



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Planning Inspectorate
Room 3 O/P
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Thursday 22nd August 2019

Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm

I am writing to formally place on record my strong opposition to the application, in its current form, by Norfolk Boreas Ltd (on behalf of Vattenfall UK) to build the Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm. This follows my previous opposition to the application's sister project, the Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm, and I would request that all of my submissions then are taken into account now – as all the points raised become even more relevant with this second application.

I continue to agree with the widespread assessment of the local community, along with their legal representation, that **the pre-application community consultation has been inadequate and in places deliberately misleading**. Designed to illustrate the proposed development from the most forgiving aspects, the visual representations, some of which contained significant inaccuracies, have been surrounded by complaint and confusion. The true scale of the proposals has not been sufficiently explained to locals, and attempts (by myself and others) to obtain more accurate information has been met with resistance – even after the decision (late in the day) to commit to HVDC rather than HVAC, and the serious implications of that. The applicant has merely stated that they have complied with legislation.

In this vein, when any detailed queries/concerns about the proposals have been raised by locals, a generic set of FAQ style answers have, for the most part, been issued to answer them. My office and I have received similar treatment and, therefore, hugely sympathise with the belief that Vattenfall UK (both Norfolk Vanguard Ltd previously and Norfolk Boreas Ltd now) have paid little serious attention, if any, to the views and concerns of councillors, residents and businesses in Necton or the surrounding communities – instead providing deliberately vague and inadequate answers and information, and relying on their belief that the application will be 'waived' through irrespective of local opinion because of its national significance. This is of course not acceptable.

You will be aware that I am not at all opposed to the location of the substation in Mid Norfolk – simply the siting. The decision to proceed with the site in question seems to be the result of an arbitrary selection process. Even when asked by myself, the applicant has been unable and/or unwilling to explain the reasons this site was favoured over others (including one nearby that was

put forward by the local community themselves). They have instead referred me to their lawyers, who have simply stated that a process to determine the siting has indeed been carried out.

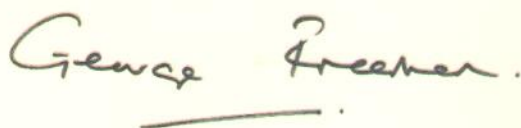
Had proper consultation taken place, it would have become known very quickly that this site is completely inappropriate – situated on **some of the highest land in the county and overlooking a number of settlements. The commitment to HVDC will further exacerbate the already significant visual impact of placing the development at this location, involving much larger structures approximately 25m in height.** In addition, the site was the location of an F-16 fighter jet crash back in 1996 and there is a chance that hazardous, and potentially radioactive, substances may still contaminate the land today – despite a major military clean-up operation at the time. **Construction could well disturb any remaining contaminants.**

All of this would further suggest that Vattenfall consider the consultation a simple 'box-checking' exercise for which they must go through the motions – never seriously taking into account the views and concerns of local communities.

As we have consistently made clear, neither I nor the people of Necton and the surrounding villages are opposed to the principle of offshore wind energy or the necessary infrastructure to bring it onshore. However, we believe the **community should be given a proper voice to help site and screen it correctly.** (Indeed, I have consistently sought to lead efforts with them to broker an arrangement that all parties can support – as I did with the substation for the Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm). Instead, this shambolic consultation has culminated in a wholly inappropriate set of proposals coming before the Inspectorate, and deepened anger and disillusionment from local councillors, councils and the community at the seeming lack of enforcement by the Planning Inspector of proper consultation.

I look forward to submitting my more comprehensive Written Representation in due course.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Freeman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

George Freeman MP