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The applicant

Your Ref:

Via Email only

Our Ref: EN020026

Date: 28 November 2025

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Dear Mr Stevens

## **The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 17**

### **Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission Limited for an order granting development consent for the Sea Link project**

#### **Conduct of the examination**

The timetable now set for the examination was set out in our letter of 10 November 2025 and on the website. This was finalised following both written comments and after discussion at the preliminary meeting on 5 November 2025. Adhering to the timetable will ensure the application can be examined efficiently and effectively. The implementation of the timetable is dependent on all parties, including the applicant, meeting the deadlines set within it. To ensure fairness to all parties, the ExA may disregard or refuse to accept submissions submitted after the relevant deadline (DL).

#### Timeliness and quality of examination submissions

At deadline 1 (DL1) you submitted 97 documents late and you failed to submit at deadline 1A (DL1A) your written responses to matters raised at the open floor hearings between 5 and 12 November. For those which were submitted there were omissions, inconsistencies and errors with them, for example:

- Incomplete response to action point 15 from issue specific hearing 1.
- No updated version of the land rights tracker submitted at DL1 as requested in the Rule 6 letter.
- Missing tracked changed versions of various documents including the Book of Reference and statements of common ground.
- Errors in the comments on the relevant representations [REP1-111].

It is essential for the successful delivery of the timetable for this examination that complete versions of documents, of an appropriate standard, are submitted by the published deadline. This allows all parties appropriate time to view and respond to each element

before the next deadline or hearing. Failure to do so, without timely requests in advance for any amendment, may be considered unreasonable behaviour and could result in unnecessary or wasted expense to other parties. This may result in the award of costs ([Award of costs: examinations of applications for development consent orders - Guidance](#), Part C).

#### Your request for amendments to deadline submission requirements

You wrote to the ExA on 26 November 2025 requesting that the detailed written response to matters raised by interested parties during the open floor hearings (OFHs) are submitted at DL2 rather than DL1a. We have made a procedural decision that the applicant's written response to the matters raised by interested parties during the OFHs can be submitted at DL2. We are satisfied that this is capable of being accommodated in the timetable without compromising other parties but the revised submission should also contain your responses to matters in the written summaries submitted after the OFHs submitted by other parties at DL1A

#### Satellite venues for January hearings

As discussed at the PM and in the Rule 8 letter dated 10 November 2025 we made a procedural decision that the applicant should arrange for satellite venues in Suffolk and Kent for use during the January hearings. We explained that these venues should be local to the proposed project and include the technology necessary to allow interested parties (IPs) to participate virtually, including giving evidence to the ExA where appropriate. This gives IPs the option of attending the central venue, participating online remotely either at their preferred location or having an assured remote link at a serviced venue. For a project with this geography, we consider it essential to make reasonable accommodation for all IPs.

In your letter dated 26 November 2025 you say that you are prepared to make the necessary arrangements for satellite venues in Kent and Suffolk in accordance with our procedural decision in the Rule 8 letter. However, you have decided to have no representatives from yourselves attending the satellite venues. The ExA's preference is that a representative for the applicant attends, however, if that is not the case the ExA requests that the applicant arranges for the management of the satellite venues (providing access to the venue and the technology needed to participate), be undertaken by third parties. The applicant is responsible for the costs of all hearings and subsequently need to make all practical arrangements required to facilitate the use of the satellite venues. No staff from the Planning Inspectorate will attend the satellite venues, but case team will facilitate the sign-posting of IPs to their preferred choice of access as per our usual arrangements.

Yours faithfully

*Sarah Holmes*

**Lead Member of the Examining Authority**

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