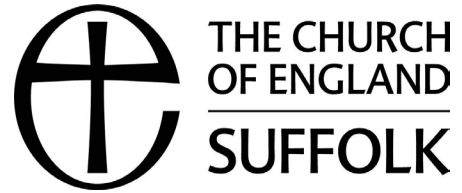


- the case for building not just one but 3 converter stations in close proximity to the market town of Saxmundham is without any merit and appears to be based on an expedient 'fast-track' solution to a long-term national problem.
- The lack of any reasoned justification of the merits of the chosen site and any coordination with the Sizewell C development are indicative of a dereliction of the most basic planning principals for a major national infrastructure development.
- The impact on life for local residents during the construction phase will be massive and the ongoing blight on the town of these huge buildings with their lighting and noise when operational will be significant. It is telling that no information regarding these parameters has been provided with the application.
- The Planning Inspectorate must refer these proposals back to the originators with clear instruction regarding producing a solution which best solves the balance between the nation's development of energy for the 21st century and protecting the environment of those living in the nation's front line.



Response to application by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) for an order granting development consent for the South East Anglia Link (Sea Link) Project.

From [REDACTED] representing the Church Council of SKC Church (Saxmundham, Kelsale, Carlton) with the parish church of St John the Baptist, Church Hill, Saxmundham IP17 1ES.

Interested Party Ref [REDACTED]

We have reservations regarding the full scope of the application referenced above but leave those arguments to others who can address these with greater knowledge and depth than we could possibly achieve. **Specifically, we strongly object to the location of the converter station to the immediate East of Saxmundham and the works associated with this giant carbuncle.**

The wording of the application is understood to be:

2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station up to 26 metres high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection & railings for walkways) near Saxmundham (including permanent access from the B1121 and a new bridge over the River Fromus)

Our objection is on the following grounds:

1. It is clear that further converter stations will be built in the location proposed if permission is given to this application. The Planning Inspectorate must consider this application in the context of the totality of proposed developments with the consequent disruption and impact on Saxmundham and the surrounding area. To fail to do this would render any consent open to legal challenge and further delay. Thus the application, as formed, is deficient and its scope must be broadened to include all further significant developments anticipated for that immediate area.
2. The location, which is very close to the market town of Saxmundham and its Grade 2* listed Medieval church appears to be based on the need for 'quick fix' solution. The routing of the supply cables some 8km inland and then back out again to the coast appears to defy logic. While clearly access to the Grid is needed, the Saxmundham location for a converter station appears to owe more to a quick fix site

acquisition and access road build rather than selection of an optimal solution for the nation.

3. We believe no assessment of alternative locations for the converter station(s) has been published and the choice of Saxmundham is probably based on an expectation that it offers the least problems with acquiring planning permission being away from the AONB. To have no such assessment of the alternative options with cost, risk, impact etc clearly set for such a major national infrastructure project is a complete dereliction of due process.
4. It appears that there has been no coordination with the major Sizewell C development underway in our locality. The key feature that this ongoing development could offer would be high-quality road and rail access to locations near to the coast and the multiplicity of construction compounds blossoming across the AONB area. We appreciate that any sharing of infrastructure activity would involve compromise but to impose a multiplicity of disconnected, huge infrastructure developments on our locality is a far worse result. We suggest that the Planning Inspectorate imposes a requirement on all the major infrastructure developments in the locality to implement a much higher level of coordination and compromise. This may require direct government intervention as these companies appear to be completely insular in their approach to their developments.
5. The construction and operation of up to 3 giant converter stations on the edge of our market town will cause major disruption to peoples' lives and enjoyment of their local environment. While the actual stations may be 500 – 1000 metres from the edge of the town it is clear that the site will go right up to the edge of the woodland screening the town. Experience of current Sizewell construction is that noisy, heavy machinery will be working throughout the whole area of the site moving materials. We can therefore look forward to many years of massive noise and light pollution. The Church Council is particularly concerned about noise affecting services at the church (not just Sundays but worship and prayer are held during the week). Also any effects of vibration due to soil compaction on the fragile structure of our Medieval building need to be addressed.

6. If it had been clearly established that the Saxmundham site proposed was the only realistic option then a case could be made, provided suitable compensatory offsets for the town and surrounding locality, and suitable controls to minimise the impact during the construction phase were provided. We challenge National Grid to provide the analysis to justify the choice of site and have this assessed by independent examination.

In summary:

- the case for building not just one but 3 converter stations in close proximity to our market town is without any merit and appears to be based on an expedient 'fast-track' solution to a long-term national problem.
- The lack of any reasoned justification of the merits of the chosen site and any coordination with the Sizewell C development are indicative of a dereliction of the most basic planning principals for a major national infrastructure development.
- The impact on life for local residents during the construction phase will be massive and the ongoing blight on the town of these huge buildings with their lighting and noise when operational will be significant. It is telling that no information regarding these parameters has been provided with the application.
- The Planning Inspectorate must refer these proposals back to the originators with clear instruction regarding producing a solution which best solves the balance between the nation's development of energy for the 21st century and protecting the environment of those living in the nation's front line.

 for SKC Church Council. Nov 2025