

Presentation to PINs panel in respect of Sea Link Proposals from
Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council

Ref: [REDACTED]

Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council is taking this opportunity to express dismay that in addition to Sizewell C and SPR, we are now faced with the first of many more proposed energy projects to add to the impacts we are already experiencing. The Sea Link project will mean our special corner of the continually eroding Suffolk coast will shoulder even more responsibility for UK energy security.

The community of Leiston has a proud industrial heritage and for 60 years the parish has been host to nuclear power. And it is now embarking on over a decade of major construction upheaval for SZC. During consultation for SZC, residents were assured that the countryside to the south and west of Leiston would not be impacted by construction, and the loss of recreational amenity on the Sizewell estate would be compensated for in these locations. However, the impact of the SPR projects and potentially the Sea Link proposals leaves Leiston facing even more upheaval to the south and west - and Sea Link would begin at the very peak of SZC construction.

It is fair to say that only a year ago, our community had not envisaged the true impact of being the host parish for SZC. Cherished countryside has become unrecognisable to make way for permanent and temporary infrastructure and the scale of the project is beyond what many imagined. We know that SZC will eventually provide a considerable contribution to the UK's energy security but this rural area should not be burdened with more responsibility - we need to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Residents working outside the town, or those who travel between customers locally, already face a frustratingly time-consuming journey as they negotiate traffic and roadworks associated with the projects currently under construction. Hospital trips and other appointments now take far longer and emergency vehicles accessing the town face delays. It has to be noted that Leiston is 60 minutes away from the nearest accident and emergency hospital without any delays - more than any other town in Suffolk.

Contractor numbers and deliveries will continue to increase and impact our daily lives, despite infrastructure upgrades and associated development to serve SZC. Residents with no links to the current projects are already starting to move away from the town. Some, simply to avoid seeing the changing landscape all around us, others to escape the impact on their daily lives. And those who seek a quieter life can be forgiven for moving elsewhere. Even residents who have roots firmly within the parish are making life-changing decisions about their future. Retired and semi-retired residents make up a large proportion of our voluntary sector and contribute to childcare support for their wider families. This vital generation must be encouraged to remain in the town. We are concerned that the result would be an unbalanced, unsustainable economy, as the town's demographic shifts.

The Council is working hard to ensure the current projects do not define our town. Adding further energy infrastructure to this already challenging task would no doubt require extra determination and energy.

The tourism offer for Leiston and the surrounding towns and villages is already challenged by the consented projects, and Sea Link will further damage the special qualities that visitors are seeking. Tourist accommodation, much in demand, has already been sought out by construction workers and this will only worsen despite extra accommodation being provided by the developer.

Leiston-cum-Sizewell is proud of our unspoilt, although diminishing, beach and foreshore in the hamlet of Sizewell, which is enjoyed by so many. We believe the development of Sea Link will make our beach even less desirable for day-trippers and holidaymakers, due to the cumulative impact on travel times and the visual impact all around.

When we met, we asked Sea Link representatives how many mature trees and hedges would need to be removed to provide a temporary haul road and cable route, the answer 'minimal' was not a satisfactory response. We asked whether the Sizewell link road could be utilised to deliver materials instead of building a temporary haul road but were told that the link road is yet to be built, and cannot be considered an option. This was not a satisfactory answer either.

We respectfully bring to your attention that predicted contractor numbers increased considerably for peak construction at Hinkley Point C. This must be considered fully when contemplating the impact of adding the Sea Link data to the traffic and workforce numbers predicted for SZC. HGV movements for SZC are capped, but what is the point of capping vehicle movements for one project only to allow several more developers to add their own?

In conclusion....

The emerging effects of the SZC and SPR projects means we are facing the next 10 years plus with trepidation, particularly if further projects are brought forward in this rural area. We therefore request that alternatives are investigated as a matter of urgency before our town and the neighbouring parishes become an industrialised cul-de-sac. Construction years might be deemed temporary but could have a long lasting effect on our community, well after construction is complete.

We are already seeing evidence of collective anxiety in the community, from the low level effect of delayed journeys to work and appointments, to the impact of seeing the countryside change beyond recognition. Understandably, tempers are frayed. Our town is already doing its fair share for UK energy security, so please do not burden us with more.

Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council is sympathetic to the concerns raised by our neighbouring parishes. We are collectively in this together but our own parish carries an extra challenge as host to SZC.

Thank you for taking our views into consideration and we sincerely hope the panel can foresee the further impact facing this community, should the Sea Link project be recommended for consent in this location.

Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council
6 November 2025