

From: [Fiona Gilmore](#)
To: [South East Anglia Link](#)
Cc: [Fiona Gilmore](#)
Subject: Re: Submission by Fiona Gilmore : Sea Link DCO Examination Deadline 6
Date: 13 April 2026 21:24:03

Re: [REDACTED]

Dear Planning Inspectors

Thank you for considering our submissions as part of the Examination process.

There are a number of issues that I wish to raise as a result of what was said at the Hearings which took place in late March 2026.

1. NGET's brazen attempt to downplay the inevitable adverse impacts of the Sea Link project

On two occasions the Barrister speaking on behalf of NGET dismissed the possibility of assessing the impact that Sea Link may have on tourism and the interrelated issues of traffic, emergency services, access for local residents and other road infrastructure problems.

Her argument was that Sizewell C was such a vast project and its impacts were so profound that it was really difficult to isolate any impacts that Sea Link would be making because in her opinion it was a very small project in comparison and the ripple impact of SZC "its noise" (metaphorically and literally speaking) drowned out the impact of smaller energy projects.

The NGET argument is simply hocus pocus.

National Grid wishes to draw a veil over the adverse impacts of Sea Link and other related projects such as LionLink, the National Grid substation and ScottishPower's projects and infer that it's impossible to assess the impacts individually and they suggest in a cumulative sense SZC is by far the greatest initiator of adverse impacts.

In fact, it is dazzlingly clear that there are significant individual adverse impacts which can be attributed to each energy project because each one has a particular cable route and particular HGVs choosing their preferred route for their particular purpose.

There are many local residents living along the cable routes and around the substation/converter zones who are directly and profoundly affected by National Grid's plans in particular, but hardly impacted by SZC except for the heavier traffic.

Sea Link and the other substations and converters use cable trenches which carve their way across bird sanctuaries, SSSI, habitat corridors, lowland wetlands, meadows and copses, close to homes in hamlets and villages along the way, blighting hundreds of acres of flat countryside and the actual substation/converter edifices absorb over 88 football pitches with concrete blocks towering over church steeples and the surrounding flat landscapes. These energy projects curiously have more adverse impacts on tourists than SZC because they spread across miles of coastal Suffolk whilst SZC is more contained to its Sizewell location. The HGVs for SZC cause much congestion but their routes are only in part the same as for the other energy projects. The A12 is a common denominator and the A1094 is generally used for their employee vehicles.

The HGVs and other related vehicles for these projects use country roads and lanes such as the A1094 dedicated historically to residents, emergency services, farming tractors, tourists, trades and commuters.

At high tourist season these roads are already severely congested. Our quantitative tracking studies in 2021 show bumper to bumper traffic during September and the concern is that the energy projects will be the “ tipping point”.

NGET suggests that it will be hard to identify the possible decline in specific tourism sectors because SZC will be the main reason for any change.

The Sea Link detrimental effect is far greater than the relative proportion of HGVs and other vehicles required by Sea Link. That is due to its particular cable route which has landfall at Aldeburgh North Warren, and which is visible to tourists who visit Aldeburgh and Thorpeness using the single connecting road for these two tourism hot spots. Sea Link project is not hidden away from tourists, on the contrary, it is unabashedly taking a highly exposed landfall location as is LionLink at Walberswick. Most tourists do not go to Sizewell and the majority of tourists will avoid Sizewell given the flattening of the trees and hedges in the approach to Sizewell. However, tourists visiting Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, Walberswick and the other cable route villages will be faced with construction works, noise and dust for years to come.

If National Grid had chosen an industrial brownfield site such as Grain these issues would disappear because Grain is not a highly successful tourism resort. Aldeburgh and the coastal Suffolk region is not Grain. It will however become more like Grain as a consequence of the intense industrialisation process.

That in turn leads to the commoditisation of the tourism sector. That has huge implications for the SMEs and for those livelihoods dependent on a thriving fine food and hospitality economy.

Until a baseline attitudinal tracking study is carried out exploring responses to the cumulative impacts of seven energy projects but also the Sea Link project in terms of its location and specific areas of impact, NGET cannot dismiss the threats as insignificant. Our estimate of the tourism decline amounts to circa £0.5 billion over 12 years of construction. The Sea Link project along with National Grid’s substation and LionLink represents at least a third of the true impacts of the seven energy projects , given the particular geography of the cable routes.

We would expect full compensation to the tourism sector for that loss.

At the last Hearing for Tourism, we were made aware of the ESC initiative to have set up a committee tasked with the tracking and monitoring of visitors’ attitudes to the energy projects and the associated issues. Sea Link can be included in this ongoing tracking study. That requires various aspects of Sea Link’s plans to be addressed in the questionnaires, in particular the construction works planned at landfall.

2. Alternative sites have not been given sufficient consideration.

In view of the threatened seismic change in character to this region as a consequence of Sea Link and the other energy projects, it is incumbent on National Grid to rethink its plans and present with full transparency the alternative site options including Bradwell, Ardleigh and Grain.

These options were never presented by National Grid as comprehensive assessments including cost benefit analyses(CBA) . SEAS presented a CBA for Bradwell.

It is staggering how National Grid has continued to cruise through with one of the most ill-conceived, irrational and damaging energy plans without any serious questioning of the logic for an energy hub to be located in a precious wildlife and tourism hot spot. As we continue to state, Netherlands, Belgium and other North Sea countries choose existing

industrial zones for their major energy hubs such as Rotterdam and Zeebrugge.

3. National Grid has not been honest about its massive ambitions for this area

██████████ National Grid is a past master of subterfuge and disingenuity.

During the SPR EA1N and EA2 Hearings, National Grid ESO and NGET chose not to participate in specific Hearings despite requests from the ExA to attend to answer questions relating to their true objectives for this region. It was impossible for the ExA to assess the true cumulative impacts as there was an opaqueness around the various projects and their plans.

“National Grid is hiding behind the skirts of SPR” was the community’s concern.

Here once again, we see National Grid obfuscating and choosing to avoid inconvenient truths.

The quantitative assessments are lacking - for tourism, traffic flow data for tourism peaks on the roads, noise and vibration and for almost every other major issue.

Either National Grid is simply arrogant and thinks that they can ride roughshod over communities and the rest or National Grid is dissembling because they know that the hard evidence is against them.

As we have consistently said for the last three years, this is the wrong project in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Thank you for your consideration of these three points.

Best wishes

Fiona Gilmore

On 10 Feb 2026, at 23:46, Fiona Gilmore wrote:

Re: ██████████

Dear Planning Inspectors

Thank you for reading our written submissions with particular attention to our outstanding concerns.

1. Threat to Tourism/ Hospitality Jobs and Local Economy

A number of concerns have been raised by Interested Parties throughout the DCO Hearings, but the Applicant has **yet** to respond on a range of outstanding questions.

Tracking those promised responses is critical as there remain so many unanswered questions. By way of example, the lack of current quantitative studies exploring visitors’ attitudes to perceived and real “blight” to a unique tourism offer along the Heritage Coast

is a deficiency that makes any quantitative estimate of the loss of visitors and loss of businesses and jobs very difficult to measure. The 2019 DMO study signals a decline of 17% visitors. We think this could be optimistic given the new information regarding the scale of at least seven energy projects.

We extrapolate from 17% decline a loss of around £500 million during 10-12 years of construction. How do National Grid along with EDF and ScottishPower together seek to compensate this loss of revenues from visitors? Some promotional literature advertising the region is absolutely no compensation. If the experience is no longer “tranquil” and “beautiful”, no amount of advertising will bring our cherished visitors back.

Other North Sea countries prohibit major construction projects taking place during tourism seasonal peaks in tourism resorts. The Applicant’s discourse continues to ignore the fact that they wish to construct one of the largest energy infrastructure hubs in Europe bang next to a premium tourism resort. From our conversations with developers in the Netherlands and Belgium, they find it hard to understand how this country can be contemplating the construction of such an energy hub in an area of outstanding beauty and so rich in biodiversity. They do not build their hubs in precious lowland wetland areas but very carefully choose hubs in industrial zones such as Zeebrugge and Rotterdam. The Heritage Coast is the wrong place for such a scale of hub. The noise of construction, the lights at night and the relentless flow of HGVs are going to deter tourists particularly at seasonal peaks.

2. Needs Case: request for a dedicated Hearing

I am surprised that the ExA does not see the need for a further Hearing to interrogate the Needs Case.

I hope that the ExA will reconsider this given the fact that it is cheaper, faster and far less damaging to communities and environments to opt for the upgrading of pylons and there is no actual need for Sea Link.

There are better offshore grid solutions which will come into play over the next ten years. The UK has been slow to grasp the opportunity for offshore converter platforms and blind to the opportunity to upgrade existing industrial hubs closer to London. A developer led culture has brought us to this parlous situation. It is absolutely critical that these ill-conceived plans are interrogated fully in a dedicated Hearing where the alternative cheaper, faster solutions are given a full airing. It is surely the duty of developers and officers to consider cheaper, faster solutions?

3. Coastal erosion: crumbling cliffs and eroding shorelines have not been fully assessed.

The alarmingly fast-changing geological landscape should be reassessed by objective specialists. This coast is not suitable for these infrastructure projects.

4. Mental health : I have friends living on the frontline who are struggling mentally with the intrusion of this industrial onslaught. Already for residents living next to the Friston SPR works, machine lights are destroying the dark skies and changing the tranquil countryside profoundly. 10 to 12 years of heavy industrialisation for these Friston residents and for Saxmundham residents in the near future along with the other impacted communities has not been examined in terms of the cumulative impact. I knew one of the men who committed suicide. I heard the story of the other man who despaired after being told by an agent that his cottage was valueless. Both men had put their life savings in to the purchase of their homes. Anxiety leads to depression and ill health and disease. It is shameful that these very real issues are treated by developers with seeming disdain. If other North Sea countries can consider social, economic and environmental issues holistically and respect their importance, why does the UK planning system relegate these concerns in favour of developers' short term profit targets?

The Winser Report (July 2023) signalled the need to accelerate the planning process but emphasised the need for the application of holistic network design criteria at the outset of planning hub locations.

This is a tipping- point for coastal Suffolk.

The cumulative adverse impacts are too great a burden on a fragile coast and the communities will be broken by this onslaught. The evidence of despair and depression is there in the health and wellbeing reports presented by SEAS and ESC. It is beholden on the developers to acknowledge the adverse impacts and seek alternative solutions.

Best wishes

Fiona Gilmore

SEAS

www.suffolkenergyactionsolutions.co.uk