



Sarah Holmes, Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Via web form only

3rd October 2025

Dear Ms Holmes

Re: Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an Order granting Development Consent for the Sea Link Project EN020026

Response to the Examining Authority's Rule 6 Letter issued on 19th September 2025 for Procedural Deadline A

Thank you for your Rule 6 letter and the detail it contains.

The Issue Specific Hearing on the Scope of the Development

We have completed and submitted our interest in participating at the Issue Specific Hearing through the Event Participation Form, however, we note that no agenda nor details are available at this stage regarding the focus of this hearing and we will therefore update the Examining Authority about whether we need to participate or not once further details are available.

The Examiners' Initial Assessment of the Principal Issues – Annex C

We request that consideration be given to the following suggested additions and amendments to the Principal Issues:

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First Floor
One Cornwall Street
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The RSPB is part of BirdLife International, a network of passionate organisations, working together to save nature across the world.

Patron: His Majesty The King **President:** Dr Amir Khan **Director, RSPB England:** Michael Copleston.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654. Registered address: The Lodge, Pottton Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL

Overarching/Integral Issues - we wish to request that reference is also made to the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 along with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In addition, with the project partly taking place within the marine environment and consideration of Marine Conservation Zones required we recommend reference is made to the Marine Act 2009. For clarity after “WFD Assessments” it might be useful to add “and relevant domestic legislation”.

Construction Effects – we welcome the reference to construction working hours however we wish to highlight the importance of also considering construction methods and locations. We also suggest the addition of; “Implications for land management, including for example through effects on grazing, water control and access” under this heading.

Terrestrial and Marine Ecology and Biodiversity – again we welcome the Examiners’ initial list. We would however suggest the following additions:

- Effects on statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites including functionally linked land, and protected or important habitats and protected species, for example within the Suffolk Sandlings area and the Minster Marshes and Pegwell Bay area
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- The adequacy of mitigation and monitoring including for impacts on land functionally linked to European designated sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Draft Examination Timetable – Annex D

Although the Examination Timetable overall looks acceptable, appreciating the requirement for it to be concluded within 6 months, we do have several concerns about the amount of information involved and potential for further additional information to be introduced (noting our letter to PINs of 28th August 2025 setting out concerns about the lack of some necessary information).

We will however suggest to the Applicant that a Statement of Common Ground with us may be helpful to the Examination.

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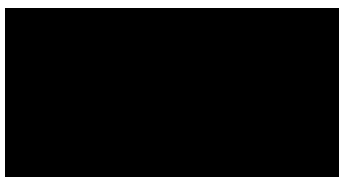
We also note a particular concern around the timing of the issuing of the Examiner's First Written Questions on 17th December and the deadline for responses to those questions being on 7th January. For us, and potentially other organisations, this will coincide with a time when many staff will be on leave over Christmas and the New Year, meaning that it will be difficult to allow sufficient time for drafting and review of our response. It would therefore be helpful if Deadline 3 could be moved back to allow time for suitably comprehensive responses to be produced.

Correspondence

Please note that Jacqui Miller, Joseph Beale and Rosie Sutherland may submit RSPB responses during the Examination. Please could you copy them into any future correspondence (contact details provided separately).

Should you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter with us in further detail please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



RSPB Senior Conservation Officer, Suffolk

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