

Written Representation relating to CR1

I am a local resident of Saxmundham and wish to make a personal written representation in response to the Applicant's Change Request 1 (CR1). My comments relate to Changes 2, 3 and 4. Taken together, these changes raise serious concerns about uncertainty, deliverability and the cumulative impacts of an increasingly fluid scheme on communities already affected by multiple major infrastructure projects.

While the changes are presented individually, their combined effect is to introduce further flexibility into a project that is already insufficiently defined. As an affected resident, this makes it increasingly difficult to understand the true scale, duration and nature of the impacts I may experience, and undermines confidence that the project is being assessed transparently and robustly.

I am concerned by Change 2, which proposes amendments to the limits of deviation at the Friston (Kiln Lane) substation. The mitigation secured during the EA1N and EA2 Development Consent Order examinations was carefully negotiated and deliberately defined. These limits were fundamental to making those projects acceptable and to protecting surrounding communities and landscapes.

In my view, these agreed parameters should not now be loosened through a Change Request. Any relaxation risks reopening impacts that were previously assessed and mitigated, creating renewed uncertainty for residents who were entitled to rely on those protections remaining fixed. This change contributes to a wider sense that previously settled matters are being destabilised rather than respected.

Change 3 reinforces my concern that key elements of the project remain insufficiently defined. Adjustments to construction or operational parameters may appear minor in isolation, but from the perspective of an affected resident they have direct consequences. Noise, traffic, working hours and construction duration shape daily life, yet these elements continue to shift rather than being clearly fixed and assessed as a whole.

The incremental nature of these changes makes meaningful community engagement more difficult and increases the risk that cumulative effects are being underestimated. A piecemeal approach does not provide reassurance that impacts are being properly controlled or that a realistic worst-case scenario has been assessed.

Treating such impacts as consequential risks understating their real-world effects on communities already experiencing prolonged disruption from other infrastructure schemes. This reinforces the impression that impacts are being addressed reactively rather than through a coherent and upfront strategy.

Against this backdrop, I wish to focus in particular on Change 4 relating to Benhall Railway Bridge, as this change brings many of the above concerns into sharp focus.

The Applicant states that works to Benhall Railway Bridge are required to support access to the proposed Saxmundham converter station. However, these works are not necessary in their own right. They arise solely from the Applicant's chosen access strategy, which includes the construction of a new permanent access road and a new bridge crossing of the River Fromus. The interventions at Benhall Railway Bridge are therefore the consequence of a discretionary design choice, not an unavoidable requirement of the project.

The Applicant has presented two broad engineering options: installing a temporary "minibridge" over the existing structure, or strengthening the existing bridge to accommodate abnormal loads. Despite this, there remains no clarity as to which option is intended, how it would be delivered, what land would be required, or what the construction programme would involve. Each option carries materially different implications in terms of construction activity, traffic disruption, noise, risk, timescales and potential railway closures.

As a local resident who relies on the surrounding road network and the East Suffolk rail line, this lack of certainty makes it impossible to understand or prepare for the disruption I may face. Any works affecting the bridge or railway would have a direct impact on my ability to travel safely and reliably, and on the wider functioning of the local transport network.

This uncertainty reflects a broader pattern within the project. Key elements, including the final design of the converter station and the design of the proposed Fromus bridge crossing, continue to be deferred until after consent. Communities are being asked to accept significant impacts without being given the essential information needed to understand their scale, duration or consequences. In my view, this approach lacks transparency and undermines confidence in CR1.

Suffolk County Council has raised consistent and well-evidenced concerns regarding the feasibility of using Benhall Railway Bridge for Abnormal Indivisible Loads. The bridge is weight-restricted, and the Council has questioned whether either of the Applicant's proposed options is realistic or deliverable. These concerns go to the heart of whether the Saxmundham converter station site can be accessed safely and reliably.

Importantly, Suffolk County Council has urged the Applicant to reconsider its access strategy and to use the Sizewell Link Road, which will be available in time for the Sea Link project and would require only a short extension to reach the proposed site. I strongly support this position.

Use of the Sizewell Link Road would be far less disruptive to local communities, would avoid sensitive landscapes and heritage assets, and would remove the need for intrusive and uncertain interventions at Benhall Railway Bridge. It would also significantly reduce pressure on the A12, the B1119 and the local road network through Saxmundham, which is already under severe strain.

As someone who lives locally and travels through this area regularly, I have already experienced the effects of even short-term road closures associated with the Sizewell C Project. Brief closures have resulted in widespread congestion across narrow rural roads, with traffic diverting onto unsuitable routes and causing delays for residents, essential workers and services.

The prospect of repeated or prolonged disruption associated with bridge works, abnormal load movements and associated traffic management is deeply concerning. When viewed in the context of other ongoing and planned infrastructure projects, the cumulative impact becomes unsustainable.

Taken together, Changes 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate a pattern of incremental adjustment that increases uncertainty for affected communities and exposes unresolved issues in the project's design and delivery. Rather than providing reassurance, CR1 highlights how key decisions, particularly around access remain unresolved.

Change 4, in particular, reveals a fundamental flaw in the siting and access strategy for the Saxmundham converter station. Access to a site of this scale is not a minor detail; it is a core requirement. The fact that access difficulties are now driving major proposed interventions at Benhall Railway Bridge indicates that these issues were not adequately addressed

at the application stage.

I respectfully ask the Examining Authority to give significant weight to the concerns raised by Suffolk County Council and to scrutinise whether a less damaging and more deliverable access strategy, specifically using the Sizewell Link Road, should be required. Until a clear, credible and fully evidenced solution is provided that avoids reliance on Benhall Railway Bridge, I do not consider that Change Request 1 should be supported.