

Response of the Colne Stour Countryside Association to Ofgem's OTNR consultation

1. The Colne Stour Countryside Association ("CSCA") is a long-standing Association of over 600 members formed to protect the countryside in North East Essex, adjacent to the area covered by the Dedham Vale Society. The route to Twinstead across the Stour Valley and the new substation at Twinstead lies within its remit.
2. The application to extend the Dedham Vale AONB further West along the Stour Valley, which has unconditional support from all relevant Councils and interested parties, is likely to succeed. The CSCA identifies with and supports the observations submitted by the Dedham Vale Society.
3. The need for an off shore holistic integrated transmission system fit for the next 50 years has been recognised for several years. In the long run it will be more efficient and cost effective, producing very substantial environmental and socio-economic benefits. Yet insufficient progress has been made to bring it about. Why? It seems that no-one body sees it as their responsibility. Given the considerable amount of research already undertaken for an integrated offshore grid, a design could be finalised relatively soon. This will reassure developers of each component part that the level of financial risk is acceptable.
4. Continuing short term decisions to add to the existing radial network and connect to the nearest on shore location point will not only delay and undermine the implementation of the offshore solution, but will in the meantime have caused irreparable harm to the environment. Looking back in say 10 years it may be seen that this important attractive area of the UK will have been spoiled unnecessarily.
5. It is no good for each interested body to continue to maintain it is not their responsibility to bring about the design and implementation of the offshore grid. It is for Ofgem to initiate any requisite change in regulation and do so urgently. This is too important. If changes to the regulatory framework are needed, they should be made.
6. There is now a pressing need to identify all the likely key Eastern on and offshore projects to come forward in the next 10 years and produce, at least in outline, an integrated design transmission system before any further DCOs are made. The body to do this should be independent of any commercial interests. Its remit should include the impact on the environment and local communities.

Charles Aldous (on behalf of the Chairman). 8th September 2021.