



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

**Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP**  
Minister of State for Energy and Climate

**Department for Business, Energy &  
Industrial Strategy**  
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16 January 2023

To East Anglian communities and interested groups,

Thank you for your continued engagement on the topic of energy infrastructure development in East Anglia. This letter outlines work underway to incentivise the coordination of infrastructure in the region as well as upcoming consultations on relevant proposals, which I am sure you will wish to engage with.

Delivering our ambition of secure, home-grown energy for the country, including 50GW of offshore wind by 2030, will inevitably require more network infrastructure, both onshore and offshore, than today. I am committed to finding ambitious solutions within this energy transformation, minimising negative impacts on communities while building a cheaper, greener and more secure energy system for Britain. I am sure that you recognise that almost all of our heating and transport needs are currently met by fossil fuels, many of them imported, and we need to move away from that situation permanently. A green, electrified system will require more electricity generation, and more transmission, distribution and storage.

Many people have written to their MP asking for a review to be launched regarding the planned electricity transmission infrastructure in East Anglia. In most cases, offshore wind developers in the region already have connection contracts in place with National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) and the Government will not, and cannot, force changes to these contracts; any attempt to mandate changes to connection contracts at this stage would be open to legal challenge by developers. Therefore, I do not think a review is the best approach. However, I recognise the concerns, and agree that we need to find ways of improving the situation.

Communities and MPs have also raised concerns relating to the East Anglia Green transmission project. National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) is developing this project and will provide opportunities for communities to share their views on the project in 2023. NGET has also published information on the wider consideration of offshore alternatives.

We are working on a range of policy enablers to ensure a coordinated approach is the starting presumption for projects yet formally to enter the planning system. Our proposed changes to National Policy Statements (which set out the expectations against which planning proposals are tested) will strengthen emphasis on the coordination of transmission infrastructure and include the need to demonstrate a reduction in environmental and community impacts through coordination. Communities will be able to respond to the consultation on these changes in early 2023. Following the consultation, the revised documents will also need to be approved by Parliament, ensuring full democratic accountability both locally and nationally.

In recognition of the significant volume of infrastructure planned for development in East Anglia, my Department is working closely with developers to encourage voluntary coordination of connections for projects that already have grid connections. This could reduce

landing points in East Anglia, and we have already seen progress. National Grid Ventures has confirmed it is investigating an alternative brownfield connection point for their Nautilus multi-purpose Interconnector, on the Isle of Grain in Kent, as an alternative to Friston, Suffolk.

To provide financial support for the additional work needed to pursue new coordinated solutions, on 12<sup>th</sup> December I launched the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme. This is an open competition grant scheme with up to £100m available, targeting well advanced offshore wind and certain offshore energy assets (such as interconnectors) in Great Britain. It will provide funding to successful applicants to develop feasible coordinated designs for their transmission infrastructure, which could reduce connection infrastructure. We are engaging with developers in East Anglia who we hope will apply. The scheme will close for applications in February 2023, with funding allocated by the middle of 2023.

Such potential coordination could reduce, remove or alter landing points in East Anglia, impacting the original assessments of some projects. Given this, the Electricity System Operator (ESO) is exploring how it could undertake a study into the implications of co-ordination on the network, onshore and offshore, in and around East Anglia. This study would be independently conducted by the ESO. It is important to note that this would follow on from the conclusion of the OCSS grant scheme.

I encourage communities to continue to engage with developers on their plans through the consultation processes. A list of open and upcoming consultations is listed below:

- Eurolink<sup>1</sup> Multi-Purpose Interconnector and the Sealink<sup>2</sup> Bootstrap finished their initial consultations on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. They will seek to consult again in 2023.
- North Falls Offshore Wind Farm finished its initial consultation on 9<sup>th</sup> December but will consult again on the project in the first quarter of 2023.<sup>3</sup>
- Five Estuaries wind farm will also consult in the first quarter of 2023.<sup>4</sup>
- East Anglia Green infrastructure project will consult again in 2023.<sup>5</sup>

While steps are being taken to coordinate and reduce infrastructure where possible, new infrastructure will be needed. Communities that host network infrastructure are playing a vital role in enabling a cheaper, cleaner and self-sufficient energy supply for Britain and it is only right that they benefit from this. A consultation on gov.uk is planned in the first quarter of 2023 on community benefits for communities hosting onshore transmission network infrastructure.

Last month I met with East Anglian MPs and separately with developers of projects in the region, to understand community concerns and encourage efforts to reduce infrastructure. I will be meeting with both groups again on this matter early in 2023.

Applications for all these projects will be considered on their merits, applying the law and policy and the independent report of the examining authority at the appropriate time. It is a fundamental feature of this planning process for nationally significant infrastructure that the final decision on whether to grant consent or not is taken by a Government Minister based only on relevant and publicly-available planning evidence. Given my intention to engage actively with local MPs, developers, and other interested parties on all of the issues here, I

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/eurolink>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.northfallsoffshore.com/consultation/>

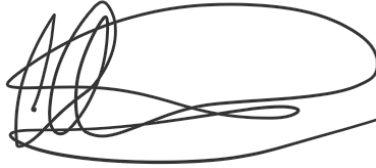
<sup>4</sup> <https://fiveestuaries.co.uk/consultation/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/east-anglia-green-programme-and-next-steps>

should make clear that I will not be the decision-taking Minister for these forthcoming planning applications in East Anglia.

I wish to reassure you that your representations are being heard and considered and as we move forward there remains an open and fair planning process for each project, enabling communities to share their views and for projects to be evaluated impartially.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP**  
Minister of State for Energy and Climate