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The additional interested parties as a result of the applicant's change request (CR1)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN020026

Date: 28 January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Act 2008 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rule 9 and 17

The Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010 – Regulations 5 to 19

Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission Limited (the applicant) for an order granting development consent for the Sea Link project

I have been appointed by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above application. I am writing to you because you submitted a relevant representation about the applicant's request to make changes to the above application. Consequently, you are an 'Interested Party' (IP) in this examination which commenced on 5 November 2025. My name is Sarah Holmes and the other members of the ExA are Richard Hunt, Luke Regan, Steven Rennie and Nancy Thomas.

Background

On 16 September 2025, the applicant gave notice [[AS-138](#)] to the Examining Authority (ExA) of its intention to submit a request for up to five proposed changes to the Sea Link development consent order (DCO) application. On 25 September 2025, the ExA used its discretion to accept [[PD-011](#)] the notification letter and responded with advice about the procedural implications of the proposed changes. The ExA subsequently accepted a further letter from the applicant dated 26 November 2025 [[CR1a-001](#)] requesting to make changes to the DCO application (Change Request 1 (CR1)).

The applicant's CR1 (comprising documents [\[CR1-001\]](#) to [\[CR1-068\]](#)), submitted on 26 November 2025, contains five proposed changes to the application.

The ExA considered the change application documents in light of its duties under the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) (the EPR) and the Planning Inspectorate's [advice](#). Following consideration the ExA decided to accept all five of the proposed changes for examination on 5 December 2025 [\[PD-015\]](#).

All the proposed changes, except for change 2, would require revision of the order limits. The applicant seeks additional compulsory acquisition powers for changes 1, 3 and 5, therefore regulations 5 to 19 of the Compulsory Acquisition (CA) Regulations are engaged. The ExA therefore amended the examination timetable to make express provision for procedures that are required to examine change requests CR1 under the CA Regulations. The examination timetable can be found in annex A to this letter.

Preliminary meeting and assessment of principal issues

The examination of this application commenced on 5 November 2025 following the preliminary meeting (PM). The PM was held to discuss the procedure for the examination.

A recording of the PM can be found in the examination library;

- Recording of PM - Part 1 [\[EV2-001\]](#)
- Recording of PM - Part 2 [\[EV2-002\]](#)

A note of the PM was also made [\[EV2-005\]](#).

In accordance with Regulation 11 of the CA Regulations, we have made a further assessment of principal issues and find that the matters arising from the applicant's proposed changes can be accommodated within the existing framework of issues identified and set out in annex C of the Rule 6 letter [\[PD-010\]](#). Accordingly, we do not consider it necessary to discuss how the proposed changes should be examined.

The ExA does not consider that a separate PM to discuss the amended timetable to accommodate the changes is necessary, as the amendments were limited in scope and are accommodated within the framework provided by the existing examination process. However, as you were not an invitee to the PM if you have any comments or questions about how the application is examined or, if on reviewing the PM, have any comments you would like to raise please contact us using the details above by deadline (DL) 4 (**Tuesday 10 February 2026**).

The purpose of the preliminary meeting was to enable views to be put to us about how the application should be examined.

Written submissions

The examination is primarily a written process and written submissions are invited at the deadlines set out in annex A.

Given the volume and frequency of letters the Planning Inspectorate needs to send to interested parties during an examination, we aim to communicate with people by email as

electronic communication is more environmentally friendly and cost effective for the taxpayer.

If you have received a letter but are able to receive communications by email, please inform the Case Team using the contact details at the top of this letter as soon as possible.

As the examination process makes substantial use of electronic documents, it will be useful for you to become familiar with the [project webpage](#). Here you can access the [examination library](#) which contains all of the application documents and examination submissions.

A '[Have your say](#)' page is available on the website which provides a portal through which parties should make written submissions at relevant deadlines during the examination.

There is also a function on the left-hand side of the project webpage called '[Get updates](#)'. This provides you with an opportunity to register to receive automatic e-mail updates at key stages during the examination.

Hearings

The examination timetable (see annex A) also includes provision for hearings, at which the ExA takes oral evidence from the various parties. Please note that the ExA has made the decision that the hearings scheduled in the timetable to be held during the week commencing 23 February 2026 are not required and will not be taking place.

Any registered IP may request an **open floor hearing** (OFH) to make oral representations about the application if they believe this to be preferable to relying on their written representation, though both carry equal weight. Oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing, but they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in the written submission. Rather, they should focus on specific detail and explanation to help inform the ExA. There should be no new or unexpected material in oral representations. A written summary note with any supporting evidence or references will be requested of each speaker following the OFH.

As with all examination events, OFHs are subject to the powers of control of the ExA, as set out in the PA2008 and supporting legislation. Participants must register in advance by the deadline shown in the examination timetable and in accordance with the instructions. It is common practice for the ExA to set a time limit for each speaker and speakers with common points are asked to come together to nominate a spokesperson or representative speakers to cover specific topics, so as to avoid repetition. Speakers representing public authorities, community and membership organisations or multiple IPs are normally provided with an additional time allowance, recognising their representative role.

The applicant's draft Development Consent Order (DCO) provides for the compulsory acquisition of land and rights, and the temporary possession of land. Affected Persons (APs) (meaning those whose land or rights over land are affected) have a right to request and be heard at a **compulsory acquisition hearing** (CAH). If one or more APs request to be heard then a CAH must be held.

The ExA has the discretion to hold **issue specific hearings** (ISH)s if it would aid in the examination and there is a specific reason this would be more helpful than reliance on

written evidence only. The lack of an ISH on one or more topics does not suggest that that topic is less important than others which are subject to a hearing. Rather, it is an indication that the ExA is satisfied that the issues can be fully considered through written submissions and responses to its written questions and that each party has had a fair opportunity to put its case.

The examination timetable includes a number of dates reserved for ISHs. It may be necessary for the ExA to hold more than one ISH on the draft DCO. This is normal practice, and they are held on a without prejudice basis. Parties can suggest modifications and amendments to the draft DCO provided by the applicant with the application, without prejudicing their overall position on the application.

Holding such hearings does not imply that the ExA has reached any judgements on the merits of the application. Whatever the ultimate recommendation is, the ExA must make sure that the draft DCO is fit for purpose if the Secretary of State decides to grant consent, as any consent will be subject to requirements (similar to planning conditions) set out in the draft DCO.

At hearings it will not normally be necessary for parties to make long and detailed submissions that require, for example, PowerPoint presentations. Any supporting detail or information can be provided in writing following the event by the relevant deadline.

The examination timetable includes a deadline (deadline 4A, **Tuesday, 17 February 2026**) for participants to notify the ExA that they wish to speak at an OFH or a CAH. If you wish to speak at an OFH or CAH, you should submit a request by this deadline using the '[Have your say](#)' page.

Site inspections

The ExA undertook a number of unaccompanied site inspections (USI) during the weeks commencing 23 June 2025, 29 September 2025, 3 November 2025 and 10 November 2025. The notes of these visits can be found in the examination library [[EV1-001](#)] to [[EV1-019](#)]. As a result of these visits the ExA considers that it has a good understanding of the site and surroundings but will be reviewing whether further USIs may be required throughout the examination. The ExA may also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites such that they could be inspected as part of a USI on an access required basis (ARSI).

The ExA may not wish or need to hold an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI). Nevertheless, the examination timetable in annex A makes provision for one to be held. At deadline 4A (**Tuesday, 17 February 2026**), the ExA requests the submission of suggestions for sites/ locations which may need to be visited on an accompanied basis should an ASI be considered necessary. Before submitting suggestions, IPs should first read the USI notes [EV1-001 to EV1-009]. The ExA is unlikely to need to revisit sites already seen without very good reason for doing so. **Please note that it is not possible at an ASI to make further oral representations.**

If after considering these requests the ExA considers that an ASI is necessary, then the examination timetable includes a date (week commencing 23 March 2026) when this could be held.

Your status in the examination

You have received this letter because you are a person or organisation who is involved in the nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP) process. See The Planning Inspectorate's [Advice for members of the public: National Infrastructure Projects and the people and organisations involved in the process](#) for further details.

If, having read the advice, you are still unsure about how you are involved in the process please contact the Case Team using the details at the top of this letter.

Awards of costs

All parties will normally be expected to meet their own costs. Costs can be awarded against a party who has acted unreasonably and has caused the party applying for the award of costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense during the examination. You should be aware of the relevant costs guidance [Awards of costs: examinations of applications for development consent orders](#).

Management of information

Information, including representations, submitted in respect of this examination (if accepted by the ExA) and a record of any advice which has been provided by The Planning Inspectorate is published on the [project webpage](#).

Please note that in the interest of facilitating an effective and fair examination, it is necessary to publish some personal information. To find out how we handle your personal information please view our [Privacy Notice](#).

We look forward to working with all parties in the examination of this application.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please contact the case team using the details above.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Holmes

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

Annex A Examination timetable

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

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Annex A Examination timetable

The Examining Authority (ExA) is under a duty to **complete** the Examination of the application by the end of the period of six months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.

The time for submission of documents at any deadline in the timetable is **23:59** on the relevant date, unless instructed otherwise by the ExA.

Please note: the revised Examination Timetable applies from the date of this letter.

Item	Matters	Date
14	Dates reserved for hearings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Issue specific hearings (ISH) – agenda [EV6-002] and [EV6-003]Compulsory acquisition hearing (CAH) - agenda [EV6-001]	w/c 26 January 2026
15	Deadline 4 For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Written post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral cases made at hearings the w/c 26 January 2026.Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.Comments on any further information/ submissions received by deadline 3.Comments on RRs and WRs relating to the effect CR1.	Tuesday 10 February 2026
15a	Deadline 4A Change request (CR1 DL4A) For receipt by the ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Requests by interested parties (in relation to CR1) to be heard at an OFH.Requests by interested parties (in relation to CR1) to be heard at a CAH.Suggested locations for site inspections (Accompanied (ASI) or Unaccompanied (USI)), including justification (in relation to CR1) for consideration by the ExA	Tuesday 17 February 2026

16	<p>Dates reserved for hearings and/or ExA's second written questions (ExQ2) (if required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further ISH (if required). • Further CAH (if required). • Further OFH (if required). • ExQ2 (if required). 	w/c 23 February 2026
17	<p>Deadline 4B Change request (CR1 DL4B)</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's draft itinerary for accompanied site inspection (ASI) (if required) 	Tuesday 24 February 2026
18	<p>Deadline 5</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral cases made at hearings the w/c 23 February 2026 (if held). • Responses to ExQ2 (if required). • The applicant's updates – refer to annex E of the Rule 6 Letter • PADSS. • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. • Comments on any further information/ submissions received by deadline 4. • Comments on the applicant's draft itinerary for the ASI (if required). • Notification of a wish to attend the ASI (if required) on the w/c 23 or 30 March 2026 	Tuesday 10 March 2026
19	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) and any associated questions (if required). 	Wednesday 18 March 2026

20	<p>Dates reserved for hearings and/or ExA's third written questions (ExQ3) and ASI (if required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further ISH (if required). • Further CAH (if required). • Further OFH (if required) • ExQ3 (if required). 	w/c 23 March 2026 and w/c 30 March 2026
21	<p>Deadline 6</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral cases made at hearings the w/c 23 March 2026 (if held). • Responses to ExQ3 (if required). • Comments on the RIES (if issued) and responses to any associated questions. • Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. • Comments on any further information/ submissions received by deadline 5. 	Monday 13 April 2026
22	<p>Publication by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the draft development consent order (dDCO) (if required). 	Friday 17 April 2026
23	<p>Deadline 7</p> <p>For receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary statements from parties regarding matters that they have previously raised during the Examination and that have not been resolved to their satisfaction. • Final versions of PADSS. • Comments on the ExA's commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO (if issued) • The applicant's closing summary statement. • The applicant's final updates – refer to annex E of the Rule 6 Letter. • Comments on the deadline 6 submissions and any other information requested by the ExA for deadline 7. 	Wednesday 29 April 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. 	
24	<p>The ExA must complete the examination of the application within six months.</p> <p>Please note that the ExA may close the examination before the end of the six-month period if it is satisfied that all relevant matters have been addressed and discussed.</p>	Tuesday 5 May 2026