FRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION - SEA LINK PROJECT

FRISTON PARISH COUNCIL - IP NO [redacted] & SASES - IP NO [redacted]

Date: 10 February 2026

DEADLINE 4 - COMMENTS ON NATIONAL GRIDS RESPONSES TO EXQ1

Findings of the Examining Authorities for the EA2, EA1N and National Grid Connection Hub

*"28.4.4 The local harm that the ExA has identified is substantial and should not be underestimated in effect. Its **mitigation has in certain key respects been found to be only just sufficient on balance**."* (emphasis added)

*"28.4.5 ….the ExA observes that the effects of the **cumulative delivery** of the proposed development with other East Anglia development on the **transmission connection site** near Friston **are so substantially adverse that utmost care will be required** in the consideration of any amendments or additions to those elements of the proposed development in this location"* (emphasis added)"

INTRODUCTION

1. This document is Friston Parish Council's and SASES's (together referred to as FPC below) combined comments on National Grid's responses to EXQ1

2. For ease FPC has used the term "National Grid substation" even though that infrastructure is a hub or node (as acknowledged by NESO in its TEC register) and NGV in their Lionlink PEIR - page 10 of Non-Technical Summary.

3. References to EA2 means both EA2 and EA1N unless the context otherwise requires.

4. This submission needs to be read alongside National Grid's responses to ExQ1. FPC has not produced its comments in a table format to avoid creating an excessively long document.

5. The comments in relation to the DCO are lengthy but this has been necessitated because:-

    a. NG has sought consent for the substations site at Friston under a draft DCO with reduced requirements and mitigation compared to the existing EA2 and EA1N DCOs;

b. the draft DCO has been drafted in a very different manner compared to the EA2 DCO, so it is extremely difficult to compare and assess the extent to which the requirements and mitigation in the existing EA2 and EA1N DCOs for the substations site have been carried forward into the draft DCO.

6. To recommend the making of such a DCO would be unreasonable.

7. Further given the advanced state of the detailed Discharge documents under the EA2 DCO, and the fact that such detailed Discharge documents will have been approved by the time any such DCO is recommended and made, it is also unreasonable that potentially another set of detailed Discharge documents in respect of the substations site will have to be considered and approved.

8. This lack of reasonableness is compounded because:

   a. further consent for the substations site is unnecessary because two consents for the NG infrastructure at the substations site already exist and such consent under the EA2 DCO can be transferred to National Grid; and

   b. the Examining Authorities who recommended the grant of the EA2 and EA1N DCOs stated that the mitigation (as secured in the EA2 and EA1N DCOs) was only *"just sufficient".*

9. It is not as if there is not a straightforward solution. All that is required is for there to be a two part DCO. The first part could deal with the Sealink specific elements, Kent onshore, offshore, DC cable route in Suffolk, Saxmundham convertor station site and the AC cable route. The second part could deal with the substations site. The second part would replicate the existing consent. Although in fact that second part is now unnecessary as NG already has the consent it needs at the substations site.

GENERAL AND CROSS TOPIC QUESTIONS

1GEN3

10. There is no indication in the National Grid's response that they have engaged with the Suffolk Fire Service. It would be helpful if FPC could have the SFS's view on the fire risks associated with the National Grid substation and the remainder of the Sealink project.

11. It should be noted that National Grid states that "*fire is relatively rare*" indicating that it is not rare in absolute terms.

12. Furthermore National Grid is not in a position to say there is "*no risk of fire spreading to vegetation crops or houses*". That demonstrates complacency. How can it be said there is no risk?

13. Whilst irrigation will be necessary in the early stages of planting, in an attempt to ensure the trees and hedgerows become established, this may not be the case after a few years therefore the fire risk remains.

1GEN4

14. National Grid has not engaged with Friston Parish Council at all in respect of community benefit, despite the fact that the National Grid connection hub was consented in 2022. FPC looks forward to meaningful engagement this year and as early as possible.

DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

1GEN11

15. National Grid's response to 1GEN11 demonstrates the huge confusion National Grid has caused in relation to the development of new National Grid infrastructure at the substations site at Friston.

16. National Grid's position on scenario 2 has become increasingly untenable, predicated as it is on neither of the Scottish Power projects going ahead. There has been no realistic prospect for a long time now of this scenario coming to pass. Not that further evidence was needed, but the recent letter to SPR from DESNZ incorrectly dated 29 January 2025 (published by PINS on its EA2 webpage) states:

    "The Secretary of State considers that the applicant has provided appropriate evidence to demonstrate its commitment to commence the authorised development ……..and the Secretary of State confirms that the grid connection works may commence."

    The grid connection works are the National Grid substation and the pylon works. This in effect crystallises the rights under the EA2 DCO to build the National Grid substation which under the terms of the EA2 DCO can be transferred to National Grid. Accordingly National Grid has the planning consent it needs. Further it is understood that the transfer of that consent from SPR/EA2 to National Grid is underway. Very reluctantly FPC has had to become involved with the detailed terms of the draft DCO in an attempt to preserve the mitigation which its Parish currently has. Has the point now been reached when scenario 2 no longer needs to be considered?

17. National Grid describes how the draft DCO has been drafted and refers to recent DCOs. Although there is a reference to SPR, National Grid does not seem to appreciate that the SPR DCOs are the most relevant, since they were granted based on the situation and environmental impacts at Friston for the same infrastructure. They were assessed during an Examination which was extended by three months to nine months due to the severity and complexity of the environmental impacts at Friston. These DCOs were recommended by the Examining Authorities for EA2 and EA1N and then made by the Secretary of State in accordance with law and policy. The other DCOs have some but limited relevance.

18. The convoluted way in which supposedly the Requirements (and related mitigation) have been replicated in the Sea Link DCO, and then the even more convoluted explanation, demonstrates that National Grid had little regard for the terms of the existing consents for the National Grid infrastructure at Friston in preparing the draft DCO.

19. However if it is necessary to persist with the Scenario 2 consent, it ought to be straightforward to make sure that the Requirements (and related mitigation) for the substations site in the draft EA2 DCO are clearly replicated in the draft Sea Link DCO.

20. Appendix C demonstrates that such straightforward and clear replication has not been achieved and in fact is not possible. Appendix C runs to 24 pages of small print and it is very difficult to track from the draft Sea Link DCO to the EA2 DCO and then understand the explanation for the differences. Why should it be incumbent on a Parish Council, with virtually no resources, to wade through this convoluted document to make sure its community has the benefit of requirements and mitigation which it already has?

21. In any event this document shows that in a number of key respects those requirements and mitigation for the infrastructure at Friston, as recommended by the relevant Examining Authorities and approved by the Secretary of State, have not been carried forward into the draft Sea Link DCO despite there being no changes to the National Grid substation and environment at Friston and limited changes to the pylon works. As set out in previous submissions it would be irrational for ExA and the Secretary of State to grant a DCO for a site which has fewer requirements and less mitigation than that which was previously determined to be necessary, where there are no material changes to the environment at the site.

22. In its explanations National Grid refers to fact that some information is contained in other documents. That may be the case but the fact that information is referred to in such documents does not mean that information is secured under the terms of the DCO. FPC knows from its experience of other developers that unless something is clearly required or secured in the relevant DCO, the developer will not regard itself as being under any obligation.

23. This response has also prompted a realisation that there may be more than two scenarios. There could be at least three:

    a. Scenario 1 - National Grid infrastructure at Friston is built under the terms of existing consents as either EA2 or EA1N go ahead.

    b. Scenario 2 - although this is not entirely clear, is this scenario where neither of the SPR projects goes ahead? This does not reflect reality as we know EA2 is going ahead. So is scenario 2 a scenario where the EA2 and EA1N never go ahead?

    c. Scenario 3 - is there a third scenario where National Grid builds its infrastructure at Friston under the Sea Link DCO but then subsequently either or both of EA2 and EA1N go ahead? If so what are the implications for mitigation?

24. FPC's specific points in relation to the National Grid's response in Appendix C are set out in Appendix 1 of this document. Due to constraints of time and resource, FPC has not been able to address all the content of Appendix C and reserves its position accordingly. FPC has only commented where it considers it is necessary.

25. There is also lack of clarity of when scenario 2 comes into play. National Grid stated the reason it needed its own consent for the National Grid infrastructure at Friston was in case neither of EA2 or EA1N went head. This is not what article 15 in Schedule 3 (which addresses this issue) provides. Article 15 refers to work number 1B being *"completed pursuant to another Development Consent Order".* The effect of such wording is that work number 1B could be commenced under the EA2 DCO (which it can be given the recent DESNZ letter) but then "completed" under the Sea Link DCO once it has been granted. Accordingly the word "completed" should be replaced by the word "commenced" in article 15. Further the words "*save where amendments to those works are required for the purposes of the Authorised Project*" are far too broad. At the very least this should be subject to the approval of ESC and a concept of materiality.

1GEN15

26. National Grid should explain any differences for the definition of *"maintain"* in the draft DCO and that in the EA2 DCO.

1GEN 18

27. *"tolerably clear"* is not an acceptable drafting standard for a Development Consent Order granted by the Secretary of State

1GEN24

28. The relevant approach it is in the EA2 DCO not the Bramford to Twinstead DCO. Provisions such as article 5(4) will in practice allow National Grid to "run a coach and horses through" the limits of deviation. In any event they should not apply to the National Grid substation and pylon works.

1GEN27

29. It would be helpful for FPC to understand what the earlier question is, as referred to in "*that interface has already been described and the interface with the controls is addressed in an earlier question*" as set out in the fifth paragraph of the response. Is it to be taken that National Grid's position is that this article will not need to be relied upon in respect of the interface between the EA2 and EA1N DCOs and the draft DCO? FPC is concerned that National Grid will not comply with the terms of the EA2 DCO should there be a conflict with the draft DCO. If National Grid is concerned there might be conflicts, it should specifically identify those now rather than relying on a generic clause.

1GEN28

30. Such a qualification as *"which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed"* can only work to the disadvantage of local authorities (and local residents) with limited resources particularly when multiple NSIPS are being developed and applied for in East Suffolk. FPC supports the views of SCC and ESC as expressed in ISH2.

1GEN43

31. Where there is a conflict between the Articles and the Requirements it should be stated that the Requirements prevail to avoid any future confusion or debate on this issue. This matter is manifestly not clear otherwise the question would not have been asked.

1GEN49

32. FPC has commented on Requirements and construction hours above. National Grid seems to have no understanding of the impact which energy projects are already having on residents who live near the substations site. Also comparisons to other projects should be treated with a great deal of care. It needs to be remembered that the substations site is very close to a number of residential dwellings and the village of Friston. The Parish Church of Friston (a Grade II* Listed Building) and the War Memorial (Listed Grade II) in the churchyard neighbour the order limits. Are religious services to be conducted to the sound of construction plant installing the AC cables etc?

33. Percussive piling should not take place on Saturday at all.

34. No one is doubting the importance of this work but is not a better solution to have a larger workforce to make sure that the work is carried out during Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings? This would also avoid the need to pay premium rates to employees who are required to work on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Incidentally is National Grid proposing to work on Christmas Day and Boxing Day?

1GEN54

35. Is National Grid suggesting that it substations will never be decommissioned? Is it the case that National Grid has never decommissioned a substation?

1GEN66

36. As National Grid notes certification of a document alone does not give it status. Accordingly key documents should be subject to a Requirement, for example the approval by SCC of an Operational Drainage Management Plan in accordance with an Outline Operational Drainage Management Plan.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

1LVIA4

37. See comments on DCO. The approval of construction lighting or operational lighting is not secured in the draft DCO unlike the position in the EA2 DCO.

1LVIA15

38. We understand from LionLink there is a plan to delay the advance planting where the AC cables from Sea Link and LionLink enter the EA2 order limits/substations site. Therefore this planting ceases to be *"advance planting".* Rather it becomes *"delayed planting"* not least given the construction of LionLink is not expected to be complete until 2032. No doubt National Grid's response is driven by cost reasons.

WATER ENVIRONMENT

1WE1

39. Suffolk County Council has not directly answered this question concerning the compliance with the Sequential Test in respect of surface water flooding. At the Friston site there are areas at high risk of surface water flooding as referred to in FPC's representations. The Sequential Test was discussed at ISH2 and there still seemed to be a lack of clarity as to the application of the Sequential Test in relation to surface water (pluvial) flooding which is a matter for SCC as the LLFA, rather river flooding (which is a matter for the EA). In the interests of time FPC chose not to raise this issue at ISH2, but complete clarity on the application of the Sequential Test is necessary to show that policy requirements have been met.

1WE2

40. An operational drainage management plan for the substations site is close to Discharge under the EA2 DCO. FPC would consider it helpful if SCC could advise whether the issue of firewater run-off has been addressed in this plan. Furthermore this plan should be secured under the draft DCO as the Operational Drainage Management Plan for the substations site.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

1TT8

41. Safety of Cyclists - National Grid states *"The routing strategy is designed to minimise the number of construction vehicles using less suitable routes such as the B1122 Leiston Road (through Theberton and Leiston),* ***B1121 Saxmundham Road (through Friston)****, B1121 Main Road and B1119 Church Street (through Saxmundham) and Grove Road."* Emphasis added

42. FPC would point out that both pedestrians and horse riders also use the B1121 Aldeburgh/Saxmundham Road through Friston (S-RL-9 and S-BM11) and Grove Road, not just cyclists.

43. 3% of construction traffic will use what National Grid call "*less suitable routes*" i.e. unsuitable routes. 3% may not sound a lot in percentage terms but given the scale of construction traffic may be significant in absolute terms. Also National Grid's answer also seems to be a limited to HGV traffic rather than all construction traffic. It would be helpful if greater clarity in the Traffic Management Plan could be provided on the number and types of vehicles proposed to use the B1121 from Benhall through to the A1094 and for how long.

44. Furthermore the use of RL-9 and BM-11 should be limited to the pylon works and secured through the DCO. The CTMP should be amended so that these routes cannot be used even in exceptional circumstances given the example given of "*road closure*" necessitating this. A particular concern is the level of road closures predicted for works on the Benhall Bridge.

45. Further consideration should be given to whether there should be greater use of 30mph or 20mph speed limits on "*less suitable routes*".

AIR QUALITY

1AQ1

46. The use of SF6 was discussed in the EA2 and EA1N examinations. One of the reasons the National Grid connection hub would be an AIS rather than a GIS design was because there may not be a satisfactory replacement for SF6. It was indicated during Consultations that there would be such alternatives in the near future. Certainly when FPC saw that in the Seal Link project the National Grid substation was to be of GIS design it assumed it would use an alternative to SF6 (as noted in FPC's relevant representations). FPC notes the supplementary questions asked concerning SF6 and awaits the response. However if it cannot be assured that a significantly less environmentally unfriendly gas will be used, then National Grid should revert to the AIS design which has already been consented. It is of concern that National Grid has admitted that SF6 switchgear does leak.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

1NV13

47. **"***The use of white noise reversing alarms would be* ***considered*** *as part of the application of best practicable means to reduce noise impacts. This would be considered alongside other potential constraints, such as site safety.*" Consideration is not enough. What about consideration of the health and well-being of the local community? The Friston community has already had to endure during the summer months high-pitched reversing alarms accompanied by recorded messages from multiple pieces of heavy plant. The quantity of plant obviously increases the level of disruption. National Grid can assess safety issues now and commit to using white noise now. There is an obvious relationship here to working hours.

OTHER

1O1

48. The response refers to the “general approach of the National Grid”. There is no comment here about the approach taken in the EA2 DCO in the context of the Examiners’ Report which stated that mitigation was considered to be “***only just sufficient***”**.** National Grid did not object to the EA2 DCO so presumably it considered it was acceptable.

END

Appendix 1 follows on page 8

APPENDIX 1

Comments on Appendix C

Work Description

1. Whilst the text compares the text of the EA2 DCO with the draft DCO in an attempt to provide an explanation, there is a fundamental flaw in that the effect of the differences is unclear. Do these textual differences have any impact on mitigation? One effect of the different text for the work descriptions make it very unclear to assess whether there has been any reduction in mitigation.

2. The paragraph numbers below are, except as otherwise provided, are references to the paragraph/requirement numbers in Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the EA2 DCO. Paragraphs in the draft DCO are referred to as "articles" to avoid confusion.

Paragraph 12

3. Paragraph 12(3) - the principal requirement here is that the external appearance has to be approved by the planning authority and furthermore is in accordance with the order limits and requirements as to size as set out in the EA2 DCO. This is linked under paragraph 12(5) to the Substations Design Principles Statement which is a defined term and a certified document.

4. What National Grid does not mention is that in the draft DCO only the design of the converter station is secured under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 of the draft DCO. There is no reference here to the National Grid substation and other infrastructure at Friston.

5. National Grid refers to scenario 1 but the issue is not in relation to scenario 1 where the National Grid works (aside from the AC cable) will have to comply with the terms of the EA2 DCO.

6. In any event the design process under the EA2 is close to completion (National Grid attended at least one design session with the local community) as work starts In March 2026. Is National Grid proposing to have a new design process for the National Grid substation at Friston and go through another design exercise?

7. National Grid has always said that it only needs its own consent if neither of EA2 or EA1N goes ahead. Different language has been included in the DCO which has further confused the situation. The relevant article is 15 in Schedule 3. This article uses the word "completed". This language would encompass a situation where work on the National Grid infrastructure at Friston is started under another DCO, for example EA2 DCO, but then "completed" under another DCO even if that DCO had been granted at a later date, for example the Sea Link DCO.

8. It needs to be clarified urgently what National Grid's intentions are. It should be remembered the Discharge Requirements process under the EA2 DCO is rapidly progressing and it is unclear therefore what the effect of the detailed documents being approved under this EA2 process will be should there be a change of DCO part way through the construction process.

9. Also it is limited to work 1B (just the substation) when it should extend to all the National Grid infrastructure being constructed at Friston otherwise there will be an even more confused situation.

10. Paragraphs 12(7)(b) and 8 – under article 5(3) National Grid has reduced this protection by excluding *"roof mounted equipment"* for which there is no limit. Nor is there a definition of *"roof mounted equipment".* Furthermore article 5(3) does not have a limit in relation to external electrical

equipment. It is not correct to say in relation to sub paragraphs (7) and (8) that there is "*no material difference*" between these provisions.

11. Paragraph 12(10) - the absence of such a Requirement means that the absolute height in the landscape of the National Grid infrastructure is not controlled. This was the reason why this provision was included.

12. Paragraph 12(11) - the Sea Link DCO does not clearly secure the number of new pylons that can be erected. Work number 1A does not include limit on the number of pylons. It is unreasonable to have to track through a number of documents to find out if there is any limit and whether those documents have the effect of securing that limit under the DCO. A better approach rather than trawling through documents is simply to include a single sentence in Schedule 3 of the draft DCO.

13. Paragraph 12(13**)** - there is not a clear limit on the width of the road and whether this is actually secured by the DCO. It is unreasonable to have to track through a number of documents to find out whether there is any width limit and then figure out whether that limit is secured in the DCO when a single sentence will suffice. In any event National Grid admits that the *"width of the access road is not explicitly restricted".* National Grid also refers to the road being tightly constrained. It needs to be remembered the width of the access road is significantly in excess of the width of the B1121 which is approximately 5m wide. If a 7m wide road represents a constraint that must mean that the B1121 is unsuitable as a means of access and should not be used. Furthermore no such problems have been identified during the current design process which is largely completed as part of the EA2 project.

14. Paragraph 12(15)(b) - National Grid admits that the footprint of a GIS substation is not secured in the DCO. It should be. See also FPC's comments on the change request (REP3A-018 and REP3a-019). A change in the footprint of a GIS substation has a significant impact on the landscape given a GIS substation is almost 3 times as high at 16m compared to 6m of an AIS substation.

15. Paragraph 12(17) - again there is not a clear limit and whether this is actually secured by the DCO. It is unreasonable to have to track through a number of documents to find out whether there is any limit and then figure out whether that limit is secure when a single sentence in Schedule 3 of the draft DCO will suffice.

Paragraph 14

16. Paragraph 14 – there are differences. Under the EA2 DCO the landscape plan is a document "*which accords with the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy*". In contrast National Grid has sought to qualify this Requirement by stating that the plan "*must be <u>substantially</u> in accordance with the outline LEMP*" (Emphasis added). Why has National Grid sought to qualify compliance with an outline plan by the use of the word "*substantially".* This can only be to enable National Grid to argue there is no need to comply 100% with the outline plan. Such a qualification was not considered necessary in the EA2 DCO. There are other examples of such a qualification in other parts of the draft DCO where compliance with outline plans is qualified by the use of the word *"generally".* It is unclear what the effect of that qualification will be and can only address that National Grid will further seek to resile from its obligations. Article 6 (f) in the draft DCO also highlights defective and inconsistent drafting in relation to certified documents. In relation to the certified documents listed in Schedule 19 and there appear to be three different approaches to the drafting.

    a. The document is a defined term and in the definition the fact that it is certified is set out, for example the "*Outline Onshore Overarching Written Scheme Of Investigation*"; or

b. The fact that the document is a certified document is set out in the body of the text for example in relation to design principles in article 3(2) of Schedule 3; or

c. There is no reference to a document being a certified document save for the fact it is listed in Schedule 19 with no reference to Schedule 19. This is the case with the "Outline LEMP" referred to in article 6(f). This document is neither defined, nor does the text state that it is a certified document. A reader is only aware that it is certified document if they check Schedule 19.

Paragraph 15

17. Paragraph 15(2) - there are reasons why this specific requirement was included in the EA2 DCO and the manner in which it was drafted, which was considered in the EA2 and EA1N Examinations. It was not introduced on a whim. Suffolk is a semi-arid area and it is well known that new hedgerows and trees can be very difficult to establish given the lack of rainfall and soil conditions of sand or heavy clay. This also means that the highly ambitious growth rates are unlikely to be achieved. When landscape mitigation is almost to be entirely to be delivered through planting there needs to be a very high standard of management. This mitigation should also be considered in the light of the Examining Authority's comments that mitigation was only "*just sufficient*".

18. The explanation of landscape mitigation requirements in the context of scenario 1 and scenario 2 highlights yet again the confusion which this approach is causing. Is the landscape mitigation for scenario 2 only to be that which is necessary to mitigate the landscape impacts of the National Grid substation alone? If so presumably it will be significantly different from that required to mitigate the landscape impacts of the National Grid substation, the EA2 substation and the EA1N substation together. Therefore given EA2 is going ahead how will the additional landscape mitigation for EA2 and EA1N be delivered and who will be responsible for maintaining it? In this context it also needs to be remembered that in scenario 2 National Grid is acquiring all the land necessary for the mitigation of all three substations. This issue also highlights why the use of the word "completed" in article 15 is confusing and or inappropriate.

19. National Grid States that maintenance will be *"for the lifetime of the asset".* This begs the question of what that maintenance will be and also whether it complies with British Standards as set out in paragraph 15(1). If National Grid is confident that its maintenance regime goes above that required for Scottish Power presumably the wording in paragraph 15 (2) can be included in the draft DCO stating that the replacement obligation will last for the lifetime of the asset.

Paragraph 16

20. National Grid has not addressed this requirement.

Paragraph 17

21. The reason this requirement was included was because of the potential use of highly unsympathetic industrial fencing in a rural area. The explanation given by National Grid in terms of types of fencing apply equally to the Scottish Power substations. Again there is confusion over scenario 1 and scenario 2. What happens if National Grid operates under scenario 2 but the Scottish Power substations are built under their own consents? Again it should be remembered that there are multiple Discharge processes being conducted at the moment including on subjects such as fencing. Are these Discharges to be of no effect?

Paragraph 18

22. National Grid has not addressed this requirement.

Paragraphs 19 & 20

23. Friston Parish Council has no specific expertise on this subject and will leave it for Suffolk County Council to comment.

Paragraph 21

24. Friston Parish Council has no specific knowledge on the subject and will leave it for East Suffolk Council and Natural England to comment.

Paragraph 22

25. Paragraph 22 – whilst article 6(1)(r) does require the approval of a Code of Construction practice, there are some significant changes and omissions. Again the word *"substantially"* now qualifies the compliance wording unlike the EA2 DCO. With regard to paragraph 22(2) whilst most of the content would appear to be covered by article 6 (1) there are two notable omissions namely a Stakeholder Communications Plan and an Artificial Light Emissions Management Plan. Could National Grid advise where these matters are elsewhere addressed in the documents listed in article 6 (1)?. In addition there is another example of poor drafting where the status of the Outline Code of Construction Practice as a certified document is not completely clear. It is neither a defined term nor expressly stated to be a certified document.

Paragraph 25

26. As set out in relevant and written representations light pollution is a serious concern to the local community.

27. National Grid had no issue with this requirement during the EA2 and EA1N Examinations. The control of artificial lighting both during construction and operation should be controlled in the same manner as for the Scottish Power substations.

Paragraph 24

28. Paragraph 24 – it is appreciated that National Grid is prepared to honour its commitment to the construction hours under the EA2 DCO to an extent. However it has not entirely understood the nature and effect of the EA2 requirement which is to ensure that all construction at the development site within the EA2 order limits can only take place on the specified hours on weekdays and on Saturday mornings, and not on Sundays or Bank Holidays. National Grid with Scottish Power selected a substations site close to a village and residential dwellings. The limit on construction hours is to provide at least some respite to residents to limit the damage to their well-being. There should be no construction work on Saturday afternoons or on Sundays or on Bank Holidays.

Paragraph 26

29. National Grid has misunderstood this Requirement. The reason for its inclusion is that many so-called *"preparation works"* are very intrusive and far from minor as any current inspection of the area to the north of Friston demonstrates. for example site clearance. Residents have already had experience of so-called "*preparation works* "last year which required the use of multiple items of heavy plant and machinery giving rise to significant noise impacts. Paragraph 26 was carefully drafted to ensure that only *"specified Onshore Preparation Works"* were included which do not include surveys which seems to be the only concern of National Grid. This requirement should be reinstated unless National Grid is prepared to exclude Onshore Preparation Works from the EA2 order limits on the basis they have already been completed.

30. Reinstating such a plan may enable advanced mitigation planting to be secured.

Paragraph 27

31. The issue of noise from the National Grid substation was not satisfactorily resolved in the EA2 and EA1N Examinations. National Grid states that *"the substation contains connections only".* This is not a complete description as the substation also contains switchgear. This topic has been the subject of previous submissions by FPC with responses from National Grid. FPC remains concerned that there could be significant noise impacts from the operation of switchgear which is exacerbated by the fact that the number of items of switchgear will significantly increase with the connection of multiple projects to the National Grid substation as set out in FPC's submissions. The problem with noise from switchgear is that if it turns out that National Grid's assertions in relation to noise turn out to be inaccurate what is the local community supposed to do? If National Grid is so sure of its position in relation to all operation not just *"normal"* operation then it should accept a Requirement in relation to noise from the National Grid substation.

32. Further National Grid submissions are based on the fact that GIS switchgear is substantially quieter than AIS switchgear. Accordingly there should be a Requirement that all switchgear in the GIS substation should be GIS switchgear and no AIS switchgear should be used (i.e. no external switchgear). It would appear from LionLink's detailed plan of the substation (Appendix 1 of FPC's post ISH2 submissions) that such external switchgear is present.

33. The EA2 noise requirement does include the National Grid substation. It is unclear how this will work going forward.

Paragraph 30

34. In its explanation National Grid admits the strategic importance of the so-called National Grid "substation" and that it will be the connection point for multiple projects given that LionLink is only referred to as an example. This highlights yet again the need for all projects which have planned locations (for example the third interconnector project at Saxmundham) or which have connection offers as listed in the TEC register to have their cumulative impacts assessed.

Paragraph 33

35. Emergency planning arrangements - National Grid has not commented on this paragraph. Why not?

Paragraph 38

36. It will be recalled that the reason National Grid had principally given for the need to have its own consent was to deal with the possibility that neither of the Scottish Power projects will go ahead and therefore the planning consents for the National Grid substation and pilot works were not capable of being used. EA2 is going ahead and as SPR have stated the necessary rights for the proposed National Grid substation can be transferred to it. This is a straightforward legal mechanical exercise and could be done now. There is no need for National Grid to have a separate consent. National Grid by persisting with this demand and by failing to honour the existing requirements and mitigation at the Friston substations site has unnecessarily and unreasonably increased the work and costs of other interested parties. Article 15 should be amended so that it reflects the true position which is work on EA2 has commenced and the National Grid infrastructure will be developed under the EA2 consent and not the Seal Link consent. The problem with the wording at present is that work on the National Grid substation will start under the EA2 consent and then National Grid will be at liberty, once the Sea Link DCO is

granted, to say that it has been completed under the Sea Link consent and benefit from reduced requirements and mitigation obligations.

Paragraph 39

37. National Grid has not commented on this paragraph. Is the necessity for approval to be in writing addressed elsewhere?

Paragraph 40

38. It is curious that National Grid no longer wishes to live by this Requirement given that it was not challenged in the EA2 or EA1N examinations. All that is required under existing wording is for National Grid to do its job properly the first time round. It should not be able to present material changes to a planning authority which is already under severe pressure and which may not have the time to properly examine material changes with the temptation always to concede.

Paragraph 41

39. FPC is pleased to note that National Grid has now accepted the need for there to be an Operational Drainage Management Plan. However the requirement is materially different because the EA2 requirement is predicated on there being an Outline Operational Drainage Management Plan. This is both a defined term and a certified document unlike in the draft DCO. Flood risk is a key issue at Friston as evidenced by the comments by the Examining Authorities for EA2 and EA1N. The high flood risk at Friston was a finding fact both in the High Court and in the Court of Appeal in the Judicial Review case brought by SASES. Therefore it was and remains necessary to have a clear understanding of how flood risk would be managed at the substations site before the DCO was granted. Nothing has changed in terms of flood risk.

40. An Operational Drainage Management Plan is close to being approved by Suffolk County Council for the Friston substations site. It would seem appropriate that National Grid accept this as the Operational Drainage Management Plan rather than reinvent the wheel. Incidentally this is true for other EA2 requirements at the substations site and it may be helpful if the Examining Authority could review the current status all the various Discharge processes most of which are expected to be complete by at least the end of the Examination.

Paragraph 42

41. National Grid has chosen not to comment on this requirement. On one level it is not directly relevant to Sea Link however it is directly relevant to the substantial reduction in environmental impacts there will be if ducts for the AC cables required for LionLink are laid alongside the AC cables required for Sea Link. The LionLink PEIR has now been published and this clearly shows such a route to be an option. Accordingly a provision equivalent to paragraph 42 should be included in the Sea Link DCO. Alternatively there must be requirements to ensure that the Sea Link cable route must be constructed in a way which would not prevent LionLink following the same route. Furthermore there must be a requirement for Sea Link to cooperate fully with LionLink and use its best endeavours to ensure the LionLink AC cable route can use the Sea Link AC cable route. Further submissions on this point were made at ISH2.

Paragraph 43

42. It is noted that National Grid admits that construction of the National Grid substation is likely to commence before Sea Link is even consented. In fact construction of the National Grid substation is due to start in March 2026.

Paragraph 44

43. This paragraph is entirely appropriate for Sea Link or rather the National Grid substation. It was included because it was self-evident, as it is now, that further development of the National Grid substation was likely and examining authorities were concerned about future development at the substation site as evidenced by comments in the report. Accordingly a similar provision should be included to provide some reassurance that landscape and flood risk mitigation will not be adversely affected by future development.

44. Alternatively National Grid should undertake that there should be no expansion of the substation site or any buildings erected on the substation site without seeking planning consent from ESC whether or not planning consent is technically required.

Comparison between documents to be certified

45. It is accepted that not all the certified documents in the EA2 DCO need to be certified in the Sea Link DCO. However there are notable omissions, for example an Outline Operational Drainage Management Plan, an issue which is a key concern to FPC and to the Examining Authorities for EA2 and EA1N.

END