

The Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) acknowledges the contribution that wind power will make towards the Nation's energy needs. Notwithstanding this, SPS's charitable objects are to protect and promote the special landscape and heritage of Suffolk by ensuring that proposals are critically assessed and properly mitigated. SPS operates as the county branch of CPRE.

Having responded to the consultations and participated in the archaeology and cultural heritage working group, SPS remains concerned about the scale of this project and the enormity of its environmental impacts. As such, SPS wishes to register as an Interested Party on the following grounds:

Onshore Impacts – Landscape and visual

SPS's principal concern is the scale of the industrialising effect of the onshore substation within an area where its intrinsic rural character is defined by its historic landscape and buildings. Friston, a tiny rural village has remained substantially unchanged for centuries and will be overwhelmed by the substation.

The Environmental Statement underestimates the onshore landscape and visual impacts and does not truly reflect the character or the historic significance of the landscape and the harm that will result. Such a large alien feature will not integrate with this existing landscape but will dominate in terms of siting, scale and massing.

The effectiveness of the proposed mitigation planting is ambitious and the reliability of the supporting visualisations is questionable. Moreover in some cases the mitigation planting being proposed is inappropriate and will create further harm to this historic landscape.

SPS believes that a more creative and sympathetic design, and/or consideration of lowering the ground level, rather than adopting generic layouts would minimise some impacts. The detail provided within the Design and Access Statement and the Design Principle Statement is superficial.

SPS also has strong reservations about the adequacy of the assessment of the impacts on designated heritage assets. Although the methodology for assessing impacts appears sound, the resulting narrative and conclusions drawn are both inaccurate and misleading and do not fully recognise the important contribution of setting to significance.

Seascape and Visual Effects

The visual impacts of the turbines upon the special qualities of the AONB will be significant, particularly with the cumulative impacts from EA2. Although the applicant has reduced the extent of the arrays they will continue to have a significant adverse impact on a nationally designated coastline and numerous coastal heritage assets. Consideration should be given to a height restriction to mitigate the impacts.

Other Issues

SPS also has concerns relating to the Cable Route, Archaeology, Traffic, Rights of Way, Lighting and the Cumulative Impacts including the uncoordinated approach to all offshore wind developments. These will be included within future representations.

Finally SPS would raise the case for an environmental fund to compensate (in part) those that will be undoubtedly impacted upon and disrupted during the life of this project. The absence of any such recognition of the impact from such significant infrastructure provision within small rural communities is considered to be wholly unacceptable and inequitable to the cost being paid by those communities.