



Statement to Parish Council Meeting 27th January 2025

Chair, Councillors

This statement is in respect of Agenda Item 6 - Planning Application 77576 Whitecross Offshore Windfarm onshore infrastructure

We continue to object strongly to this proposal for the onshore cable route. With the exception of bat survey reports for 2024, confirmation that they will not fund an ecology warden and the biodiversity net gain will come with caveats - the additional documentation submitted by the applicant on the 2nd January 2025 does not provide the requested further detail or address concerns about the proposed onshore cable route.

There are numerous and insurmountable issues that this flawed application raises, yet the applicant continues to respond by either cross referencing to previous documents or stating that issues will be addressed post consent. The applicant's responses continue to avoid detailing how their proposals are compliant with planning policies – particularly those in Braunton Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

This current round of consultation is in respect of the applicant's response to specific consultees who are subject matter experts - some of whom have local knowledge, in respect of environment, landscape and ecology, and whose detailed objections to date are material considerations in the planning decision.

What is clear from reading the applicant's responses is that they are intent on managing away the issues that this proposal raises by stating details will follow post consent, that they will agree to have conditions attached if permission is granted or refer the reader back to the original Environmental Statement documents which prompted the objections.

Provision of detailed documentation post consent will not enable full consideration of the proposed mitigation activities by the individual consultative bodies, nor the considerable cumulative effects that development will have on the landscape and its ecology. These matters cannot be appropriately managed and enforced by planning conditions. The lack of detail needs to be addressed pre determination in order that it can be properly examined by the subject matter experts.

We are very concerned that this lack of detail may have been promoted as acceptable due to the use of the Rochdale Envelope approach that the applicant has justified as being "agreed with NDC during pre-application engagement".

The Rochdale Envelope is designed to allow developers to have greater flexibility in providing detail in respect of designated Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. This White Cross application is not.

It appears that the applicant is taking full advantage of this apparently agreed approach. NDC have not publicly confirmed this agreement with the applicant, nor did the applicant explain "clearly for the purpose of consultation and publicity at the Pre-application stage" that this agreement was in place as required by government guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-nine-rochdale-envelope/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-nine-rochdale-envelope>

This apparent agreement may account for why this proposal is in effect an outline application establishing the principle of development.

Given the potential impact of this proposal on the Parish an outline application is not acceptable nor is the applicant's stated intent to agree to have conditions that will require them to produce the detailed documentation that they currently have not provided. Without the detail the applicant cannot demonstrate compliance with the Parish Neighbourhood Plan which gives the specificity to the associated Local Plan policies.

This application must be refused.