

I am a former public servant with experience in governance and international relations. I retired to Aldeburgh with my [REDACTED] in the hope of spending the rest of our lives in a peaceful small community and a green environment, on a wild coast which we both love. Our expectations have been shattered by the multiplicity of energy projects now assailing our area.

I spoke at an early OFH on behalf of the Aldeburgh Society, expressing our principled opposition to SeaLink. Nothing I have heard since from following the various OFHs and ISHs suggests that our position should change. I now write in a personal capacity and on behalf of my wife.

I strongly oppose the SeaLink project and do not think it should be granted a DCO. My objections to the project are as follows:-

1. As a matter of principle, large energy infrastructure projects should never be allowed in AONBs/ Protected Landscapes other than in highly exceptional circumstances which are set out in advance by Ministers in conjunction with the local authorities.
2. The case for pursuing SeaLink has not been made convincingly. Responsible opinion suggests that the claimed benefits could be obtained much more cheaply and with much less disruption through the reconfiguration of existing overhead cables to Bramford and in Kent.
3. The construction of SeaLink's onshore infrastructure would cause considerable damage to nature and wildlife in areas designated for a high level of official environmental protection.
4. In this area close to the Sizewell C project now underway construction traffic would add to existing cumulative impacts on the inadequate main road A12 and on the local network of rural roads which are unsuitable to carry high numbers of HGVs.
5. The imposition on the small historic market town of Saxmundham of a large industrial building as a converter station, generating disruption, noise and drainage issues, is unacceptable. Extending this site as proposed for a second converter station for LionLink compounds the offence.
6. National Grid's confused approach to providing access to this converter station site via Benhall Bridge and a new River Fromus crossing suggests an alarming lack of understanding and forward planning.
7. The exceptionally large number of amendments to plans presented to PINS by National Grid also calls into question the soundness of the project.
8. Construction of the proposed landfall on Aldeburgh's Haven Beach by horizontal direct drilling raises concerns about viability: a resort to open trench construction would be immensely damaging to a much loved recreational area and its adjoining wetland habitat. The landfall would also generate a serious traffic impact in Aldeburgh.
9. The economy of Aldeburgh is heavily dependent on tourism. Visitors, whether for traditional seaside pursuits or for the many cultural events and festivals that take place through the year, may be deterred from travelling here by the traffic congestion and air and noise pollution generated by the energy projects, causing losses to accommodation providers, hospitality businesses, and local shops.
10. At this time of heightened international tensions, the concept of concentrating a significant proportion of UK energy production and distribution in a small area of East Suffolk gives rise to major concerns over public safety. In short, SeaLink should not proceed. Better options for achieving its stated objectives are available. The project should be brought to a halt before further irremediable damage is caused.