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## Onshore eyesores that come with offshore wind farms to be shrunk

Plan to reduce unsightly infrastructure such as cables, substations and pylons in government push to get coastal communities onside

By Emma Gatten, ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

25 April 2022 • 9:00pm



[Offshore wind farms](#) will have less onshore infrastructure as part of a government push to get coastal communities onside and turn the UK into an exporter of renewable electricity.

Currently, every [offshore farm](#) requires its own connections to the grid via cables, substations and pylons, causing concern among nearby residents who argue that these spoil the landscape.

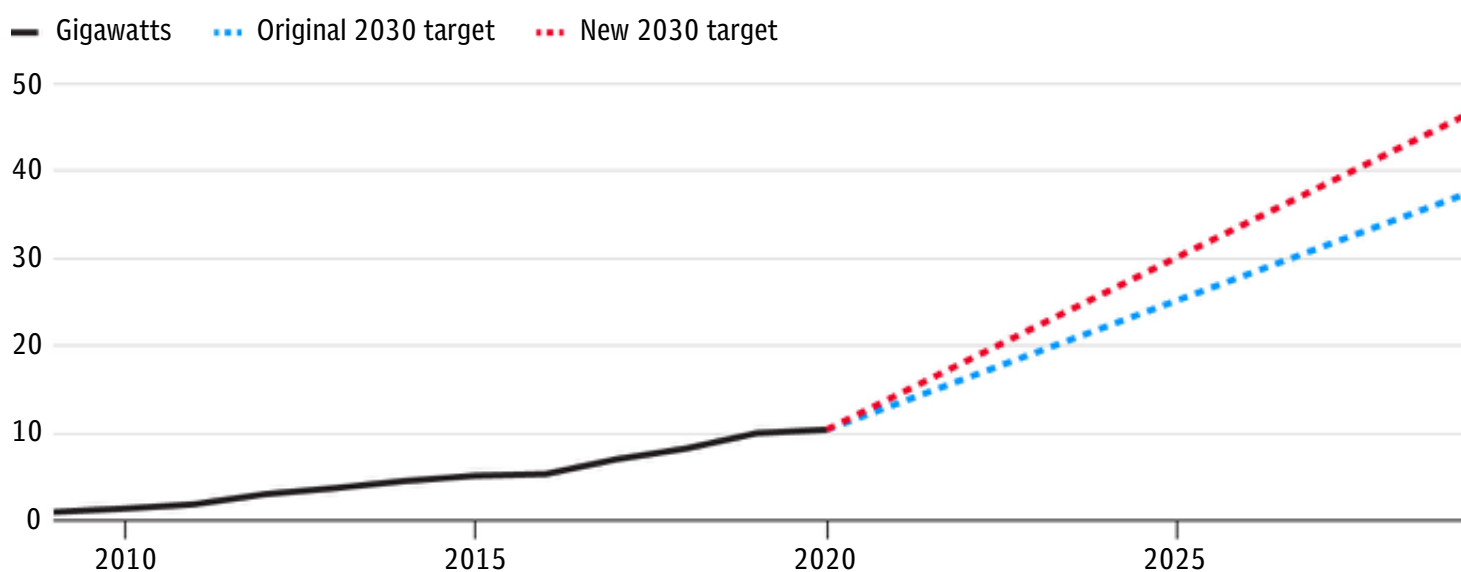
The Government now wants to enable more wind farms to connect to each other, reducing the number of onshore connections by around 30 per cent.

Up to 2,000 new wind farms could be needed – the majority offshore – to hit the target of quadrupling offshore wind in the next eight years and [turning the electricity grid "clean" by 2035](#).

The plans are also the first step in allowing the UK to export its excess wind power and import more when needed.

## WINDS OF CHANGE

Cumulative installed offshore wind capacity



SOURCE: STATISTA

Two former energy secretaries have previously called for compensation to be paid to

coastal communities that have to host offshore wind infrastructure.

[Andrea Leadsom and Amber Rudd](#) warned that there was "a significant risk" of local backlash to onshore infrastructure that could derail the development of offshore wind.

Last February, the Government [lost a High Court challenge](#) against the approval of one of the world's largest wind farms off the coast of Norfolk.

The case had been brought by a local resident worried about the impact on the landscape of planned underground cables. The judge said the Government had failed to consider the "cumulative impacts" of the development.

Meanwhile, campaign group Suffolk Energy Action Solutions is considering applying for a judicial review [of the development of a substation near the medieval village of Friston](#), which it says will be three times the size of Wembley Stadium.

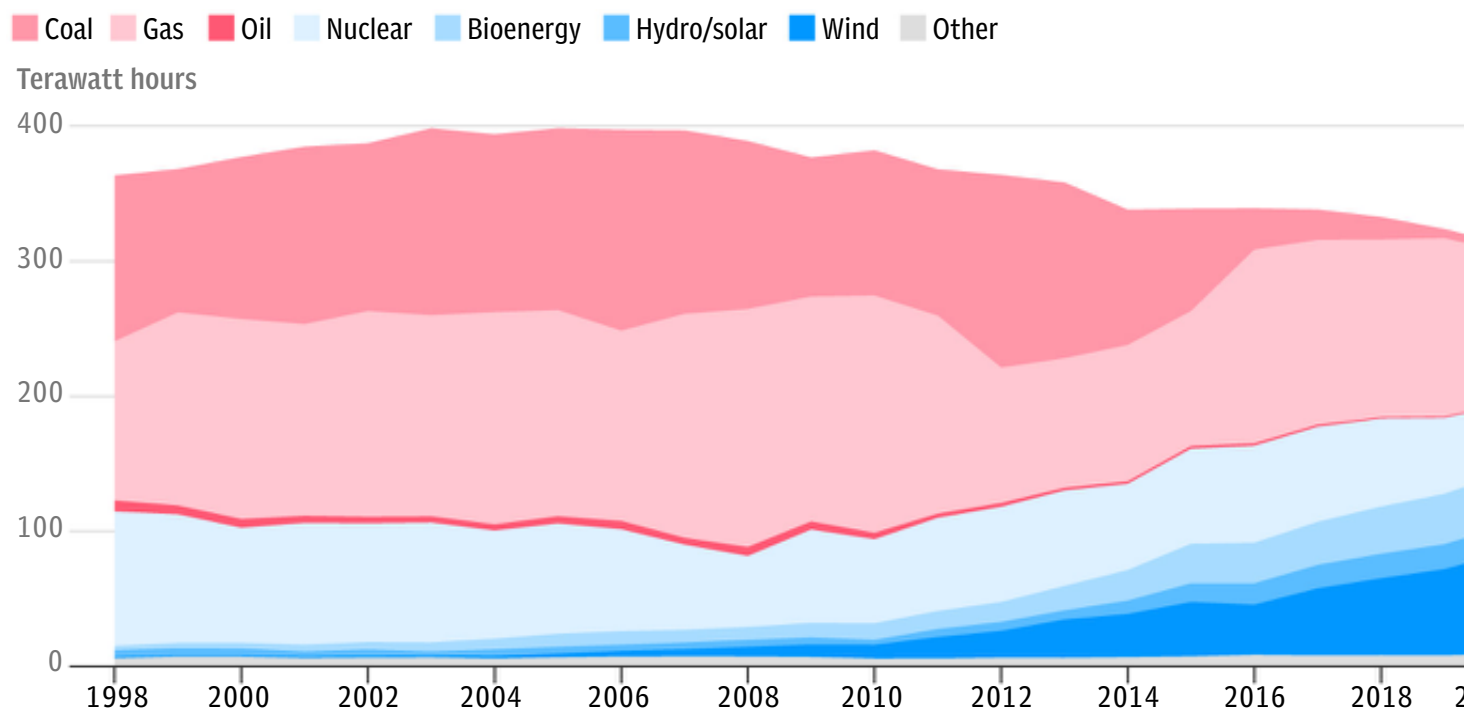
Speaking about the proposed changes, Greg Hands, the energy minister, said: "We recognise that there is currently a growing impact on the coastal communities that host offshore wind infrastructure. As we power up our plans to become more independent, with growing supply of clean energy, we need to minimise local impacts.

"With the potential for huge savings, multi-purpose interconnectors could ease offshore wind development by establishing a future generation of offshore connection hubs.

"I look forward to working with the independent regulator Ofgem as we explore allowing clusters of offshore wind farms to connect all in one, and directly into electricity interconnectors which could also enable Britain to sell excess clean energy to other countries."

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SOURCE: DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

However, countryside groups said the plans would not go far enough to allay concerns over the impact of offshore infrastructure.

"Developing a new network of connection hubs and substations offshore wherever possible is a thoughtful policy that is likely to generate public support," Tom Fyans, the director of campaigns and policy at the countryside charity CPRE said.

"But new onshore transmission routes, such as the new pylon line from Norwich to Tilbury, announced last week by National Grid, should be buried underground if they are to also gain community consent."

Fiona Gilmore, who founded Suffolk Energy Action Solutions, said the plans were "very ill-conceived", adding: "We want to see offshore integration at sea using the latest technology, carrying energy to an offshore platform which takes it to a brownfield site."

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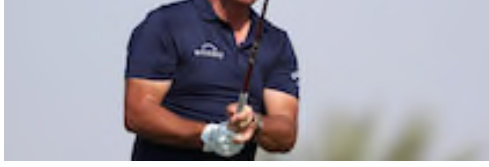
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