

# Egmere Local Development Order

Supporting investment associated with offshore wind developments off the North Norfolk coast

**Adopted: August 2014**



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## **1.0 Introduction and background**

- 1.1 This Local Development Order (LDO) relates to the area of land at Egmere, Norfolk edged red on the plan and aerial photo attached at Appendices A & B. This Order grants planning permission for the types of development listed in the Schedule of Development (subject to the criteria specified in the Schedule) and also subject to the conditions specified in the Schedule of Conditions.
- 1.2 This LDO will be operative for an initial period of five years from the date of adoption and may then be reviewed and extended. Any development which has been commenced under this Order will be allowed to be completed in the event that the Order is revoked or revised.

### **The following paragraphs outline the background to this Order**

- 1.3 A number of wind energy developments off the North Norfolk Coast are in operation or licensed for development – ie the Sheringham Shoal development which has been fully operational since September 2012; together with proposals for the Dudgeon and Race Bank schemes which have received formal licensing approval and it is understood will be developed over the next five years.
- 1.4 Whilst the majority of investment / development associated with these schemes is offshore, each scheme requires onshore operational and maintenance support facilities and the most convenient and cost effective location from which to serve these developments is the Port of Wells on the North Norfolk coast.
- 1.5 The development of the Sheringham Shoal offshore wind farm by a partnership of Norwegian companies StatOil and Statkraft, saw survey and support vessels, as well as a number of sub-contract businesses, operate out of the Port of Wells, where the Harbour Commissioners invested in the development of an outer harbour facility at the northern end of Beach Road, providing operational access to the harbour for support vessels at more states of the tide than the historic quay and harbour facilities 1.5 kilometres to the south.
- 1.6 In developing the Sheringham Shoal scheme, Statoil and Statkraft looked at a number of potential site locations in and around the town of Wells-next-the-Sea on which to establish their on-shore support facilities – ie administrative offices, control room, staff welfare, training and warehouse facilities to support the operation and maintenance of the offshore turbine development; before securing consent for such facilities on a site at Egmere on the B1105, the principal access road serving Wells-next-the Sea, approximately 5 kilometres to the south of the town.
- 1.7 Egmere is considered to be a good location for such development as it lies beyond the area designated as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and is therefore able to accommodate new development in support of offshore wind energy developments without creating development pressure on the sensitive environmental designations of the North Norfolk Coast, which supports a significant local tourism economy, as well as being an area of significant landscape, environmental and biodiversity value.

- 1.8 In wishing to support the diversification of the local economy and realise the benefits of new job-creating investment associated with the development of offshore energy schemes off the North Norfolk Coast, North Norfolk District Council has identified the land at Egmere to which this Order applies.

## **2.0 What is a Local Development Order?**

- 2.1 A Local Development Order (LDO) grants planning permission (subject to conditions) for specific developments described within the Order; meaning that it is not necessary for investors / occupiers of such developments to submit planning applications for their proposals.
- 2.2 Development proposals which do not fall within the prescribed permissions / definitions provided by the LDO will need to secure some other form of planning permission – ie through a planning application made to North Norfolk District Council for consideration against the adopted Local Plan for the area – ie the North Norfolk Core Strategy incorporating Development Control policies adopted in September 2008; or as may be granted consent under the current Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order (GDPO).
- 2.3 It is important to state that just because development proposals do not fall within the definition of the LDO, it does not mean that they will not be considered acceptable within the area covered by the LDO. Such proposals will however need to be considered by the local planning authority in the context of national and local planning policies – ie the National Planning Policy Framework published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012; together with policies contained within the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.4 The Egmere LDO will be operative for an initial period of five years from the date of its adoption; complementing the period of time over which it is anticipated that the development of the Dudgeon and Race Bank proposals will be developed. The operation of the LDO can however be reviewed and extended for a further period of time, subject to further consultation. An indicative site layout detailing the potential of the LDO to accommodate development is attached at Appendix C.

## **3.0 Statement of Reasons / Objectives of the Egmere LDO**

- 3.1 North Norfolk District Council has designated this Local Development Order at Egmere in support of the significant offshore wind energy developments off the North Norfolk Coast. Whilst the major construction / development of the offshore wind energy developments will be supported by vessels deploying from Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft; the Port of Wells provides the most cost-effective location from which to base survey vessels and staff during the pre-construction survey and construction phases and in the longer term operation of the schemes, being the closest port facility from which to deploy operational and maintenance personnel.
- 3.2 The District Council wishes to secure as many economic and employment benefits from offshore wind developments for North Norfolk as possible. The Council and local partners, particularly the Wells Harbour Commissioners, and the Holkham and Walsingham Estates, therefore wish to create and promote a positive environment for inward investment by wind energy companies and their sub-contractors through identifying appropriate land and property opportunities, simplifying the local planning regime, co-ordinating supply chain and cluster development and promoting skills development

amongst local people so that the opportunities to diversify and develop the local economy presented by the offshore wind and wider renewable energy sector are realised locally. The designation of this LDO at Egmere is a key element of the Council's "offer" to such investors.

3.3 The objectives of the Egmere LDO are therefore:-

- designating an area of land where investment by wind energy companies and their suppliers / sub-contractors can be directed and accommodated in principle, where a simplified planning regime exists for such developments
- allowing permitted development rights for new developments proposed in support of the offshore wind energy sector, subject to compliance with the agreed Schedule of Development detailed at Section 5.
- to foster inward investment and economic growth through allowing offshore wind energy businesses and their suppliers, sub-contractors and support businesses, to invest in the district and benefit from co-location / cluster development.

3.4 In order that development within the LDO is taken forward to a reasonable standard and promotes a positive image for the District and development of the wider renewable energy sector in North Norfolk, the LDO is supported by a Design Code, attached at Appendix D, which seeks to establish key principles for development at Egmere. This is considered important, not only for the positive image of renewable offshore wind energy, but also as the B1105 road through Egmere serves as a key gateway route to the North Norfolk Coast, used by tens of thousands of tourist visitors to the District.

3.5 The designation of the Egmere LDO will simplify the planning process for wind energy companies and related businesses wishing to establish a presence in North Norfolk; providing clarity and certainty around the nature and type of development which will be considered acceptable within the LDO. This will allow developments to be taken forward within shorter timeframes, allowing offshore wind energy businesses and their suppliers to respond quickly to technical issues arising in the construction and operation of the offshore turbines and supporting infrastructure.

3.6 Other policies relevant to the Egmere LDO are the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy incorporating Development Control policies.

3.7 A schedule of conditions restricting or relating to development taken forward within the area covered by the LDO, together with the reasons for these conditions, is detailed at Section 6 and developers and their advisors / agents will need to give careful consideration to such conditions in the development of proposals.

3.8 The LDO does not remove or compromise any established development / land uses or any development proposal previously approved within the LDO area, subject to the usual time limits set by conditions.

3.9 The LDO does not remove the need for Building Regulations approvals to be obtained or remove the need for developers / occupiers of premises to comply with all other legislative requirements pertaining to their occupation of premises or their wider business operations.

- 3.10 Development permitted under the LDO will be the subject of continuous monitoring by the local authority in order to safeguard the wider public interest and monitor the effectiveness of the LDO as a policy instrument. Developers taking forward permitted developments within the LDO area will therefore be required to provide details of their proposals to the local planning authority in order that details of developments can be placed on the Council's public register of planning applications (a template Commencement Notice is attached at Appendix E).
- 3.11 Any unauthorised development or breach of consent as allowed for by the permitted development through the LDO, will be the subject of investigation under the Council's established Planning Enforcement procedures.

#### **4.0 Area covered by the LDO**

- 4.1 The Egmere LDO covers an area of approximately 30 hectares; made up of areas of brownfield and greenfield land – see Appendices A and B. The area of land proposed for designation is in at least two principal ownerships (the Holkham and Walsingham Estates); together with a number of small plots understood to be in other ownerships. This is intended to provide a choice of site / premises opportunities for potential investors providing a degree of competition and value for money for investors.
- 4.2 The Egmere LDO lies to the east and west of the B1105 Fakenham to Wells-next-the Sea road, approximately five kilometres south of Wells-next-the Sea and four kilometres west of the village of Walsingham. The B1105 road is the principal access road serving Wells-next-the Sea from the A148 / A1065 / A1067 roads at Fakenham, ten kilometres to the south. In a regional context, Egmere is situated approximately 50 kilometres north-west of the city of Norwich with its international airport and rail connections via the A1067; approximately 82 and 96 kilometres from the major port facilities of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft via the A1067 and A47/A146 roads; and 140 kilometres from Stansted Airport via the A1065, A11 and M11.
- 4.3 Development of support facilities associated with the operational and maintenance requirements of the offshore wind energy schemes at Egmere would therefore provide an opportunity for offshore technicians and survey personnel, as well as HGVs serving such operations, to be located outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but with easy access to the port facilities at Wells-next-the-Sea. This would mean that large volumes of additional traffic could be kept out of Wells, as personnel and equipment accessing boats at the harbour could be transported by minibus / dedicated support vehicles operating from facilities at Egmere.
- 4.4 The Egmere site historically accommodated miscellaneous buildings associated with a Second World War airfield to the west of the B1105 road; but more recently has seen development of facilities supporting the wider agricultural economy – including grain storage and drying facilities; animal feed manufacture and distribution facilities, some of which are currently vacant. The wider area is in arable production; with no significant development or land uses / settlements closer to the site than the communities of Wells-next-the-Sea and Walsingham as detailed at paragraph 4.2 above. The historic Holkham Hall and Park lie approximately four kilometres to the north-west of Egmere, but would not be impacted upon by any development permitted by the LDO.

## 5.0 Schedule Of Development permitted by the Egmere Local Development Order

### **Description of development to be permitted under the Local Development Order**

Within the boundaries of the Egmere LDO and in accordance with the building design parameters shown on the Plan at Appendix A, planning permission will be granted for the following types of development:-

### **Developments directly supporting the operational and maintenance requirements of the offshore wind energy sector**

Development is permitted for the following purposes:-

- a) Co-ordination and operation of offshore wind energy developments through the design, development and operational phases – to include administrative offices, operations control and monitoring facilities, staff training, briefing and welfare facilities, warehousing and storage facilities.
- b) The manufacture, assembly, storage, maintenance and servicing of plant, machinery and components used in the generation and transmission of electricity generated by offshore wind farm developments.
- c) The decommissioning and/or disassembly of plant, machinery and components used in the generation and transmission of electricity generated by offshore wind farm developments.
- d) The provision of technical survey and support services for the construction and maintenance of offshore wind energy developments.
- e) The provision of storage and warehousing associated with the supply of goods and services to offshore workers through the Port of Wells.
- f) Education and training facilities in support of the offshore wind energy sector.

Subject to the following conditions / exceptions:-

- i) Development of a hotel, hostel or residential accommodation is not permitted by the LDO
- ii) Development of facilities for the take-off or landing of helicopters is not permitted by the LDO
- iii) Any development taken forward under the provisions of the LDO shall comply with the requirements of the Egmere LDO Design Code
- iv) On-site parking provision shall be made in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix D: Car Parking Standards of the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

## **Electronic communications equipment used in support of offshore wind energy operations**

Development is permitted for the following purposes:-

- a) The provision and future maintenance of electronic communications infrastructure and apparatus (ie masts, aerials, antennae and satellite dishes) and ancillary equipment housing in support of the monitoring, maintenance, and safe operations of offshore wind energy developments.

Subject to the following conditions / exceptions:-

- i) Development is not permitted for masts, aerials and antennae exceeding 25 metres in height
- ii) Any part of the development, including equipment housing which would obscure the sight lines of any road junction or site access / egress on to the public highway is not permitted by the LDO.
- iii) Any part of the equipment that would require lighting, e.g. top of masts is not permitted by the LDO.
- iv) Any electronic communications equipment attached to buildings shall, so far as is practical without compromising operational effectiveness, be located so as to minimise its effect / impact on the external appearance of the building.
- v) Prior to the use of any electronic communications equipment approved under the LDO, the developer / operator shall provide to the Local Planning Authority a certificate confirming that the development will meet International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for exposure and that the cumulative impact of exposure from all development within the LDO will not exceed ICNIRP guidelines.
- vi) Any infrastructure and apparatus developed / erected in accordance with the LDO provisions and in relation to the offshore wind energy sector shall be decommissioned and removed from the land, building or structure (eg masts) upon which it is situated after it is no longer required for the purpose for which it was installed.

## **CCTV cameras**

Development is permitted for the following purposes:-

- a) The installation and operation of Closed Circuit Television cameras and supporting infrastructure (poles, masts, infra-red lighting) for security purposes where this forms an integral part of the developments directly supporting the operational and maintenance requirement of the offshore energy sector.

Subject to the following conditions / exceptions:-

- i) CCTV cameras permitted by the LDO shall be designed / operated in such a way that they cannot survey / film any residential property or garden.

- ii) Any CCTV cameras and supporting infrastructure developed / erected in accordance with the LDO provisions shall be decommissioned and removed from the land, building or structure upon which it is situated after it is no longer required.
- iii) The operation of any CCTV security systems permitted under the provisions of the LDO will be operated in accordance with relevant legislation.

### **Boundary fences and gates**

Development is permitted for the following purposes:-

- a) Operational development comprising the erection or installation of boundary fencing and gates

Subject to the following conditions / exceptions:-

- i) Fences and gates shall not exceed 2 metres in height
- ii) Any fencing or gate permitted by the LDO shall not obscure the sight lines of any road junction or site access / egress on to the public highway.
- iii) Any gate providing vehicular access to the public highway shall be set back within the development by a distance of 15 metres so that it can be unlocked / opened without obstruction of the highway.
- iv) The provision of fencing under the provisions of the LDO shall seek to minimise visual impact when viewed from the public highway or external views, with consideration given to the planting of hedging in native species on the outward facing aspect of the fenced development.

### **Photovoltaic / solar panels**

Development is permitted for the following purposes:-

- a) The installation of photovoltaic or solar thermal energy panels on buildings within the Egmore LDO area

Subject to the following conditions / exceptions:-

- i) Any photovoltaic or solar thermal energy panel installed on buildings in accordance with the LDO provisions shall be decommissioned and removed from the building after it is no longer required.

### **Future Change of Use:-**

Following cessation of the use of the developments permitted under the provisions of the LDO, any change of use of these buildings shall first be subject to planning permission.

## **6.0 Schedule Of Conditions applicable to development permitted by the Egmere Local Development Order**

6.1 Whilst a Local Development Order allows prescribed developments to be taken forward within the LDO area without the need for planning permission to be obtained from the local planning authority, there are a number of conditions which the local planning authority would expect to be complied with by developers in taking forward development within the Egmere LDO. These are detailed below:-

- Developers taking forward permitted developments within the LDO area will be required to provide details of their proposals to the local planning authority in order that these can be placed on the Council's public register of planning applications (a template Commencement Notice is attached at Appendix E).
- All development taken forward under the LDO should comply with the principles detailed within the Egmere Local Development Order Design Code, which has been prepared so as to ensure that development is of a good design and standard and assimilates well into the predominantly rural setting and wider landscape.
- All development taken forward under the LDO is subject to prior agreement with the highway authority (Norfolk County Council) so as to secure a safe means of access / egress on to the B1105 Wells – Fakenham road or Edgar Road.
- Surveys for great crested newt, breeding birds (including barn owls), badgers and bats shall be undertaken by Suitably Qualified Ecologists in accordance with recognised standards and procedures and approved by the District Council in writing prior to commencement of development. All survey recommendations and mitigation as approved to be implemented as part of the permitted development.
- All construction traffic will be restricted to no more than 10mph within the LDO area.
- No construction or demolition will take place during the hours of darkness (7pm to 7am inclusive) – to avoid any potential impact on nocturnal species.
- During the construction and demolition stages of development, construction methodologies shall follow best practice, this shall include:-
  - no trenches to be left open overnight unless an egress board is positioned within them to allow any terrestrial animals to escape
  - any stored materials that may act as resting places shall be raised off the ground on pallets
  - any building waste or rubble must be directly placed into suitable waste storage containers such as skips.
  - Where there is no current barrier between the LDO site and open fields a dense boundary shall be established.

6.2 The conditions set out in Appendix F have been imposed at the request of the Environment Agency in response to consultation on this Order.

- 6.3 Prior to any works of conversion, refurbishment or demolition of any existing World War II buildings within the Egmere LDO area, a photographic record shall be made by or on behalf of the developer in consultation with Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service – Tel: 01362 860528 / Email: heritage@norfolk.gov.uk.
- 6.4 The LDO does not remove the need for Building Regulations approvals to be obtained or remove the need for developers / occupiers of premises to comply with all other legislative requirements pertaining to their occupation of premises or their wider business operations.