



The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Sea Link

Volume 9: Examination Submissions

Document 9.68: Applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions to Preliminary Meeting

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1. About This Document

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This document summarises the oral submissions made by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (the Applicant) at the Preliminary Meeting held on Tuesday 5 November 2025 in relation to the Sea Link Project (the Project).
- 1.1.2 The Preliminary Meeting commenced at 10.00 and concluded at 13.01. The agenda for the meeting was set out in the Rule 6 letter issued by the Planning Inspectorate on 19 September 2025 **[PD-010]**.
- 1.1.3 The Applicant submitted its written Response to the Rule 6 Letter at Procedural Deadline A **[PDA-001]**.
- 1.1.4 The summary of oral submissions provided in this document follows the structure and order of the agenda items set out by the Examining Authority (ExA) in the Rule 6 letter.

1.2 Attendees on Behalf of the Applicant

- 1.2.1 Saira Sheikh KC appeared on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission plc, the Applicant.
- 1.2.2 The following representatives were also in attendance:
 - Seb Stevens, National Grid
 - James Parker, BCLP
 - Ali Leeder, Aeos Infrastructure Planning
 - Adrian Pierssene, National Grid.

2. Applicant's Summary of Case on Item 2: ExA's remarks about the Examination Process

2.1 Item 2: The ExA's Remarks about the Examination Process

Table 2.1 Item 2: The ExA's Remarks about the Examination Process

Item Discussed	Summary of Oral Case
i. Change Request	
The ExA sought an update on the targeted consultation that was held in respect of the Change Request, the formal notification of which was submitted by the Applicant (letter dated 16 September 2025 [AS-138], Rule 9 response dated 25 September 2025 [PD-011]). The ExA sought an update on the targeted consultation that was held in respect of the Change Request, the formal notification of which was submitted by the Applicant (letter dated 16 September 2025 [AS-138], Rule 9 response dated 25 September 2025 [PD-011]).	<p>The Applicant confirmed that the targeted consultation relating to the Change Request started on 7 October and concludes on 7 November 2025. At the time of the Preliminary Meeting, the Applicant had received over 100 responses.</p> <p>The Applicant confirmed that all parties were consulted as set out in the Notification of Change submitted to the ExA on 16 September [AS-138], with all comments provided by the Inspectorate in their letter dated 25 September [PD-011] also addressed in full. The Applicant confirmed that the list of consultees included Kent Wildlife Trust, who were contacted both by letter and email. The full methodology for consultation and list of consultees is provided in the Consultation Report submitted with the Change Request at Deadline 1A.</p> <p>The Applicant confirmed that the team was on track to submit the formal Change Request by Deadline 1A (26 November 2025).</p> <p><i>[Post hearing note: The Change Request has been submitted alongside this summary at the deadline agreed.]</i></p> <p>This Applicant confirmed that those consulted included prescribed consultees and neighbouring properties to the proposed changes. The Applicant noted that the changes proposed are minor in nature and the list of those parties that may be affected reflected this as advised in the Planning Inspectorate Guidance (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Changes to an application after it has been accepted for examination).</p> <p>The Examining Authority asked the Applicant to consider whether notices could be published in</p>

newspapers to publicise the changes to the Application. The Applicant agreed to consider the best time and approach to future consultation and notification.

*[Post hearing note: the Applicant confirmed in the letter submitted on 18 November **[REP1-033]** that it was not possible to publish letters to publicise the consultation that finished on 7 November, given that the query was raised on 5 November. However, given that the non-statutory consultation carried out on the changes did not require notices, the Applicant proposed to publish notices on submission of the Change Request, which would provide notification on the final changes and publicise the period for Interested Parties to make representations on the changes. These notices are proposed to be published in week commencing 8 December 2025 and 15 December 2025.]*

ii. Hearing arrangements

The ExA requested that the applicant consider setting up satellite events during the hearings – where IPs who cannot access the central location or virtually, can participate.

The Applicant highlighted that it wrote to the Inspectorate on 2 June 2025 setting out the challenges of taking such an approach to satellite hearings. The Applicant reiterated concerns over this approach.

The Applicant's primary concerns are that the Applicant, who is not a neutral party, would be responsible for managing the operation of the events at the satellite venues. There were also issues with staffing three simultaneous venues and challenges coordinating the Applicant's own team safely over the three locations. The Applicant's preference would be to hold the hearings locally in the two counties, with hearings focused on the issues relevant to that locality.

*[Post meeting note: The Examining Authority has subsequently taken the decision to proceed with satellite venues and the Applicant is in discussion with the Inspectorate on the responsibilities of each party in delivering this approach, noting that the project this was previously used for was a relatively uncontentious project with very few attendees at the satellite venue. An updated response from the Applicant on this was included in **9.38.2 Deadline 1A Cover Letter [REP1-033]**.*

3. Applicant's Summary of Case on Item 3: Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (Annex C to the Rule 6 Letter)

3.1 Item 3 (Initial Assessment of Principal Issues)

Table 3.1 Item 3 (Initial Assessment of Principal Issues)

Item Discussed	Summary of Oral Case
The Applicant made no oral submissions in relation to Item 3	

4. Applicant's Summary of Case on Item 4: Draft Examination Timetable (Annex D to the Rule 6 Letter)

4.1 Item 4 (Draft Examination Timetable)

Table 4.1 Item 4 (Draft Examination Timetable)

Item Discussed	Summary of Oral Case
i. Timing of Written Questions and Responses	
Timing of deadlines around Christmas/New Year Period and issue of ExAs First Round of Written Questions	<p>The Applicant has provided full detail on its position in its response to the Rule 6 letter [PDA-001]. The Applicant suggested that one possible approach could be to bring forward the issue of the ExA's First Written Questions from 17 to 15 December 2025 and to push back Deadline 3 from 7 to 9 January 2026, therefore providing two full working weeks. The Applicant also suggested that an alternative approach may be for the ExA's First Written Questions to be issued in draft in advance.</p> <p>The Applicant noted that this is a priority project, with a tight timetable and that the challenges for the ExA within the six-month timeline were appreciated.</p>
ii. LionLink National Grid Ventures (NGV)	
Queries raised by Interested Parties regarding the timetable of the NGV LionLink project and understanding how their upcoming statutory consultation relates to the Sea Link Examination Timetable.	<p>The Applicant clarified that NGV is a separate legal entity from the Applicant. Under the Electricity Act 1989, National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) has statutory duties that require a completely independent board, governance structure, and decision-making process from NGV. The Applicant has no influence over NGV's timetables. However, the Applicant can confirm that there is coordination with other parties, while ensuring compliance with legislative duties.</p> <p>The Applicant recognised that there is an overlap between the eight week consultation period for Lionlink and the six month Examination for Sea Link. However, given the length of time for both periods, it is not</p>

considered that this is a barrier to participation in either process. The Applicant also noted that it is common for the timescales of major projects to overlap and for this to be managed.

5. Applicant's Summary of Case on Item 5: Procedural Decisions (Annex G to the Rule 6 Letter)

5.1 Item 5 (Procedural Decisions)

Table 5.1 Item 5 (Procedural Decisions)

Item Discussed	Summary of Oral Case
The Applicant made no oral submissions in relation to Item 5	

6. Applicant's Summary of Case on Item 6: Any other matters

6.1 Item 5 (Any other matters)

Table 6.1 Item 6 (Any other matters)

Item Discussed	Summary of Oral Case
The Applicant made no oral submissions in relation to Item 6	

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