

Date: 11th March 2026
Our ref: 533361
Your ref: EN020026



National Infrastructure Planning
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business
Park Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ
T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam,

Sea Link Energy Cable

The following constitutes Natural England's formal statutory response for Examination Deadline 5.

1. Natural England's Deadline 5 Submissions

An update of Natural England's position and advice in relation to documents relevant to our remit is provided in the Appendices listed below.

Natural England notes that a large volume of complex material continues to be submitted at each deadline, much of which has been amended and/or superseded by subsequent submissions. This has made document review and the formulation of advice particularly challenging. At the Applicant's request (during meeting on 26th February 2026), we have also sought throughout our responses to set out what we consider necessary to resolve outstanding matters.

However, this process has been more time-consuming than anticipated, resulting in a late submission from Natural England and preventing completion of our review of all documentation in time for Deadline 5. We therefore intend to respond to any remaining submissions within our remit at Deadline 6.

A full list of documents reviewed for each thematic area is included below in Annexes 1-5 and

listed within each Appendix for detailed comments.

The Appendices submitted at Deadline 5 are as follows:

- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable Appendix A5 - Natural England's Advice on Suffolk Onshore - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable Appendix B5 - Natural England's Advice on Kent Onshore - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable Appendix D5 - Natural England's Advice on Marine Physical Environment - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable Appendix E5 - Natural England's Advice on Benthic - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable Appendix F5 - Natural England's Advice on Marine Mammals - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable Appendix G5 - Natural England's Advice on Offshore Ornithology - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable - Natural England Risk & Issues Log - Deadline 5.
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable – Appendix K5 Natural England's Response to ExQ2 - Deadline 5
- EN020026 533361 Sea Link Energy Cable – Appendix L5 Natural England – Issue Specific Hearing 2 Action points relevant to Natural England.

Overarching comments

1. REP4-218 Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (Tracked)

Natural England notes within the amended DCO, references to Natural England have been included in some of the updated requirements (for example requirement 6). All references to Natural England should be amended to the Relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB) to ensure consistency and to future proof the consent against any changes to statutory bodies.

2. Further Engagement with the Applicant

On the 26th February 2026 Natural England had a meeting with the Applicant to discuss outstanding issues. Following this meeting Natural England provided further advice regarding whether sediment dispersion modelling was required at Pegwell Bay. For completeness we have included the advice we provided below:

Natural England welcomes the updates provided at Deadline 4, with regard to marine physical processes. We have highlighted in our response in Appendix D5 to our Deadline 5 submission, and to the Examiner's Written Questions 2, that a number of outstanding issues or evidence gaps remain relating to Pegwell Bay. However, if the Applicant is able to address these issues/gaps, for example, by providing empirical evidence from previous relevant projects (e.g. Thanet Offshore Wind Farm (TOWF) or Nemo) to support ES predictions of impacts on coastal/intertidal morphology and demonstrate seabed recovery, then we will likely be content that additional sediment dispersion modelling is not required.

However, please note that there are caveats to this advice related to:

- Extension of the Order Limits to include the hoverport site and the potential for release of contaminants from the site into coastal waters. This is a new issue and currently there is insufficient information in terms of the scale or nature of the potential impact to inform survey or modelling requirements. Please see our response to ExQ2 ECOL26
- Thorough consideration of placement/containment of sediment excavated from the exit pits and drill fluid management which is highlighted in Appendix E5 to our Deadline 5 submission

Natural England expects that a number of documents will be submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 5. We will undertake best endeavours to respond to any relevant additional documentation by Deadline 7, if not sooner.

For any queries relating to the content of this letter please contact us using the details provided below.

Yours faithfully

Sustainable Development, East Midlands Area Team

Annex 1: Natural England's Response to the Applicant's Documents Submitted at Deadline 2 Relevant to our Remit

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
REP2-048	East Suffolk Council - Comments on any further information/submissions received by deadline 1 and deadline 1A	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.

Annex 2: Natural England's Response to the Applicant's Documents Submitted at Deadline 3 Relevant to our Remit

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
REP3-001	9.38.4 Cover Letter	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-003	2.3 (D) Land Plans Part 2 of 2	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-005	2.4 (C) Special category and Crown Land Plans Part 2 of 2	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-007	3.1 (F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed and provided response within our Risks and Issues Log.
REP3-009	3.2 (E) Explanatory Memorandum (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-021	6.2.4.1 (D), Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments on this document within Appendix D5.
REP3-022	6.2.4.4 (F) Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix F5 and our Risks and Issues Log.

REP3-025	6.4.4.1 (C) ES Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-027	6.4.4.5 (C) ES Figures Marine Ornithology (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-029	6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendices A5, B5 and F5
REP3-057	9.7 (D) (Deadline 3) Applicant's Schedule of Changes to the Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed this document and comments on the changes are provided within the Risk and Issues Log.
REP3-060	9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix A5.
REP3-061	9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-064	9.36 Applicants Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments on this document within Appendix A5.
REP3-069	9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-070	9.73.1 Applicant's Response to First Written Questions - Appendices	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-075	9.82 Operational Noise Contour Plan for Saxmunham Converter Station	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP3-077	9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix A5. Natural England has no comments on make on this document in relation to Kent Onshore.
REP3-079	9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document in relation to Kent Onshore. Natural England has provided comments on the updated version of this document within Appendices E5 and J5.

Annex 3: Natural England's Response to the Applicant's Documents Submitted at Deadline 4 Relevant to our Remit

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
REP4-001	9.38.5 Deadline 4 Cover Letter	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-002	2.3 (E) Land Plans Part 1 of 2	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-003	2.3 (E) Land Plans Part 2 of 2	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-006	2.5.1 (C) Works Plans - Suffolk	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-007	2.5.2 (C) Works Plans - Kent	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-008	2.14.1 (B) Indicative General Arrangement Plans - Suffolk	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-010	3.5 (B) Consents and Agreements Position Statement (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-020	4.2.3 (C) SoR Appendix C Special Category Land Report (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-022	4.3 (E) Book of Reference (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-026	6.2.2.2 (D) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix A5.
REP4-028	6.2.4.1 (E) Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5.
REP4-030	6.2.4.2 (D) Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix E5.
REP4-032	6.4.4.4 (G) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix F5 and our Risks and Issues Log.

REP4-038	6.3.2.2.B (C) Appendix 2.2.B Suffolk Wintering Bird Report (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-042	6.3.2.9.B (B) Appendix 2.9.B Suffolk Construction Noise and Vibration Data (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-044	6.3.3.9.B (B) ES Appendix 3.9.B Kent Construction Noise and Vibration Data (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-050	6.4.4.1 (D) ES Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5.
REP4-052	6.4.4.5 (D) ES Figures Marine Ornithology (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-054	6.4.4.6 (C) ES Figures Marine Archaeology (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-056	6.4.4.6.A (C) ES Figures Marine Archaeological Technical Report (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-058	6.6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and has no comments to make in relation to Marine Physical Environment. Natural England's response to this document in relation to Benthic Ecology is provided in Appendix E5 and to Marine Ornithology is provided in Appendix G5.
REP4-060	6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments in Appendix D5 in relation to the Physical Environment and Appendix E5 for Benthic Ecology.
REP4-062	7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-066	7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-068	7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Kent (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix B5,
REP4-070	7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix F5 and our Risks and Issues Log.
REP4-072	7.7 (C) Marine Biosecurity Plan (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has provided an update in our Risks

		and Issues log in relation to this document and has provided comments in relation to Benthic Ecology in Appendix E5
REP4-079	9.28 (B) Winter Bird Use of Golden Plover Enhancement Area (Tracked Changes)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-080	9.77 (E) Application and Examination Document Tracker	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-082	9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix F5
REP4-083	9.87 (A) Applicant's Comments on Responses to First Written Questions	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-084	9.88 (A) Applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions at Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-085	9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submission at Issue Specific Hearing 2	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-086	9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points - Deadline 4	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-087	9.90 (A) Revised version of Appendix C to Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-088	9.90.1 Hearing Actions Deadline 4 Appendix J Piling Noise Dataset	Natural England has reviewed this document but have no comments to make in relation to Marine Mammals
REP4-089	9.91 (A) Applicant's Comments on Change Request (CR1) Relevant and Written Representations	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-090	9.92 (A) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5 in relation to the Physical Environment and Appendix E5 in relation to Benthic Ecology.

REP4-091	9.93 (A) Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5 in relation to Physical Environment and Appendix E5 in relation to Benthic Ecology.
REP4-092	9.94 (A) Planning Statement Addendum	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-094	9.97 (A) Applicant's Response to Supplementary Agenda Additional Questions for Issue Specific Hearing 2	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-102	9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5 in relation to Physical Environment and Appendix E5 in relation to Benthic Ecology.
REP4-218	Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (Tracked)	Please refer to Point 1 above in the overarching comments section of this cover letter in relation to REP4-218.
REP4-222	6.2.3.2 (E) Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed this document and provided comments within Appendix B5,
REP4-224	Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 7.5.2 (B) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document in relation to Marine Physical Environment and provided comments within Appendix E5 in relation to Benthic Ecology
REP4-026	7.12.2 (B) Design Principles - Kent (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP4-230	Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 9.13 (C) Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5 in relation to Physical Processes and Appendix E5 in relation to Benthic Ecology.
REP4-234	Late Deadline 4 Submission – 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked)	Natural England has reviewed and provided comments within Appendix D5 in relation to Physical Environment and Appendix E5 in relation to Benthic Ecology and Appendix B5 in relation to Kent Onshore,

REP4-233	9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make in relation to this document.
REP4-242	Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Tracked Changes)	<p>Natural England has no comments to make on this document in relation to Marine Physical Environment.</p> <p>Natural England has reviewed and provided a response to this document in relation to Kent Onshore within Appendix B5,</p>