

## National Grid Electricity Transmission – Sea Link DCO

Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED]

### Statement of [Suffolk County Councillor for Aldeburgh & Surrounding Wards]

Deadline 3 – 9 January

#### Introduction

1. As the elected Suffolk County Councillor for Aldeburgh and its surrounding communities, I submit these comments in support of my division and in response to the Applicant's Detailed Responses, the reissued Chapter 10, and the additional material provided at Deadline 2. The volume and complexity of the material has been considerable, and I respectfully ask the Examining Authority to accept this submission.
2. I am deeply concerned that the Applicant has failed to engage meaningfully with Aldeburgh as a community. Despite detailed representations from the Town Council, local businesses, residents and elected representatives, the Applicant has largely repeated its original assertions and has not substantively responded to the specific issues raised for this town.
3. This matters. Aldeburgh is not an abstract location on a map: it is a living community whose economy, health and identity are closely bound to tourism, accessibility and environmental quality. I share the view of Aldeburgh Town Council that even if the scheme were to be approved—which I do not support—there is little confidence that mitigation or compensation would be delivered in good faith, given the Applicant's persistent unwillingness to engage.
4. I refer to (15) and also my 'apples and pears' below regarding how different everything is now and how you can not compare Sizewell B to what is happening with C.

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#### Tourism

4. I support the positions set out in the Local Impact Reports of Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council, but it is vital to stress the particular vulnerability of Aldeburgh. The town is the primary tourism centre in this part of the coast and a major contributor to the local economy. Any assessment of tourism impacts that fails to properly account for Aldeburgh is fundamentally flawed.
5. Aldeburgh is a nationally and internationally recognised destination. The Applicant's tourism assessment, however, treats the town as if it barely exists, referring only to small peripheral areas and ignoring the reality of where visitors go, stay and spend. This omission is not a technical oversight; it undermines the entire credibility of the assessment.
6. The Applicant's approach in Chapter 10 is deeply problematic for three reasons:
  - o First, no realistic "sanity check" appears to have been applied. Any serious appraisal of tourism impacts in this area would begin with Aldeburgh as the principal tourism hub. A methodology that does not capture this cannot produce reliable results.

- Second, the Applicant relies on highway-based guidance (LA 112) that was never designed to assess tourism impacts in coastal resort towns. Even the Applicant concedes that there is no statutory guidance for this type of assessment yet proceeds as if there were.
- Third, the Applicant relies on unnamed “professional judgement”. Given the two points above, that judgement is not credible.

7. The only supporting evidence offered is an undisclosed review of other infrastructure projects, which is said to demonstrate that tourism is not harmed. No witnesses, case studies or comparable locations have been provided. Against this, the Examining Authority has extensive evidence from Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, SEAS, Aldeburgh Town Council and dozens of local businesses that point in the opposite direction.
8. Over 50 local businesses have formally objected to this scheme. These are not anti-energy or anti-infrastructure voices — many did not oppose Sizewell or Scottish Power projects — but they understand their own livelihoods and customer base. Major community assets such as Aldeburgh Jubilee Hall have also expressed serious concern that their financial recovery and long-term viability would be damaged.

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## Traffic and Access

9. I fully endorse Suffolk County Council’s submissions on transport but wish to emphasise how acutely these impacts are felt in Aldeburgh.
10. The A1094 is the town’s lifeline. It is the only meaningful route for visitors, for deliveries, and for emergency services. Ipswich Hospital is 24 miles away, serving an ageing population. Any sustained disruption would not simply inconvenience the town — it would put people at risk and undermine confidence in Aldeburgh as a safe and accessible destination.
11. The Aldeburgh Roundabout is particularly critical. All traffic entering and leaving the town passes through it, including coaches, cyclists, pedestrians and emergency vehicles. It is also crossed daily by children walking to school, by people accessing the GP surgery, and by residents reaching shops and community facilities. The Applicant proposes to route HGVs through this junction for landfall access and compounds. This is not a marginal impact; it goes to the heart of how the town functions.
12. The Applicant’s conclusion that impacts at this junction will be “negligible” is not credible, particularly when Scottish Power’s consented project alone has already been assessed as causing adverse effects at the same location. These projects are cumulative, not theoretical.
13. The baseline traffic surveys were carried out in January and February 2024 — historically the quietest months for Aldeburgh — and during a period of exceptional rainfall and travel warnings. This significantly underestimates real-world conditions, particularly in the spring and summer when up to 15,000 visitors a day use the A1094.

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14. In the coming months, closure of the B1353 (Thorpeness–Aldringham) will push even more traffic through Aldeburgh. This demonstrates why Suffolk County Council is correct in saying the study area must be wider than the Applicant has assumed.

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### **Economic and Social Wellbeing**

15. Aldeburgh's economy has changed fundamentally since the construction of Sizewell B. It is now a tourism-led town with hotels, holiday lets, cafés, restaurants, independent retailers and cultural venues that depend on visitors. Comparing the present day with the late 1980s is misleading and not a sound basis for decision-making.

16. Evidence from long-standing High Street businesses shows how the town has evolved from a primarily residential service centre into a dedicated visitor economy. That model is now highly sensitive to disruption, congestion and negative perception.

17. There is already evidence that Sizewell C construction workers are displacing holiday visitors from rental accommodation, with knock-on effects for spending in the town. Suggesting that long-term workers spend in the same way as holidaymakers is not supported by any serious economic analysis.

18. Residents' mental wellbeing is also being affected. The cumulative pressure of multiple energy projects, combined with uncertainty about traffic, noise and economic impacts, is creating significant anxiety across the community.

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### **Engagement**

19. Finally, I must underline how disappointed I am that this Applicant has not engaged with Aldeburgh and others in any meaningful way. Sizewell C and Scottish Power Renewables have both held public meetings in the town and worked with local representatives. National Grid Electricity Transmission has not done so, despite repeated concerns being raised.

20. Aldeburgh and its surrounding villages deserve to be treated with respect. The current approach gives little confidence that, if consent were granted, the Applicant would work constructively with the community to manage or mitigate the harm caused.

Yours faithfully,

**T-J Haworth-Culf**

SCC Cllr for Aldeburgh, Leiston, Thorpeness, Aldringham and Knodishall.

## **You cannot compare Apples to Pears!**

As well as the objections to the substance of the Applicant's position, there is growing concern at its approach in refusing to accept the obvious or to engage with our community. The Applicant's approach is in contrast to that of Sizewell C.

Sea link and other energy projects are already highly affecting Aldeburgh, Leiston and villages within my division. Having lived in Aldeburgh during the construction of Sizewell B and now Sizewell C and other energy projects, the impacts are constant and relentless. There are completely different circumstances and geographic differences which mean that Sizewell B & C cannot be compared like for like, their differences are vast! The construction and potential operation of Sizewell C, a new nuclear power station in Suffolk, is having significant implications for both Aldeburgh & Leiston High Street and tourism in the area, especially in comparison to the existing Sizewell B.

### **1. Increased Traffic and Congestion**

- **Sizewell B Impact:** The current operation of Sizewell B already brings a level of traffic congestion to the region, particularly around key times when workers are commuting to and from the site. However, it is relatively manageable because the plant is smaller in scale compared to Sizewell C.
- **Sizewell C Impact:** The construction of Sizewell C is and will likely bring a much higher volume of traffic, including heavy construction vehicles, lorries carrying materials, and an influx of workers. The East Suffolk area, including Aldeburgh, is already known for narrow roads and rural settings, which means that the added traffic could significantly impact the experience of both locals and tourists. Aldeburgh and Leiston High Street are and could feel more of the brunt of this, with congestion and less pedestrian-friendly space, especially during peak tourist seasons. Locals are already put off from going to shop locally and are turning more and more to online purchases.

### **2. Impact on Tourism**

- **Sizewell B Impact:** Sizewell B has had some minimal effects on tourism in Aldeburgh. Tourists visiting the area are generally not drawn by the nuclear power station, but rather by Aldeburgh's cultural heritage, seaside attractions, and proximity to the famous Aldeburgh Festival. The station is somewhat discreet in the landscape, and its effects on the tourism sector are largely indirect (e.g., workers coming and going but not necessarily affecting visitor enjoyment).
- **Sizewell C Impact:** Sizewell C is and could have a more direct and pronounced impact on tourism, especially during its construction phase. The increased traffic and disruption to the environment could make Aldeburgh less appealing to visitors who come for its tranquillity. Furthermore, some visitors may be wary of staying near a large construction project. This could lead to a decline in tourism for years, at least until the station is complete. Once operational, Sizewell C could bring some tourists who might

want to visit a major industrial site, but this is likely to be less significant compared to the loss of general tourism in the construction period.

- Visitors are vital to tourism in Aldeburgh, as the town's economy depends heavily on year-round and seasonal visitors who come for its beach, High Street, food, festivals, and cultural attractions.
- Tourism is **important to Leiston**, even though it is a small town rather than a major tourist destination. Attractions such as **The Long Shop Museum** play a key role in bringing visitors into the town and supporting both the local economy and community identity. The Long Shop Museum is particularly significant because it tells the story of Leiston's industrial past and the impact of **Richard Garrett & Sons**, whose engineering works shaped the town's development. This type of heritage tourism attracts visitors who are interested in history, engineering, and local culture, offering something unique that cannot easily be found elsewhere. As a result, the museum helps preserve local heritage while also giving Leiston a reason to be visited.

Economically, tourism linked to the museum supports local cafés, pubs, shops, accommodation providers, and events. Although visitor numbers are modest compared to large attractions, even a steady flow of day-trippers and school groups can make a noticeable difference to small businesses. Visitors often combine a trip to the museum with walks, nearby historic sites, or nature attractions such as **RSPB Minsmere**, increasing the overall benefit to the area.

However, the number of “vital” visitors needed to keep tourism sustainable can be affected by several factors. Transport access is a key issue, the impacts from energy projects putting new and returning visitors off, as Leiston does not have a passenger railway station and relies heavily on car and bus travel. Poor public transport can reduce visitor numbers, particularly for older visitors, families, or school groups.

- Examples of the importance of tourism to the area. The Red House and the Jubilee Hall are extremely important to Aldeburgh because they are central to the town's cultural identity and visitor economy: the Red House, as Benjamin Britten's former home and an international music heritage site, attracts visitors from across the UK and abroad, while the Jubilee Hall provides a vital venue for concerts, festivals, community events, and exhibitions, together drawing year-round visitors who support Aldeburgh's shops, cafés, accommodation, and wider tourism, and reinforcing the town's reputation as a nationally significant cultural destination rather than just a seasonal seaside resort.

Just a few meters away from the proposed Sea Link site there is the Moot Hall. This includes **Aldeburgh Museum** — housed in the historic **Moot Hall** — is quite important to **Aldeburgh's identity and tourism**, even if it's not the biggest attraction in town.

The **Moot Hall** itself is one of the best-preserved Tudor public buildings in Britain, a Grade I listed structure dating back to the early 16th century that still serves as a meeting place for the town council and anchors Aldeburgh's historic seafront. Its architectural and historical importance makes it a *must-see landmark* for visitors interested in heritage and local story. [Wikipedia+1](#)

Inside, the museum tells the **story of Aldeburgh from ancient times to the present** — from Anglo-Saxon and Roman artefacts through to the town's fishing and shipbuilding

past, the infamous 17th-century witch trials, and local maritime history. This gives visitors a rich sense of place and context, deepening their experience beyond the beach and festival culture that Aldeburgh is often best known for. [Aldeburgh Museum+1](#)

While Aldeburgh also attracts people for its seaside, cultural events (including the famous Aldeburgh Festival), and coastal scenery, the museum adds **cultural depth and historical continuity** to the visitor offering. As reviews show, tourists often recommend it as a rewarding, informative stop that complements other local attractions and helps them understand why Aldeburgh is special. [Tripadvisor](#)

For the local visitor economy, heritage museums like this help **extend visitor stays and diversify what Aldeburgh can offer beyond its beaches**, supporting nearby cafés, shops and accommodation. By showcasing unique local stories — and by being one of the town's key heritage draws — the Moot Hall Museum plays a valuable role in making tourism worthwhile for both visitors and the community.

- **Aldeburgh Carnival, an award winning and major attraction for Aldeburgh, this annual 3 day event must not be comprised of visitor accommodation and other energy project impacts.** The award-winning Aldeburgh Carnival is vitally important to both Suffolk and Aldeburgh as it celebrates community, heritage, and attracts thousands of visitors each year, yet unlike during the era of Sizewell B when accommodation remained available and tourism could thrive alongside industry, the construction of Sizewell C has severely reduced accommodation capacity, threatening the Carnival's ability to welcome visitors and undermining one of the area's most significant cultural and economic events. Visitors are absolutely vital to tourism in Aldeburgh, as the town's economy depends heavily on year-round and seasonal visitors who come for its beach, High Street, food, festivals, and cultural attractions.
- Overall, tourism is a **valuable but fragile part of Aldeburgh's and Leiston's economy.** Maintaining visitor numbers depends on good access, effective promotion, appealing events, and wider economic conditions, all of which can either strengthen or weaken the town's ability to attract the visitors it needs. Reputational damage is irreparable.

### 3. Economic and Employment Impact

- **Sizewell B Impact:** Sizewell B provides a steady, long-term source of employment to the region. The plant itself doesn't directly influence local retail or hospitality businesses on a daily basis, but it does contribute to the local economy through jobs, and workers may spend money in Aldeburgh and surrounding areas.
- **Sizewell C Impact:** The construction of Sizewell C, while it could create thousands of jobs in the region, might not directly benefit Aldeburgh High Street unless measures are taken to localize the workforce. During construction, Aldeburgh could see an increase in temporary workers who might be looking for accommodation and services. However, this may lead to inflated accommodation prices, making it harder for tourists to afford stays in the area or find any available accommodation, and therefore hurting local businesses that rely on leisure tourism
- **4. Environmental Considerations**

- **Sizewell B Impact:** The existing Sizewell B plant has a relatively minimal visible footprint in terms of disruption, though it is situated in a sensitive coastal area. The current impact on Aldeburgh is mostly related to industrial presence, but the town remains relatively untouched by the site.
- **Sizewell C Impact:** With Sizewell C being a much larger facility, the environmental consequences could be far greater. The plant's construction and operation will significantly alter the landscape. The impact on the coastline, wildlife, and coastal erosion will need to be carefully managed. If not handled well, this could deter tourists who come to Aldeburgh for its natural beauty. Furthermore, there's a concern that the environmental impact might negatively affect the atmosphere of the area, leading to a decrease in tourism, particularly for those who value its natural setting.

## 5. Long-Term Effects on Local Business

- **Sizewell B Impact:** Local businesses in Aldeburgh did benefit from the stable presence of Sizewell B's operations. Some retail and hospitality businesses cater to the workers at Sizewell B, especially during periods of maintenance. However, the overall impact on Aldeburgh High Street has been relatively modest and does not overshadow the town's tourism-driven economy.
- **Sizewell C Impact:** While the potential boost to employment could help local businesses, the increased construction activity and changes in the town's character could detract from the area's reputation as a peaceful coastal getaway. The long-term presence of the much larger Sizewell C could overshadow the town's traditional appeal, leading to a shift in the type of visitors it attracts. It could transform Aldeburgh from a quiet tourist destination to a more industrialized and less desirable location for some tourists.

## 6. Community and Social Impact

- **Sizewell B Impact:** Sizewell B's presence has been a stable part of the region for many years, and it has allowed for a reasonable balance between industrial activity and the needs of the local community and tourism.
- **Sizewell C Impact:** The social impact of Sizewell C will likely be more pronounced, with more displacement of residents during the construction phase due to the need for temporary accommodation and the disruption caused by large-scale industrial work. This could create tension between local communities and the influx of workers. Moreover, the long-term change to the area's social fabric might alter Aldeburgh's character, making it less appealing for some visitors who enjoy the village-like atmosphere.

## Conclusion

The impact of Sizewell C on Aldeburgh High Street and the local tourism economy is likely to be significant. During the construction phase, tourism could suffer more due to increased traffic, environmental disruption, and a less attractive atmosphere for visitors. Local businesses that rely on tourists may see a further dip in revenue during the construction period, though some could benefit from the temporary influx of workers. The impacts from other energy projects will only add to the impacts already being felt.

**It is important that it is recognised that without a doubt that the Sea Link project is within Aldeburgh, it is not located “inbetween” anywhere.**