

Sea Link DCO (EN020026)

Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) – Request for Accompanied and Unaccompanied Site Inspections - Deadline A

Submitted 8 October 2025 in response to the Examining Authority's Rule 6 Letter (PD-010)

Interested Party unique reference number: F4BE0B552

Email address info@suffolkenergyactionsolutions.co.uk

Contact telephone number: [REDACTED]

SEAS Requests ACCOMPANIED AND UNACCOMPANIED SITE INSPECTIONS in and around ALDEBURGH, THORPENESS, FRISTON, SNAPE, SAXMUNDHAM and BENHALL

Introduction

Suffolk's Heritage Coast from Felixstowe to Lowestoft is one of the UK's rare and unique biodiverse areas with 1% of the World's low heathland, RSPB Minsmere, RSPB North Warren, AONB (National Landscape), SSSIs, SPAs, RAMSARs and The East Coast Flyway along with these globally recognised coastal wetlands are nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site.

From the Neolithic period through the Bronze, Iron Ages and early medieval periods to incursions from the Vikings, Romans and the Normans, the Suffolk Coast has a rich history of Pilgrim Ways, ancient footpaths and archaeology. Some of these footpaths are walked today, such as the Domesday Book noted Pilgrims Way that unfortunately has been closed due to the National Grid and Scottish Power Friston Substations. SEAS invites the Examining Authority to visit a number of these footpaths.

Coastal Suffolk is made up of traditional seaside towns, market towns and medieval villages attracting families, bird watchers and walkers. Despite the tranquillity of the area there are estimated to be 4,167,368 trips (day & staying) per annum, which creates a spend of £164million¹. These visitors support the largely family-owned independent businesses and cultural venues (shops, cafés, restaurants and cultural arts venues) which have bucked the trend in struggling coastal towns or corporate

¹ The Energy Coast report of September 2019: The Energy Coast, National Coastal Tourism Academy, Suffolk Coast and Heaths ANOB. <https://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/shares/The-Energy-Coast-BVA-BDRC-Final-Report-2019.pdf> <https://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/shares/The-Energy-Coast-BVA-BDRC-Executive-Summary-2019.pdf> <https://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/shares/The-Energy-Coast-Snapshot-Findings.pdf>

High Streets. Many of those visitors come to the area for the reasons cited in the East Suffolk Tourism Strategy², if they fail to visit the area the economy would be unsustainable.

We are requesting these ASI/USI's to make the Examining Authority aware of the value of the area and the devastation that NGET's plans and the cumulative impact of a further 5 proposed energy projects plus Sizewell C would wreak on this unique area, it's tourist economy, and residents therein and the noise and disruption which could be caused to the many quiet footpaths in the area. The ExA may have completed some of these USI, but these detailed route maps may help highlight information that may have been missed the first time round.

SEAS request the following USIs 1-6 and ASIs 7-9:

1. Sailor's Path to Aldeburgh Roundabout – Part 1 (Walk 2km, ¾ hr)

A1094 is a busy rural road which also passes through a residential area. There is significant pedestrian flow along the route and crossing the road – walkers on the Sailor's Path, golfers crossing over to the Riverside Course, children walking to school, pedestrians going shopping or to play football, tennis, rugby or to the gyms. Any increase in HGV, commercial and general vehicle movements would significantly increase the danger of using the Sailor's Path and dramatically raise pollution levels for residents going about their daily lives. (See Route Map 1)

2. Aldeburgh roundabout to Aldringham – Leiston Road (Drive 10 mins)

This road (B1122) is a busy rural road, particularly in summer with visitors to the area and forms the western boundary of the North Warren Nature Reserve. The extensive wildlife, including free roaming deer, is vulnerable to accidents with vehicles particularly in view of the blind crossing points across the carriageway. It is unsuitable for significant HGV and commercial vehicle movements of any nature and indeed any increase in general traffic on route to NGET's development site. An increase in traffic volumes would raise pollution levels considerably in an area to which people come to walk and enjoy the open landscape (See Route Map 2)

3. Aldeburgh Roundabout down Park Road to High Street and back (Walk - 1 hour)

This route demonstrates the residents' essential services. Park Road is a private road (walkers are allowed) with the Northern gate closed on weekends during the months of April-October and Bank Holidays. It gives access to **the Hospital, the Garrett House Care Home, the Primary School, parking for the allotments and**

² <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Visitors/East-Suffolk-Tourism-Strategy.pdf>

the tennis courts. At the end is the High Street. As you proceed down the High Street you will note the important local independent shops which include **the butcher, the book shop, the cinema, two fish & chip shops, ice cream shops and the retailer O&C Butcher.** The High Street is also home to **four restaurants, the very busy Post Office and the independent chemist** which serves the mainly elderly vulnerable permanent residents. One street over is the **Moot Hall** and the **Jubilee Hall.** (See Route Map 3)

4. Aldeburgh to Thorpeness circular route (Walk 6.5km – 2.5 hours)

This circular walk along The Haven to Thorpeness and back along the old railway line is the epitome of why so many visitors come to Aldeburgh. It is also part of the King Charles III England Coast Path³. Any diminution in the enjoyment this walk delivers will be a loss to many people, to the region and to the local economy. It combines sea views, **a rare shingle beach, rare flora & fauna, a historic Victorian holiday village, open landscapes, majestic pine trees and places for children to get wet and muddy.** Let the photographs speak for themselves... (See Route Map 4)

5. Sailors Path Part 2 - Hazelwood Car Park to Snape Warren Car Park (Walk 3.75 km)

This walk along the Sailors' Path reveals the diverse landscape which make this such a special route for many walkers. With views to the River Alde, mudflats and marshlands, woodland and meadows, a wildlife bonanza awaits the casual and seasoned observer. History and the storm tides have changed some of the views over the years and it would be unacceptable if there was any interference with the area's natural evolution. (See Route Map 5)

6. The Sandlings Walk from Thorpeness to Friston (Walk 6.5km – 1.5 hours)

The Sandlings Walk⁴ is a long-distance footpath through the Suffolk Heritage Coast from Southwold to Ipswich, passing through forests and across heathland. Since the 1930's 80% of this sandy heathland has been lost and what remains makes up **1% of the world's lowland heath.** Part of the Sandlings Walk has already been closed due to the construction of Sizewell C and re-routed along the Suffolk Coastal Path⁵. Our recommended route here picks up the path at the old Thorpeness level crossing point and ends at the medieval village of Friston (See Route Map 6)

³ https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/england-coast-path/

⁴ <https://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk/promoted-trails/sandlings-walk/>

⁵ <https://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk/promoted-trails/suffolk-coast-path/>

SEAS request the following ASIs:

7. Aldeburgh Golf Club - Leiston Road (B1122) to the Club House- Walk (1.5km)

National Grid's Sea Link proposed cable route runs along the northern boundary of this award-winning maritime heathland course. In particular it should be noted that, whilst the site is not subject to any statutory ecological designations, it crosses important wildlife habitats and valuable wildflower meadows classified as Lowland Dry Acid Grassland and is bounded by 'Priority Habitats' supporting a range of prey species and bird nesting sites. We invite you to take your time to appreciate what makes this place so special. Access may be obtained via the Golf Club Secretary.

8. Saxmundham: St. John's Church via Hurts Hall to the proposed Fromus Bridge (Walk 1.2km)

The purpose of the inspection is to assist the ExA in assessing the potential adverse impacts of this infrastructure on Hurts Hall and the residential dwellings within its curtilage. A site visit would provide important spatial and contextual understanding of the relationship between the proposed development and the surrounding heritage assets, residential amenity, and landscape setting.

9. ASI/USI Benhall Ford to Benhall Railway Bridge and A12 – Walk – 1.2km)

The A12/B1121 Benhall junction is the main artery to three residential areas: the villages of Benhall and Sternfield and further on the town of Saxmundham. In the light of NGET's recent request to change the DCO Order Limits ([AS-138](#)) and construct and/or store an over-bridge alongside the existing railway bridge this is an important USI/ASI. The footpath is Benhall Village's walking and cycle route to the Church situated across the A12. It is also part of the Suffolk Cycle Route. It is already dangerous enough without the added traffic from Sea Link, Lionlink and other energy projects that will follow on for years to come. It also affects the private Whitearch Residential Park as their one and only entrance/exit is to the west side of the railway bridge. Access can be arranged through The Whitearch Residents Association and the owner of the park.

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