

Minutes of Meeting.

Meeting title	Community Liaison Group – Substation
Location	Tonic 44 Community Hub, Surfleet
Date/ time	Wednesday 31 January 2024
Originator	ODOW
Attendees	<p>Andrew Acum – ODOW – AA Roisin Aldis – ODOW - RA Chris Jenner – ODOW – CJ Jenny Marsden – ODOW – JM Jo Phillips – ODOW – JP Garrett Roche – ODOW – GR</p> <p>David Brown – Boston Borough Council – DB James Cantwell - Boston Borough Council / Sutterton PC – JC Chris Croypley – Fosdyke PC - CC Sam Dewar (via Teams) - Boston Borough Council – SD Kevin Gillespie (via Teams) - Lincolnshire County Council – KGi Kerry Gratton – Fosdyke PC - KG Neil McBride (via Teams) – Lincolnshire County Council – NM Alan Mowton – Fosdyke PC / Landowner - AM Ian Pennington – Weston PC / Landowner - IP</p>
Apologies	None
Purpose of meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To involve key local stakeholders in the design and development of the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind project (landfall, onshore cable route and substation) through presentations, discussions and planned workshop activities. 2. To act as a two-way communication channel between local communities and the project team. 3. To help foster local involvement and ownership of the project.

1.	<p>Chair's welcome, terms of reference and introductions</p> <p>CJ opened the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p>The group was reminded of the terms of reference.</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were already approved and available on the website.</p>
2.	<p>Consultation Overview</p> <p>The project team has worked to engage local communities through extensive consultation.</p> <p>During the 15 months of 2023-2024, the project has delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 public engagement events • 8 webinars • 1491 attendees at engagement events • 107 written responses • 74 phone calls • 246 Completed feedback forms <p>The project has received a large number of supportive responses and positive feedback on the consultations.</p> <p>Themes of interest primarily related to onshore matters such as noise, visual impacts and traffic.</p> <p>Targeted consultation closed on Jan 19th.</p>
3.	<p>Category 3 Communications</p> <p>Category 3 letters were sent out before Christmas. This is a statutory process and the letters were sent to people who may have an interest in land which may be indirectly affected by the project, e.g. by noise, dust, etc.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>CBF Boundary and Themes Review</p> <p>The aim of the fund is to bring long-lasting value to the communities closest to the project.</p> <p>The team has proposed four themes of focus - themes the project hopes to support in the local community.</p> <p>Proposed eligibility criteria have been drafted to set out which applications get through the first sift. This ensures the funding is in line with ODOW standards and those of its partners.</p> <p>Draft award criteria outline how the applications will be scored to ensure that the projects with the highest impact and closest to the project are more likely to get funding.</p> <p>It is likely that the project will appoint a third party to administer the fund.</p> <p>The project wants to incorporate learnings from other developers and feedback gained from the community consultation events.</p> <p>The fund will be launched once consent has been granted and FID has been taken (estimated to be 2025). In the meantime, ODOW will look to fund a small number of more strategic projects, more likely with larger organisations (like the Boston Woods Trust example) as opposed to a larger number of grass-roots projects during the phase before the CBF is launched. ODOW is seeking suggestions therefore for organisations that are active within the themes presented to explore creation of projects in the run up to CBF launch.</p> <p>CF Themes</p> <p>The proposed themes for the CBF are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature positive 2. STEM and skills
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		<p>3. Sustainable enterprise</p> <p>4. Community health and well-being</p>
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It is envisaged that CBF support will also include volunteering and staff engagement.

IP asked if solar panels and batteries for Weston Village Hall would qualify. JM said eligibility would be covered later in the presentation. IP said that the hall is used to provide a lot of activities for the local community but heating costs have risen dramatically.

Draft Eligibility Criteria

It will be necessary for the projects to meet certain criteria. These are being explored, but early suggestions include:

- Have a constitution outlining objectives and rules for the organisation.
- Have a bank account or credit union account set up in the organisation's name.
- Be within the eligibility zone
- Be aligned with CBF themes

Exclusions

It was proposed that the following exclusions would likely apply to CBF funding:

- Religious organisations, trade unions and political parties
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination (ages, sexes, ethnicities, or minority groups)
- Requests for funding that benefit a single person
- Requests for funding to pay for salaries or other ongoing running costs (e.g. rent)

- Recipients that promote illegal or unsafe activities
- Retrospective funding or existing loans or debts
- Requests for funding that relate to public infrastructure
- Members-only sports clubs or facilities unless they are open to the general public

CC asked if parish councils would be excluded under the “political parties” exclusion. JM said that parish councils were not political parties.

JC asked if capital projects would be excluded. JM said that they may fall under the “bricks and mortar” exclusion if there was no evidence of a source of maintenance or revenue budget.

JC asked if “public infrastructure” exclusion would exclude wild areas next to public footpaths maintained by local parish councils, playing field committees, etc. JM said the definition may need amending, as it is meant to apply to capital projects rather than public footpaths, cycle paths, wild meadows, etc.

JC said a lot of other groups such as sports clubs, PTAs, etc. won’t have constitutions and would therefore be excluded. He suggested a way around this may be to give parish councils ringfenced funds that they could distribute to worthy groups in their parishes.

Draft Award Evaluation Criteria

In order to help select the most impactful projects, criteria such as the following would most likely be applied:

	<p>1. Proximity to project</p> <p>2. Relevance to community</p> <p>3. Level of impact</p> <p>4. Ability to deliver results</p> <p>Proposed Boundary</p> <p>The initial “yellow line” boundary was drawn 3km either side of the cable route and 5 km around the substation.</p> <p>However, it is recognised that this is a very rural area and people living in the 3km zone may access services (such as a village hall or sports field) which are outside of the yellow line boundary.</p> <p>Therefore, if part of a parish lies within the boundary, then the whole parish will be eligible to apply for funding.</p> <p>JC said he felt the boundary was as fair as it can be.</p> <p>DB said the cable route appeared to follow the pylon route and asked why they couldn't share a trench.</p> <p>CJ said the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) determined the ODOW cable route and connection point. This was decided by National Grid. The Grimsby to Walpole pylons is a different National Grid project completely independent of ODOW with a different form and function. National Grid have some public events coming up where the public can find out more about their project.</p> <p>IP asked if the CBF would be a percentage of the whole project budget. JM said it wasn't known yet but would probably be benchmarked against other CBFs.</p> <p>JC asked whether there would be democratic oversight of grant distribution. JM said the fund would be administered by an independent third party – there are numerous foundations who do this type of work. They normally have a panel of local residents</p>
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		<p>who are representative of the community.</p> <p>SD asked why the CBF was based on the cable route rather than the ZTV from the substation. JB said there is a 5km zone around the substation. JM said that a bigger portion of the pot would be allocated to the substation area. CJ said the turbines were a significant distance offshore and would not have an impact on coastal receptors.</p>
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5.	<p>Onshore Substation Design Review Process</p> <p>This was the first meeting of the Local Design Panel to outline the remit of the group and the elements of the substation that can be influenced by the group.</p> <p>There will also be an External Design Review – by independent architects from Q2 2024.</p> <p>Engineers need to assess technical requirements but the Local Design panel will be consulted as the design progresses.</p> <p>Maximum Design Scenario</p> <p>This is based on a “worst case scenario.” The designs are based on two potential technologies still under consideration that will impact the footprint and maximum heights of buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) • Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) <p>Functional requirements of a substation</p> <p>The project aims to generate renewable electricity and export it to the National Grid, via the 400kV ODOW Substation.</p> <p>The substation area indicated enables the installation and operation of either an AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear) or GIS (Gas Insulated Switchgear) type substation. From a transmission perspective, AIS or GIS transmits the power generated offshore to meet the grid requirements. The main considerations for the substation are as follows:</p> <p>Insulation Medium: The AIS uses air as the insulation medium between conductors and equipment, whereas the GIS employs a specialist gas in modular units. GIS equipment offers reduced footprint and maintenance requirements. The switchgear in AIS is outdoors, and GIS is installed indoors and requires additional building.</p> <p>Size and Space: The AIS substations require a larger footprint, whereas the GIS substations are compact</p>
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	<p>and space-efficient. Subject to equipment and design, the GIS Converter Hall(s) could be up to 16.5m in height. <i>These maximum parameters are represented on the visualisations.</i></p> <p>Studies are engineering work needs to be undertaken to determine whether AIS or GIS will be used.</p> <p>JC asked whether there was any danger to local residents. He said this was probably the question that most residents would want reassurance on. GR said that safety was of paramount importance and was designed into the proposal through a rigorous process of safety distances, technology selection, and separation.</p>
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It was shared by DW that onshore substations are not a new concept, it is a tried and trusted technology built to National Grid specification, the same as numerous other substations all around the country. There will also be an ongoing operations and maintenance programme for the building, equipment and grounds.

IP asked if AIS had a bigger footprint. GR said that GIS has a smaller footprint, but GIS has taller buildings.

CC asked that although it is not new technology, had this layout and type of cable route been done before. CJ said that there are over 2,000 offshore wind turbines around the UK, and all wind farms are fundamentally the same configuration – offshore generation, radial connection, underground cable, substation and then connection into the 400KV network.

CC asked if there were any examples of feedback from other projects. CJ said that the team had learnt a lot from Triton Knoll and Viking Link. CJ said that GR had also worked on Triton Knoll. GR said that he had worked on Triton Knoll as well as power generation in general for 20 years with the last 10-15 years in offshore wind and all schemes were very similar. CC asked if this was essentially a “run of the mill” project. GR said that the main difference between projects was size and power generation, but the basic principles were the same.

CC asked if any residents' lives were really affected by these schemes. GR said that from a technical point of view they weren't. CJ said that the project had received a lot of feedback from the five phases of consultation and the public events regarding Triton Knoll and Viking Link which the team has been able to learn from. One example of learning led to the ODOW definition of the CBF boundaries. Other learning points had been around traffic, access areas, speed limits, etc. He added that it was an ODOW principle to always try and do things better than before. Another good example was engagement with local farmers – they know the land and understand the soils and this knowledge guided the route selection. Another important aspect is soil reinstatement and a lot had been learnt from Triton

Knoll, Viking Link and local farmers. GR added that the whole point of the consultation events, leaflets, CLGs and meetings was to listen and learn from local people.

IP asked whether National Grid would have more capacity if they buried their cables. CJ said that would be a question for National Grid. IP asked if Triton Knoll and Viking Link were bigger projects than Outer Dowsing. CJ said that Triton Knoll was approximately half the size of Outer Dowsing, whereas Viking Link was a transmission project rather than a generation project, moving electricity between the UK and Denmark. Viking Link is an HVDC project requiring a convertor station at the end whereas ODOW is an HVAC project which wouldn't require a convertor station.

DB said that he and JC were frequently receiving emails from a couple about Viking Link trucks on the main roads and they had suffered abuse and threats from lorry drivers. He wanted to know what procedures ODOW would have in place to prevent this happening on their project. CJ said he was horrified to hear this. In terms of traffic management and management of contractors, the project will be submitting a number of outline plans with its DCO application, that set out protocols, standards, working time hours and guidance. Viking Link was built under a different consenting regime; the Town and Country Planning Act rather than a Development Consent Order. In terms of the number of measures and procedures that have to be in place, the bar is much higher for a DCO and there will be a significant number of measures used to manage contractors.

GR said that on Triton Knoll he would personally investigate any complaints and follow up with the contractor.

JC said he would like houses along the traffic route to be mailed a leaflet explaining what was happening along with contact details in case there were any issues. JM said that there would be a local community liaison officer appointed prior to construction to personally deal with any issues raised by residents.

Onshore substation

Following a decision from the National Grid that the connection point would be in the vicinity of Weston Marsh, Lincs Node was removed from the Project Scope in August 2023.

Surfleet Marsh was subsequently selected as the optimum site for the substation taking into account multiple factors including engineering and environmental considerations.

There will also be a need for a National Grid substation and associated enabling works within the vicinity of the project's onshore substation which ODOW will connect to using 400kV underground cables running between the project substation and that which will be developed by National Grid Electricity Transmission

Feedback on Landscaping

There were previously concerns around the use of "deciduous trees" and views in winter. The Project has commissioned a "Winter Photography" campaign which is being undertaken at the moment.

The woodland shelterbelts will be approximately 20m wide which will ensure that even without leaves they will provide a screen.

In the detailed design of the shelterbelts some evergreen trees, hedges and understorey shrubs will be included to add to the screening effect in winter.

Comments on the inclusion of native species.

The planting design will always prioritise native species, but also with thought and consideration given to ensuring the planting will be resilient to climate change.

It was noted by landowners that the landscaping areas proposed could be adjusted to better align with the landownership boundaries. As a result, the landscaping areas have been moved slightly to better align with landownership boundaries.

It was previously highlighted that there was the possibility for potential impacts on agricultural drainage from the planting. The project has included for drainage works within the order limits to ensure existing land drainage is not impacted.

Landscaping - What is the aim?

From feedback to date it had become clear that the screening of the substation is the desired outcome for the local communities.

This project has developed extensive planting proposals – not only are to provide an effective screen, but also to enhance the overall landscape and biodiversity of the Surfleet area.

IP said he agreed with the landscaping argument but pigeons were a big problem for farmers and additional trees may exacerbate this. JP said that this had to be balanced against the visual and environmental benefits of planting. The planting would also be shelter belts, rather than dense woodland, but the project would take on board the feedback.

CJ said that the process was iterative, and the final design will consider balance between agricultural and landscaping requirements.

Post-consent, the landscaping then has to be approved by the local planning authority in consultation with the county council. The point of the local design group is to understand these concerns and suggestions and try and incorporate them into the proposals.

Cumulative Impacts

A cumulative assessment including visualisations (based on an indicative location within the connection area and typical parameters) will be included in the DCO application documents.

- Noting the location of the **Connection Area** (*the indicative search area for the National Grid substation*) relative the project substation – the planting strips will be an effective screen for those viewpoints that would be affected by both of these infrastructures.
- The cumulative visualisations will be based on both VP4 & VP5 on Macmillan Way

JP said that there are very few points where it would be possible to see both the ODOW and National Grid substations, but they would be visible from the elevated points on the Macmillan Way, and this was the focus of the concept of the cumulative impact and this has been incorporated into the study. After 10-15 years it is possible to effectively screen the ODOW substation which means it can be removed from the cumulative impact.

NM asked if the National Grid pylons would be included in the assessment. JP said that the project has to put together an assessment based on Best Available Information. As the pylon route is not yet known, this would be picked up later with an update.

DB asked why the project couldn't connect at Derby. CJ said that the connection point is decided by National Grid, not ODOW.

DB asked whether ODOW had spoken to National Grid. CJ said that the project had been speaking to National Grid on a regular basis for the last couple of years regarding connecting to the network, but the project does not need new overhead lines to connect. DB asked how it would connect. CJ said that the project would connect into the existing overhead lines via the ODOW and National Grid substations, and ODOW will be supplying power into the Grid before the Grimsby to Walpole scheme is developed.

JC said that when the ODOW project began, there was no talk of the National Grid project. He now has three national energy projects in his ward. He felt that people were getting fed up with energy projects in their area, although ODOW had handled their scheme well.

Design Consideration: Material

The key technical requirements of the materials to be used in the construction of the converter buildings are;

- Strong enough to form robust and secure large-scale structures;
- Fire resistant and able to withstand high temperatures without the structural integrity of the material being compromised;
- Resistant to severe weather conditions, including high winds, water ingress and heat waves;
- Forming surfaces and joints that are completely impermeable to water;
- Suitable to form the large spans and surfaces required to construct large structures;
- Sufficiently durable to withstand the impacts of a 35-year lifecycle;
- Modular to reduce the time for installation, provide aesthetics and reduce the building's carbon footprint; and
- Low maintenance.

Material Consideration: Steel

Steel has always come out as the most appropriate material for these types of buildings.

Advantages

- Robust material that is fire resistant, very low maintenance and durable.
- Relatively low-cost material that is available from local manufacturers in the UK.
- Large and lightweight and can be readily and quickly assembled on-site.
- Large scale agricultural and industrial sheds made from sheet metal are a common feature in rural landscapes.
- Options for recycled steel
- Complete cladding system
- Insulated sheet metal panels last beyond the 35-year lifecycle of the converter buildings.
- The colour range available is extensive, with different types of finish available, making colour matching to local contexts possible.

Disadvantages

- Sheet metal can present a reflective surface if the appropriate finishes and coatings are not applied.
- The extraction of raw materials and production of sheet metal reduces the sustainability of this material, especially if also imported from overseas.
- Cladding panels could look a bit tardy toward the end of their design life. Thus, routine checks, cleaning and maintenance are required.

Colour

The aim is to minimise the visual impact and blend into the local environment and its natural colour palettes.

This can be discussed in more detail at future meetings.

JC asked if much brick would be used. JP said not on the main building. JM said that she had been looking into the possibility of using “bee bricks” where possible.

Cladding

Appearance of materials, in terms of colour, texture and reflectiveness.

Trapezoidal vs smooth architectural wall rib.

Roof Shape

The options that can be influenced are:

- Monopitch
- Pitched – keeps the height of the eaves lower
- Flat – looks more industrial

Design Scope: Landscaping & Planting Proposals

- Increasing biodiversity, decreasing visual impacts, flood reduction and capturing carbon.
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- Many thousands of trees and hedgerows would be added to the Lincolnshire landscape.
- Up to 19 hectares would be planted, equivalent to 27 football fields with long term management plan.
- Up to 1.6 miles of Hedgerow containing diverse species that support bats, birds and other species.
- 130 Biodiversity Action Plan species associated with hedges:
- Lichens, fungi and reptiles.
- Bank vole, harvest mouse and hedgehog all nest and feed in hedgerows alongside birds including; blue tit, yellowhammer and whitethroat.

JM said that there were up to 19 hectares of planting involved in the whole project, increasing biodiversity and creating natural corridors. CJ said there were also added indirect benefits such as capturing carbon and flood reduction.

	<p>IP asked who would maintain the hedges. CJ said that the project had an obligation to maintain the landscaping and hedges. This may be done directly, or sub-contracted to a farmer or landowner. The details are still being discussed and will be confirmed at a later date.</p> <p>JC asked if there were any Tree Preservation Orders. CJ said there weren't any around the substation, but there was one spot on the 60km cable route where there are a couple of trees with TPOs.</p>
	<p>Timeline</p> <p>The project is still on course to submit its Development Consent Order by the end of Q1 2024. Once submitted, the Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to validate it.</p> <p>Once accepted, there will then be an examination period, probably in H2 2024. This is a participatory process where all residents and stakeholders can attend and/or submit questions. The Inspectors will then cross-examine the team on the plans. If approved, a consent decision would be made in 2025, with constructions starting earliest 2026 (subject to consent) and commercial operations commencing in 2030.</p> <p>In terms of the Local Design Group, consultation on landscaping proposals and planting had been undertaken as part of the Autumn Consultation. Prior to the next group meeting in Summer 2024, the winter photography campaign would be completed, along with substation visuals and feedback from the External Design Review.</p>

6.	AOB	<p>NB asked if there were any plans to work with other CBFs in the substation area. JM said that she has been looking at what could be done collaboratively within the different project time frames.</p> <p>JP added that the work that ODOW had done on design principles had been agreed with other projects which sets out a template and some degree of co-ordination for what comes forward for mitigation planting between the different projects even though they may be at slightly different phases. CJ said he was happy to discuss this further with the LPAs.</p> <p>KG said that the management of the planting scheme at both establishment and long-term is important to make sure that the trees establish and grow and achieve the objectives, otherwise it's just a case of planting and replanting. He also thought the strategy of including offsite planting was good as otherwise it would be difficult to screen such a large building, however care must be taken not to change the character of the area through the overplanting of screening, particularly where there has traditionally been little tree cover.</p> <p>IP asked if there was any news on where the National Grid substation would go or when a decision would be made. CJ said this was a question for National Grid.</p>
7.	Chair's closing remarks and next steps / next meeting	<p>The next CLG is expected to be in the summer but Jenny Marsden will be in touch with details nearer the date. his email will come from contact@outerdowsing.com, please ensure it is added to safe mailing lists.</p>
Meeting Protocol		
Distribute agenda before meeting	Fix responsibilities for each item	
Start on time	Finish on time	
Set out your ground rules	Publish minutes / actions	

Stick to the agenda	Continuous improvement
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