



# 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 3 dealing with environmental matters

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
<b>Issue Specific Hearing 3:</b>  <b>Environmental matters</b>	<b>Wednesday 25 March to Friday 27 March 2026</b>  <b>Registration and seating available at venue on Wednesday 25 March from:</b>  <b>1:30pm</b>  <b>Virtual Registration Process from:</b>  <b>1:30pm</b>  <b>Hearing starts:</b>  <b>2:00pm</b>  <b>Hearing resumes on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 March:</b>  <b>Registration and seating available at venue from:</b> <b>09:30am</b>  <b>Virtual Registration Process from:</b>  <b>09:30am</b>  <b>Hearing starts:</b>  <b>10:00am</b>	<b>South Gallery Rooms 20-22 Excel London</b>  <b>1 Western Gateway Royal Victoria Dock London E16 1XL</b>  <b>and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams</b> OR at one of the satellite venues hosted by CVS International on behalf of the applicant:  Suffolk: Deben Suite Ufford Park Yarmouth Road Melton Woodbridge IP12 1QW  Kent: Unit 18 (1st Floor), Innovation House, Innovation Way, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, CT13 9FF  <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 ISH3 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 Tuesday 10 March 2026. If you haven't notified us that you wish to speak then you must contact the case team ([southeastanglialink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:southeastanglialink@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.

### **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

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

0303 444 5000

Sea Link Case Team

Planning Inspectorate

c/o QUADIENT

69 Buckingham Avenue

Slough

SL1 4PN

## Agenda

<b>Title of meeting</b>	Sea Link issue specific hearing 3 – Environmental matters
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 25 to Friday 27 March 2026
<b>Time</b>	2.00pm Wednesday 25 March, 10am Thursday 26 and Friday 27 March
<b>Venue</b>	Blended event
<b>Attendees</b>	Invitees

**It is anticipated that items 1 to 5 will be heard on Wednesday 25 March and items 6 to 12 on Thursday 26 March. Friday 27 March will be used to cover the remaining items and any matters outstanding.**

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

### **2. Matters arising from the Examining Authorities third written questions (ExQ3) published on 23 March 2026**

- 2.1 Parties will be asked if there are any matters arising from ExQ3 that they wish to raise.

### **3. Water Environment**

- 3.1 Flood Risk
- 3.2 The applicant's approach to the sequential and exception tests
- 3.3 Matters relating to the objectives of the Water Framework Directive

### **4. Traffic and transport**

- 4.1 Junction Capacity Modelling – responses and updates
- 4.2 Driver delay mitigation
- 4.3 Effects of current planned highway works (such as the A12) on the proposed development construction traffic
- 4.4 Benhall Railway Bridge update and abnormal load routes
- 4.5 Potential capping of heavy good vehicles using the local road networks

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

- 5.1 Accommodation for workers of the proposed development
- 5.2 Tourism impact monitoring and mitigation

### **6. Health and Wellbeing**

- 6.1 Core working hours
- 6.2 Mental health impacts

### **7. Cultural Heritage**

- 7.1 Archaeology update and assessed impacts
- 7.2 Setting of heritage assets, including cumulative impacts

## **8. Cumulative effects**

- 8.1 Intra-project cumulative effects including the estimation of significance and need for mitigation (including how that is secured)
- 8.2 Matters relating to the application of the mitigation hierarchy

## **9. Marine Physical Environment**

- 9.1 Update on additional sediment modelling
- 9.2 Effects on the Coralline Crag and coastal processes, the need for requirements to secure a minimum depth of burial and exit location, and any other mitigation
- 9.3 Use of pneumatic casing
- 9.4 River Stour channel migration and mitigation including scope of monitoring

## **10. Noise and vibration**

- 10.1 Construction noise effects and mitigation
- 10.2 Operational noise emissions from converter stations and substations including, but not limited to, low frequency noise emissions and evidence to demonstrate that 5dB below background level is unachievable

## **11. Air quality**

- 11.1 Traffic emissions assessment
- 11.2 Operational back-up generator assessment including, but not limited to, potential for eutrophication impacts and cumulative effects with SPR proposals.
- 11.3 Air quality mitigation measures including enforceability and water for dust suppression in Suffolk

## **12. Ornithology**

- 12.1 Update on red-throated diver displacement assessment
- 12.2 Seasonal restriction for all activities including pre-lay grapnel run
- 12.3 Application of a 2km buffer for vessel displacement
- 12.4 Potential derogation and compensation in respect of emergency repairs

## **13. Ecology and Biodiversity**

- 13.1 Whether the potential disturbance effects of terrestrial unexploded ordnance have been sufficiently addressed in the applicant's ecological assessments
- 13.2 Mitigation for riparian mammal activity
- 13.3 Bats including, but not limited to, update on Natural England licensing team barbastelle bat discussions, use of hedgerow gaps vs HDD (including evidence of programme constraints) and mitigation for Daubenton's bats in Pegwell Bay
- 13.4 Pegwell Bay and former hoverport access and disturbance
- 13.5 Control of activities under requirements 5 and 6, including consideration of whether the outline landscape and ecological management plan should contain more specific survey methodologies (or provision to secure this detail)

- 13.6 Biodiversity net gain including, but not limited to, an applicant update on progress with legal agreements and details of proposals

#### **14. Any other business**

#### **15. 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
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- 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:

- Water environment
- Traffic and transport
- Socio-economics and tourism
- Health and wellbeing
- Cultural heritage
- Cumulative effects
- Marine physical environment
- Noise and vibration
- Air quality
- ornithology
- ecology and biodiversity
- 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 6, 13 April 2026**.