

Good afternoon Madam, and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

As a district councillor representing a ward directly affected by Sea Link, I am entrusted with an important responsibility to speak with you today - at a time when a dense part of East Suffolk is being subject to unprecedented infrastructure pressure.

I speak on behalf of so many of residents whose lives are already being reshaped. Their voices must not be diminished by process or treated as an administrative inconvenience. Our once glorious landscape has swiftly become dystopian in look and painful in feel because Multiple major energy schemes have been allowed and indeed permissioned to take place and so doing are being concentrated into one small area by organisations who neither live here, nor experience the daily disruption, and for sure will not face the long-term consequences of the choices being made.

The Inspectorate will be aware has previously heard my submissions as a local councillor who consistently seeks any potential benefit for my community. Yet despite raising these points with goodwill and in good faith, there is little to no indication that the applicant has listened or taken any suggestions on board — there still remain no meaningful benefits to counterbalance the intrusion. This is neither fair nor acceptable.

The Development Consent Order process was created under the Planning Act 2008 to deliver a clear and transparent system for nationally significant infrastructure — not as a mechanism to bypass democratic accountability, community input or rigorous scrutiny. When transparency weakens, trust collapses.

We have seen this recently. Sizewell C showed what happens when detail is not properly worked through into tru-isms. There have been too many assumptions, with risks being missed, cumulative impacts are underestimated, and communities disengaged due to lack of confidence. They have shown that applicants who avoid detail, then harm follows. Transparency is a choice — and the right choice is to reveal, not obscure.

Yet in this application, too many crucial questions remain unanswered: technical queries, environmental effects, operational risks, access arrangements, and the combined burden of multiple simultaneous projects. Remarkable the Examination progresses. For a scheme of this scale, that is deeply concerning and I can only assume that once the course is set, both the counties of Kent and Suffolk have to run it until it is rejected.

As [REDACTED] has highlighted, mental health pressures are already emerging — not hypothetical future risks, but daily and worsening realities. And I reiterate I am dealing with those myriad of nsip induced challenges that impact residents on a daily basis. No property search in the past twenty years warned residents: *“From 2026, expect fifteen years of daily disruption.”* Yet this is the situation communities now face.

[REDACTED] of Snape was right to challenge National Grid’s failings within the lack of detail currently submitted. The truth is none of us would be consider submitting proposals of such poor quality and detail as with such inconsistencies they would never reach the committee table.

And given that National Grid has declined to engage meaningfully, small wonder my colleague Portfolio lead for energy project Councillor Tom Daly has stressed publicly here today National Grid take seriously a need for responsible behaviour and it must start now.

As the inspectorate you will be aware that Under National Policy Statement EN-1, applicants must show that reasonable alternatives have been rigorously assessed. There still remains no convincing evidence that potential brownfield or alternative sites have been examined transparently or seriously. As [REDACTED] of SEAS has made clear: alternatives must be tested, not acknowledged and dismissed for convenience. Are NGET waiting for the county council to oblige in this regard just at they have proposed, using public funds a practical, deliverable integrated access solution linking Sea Link, LionLink and Sizewell C — reducing community impact, removing reliance on the unsafe Benhall Railway Bridge, and avoiding unnecessary environmental and heritage damage. It is coherent, workable and evidence-based.

How can the applicant, with a hearty solution on the infrastructure plate - cry too costly, and too long a journey when neither issue will impact them greatly? Plus given all the conversations in Westminster for a need for the NSIP applications to work together to deliver an integrated access solution this should be taken into account.

Finally and importantly I too wish to recognise the work of **Mr Michael Mohoney** — he was Speaker 21 this morning. His contribution was sublime and exposed in granular detail where these complex documents were heading and I wish you to go back over his every word. He unpacked it and pointed the clever Nget escape route out.

His exposure of mitigation being quietly reduced was incisive and necessary, and his questioning of Ngets legal instructions to their lawyers, and his rigorous questions as to where the applicant really stands with respect to governance and ethics deserves serious scrutiny.

I don’t see any great solutions or investment. No new roads or access roads to help Saxmundham develop. These are asset failures.

I therefore urge the Planning Inspectorate to uphold the principles on which the DCO system was founded: transparency, rigour, fairness and accountability and without detailed submissions from the applicant this is not currently possible. Our community deserves nothing less. Thank you.