

WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE APPLICANT'S THEMATIC RESPONSES

(REP1-116)

Project: Sea Link EN020026

Deadline 2 – 9 December 2025

From: David Pelly



SUMMARY

I am submitting this Written Response as a resident of Walberswick in the Suffolk Coastal area which is affected by the Sea Link project and a number of other major infrastructure projects including Sizewell C, EA1N, EA2 and LionLink and in response to the Applicant's Thematic response to my Relevant Representation - REP1-166.

I have significant concerns across a range of the assessed topics but specifically: the cumulative effects from multiple NSIPs, ecological disturbance and impacts on the local economy, tourism and the well-being of local residents. The Applicant frequently downplays the impact of Sea Link, relying on a range of assumptions rather than providing evidence to support their arguments. The project in its current form will permanently damage the environment and wellbeing of local communities, and does not adequately avoid, minimise, or justify the level of harm proposed.

1. CUMULATIVE IMPACT

National Grid's responses consistently treat each category of harm in a piecemeal fashion, rather than acknowledging the clear and growing pattern of overlapping, long-term burdens on the communities affected by Sea Link.

The Applicant repeatedly asserts that residual effects are "not significant", but this conclusion is reached not only by examining each topic area separately but also by failing to take into account the cumulative impacts from a number of projects in the Suffolk Coastal area.

The cumulative picture across Suffolk is undeniable. Sea Link is one of a number of major energy infrastructure schemes that already include Sizewell C, Scottish Power's projects, Friston Substation proposals, and multiple offshore connections. National Grid's responses do not seriously reflect the compounded stress these projects impose—whether environmental, psychological, economic or social.

The Examining Authority should require the Applicant to produce a genuine cumulative impact assessment, covering all relevant NSIPs together, using realistic combined scenarios instead of theoretical, isolated averages.

2. ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE

The Applicant's responses repeatedly downplay ecological impacts despite the presence of highly sensitive receptors, including the Sandlings SPA, Alde—Ore Estuary, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Pegwell Bay, marshland, ancient hedgerows and specialist coastal habitats.

The environmental assessments rely heavily on generic modelling and very limited surveys that do not capture seasonal variation, migratory species or long-term ecosystem dynamics. Many of the affected habitats require multi-year survey baselines, particularly where species are sensitive to disturbance from noise, lighting, sediment movement or human presence.

Of particular concern are disturbance to birds, especially wintering and breeding populations in SPAs and SSSIs, where even minor, prolonged activity can cause displacement and Underwater noise and vessel activity in Pegwell Bay affecting seals and marine life at distances far greater than the Applicant acknowledges.

National Grid's reliance on reinstatement and planting fails to recognise that mature habitats supporting a very diverse range of protected species that have developed over many decades cannot simply be "replaced". Their restoration plans are poorly designed, unenforceable, and dependent on monitoring regimes the Applicant has not adequately defined.

Given the internationally and nationally designated nature of many affected landscapes, the Examining Authority must apply the precautionary principle and require independent ecological oversight, binding seasonal constraints and avoidance of sensitive areas—not merely limited, post-hoc mitigation measures.

3. LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

The Applicant asserts that tourism impacts will be negligible but has not provided any convincing facts or figures to support this contention especially given the cumulative impacts of the other major energy infrastructure projects in the Suffolk Coastal area. Severe disruption and delays are already being experienced on the A12 and local B roads because of construction work relating to Sizewell C, EA1N and EA2.

Visitors are attracted to the Suffolk Coastal area by its tranquillity, the beauty of the local landscapes, the diversity of the wildlife, ease of access to coast and the depth of local heritage. Sea Link and the other infrastructure projects will put off many thousands of visitors who will not wish to face longer travel times and a coast disturbed and disfigured by major construction projects.

Businesses in hospitality, leisure, outdoor recreation and local retail rely heavily on tourism all the year round. They are already under wider economic pressures and now face significant reductions in the numbers of visitors who will stay away because of the noise, visual intrusion, traffic congestion and general disturbance from these projects.

National Grid has not provided any evidence to suggest that these impacts will not be significant.

CONCLUSION

I remain opposed to the Sea Link project in its current form. The Project, as proposed, will cause long-lasting and possibly irreversible harm to the local environment, the local economy and the health and wellbeing of local people.

National Grid's 'thematic' responses are totally inadequate and consistently understate the scale, duration and seriousness of impacts arising from the Sea Link project. The Applicant repeatedly makes assertions about limited impacts based on selective modelling, incomplete surveys and assumptions about mitigation that do not stand up to scrutiny.

The examining authority should insist on:

- a transparent and independent alternatives assessment
- binding mitigation, monitoring and enforcement
- genuine cumulative impact analysis
- full ecological precaution
- clear protection for emergency services and local road networks
- and meaningful recognition of harm to tourism, wellbeing and local economies

The EA should refuse consent until these are secured.