

CURRENT PLANNING ISSUES

Nationally significant infrastructure projects:

Hornsea 3 Offshore Wind Farm

Orsted (formerly known as DONG Energy) is seeking permission to build an offshore wind farm in the North Sea. They plan to bring cables onshore at Weybourne in North Norfolk and run to the Norwich substation. Ecological surveys have been taken place over the last 2 years, along the proposed cable routes to determine a final route that has the least ecological impact. The final cable onshore cable corridors may be up to 80m wide and cables are planned to pass close to a number of [Norfolk Wildlife Trust \(NWT\) Nature Reserves](#) and [County Wildlife Sites](#).

NWT's major concern relates to impacts of the Hornsea 3 cables on the newly designated [Cromer Shoal Marine Conservation Zone \(MCZ\)](#). As a result we have been attending a specialist MCZ assessment group chaired by the Planning Inspectorate, along with The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) and Natural England national marine planning staff. This involvement has proved fruitful, in ensuring that the MCZ is given proper recognition and being one of the first major developments within an MCZ is seen as a test case by TWT. In addition NWT engagement has included taking part in an Onshore Ecological Working Group, where we have raised issues relating to impacts on local habitats and protected species. Link to [DONG Energy](#) website.

As this is a major infrastructure project, applications are made to the [Planning Inspectorate](#) and decided by The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The final planning application accompanied by a full Environmental Impact Assessment was submitted by Orsted in May 2018 and accepted by PINS on 13th June. There will now be a public inquiry, mainly through written responses beginning from this date. NWT (along with national Wildlife Trust marine planning staff) will be making submissions to the public inquiry.

Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas Offshore Wind Farms

Vattenfall is seeking permission for cables and associated relay stations for two related but separate wind farm projects (Norfolk Vanguard and Norfolk Boreas), which are planned to come ashore at Happisburgh and run to a substation close to Necton. We are pleased to see that the offshore cables will avoid the southern end of the Cromer Shoal MCZ. However, we will continue to engage regarding impacts of onshore cables and relay stations. As with Hornsea 3, NWT is a member of an Onshore Ecological Working Group. The submission to PINS is expected in summer 2018.

Local planning issues:

Thorpe Woods/Racecourse Plantation housing proposal

The owners of Racecourse Plantation in Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich (which along with Belmore Plantation is also known as Thorpe Woods) have applied to build 300 houses within this County Wildlife Site woodland. This application is a culmination of several years of similar proposals within the woods. NWT has objected to this proposal because it would lead to direct loss of 10ha of woodland along with impacts on the remaining area. Racecourse Plantation, along with the adjacent Belmore Plantation, is recognised as a key green infrastructure corridor in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. Our objections have been supported by a local campaign group, [Friends of Thorpe Woodlands](#) and the application was refused by Broadland District Council in June 2017. Further details on the application can be

found at [Broadland District Council Planning Explorer](#) by entering the application number 20161896. NWT letter of objection [hyperlink](#). Following refusal, a public inquiry was held in May 2018. NWT attended the inquiry but the main ecological case against the development was made by an ecologist working for Broadland District Council. We see this as an important case, where the value of the woods as a County Wildlife Site and key green infrastructure corridor are set against the landowners arguments for housing. A decision by the inspector is expected by early Autumn.

Proposed Development West of Brandon

Along with [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#); [the RSPB](#) and [Brandon Community Union](#), we have objected to the planning application for the proposed development of up to 1,650 new houses and a relief road on land west of Brandon. We consider that the proposal would result in significant harm to sites of European nature conservation importance, as well as the loss of UK and Suffolk Priority Habitats such as wet woodland. A copy of our letter of objection can be viewed [here](#) and further details can be found on the Forest Heath Council's website [here](#) by entering the reference number DC/15/1072/OUT.