



Planning and Highways Delegations Committee

Date: **11 September 2009**
Time: **On the rise of the Planning Regulatory Committee**
Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

Membership

Mr A Gunson

Mr I Monson

Panel of Representatives from the Planning (Regulatory) Committee:

Mr P Hardy – Green Party Spokesperson

Mr D Harrison - Liberal Democrat Spokesperson

Mr J Rogers - Chairman of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee

Mr J Shrimplin - Vice-Chairman of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee

For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda please contact the Committee Administrator:

Lesley Rudelhoff Scott on 01603 222963
or email lesley.rudelhoff.scott@norfolk.gov.uk

Where the County Council have received letters of objection in respect of any application, these are summarised in the report. If you wish to read them in full, Members can do so either at the meeting itself or beforehand in the Department of Planning and Transportation on the 3rd Floor, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich.

A g e n d a

1. **To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending.**
2. **Election of Chairman**
3. **Minutes:** To receive the Minutes of the last meeting held on 24 April 2009 (Page 1)
4. **Members to Declare any Interests**

Please indicate whether the interest is a personal one only or one which is prejudicial. A declaration of a personal interest should indicate the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of a personal interest, the member may speak and vote on the matter. Please note that if you are exempt from declaring a personal interest because it arises solely from your position on a body to which you were nominated by the County Council or a body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. another local authority), you need only declare your interest if and when you intend to speak on a matter.

If a prejudicial interest is declared, the member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, in which case you may attend the meeting for that purpose. You must immediately leave the room when you have finished or the meeting decides you have finished, if earlier. **These declarations apply to all those members present, whether the member is part of the meeting, attending to speak as a local member on an item or simply observing the meeting from the public seating area.**

5. **Proposed Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm** (Page)

Report by The Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 3 September 2009



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Planning and Highways Delegations Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Friday 24 April 2009

Present: Mr A Gunson

Also Present: Mr C Armes
Mr D Baxter
Dr A Boswell
Mr D Callaby
Mrs J Eells
Mrs I Floering Blackman
Mr J Rogers
Mr A Wright

Officers: Mr S Faulkner – Planning and Transportation
Mrs Anita Ragan - Planning and Transportation

1. Apologies for absence:

There were apologies from Mr Monson.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2009 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr Wright declared a personal interest in item 4, as he sat on the Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Management Group and the Wash Estuary Local Authority Member Group.

Mrs Eells declared a personal interest Item 4 as a Member of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Management Group.

Mr Rogers declared a personal interest as a Member of Breckland District Council.

4. Race Bank Offshore Wind Farm Proposal, Centrica Energy Ltd

The annexed report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received.

It was noted that the Local Member for Docking, Mrs Monbiot supported the recommendation as contained in the report to raise an objection.

Mr Baxter said that he too supported the recommendation to raise an objection to the application for the same reasons as he gave on page six of the minutes of the last meeting on 13 February. He said that the people of Wells connected with the fishing industry were not in favour of the proposed turbines. He felt that there was a lack of baseline information, with only one to two years research which was completely insufficient to determine the future effects of such an installation.

The following comments were made for and against wind turbines.

- Oil supplies would cease in the next 25 years.
- There had been no objections to the turbines from the residents at Wells.
- When the wind stopped blowing no power would be generated.
- Turbines would not be erected at all if subsidies were not given by the Government to install them.

The Local member for Dersingham, Mrs Eells said that she supported the recommendation due to the unknown effects the turbines could have on The Wash and the marine life in it. She asked how it had been authorised that cables be laid through The Wash as the area had been clarified at the High Court as a “no mans land.” She also said that jobs of local fishermen were at stake. She said that she had been elected to represent the people in her division, some of who were people who rely on their income from the sea.

In response the Principal Planner said that he was not aware of the legal case she had referred to but understood that Crown Estate own, or are responsible for the sea-bed. He indicated that the application was not covered by land use planning legislation and would be determined by the Secretary of State responsible for Energy and Climate Change under the provisions of the 1989 Electricity Act. The Committee were being asked only for its comments on how the application would affect Norfolk.

In response to questions over numbers, the Principal Planner stated that 275 off shore wind turbines had been permitted or were operational off the coast of Norfolk. If this application went ahead there would be around 500. It was the cumulative impact which was the issue with this application and the fact that the proposal in combination with other permitted schemes would have implications on designated landscape and nature conservation areas.

Mr Callaby felt that wind power was a cleaner and better way to supply power but he had concerns about the power cables going through The Wash. He felt a study needed to be carried out on the impact of the turbines to see whether or not The Wash could withstand them.

Dr Boswell made the following points:

- He shared concerns over the cables going through The Wash and felt that the Grid connection needed to be moved out to Skegness to enable them to bypass The Wash.
- Centrica had published an extensive programme of data collection that had taken place which showed the application was designed to avoid areas of environmental importance.
- The issues raised about the inefficiency of turbines were unproven, there would never be a time when there would not be sufficient wind to produce electricity.
- Employment would be created for thousands of people around the area of Wells so it would be doing a disservice to the people of Norfolk if the application was not supported.
- Views taken on the application seemed very parochial. Although the energy that would be created by the turbines would be more than was needed in Norfolk it would mean providing energy for the rest of the country.
- The turbines would help reduce the impact of climate change.
- He had concerns about the livelihoods of the fishermen but the DTI had set up a Fishing Liaison Forum, so that any concerns could be voiced.
- There was no evidence to say that there would be a negative effect on visitors to the region.

Mr Wright said that it would be an impossible task to lay cables on the sea bed of The Wash as it changed continually, so there would not be a safe route for cables. There was a need to put pressure on the appropriate body to get the cables to go via Skegness.

The Chairman felt that the precautionary principle should be adopted and proposed to **RESOLVE:**

That the Department of Energy and Climate Change be informed that the County Council wishes to raise an objection to the Race Bank wind farm on the following ground:

The proposal in combination with other permitted and planned offshore wind farm schemes would have a detrimental impact on North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast contrary to Policy ENV.2 of the East of England Plan;

- There was concern that the landscape impact arising from this proposal in combination with other permitted and planned wind farms could have a detrimental impact on visitor numbers and the local economy contributing to the objectives of Policy E.6 of the East of England Plan.
- There were concerns about the cumulative impact of this proposal, taken with other permitted and planned schemes, on

the local fishing industry and local economy. The proposal is considered contrary to Policy SS.1 of the East of England Plan.

- There were environmental concerns regarding the wind farm and cabling route through the Wash Estuary, which has a number of national and international designations, including: Ramsar site; National Nature Reserve; Special Protection Area; and Site of Special Scientific Interest. As such this proposal is contrary to Policy ENV.3 of the East of England Plan.

Reasons for Decision

The proposed Race Bank wind farm development would undoubtedly have major environmental benefits in terms of producing significant amounts of renewable energy. The applicant's Environmental Statement indicates that the proposal could supply electricity for around 420,000 homes and lead to the reduction of up to 848,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. These benefits are clearly consistent with:

- National policy on renewable energy targets
- Meeting the UK's Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases
- Meeting the aspirations set out in the Climate Change Act (2008); Energy Act (2008) and Planning Act (2008)

- The conclusions reached in the Stern Report
- Policy ENG.1 of the East of England Plan (2008)
- A Climate Change Strategy for Norfolk (2008)

However, offset against these wider benefits, it recognised that this proposal was the latest in a series of offshore wind proposals off the North Norfolk coast, which has a variety of national landscape designations (e.g. Heritage Coast and AONB). It was felt that this proposal in combination with other permitted and proposed offshore wind farms would have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the north Norfolk coast. This in turn could detract from the County's tourism offer and have an adverse economic impact. There were also concerns about the impact on the local fishing industry

In responding to the last three offshore wind farm proposals (August 2006; March 2007; February 2009) the County Council has taken a cautious view, raising concern about the cumulative adverse impact on the north Norfolk coast. Although the County Council has signed up to the Norfolk Climate Change Strategy (2008) which firmly recognises the need to cut carbon emissions, the potential adverse socio-economic and landscape impacts of the proposal are important material considerations.

Therefore, considering the cumulative impacts of successive proposals in the Greater Wash, it was recommended to raise an objection to this proposal. While previous advice in respect of the Docking Shoal

proposal recommended not raising an objection, in this instance it is felt that the combined impact with other permitted and proposed schemes is now too significant in landscape, ecology and local economy terms for this particular proposal to be supported. As such, an objection is recommended to the Race Bank offshore wind farm.

Alternative Options Considered

Any decision relating to this proposal would need to balance the local and national objectives for addressing climate change while at the same time needing to protect a very precious and sensitive part of the County's environment. The potential benefits arising from this proposal were significant in terms of the number of households (420,000) which could be supplied with electricity from a sustainable renewable source. This potentially could produce enough electricity to meet the needs of all the outstanding housing (still to build at March 2006) in the Eastern Region up to 2021. The proposed wind farm could significantly reduce carbon emissions by 850,000 tonnes per year. On this basis, it could be argued that the proposal is consistent with national, regional and local policies on energy and climate change. Therefore it could have been proposed to support the application.

It was further **RESOLVED** not to ask for a public enquiry.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting ended at 12.00pm



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Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm Proposal
Dudgeon Offshore Wind Ltd

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

Consultation by Dudgeon Offshore Wind Ltd for an Offshore Wind Farm and ancillary development including offshore cable route and substation approximately 32 KM (20 Miles) miles off North Norfolk Coast (North of Cromer). This application will be determined by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) under Section 36 of the Electricity Act (1989).

Separate applications will need to be submitted to the respective local planning authorities with regard to the on-shore works (e.g. electricity cable routes and substation etc).

The proposal could potentially provide enough electricity for 400,000 homes annually and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 825,000 tonnes per annum. The proposal is consistent with national, regional and local policies on tackling climate change.

It is recommended that no strategic objection be raised to this proposal. In addition no highway objection is recommended to this proposal.

1. The Proposal

1.1. The application for the Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm comprises:

Table 1

Location	:	The site is 32 km (20 miles) north of Cromer (see Map).
Number of turbines (Indicative)	:	Between 56 (10 MW Turbines) – 187 (3 MW Turbines) all with three blades
Mean sea level to tip of blade at highest point	:	190 metres (maximum – based on 10 MW turbines)
Total Area	:	35 sq.km.
Total Output	:	Installed Capacity of 560 Mega Watts (MW)

1.2. The proposed development also includes:

- An offshore electrical substation(s) located alongside the Wind Turbines, which is likely to comprise a single main deck area of between 800 sq.m. to 2,500 sq.m. and standing up to 25 metres in height; and
- Up to four export cables running south west (40 km) and making landfall at Weybourne. The cables will be buried in the sea bed to a depth of between 1 – 3 metres (see Map). Cable separation will be between 10 – 50 metres.

1.3. The above offshore proposal will require consents under:

- Section 36 of the Electricity Act (1989);
- Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act (1985); and
- Section 34 of the Coast Protection Act (1949).

It is the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) who will determine the application. The County Council is a statutory consultee.

Grid Connection

1.4. The onshore works associated with this scheme, including export cables, substation and connection to the Grid, will be the subject of separate applications made under the relevant Planning Acts. These applications will ultimately be determined by the respective local planning authorities.

2. Background

2.1. The Table below compares the Dudgeon proposal with other permitted and proposed schemes in the area (see also attached Map):

Table 1

Wind farm	No of Turbines and capacity (MW)	Total Height Metres	Distance off Coast (KM)	Number of Homes	Status
1. Scroby Sands	30 (76)	92	3	52,400	Operational
2. Lynn	27 (97)	N/A	18	65,000	Operational
3. Inner Dowsing	27(97)	N/A	23	65,000	Under-construction
4. Sheringham Shoal	108 (315)	172	17	176,000	Approved Not Started
5. Lincs	83 (250)	170	18	150,000	Approved Not Started
Sub-Total	275 (835)			508,400	
6. Docking Shoal	166 (500)	170	14	340,000	Awaiting decision
7. Race Bank	206 (620)	170	27	420,000	Awaiting decision

8. Dudgeon Shoal	187 (560)	190	32	400,000	Application Submitted
9. Cromer	30 (N/A)	140	7	N/A	Withdrawn
10. Triton Knoll	N/A	N/A	40	N/A	No Application submitted
Total	834			1,668,400	

2.2. While no objections were raised to the Great Yarmouth and Cromer schemes, the County Council has raised objections to the following:

- (a) **Sheringham Shoal proposal** was considered by this Committee in August 2006. Concerns were raised in relation to the impact the proposal would have on the North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Heritage Coast; the local fishing industry and local economy;
- (b) **Lincs Proposal** was considered by this Committee in March 2007. It was felt that the Environmental Statement accompanying the application failed to sufficiently address the wider cumulative impacts on Norfolk and the Greater Wash Area. In particular concerns were raised regarding the landscape, nature conservation and economic impacts on Norfolk when combined with further offshore schemes at Docking Shoal and Race Bank;
- (c) **Docking Shoal** was considered by this Committee in February 2009. An objection was raised on the basis of cumulative impact on the AONB and Heritage Coast, detrimental impact on the Wash Estuary and unfavourable impact on the local fishing industry and local economy;
- (d) **Race Bank** – was considered by this Committee in April 2009 and again an objection was raised on the basis of cumulative impact on the AONB and Heritage Coast, detrimental impact on the Wash Estuary and unfavourable impact on the local fishing industry and local economy.

2.3. It should be noted that those schemes already permitted (1-5 above) have the potential to generate over 800 MW of energy, which is sufficient to supply more than 500,000 homes with electricity. Norfolk currently has around 380,000 dwellings with a further 62,000 planned in the period 2006-2021 in the adopted East of England Plan (May 2008).

3. **Policy Context**

a) National Policy

- 3.1. National planning policy on renewable energy is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22, Renewable Energy, published in August 2004. However, offshore renewable energy generation projects (such as offshore wind farms) are not covered by the land use planning system.
- 3.2. The Energy Act 2008 states the government's targets for electricity generated from renewable sources. These currently stand at 10% by 2010 and 15% by 2015. The government has also signalled its intention to increase the targets to

20% in 2020. The government's long term aspiration is to increase the diversity of the electricity mix, thereby improving the reliability of energy supplies as well as lowering carbon emissions.

- 3.3. The Climate Change Act 2008 underlines the government's commitment to addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change. The Act aims to improve carbon management and help the transition towards a low carbon economy in the UK.
- 3.4. The Planning Act 2008 sections 181 & 182 make specific reference to the need for local authorities and regional planning bodies to tackle climate change.
- 3.5. The UK's Renewable Energy Strategy was published in July 2009. The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the path for meeting the UK's legally-binding target to ensure 15% of the UK's energy comes from renewable energy sources by 2020. The Strategy is designed to tackle climate change and reduce the UK's emissions of carbon dioxide by over 750 million tonnes between now and 2030.

b) Regional Policy

- 3.6. The adopted East of England Plan (May 2008) Policy ENG.1 (Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance) indicates that local authorities should encourage the supply of "decentralised, renewable and low carbon sources...".
- 3.7. Policy ENG.2 (Renewable Energy Targets) indicates that the development of renewable power generation should be supported, with the aim that by 2010 10% of the region's energy should come from renewable sources, rising to 17% by 2020. These targets exclude offshore wind and are subject to meeting European and international obligations to protect wildlife.
- 3.8. Policy ENV.2 (Landscape Conservation) indicates that local planning authorities (LPAs) and other agencies should afford the highest level of protection to the East of England's nationally designated landscapes, which include in the context of Norfolk the Heritage Coast and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within the AONB, priority over other considerations should be given to conserving the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of each area.
- 3.9. Policy ENV.3 (Biodiversity and Earth Heritage) indicates, *inter alia*, that LPAs should ensure that internationally and nationally designated sites are given the strongest level of protection and that development does not have adverse effects on the integrity of sites of European or international importance for nature conservation and should ensure that new development minimises damage to biodiversity and avoids harm to local wildlife sites.
- 3.10. Policy SS.1 (Achieving Sustainable Development) indicates, *inter alia*, that development should support a sustainable and diverse economy.

c) Local Policy - A Climate Change Strategy for Norfolk

- 3.11. The above strategy was commissioned by the Norfolk Local Government Association (LGA) and has been agreed by the County Council (2008) and was formally launched on 6 February 2009. The strategy has two high level goals: to mitigate; and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The strategy recognises the need for decisive action now to save energy and reduce

emissions in order to avert the worst effects of climate change (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding, water shortages, etc).

- 3.12. With regard to renewable energy, priority is given to understanding the supply and demand in the renewables and low carbon-market. A Norfolk-wide study of the renewable energy market will be commissioned through the Climate Change Strategy with the aim of developing a sustainable energy strategy for Norfolk, which will include targets for the development of renewable energy.

4. **Local Members' Views**

- 4.1. The views of members will be reported at Committee.

5 **Assessment of Proposal**

- 5.1 The assessment below considers the key strategic implications of the proposed Dudgeon Wind Farm on the County in terms of potential benefits, impact on the landscape and seascape, nature conservation impact and potential socio-economic impacts. While the Environmental Statement (ES) also considers the wider implications of the proposal in respect of, for example, shipping and navigation, marine ecology and electromagnetic interference, these matters are generally not considered in the assessment below as they are detailed issues for other consultees with specialist responsibilities to address. The assessment below considers the cumulative impact of the above development, taking into account permitted and recently submitted proposals.

(a) Potential Benefits

- 5.2. The proposed offshore wind farm would produce approximately 1,480 GWh of electricity per year. The total installed capacity of the wind farm would be 560 MW; enough to meet the requirements of approximately 400,000 homes. This is almost enough electricity to meet the needs of all the outstanding (still to build) housing in the Eastern Region to 2021, as set out in Policy H1 of the adopted East of England Plan (i.e. 402,450 dwellings). These figures are based on a net capacity of 40% and take into account: the intermittent nature of the wind; the 'down-time' of the turbines due to maintenance and adverse weather; and other energy losses in cabling etc.
- 5.3. On the above basis the Dudgeon Wind Farm would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around 825,000 tonnes per year. Over the 40 year life time of the project this would amount to a reduction of some 33 million tonnes of Carbon Dioxide.

(b) Seascape and Visual Impact

- 5.4. As indicated above the proposal lies 32 km (20 miles) off the Norfolk Coast (north of Cromer), which is more or less the equivalent distance of the English Channel at the narrowest point. As Table 1 above shows this is the furthest wind farm out at sea considered by the County Council, with the nearest being just 3 km off the Norfolk Coast at Great Yarmouth (Scroby Sands).
- 5.5. It concludes that both the 3 MW and 10 MW turbines will be visible from the Norfolk Coast from a section of the North Norfolk Area Outstanding Beauty

(AONB) between Weybourne and Trimmingham. The impact arising from the turbines is considered minor for the 3 MW turbines and moderate for the 10 MW turbines. The ES has taken into account other offshore schemes in the area. The Dudgeon proposal would be obscured by other proposals when viewed to the west of Weybourne. Moreover, the Environmental Statement (ES) indicates that given the distance out at sea the wind farm will only be visible for 33 days a year when weather conditions allow (based on Met Office data).

- 5.6. While the section of coast is designated AONB, it includes the coastal towns of Sheringham and Cromer and has a more settled character than the heritage Coast to the West. It is felt that the visual appraisal presented within the ES is generally sound together with the conclusions (i.e. that the proposed development, by itself would have a generally minor and at worst moderate impact on local viewpoints). This impact would be increased if fewer, but larger turbines were erected, however would still lie within the minor to moderate range.
- 5.7. In terms of cumulative impact, the analysis in the application shows that the development would add to the cumulative effect with other known developments. It illustrates, using viewpoints from Blakeney around to Cromer that from every viewpoint all four proposals (Docking Shoal, Race Bank, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon) would be visible. Of these Docking Shoal and Sheringham Shoal would have the highest impacts being closest to the shore. The cumulative impact of all these developments raises concern in terms of the impact on the wilderness quality of the North Norfolk coastline and this issue has been reported in respect of other applications.
- 5.8. In terms of this application, however, its greatest impact would be in extending the field of view of the permitted Sheringham Shoal to the east when viewed from Blakeney. Unlike Docking Shoal and Race Bank, it would not be filling in the seascape to the west along the most sensitive stretch of the heritage coast. For these reasons, while it is still considered that cumulative impact is an important landscape issue given the distance offshore of this proposal (32 km) and the more settled quality of this part of the North Norfolk coastline, it is not felt necessary to raise a landscape objection.

(c) Nature Conservation

- 5.9 The ES has provided a detailed assessment of nature conservation issues covering: marine and coastal water quality; marine ecology; and impact on bird life. These issues are ultimately matters for other consultees to respond to, such as Natural England and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).
- 5.10 An intensive programme of boat based surveys has been undertaken in the area in relation to bird life. The survey showed a relatively small number of species in the areas reflecting the site's distance offshore. The main potential cumulative impacts identified in the ES, include:
 - Disturbance due to maintenance;
 - Avoidance of site due to Wind Turbines;
 - Barrier effects limiting or preventing free movement; and

- Direct collision of birds with Wind Turbines.

The ES concludes that the cumulative effects during operation for the Sandwich and Common Tern would be tolerable, with the impacts on other species described as having only a minor adverse or negligible effect. It is understood that a second year of boat based surveys is currently underway and will provide further detail on the potential impact on the Sandwich Tern.

Overall the ES concludes that while there is some impact on the Sandwich Tern from the North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area (SPA), this is not sufficient to impede development of the Dudgeon site. The broad conclusions reached in the ES are considered reasonable.

- 5.11 Unlike other recent offshore wind farm proposals closer to the Wash, this application does not rely on a cable-route passing through an internationally designated nature conservation site (RAMSAR site). As such the conclusions reached in the ES regarding the nature conservation impacts are considered soundly based.

(d) Commercial Fishing

- 5.12 The ES suggests that commercial fishing in the area proposed for the wind farm and the proposed cable route is significantly lower than most of the other east coast areas. Only 7 local potting vessels fish within the boundary of the wind farm. While more vessels fish along the cable route the impact would only be temporary during construction. The overall impacts of the commercial fishing are considered in the ES to be “minor adverse at worst, due to the limited number of vessels involved and distance offshore.”
- 5.13 The ES has looked at the potential cumulative impact of the proposal with other planned schemes in the area. It states that while there could be a cumulative loss of fishing areas with the simultaneous imposition of construction safety zones, it concludes that given the relatively low levels of fishing activity in the Dudgeon area, it will only have a minor impact.
- 5.14 The conclusions reached in the ES are broadly considered reasonable, particularly given the distance offshore of this proposal and the limited number of vessels fishing inside the proposed wind farm site.

(e) Socio Economic

- 5.15 The ES suggest that the project is likely to require a billion pound investment and that overall this will have a beneficial impact on the local economy. However, the ES recognises that “the vast majority of the procurement and supply is based in continental Europe, where a complete supply chain is available and at a greater state of advancement than potential UK based competition.” It goes onto indicate that much of the employment needed will be imported and as such anticipated local (Norfolk) direct employment generated by the construction of Dudgeon will be relatively small.
- 5.16 The ES indicates that there will be no impact on tourism in combination with other schemes planned in the area. Moreover it suggests that there is the potential for the wind farm to act as an attraction and this may eventually increase the tourism offer in this part of Norfolk. While concerns have been raised to other offshore schemes in terms of their adverse impact on visitor

numbers, these previous proposals have been closer to the Norfolk coast and their impact has been on a different stretch of coastline designated Heritage Coast with a more wilderness character. Given the location of the Dudgeon Wind Farm it is not expected that there will be any impact on visitor numbers arising from the proposal and the conclusion reached in the ES are considered sound.

(f) Highways

5.17 There are no highway objections relating to the proposed offshore wind farm.

6. Resource Implications

6.1. **Finance** : There are no financial implications to the County Council arising from this proposal.

6.2. **Staff** : There are no staff implications.

6.3. **Property** : None

6.4. **IT** : None

7. Other Implications

7.1. **Legal Implications** : There are no legal implications.

7.2. **Human Rights** : None.

7.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** : The County Council's planning functions are subject to equality impact assessments. However, as the County Council is simply a consultee on this offshore wind farm application, no EqIA issues have been identified.

7.4. **Communications** : None.

8. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act** - No implications.

9. Alternative Option

9.1 Decisions relating to wind farms whether onshore or offshore are clearly very sensitive given the visual impacts of such structures. As such any decision needs to balance national, regional and local objectives for addressing climate change, while at the same time needing to protect sensitive parts of the County's environment. The potential benefits arising from this proposal are significant in terms of the number of households (400,000) which could be supplied with electricity from a sustainable source.

9.2 However, the proposed scheme would on occasion be visible from the North Norfolk coast, which is designated an AONB. There is the potential in combination with other proposed schemes at Docking Shoal and Race Bank for an impact not just on the AONB but also the Heritage Coast (west of Sheringham). As such Members may feel that despite this proposal being located 32 km offshore, there would be an unacceptable cumulative impact on

the North Norfolk AONB and as such an objection should be raised.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1. The Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm has the potential to deliver enough electricity for 400,000 homes and make an annual saving of 825,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. The proposal by itself could provide most of the electrical demand arising from all the planned housing growth in the region up to 2021. The proposal site is located 32 km (20 miles) offshore, north of Cromer and is the most distant proposal yet to come forward off the Norfolk Coast.
- 10.2. The principle of offshore wind energy is consistent with national, regional and local policies on climate change. Members will be aware that the County Council has raised concerns with recent proposals at Docking Shoal and Race Bank due their “combined” impacts on: (a) the AONB and Heritage Coast; (b) visitor numbers; (c) the fishing industry; and (d) the Wash Estuary nature conservation area.
- 10.3. However, the Dudgeon proposal is materially different to the above schemes in that it is:
- Located further East and offshore than the other proposals and as such its impact on the Heritage Coast and AONB is considerably less;
 - The impact on visitor numbers is unlikely to be significant given the distance of the scheme offshore;
 - The impact on the fishing industry is again unlikely to be significant given the limited number of vessels fishing inside the proposed wind farm site; and
 - The proposed offshore cable-route does not pass through any international nature conservation site.
- 10.4 Therefore it is recommended that no objection be raised to the Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm.

Recommendation

- 1) That the Department of Energy and Climate Change be informed that the County Council does not wish to raise a strategic objection to this proposal.
- 2) The County Council does not request any public hearing.

Background Papers

Dugeon Offshore Wind Farm Environmental Statement.

Officer Contact

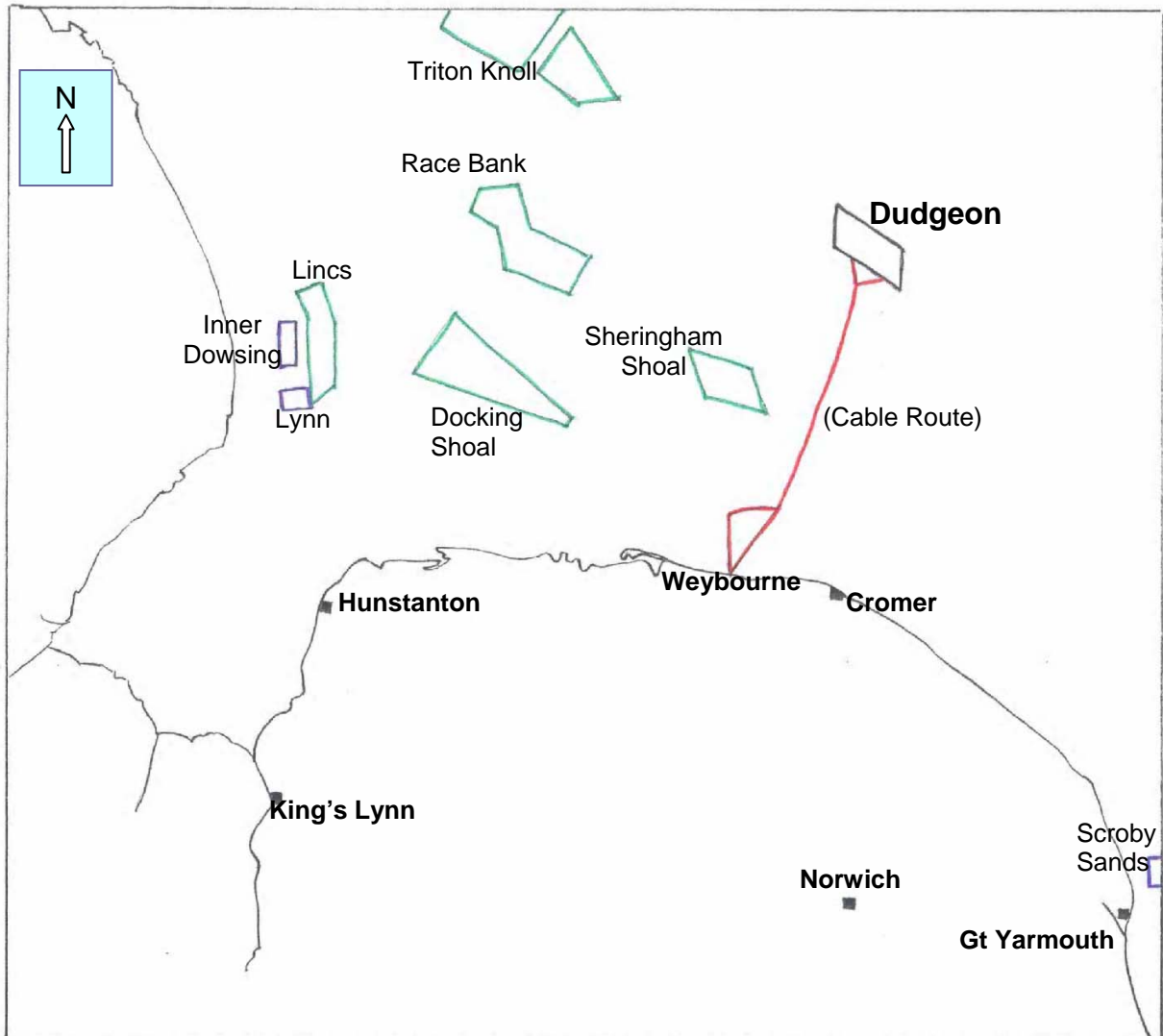
If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Stephen Faulkner	01603 222752	stephen.faulkner@norfolk.gov.uk



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Map 1 – Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm



**Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm Proposal
Planning and Highways Delegations Committee
September 2009**

Scale Approximately – 1: 770,000