

From: **Suffolk Energy Action Solutions - SEAS**

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Date: Wed, Mar 9, 2022 at 3:16 PM

Subject: ESC/SCC joint letters to Greg Hands

To: <craig.rivett@suffolk.gov.uk>, <steve.gallant@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <james.mallinder@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <philip.ridley@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <Naomi.Goold@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <tony.cooper@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <russ.rainger@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <Tom.Daly@eastssuffolk.gov.uk>, <Richard.Rout@suffolk.gov.uk>, <matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk>, <Phil.watson@suffolk.gov.uk>, <Andrew.Reid@suffolk.gov.uk>, TJ Haworth-Culf (SCC Councillor) <TJ.Haworth-Culf@suffolk.gov.uk>

Cc: <therese.coffey.mp@parliament.uk>, <bernard.jenkin.mp@parliament.uk>, <jerome.mayhew.mp@parliament.uk>

By Email To: Suffolk District and County Councillors

Craig Rivett - ESC

Steve Gallant - ESC

James Mallinder - ESC

Philip Ridley - ESC

Naomi Gould - ESC

Tony Cooper - ESC

Russ Rainger - ESC

Tom Daly - ESC

Richard Rout - SCC

Matthew Hicks - SCC

Phil Watson - SCC

Andrew Reid - SCC

TJ Haworth Culf - SCC

Cc. Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP (Chair OffSET)

Jerome Mayhew MP (Vice Chair OffSET)

Dear Councillors,

The Secretary of State is due to make his decision whether or not to grant development consent to Scottish Power Renewables' (SPR) plans to build enormous substations to support its EA1N and EA2 windfarms by the end of this month. The omens don't look good for the people of Suffolk Coastal who vehemently oppose what will be the wholesale destruction of vast tracts of the precious land that we treasure. The Secretary of State has recently ignored the advice of his own planning inspectors and has overturned judicial review findings in similar cases in the area.

Throughout this whole sorry process, the people in the area that will be affected by the plans have felt let down by council representatives. The ESC decision to move from a position of opposition to one of "neutrality" was used by SPR as evidence of "local support"; nothing could be further from the truth. There are no positive benefits to this area, only destruction of valuable agricultural land and destruction of the nature-based tourist economy that has been carefully built up over many decades. SPR's PR exercise extolling the job benefits that will come to this area is disingenuous to say the least; there will be no local jobs provided and a few apprenticeship schemes in Lowestoft will do nothing to help us.

The true scale of what is being proposed and the cumulative impact of the additional projects that will be bolted on to the SPR/National Grid infrastructure is becoming more visible day by day. Alarm is spreading throughout the community; the people running the world-renowned music centre at Snape Maltings are appalled at what could be coming their way and letters have been published in the national press objecting to the plans.

We believe that alarm is also spreading at council level. The recent visit by local councillors to the Viking Link Interconnector in Lincolnshire must have been an eye opener. It is one thing to read about a structure that will be 24m high, quite another to actually see it and try to envisage the horrors of such infrastructure being built around the narrow leafy lanes near Friston. We note that letters recently written by East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council to The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, identify the lack of support for these proposals in the communities affected. We are however upset to see that ESC and SCC seem to think that the problems can be solved by "mitigation and compensation". These schemes are immitigable, how can you mitigate for the concreting over of acres and acres of land, the destruction of the thriving local economy and the irreparable damage that will be caused to the ecology and wildlife in the area? What compensation do ESC and SCC have in mind? We do not want a new village hall or a community centre, we want to preserve the local economy, the fragile cliffs at Thorpeness, the protected AONB land, the SSSI areas and the valuable agricultural land that is used to grow the wheat and cereals that are increasingly valuable and important to this country.

Further to your press release of 7th February 2022, which expresses the Council's serious reservations about these energy projects SEAS is calling, even at this late stage, for ESC to write to the Secretary of State and declare that it is no longer "neutral" about the proposals but does in fact oppose them, recognising the irreparable damage that will be done to the nature and economy of the local area. We are asking for ESC to reverse its "move towards neutral" and to make every effort to encourage the Secretary of State to reach a "split decision" and insist that National Grid and SPR find a more appropriate connection point on a brownfield site, closer to the coast and closer to the areas that actually need and will use the energy generated.

We live on a heritage and supposedly protected stretch of coast, with fragile cliffs that crumble away with every winter storm. We do not want or recognise the term "energy coast", it is the job of our local councillors to represent our views and fight to protect the land over which you have temporary stewardship. In the words of your own Craig Rivett, it is time for all concerned "to get a grip".

Yours sincerely

Fiona Gilmore
On behalf of SEAS