



# The Planning Inspectorate

## **The Planning Act 2008**

## **Application for Development Consent for the Sea Link Project**

**Case Ref: EN020026**

## **The Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection**

### **Background**

The Examining Authority ('the ExA') undertook an unaccompanied site inspection (USI) to support the examination of an application for development consent for the proposed Sea Link Project ('the application') on the evening of Friday 27 February 2026.

The ExA carried out its USI from publicly accessible land.

The USI was undertaken to view Orsted's Hornsea 3 Offshore Windfarm High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) to High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) converter station - located near Swardeston, south of Norwich. It is understood that the external construction activity is largely complete at this site and current works are focussed on the internal fit out. Therefore the site visit was conducted at night to understand the night time visual and noise impacts at this location. This site was suggested by Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) [REP1-277]. It is noted that this USI was undertaken on a Friday night. Therefore this might not be fully representative of midweek night activity. Whilst not a recommended location, the ExA also viewed the nearby National Grid Norwich Main Substation from the local road network to gain a broader understanding of night time impacts arising from electrical infrastructure.

### **Particulars of the Site Visit**

The visit was undertaken by: Richard Hunt.

The visit was undertaken by car.

Weather conditions were dry and cloudy with a temperature circa 13 degrees centigrade. Weather conditions were partially overcast. The inspections commenced at approximately 18:30 and finished at approximately 19:15. A list of the locations visited is attached at Annex A.



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## Annex A: List of locations visited on the USI on the evening of Friday 27 February 2026

The ExA parked on the B1113 verge to view Orsted's Hornsea 3 onshore HVDC to HVAC converter station from the west. The ExA noted:

- The site is still under construction. The buildings are unlit but task lighting is in place. This is bright directional lighting.
- The ExA noted the scale of the HVDC to HVAC converter station buildings but due to the night time conditions and the lack of structure lighting was unable to determine much additional detail (such as fencing or landscaping).
- Noise character was largely dominated by road noise from the B1113 and road noise from the A47.

Safe locations to photograph the HVDC to HVAC converter station were not available but photos showing construction task lighting associated with the converter station were taken from the B1113 Main Road (Photograph A) and Mangreen Lane (Photograph B).

The ExA then drove east on Mangreen Lane crossing the route of cable corridor between Hornsea converter station and National Grid Norwich Main Substation. The ExA took in views south towards the main substation (Photograph C) and then drove south on the A140 pausing at a layby at location D. The ExA noted:

- Hedgerow gaps required to access the cable corridor.
- Some point source lighting associated with the Norwich main substation area (Photograph C).
- Noise from a generator, although it was unclear whether this was operational or construction noise.
- No other obvious noise from the substation due to masking by the background traffic noise levels from the nearby A140 Ipswich Road.



Photograph A



Photograph B



Photograph C



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The route is shown below (arrows and letters correspond with approximate location of photographs and layby stop at D).

