



NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm

CONSULTATION RESULTS

We would like to thank you for your feedback.

All comments we receive will help us refine and improve our plans.



NEED AND RATIONALE

Q1. Do you have any general comments you would like to make about the UK's offshore wind energy ambitions?

More than half of respondents indicated support for offshore wind, particularly as it means a move away from fossil fuels and has the potential to reduce pollution. However there were a number of concerns around its reliability and the continued need for other generation sources, as well as its impact on marine life and how it works in a harsh offshore environment. In terms of the project itself, a similar number were supportive (around 50%) with the key theme being that they would like to see it delivered quicker. Some other respondents were worried that the technology would be outdated by the time construction is complete, were concerned about the onshore grid connection location and also about impacts on the agricultural land. There was also a suggestion that energy companies should be run as not for profit organisations

Q2a: Do you believe that offshore wind will: reduce energy costs for the UK?

Of those who answered this question there was an even 50/50 split between yes and no.

Q2b: Do you believe that offshore wind will: improve the nation's energy security?

78% of respondents said they believed offshore wind would improve the nation's energy security.

Q3a: Do you believe that offshore wind has a key role to play in the UK's energy future?

85% of respondents said they believed offshore wind has a key role to play in the UK's energy future.



NEED AND RATIONALE (CON'TD)

Q3b: Why / why not?

The reasons for a positive response to this question included the fact that as the UK is a windy island nation it makes sense to use its natural resources. The other key points from supporters were that it: contributes to a reduction in the use of fossil fuels, is a proven technology and has well-established benefits. Of those who said no, there were concerns around the visual impact and what happens at the end of the turbine lifecycle.

Q4: Do you have any preference as to how North Falls could engage with and benefit the local community?

There was a range of responses to this question, which will be taken into consideration by the project as work progresses. From a socio-economic perspective these included the use of local companies, and the development of apprenticeship and trainee schemes to create career pathways. From a wider community perspective there were suggestions around supporting and working closely with local artists and theatre groups, sponsoring community events and projects, protecting wildlife and providing charitable donations. In terms of engagement, future consultation events and the provision of regular information was requested, along with genuine consideration of the feedback provided.



OFFSHORE TRANSMISSION NETWORK REVIEW

Q5: Do you have any comments or questions about North Falls' involvement with the Offshore Transmission Network Review?

Most people had no comment on this question partly due to not being exactly clear on what the OTNR is. However those who did respond would mostly like to see more effort on a potential offshore connection option. There was a general understanding that North Falls was given a grid connection point by National Grid but also questions on how the project could influence the location of that connection. The fact that the proposed cables will be underground was positively received but this was counter-balanced by concerns around the visual and other impacts of the onshore substation. Updates on the progress of the OTNR were requested.

Q6: Do you have any comments about the location of the proposed North Falls grid connection?

Of those who responded to this question, the main theme was around what is seen as a detour of the East Anglia Green route into Ardleigh and the preference either for a connection elsewhere, such as closer to the coast or nearer London, or the use of an offshore grid connection option. There was some concern around the use of agricultural land for the substation site, and need to protect local bird and wildlife, and a query on the landscaping proposed around the substation. The remainder of the respondents used this question to voice general support to the project.

Q7: Do you have any questions about the development consent application process?

There were few questions about the development consent application process, but of those questions asked, they covered the full spectrum from saying the process was too long and should be reduced to those wondering about how decisions are made, what is the level of local authority involvement and whether it was a waste of time. There were some comments around landowner engagement that will be taken on board by the project.



DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Q8: Do you have any comments about the purpose of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report?

It was stated that the PEIR needs to be well-considered, take a long-term perspective and be reviewed externally. There was the call for greater cooperation with Five Estuaries (see also next question), for cumulative impacts to be included and for all materials to be made available online. There were concerns around how local comments will be incorporated and whether the information in the report would be either insufficient or that decisions have already been made. This question also received a very specific request to replace cast iron water main near Thorpele-Soken.



STAKEHOLDERS

Q9: Do you have any comments or suggestions about how North Falls is coordinating with other major infrastructure projects in the region?

The main theme to come from responses to this question was around the need for increased coordination with Five Estuaries, more detail of exactly how the two projects are working together, specifics on the cooperation and more on the cumulative impacts (also with National Grid's East Anglia Green project). The cumulative impact responses related to both the construction work and also to the fact the substations would be in one area and how that would effect the nearby community.



THE WIND FARM

Q10: Do you have any comments or questions about the concept of the design envelope?

There were only a handful of responses to this question with the gist being that while the design envelope presents the worst case scenario, it was important to try to avoid the worst case. To that end there was also the suggestion to narrow the design envelope.



OFFSHORE

Q11: Do you have any comments or suggestions in relation to the offshore location or offshore infrastructure of North Falls? This could be comments on fisheries, components, marine ecology, offshore construction or anything else you feel relevant.

The feedback from this question primarily related to minimising impacts on marine life and the offshore ecosystem, with a specific focus on being aware of cod spawning sites near the offshore site. Some respondents felt the project's presence may help reduce the likelihood of overfishing. There were some suggestions around use of recyclable turbine blades, some generally supportive feedback and one comment around using an alternative sub-sea connection that comes to land elsewhere.



LANDFALL

Q12: Looking at the landfall compound zone, is there anything you feel would be relevant for our project to know about this particular area to help us select our temporary construction compound location?

Half of the respondents did not respond to this question while the other half had a wide range of comments including those related to construction concerns such as: avoiding any closures of local footpaths or bridleways; keeping heavy construction traffic off residential roads; and minimising construction noise. There was also acknowledgement of the beauty of the local area and that care should be taken to 'put things back how you found them'. Awareness was raised of the area's susceptibility to flooding and the possible presence of WWII unexploded ordnances. Finally there was also the request to minimise the extent of any sailing restrictions.



ONSHORE

Q13: Do you have any comments or questions about the methodologies proposed to be used to construct the onshore underground cable?

Again half of the respondents were happy with the proposed methodologies and had limited feedback other than to be comfortable with horizontal-directional drilling as a process and relieved that the cables would be buried for their full length. In terms of concerns with the proposed methodologies, the main issues were around the impact on the farmland and countryside during construction, closure of any footpaths or bridleways and also any potential noise or other pollution. There was also a comment around any longer-term impacts on agricultural land into the future.

Q14: Do you have any information about the onshore substation zone that could help in finalising the location for the onshore substation?

Respondents not living in the area close to the proposed substation location did not tend to comment on either the location or surrounding area as they were either unfamiliar with the area or had no issues/felt it looked reasonable. Those who did comment were concerned it was not a suitable location for electrical infrastructure and felt it would add negatively to the existing 'wirescape'.

Q15: Do you have any comments or suggestions in relation to the onshore cable route for North Falls? This could be comments on the route, onshore ecology or anything else you feel relevant.

This question received some very specific and useful responses that included suggestions around: replacing a cast-iron water main; ensuring a known dormice hedge route remains undisturbed and not blocking, diverting or impacting a specific drainage ditch. There were further calls for coordination with the Five Estuaries project in terms of utilising the same route and for reduced impacts on agricultural land.

Q16: Although not feasible under existing regulations, do you have any comments or questions on the concept of an offshore grid connection or its associated onshore infrastructure?

There were questions around why the existing regulations mean an offshore grid connection is not feasible, which relates to current government legislation and planning regulations that are under review as part of Offshore Transmission Network Review. While most did not answer this question, the responses from those who did were primarily positive to the concept providing it did not impact marine life or create too much offshore infrastructure or create offshore restriction zones.