



Planning Inspectorate  
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

## Hearing Transcript

<b>Project:</b>	Sea Link
<b>Hearing:</b>	Transcript of Open floor hearing 1 (OFH1) – Session 1 Part 1
<b>Date:</b>	5 November 2025

**Please note:** This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above hearing. The content was produced using artificial intelligence voice to text software. It may, therefore, include errors and should be assumed to be unedited.

The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:07:18 - 00:00:37:21

Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly. Thanks. And can I also confirm with the case team that the live streaming and recording of this event is commenced? Thank you. It is now 2 p.m., and this open floor hearing in relation to the Sealink project is now open. Thank you all for attending this hearing. My name is Sarah Holmes. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered civil engineer. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application.

00:00:37:23 - 00:00:44:21

I'm now going to ask my fellow panel members, who have also been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine this project, to introduce themselves.

00:00:46:18 - 00:00:51:17

Good afternoon. My name is Steven Rennie. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered town planner.

00:00:53:12 - 00:00:59:19

Good afternoon. My name is Doctor Richard Hunt. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered Environmentalist.

00:01:03:10 - 00:01:08:19

Good afternoon. My name is Nancy Thomas. I am a planning inspector and a chartered town planner.

00:01:10:10 - 00:01:16:07

Good afternoon. My name is Luke Regan. I am a planning inspector and a chartered transport planner.

00:01:18:03 - 00:01:48:18

I can confirm that all members of the examining authority have made a formal declaration of interests, and there are no known conflicts of interest. With regard to his examining this application, together we constitute the examining authority, or X for this application. There are other colleagues from the Planning Inspectorate with us today. For those of you who present in the room, you may have already spoken to or heard from Louise Hathaway, who's the case manager for this project. Mrs. Hathaway is accompanied by one of our other case managers, Amina Khan, and our case officer, Emma Smith.

00:01:48:28 - 00:02:09:24

For those of you who have joined us virtually, you have spoken to Caroline Allen and happy to see our case officers in the joining conference. Together. They are the case team for this project and if you have any questions or queries, they should be your first point of contact. Their contact details can be found at the top of any letter you have received from us, or on the project page of the National Infrastructure website.

00:02:11:10 - 00:02:45:04

Before we consider the items on the agenda this afternoon, we need to deal with a few housekeeping matters and I'll try to get through these as quickly as possible. Can everyone attend in? Please make sure your phone is switched off or turn to silent. There's no fire test planned for this afternoon, so should an alarm sound. It is an emergency and we'll need to vacate this building. Emergency exits are located in the corners of the room and through the doors which you entered. And the fire assembly point is the Henry Moore law. If anyone needs any assistance, please let the case team know. Toilet facilities, including disabled facilities, can be found in the foyer.

00:02:46:02 - 00:03:00:08

We understand that there are representatives of the media here today, and you've made yourselves known to the case team. We do not mind you filming this event as long as it does not cause any disruption. If there are any other representatives in the media who have not spoken to the case team, please can they do so?

00:03:02:29 - 00:03:34:24

As far as I'm aware, no requests have been made for any special measures or arrangements to enable participation in this meeting, such as needing to take a break for medical reasons or having to leave an event at a certain time. If anyone does need a break or extra support later, please do let the case team know this event is being live streamed and recorded. Our letter of the 19th of September, which we refer to as the rule six letter, explained that because we retain and publish the digital recordings, they form a public record to which the General Data Protection Regulations, or GDPR, applies.

00:03:35:11 - 00:04:05:20

The Planning Inspectorate publishes and retains recordings for periods of five years from the Secretary of State's decision on a development Consent order. So if you participate in this meeting, it's important that you understand that you'll be recorded and that you consent to the retention and publication of the digital recording. We have, however, aware of a number of people who have let us know they do not wish to be filmed. The audiovisual team are aware of this, and those people can be seated in a location which is not covered by the cameras. This will also be taken into account for anyone speaking in this hearing.

00:04:06:27 - 00:04:09:21

Does anyone else intend to film or record this meeting?

00:04:12:13 - 00:04:43:07

They will only ever ask for information to be placed on the public record. That's important and relevant to the planning decision, and to avoid the need to edit the digital recordings. What we ask is that you try your best not to add information to the public record that you would normally wish to keep private or confidential, such as your address, financial circumstances, or details of any medical conditions. If you do feel you need to refer to something that's private and confidential, please discuss this with the case team first to explore how this could be submitted, possibly in writing and redacted.

00:04:43:25 - 00:04:47:09

Does anyone have any questions with regard to this matter in the room?

00:04:49:27 - 00:04:51:01

Or online?

00:04:54:19 - 00:05:32:18

Okay. For those of you attending virtually, can I repeat the request made in the arrangements conference that to minimize background noise, you make sure your phone's switched off or turned to silent and that you're so muted with your camera off unless you are speaking. I would also ask that if you want to speak, you switch your camera on and either use the raise hand function in teams to speak at the appropriate time. Can I also remind people that the chat function on teams will not work? So please do not try to use this to ask any questions or post any comments. For those people watching on the live stream, should we at any point adjourn proceedings this afternoon? We'll need to stop the live stream to give us clear recording files.

00:05:32:24 - 00:06:03:01

As a result, at the point at which we start the meeting and the live stream, you'll need to refresh your browser page. We will remind you this again should we need to adjourn. I just want to say a little bit about conduct during this hearing. So we understand people have strong feelings about the proposed development, but it's important to recognize that we have a process to follow. We therefore ask for good manners and respect to be shown to each other throughout the hearing. As such, we want everyone to have the opportunity to speak. Please don't talk over anyone when they're speaking.

00:06:03:03 - 00:06:35:05

And additionally, we ask for no clapping, cheering, or booing because we need to get here. Everybody and what people are saying, and we don't want to waste anyone's speaking time. Please also be polite to each other as everyone deserves the same level of respect, even if you don't share their views. We also understand that some people may feel nervous about having to speak in public. Please be reassured that we do understand. And if you stumble over your words or need to repeat something, this isn't a problem. Are there any comments or questions regarding any of the points I've just made in the room

00:06:36:25 - 00:07:01:24

online? Okay. This hearing, which is split over five sessions, will generally follow the agenda that was published on the project page of the National Infrastructure website on the 21st of October 2025, and a copy of this can be found in the examination library at reference EV 401. And can the applicant now display this agenda?

00:07:37:01 - 00:07:41:11

The classification is a problem displaying the running order agenda.

00:08:11:08 - 00:08:41:09

We'll move on. We'll display the running order. And when the applicants managed to display it in a few moments. So I'll just move on to item two of the agenda. So normally, open floor hearings are held at the request of interested parties. However, we've called this open floor hearing because we want to hear first hand from interested parties your thoughts at an early stage in the examination. Thank you. It will also help us to form a view about what we want to discuss in more detail at later issues, specific hearings, and in our written questions.

00:08:41:29 - 00:09:12:23

We're familiar with your representations. So when you're speaking, you don't need to repeat these at length. What we're seeking for you to provide for us is further detail or evidence to help us understand these issues, to make the best use of time. And while not wishing to limit contributions, it will be great assistance if points weren't repeated. You can rest assured that we will have understood the points made the first time. We are aware that the applicant is attending this afternoon, and we will ask the applicant to respond to everything they've heard through all the open floor hearing sessions in writing.

00:09:13:01 - 00:09:20:17

It's not the purpose of these hearings to enable the applicant to make their case. I'll now hand over to Doctor Hunt for item three on the agenda.

00:09:22:07 - 00:09:57:09

Thank you, Mr. Holmes. Due to the number of people who wish to speak at this open floor hearing, you'll have seen from the agenda that we've split the hearing into five sessions, with the next session starting at 5:30 p.m. today, and the remaining three sessions starting at 10 a.m. tomorrow morning. It's our intention to hear from interested parties who are pre-registered to speak and who are listed in the agenda for this hearing. After that, if time permits, we may choose to hear from any interested party who has not pre-registered but who wishes to speak, and then finally from any other persons or non interested party who may wish to speak.

00:09:57:11 - 00:10:02:03

However, time is tight and this will be at the discretion of the examining authority.

00:10:04:24 - 00:10:36:10

If time is not available during these open floor hearing sessions, then parties can request a further open floor hearing during our later hearings, and we're happy to hold a further open floor hearing should we need to do so, due to the number of parties wishing to speak today. We've set a time limit per person. We've agreed a maximum of six minutes for those representing groups, which includes membership organizations, clubs and societies, and three minutes for individuals. When you're speaking, you must take account of the time remaining shown on the monitor.

00:10:36:27 - 00:10:59:23

For those attending virtually, I'll let you know verbally when you have one minute left. Please try to finish in your allotted time, as you want to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to be heard today to ensure we can hear from as many people as possible. We won't ask any questions once you've spoken, but be assured that if we do have any questions for you, we will send them to you in writing following this event.

00:11:01:29 - 00:11:13:00

And can everyone who is speaking? Just not sure whether people will be able to see this. Uh, would it be possible for the applicant to zoom in to say, the first 16 names

00:11:14:27 - 00:11:17:00

so that people can see those clearly?

00:11:20:27 - 00:11:30:27

Hopefully you should see your name and be aware of your speaking slot. And if we can then scroll down to the bottom part of the list.

00:11:34:14 - 00:11:34:29

Yep.

00:11:36:28 - 00:12:14:29

Um, just for the applicant when we hear from the virtual speakers and following, uh, the preliminary meeting this morning, can we make sure that the list is taken down so that the speakers can be clearly seen who are online? Um, so the order in which you'll be invited to speak will follow the agenda we're now displaying. We'll ask people to come forward to the table at the front. Five is time. If you've informed us that you do not want to be filmed, you don't need to come to the front and will instead be given a roving might speak from where you're currently seated, although some of the speakers in each group of 5th May be attending virtually or not be coming to the table at the front.

00:12:15:01 - 00:12:49:07

We'll still ask each of you to speak in turn, based on the time allocated to you, as shown in the agenda. When we've heard from all five of you. You're welcome to return to the general seating, and we'll call the next group of five forward. Once you've returned to the general seating, you may depart the venue if you wish. However, please do so quietly for the purposes of the recording and to respect those people who are still speaking. It would assist us if written some summaries of anything that you say are submitted by deadline. One a which at the moment is on Tuesday the 26th of November, 2025.

00:12:49:13 - 00:13:07:14

These can include any additional points or further detail you may wish to make, but were unable to do so because of the time constraints this afternoon. Please be reassured that when coming to our conclusions, we will give equal weight to both oral and written submissions. There is no disadvantage to not having presented something orally here today.

00:13:09:01 - 00:13:15:01

Can I check whether the list currently displayed comprises everyone who has registered to speak in this session?

00:13:20:22 - 00:13:26:25

Um, and there is. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak in the session today?

00:13:32:12 - 00:13:34:19

I don't see anyone online or in the room.

00:13:37:16 - 00:13:42:17

So before I finish. Does anyone have any questions on the speaking process, either in the room?

00:13:47:21 - 00:13:53:07

While you speak? Um, I think unlikely, because you'll need to be speaking to the microphone.

00:13:54:29 - 00:14:10:16

Everyone who's speaking will come forward to the table at the front sit and the microphone will be on for the purpose of the recording. Uh, we have. Sorry. For the purposes of the recording, you need to be close to the microphone. I think I've just demonstrated that possibly by moving away. Um, so you will need to be seated, I'm afraid.

00:14:13:25 - 00:14:14:22

I think.

00:14:21:24 - 00:14:29:01

We can give you a roving mic if you have a particular, uh, need to be in a particular position, so.

00:14:31:21 - 00:14:35:25

Um, And in that case, we can provide you with a roving mic for that purpose. Yeah.

00:14:37:11 - 00:14:39:00

Sorry. Can I just take your name?

00:14:45:02 - 00:14:47:07

Um, did anyone else have any questions?

00:14:49:18 - 00:14:53:09

Um, in that case, uh, if we can move on to agenda item four.

00:14:55:13 - 00:15:25:17

I'm now going to invite those listed on the agenda to speak when I read out your names. If you're in the room, please come to the table at the front. Unless you've informed us that you don't want to be filmed. And if you're online, please turn your camera on when it's your turn to speak. Please turn the microphone on. So for those in the room, it's the button at the front of the microphone stand and you'll see it will go red when it's live. For those um and please start by introducing yourself, if relevant, who you who you're representing. There is a timer displayed in the room.

00:15:25:19 - 00:16:04:09

When you sit at the table, you'll be able to see it on the floor in front of you. Um, and that will show you how long you've got left. And if you're talking virtually. Doctor hunt will let you know that you've got one minute remaining. Can I just remind you again not to supply any personal details from speaking here today? It's really important that you don't tell us your home address, your age, medical conditions. Um, as I said, if you feel like you need to supply this information to us, please talk to the case team about how this can be done without it going on the public record. So the first five people we have are Simon and Stoltz, Sarah Koch, Sheridan Stein, Sarah Whitelock and David Gordon.

00:16:04:17 - 00:16:17:06

So if you've been asked not to filmed or you have any mobility issues which make it difficult for you to walk. Please stay seated, raise your hand and they'll bring you a roving mic. Otherwise, can you please come down to the table at the front? I'll turn your camera on if you're online.

00:16:18:08 - 00:16:18:26

So.

00:16:38:23 - 00:16:39:15

Why don't you make it?

00:16:42:28 - 00:16:50:25

And if the applicant could just take down the million order while we. So we can see the people who are attending virtually for this this group. Thank you.

00:16:57:16 - 00:17:07:04

Okay, so the first person on this list is Simon Amstutz. Um, you've got six minutes, um, in your virtual start when you're ready. Thank you.

00:17:23:16 - 00:17:27:02

Can you confirm from the case team if Simon is actually online.

00:17:35:24 - 00:17:41:13

Okay, we'll move on to the next person then. Server coverage please. You have three minutes and start when you're ready.

00:17:45:06 - 00:17:50:20

That's I don't know. Can someone show us how to switch the mic on?

00:17:52:21 - 00:18:46:24

Just speak into it. Okay. My name is Sarah Courage. We moved from Essex to Kelsall in east Suffolk, drawn to the quiet roads seven years ago. Dark skies and tranquil countryside, including areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of Special Scientific Interest that are home to many rare birds. Living now in this area of Suffolk is like being on the frontline of a war zone. As one infrastructure bombshell after another is dropped on us with seemingly no regard for the areas of AoNB or size for which this part of Suffolk is well renowned, we urge you to consider the very serious cumulative impact Sealink would have alongside the proposed 800 new homes southwest of Saxmundham, Larne Link, ScottishPower Renewables and Sizewell C.

00:18:47:00 - 00:19:21:21

And only last Wednesday notice of an Essex and Suffolk Water DCO involving the construction of water pipelines 200m wide through the town and even through our own garden of Higgins Lane. We are shocked our narrow local roads are already overwhelmed by Sizewell C's increased traffic. Especially HGVs are accompanied indivisible loads, the endless road closures and roadworks making it impossible to plan a journey. For instance, driving to hospital appointments in Ipswich and to the doctor's surgery in Leiston.

00:19:22:12 - 00:19:58:23

This is especially concerning for emergency vehicles. Catching trains to London. Another logistical nightmare. Over 22,000 trees have already been destroyed by Sizewell C. The countryside is turning into a barren desert. No longer a peaceful haven. We are pleased that the SPR are using a massive



converter station recently installed offshore to transform electricity generated by wind turbines off the Suffolk coast from AC to DC. This is something we all have campaigned for, but National Grid stated it could not be achieved.

00:19:58:26 - 00:20:33:02

It is clearly achievable and would prevent further unnecessary destruction, disruption and misery for all residents and wildlife. The proposed permanent Hall road off the B1 21, would cut a wide swathe across farmland and would require a massive bridge to be built over the river from us, resulting in the felling of more healthy, mature woodland and an ancient hedgerow beside the b1 a21. This has been ripped out now. This will cause yet further needless destruction of habitat for wildlife.

00:20:33:04 - 00:20:56:25

The construction of ceilings huge 26 metre converter station requiring 12.5 acres of concrete over existing farmland above the market town of Saxmundham, resulting in a real threat of flooding down Church Road. The prospect of further ongoing misery for years to come is unbearable. We feel under terrible stress. Please turn down ceiling.

00:20:59:02 - 00:21:13:01

Thank you very much. Um. We don't I don't want to hear any clapping because you're taking up time when we need to hear people. And next speaker. Thank you. Okay. The next speaker is Sheridan Stein. Please. You've got three minutes.

00:21:15:22 - 00:21:51:29

Good afternoon, planning inspectors. My name is Sheridan Stein and I live in Friston, a village already under enormous pressure from the Scottish Power and National Grid project as a community. We believe that Scottish Power was acting as National Grid's Trojan horse when E1 and E2 were being examined by your colleagues. I want to begin with something very personal. Not long ago, four weeks ago, in fact, I travelled in an ambulance under blue light conditions from Friston to Ipswich Hospital with a close relative who was critically ill.

00:21:52:13 - 00:22:24:21

We only just made it in time to save their life. That journey was one of the most distressing experiences of my life, and it brought home in a very real way, how vital it is that our emergency services can move freely. The ambulance crew told me that they are increasingly anxious, distressed and exhausted by because of the traffic congestion on the A12 and surrounding roads. If Sealink and the other planned projects go ahead as proposed.

00:22:24:23 - 00:23:00:07

Those delays will only get worse and next time someone may not make it in time. I want to be clear I fully support renewable energy and offshore wind, but the Sealink proposal bringing cables onshore through the Suffolk Heritage Coast is the wrong solution. There are proven alternatives. Our European neighbours are already using offshore converter platforms that take the power directly to where it is needed. Closer to London, to all existing grid points such as Grane or Bradwell and Safe.

00:23:00:25 - 00:23:09:15

National grid has even done this before with the Brit led interconnector, so the technology and experience already exists.

00:23:11:15 - 00:23:43:00

National grid maintain this is not possible here in Suffolk, but we know that it is possible. What we face here in Suffolk is not progress, it is destruction. It threatens RSPB North Warren and the fragile wildlife that depends on it. It endangers the quiet and thoughtful tourism that sustains our local economy. It was unbearable pressure on our roads, emergency services and the mental health of the people living and working here. We are not talking about abstract inconvenience.

00:23:43:02 - 00:24:23:28

We are talking about lives, safety and well-being. The stress is already visible in our community, and it is felt deeply by those who work under these conditions every day, including our ambulance drivers and the first responders. Finally, I ask you to consider the wider national risk. Within just five square miles, we are facing up to seven major energy installations. Substations. Converter station size will see. Um, battery storage and solar farms concentrating so much critical infrastructure in one rural area makes no sense in the environment.

00:24:24:00 - 00:24:24:28

Sorry to interrupt.

00:24:25:00 - 00:24:25:15

You.

00:24:25:17 - 00:24:55:00

Strategically, that's your three minutes. If you have, um, extra things that you want to tell us, please do submit it in writing and we'll take it all into account. Thank you. Can I now have, um, server white again? We can't. We can't have clapping. Please. We can't have clapping because you're taking up time. We won't be able to get through everyone and hear from everyone today. If we have clapping between every person. I hope you understand. Um, okay. We now have server white clock. You've got six minutes.

00:24:55:19 - 00:25:30:04

Hello, my name is Sarah Whitelock. I'm, um, a member for East Suffolk Council and my ward is over in Leiston. I'm also a cabinet member for East Suffolk Council. Um, we have I'm here to talk about a wellbeing survey that has been conducted by Suffolk Mind into the mental health of residents in Aldeburgh. Listen and Saxmundham. There was a presentation, but that can't be part of this process. So the presentation and the much fuller report will be available in the document library.

00:25:31:06 - 00:26:05:01

Local members wanted to update a wellbeing report that we did with Suffolk Mind two years ago, because we had heard about, um, evidence of distress amongst local residents, which you're hearing about now due to the NST processes. The report two years ago was done two years ago before the full effects. Um, that was done two years ago. We've now updated and we updated it in the spring of this year before the full effects of Sizewell C or the other end, CIP projects were fully understood.

00:26:06:01 - 00:26:41:10

Um, we had 51 responses, which, with a statistical formula for surveys of this type, is about right. And what we need to consider in terms of the number of responses is how difficult it is for people to respond to surveys of this type. Um, talking about your own emotional landscape is difficult, and there is a level of intrusion which may not be comfortable. To get usable information, we need residents to be introspective, and that is often avoided when people are unhappy.

00:26:42:15 - 00:27:14:29

It's also important to understand that report looks at the area as a whole. Um, but the anticipated construction impact actually varies a lot within the area, and it varies depending on where you live. The statistics are averages, and within those averages there are people who are very unhappy and some people who have benefited. And those statistics are available both in my presentation and in the report. I'd also like to add this has not been a campaign tool.

00:27:15:01 - 00:27:44:01

The infrastructure projects have not been alluded to when we put up the posters asking for people to share their mental health with us. So the headline results were that 63% of Aubrey Leeson and Saxmundham residents are meeting their emotional needs well, but 57% of residents feel their local energy projects are a barrier to their mental well-being. To some extent.

00:27:46:05 - 00:28:21:14

There are three key findings which I'm going to focus on, although there's a lot more in there and I would encourage you to look at the full report. The first is on status. The scoring for status is 1.0. For anything under one is very worrying. And you must remember these are averages. So status is really about low self-esteem. And some of the comments that were freely given within the survey mentioned things like not being listened to as an individual or a community, feeling that they're not important, feeling not valued or respected.

00:28:21:19 - 00:28:57:24

And people in Friston, particularly once recognised as a beautiful medieval village, now feeling that there's a poor new status about them, that they made the wrong decisions in moving there. The second important statistic is around the meaning and purpose, which is the why of life. This need is not being met. Um, and is a big risk factor for someone going on to experience suicidal thoughts. So there's a statistic. Some people don't feel like this because they're not close to the, um, planned infrastructure, but some do.

00:28:58:20 - 00:29:22:28

Um, there were two comments of people talking about their friends or family experiencing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide as a direct result of the construction builds. Add another six, mentioning things like there is no light at the end of the tunnel and it being impossible to take care of mental well-being, all of which are risk factors on the path to suicidal thoughts.

00:29:24:17 - 00:29:59:25

So the other thing I want to mention is sleep. 38% people reported sleep as a barrier to meeting their need for sleep. And we had eight comments directly about people losing sleep due to National Grid Connection Hub. This is one of the biggest factor in not meeting emotional needs. So we also

asked the question about what could be done about it. People mentioned wanting more counselling. They wanted all the information in one place rather than be broken into different places because that's different.

00:29:59:28 - 00:30:01:08

One minute remaining.

00:30:01:14 - 00:30:35:06

Okay. Thank you. Because of different, um, companies organizing infrastructure projects, they also mentioned things like culture and social needs, which I will be looking into and seeing what I can do about the biggest need. And this is what I would really like. The plan is to take a close attention to, is that the residents closest to the construction are suffering the most, and that they really need to be considered and compensation needs to be considered for them. And I would just like to share a couple of comments that were freely given to the survey.

00:30:35:25 - 00:31:06:21

One of them is their way. That's the, um, the energy projects of dealing with it was to attack us and then not answer our questions. We are just treated like dirt. It's quite hard to read these. Also, the whole process has been a relentless level of foulness towards fellow human beings that is actually off the scale. You wouldn't treat your worst enemy the way we have been treated. Not everybody feels like that, but a lot of people do. So I would urge you, please, to look at the report and at my presentation.

00:31:06:23 - 00:31:07:16

Thank you.

00:31:07:29 - 00:31:08:20

Thank you.

00:31:10:20 - 00:31:16:14

Thank you very much. And now we have David Gordon. Um, three minutes that when you're ready. Thank you.

00:31:19:06 - 00:31:53:11

Good afternoon. My name is David Gordon. I'm a resident in Aldeburgh. The big question to ask the applicant is where is the electricity coming from that you plan to transmit from Friston to the coast at Aldeburgh and then offshore down to Kent. The Friston facility is being built for ScottishPower to receive electricity from their wind farms. That is being brought a short thought. Ness Friston was chosen so that the electricity can move on south over the existing overhead power lines that pass near Friston.

00:31:53:28 - 00:32:35:27

At a recent ScottishPower community meeting, it was confirmed that that is still the plan. Nobody else has permission or has even applied for planning consent to bring offshore generated power to Friston. So if Sealink was given the go ahead, it has no electricity to transmit. Ceilings project description talks about the significant growth in wind generation. And so if the question is put to

Sealink, where is your electricity coming from? They are likely to reply from the many wind farms being developed off the coast, but that if that is indeed the plan, then more planning inquiries will be required for each one and that takes years.

00:32:36:13 - 00:32:49:18

And importantly, the planning inspector, in granting permission for Scottish power cancelled against any more wind farms, bringing their power to Tristan because of the huge damage to the environment and to the community.

00:32:51:18 - 00:33:38:00

All of the power being generated offshore by the wind farms is not required here in rural Suffolk. It's required down south. So the obvious way forward is to bring all of this power onshore to a hub on the coast, or better still, an offshore structure than where it can go by Sealink Mark two under the sea to where it is needed purely from a financial viewpoint. This would appear to be the sensible strategy. It saves the very considerable cost of the multiple huge tranches across the countryside that would otherwise be needed to bring the power from the wind farms, and that saving would reduce the burden on the taxpayer and contribute to the Chancellor's aim of cutting out wasteful public expenditure that we heard about in her speech yesterday.

00:33:38:28 - 00:34:10:12

This solution has been put forward for years now by local organisations, but strangely it's fallen on deaf ears. Very strange as with much cheaper and also much quicker as it is a multi-year project to gain the planning permissions and then dig all the way to Friston. I have concentrated this morning on the financial aspects. The cumulative impact rallied this morning, and I'm sure many speakers today will emphasize the disastrous environmental and social consequences of proceeding with Sealink.

00:34:11:02 - 00:34:19:29

So the sailing application has absolutely no merit. Indeed, it could be described as madness. It should be emphatically refused. Thank you.

00:34:20:29 - 00:34:36:04

Thank you very much. Okay, so the next group of five we have is Robert Jellicoe, Theresa Thorne, Louise Morse, James Jenkins and Fiona Gilmore. They'd like to come down to the table, please.

00:35:24:12 - 00:35:36:05

Okay. We'll start with Robert Jellicoe. You've got three minutes. Are you on the virtual mic or have you come down here? Okay. Thank you very much. There's a time in front of you. Three minutes please. Thanks.

00:35:36:07 - 00:36:14:02

My name is Robert Jellico. Things done in haste are often repented at leisure, and I fear that will be the case here. If Sealink and the other projects proposed for coastal Suffolk are allowed to proceed Unchecked. These projects are nothing short of environmental cannibalism, in which the unique and precious landscapes, communities and economies of our part of the country could be carved up to feed another London and the southeast. The international capitalists, for whom profit is the primary motive, and the politicians who have lacked the foresight to plan ahead intelligently, are responsible.

00:36:14:13 - 00:36:45:03

The cheapest option is not necessarily the best. The haste to complete these projects is short sighted. 2050 is the net zero commitment, not 2030, which is merely a target. I urge you not to consider Sealink in isolation, but all the scheduled projects as a whole, and to assess seriously their cumulative impact on the economy, the communities, and above all, the unique and irreplaceable landscapes of coastal Suffolk.

00:36:45:05 - 00:37:20:10

Before disastrous decisions are made. You should be aware that there are alternative ways to deliver these projects than the ones being proposed, which deserve considered thought. Offshore solutions landed at brownfield sites nearer to use should be actively investigated. I urge you to recommend that a halt be called to all the whack a mole proposals while their cumulative impact is assessed, and that you advise the government to come up with intelligent, sustainable and forward thinking offshore solutions.

00:37:21:06 - 00:37:55:25

May I refer you to the great Renaissance humanist Michel de Montaigne, who, in his essay on cannibal, wrote it is not reasonable that art should win the honours for from our great and mighty Mother nature. We have so loaded the riches and beauty of her works with our inventions, that we have altogether stifled her. Yet wherever she she shines forth in her purity, she makes a vain and trivial enterprises marvellously shameful.

00:37:56:23 - 00:38:21:25

Please do not proceed in haste. There is time before 2050. Stand back. Consider the whole. Use intelligence, not prophet nor politics to drive this. Leave our great and mighty Mother Nature unstifled without her. We are disconnected, not interconnected.

00:38:24:07 - 00:38:35:09

Thank you very much. Now, can I hear from Teresa Thorn, who is representing White Arch Residential Retirement Park? And you have six minutes. Start when you're ready. Thanks. Good afternoon. My name is.

00:38:35:11 - 00:39:09:11

Teresa Thorn, and I'm here today on behalf of the residents of White Hart Residential Retirement Park, a small, close knit community of 20 homes located on Maine Road in Benham, just 40m from the center of the Ben-Hur bridge. White arch is more than just a group of houses. It is a community built on trust, safety and peace of mind values that are especially important to our older residents who have chosen to make this place their home. For many, this is where they hope to spend their next chapter of their lives in comfort, stability and security.

00:39:09:26 - 00:39:41:29

However, those assurances are now under threat. The three proposed plans for Bend Railway Bridge, as outlined in the National Grid documents received on 7th October, have caused deep concern among our residents. Each proposal, as it stands, raises serious issues about safety, accessibility and the long

term well-being of our community. From what we understand, the proposed works would involve extended road closure and major construction activity, potentially over a span of 4 to 16 years.

00:39:42:01 - 00:40:15:21

During that time, we could experience 15 or more separate crossings along with a large increase in vehicle traffic, including heavy vehicles. For a small park located so close to the site. This level of destruction is not just inconvenient, it is dangerous. Let me explain why. Our entrance sits at a difficult junction with traffic exit in the A12. Turn off at speed and vehicles approaching the bridge on the B1 21 at around 40mph on an elevated road.

00:40:15:28 - 00:40:47:29

Reduce visibility caused by construction works, diversions or heavy traffic would create a serious hazard to anyone entering or leaving White Arch Park. In practical terms, residents could find themselves unable to exit safely, service vehicles might struggle to access the site, and emergency responses could be delayed exactly when they are needed most. This is not speculation. It is a foreseeable and preventable risk. Now, some may see these issues as temporary inconvenience.

00:40:48:02 - 00:41:24:06

A small price to pay for progress. But for our residents, many of whom are elderly or living with health conditions. These are not minor inconveniences. They are matters of health, safety and dignity. Let me share a few examples. One of our residents travels to hospital twice every week for dialysis treatment. Any delay, any obstruction could have serious consequences. Others depend on daily services, medical visits, grocery deliveries, refuse collection, LPG, gas supply, and cesspit maintenance.

00:41:24:18 - 00:42:00:16

Several residents still work or volunteer and need unrestricted access in and out of the park. And this year alone, we have had multiple emergency service call outs, ambulances and paramedics. Every minute counts. To close. Your devotion could cost your life, but it goes deeper than physical access. There is also an emotional impact, a constant sense of anxiety. Many residents already live with medical challenges. The thought that an ambulance might not reach them in time or that family could be delayed causes Ruth real distress.

00:42:00:28 - 00:42:32:22

Imagine being in your 70s or 80s, unsure if help will arrive when you need it. That uncertainty takes a tremendous toll. These are not just statistics. These are human lives. People who have worked hard, raised families, contributed to society, and who now wish to live out their later years with peace and respect. Let me be clear we are not here to block development or oppose progress. We understand that infrastructure improvements are vital and the National Grid's work is important to the region.

00:42:32:24 - 00:43:02:24

What we're asking for is consideration, Collaboration and communication. There are practical steps that can make a real difference, ensuring continuous access for residents and emergency services at all times. Providing clear advance notice of any closures or diversions. Implementing temporary traffic control or visibility measures near our entrance, and maintaining open dialogue with our community throughout every phase of the project.

00:43:03:06 - 00:43:34:27

By taking these steps, we can balance progress with people's safety and well-being. Because development should never come at the cost of human dignity, our residents deserve the reassurance that their lives, their safety and their peace of mind are being valued and protected. They deserve to have their voices heard and their concerns respected. In conclusion, for the reasons I've outlined, these proposals as they currently stand threaten to erode the very reasons our residents chose right out to park in the first place.

00:43:34:29 - 00:43:55:16

Their health, their safety, and their peace of mind. We are asking only for fairness and for a recognition that behind every plan there are people, real people, whose lives are directly affected. Thank you for your time, your attention, and for listening to the voices of those who call White Arch Park their home. Thank you very.

00:43:55:18 - 00:43:59:15

Much. And now, can we have James Jenkins? You have three minutes.

00:43:59:27 - 00:44:39:22

Yeah. Good afternoon. My name is James Jenkins, and Katie and I run a studio and shop here on the Suffolk coast, with a focus on sustainability and traditional craft practice. Let me be completely clear from the outset. Our business relies on a vibrant tourist economy, which the Suffolk coast has enjoyed for many years. We're very concerned about the impact of the ceiling project on local businesses and the impact on that tourism economy. I could have told you about any number of similar conversations that I've had this year, but I've chosen a couple that I met in Dunwich in September and they are very typical of our tourism visitors of that time of year.

00:44:39:24 - 00:45:15:29

A retired couple they'd had stayed in Aldeburgh, visited Minns Meir in the morning and then come on to Dunwich to have lunch. And as I was putting the items in their bag that they'd very kindly purchased from us, I asked if they were enjoying their time on the Suffolk coast. It had turned out this was their 10th year coming to the Suffolk coast. But she said hesitantly, I cannot believe how much has changed. And I looked down at my feet, rather embarrassed, and said, yes, it has. The husband said, I'll be honest, we don't like seeing it and we're not thinking about coming next year.

00:45:16:05 - 00:45:18:12

We think it's time to find somewhere else.

00:45:19:29 - 00:45:55:24

At that moment, what I heard was that the Aldeburgh Hotel would not be getting a booking next year. That means Mia wouldn't be getting the support for their vital conservation work. But Dunwich Town Trust wouldn't be getting a donation for their car parking, which supports keeping the town looking nice. And the museum that Flora's tearoom, with its local and dedicated staff, would not be getting their pay from those meals that were purchased. And perhaps most crucially for me, they wouldn't be there to purchase the items that would help me pay my bills and put food on my table that week.



00:46:00:03 - 00:46:35:08

The decisions that you make have very real world consequences. We are not here today with the wittering of NIMBYs. They are the deeply felt concerns of people who call this place home, and they reveal the genuine impact on the local economy and working people, which these proposed plans have already caused. We know that energy policy is not taking sufficient impact of nature, landscape and tourism.

00:46:35:12 - 00:47:05:18

And it's unbelievable that we are here today, even contemplating a project that will seriously impact an RSPB reserve with triple ISI status, all within an A or n B, our community faces one hell of a fight to convince visitors that the stuff at coast is still a beautiful and nature focused destination. To approve this project will make that challenge much more difficult.

00:47:06:09 - 00:47:07:13

Thank you very much.

00:47:08:04 - 00:47:08:21

Can I now.

00:47:08:23 - 00:47:16:01

Have Fiona Gilmour? Um, you have a six minute slot on behalf of Suffolk Energy Action Solutions. Um, if you'd like to start now.

00:47:17:08 - 00:47:20:10

Thank you so much. Thanks for the opportunity to speak.

00:47:20:16 - 00:47:23:01

Can we just make sure there's six minutes on the clock, please?

00:47:23:03 - 00:47:23:22

Hello.

00:47:23:25 - 00:47:25:00

Good afternoon.

00:47:25:02 - 00:47:26:28

Madam Inspector examining.

00:47:27:00 - 00:47:31:10

Authority panel. I'm Fiona Gilmore. I'm speaking on behalf of SES.

00:47:31:17 - 00:47:33:22

We're a community research driven.

00:47:33:24 - 00:47:36:29

Organisation established in 2019.

00:47:37:01 - 00:47:37:27

We support.

00:47:37:29 - 00:47:38:14

The.

00:47:38:16 - 00:47:39:01

UK's.

00:47:39:03 - 00:47:39:21

Transition to net.

00:47:39:23 - 00:47:40:11

Zero.

00:47:40:13 - 00:47:40:28

But.

00:47:41:00 - 00:47:41:15

Believe.

00:47:41:17 - 00:47:42:10

It must and can.

00:47:42:12 - 00:47:43:05

Be delivered in.

00:47:43:07 - 00:47:44:10

A way that is fit.

00:47:44:12 - 00:47:44:27

For the.

00:47:44:29 - 00:47:48:29

21st century. Maximising cost efficiencies.

00:47:49:01 - 00:47:55:06

Ensuring environmental responsibility. Safeguarding communities from.

00:47:55:08 - 00:47:55:25

Needless.

00:47:55:27 - 00:48:01:01

Harm and that the harm Sealink will cause cannot be justified.

00:48:01:21 - 00:48:02:06

We are.

00:48:02:08 - 00:48:03:17

Volunteers giving.

00:48:03:19 - 00:48:04:19

Up our time.

00:48:04:21 - 00:48:05:06

To.

00:48:05:08 - 00:48:10:10

Interrogate these irrational proposals, which cannot be justified on their own.

00:48:10:12 - 00:48:10:27

Terms.

00:48:10:29 - 00:48:11:14

And.

00:48:11:16 - 00:48:12:25

That the unjustifiable.

00:48:12:27 - 00:48:14:10

Harm they would cause.

00:48:14:12 - 00:48:15:17

Is because they were.

00:48:15:19 - 00:48:19:29

Conceived in a previous era, since when technology.

00:48:20:04 - 00:48:20:27

Advances.

00:48:20:29 - 00:48:21:19

And renewable.

00:48:21:21 - 00:48:22:27

Energy objectives.

00:48:22:29 - 00:48:27:03

Have changed dramatically. Yet these plans.

00:48:27:05 - 00:48:27:23

Have.

00:48:27:25 - 00:48:31:24

Been stuck, mired in the outdated world.

00:48:31:26 - 00:48:32:11

Of.

00:48:32:13 - 00:48:43:17

Onshore radial connections with landfills splattered randomly along the entire coast. A world devoid of a master.

00:48:43:19 - 00:48:44:04

Plan.

00:48:44:06 - 00:48:49:18

For energy infrastructure where design principles are non-existent.

00:48:49:25 - 00:48:51:13

Yet the Ortner.

00:48:51:15 - 00:48:52:07

Review.

00:48:52:13 - 00:48:53:11

Proposed.

00:48:53:13 - 00:48:53:28

That.

00:48:54:00 - 00:48:54:17

HMD.

00:48:54:19 - 00:48:56:15

Criteria should be applied.

00:48:57:15 - 00:49:00:11

What has happened to that? In short, we say.

00:49:00:13 - 00:49:04:25

This is the wrong project. Wrong place, wrong time.

00:49:05:11 - 00:49:06:18

Sea link fails.

00:49:06:20 - 00:49:09:02

On two levels the micro.

00:49:09:04 - 00:49:09:21

And.

00:49:09:23 - 00:49:12:25

The macro, which I will address first.

00:49:12:27 - 00:49:14:06

Seas has consulted.

00:49:14:08 - 00:49:46:12

Engineers and economists across North Sea countries over the last six years to benchmark and understand how infrastructure can be delivered efficiently. Where they've succeeded in reducing onshore infrastructure by as much as 50%. Belgium. Netherlands. Germany. Denmark. Select brownfield sites in existing industrial and chemical zones such as Zeebrugge, Mass Flux, Rotterdam, Veloster and Iceberg for their cluster energy hubs.

00:49:46:14 - 00:50:31:24

We do hope you're going to look at those sites to understand what they're like. They're truly industrialized. Their projects do not result in egregious damage to the natural environment. They do not face 6000 odd relevant representations. Nor do they get bogged down in lengthy arguments and judicial reviews. Why? Because the system operators avoid building over 80 acres of concrete monolithic converters and Substations adjacent to tourism nature hotspots such as Aldeburgh and Walbrzych, and they consult collaboratively with communities at the very outset.

00:50:31:29 - 00:51:03:15

Their design principles are simple. Locate energy hubs at existing brownfield sites. Bring power directly to where it's needed. Close to centres of demand. Use modern technology such as shared offshore converter platforms and HVDC subset cables. Sealink has proposed has been tagged on to an outdated system, and it is an expensive component of a piecemeal network that multiplies onshore impacts.

00:51:03:23 - 00:51:44:08

During the issue, specific hearings sees Will, with the assistance from legal counsel and experts, address the specific issues, including the needs case, which is based on assertion, not evidence where the current capacity is perfectly adequate at 6.7GW for many years to come. Now that Nautilus has gone to grain size will see, will not be completed for another decade, and Lion Link is more about export than import superficial site selection where grain, Bradwell, Thames Gateway and other sites closer to demand were hastily dismissed.

00:51:44:20 - 00:52:16:21

The rule nine letter sleight of hand. The demonstrable flaws in surveys relied upon by National Grid, such as traffic assessments, which failed to factor in realistic seasonal peak, and conditions which are highly relevant to a tourism resort such as Aldeburgh, and exclude cumulative projects overlapping. We turn to cumulative impacts. I have a huge map here which I'd like to leave somewhere in the in the room Afterwards.

00:52:16:23 - 00:52:49:08

It's an onslaught map, and I'm turning it up here and we'll talk about it later. But what I wanted to say is that Sealink has been assessed as if there was no need to really get to grips with the surrounding projects, as well as the many nonsensical projects. The context of this particular place for what could become the biggest energy hub in Europe, has not been acknowledged or properly valued by this developer, who is allowed to be both the architect and the builder.

00:52:49:21 - 00:53:22:14

Yet for the communities of East Suffolk. These schemes overlap in time, in geography and in consequence, each energy project brings its own road closures, HGV movements, land grab, loss of immunities and construction disturbance. Together, they create a level of disruption that no single environmental statement has yet captured or acknowledged, the scale of disruption is disproportionate and unreasonable. For all of these reasons.

00:53:22:21 - 00:53:31:07

We urge the inspectors to understand that this is a tipping point for this region. We urge you not to give consent.

00:53:32:13 - 00:53:35:00

You now have. Excuse me. Three minutes.

00:53:35:02 - 00:53:36:21

I'm speaking as an individual.

00:53:37:15 - 00:53:39:12

Okay. Thank you.

00:53:40:14 - 00:54:10:24

A few miscellaneous, but actually seemingly linked comments. The district nurse who comes to visit one of my family every morning turned up at our house yesterday. Frazzled. Nightmare road, she said diversions, traffic lights. I can't get round all my patients. I'm going to have to reduce the number of visits. The electrician arrived on Monday for urgent repairs. Fuming. Ridiculous. Bloody mess.

00:54:10:26 - 00:54:43:06

HGTV's The Roads are adding an extra hour to my driving each day. Now all that Sizewell C stuff. Our road infrastructure was never designed to become the biggest energy hub in Europe. The road infrastructure is impossible for these projects. Look at Branford, which has the A14. We don't have easy access here. We're blessed with river estuaries. Multiple. It has a huge impact on our roads and our systems.

00:54:43:08 - 00:55:13:05

And what the developers are trying to do here is frankly, ludicrous. I went into a class of six year olds the other day. We talked about the benefits of renewable energy. I then took this map and I asked, how would you take the energy from E1 and E2 to London? They got out their rulers and they drew a straight line to London. It landed somewhere near grain. They didn't go for a cup of tea at all. Breakfast.

00:55:15:19 - 00:55:51:17

We are a deviation. The old fashioned idea of drawing straight horizontal lines is now debunked. See, link is a white elephant. A redundant project. Unnecessary financial burden. The energy power flows estimated for this region is below seven gigawatts. And the pylons can carry that. And we can always upgrade the pylons. That's a darn sight cheaper than this sea link domestic interconnector. So we believe, and we recommend that this project could be cancelled.

00:55:52:00 - 00:56:11:09

The UK could save well over £2 billion by not going ahead with Sealink. And what we would like you to do is to ensure that there is an issue specific hearing to explore alternative sites and technology solutions. And finally, I just want to mention Russian dolls. For those.

00:56:11:11 - 00:56:11:26

Who.

00:56:11:28 - 00:56:48:00

Attended the Scottish Power hearings, it was clear that National Grid were not forthcoming or open on their plans for their other projects. The National Grid substation at Friston had been slipped into the application like Russian dolls. There were projects not immediately visible to the eye, but lurking in the shadows. As a consequence, our current concerns about cumulative impacts were aired but never properly acknowledged. Now you have the chance to reveal all and understand that the cumulative impacts here have been great.

00:56:48:02 - 00:57:11:16

So I don't mean to interrupt and please do submit anything you didn't get a chance to say in writing to us. You can take it all into account. So we'll have the next group of five, please. And then we'll have a break. So the next group, if the applicant could just display on the screen again to remind people. Um, it's Anthony Fincham, Geoffrey We're done. Julian Glenn and Richard Rout from Suffolk County Council.

00:57:35:28 - 00:57:40:14

Thank you. So first we have Anthony Fincham. You have three minutes. You're ready.

00:57:40:16 - 00:57:41:06

Thanks.

00:57:41:14 - 00:58:12:01

Good afternoon. My name is Anthony Fincham. I'm the director of Seas but I'm now speaking personal capacity. And I'll address two matters cumulative impact. And the Penhall Bridge cumulative

impact was run at the Scottish Power Renewable Examination. National grid chose to stay away and thereby was able to remain stumm about its other plans. I'll read two short extracts from your colleagues lengthy final report.

00:58:12:28 - 00:58:59:09

The effects of the cumulative delivery of the proposed development with the other EA development are so substantially adverse that utmost care will be required in the consideration of any amendments or additions to the proposed development in this location. This essay can and does set out a strong view of the most substantial and innovative potential. Siting, scale, appearance and mitigation of adverse effects within design processes would be required if anything, but a material development would be proposed in this location and given its decision, the local harm that the essay has identified is substantial and should not be underestimated.

00:58:59:11 - 00:59:30:16

In effect, its mitigation has in certain key respects being found to be only just sufficient on balance. Then the bridge. It's extraordinary that National Grid left out the Penn Hall Bridge. Suffolk County Council raised this in December 2023. Site access is obviously fundamental to any project of this sort, and this national grid are utterly incompetent and simply don't listen, undertake even the most basic due diligence.

00:59:30:25 - 01:00:01:28

The inescapable conclusion is that they decided to play the system and try to sneak this through under rule nine, and thereby avoid a full consultation over a key and obviously problematic aspect of their plan. We're not talking about a close run thing. Its weight bearing capacity is 46 tons. A national grid has to get seven transformers to the site, each weighing 300 tons, and other equipment we're exceeding the capacity of the bridge.

01:00:02:21 - 01:00:33:22

You should have no truck with National Grid. Playing fast and loose with the examination in this way. The fact that there is every reason to believe that National Grid are not engaging with this process in good faith should, with respect, mean you shouldn't accept anything said by them at face value. In the latter two of 16th September, they claimed the change was small, highly debatable would reduce the impact of the proposed project. Simply not the case.

01:00:34:02 - 01:00:45:12

The need had arisen recently. That's untrue. And they claimed they were notifying with the change at the earliest opportunity. Also untrue. What must follow?

01:00:45:14 - 01:01:04:12

I'm sorry. That's your three minutes. Anything you didn't have time to say? Please submit it to us in writing. Anything in writing, it's the same weight as what you say earlier today. And we will read it. Okay. Next we have, um, Geoffrey Dunn. Um, you've got six minutes to represent offshore for sure, and three minutes as an individual. Which do you want to do first?

01:01:04:14 - 01:01:07:09

I'll speak, if I may, as an individual first.



01:01:07:11 - 01:01:09:20

Individual first or three minutes first, please.

01:01:09:22 - 01:01:40:11

Thank you. My name is Jeffrey Dunn. It's easy to conclude from the quality of jet's Sealink application. They consider this DCO to have a foregone outcome and that the Secretary of State will consent. Laser cut and pastes of evidence relating to Pequot Bay being inserted into Suffolk. Evidence is trivial, much less trivial, when the applicant ignores guidance from the Department of Transport about when surveys traffic surveys should be done. Ditto the response to environmental and ecological surveys.

01:01:41:09 - 01:02:17:09

These examples of poor rigour by the applicant give rise to a cumulative, cumulative, unreasonable and unfair burden being placed on groups and individuals as the goalposts are routinely ignored. When we consider the impact of the most recently advised Vars change the Bentall Rail Bridge. It becomes an even greater concern. Initially, the applicant stated there were five suitable sites to be subject to detailed review. The Saxmundham site was never even mentioned. All of those five sites were dismissed, some without any explanation as to why they were considered unsuitable.

01:02:18:03 - 01:02:55:27

The former RAF airfield near Leiston was dismissed without any detailed evidence to sustain that decision. Why is this relevant, particularly in relation to the Ben Hill Rail Bridge? The rail bridge has always been the only practical access route to the proposed Saxmundham site. It's a problematic physical location. It's always had a weight limit of 44 tonnes. It's always been over. The only main railway line in East Suffolk which connects Lowestoft to Ipswich and London. A million people use this rail line each year, so if that bridge needs strengthening or even repair, it will have a material adverse economic impact.

01:02:56:09 - 01:03:27:03

A rail replacement service is just a bus service is unrealistic, especially given the existing cumulative increase in traffic. Due to size, we'll see. Yet the major structural risk to the bridge have had a few dozen aisles passing over, and which will require extensive and expensive modification, were ignored until almost until the start of the DCO. Despite warnings for over a year from Suffolk County Council plus, the affected residents have been effectively been disenfranchised. This is negligent.

01:03:27:09 - 01:03:58:02

It raises serious questions about the adequacy of NHS application. Plus, the latent Harefield satisfies all the key challenges that the applicant's preferred Saxmundham site fails. It's not near a market town of 5000 people. It won't cause the same construction operating noise impact. The new sizeable link road passes within 200m of that airfield, so construction access would be massively easier. Finally, it doesn't require an expensive bridge to be built over a river and a floodplain.

01:03:58:04 - 01:04:06:01

Again, a significant saving. So why was this ignored and why is it unsuitable? Thank you.

01:04:06:23 - 01:04:11:08

Thank you very much. And now you have six minutes on behalf of off shore for sure.

01:04:11:17 - 01:04:51:27

Thank you. Now I am speaking on behalf of offshore for sure, which is a network of independent groups in England, Wales and Scotland. We fully support the UK's transition to net zero and offshore wind and transmission reinforcement. But I'm here to question the national system implications of Sealink and to explain why, given the Nautilus changes, this proposal must be re-examined because the UK is not being offered the best solution by the applicant. This Sealink application reflects legacy grid system design and thinking, whilst proven alternatives exist that are cheaper and faster to deliver and cause significantly less harm.

01:04:52:26 - 01:05:31:22

I'm questioning the national system wide implications of Sealink and show that now the examining authority has clear grounds, indeed, a responsibility, to question whether the applicant's Sealink proposal is still appropriate. Across the North Sea, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Holland are all building hybrid meshed offshore grids that pull energy offshore and then bring it onshore at brownfield industrial sites. This approach is faster to consent, much less offshore infrastructure, cheaper infrastructure is shared and curtailment reduced, better for communities and biodiversity as the onshore footprint is smaller.

01:05:32:09 - 01:06:17:09

This solution is real. Siemens, Hitachi, General Electric are all making and delivering offshore compared to platforms today. Last week, ESPN's E3 windfarm completed an offshore HVDC converter platform in the North Sea, 69km from the Suffolk coast, with undersea cables taking energy from that platform to landfall and connecting to the grid at Bramford. So the question is not whether the UK could do this, but rather why are we still planning major onshore infrastructure as if this better solution didn't exist? Sealink was planned using assumptions that multiple interconnectors and wind connections would cluster in the Sizewell area.

01:06:17:24 - 01:06:19:06

That's no longer true.

01:06:21:00 - 01:06:48:24

Nautilus has moved to the Isle of Grain. The 1.4GW driver for reinforcement in Suffolk was removed at a stroke line. Link is not consented and its connection point is not fixed. It can be connected as part of an offshore grid with Nautilus gone, and if line link is treated as speculative rather than assumed a certain, the claimed size will need collapses from two gigawatts to a deficit,

01:06:50:13 - 01:07:27:26

so Sealink is no longer solving the need. It claims to be solving this crucial change demands immediate reassessment. In 2020, National Grid USA modelling showed greater offshore integration at East Anglia could save around £2 billion and about 6 billion nationally. And this is based on official systems planning analysis, which was commissioned for the government. Offshore pooling reduces the need for and the cost of redundant onshore converter stations, plus it halves the onshore construction footprint.

01:07:28:12 - 01:08:02:18

It minimises constraint costs spirals which land on consumers. Construction periods are shorter and easier to sequence, and there's less than half the community disruption compared with the current Project by Project Landfall approach. This is the very definition of a modern, more efficient network under the Electricity Act 1989 and a material consideration and NPS, N1 and N5. So why is Sealink still being planned for here? This this is an n cip hearing.

01:08:03:03 - 01:08:38:23

The applicant should be presenting a nationally significant solution. It's not. It's a suboptimal solution because the applicant did not revisit the alternatives once the location of Nautilus had changed. It's even worse. Their proposal risks harmful environmental impacts that will reduce the UK's ability to withstand climate change. To be clear, NPS, N1 and N5 require the applicant to show that harmful sites have are justified when less harmful to sites exist.

01:08:38:28 - 01:09:10:11

They've not demonstrated that what we're asking for is something procedurally fair and legally required a dedicated issue specific hearing on network alternatives and offshore hybrid solutions. Since the needs case has so clearly changed, the examining authority has shown interest in alternative sites and system design designs. There are now clear current decision relevant, relevant evidence that merits further examination.

01:09:11:08 - 01:09:42:22

A pause for such a hearing is not a delay. It enables due diligence to ensure the right solution is consented for the next 50 years. Sealink is not required for Suffolk and it's not the right solution. If unchallenged, this application may set a precedent for how Britain connects offshore wind farms for decades to come. We've one chance to get this right, get it wrong. We lock in extra cost inefficiency, Public resistance.

01:09:43:18 - 01:09:50:09

Get it right. We achieved net zero faster, at lower cost and with public support.

01:09:52:08 - 01:10:12:21

Better alternatives exist and are technically ready now. Plus, the needs and site case for Sealink have fundamentally changed. We wish we request and issue specific hearing on network alternatives, and that the examining authority do not recommend consent in its current form. Thank you.

01:10:13:19 - 01:10:19:14

Thank you very much. Can we now have Julian Glenn? You have three minutes. Thank you.

01:10:26:10 - 01:10:29:06

Good afternoon. Um, I just.

01:10:29:08 - 01:10:29:23

Want.

01:10:29:25 - 01:10:31:09

To start by saying I agree with everything.

01:10:31:11 - 01:11:08:05

Cesar said. And there is offshore cable should be connected and where these offshore cables should be connected to the grid. We are not NIMBYs, just ordinary people who are concerned about the utter devastation of our beautiful coastal region. We started with the building of Sizewell A, then B, and now C. This current project has had catastrophic impacts to our native species. With the destruction of Kenton Hills, forests, the miles of hedgerows, the felling of councillors trees, many of them mature oaks, not to mention of our sacred or valuable farmland lost.

01:11:09:05 - 01:11:41:09

Now we have a new power threat on our doorstep with Sealink offshore cables, which have two proposed landing points. One is a war with Wick, where we'd go through marshland and reedbeds, home to rare birds Marsh Harris and the rarely seen water rail. Not to just to mention a few, all of which call this their home and will have an impact on their lives. Always. Wick also has a thriving tourism industry, which will be impacted due to the increase of the construction.

01:11:41:11 - 01:12:26:26

Traffic along most of its single file lanes are almost single file lanes. That should be. The other is a obra. These cables go through RSPB North Warren Nature Reserve, which by definition is a wildlife habitat. Aldeburgh and its surrounding area also has a large, thriving tourist industry. Both these routes are due to culminate a new converter station at Saxmundham, which again will seriously affect this community. During a Google search for distances, warblers, which is 15 to 20 miles and Aldeburgh is 10 to 50 miles from London, culminating in a total of another 30 plus miles of devastation to our countryside.

01:12:27:08 - 01:13:09:24

There is already, in just a few months, a substantial increase in traffic due to Sizewell, and this will increase many times during these constructions. If this project is not going to go on to sea and the inspectorate says it has to come here. Obviously the best option is to go and see why. Has no one said that? It must have come at Sizewell with a new converter station being built on this side, as they've already destroyed this area. The Planning Inspectorate should also seriously take into account the concerns of local communities with their mental health and stress levels, plus the nature that will be lost and not be swayed by external forces who are only looking for profit.

01:13:09:26 - 01:13:10:17

Thank you.

01:13:11:17 - 01:13:12:02

Thank you very.

01:13:12:04 - 01:13:18:26

Much. And now we have Richard Rout for Suffolk County Council. I understand your virtual. So if you'd like to switch your camera.

01:13:19:05 - 01:13:19:20

Oh.

01:13:20:21 - 01:13:21:06

That was like.

01:13:21:14 - 01:13:22:11

A 3D version.

01:13:24:27 - 01:13:26:27

You've got six minutes. Thank you.

01:13:27:04 - 01:13:30:22

Good afternoon. My name is Richard Rout and I'm cabinet member.

01:13:30:24 - 01:13:31:09

For.

01:13:31:11 - 01:13:38:27

Devolution, local government reform and nationally significant infrastructure projects. At Suffolk County Council. I'd like to thank you for providing.

01:13:38:29 - 01:13:40:03

This opportunity for me.

01:13:40:05 - 01:13:40:20

To address.

01:13:40:22 - 01:13:41:07

You about.

01:13:41:09 - 01:13:42:18

The Sealink project.

01:13:43:11 - 01:13:44:22

Before setting out some.

01:13:44:24 - 01:13:45:22

Key issues, I'd like to.

01:13:45:24 - 01:13:46:09

Take.

01:13:46:11 - 01:13:50:28

This opportunity to reflect on the development of this project and the Council's engagement with.

01:13:51:00 - 01:13:51:15

It.

01:13:52:05 - 01:14:08:18

I think it would be fair to say that from my point of view, the process has not been satisfactory, despite the fact that the council is engaging with National Grid transmission on two other projects, Branford Twin State and Norwich to Tilbury. As I said at our cabinet meeting on the 13th of May of.

01:14:08:20 - 01:14:09:06

This year.

01:14:09:08 - 01:14:44:22

To consider the council's relevant representations, the response to engagement from key members of National Grid Sealink project team has too often been dismissive and high handed. This is a this is unhelpful and at times intransigent, and this approach, both in relation to the concerns of the councils and of the communities that it represents, has been a serious disappointment for officers and councillors alike, especially after effective engagement with grit on other projects. Following the cabinet meeting, there was an in-person meeting between the council leader and a National Grid Board director, and some progress was made.

01:14:44:24 - 01:15:17:07

However, substantive concerns remain. Overall, the engagement on this project has been both difficult and disappointing as a result of the many issues that have not been properly addressed or resolved, and I believe they could have been if the applicant had taken a more constructive approach. So while the full, comprehensive details of the council's concerns are set out elsewhere, I'll take this opportunity to highlight a section a selection of the key issues. Access arrangements for the concert of State converter station site remain on its satisfactory.

01:15:17:13 - 01:16:08:20

The ability, as we've heard of the Ben Hall Railway Bridge to support delivery of the project remains, at best questionable and unresolved. Likewise, the use of a permanent bridge over the river from us to allow access to the site for construction and operation of the converter station is wholly disproportionate and unnecessarily damaging to the environment, landscape and heritage assets. Notably, the grade two listed Hertz Hall and Grade two star listed Saint John the Baptist Church in Saxmundham. Both the harm of the proposed access arrangements and the engineering viability of those arrangements mean that the County Council maintains its position that an alternative access route, which integrates with the Sizewell Link road would be a significant, more robust alternative for both this project and any future projects than what is being proposed currently by the applicant.

01:16:09:20 - 01:16:43:05

The design of the converter station and its integration with the surrounding landscapes as currently presented lacks ambition, respect or care for the local environment and communities. Initial consultation on the design of the converter hall offered a range of innovative possibilities, which were subsequently not progressed in the submitted application. If the innovative design on offer

consultation was not offered with any realistic assessment of how it could be delivered in practice, I suggest this implies an inappropriately casual approach on the part of the applicant.

01:16:44:01 - 01:17:15:19

This impression is only reinforced by the fact that the applicant fails to publish the feedback of the design review panel, so as to demonstrate transparency of process, or to contribute to building public confidence in the project. In terms of working hours, the council believes seven days a week in a pub and on public holidays is unacceptable due to the lack of respite for local residents from the impacts associated with construction activities, including disruption to local roads and public rights of way used for recreational activities at a time when they are most frequently used.

01:17:16:01 - 01:17:56:22

Disappointingly. Regarding the potential delivery of the substation in Friston under the Sealink DCO, the applicant has not committed to undertake construction under the working hours agreed under the SPR consent, which does not include public holidays and Sunday working. We also have strong concerns that the cumulative impact of the scheme, its relationship and timing with other projects and consequent impact on socioeconomics, tourism and the environment and these need to be effectively assessed. The council disagrees with the applicant's assessment that local labour forces have low sensitivity, as their existing skills shortages are exacerbated by consented and constructing projects, not least including Sizewell C.

01:17:57:20 - 01:18:28:22

Likewise, the applicant needs to take an effective and robust cumulative assessment of the impact of traffic from overlapping inset projects on the Suffolk coast, rather than presuming that these other consented projects have already fully mitigated their harm. Finally, the impact of the scheme on the Suffolk and Essex coast and Heaths national landscape must be dealt with effectively. But not only that, the applicant must ensure that the Secretary of State can meet the duty to seek to further the purposes of the designation when making the decision on this proposal.

01:18:28:24 - 01:18:43:17

This issue also remains unresolved. For all these reasons and others set out in detail elsewhere. Suffolk County Council is of the view that the development consent should not be granted, and continues to object to the scheme. Thank you.

01:18:44:15 - 01:19:15:18

Thank you very much. Um, because we've been going for over an hour now, I think we'll take a ten minute break. If the applicant could just show the running order so that the next group of five can be ready at the front table for when we start, uh, so that that'll start with the group starting with, um, Alexandria Fulford. Um, for those watching on the live stream, you'll have to refresh your browser page for this hearing when we recommence. And so we'll now recommence at, uh, 1530.

01:19:15:20 - 01:19:16:22

Thank you very much.