. We will raise the money to take this all the way.

Most SEAS supporters do not come from Friston. They live all over the wider region. We also have supporters from across the UK as a whole. They are joining us in support of the principle.

We look forward to evidencing a far greater degree of challenge and objection from ESC than shown to date in the ISHs.

Sincerely,

Fiona Gilmore

SEAS Campaign

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