

To: Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State
Department of Energy Security and Net Zero

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Devastating Negative Impact on the Suffolk Coast

As a local resident of the Suffolk Coastal area I am writing about your recent visit to Lowestoft where your comments gave the misleading impression that current energy plans are positive for the Suffolk Coast, bringing exciting opportunities for growth and jobs. This PR exercise distorts the true impact of current plans, which is overwhelmingly negative.

You chose to bypass Friston and Saxmundham, Aldeburgh, Reydon and Walberswick which are threatened by the cumulative impact of the onshore infrastructure for multiple energy projects. I am in favour of more offshore wind energy but reject current plans to connect this power to the grid on the Suffolk Coast as not fit for purpose, not in Britain's medium term interest.

Lowestoft can indeed become an important service centre because of its proximity to the wind farms in the North Sea, and it could also be much more than this, a centre of excellence for research and development into all kinds of renewable energy including tidal and algae. However current plans to make Friston/Saxmundham an energy hub are the wrong plans in the wrong place and will have a devastating negative impact on the Suffolk Coastal area.

The cumulative impact on the Suffolk Coastal tourism economy is estimated at c.£1bn over the 12 years of construction of the various projects and in terms of jobs a 15% year-on-year reduction is expected (DMO 2019). Furthermore, Sizewell already drains the labour market by having to overpay to get temporary staff using tax payers money. Very few permanent jobs will be created with the vast majority of roles on the projects being for specialists shipped in only for during the build periods, with minimum people required after construction. The small number of temporary unskilled jobs available will siphon off labour from the existing tourism economy already under pressure from Sizewell.

As mentioned, I am in favour of more offshore wind, but locating energy hubs at brownfield sites closer to demand and using smarter offshore technologies when designing the transmission network (subsea HVDC cables) which are cheaper in the medium term, and are a better way to accelerate to net zero given fewer planning issues. Look at the planning success of EGL2 (subsea HVDC cables between brownfield sites) and the reduced planning issues involved in taking Nautilus to the already industrialised Isle of Grain.

We must get the network design right upfront, with brownfield sites closer to demand selected for major energy hubs. This will then allow for accelerated progress for all the projects currently in development. The recent Panorama programme suggested that in the drive for Net Zero the ecological emergency seems to have been forgotten, why would you locate a major energy hub in the middle of unspoilt countryside miles from where it is needed, all this does is help maximise profits for developers National Grid (NGET and NGV) and Scottish Power Renewables. Working with industry is a key part of our future energy system but long-term transmission network design should not be left to developers who are legally obliged to maximise returns to their shareholders. The Government needs to take back control from commercial company agendas to safeguard the country for Britain's future generations.

We invite you to visit the proposed energy hub sites in Suffolk Coastal, with their vital wetland environments and thriving tourism economies, to better understand what is at stake and to discuss alternative brownfield site locations.

Yours sincerely,