

Westleton Parish Council – Sea Link Deadline 2 submission

1. Westleton is village 5 miles north of Friston and Saxmundham and 1 mile inland from the Suffolk coast. Westleton and its residents are already suffering the effects of the Sizewell C (SZC) construction – notably, significantly increased peak-time traffic through the village, heavier traffic on local roads and the destruction of the surrounding environment, much of which is in an Area of Natural Beauty/Natural Landscape and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
2. Westleton Parish Council (WPC) supports the comments made by the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership its Relevant Representation REP1A-045 and its Deadline 2 submission. To this we add our support for statements made by Suffolk County Council in its *Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement AS-083 (PADSS)*, in particular:
 - a. *The proposed peak construction date for Sea Link (2027) will be close to the peak construction of Sizewell C (2028) with a likelihood that there will also be an overlap with SPR projects East Anglia One North and Two and East Anglia THREE), and also LionLink. There is a lack of cumulative assessment regarding the impacts of traffic from the respective projects. The Council is concerned regarding the cumulative impacts on the road network and expects the Sea Link proposals to contribute to the considerable effect to traffic on the routes leading to, and in proximity to the Suffolk Coast (including subsequent associated impacts to air quality, noise, and vibration) local housing and services. The sequential delivery of NSIPs on the Suffolk coast will create successive impacts at the same locations and be detrimental to residents, local businesses, and tourism.*
 - b. *The Council regards the inclusion of core working hours which spans seven days a week and Public Holidays as unacceptable due to the lack of respite for local residents from the impacts associated with construction activities including disruption to local roads and public rights of way (PRoW) used for recreational activities at a time when they are most frequently used. Regarding the potential delivery of the substation in Friston under the Sea Link DCO, the Applicant has not committed to undertake construction under the working hours agreed under the SPR consent which does not include Public Holiday and Sunday working.*
 - c. *The Council is concerned regarding the level of detail submitted within the draft management plans. For example, the Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan lacks rigorous controls on Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) routing and a cap on numbers in line with what has been assumed in the submitted assessments and what has been accepted in previous DCO consents. There is also no commitment that can be enforced in terms of worker shift patterns that form part of the embedded mitigation. The definition of ‘workers’ is also unclear and does not state whether it includes other visitors to site.*
 - d. *The Council is deeply concerned regarding the apparent lack of meaningful discussion between Sea Link and other NSIP projects in the same locality, to find opportunities to coordinate activities to reduce the impact of construction (e.g. on the highway network) of*

multiple projects on host communities on the East Suffolk Coast. As a result, differing landfall and cable routes have been selected by separate projects which will increase the impacts of construction on the host communities, landscape, and ecology.

3. WPC also agrees with much in Suffolk County Council's Local Impact Report REP1-130 (LIR). The conclusions to each issue chapter highlight numerous substantial failings with the Applicant's proposals which in the opinion of WPC are sufficient to warrant an ExA recommendation to the Secretary of State to refuse consent. While some minor concerns may be managed by mitigation, the majority are not; and the significant and valid concerns about the use the Benhall Bridge for access of Abnormal Indivisible Loads pose a very real question as to whether the project can be delivered as proposed.
4. However, a weakness of the LIR traffic and transport chapter is that the majority of its comments are addressed at the Applicant's defined traffic study area (which is limited in geographical scope) while being less detailed in regard to the significant impacts outside of that study area. The assessment of local impact and required mitigation is therefore inadequate. Notably, it does not fully address traffic and transport impacts in communities to the north, south and west of the Applicant's defined traffic study area.
5. B and C roads service the communities to the north, south and west of the Applicant's defined traffic area, all of which are experiencing increased traffic volumes because of the SZC and the EA1N and EA2 projects. The B1125 is in particular suffering increased traffic volumes of 45%+ during peak hours. Between Blythburgh and Westleton this traffic is fast and is presenting a road safety concern; through the village of Westleton, the increased traffic volumes are creating noise and air pollution and making junctions within the village dangerous to navigate. The Applicant is not proposing to impose restrictions on worker access routes to site; given that the proposed Sea Link construction is due to coincide with SZC peak years, WPC is concerned that traffic volumes on the B1125 will further increase because of the Sea Link worker traffic and because the B1125 (along with other B and C roads to the north, south and west of the Applicant's traffic study area) will be elective diversion routes for other traffic wanting to avoid A12 congestion caused by the weight of the SZC, Sea Link and other energy project traffic - in 2030 there are projected to be at least 1064 additional HGV movements per day.
6. Compounding this concern is that the proposed HGV access route to the Sea Link converter station site will require HGVs to cross the A12 at the northbound exit to the B1121 and so require HGVs to cross southbound A12 traffic before joining the B1121 which at that point has a rising vertical alignment. WPC believe that the junction will impose a greatly increased road safety risk caused by slow-moving HGVs attempting to navigate the junction. Road safety concerns about A12 junctions more generally were highlighted by the fatal traffic accident at the A12/B1119 junction on 4 November 2025. The accident caused the closure of the A12 with all traffic diverted by the police through Saxmundham, while sat-navs were diverting traffic to B and C roads to the west to avoid the congestion. The road closure lasted more than 3 hours.
7. The Applicant's proposal and the LIR fail to mention a site allocation in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan for 110-properties on the field between the A12 and Westleton Road. Scott Properties received a resolution to grant planning permission at the Planning Committee in May 2024. It is expected that the development will require A12 works for pedestrian access.

The construction and then occupation of the estate will change the dynamics of the A12/Westleton Road junction and will cause congestion and compromise road safety.

8. Mitigation: WPC generally supports SCC's LIR proposed mitigations and in particular those addressing traffic and transport in paragraphs 11.221-11.224. Additionally, WPC calls for:
 - a. the speed limit on the B1125 between Westleton and Blythburgh to be reduced to 40mph to compensate for the current and likely higher traffic volumes which are increasing road safety risk;
 - b. the speed limit on the B1125 between Westleton and Middleton to be reduced to 30mph to compensate for the current and likely higher traffic volumes which are increasing road safety risk;
 - c. for the A12/Westleton junction to be redesigned to compensate the increased road safety risk created by the construction and resident traffic of the 110-property estate which has received outline planning permission and will therefore likely be under construction/in occupation at the time of the Sea Link construction if the Applicant's proposal is approved.