



# Planning Inspectorate

## Planning Act 2008 – Section 91

### Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an Order granting Development Consent for the Sea Link Project

#### Agenda for issue specific hearing 2 dealing with environmental matters

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
<b>Issue Specific Hearing 2: Environmental matters</b>	<b>Wednesday 28 January to Friday 30 January 2026</b> <b>Registration and seating available at venue from:</b> <b>09:30</b> <b>Virtual Registration Process from:</b> <b>09:30</b> <b>Hearing starts:</b> <b>10:00</b>	<b>South Gallery Rooms 20-22 Excel London 1 Western Gateway Royal Victoria Dock London E16 1XL</b>  <b>and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams OR at one of the satellite venues hosted by CVS International on behalf of the applicant:</b>  <b>Suffolk:</b> <b>Deben Suite</b> <b>Ufford Park</b> <b>Yarmouth Road</b> <b>Melton</b> <b>Woodbridge</b> <b>IP12 1QW</b>  <b>Kent:</b> <b>Raleigh Suite</b> <b>Discovery Park</b> <b>Gateway Building</b> <b>Innovation Way</b> <b>Ramsgate Road</b> <b>Sandwich</b> <b>CT13 9FF</b>  <b>Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered.</b>

**Hearings guidance:** Please see annex A of this agenda

Notification of the date, time and attendance instructions for ISH2 were provided in the Examining Authority's (ExA's) Rule 13 letter [\[PD-018\]](#). Interested parties who wish to speak at this event were required to provide notification by Friday 9 January 2026. If you haven't notified us that you wish to speak then you must contact the case team ([southeastanglia@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:southeastanglia@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)) as soon as possible.

Each interested party is entitled to make oral representations at hearings. However, this is subject to the power of the Examining Authority (ExA) to control the conduct and management of hearings.

Registration for the event will be open one hour prior to the start of the hearing to enable a prompt start. The hearing will finish as soon as the ExA deems that all matters have been covered.

The agenda detailed below is for guidance only. It is not designed to be exclusive or exhaustive. The ExA may add other issues for consideration, may alter the order in which issues are considered and will seek to allocate sufficient time to each issue to allow proper consideration of them. Any lack of discussion of a particular issue at a hearing does not preclude further examination of this issue, including the asking of written questions.

A supplementary agenda has also been published in addition to the main agenda which contains a table of questions. As these are likely to require relatively straightforward responses, clarification and/ or the submission of additional information/ evidence, the ExA has asked these questions in this format as it considers they can be sufficiently dealt with in writing rather than spending time within the hearing to obtain this information verbally. Most of the questions are directed to the applicant, however, written responses will be welcomed from any interested party who wishes to provide comments relating to any of the questions. Responses should be submitted at **deadline 4, 10 February 2026**.

It is anticipated that items 1 to 11 will be heard on Wednesday 28 January and items 12 to 20 on Thursday 29 January. The morning of Friday 30 January will be used to cover the remaining items and any matters outstanding.

## **Satellite Venues in Kent and Suffolk**

The satellite venue locations at Kent and Suffolk will be hosted by CVS International, an independent production company, on behalf of the applicant. There will not be any representatives from National Grid Electricity Transmission (the applicant) or the Planning Inspectorate present at the satellite venues.

If you have any questions or issues concerning the Sea Link project or examination procedures during the hearings (or at any time) please use the contact details below:

For queries specifically concerning the Sea Link project:

National Grid Electricity Transmission

[contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com](mailto:contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com)

0808 134 9569

FREEPOST SEA LINK

For queries concerning the examination procedures for the Sea Link project (e.g., hearing participation, deadline submissions, etc):

The Planning Inspectorate Sea Link Case Team

[southeastanglalink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:southeastanglalink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

0303 444 5000

Sea Link Case Team

Planning Inspectorate

c/o QUADIENT

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SL1 4PN

## Agenda

<b>Title of meeting</b>	Sea Link issue specific hearing 2 – Environmental matters
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 January 2026
<b>Time</b>	10.00
<b>Venue</b>	Blended event
<b>Attendees</b>	Invitees

### 1. Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the hearing

### 2. Matters arising from the supplementary agenda

2.1 Parties will be asked if there are any matters arising from the supplementary agenda that they wish to raise.

### 3. Ecology and biodiversity

3.1 Kent landfall including:

- Implications of previous cable works for impact assessment and mitigation
- Impacts on the intertidal area
- Access via the hoverport

3.2 Suffolk landfall including:

- Disturbance effects, emissions and mitigation
- Unexploded ordnance

3.3 Update on intrusive ground investigations

3.4 Effects on protected species such as bats, dormice and reptiles

3.5 Impacts on trees, including:

- Development Consent Order controls on tree felling
- Implications of the proposed attenuation ponds shown on sheet 1 of 7 of the Indicative General Arrangement Plans [CR1-024] to the south side of the access and the River Fromus bridge proposal, on trees T875S and G874S.
- Seasonality in cutting of trees

3.6 Securing biodiversity net gain

### 4. Ornithology

4.1 Construction impacts, including:

- Works affecting designated sites in the breeding season
- Works in Pegwell Bay
- Impacts and mitigation for functionally linked land
- Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on Red-Throated Diver of the Outer Thames Estuary and implications for habitats regulations assessment

- 4.2 Operation and maintenance impacts, including:
  - Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on Red Throated Diver of the Outer Thames Estuary and implications for habitats regulations assessment
- 4.3 Collision risk and mitigation
- 4.4 Questions for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature regarding The East Atlantic Flyway

## **5. Benthic Ecology (with questions included for Natural England)**

- 5.1 Assessment of all pathways of potential effects on benthic habitats
- 5.2 Scour and cable protection
- 5.3 Suspended sediment and deposition impact on benthic ecology
- 5.4 Goodwin Sands Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)
- 5.5 Planning and micro-siting of cable route
- 5.6 Monitoring of effects and adaptive management
- 5.7 Avoidance/mitigation of benthic ecology impacts and Benthic Mitigation Plans

## **6. Fish and shellfish**

- 6.1 Impacts to fish species from construction, including Herring and Sandeel

## **7. Marine mammals**

- 7.1 Assessment of effects of project on seal behaviour
- 7.2 Assessment of effects on cetacean species close to the Kent landfall

## **8. Marine physical environment**

- 8.1 Coastal erosion, including:
  - National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping (NCERM2)
  - Coralline Crag, Suffolk Horizontal Directional Drilling exit location and Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments provisions
  - Pegwell Bay morphological change and depth of cable burial
- 8.2 Pegwell Bay contamination risk
- 8.3 Discharges to the marine environment (including dredge and liquid discharges)

## **9. Landscape and visual**

- 9.1 Ambition for landscape vision and legacy
- 9.2 Assessment of effects on landscape character in Kent and Suffolk
- 9.3 Cumulative landscape and visual impact assessments including on the National Landscape
- 9.4 Assessment of effects on Heritage Coast
- 9.5 Landscape mitigation in Kent and Suffolk, including
  - the securing of advance planting

- Landscape mitigation for Kiln Lane substation
- Potential for additional landscape planting in the vicinity of the proposed converter station at Saxmundham within the order limits – with reference to Figure 1 of the Suffolk outline landscape and ecological management plan and representative viewpoints
- Implications of the statutory consultation documents for LionLink. With reference to figure 49 of the Converter Station - Background to Potential Design Approaches
- Landscape mitigation for Minster converter station and substation
- Adequacy of National Landscape mitigation

## **10. Design**

- 10.1 Adequacy of design controls including in relation to converter stations, substations, pylons, lighting
- 10.2 Embedding of good design in decision making process

## **11. Cultural heritage**

- 11.1 Suffolk bronze age enclosure update
- 11.2 Remaining archaeological on-site assessment work and reporting
- 11.3 Scoped out heritage assets
- 11.4 Effects on setting of listed buildings, including Hurts Hall and Hill Farmhouse
- 11.5 Ebbsfleet Peninsular Multi-Period Complex archaeology impacts
- 11.6 Richborough Roman Fort impacts

## **12. Public rights of way**

- 12.1 Public rights of way impacts and proposed mitigation and coordination
- 12.2 Possible enhancements to the right of way network

## **13. Traffic and transport**

- 13.1 Benhall bridge proposed works, with potential diversions and rail line effects
- 13.2 Construction traffic and abnormal indivisible loads – suitability of routes proposed
- 13.3 Junction modelling and traffic flows on construction routes
- 13.4 Cumulative impact of traffic and the coordination with other projects
- 13.5 Controls on construction traffic

## **14. Noise and vibration**

- 14.1 Construction noise assessment (including assessment assumptions, noise contour figures, s61 consents, mitigation and monitoring)
- 14.2 The need for operational noise limits at all operational sites
- 14.3 Operational noise impacts including low frequency noise

## **15. Socio-economics and tourism**

- 15.1 Effects and potential reputational impact on the tourism industry of Suffolk and Kent as a result of the proposed development
- 15.2 Tourism accommodation capacity
- 15.3 Skills and Employment Plan and labour market effects
- 15.4 Socio-economic positive effect potential

## **16. Health and wellbeing**

- 16.1 Core working hours, in relation to effects on traffic, health and wellbeing, and noise
- 16.2 Light pollution effects on health and wellbeing

## **17. Climate change**

- 17.1 Matters relating to R (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) v Surrey County Council judgment

## **18. Water environment**

- 18.1 Matters relating to flooding and the adequacy of the Flood Risk Assessment
- 18.2 The application of the sequential and exception tests
- 18.3 Effects on the achievement of the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive

## **19. Shipping and navigation**

- 19.1 Safeguarding of dredging depths
- 19.2 Cable exposure during operation
- 19.3 Cable joints
- 19.4 Cable crossings
- 19.5 Vessel management plan
- 19.6 Safety zones
- 19.7 Exclusion zones
- 19.8 Cable burial risk assessment

## **20. Cumulative effects**

- 20.1 Intra and inter-project cumulative effects
- 20.2 Mitigation of cumulative effects

## **21. The draft Development Consent Order**

- 21.1 Article 10 – The effect that article 10 would have with respect to the interface with existing consents, such as the Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) East Anglia 1 and East Anglia 2 DCOs and future consents, such as LionLink.  
How the relevant planning authorities would see articles 10 and 56 operating in practice including, for example, the discharge of requirements.

- 21.2 Article 11(2), article 14(4), article 15(2) and (5)(b), article 17(1)(b), article 20(3) and (4), article 22(5), article 50(2) and article 55(1) with respect to the words “unreasonably withheld or delayed” and the 35 day decision period.
- 21.3 Schedule 3 Requirement 6, the submission and approval of plans.
- 21.4 Schedule 3 Requirement 9(2) “reinstatement schemes”

## **22. Any other business**

## **23. Close of Hearing**

### **Attendees:**

All interested parties (IPs) are welcome to attend the hearing. However, the ExA considers that representatives for the following parties should consider attending because the ExA believes that the material that they have submitted raises issues that may need to be explored at the hearing:

- The applicant
- Suffolk County Council
- East Suffolk Council
- Kent County Council
- Thanet District Council
- Dover District Council
- Environment Agency
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- Port of London Authority
- London Gateway Port Ltd
- Harwich Haven Authority
- National Grid Ventures
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Scottish Power Renewables
- International Union for Nature Conservation
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- National Grid Ventures (re: Nemo Link and Lion Link)
- Any other public authority, body or organisation affected by the proposed development
- Any other IPs with an interest in the scope of the development

The applicant is requested to have people with the following expertise to assist the hearing:

- ecology and biodiversity

- ornithology
- benthic ecology
- fish and shellfish
- marine mammals
- marine physical environment
- landscape and visual
- design
- cultural heritage
- public rights of way
- traffic and transport
- noise and vibration
- socio-economics and tourism
- health and wellbeing
- climate change
- water environment
- shipping and navigation
- cumulative effects
- the draft Development Consent Order

This list may also assist other interested parties in preparing for the hearing

## Conduct and Management of Hearings

The Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 provide that the Examining Authority (ExA) will probe, test and assess the evidence at hearings through direct questioning of persons making oral representations. Questioning at this hearing will therefore be led by the ExA. Cross questioning of the person giving evidence by another person will **only** be permitted if the ExA decides it is necessary to ensure representations are adequately tested or that a person has had a fair chance to put their case. Parties wishing to make a representation will be invited to do so at the ExA's discretion.

The ExA will begin the hearing with opening comments and introductions, then will run through housekeeping matters and explain how the hearing will be conducted. The duration will depend on the progress made on the day and will be subject to the ExA's powers of control over the conduct of the hearing.

The agenda may be amended by the ExA at the start of the hearing or throughout its course. Furthermore, the ExA may wish to raise matters arising from oral submissions and relevant representations, and pursue lines of inquiry that are not listed on the agenda in the course of the discussion.

The hearing is being held at the discretion of the ExA to consider matters that it considers to be important and relevant to the effective and robust examination of the application. Consequently, the business of the hearing will be limited to the matters identified in the agenda or otherwise raised by the ExA.

Active participation is at the invitation and discretion of the ExA. Oral submissions must address the matters and questions identified on the hearing agenda or raised by the ExA at the hearing. Oral submissions on other subject matters or from persons who have not been invited to speak by the ExA may only be heard at the discretion of the ExA, who may decide that such matters are not heard in the interests of relevance, efficiency or fairness.

A recording and transcript of the hearing will be published by the Planning Inspectorate on the project page of the national infrastructure website and any interested party may make a written submission on the specific matters either included in the agenda or arising at the hearing by **deadline 4, 10 February 2026**.