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Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP

Minister for Business, Energy and Clean
Growth

BEIS 1 Victoria St, Westminster, London
SW1H 0ET

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Date: 4th December 2020

BY EMAIL

CC. The Rt Hon. Thérèse Coffey MP
The Rt Hon. the Lord Deben
James Cartlidge MP

Dear Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP,

We appreciate the time you have taken previously to meet with us, and the Rt Hon Therese Coffey MP, on 16 October 2019 and 5 February 2020 and your support and engagement since then, including most recently your letter to us of 5th August this year discussing in more detail the terms of reference of the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR).

We look forward to understanding more about the outcomes of the first phase of the review, with the publication on 16th December of the NGESO phase one outputs, and the BEIS OTNR seminar on 17th December. We appreciate the substantial progress that has been made on the issue of coordinated connections, and the very considerable efforts you have made to drive this matter forward.

We are writing to you now in support of the recent call, by MP's in Norfolk and Suffolk, to ensure that the full potential to coordinate and minimise, the extent of offshore connections is realised.

We fully support their suggestion, in the adjournment debate of 5th November, and elsewhere¹, for relevant proposals to be included in the next Queen's Speech. We ask that all possible measures are fully explored to enable the earliest roll out of the coordination of offshore wind and interconnector projects. It appears that this will be particularly important given, the Crown Estate's expectation, that many of the Round Four offshore wind projects will connect to the Grid before the end of the decade².

¹ <https://www.jamescartlidge.com/campaigns/reforming-offshore-wind>

² <https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/en-gb/media-and-insights/news/the-crown-estate-updates-timings-for-final-tender-stage-of-offshore-wind-leasing-round-4/>

We believe that effective and rapid deployment of coordinated connections, supported by the necessary legislative and regulatory change, offers significant benefits. Substantive pathfinder projects would secure a more optimal and coordinated offshore network, and facilitate the best possible outcomes for integration, that is, the 60-70% reduction in infrastructure identified by NGEESO by 2050, rather than their projected median outcome, of a 50% reduction by that date. In addition, an assertive approach to enabling coordinated offshore connections would also provide for:

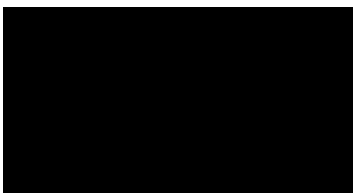
A clear regulatory signal to drive the development of the necessary innovation, in modified supply chains, financing, and commercial structures, that will be needed to deliver offshore meshed grids. This would be a significant benefit to the UK's competitive position for the delivery of offshore HVDC grids, both in the UK, and overseas. It would also accelerate the development of supply chains and the necessary supporting skills at the local level.

The testing of new technologies, and new ways of working in pathfinder projects would both, build developer confidence, and reduce potential regulatory and investment uncertainty. The learning from this process would inform the development of the new enduring regime for offshore connections, to be implemented after 2030.

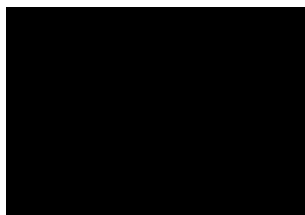
In summary, we believe that the development of coordinated connections could and should, be an opportunity for the UK to further bolster its position in the offshore energy sector. That an assertive and positive approach would be consistent with the Ten Point Plan, the National Infrastructure Strategy, and the overarching goal of achieving Net Zero in the UK by 2050.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you again, and your officials, for continuing to engage with us on these issues, and for the substantial progress that has been made so far. We look forward to understanding more about the next stages of this work, later in the month.

Yours sincerely



Richard Rout
Cabinet Member for Environment &
Public Protection



Craig Rivett
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic
Development
East Suffolk Council