



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Planning Inspectorate  
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Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm**

I am writing to formally put on record my strong opposition to the application by Norfolk Vanguard Ltd (on behalf of Vattenfall UK) to build the Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm.

As you will be aware, under their proposals, Norfolk Vanguard Ltd intend to connect the Norfolk Vanguard project to an onshore substation located at Necton in my constituency – in the vicinity of the existing National Grid substation in the village. Extension works will be required at the existing substation to complete Norfolk Vanguard's connection to the National Grid and the application also looks to obtain consent to carry out some enabling works for Norfolk Vanguard's sister project, Norfolk Boreas, which is being pursued through a separate DCO process and will require another substation.

Prior to the acceptance of the application for a Development Consent Order and the beginning of the current pre-examination stage, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government about the application. I have enclosed a copy of that letter, along with its attachments, in which I highlighted a number of specific reasons as to why I believe this particular application should not be allowed to go ahead. I stand by all of those reasons now, and wish for them to be given full consideration.

The local community and their legal representatives have repeatedly made the case that Norfolk Vanguard Ltd/Vattenfall UK's pre-application community consultation was inadequate – and I very much agree with them. Indeed, little, if any, information has been provided as to why this site has been chosen ahead of other sites and when specific queries/concerns about a range of aspects concerning the proposals have been raised by individuals, a generic set of FAQ style answers have, for the most part, been used to answer them. My office and I have received similar such answers from Norfolk Vanguard Ltd/Vattenfall UK and, therefore, can very much sympathise with the view locally that they have disregarded the expressed views and concerns of local Councillors, residents and businesses (as well as my own as the local Member of Parliament) by tailoring these FAQs to



provide vague 'answers' to very open ended questions – in a process that they clearly see as being a mere 'box-checking' exercise. Few people in Necton and the surrounding area believe that they have actually received an answer that adequately addresses the specific question that they have asked, and there remains considerable confusion about the true nature of these proposals and how they will likely impact the surrounding area. Specifically, the community has expressed concerns about the visual and environmental impact of the high vantage site chosen by Vattenfall, without any support from the local community.

All of this was articulated in my letter to Ruari Lean, Project Manager of Norfolk Vanguard, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 – as was the widespread belief that the visual representations being provided by Norfolk Vanguard Ltd/Vattenfall UK were inadequate. Requests from both the community and myself for up to date visual files to be provided have continued to be refused (even after the decision to pursue the HVDC option), despite the grave concerns that Necton and its surrounding communities have about the likely visual impact that the proposed substation will have on the area.

I firmly share the widespread local belief that the application is sited incorrectly – as the site is located on some of the highest land in Norfolk and consultation has been disingenuous. Having visited it several times, spent time in the heart of the village and viewed it from surrounding villages, it is clear that any construction there will be a significant visual blight. As alluded to above, the decision to pursue HVDC will massively compound the problem – with a structure of approximately 25m in height being required at this incredibly prominent location. I have no doubt whatsoever that this would result in the substation being visible, not only to all of Necton, but also to a number of villages within a several mile radius. I have very little faith that even the best mitigation techniques will quell this enormous visual impact on the surrounding area.

As the local community and their legal representatives have also repeatedly made clear, insufficient environmental information has been provided by Norfolk Vanguard Ltd/Vattenfall UK as part of their plans. This has taken on even more importance in recent weeks as I have been made aware by the local community of grave local concerns relating to the crash of an F-16 fighter jet at the location back in 1996. A major military clean-up operation was required at the time, with the land having been contaminated with hazardous fuel and, it is feared, radioactive substances. Farming was not permitted at the location for some time due to the likelihood that traces of the contaminants would still be present, and many locals are concerned that, under the proposals, Norfolk Vanguard's cable corridor will run through the site and disturb any remaining contaminants – posing a serious threat to the surrounding community. Despite Norfolk Vanguard Ltd/Vattenfall UK having been made aware of these circumstances, it appears that they have still not taken steps in response to this information.

While I, as the MP, am not opposed to the proposals for a substation in this part of Mid Norfolk in principle, and have consistently made clear to my constituents and Norfolk Vanguard Ltd/Vattenfall UK my desire to broker an arrangement that all parties can largely support, the applicants refusal to properly consult leaves me with no choice but to forcefully support my constituents and local Councillors in opposing this application for the reasons I have discussed above and in the accompanying correspondence provided. I do not believe the plans put forward are at all acceptable in their current form.



I urge you to insist that specific site consultations be redone, as I have no doubt that otherwise they will be subject to a successful Judicial Review.

I wish to be kept updated with all developments in this matter going forward.

Yours,

George Freeman.

George Freeman MP