



Non-technical summary: Transport

Introduction

This briefing note includes a summary of the way construction traffic will be managed by the proposed White Cross Offshore Windfarm project. (It does not include any new or additional assessment against policy.)

Changes to our transport plans

To allow construction traffic to access the project, an initial access strategy was proposed where construction traffic would use the local narrow roads (including Blind Acres Lane, Moor Lane and Vellator Way). It was recognised that the use of these roads could cause delays to existing users, however it was proposed that these could be addressed with traffic management measures (e.g. one-way systems, temporary traffic signals, escort vehicles, etc.).

Specific concerns were raised by Devon County Council (DCC) Highways regarding delays to drivers from the use of traffic management measures, and the impact upon pedestrians and cyclists was also raised as a concern (by DCC and Braunton Parish Council).

In response to these concerns, an updated access strategy has been agreed with DCC Highways. It is now proposed to construct a new temporary track on site, known as a haul road. This haul road would be approximately 5km long and be used exclusively by site traffic enabling HGVs to avoid the narrow local roads.

This temporary haul road will be accessed from the B3231 (west of Blind Acres Lane (See map: Access A002)). This access will allow construction traffic to travel south along the temporary haul road towards the River Taw and west towards the Saunton Golf Course.

This new temporary haul road route means HGVs would not need to use the existing narrow roads and will address the concerns which were raised about impacts on pedestrians and cyclists and driver delay.

As construction completes, the haul road will be removed and the land restored to its existing condition – or improved, so that the natural habitat will be maintained and there will be limited environmental disturbance to the area.

The existing road from the B3231 to Saunton Sands Car Park (See Map: Access A001) will be used to allow vehicles to get to the area where the cable reaches the shore.

Additional routes will also be used (See map: A003 and A007) from Sandy Lane and the private toll road to Crow Point. These will only be used by limited numbers of Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) such as minibuses for construction workers.

These plans were agreed with Devon County Council Highways. They will also remove the need for any traffic management measures such as temporary traffic lights or one-way systems. This will alleviate the potential for congestion at busy times of day, particularly as traffic movements will be generally scheduled for outside the main peak hours.

You can see the updated proposals in **Figure 3.1**.

HGV movements

The predicted number of HGV movements to and from the site in our Environmental Statement are based on a “worst case scenario” but we believe the actual number of movements will be lower.

The figure of 92 total HGV movements (i.e. 46 arrivals and 46 departures) per day along the B3231 and A1361 is a forecast worst case and relates to a single month. This represents a worst case where different construction activities are undertaken at the same time where the cable reaches the shore and at the golf course. We expect that these worst case numbers can be reduced significantly and the project team are working on the options to achieve this (detailed below).

All activities where there are significant traffic movements are planned to happen outside the peak tourist season because we know that is a very important time for local businesses and residents.

During the rest of the construction period, the numbers of vehicle movements for HGVs will be much lower. The average is estimated to be 18 arrivals and 18 departures (36 total movements) per day.

Working hours will be limited to 07:00 – 19:00 Monday to Friday and 07:00 – 13:00 on Saturday (no working is proposed on Sundays or Bank Holidays). So during the busiest time for the scheme – as mentioned above - the worst possible case is that the B3231 would experience an increase of approximately five HGV arrivals and five departures per hour for one month. We have arrived at these figures by excluding Saturdays, when there will be very few deliveries.

Reducing traffic at peak times

We understand that any increase in traffic is not desirable, however temporary. So to keep traffic as low as possible we are investigating options including:

- Stockpiling materials on site to plan deliveries for off-peak times and reduce peak HGV movements
- Explore options for incoming vehicles to import stone and outgoing vehicles export excavated material – this is known as backhauling and limits empty lorries on the road network
- Using the appropriate size of HGVs to reduce the total number
- Wherever possible, we will reuse material onsite – for example reusing excavated material to form bunds (mounded barriers)

We have committed to producing a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to formalise the agreed controls and measures that will be used during construction. The CTMP will be agreed with DCC Highways.

Traffic in Braunton

During the consultation on our planning application, some concerns were raised about the project causing an increase in traffic, particularly in Braunton. We recognise these concerns and are proactively looking at options to minimise traffic movements. When the project moves forward to the detailed planning stage we will produce a detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

The final CTMP will contain details of control measures (e.g. routes to be used, limits on vehicle numbers and timing of deliveries) as well as monitoring procedures for managing the potential traffic and transport effects of constructing the project.

Use of the Toll Road

Some members of the community suggested we use the Toll Road to access the area where we need to work. We agree this could reduce traffic on the B3231, but having previously investigated this option, it was discounted as it would mean vehicles using Vellator Way instead of the B3231.

In contrast to the B3231, Vellator Way, is much narrower, not wide enough for two HGVs to pass, and includes humpback bridges which are not suitable for larger deliveries. Additionally, the Toll Road is not considered suitable for HGV traffic.

Air Quality

The expected effects of traffic emissions linked to the project have been assessed according to the relevant British standards. The increased traffic emissions linked to the project have been assessed to be negligible and not significant to human health.

An air quality assessment is required if a construction scheme is more than 2 years in duration. Because of the number of HGV movements involved in the cabling work, and the fact that the construction programme will be less than a year, a detailed air quality assessment is not required. This approach was agreed with the Environmental Health Consultant at North Devon District Council in May 2023. We will however be monitoring our scheme to keep dust down, and ensure that we avoid any unnecessary traffic movements.

Air quality at Caen Primary School

Concentrations of Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) recorded by North Devon Council's independent air monitoring team at the sampling point nearest the school have been declining since 2017. In 2019 they were 15 per cent below the target levels set by the UK government, and they dropped again in 2020 and 2021, although that might have been because there was less traffic during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Because levels are already low, and the increases in traffic linked to the project will be temporary, the effects on air quality at the school will not be significant. However, the Environmental Health Consultant at North Devon District Council has asked us to make provisions for responding if there are reasonable grounds to think traffic linked

to the project is affecting air quality in the Braunton area. These measures will be agreed with the council before construction starts and regular monitoring undertaken.

Saunton Sands Car Park

We are proposing to use part of Saunton Sands Car Park while we are laying the cables, and we realise there are concerns about the loss of spaces this will cause. We are going to do a number of things to make sure this has as little impact as possible.

There will be three phases of work. The initial project set up will happen outside the peak summer holiday season (July-August). The landfall works which follow will involve the temporary loss of the greatest number of car parking spaces (up to 250 spaces from a total of 650-700) but will also be completed during the off-season between September and April. More detail will be published nearer the time.

The last phase of work – including the work at the golf course - will involve fewer parking spaces being temporarily out of use (up to 140).

The number of car parking spaces out of commission will fluctuate over the nine months, but has been timed to coincide with the off season as far as possible. Every effort will be made to reduce the time that car park spaces are out of use, and to return areas of the car park when they are no longer needed by the project

The construction area will be fenced off with appropriate signage and traffic marshals as required.

We realise the temporary loss of car parking is a concern, and we are exploring whether we can take any further measures to offset this.

You can see how the car park would be used during the landfall works and the golf course crossing in **Figure 7.1**.

Figure 3.1 Proposed Access Locations



