



Suffolk County Council (20050784)

Comments on submissions received at
Deadline 4

North Falls (EN010119)

Deadline 5

30 May 2025

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Glossary of Acronyms

<i>AONB</i>	<i>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</i>
<i>DVNL</i>	<i>Dedham Vale National Landscape</i>
<i>EIA</i>	<i>Environmental Impact Assessment</i>
<i>ExA</i>	<i>Examining Authority</i>
<i>GLVIA</i>	<i>Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments</i>
<i>ISH</i>	<i>Issue Specific Hearing</i>
<i>OSEP</i>	<i>Outline Skills and Employment Plan</i>
<i>SECHNL</i>	<i>Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape</i>
<i>SLVIA</i>	<i>Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment</i>
<i>WTG</i>	<i>Wind Turbine Generator</i>
<i>VP</i>	<i>View Point</i>
<i>ZTV</i>	<i>Zone of Theoretical Visibility</i>

"The Council" / "SCC" refers to Suffolk County Council

Purpose of this Submission

The purpose of this submission is to provide responses to the Applicant's Deadline 4 (D4) submissions and representations made by other interested parties at D4, as appropriate. Examination Library references are used throughout to assist readers.

1 Comments on submissions received at Deadline 4

9.44 Cumulative visualisations at the onshore substation, including the Norwich to Tilbury Pylons wirelines Part 2 of 2 (Rev 0) [REP4-030]

Table 1: SCC Table of Comments on 9.44 Cumulative visualisations at the onshore substation, including the Norwich to Tilbury Pylons wirelines Part 2 of 2 (Rev 0) [REP4-030]				
Ref.	Topic	Paragraph Number	SCC's Comments	References
1a	Cumulative Visual Impacts	Figures 30.2.6c & 30.2.7c	<p>SCC welcomes the additional wirelines showing the Norwich to Tilbury Pylons.</p> <p>Only two viewpoints relate to views from directions of the National Landscapes: VP6, Grange Road, for the SECHNL and VP8, Essex Way, Dedham Road for the DVNL. From both viewpoints the pylons would be visible, but in neither view would they introduce a completely new element to the view or be dominant in the view. It is noted that VP6 is not located within the DVNL and therefore does not relay a view from within the DVNL.</p> <p>With regards to VP8, the question remains as to why this location was chosen, where the ZTV suggests limited visibility, and not a location on the Essex Way further south-west where the ZTV suggests greater visibility. In ISH1 and the Applicant's corresponding written summary [REP4-026], the Applicant states that unassessed ZTV are outside of the 2km study area. However, the location referenced here by SCC is closer to the proposed substation than viewpoint 8, meaning that it is within the 2km study area. SCC considers that the inclusion of this viewpoint would benefit the examination in deciding whether the DVNL is affected by the proposed development.</p>	[REP4-026]

9.50 Applicant's Response to Actions List for ISH1 and ISH2 (Rev 0) [REP4-036]

Table 2: SCC Table of Comments on Applicant's Response to Actions List for ISH1 and ISH2 [REP4-036]				
Ref.	Topic	Paragraph Number	SCC's Comments	References
2a	Socio Economic Effects	3.7.1	Suffolk County Council is expected to be a part of the OSEP steering group in the capacity of Regional Skills Co-ordination Function which covers Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex boundaries.	
2b	Cumulative effects	3.8.4	Cumulative effect assessment is not undertaken as the Applicant deems there to be insufficient evidence. Socio-economic impacts (on skills/employment/training) are being investigated by the Regional Skills Co-ordination Function as referenced by the applicant under 3.7.1. In this discussion with SCC the Applicant was made aware of a major infrastructure skills group that SCC is developing to gather better evidence and resources to inform and respond to cumulative impact. The Applicant is expected to support and contribute to this objective of better understanding and addressing the cumulative skills/employment/training impact.	
2c	Methodology used for determining magnitude and significance of effects	3.5.2	The Applicant agrees that impacts on parts of the SECHNL should be treated as impacts on the SECHNL as a whole. The Applicant proceeds to state that its findings of low magnitude of impact despite medium scale of change are justified on the basis of the small geographical extent of the SECHNL affected. SCC would appreciate some clarification as to how the SECHNL is considered 'as a whole' despite the assessment's findings appearing to diminish the magnitude of the effects due to some parts of the SECHNL not being affected by the turbines.	[REP4-096]

			<p>SCC recognises that the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (“GLVIA”) recommends conclusions of magnitude of impact to account for geographical extent. However, in paragraph 5.50, GLVIA emphasises that there are ‘<i>no hard and fast rules</i>’ on how to consider geographical extent in landscape and visual impact assessments. SCC has given its reasoning on how the materiality of adverse impacts on the special qualities of the SECHNL should be considered in its written summary of oral submissions made at ISH2 [REP4-096]:</p> <p><i>“SCC disagrees that with the Applicant’s view that it is appropriate to reduce the materiality of impacts on special qualities of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (“AONB”) (particularly those arising in the coastal parts of the AONB with views out to the proposed development) by reference to the fact that they are only a part of the overall AONB. SCC considers that the materiality of an adverse impact on a special quality stands in its own terms, because that is an intrinsic part of the AONB. SCC does not consider it appropriate to say that because some parts of the AONB are not adversely impacted because they do not have views out to the turbines, the effect is diminished.”</i></p>	
2d	Conserve and enhance	3.5.2	<p>SCC does not accept the Applicant’s reasoning that findings of no significant effects on the SECHNL entails that the Applicant has sought to further the purpose of conserving the SECHNL. SCC refers to Appendix A of its written summary of oral representations for ISH1 [REP4-094] which details SCC’s position on the duty in relation to the Five Estuaries application. In particular, paragraphs 4.13, 4.20 and 4.23 refer to how an application can be considered to have sought to further the purpose of conserving the natural beauty of a national landscape. The duty, as written, makes no reference to the status of significance of impacts in EIA terms. As the Applicant’s SLVIA [APP-043] and technical note [REP3-044] state, a multitude of adverse effects on the special</p>	[APP-043] [REP3-044] [REP4-034] [REP4-066] [REP4-094] [REP4-096]

			<p>qualities of the SECHNL have been found, including a medium scale of change on several of these special qualities. The fact that the Applicant determines these effects to not be significant does not mean that these effects are not relevant to the application of the new duty.</p> <p>During ISH 2 and SCC's corresponding written summary [REP4-096], SCC made reference to the recent London Luton Airport Expansion Development Consent Order decision on 3rd April 2025 in which the Secretary of State concluded that the effects on the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB would not be significant. Nonetheless, the Secretary of State still required a compensation payment of a financial sum to fund the conservation or enhancement measures within the AONB, in order that she could be satisfied that the duty was discharged. SCC attached relevant extracts from that decision in Appendix A of that document [REP4-096].</p> <p>Findings of a medium scale of change across a small geographical area indicate that some areas of the SECHNL will be substantially affected in relation to their special qualities which indicate natural beauty. Not considering these effects to be relevant to the duty solely due to their small geographical extent risks diluting the adverse effects on those areas of the SECHNL closest to the offshore element of the proposed development; a point which SCC made in its post-hearing submission for ISH2 [REP4-096].</p> <p>Therefore, SCC rejects the Applicant's reasoning in its post-hearing submission for ISH 2 [REP4-034] that a lack of compensatory measures is justified based on the 'minimal harm' of the project on the special qualities of the SECHNL.</p> <p>It should be noted that Natural England disagrees with the Applicant's conclusions on the magnitude of impact on the SECHNL's special qualities and instead finds significant adverse effects as a result of the proposed development [REP4-066].</p>	
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			<p>The proposed development cannot be said to result in the natural beauty of the SECHNL to be left in no worse of a state than it would be without the proposed development, meaning it cannot be said to conserve the natural beauty of the SECHNL.</p> <p>SCC's Appendix A of its written summary of oral representations for ISH 1 [REP4-094] also explores the nature of the duty being an "active" one using evidence from the Defra guidance, EN-1 and the duty as written. SCC refers the ExA to its argument in this document regarding the notion that the relevant policy and guidance indicates that the duty requires more than just the avoidance and minimisation of adverse effects to be discharged. Notably, the wording of the duty includes 'seek to <i>further</i> the purposes...' rather than merely 'have regard to the purposes' as was the previous wording of the duty. The Applicant must demonstrate what measures are proposed which actively seek to improve the purposes of the designation of the SECHNL. Currently, SCC considers that the application lacks such measures and instead will result in adverse effects on the purposes of the designation.</p> <p>SCC notes that the Applicant omits any reference to what measures are included in the proposed development which seek to enhance the natural beauty of the SECHNL. The Applicant should demonstrate what measures are proposed which seek to further the purpose of enhancing the natural beauty of the SECHNL in addition to those which seek to conserving the SECHNL's natural beauty.</p>	
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