



## **Crossed Wires: Maintaining public support for offshore wind farms, Policy Exchange, July 2021**

*“Without reform, there is now a significant risk that local backlash against grid connections for offshore wind farm will grow, spreading from East Anglia to North Wales, Humberside, and the east coast of Scotland”*

This is the conclusion to the latest report endorsed by the Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom DBE MP and Rt Hon Amber Rudd.

SEAS would agree with this conclusion. The Government must act if we are to hit the Government's 2030 deployment target and put the UK on a path to Net Zero.

Although this is a national problem, significantly, this report singles out East Anglia as the region for the Government to focus on with regard to greater integration and engagement with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) 'pathfinder' projects.

*“Given the potentially large costs involved in encouraging projects to coordinate, we recommend that the Government focus only on the projects where early coordination could have the biggest benefits; the Government should focus on the East Anglia region, where there are six new offshore wind farms that are looking to connect to the onshore electricity network in mid-2020s and where proposals include new substations and many miles of underground cables onshore.”*

The report suggest:

*“the Government underwrites all additional costs incurred by the developers ..”*

SEAS wholeheartedly supports this positive suggestion. In the case of EA1N and EA2, these two projects can share the same technology, share the same developer (which quite possibly would negate the need for changes to legislation) and therefore have opportunities to integrate offshore and reduce the harm to the environment. This does not require a ring main or shared assets but still enables an alternative grid location to be brought forward with less damaging impacts on our environment and coastal economies in line with the White Paper and objectives of the BEIS OTNR Review.

However this report suggests weak and regressive caveats to fall back upon.



*“The Government should compensate communities impacted by the construction of offshore wind farms and associated infrastructure such as substations and cable routes”*

SEAS rejects this suggestion. No amount of money can compensate for the loss of our environment and rural communities. The world has shifted. This degree of damage to environmentally sensitive and diverse landscapes brimming with biodiversity is unmitigable, unacceptable and given the availability of better industrialised or alternative brownfield sites either on the coast or using existing cable routes, indefensible.

The report does not go far enough. Integration in itself is not enough to protect our biodiversity and rural communities. Only if integrated grid connections are taken forward at **brownfield or pre-industrialised sites** can the impacts of offshore wind farm infrastructure be minimised. In today’s world if our environment is not protected for our future generations, then the Government will not receive support for the UK’s decarbonisation efforts.