

I am submitting this Written Response as a local resident directly affected by the Sea Link project and in response to National Grid's "Thematic response" to the Relevant Representations – RR-0872.

I note that National Grid's "Thematic response" document has taken approximately five months to prepare. It's a large, unwieldy document and not particularly easy to navigate around. It seems designed to obfuscate and confuse! I would respectfully submit that the short deadline to respond is unreasonable. Throughout this project so far, National Grid seem to be behaving in a shoddy – arguably underhand – manner and refusing to engage in genuine consultation. They have a persistent habit of "moving the goalposts" (e.g. recent applications asking for more access to land at Benhall Bridge and seeking to take over the Hoverport).

As a general observation, National Grid seem to repeatedly downplay adverse impacts, seek to rely on assumptions rather than evidence and come out with vague platitudes in their responses to the relevant representations. This is regrettable. In essence, it is proposed by National Grid that Sea Link will in effect be an extension cable from Suffolk to Kent. But what power is it planned to transmit? I understand that the Scottish Power windfarms' electricity can be transmitted over the existing pylon network. As can the power from Sizewell C - when/if it finally becomes operational in the mid 2030s, at the earliest, more likely in the late 2030s.

I would submit that Sea Link is being proposed in anticipation of planning approval for Lion Link and presumably other onshore electricity generating projects attracted by the National Grid connection hub at Friston.

A well-planned strategic plan for the country's power needs would have Lion Link landfall at a brownfield site near to its power's point of use. In this case, there is no need for Sea Link – and without Sea Link, potential onshore energy projects would then also be installed closer to their point of use. A planning reset is needed to prevent the needless destruction of the East Suffolk coastline and at the same time deliver the energy more efficiently and more appropriately to the point of use.

Consent for Sea Link opens the door for more infrastructure projects to be inappropriately and unnecessarily imposed on this small section of Suffolk coast at great cost to its residents, its landscape, its wildlife, its farmers and its thriving tourism industry.

However, National Grid seem to dismiss justifiable concerns of these cumulative impacts. Many of National Grid's documents are a litany of explanations as to why there are no or limited significant impacts anticipated. This goes against all the evidence which the Planning Inspectorate heard during the open floor hearings in November 2025.

Regarding "Alternatives, Site Selection & Assessment of Options", National Grid repeatedly states that the chosen locations represent the "most suitable" or "least harmful" options. However, the evidence provided does not convincingly demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives were properly assessed. In particular, alternatives appear to have been constrained by National Grid's own operational preferences rather than by environmental, community or cumulative impact considerations.

A proper alternatives assessment must be independent, transparent, and environmentally-led, not simply a justification of pre-selected locations.

National Policy makes clear that the first principle should be avoidance of harm — yet in multiple topic areas (landscape, tourism areas, bird habitats, flood zones), National Grid appears to have prioritised "minimisation" rather than "avoidance". Avoidance should always be the default, especially where highly sensitive receptors (AONB, SSSIs, tourism hotspots) are involved.

Offshore routing and landing alternatives appear to have been dismissed prematurely by National Grid. Where offshore solutions could minimise community impacts, National Grid should justify with transparent engineering and environmental evidence why these alternatives were discounted.

Coordination with other NSIPs seems to be distinctly lacking. Residents need a strategic programme that staggers construction windows, shares compounds where feasible, and reduces cumulative impacts - that has not been demonstrated.

National Grid dismiss concerns over the cumulative impact of traffic from all the projects in Suffolk, particularly the proposed Sizewell development, stating:

"This note concludes that the duration of any potential effects of overlapping peak construction activity (third party scheme and the Proposed Project) would be limited to a five consecutive months (short-term) at most, or avoided altogether, resulting in effects that are not significant."

Such a statement is not founded on any factual basis whatsoever.

Are lessons from Nemo Link being learned? It would seem to be unlikely given the shoddy way National Grid have been approaching the Sea Link DCO process.

Regarding "Landscape and Visual Impacts", the Project lies partly in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. National Grid's conclusion of "no significant adverse effects" is hard to reconcile with the large-scale, permanent converter infrastructure and access routes. AONB status requires exceptional caution and avoidance.

The cumulative effect of converter stations and substations is to industrialise rural landscapes. This is not just localised visual change but a fundamental alteration of character.

Tourism relies on tranquil landscapes and coastal amenity. These qualities will be undermined for years. National Grid uses non-comparable case studies to downplay impacts.

Tourism is the lifeblood of the Suffolk Heritage coast. Lonely Planet's "Best in Travel" has listed East Anglia as an incredible destination to visit 2025, an excellent advert for the region: "The Suffolk Coast, with its stunning landscapes, rich history, and charming coastal towns, offers a quintessentially British seaside experience. From sandy beaches to ancient ruins, and bustling markets to tranquil nature reserves, this part of the UK has something for every traveller."

I appreciate that the grid needs updating to meet the changing energy generation options and energy demands. However, it needs to be updated under a planning strategy which is proportionate in its consideration of needs, options and impacts.

The fact that the Sea Link project has been proposed suggests that a planning re-think is required because better options are possible and because the project cannot be considered in isolation: the cumulative environmental, economic and social impacts of all the energy projects proposed for the area must be fully considered together.

National Grid repeatedly minimise the adverse impacts, put weight on many unproven assumptions, and rely on

non-binding mitigation and compensation. The Sea Link project, as proposed, will cause long-lasting and possibly irreversible harm to agriculture, ecology, landscape, tourism, the character of communities and local health and wellbeing.

I remain strongly opposed to the Sea Link project in its current form.