

07 October 2025

Dear [name],

Consultation on proposed changes to the Sea Link development consent order

Earlier this year, National Grid submitted a development consent order application for Sea Link, a proposal to reinforce the electricity network between Suffolk and Kent via a new, primarily offshore cable link. The Planning Inspectorate has since agreed that our application meets the standard required to proceed through the planning process, and we are currently preparing for the start of the formal Examination of our proposals in November 2025.

Whilst our application has been submitted and accepted for Examination, we have continued to undertake technical and survey work, along with continued engagement with stakeholders. We have identified a series of small changes we propose to make to our plans. We wrote to the Planning Inspectorate on 18 September 2025 to notify them of this. The majority of our plans for Sea Link remain unchanged.

As some of these changes are relevant to your interests as a technical stakeholder/are in your local area, we are inviting you to provide any comments you may have about them. A summary of the amendments is included below, with more detail available on our website at nationalgrid.com/sealink. The website provides further information on the changes, the potential environmental impacts of those changes, any changes to the land rights sought, and plans of the proposed changes.

Change to access at the former hoverport near Cliffsend, Kent

Our plans already include a construction, maintenance and operational access to the intertidal area (the area above water level at low tide and underwater at high tide) via the former hoverport near Cliffsend in Kent.

Survey work undertaken in August 2025 identified that the saltmarsh habitat in Pegwell Bay has expanded further than previously recorded.

To ensure we can avoid the saltmarsh habitat when carrying out works, we are proposing to include additional areas of the hoverport within our Order limits (the land we would need to build, operate and maintain Sea Link). This will allow us to avoid driving vehicles on or close to the saltmarsh habitat when accessing the intertidal area.

We are not proposing any changes to when use of the hoverport area would be required, and we are not expecting this change to alter the conclusions of the Environmental Statement included in our development consent order application. Avoiding the sensitive saltmarsh habitat would reduce the ecological impacts of the project.

Change to works plans at Friston (Kiln Lane) substation, Suffolk

In Suffolk, Sea Link would connect to the electricity transmission network at Kiln Lane substation near Friston, which already has consent as part of Scottish Power Renewables' (SPR) East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO Offshore Wind Farms. It is anticipated that the substation will be constructed by SPR, but it is included in our plans as a fallback.

We are proposing to expand the area within which the substation can be constructed to align with SPR's plans. SPR are continuing to progress detailed design of the substation, and we now understand the footprint of their substation design falls slightly outside the footprint submitted in the Sea Link DCO application.

This change allows the two projects to better coordinate landscaping and drainage plans, and responds to comments made by local residents and stakeholders.

Other than the footprint of the substation, we are not proposing to alter the proposed substation itself. This change is consistent with both the SPR DCOs and the Sea Link strategy. National Grid would only deliver the substation under the Sea Link DCO if it was not built under the SPR DCO.

We are not expecting this change to alter the conclusions of the Environmental Statement included in our development consent order application.

Archaeology findings east of Friston, Suffolk

As part of archaeological investigations, we recently identified the site of a previously unknown hengiform monument along our proposed underground cable route to the east of Friston. The finds within the henge date back to the Neolithic period, meaning that they are approximately 4,000 to 5,000 years old. Finds like these are relatively rare in Suffolk, and it is considered to be of high value.

We are therefore proposing to remove the Neolithic henge feature from the Order limits and include additional land either side of it to route the underground cable. The underground cable and temporary haul route would then be located more than 30m from the monument and would not result in harm to the henge. Both Historic England and the Suffolk County Archaeologist agree that our proposed approach is the best solution.

We will undertake further survey works in this area to identify a precise route for the underground cables in the additional land we are proposing to include in our Order limits. We are not expecting this change to alter the conclusions of the Environmental Statement included in our development consent order application. Incorporating the proposed change would avoid a potential significant environmental effect.

Benhall Railway Bridge, Suffolk

We are proposing to add some highway land at the Benhall Railway Bridge and an adjacent section of land to the east of the B1121, into the Order limits.

The B1121, including the bridge, would be the main route for the transportation of larger construction deliveries, known as abnormal indivisible loads (AILs), to the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station. These are expected to comprise the seven transformers (large pieces of electricity infrastructure needed for the operation of the converter station), and possibly some cable drums and construction equipment.

We understand that the Benhall Railway Bridge currently has a provisional weight limit of 46 tonnes. If this weight limit is confirmed, we would need to strengthen the bridge to enable AILs to cross the bridge.

Our existing proposals are to install a 'mini bridge' overbridge structure on the existing Benhall Railway Bridge, within the highway boundary. The mini bridge would be assembled and removed before and after each AIL delivery. This section of road was not included in our application as these works could be carried out under other planning rights. Further design work has shown that it would be beneficial to have additional land in two locations:

- an area adjacent to the bridge for materials storage and a compound when the bridge is being installed and removed
- land along the railway line near to the bridge to allow for surveys to be carried out.

The additional land east of the B1121 reflects our discussions with stakeholders, including the Local Authorities, to allow for two other potential solutions. These are the installation of a semi-permanent overbridge and works to permanently repair the bridge.

We are proposing to include the land required for all three potential solutions into our Order limits, to provide reassurance on how these works will be approved, following discussions with Local Authorities

Depending on the solution used, these changes could reduce construction periods, and therefore disruption to the road network. They could also potentially provide a permanent additional benefit, reducing potential closures of the bridge when AILs are being delivered. The changes also provide flexibility should the condition of the bridge change, for better or worse, between now and construction, and provides certainty that a solution can be delivered.

A final decision on the exact method will likely be chosen after the DCO has been granted depending on the condition of the bridge and following discussions with the Local Highway Authority.

Maintenance area for new hedgerow south of the B1119, Suffolk

In our application, we proposed to plant a hedgerow on land south of the B1119, in the northern area of the proposed converter station field. This hedge would partially screen views of the converter station from properties, recreational routes and the road network to the north/north-east. It would also provide a degree of screening for road users on the B1119, reinstate historic hedgerow planting, provide ecological connectivity and provide areas for advanced planting before construction of the converter station begins.

Following engagement with one of the landowners affected by the new hedge, we are proposing to include additional land around this new hedgerow. This would provide more space to maintain the existing ditch along the B1119 and the hedgerow itself, from both the highway and the adjacent field.

This change addresses a concern that there is insufficient space in our application for the drain and hedge to be maintained from the field side. This change would be beneficial and provide flexibility of access for maintenance requirements for the drain.

We are not expecting this change to alter the conclusions of the Environmental Statement included in our development consent order application.

Have your say

If you have any comments on the changes outlined above, you can provide your feedback to us via email at contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com or by post to Freepost SEA LINK. The deadline for responses is **23:59 on Friday 7 November 2025**.

Should you require paper copies of the consultation document or plans, please contact us via email at contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com or via phone on 0808 134 9569.

Should you choose to give further feedback, please do not include comments that you may have given previously about other aspects of our proposals or the principle of the project as a whole. These comments have already been considered as part of the Consultation report included in our development consent order application, which you can find on the Planning Inspectorate's website at national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020026 or will be addressed as part of our response to the relevant representations which have been previously received.

Only comments or feedback related to the above changes will be considered as part of this consultation.

All feedback relating to the proposed changes received from this consultation will be reported on in an addendum to our Consultation report. We expect to submit this to the Planning Inspectorate, alongside our formal request to amend our plans, in November 2025.

If you have any questions about the proposed changes, the dedicated Sea Link project email and telephone line (0808 134 9569) is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm.

Kind regards,

Adrian Piersenne
Project Director