

Football

Exclusive

Broken wind

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PLANS for the world's biggest wind farm off Britain's coast have been blown off course - by faulty windmills built on the cheap in China.

The eco-project's 140 giant turbine towers were assembled by Chinese steelworkers then ferried 4,500 miles on fuel-guzzling cargo ships.

But serious welding faults were found in many of the structures shipped to a Dutch port.



Eco-friendly ... a wind farm

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Now Chinese workers have been flown to Holland, at further cost to the environment, to help British experts sent in to sort out the mess.

Project insiders last night branded the decision not to buy British "a national disgrace" - and warned taxpayers will foot the bill.

One source said: "The quality of work is appalling.

"It's supposed to be about cutting greenhouse gas emissions - but how much gas was guzzled when 180,000 tonnes of steel was shipped from China?"

Greater Gabbard, 16 miles off the Suffolk coast, will be the planet's biggest offshore wind farm.



Green or not green? ... path of wind turbines

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The first of the turbine towers was due to be sunk into the sea bed this year, but sources say the project - hailed as a cornerstone of the Department of Energy and Climate Change's green policy - now faces months of delays.

The row follows angry protests over the July shutdown of Britain's only wind turbine factory.

Danish-owned Vestas axed 425 jobs on the Isle of Wight and 100 more in Southampton, blaming lack of UK demand.

The firm then **HIRED** more than 5,000 extra workers in China, the US and Spain.

Sacked Vestas engineer Mark Smith said: "If British workers had built the towers, the quality would have been guaranteed.

"It's a false economy which will cost them dear in the long run."

Scottish and Southern Power bosses declined to discuss the turbines last night.

They said the project remained on course for completion in 2012.

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By BEN JACKSON

Environment Editor

IF you didn't laugh you'd cry.

Ferrying 180,000 tons of steel 4,500 miles makes a mockery of saving energy.

But before pointing the finger, it's worth remembering that the main reason wind turbine manufacturers have struggled so far in the UK is that so many people continue to object to them.

Until NIMBY Britain stops fighting and starts embracing wind power - in the same way as other countries across Europe - we'll continue to see many of the turbines we do own stamped with the words Made In China.

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