



**The Great Grid Upgrade**

Sea Link

# Sea Link

**Volume 9: Examination Submissions**

**Document 9.1: Applicant's Response to S51 Advice**

**Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020026**

**Version: A**  
**June 2025**

**nationalgrid**

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# 1. Applicant’s Response to S51 Advice

## 1.1 Applicants Response

- 1.1.1

This document provides a full breakdown of the observations set out in the section 51 advice letter dated 23 April 2025 and in Box 30 of the Section 55 Checklist.
- 1.1.2

In summary, our response to the advice is provided in the list of updated/additional documents are in Table 1.2

Table 1.1 Documents Submitted

Document Number	Document Title	Version	Date Provided
6.3.2.2.A	ES Appendix 2.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report	B	01 May 2025
6.3.3.2.A	ES Appendix 3.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report	B	01 May 2025
6.2.3.11	Part 3 Kent Chapter 11 Health & Wellbeing	B	01 May 2025
6.3.4.2.D	ES Appendix 4.2.D Interim Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys)	B	01 May 2025
6.6	Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	B	01 May 2025
7.5.1.1	Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan - Suffolk	B	01 May 2025

Document Number	Document Title	Version	Date Provided
4.3	Book of Reference Addendum	A	01 May 2025
9.2	Supplementary Stage 1 and 2 Marine Geoarchaeological Assessment	A	03 June 2025
9.2.1	Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment - Technical Note	A	03 June 2025
9.5	Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys)	A	03 June 2025
3.1	draft Development Consent Order	B	03 June 2025
6.1	Environmental Statement Non Technical Statement	B	03 June 2025
6.2.1.4	Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project	B	03 June 2025
6.2.4.2	Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology	B	03 June 2025
6.2.4.3	Part 4 Chapter 3 Fish and Shellfish	B	03 June 2025

Document Number	Document Title	Version	Date Provided
6.2.4.3	Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals	B	03 June 2025
6.3.4.6.A	ES Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report	B	03 June 2025
4.2	Statement of Reasons	B	03 June 2025
7.1	Planning Statement	B	03 June 2025
2.7.1	Access, Rights of Way and Public Rights of Navigation Plans - Suffolk	B	03 June 2025



**Table 1.2 Applicants Response**

DCO Document	Detail of Issue / Update	Applicant's Response
N/A	<p><b>Consultees identified on a precautionary basis</b></p> <p>Given the individual circumstances of this case, the Planning Inspectorate advises taking a precautionary approach to consultation under s42(1)(a) of PA2008 to ensure that all persons potentially affected by, or potentially likely to have an interest in the application are given the opportunity to participate fully in the examination of the application. On this basis, the applicant may wish to serve notice on the bodies listed in Box 6 of the section 55 checklist when it serves notice of the accepted application under s56(2)(a) of the PA2008; unless there is a specific justification why this is not necessary</p>	<p>The applicant has reviewed the s51 advice and the guidance in box 5 of the s55 Checklist The applicant can provide the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CABE was merged into the Design Council in 2011 and no longer exists so unclear why this is included – they are not included in Schedule 1 to the APFP Regs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The relevant Regional Development Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These were abolished in 2010.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Scottish Human Rights Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This body is not included in the Regs and so unclear why we should consult on an application not located in or close to Scotland.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Commission for Sustainable Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It's not clear what this body is and unable to find record online of it.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Commission for Rural Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This body was abolished in 2013.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Water Industry Commission of Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This body is not included in the Regs and again, it's not clear why we should consult on an application not located in or close to Scotland.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The British Waterways Board</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This body is included in Schedule 1 but only for “All proposed applications likely to have an impact on inland waterways or land adjacent to inland waterways in Scotland”. In England, the BWB is now the Canal and River Trust who were consulted.</li> </ul> <p>Given the conclusions above we have not consulted any of the above bodies and do not think it necessary to notify them under S56.</p>
6.3.2.2.A ES Appendix 2.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report	<p>These survey reports are watermarked as confidential. Whilst the report contains some confidential information (for example in relation to badger setts) most of the information does not appear to be confidential, as its release would not adversely affect protections of the environment to which the information relates. The applicant is requested to provide 2 versions of these survey reports, to enable the information that is not confidential to be published in line with duties under the Environmental Information Regulations. The survey reports should be provided as soon as possible before commencement of the examination</p>	<p>The applicant has updated 6.3.2.2.A ES Appendix 2.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report in response to the s51 advice, which was submitted in May 2025</p>



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6.3.3.2.A ES Appendix 3.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report	<p>These survey reports are watermarked as confidential. Whilst the report contains some confidential information (for example in relation to badger setts) most of the information does not appear to be confidential, as its release would not adversely affect protections of the environment to which the information relates. The applicant is requested to provide 2 versions of these survey reports, to enable the information that is not confidential to be published in line with duties under the Environmental Information Regulations. The survey reports should be provided as soon as possible before commencement of the examination</p>	<p>The applicant has updated 6.3.3.2.A ES Appendix 3.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted in May 2025</p>
6.2.2.3 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage	<p>Appendix 2.3.F presents results of the completed trial trenching (Phase 1 and 1b) but it is labelled as draft. The Consultation Report, Appendix E (Part 4 of 4) (Doc 5.1.6) indicates that a limited area of Phase 2b would not be complete until March 2025. ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage states that the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Doc 7.5.4.1) would be updated during examination following receipt of the final fieldwork report for the trial trench evaluation, but it was not considered that the absence of this fieldwork was a meaningful limitation to the assessment. The applicant is requested to provide a final version of the trial trenching report including the results of work carried out in March 2025, and an updated Outline WSI</p>	<p>The applicant can confirm that whilst Application Document 6.3.2.3.F ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Appendix 2.3.F Phase 1 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report (Draft) was labelled as 'draft' it presented the full results of the Phase 1 trial trenching (Phases 1a and 1b). The applicant will submit an Additional Submission presenting the results of the Phase 2a and Phase 2b trial trenching once these become available. In addition, the application will submit an update to Application Document 7.5.4.1 Outline Onshore Overarching Written Scheme of Investigation (OWSI) - Suffolk, reflecting the results of the Phase 2 trial trenching, in due course.</p>

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	<p>reflecting this information, as soon as possible before commencement of the examination.</p>	
<p>6.3.2.3.F ES Appendix 2.3.F Phase 1 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report (Draft)</p>	<p>Appendix 2.3.F presents results of the completed trial trenching (Phase 1 and 1b) but it is labelled as draft. The Consultation Report, Appendix E (Part 4 of 4) (Doc 5.1.6) indicates that a limited area of Phase 2b would not be complete until March 2025. ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage states that the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Doc 7.5.4.1) would be updated during examination following receipt of the final fieldwork report for the trial trench evaluation, but it was not considered that the absence of this fieldwork was a meaningful limitation to the assessment. The applicant is requested to provide a final version of the trial trenching report including the results of work carried out in March 2025, and an updated Outline WSI reflecting this information, as soon as possible before commencement of the examination.</p>	<p>The applicant can confirm that whilst Application Document 6.3.2.3.F ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Appendix 2.3.F Phase 1 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report (Draft) was labelled as 'draft' it presented the full results of the Phase 1 trial trenching (Phases 1a and 1b). The applicant will submit an Additional Submission presenting the results of the Phase 2a and Phase 2b trial trenching once these become available. In addition, the application will submit an update to Application Document 7.5.4.1 Outline Onshore Overarching Written Scheme of Investigation (OWSI) - Suffolk, reflecting the results of the Phase 2 trial trenching, in due course.</p>

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6.2.4.6 Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology	ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology states that additional geotechnical surveys were undertaken in October 2024 to duplicate earlier vibrocores that were destroyed. The results have not been included in the ES and are proposed to be submitted as a standalone document when complete. It states that the existing baseline information from geophysical survey and geoarchaeological deposit models (presented in the Marine Archaeological Technical Report Figures (Doc 6.4.4.6.A) and summarised in ES Appendix 6.4.A (Doc 6.3.4.6.A) is suitable to inform impact assessment. The applicant is requested to provide results of the October 2024 surveys and set out any implications for the ES assessment conclusions as soon as possible before commencement of the examination	The applicant has submitted Application Document 9.2 Supplementary Stage 1 and 2 Marine Geoarchaeological Assessment which presents the results of October 2024 survey. Application Document 9.2.1 Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment - Technical Note has also been submitted alongside this response and confirms that the survey results do not change the outcomes of the ES marine archaeology chapter assessment conclusions. Both of these documents have also been submitted to Historic England.
6.2.4.2 Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology	The Consultation Report, Appendix E (Part 4 of 4) (Doc 5.1.6) response to the 2023 statutory consultation page 213 states that "The results from the comprehensive geophysical survey, preliminary imagery and survey logs are being integrated with our existing 2021 data and supplemented with existing environmental information from available sources such as One Benthic to provide confidence in the assessment. The final results of the most recent survey campaign will be provided prior to examination as supplementary information in order to provide an additional confidence in	The applicant can confirm that whilst the interim benthic survey report was submitted as part of the ES in the DCO application (Application Document 6.3.4.2.D ES Appendix 4.2.D Interim Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys)), the full set of survey results were considered within the ES in the benthic ecology chapter assessment conclusions. Document 9.5 Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys) has been submitted alongside this response. This final survey report provides additional results and analysis that wasnt presented in Application Document 6.3.4.2.D ES Appendix 4.2.D Interim Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys).

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	<p>the conclusions.”</p> <p>Please explain your programme for submission of the supplementary information.</p> <p>It is assumed that these are the only outstanding submissions but in responding, please confirm whether there are any other outstanding or pending submissions proposed for any subject and, if so, their anticipated date of submission.</p>	
6.8 Flood Risk Assessment	<p>The Environment Agency (EA) released updated flood risk and coastal erosion data in March 2025, shortly before the application was submitted. The flood risk assessment (FRA) has therefore not been based on the most up to date EA data. The applicant is requested to review the latest EA flood risk data and confirm any implications for the FRA. An updated FRA should be submitted as soon as possible before commencement of the examination if necessary following this review. The FRA states that localised areas of the proposed development are in Flood Zone 3 (shown on Figure 1 of Appendix A). It does not distinguish between Flood Zones 3(a) and 3(b). The applicant is requested to provide plans showing Flood Zones 3a and 3b differentiated or explain why this is information</p>	<p>The applicant is reviewing the March 2025 updated flood risk and coastal erosion data and will confirm the implications for the FRA in an Additional Submission, together with clarification on Flood Zones 3a and 3b as requested.</p>

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	is not required in respect of the proposed development.	
4.1 Funding Statement	Paragraph 3.2.17 of the Funding Statement states that “The estimated cost of implementing the Proposed Project is approximately £1.1bn (18/19 price).” This cost estimate is based on prices from circa six years ago. Please can this be updated or otherwise explain why this estimated cost is still relevant to the proposed development	The applicant can confirm that the reason that the price base used in the document is in 2018/19 prices is that this the price base of the current RIIO regulatory period. The RIIO-T2 regulatory period runs from April 2021 until March 2026 and so 2018/19 is the cost base we use for all project cost estimates for consistency. The applicant also can provide a link to the document (page 10) which provides further information ( <a href="https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/2023-24_RIIO-T2_Electricity_Transmission_RIGs_%20version%201.8%20clean.pdf">https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/2023-24_RIIO-T2_Electricity_Transmission_RIGs_%20version%201.8%20clean.pdf</a> )
3.1 draft Development Consent Order	Schedule 3 Requirement7(4) - Item n) duplicates h). Article 60 - Three instances of “Error! Reference source not found..” Cross referencing of Schedules and Articles - Please check and review to ensure all schedules and articles are cross referenced correctly	The applicant has updated 3.1 draft Development Consent Order, which is submitted alongside this response.

DCO Document	Detail of Issue / Update	Applicant's Response
6.1 Environmental Statement Non Technical Summary	<p>Paragraph 3.5.20 - kVv and Kv instead of kV</p> <p>Paragraph 5.2.7 - 'pong' habitat - pond habitat</p> <p>"Paragraphs 5.2.7, 6.4.6, 6.10.4, 6.10.10, 6.11.3 - References to Kent/Suffolk appear to be wrong"</p> <p>"Paragraphs 5.8.8 and 5.8.10 - Potentially contradictory text suggests that during construction receptors are within 200m but during operation there are no receptors within 200m therefore effects are not significant."</p> <p>Paragraph 6.2.6 - Typos/punctuation errors make it difficult to understand meaning of text.</p> <p>Paragraph 6.2.18 - residaul - residual</p> <p>Paragraph 6.9.3 - 'study area for varies' should read 'study area for noise and vibration varies'</p> <p>Paragraph 7.4.1 - The potential impacts two groups...</p> <p>Paragraph 7.4.6 - Airbourne south and visual</p> <p>Paragraph 7.8.9 - Reference to ecology and biodiversity effects but should be commercial fisheries</p> <p>Paragraph 7.9.4 - Reference to fish and shellfish ecology effects but should be other sea users</p> <p>Paragraph 7.11.4 - disturbnace - disturbance</p> <p>Paragraph 8.2.4 - and bird in – and birds in</p> <p>Paragraph 8.2.5 - co,nined - combined</p> <p>Paragraph 8.2.5 - signifcaint - significant</p> <p>Plates 1.1 and 1.2 Suffolk and Kent</p> <p>Environmental Constraints - Special Area of Conservation (SAC) not shown with hash and not labelled on plan for Suffolk. Flood zones</p>	<p>The applicant has updated 6.1 Environmental Statement Non Technical Summary in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response</p>



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	<p>make it difficult to read base map. Consider changing flood zone notation to make base map visible.</p> <p>Plate 3.2 Kent Onshore Order Limits - Converter station labelled as Saxmundham in legend but should be Minster.</p> <p>Plates 3.1 and 3.2 Kent and Suffolk - Clearly label the overhead and underground sections.</p>	
6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project	<p>Paragraph 4.1.6 - The list of supporting figures describes a number of figures as application documents e.g. "Application Document 7.5.7.1.1 Saxmundham Converter Station Outline Landscape Mitigation" but does not make it clear that these are figures appended to documents 7.5.7.1 and 7.5.7.2.</p>	<p>The applicant has updated 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response.</p>

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6.2.3.11 Part 3 Kent Chapter 11 Health & Wellbeing	Heading of Social cohesion and community identify after paragraph 11.9.70 - The text description of the effects to health and wellbeing from impacts to social cohesion and community identity during operation of the proposed development is missing and should be inserted.	The applicant has updated 6.2.3.11 Part 3 Kent Chapter 11 Health & Wellbeing in response to the s51 advice, which was submitted in May 2025.
6.2.4 Part 4 Marine Various Chapters	References to Electromagnetic Deviation Study - Several of the ES aspect chapters refer to an ES Appendix 4.7.B Electromagnetic Deviation Study. This document is not listed in the Electronic Application Index. It appears that the relevant information is presented in the Electro and Magnetic Field Compliance Report. This should be checked and clarified in all chapters where the reference is used.	The applicant has updated 6.2.4.2 Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology, 6.2.4.3 Part 4 Chapter 3 Fish and Shellfish and 6.2.4.3 Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response
6.3.4.2.D ES Appendix 4.2.D Interim Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys)	Appendices I to M - The appendices are not included, an icon of a link to a pdf document or excel spreadsheets is shown. A copy of these documents should be submitted.	The applicant has updated 6.3.4.2.D ES Appendix 4.2.D Interim Subtidal Survey Report (Additional Surveys) in response to the s51 advice, which was submitted in May 2025
6.3.4.6.A ES Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report	Title page - Reference number on the title page is 6.3.4.7.A	The applicant has updated 6.3.4.6.A ES Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response.

DCO Document	Detail of Issue / Update	Applicant's Response
6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	Section 7.3 - At section 7.3 the paragraph numbering reaches 7.3.42 and starts again at 7.3.1 in the next paragraph. This should be corrected. Appendix B - Appendix B is missing and should be inserted.	The applicant has updated 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report in response to the s51 advice, which was submitted in May 2025.
4.2 Statement of Reasons	Unnumbered paragraph on page 41 between paragraphs 7.2.6 and 7.2.7 - Cross referencing with paragraphs 1.3.5 and 1.3.6 of Appendix C Special Category Land Report indicates there is an error in the last sentence of the paragraph where National Grid should be National Trust. Paragraph numbering also needs to be corrected.	The applicant has updated 4.2 Statement of Reasons in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response.
7.1 Planning Statement	Paragraph 7.2.6 - Error reference source not found Paragraph 7.3.27 - Should be National Grid has avoided altogether locating the converter station and substation inside (not outside) the AONB Paragraph 7.13.34 - Reference to Suffolk Onshore Scheme but should be Kent	The applicant has updated 7.1 Planning Statement in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response.
7.5.1.1 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan - Suffolk	"Sea Link Ref: 7.5.1.1 Outline Construction Traffic and Travel Plan Suffolk PINS Ref: APP-337: Page 21 refers to document 6.4.1.4.20. Sea Link Ref 6.4.1.4 ES Figures Introduction Description of the Proposed Project.	The applicant has updated 7.5.1.1 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan - Suffolk in response to the s51 advice, which was submitted in May 2025

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	<p>Figures from 1 to 9 only included. Figures from 10 to at least 20 appear to be missing.</p> <p>6.4.1.4 ES Figures Introduction lists figures 1 - 9 as 6.4.1.4.1, 6.4.1.4.2, etc up to 6.4.1.4.9; APP-337 Outline Construction Traffic and Travel Plan Suffolk refers to doc 6.4.1.4.20, however this does not appear to be a standalone doc – are you able to please clarify the error and direct us to figures 6.4.1.4.10 – 6.4.1.4.20, if they are included within a different document please?"</p>	
4.3 Book of Reference	Book of Reference (errata) – pages missing from the Book of Reference, meaning that certain Category 3 PILs who, whilst identified through diligent inquiry and consulted, are not listed. Note that all PILs are correctly listed elsewhere in the submission (Consultation Report Appendix F.1).	The applicant provided an addendum to 4.3 Book of Reference which correctly lists the Category 3 PILs who were identified through diligent inquiry and consulted, which is submitted alongside this response. This was submitted in May 2025
2.7.1 Access, Rights of Way and Public Rights of Navigation Plans - Suffolk	<p>Some of the road names are not marked in the plans as mentioned in the Schedule 5 – Streets subject to street works. For example</p> <p>– Leiston Road is listed in Schedule 5 to be on the Sheet 5 of Plans but is not marked on the plan."</p>	The applicant has updated Access, Rights of Way and Public Rights of Navigation Plans (Doc 2.7) in response to the s51 advice, which is submitted alongside this response.
Advice from Box 30 of the s55 Checklist	Various typographical errors	The applicant provided updated documents responding to various typographical errors found in the advice from Box 30 of the s55 checklist.

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