

ScottishPower Renewables

East Anglia TWO and East Anglia ONE North

Phase 3.5 Decision Summary

December 2018

Introduction

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) has now concluded pre-application consultation Phase 3.5 in relation to the proposed East Anglia TWO and East Anglia ONE North offshore windfarms and would like to thank everybody that has participated throughout this period.

SPR introduced this additional phase of consultation in response to statutory and local stakeholder feedback. It explored the opportunity to consider an alternative site known as Broom Covert, Sizewell, in parallel with proposals for a substation site at Grove Wood, Friston. In addition, this phase of consultation was used to communicate additional information on SPR's proposals, particularly regarding connection to the electrical transmission network, local road network work and substation drainage works.

Prior to this phase of consultation SPR had undertaken three previous phases of pre-application consultation, covering the principle matters set out below.

Phase 1: held in late 2017; introduced the projects to new stakeholders, consulted on potential constraints to the location for onshore infrastructure, consulted on the scope of the proposed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and introduced the projects to those potentially visually impacted by the offshore infrastructure.

Phase 2: held in spring 2018; consulted on an indicative onshore development area, including proposed substation zones and consulted on the location of viewpoints selected to assess the visual impact of the offshore wind turbines.

Phase 3: held in summer 2018; communicated conclusions based on previous consultation that zones in the west of an indicative onshore development area, and in particular the site to the north of Friston (Grove Wood) offered on balance the most appropriate option for substation development. At this time, SPR consulted on the detail of our proposals including landfall location, the preferred substation zone and broad cable routing.

SPR Decision Making

As a responsible developer, SPR takes a balanced view towards site selection at all times using its industry leading legal advisors who draw on national planning guidance and industry leading technical advisors, in addition to the company's project experience, notably in the successful development of East Anglia ONE and East Anglia THREE offshore wind projects.

SPR has received over 600 responses to Phase 3.5 Consultation from members of the public, local interest groups and statutory stakeholders. Feedback was received in relation to both the Grove Wood, Friston, site and the Broom Covert, Sizewell, site. This consultation has, for the Broom Covert site, highlighted concerns regarding proposed substation impacts on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and therefore compliance with National Policy Statement. National Policy Statement EN1 states the following.

“National Parks the Broads and the AONB have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes which help ensure their continued protection, and which the infrastructure planning commission (IPC) [now Secretary of State] should have regard to in its decisions. The conservation of natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should be given substantial weight by the IPC in deciding on applications for development consent in these areas.”

It also states that the development consent may be granted in exceptional circumstances. EN1 sets out the criteria to be applied to determine whether 'exceptional circumstances' can be demonstrated to justify major development within the AONB. It is SPR's view, along with a number of respondents to Phase 3.5, that a feasible alternative site for the substation has been identified outside of the AONB at Grove Wood, Friston.

“The AONB Partnership consider that ScottishPower Renewables have already identified sites outside the nationally designated AONB during a site selection process that the developer considered suitable and indeed a preferred option was identified before this further round of consultation.

“New substations at Broom Covert have the potential to overwhelm this part of the AONB and to squeeze out the remaining traditional landscape character and permanently close down opportunities to enhance this part of the designated area. It would also further populate with industrial development the corridor of AONB land between Sizewell and Leiston, threatening to sever clear landscape character connectivity north and south.”

Natural England acknowledges that “The Broom Covert site is within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the landscape has the highest level of sensitivity. Natural England believes that the proposed use of this site would constitute major development in the AONB. Planning policy establishes a default of no major development within the AONB unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Natural England consider that the Broom Covert site would be extremely challenging to develop without significantly impacting on the AONB.

“This site sits in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Government’s new NPPF sets out that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that the scale and extent of developments in these areas should be severely limited.

“The construction of such visually intrusive complexes in or adjacent to an AONB is wrong and should be avoided. It behoves the principal authorities to uphold these site designations and fully support their function of protecting the UK’s natural heritage as detailed in statute.”

SPR’s expert advisors have drawn similar conclusions with regards to AONB impacts and therefore policy implications, concluding;

The Broom Covert, Sizewell, site is within an AONB and at a sensitive location due to the AONB being both narrow in width and having already had its landscape character influenced and adversely affected by the development of large-scale energy generation and transmission infrastructure in the immediate vicinity. Development, including screening and mitigation, at Broom Covert, Sizewell, is likely to have a significant effect on openness, tranquillity, views and character of the AONB. This erosion of the special qualities and the small scale of this part of the AONB increases its sensitivity to further effects.

The Grove Wood, Friston, site lies outside the AONB and is not in a locally designated landscape.

In addition to landscape implications, consultees responding to Phase 3.5 have also highlighted the potential interaction of the Broom Covert, Sizewell, site with internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites. Drainage implications in relation to the Sizewell Marshes nationally protected Site of Special Scientific Interest are also highlighted by several respondents.

A number of consultees have commented on the cost of a longer cable route. Although the cost of the cable route to Grove Wood, Friston, is higher, this is not significant in relation to other comparable projects. The Broom Covert site presents major challenges to policy which outweigh the increased cost of further cabling.

It is SPR’s position based on extensive advice and this further stakeholder engagement that the Grove Wood, Friston site offers on balance the most appropriate option for substation development. This position is based on policy guidance presented within EN1.

Next steps

SPR will continue to work on detailed plans for the Grove Wood, Friston, site with a focus on finalising draft impact assessments and developing appropriate mitigation options. In particular we will look in detail at the concerns raised by you specifically during Phase 3.5 consultation regarding; flooding and drainage, traffic and transport, landscape and visual impact and effects on the setting of heritage assets.

In early 2019 SPR will launch Phase 4 of pre-application consultation for both East Anglia TWO and East Anglia ONE North. This consultation will be based around a draft Environmental Statement which will set out, for each project separately, the proposed infrastructure and its likely environmental impacts. The documents will also set out in detail SPR’s approach to site selection, including how

consultation has influenced this process. The site selection chapter will set out the reasons for SPR's choice of substation sites, taking into account the environmental, social and economic effects and including, where relevant, technical and commercial feasibility.

SPR will publicise when this consultation will be undertaken and how to access the documentation, and look forward to your comments on the draft impact assessments. SPR will also hold further public information events where experts will be on hand to discuss the impact and proposed mitigation options for the projects, including those at the Grove Wood, Friston, site.

| Date | Town / Village | Address | Time |
|------------|----------------|--|------------|
| 16/02/2019 | Friston | Friston Village Hall, Church Road, Friston, Saxmundham IP17 1PU | 10am - 4pm |
| 18/02/2019 | Aldeburgh | Aldeburgh Church Hall, Victoria Road, Aldeburgh IP15 5EA | 2pm - 7pm |
| 20/02/2019 | Leiston | Sizewell Sports and Social Club, King George's Avenue, Leiston IP16 4JX | 2pm - 7pm |
| 21/02/2019 | Orford | Town Hall, Market Hill, Orford, Woodbridge IP12 2NZ | 2pm - 7pm |
| 22/02/2019 | Knodishall | Knodishall Village Hall, School Road, Knodishall IP17 1UD | 2pm - 7pm |
| 23/02/2019 | Thorpeness | Thorpeness Country Club, The Benthills, Thorpeness IP16 4NU | 10am - 4pm |
| 25/02/2019 | Southwold | Stella Peskett Hall, Mights Road, Southwold IP18 6BE | 2pm- 7pm |
| 27/02/2019 | Friston | Friston Village Hall, Church Road, Friston, Saxmundham, IP17 1PU | 2pm - 7pm |
| 28/02/2019 | Thorpeness | Thorpeness Country Club, The Benthills, Thorpeness IP16 4NU | 2pm - 7pm |
| 01/03/2019 | Aldeburgh | Aldeburgh Church Hall, Victoria Road, Aldeburgh IP15 5EA | 2pm - 7pm |
| 02/03/2019 | Knodishall | Knodishall Village Hall, School Road, Knodishall IP17 1UD | 10am - 4pm |
| 04/03/2019 | Southwold | Stella Peskett Hall, Mights Road, Southwold IP18 6BE | 2pm - 7pm |
| 09/03/2019 | Leiston | Sizewell Sports and Social Club, King George's Avenue, Leiston IP16 4JX | 10am - 4pm |

FIND OUT MORE

If you require any further information on the projects please contact us via the methods below.

Email

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