The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Sea Link

Volume 9 : Examination Submissions

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nationalgrid

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Version History

Date	Version	Status	Description/Changes
February 2026	A	Draft	Issued to PINS for Deadline 1
April 2026	B	Final	Issued to PINS for Deadline 7

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to support the application ("The Application") for the Sea Link Project ("Proposed Project") made by National Grid Electricity Transmission Ltd ("the Applicant"). The Application was submitted to the Secretary of State for a Development Consent Order (DCO) and accepted for examination on the 23 of April 2025.

1.1.2 A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the Examination. It is prepared jointly between the Applicant and another party(s) and sets out matters of agreement between both parties, as well as matters where there is not an agreement. It also details matters that are under discussion.

1.1.3 The aim of a SoCG is to help the Examining Authority manage the Examination Phase of a DCO application. Understanding the status of the matters at hand will allow the Examining Authority to focus their questioning and provide greater predictability for all participants in examination. A SoCG may be submitted prior to the start of or during Examination and then updated as necessary or as requested during the Examination Phase.

1.2 This Statement of Common Ground

1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared between the Applicant and Suffolk Constabulary (SC). It has been prepared in accordance with the guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024).

1.2.2 The SoCG was first submitted at Deadline 1. The SoCG has been progressed during examination period to reach a final position between the Applicant and Suffolk Constabulary and to clarify if any issues remain unresolved. This version of the SoCG sets out the final positions. Where items are not agreed this is because further information is required from the detailed program and design is required, these will continue to be discussed through the life of the project, the approach however on these items is agreed.

1.2.3 For the purpose of this SoCG, National Grid and Suffolk Constabulary will jointly be referred to as the "Parties". When referencing Suffolk Constabulary alone, they will be referred to as "the Consultee".

1.3 Description of the Proposed Project

1.3.1 The Sea Link Project (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Project') is a proposal by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (hereafter referred to as National Grid) to reinforce the transmission network in the South East and East Anglia. The Proposed Project is required to accommodate additional power flows generated from renewable and low carbon generation, as well as an addition to new interconnection with mainland Europe.

1.3.2 National Grid owns, builds and maintains the electricity transmission network in England and Wales. Under the Electricity Act 1989, National Grid holds a transmission licence under which it is required to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated, and economic electricity transmission system.

1.3.3 National Grid is also required, under Section 38 of the Electricity Act 1989, to comply with the provisions of Schedule 9 of the Act. Schedule 9 requires licence holders, in the formulation of proposals to transmit electricity, to:

1.3.4 Schedule 9(1)(a) '…*have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest*;' and

1.3.5 Schedule 9(1)(b) *'…do what [it] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects'*.

1.3.6 The Proposed Project would comprise the following elements:

The Suffolk Onshore Scheme

- A connection from the existing transmission network via Friston Substation, including the substation itself. Friston Substation already has development consent as part of other third-party projects. If Friston Substation has already been constructed under another consent, only a connection into the substation would be constructed by the Sea Link project.
- A high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable of approximately 1.9 km in length between the proposed Friston Substation and a proposed converter station (below).
- A 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station approximately 26 m high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials, similar small scale operational plant, or other roof treatment) near Saxmundham.
- A HVDC underground cable connection of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed converter station near Saxmundham, and a transition joint bay (TJB) approximately 900 m inshore from a landfall point (below) where the cable transitions from onshore to offshore technology.
- A landfall on the Suffolk coast (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness).

The Offshore Scheme:

- Approximately 122 km of subsea HVDC cable, running between the Suffolk landfall location (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness), and the Kent landfall location at Pegwell Bay.

The Kent Onshore Scheme:

- A landfall point on the Kent coast at Pegwell Bay.
- A Transition Joint Bay (TJB) approximately 800 m inshore to transition from offshore HVDC cable to onshore HVDC cable, before continuing underground for approximately 1.7 km to a new converter station (below).
- A 2 GW HVDC converter station, approximately 28m high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials, and similar small scale operational plant, or other roof treatment), near Minster. A new substation would be located immediately adjacent.
- Removal of approximately 2.2 km of existing HVAC overhead line, and installation of approximately 3.5 km of new HVAC overhead line from the substation near Minster and the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line.

1.3.7 The Proposed Project also includes modifications to sections of existing overhead lines in Suffolk (only if Friston Substation is not built by SPR) and Kent, diversions of third-party assets, and land drainage from the construction and operational footprint. It also includes opportunities for environmental mitigation, compensation and enhancement (which could include hedgerow creation, native tree planting, or habitat creation). The construction phase will involve various temporary construction activities including overhead line diversions, use of temporary towers or masts, working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, parking spaces, storage, accesses, bellmouths, and haul roads, as well as watercourse crossings and the diversion of public rights of way (PROWs).

1.4 Format of Document and Terminology.

1.4.1 Section 2 of this SoCG summarises the engagement the Parties have had with regard to the Proposed Project.

1.4.2 Section 3 of this SoCG summarises the issues that are ‘agreed’, ‘not agreed’ or are ‘under discussion’. ‘Not agreed’ indicates a final position where the Parties have agreed to disagree, whilst ‘Agreed’ indicates where the issue has been resolved. The Parties have also indicated the likelihood that agreement will be reached on each item.

1.4.3 Abbreviations used within the SoCG are provided in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Abbreviation

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
AIL	Abnormal Indivisible Load
DCO	Development Consent Order
NG/NGET	National Grid/National Grid Electricity Transmission
SC	Suffolk Constabulary

2. Record of Engagement

2.1 Role of Suffolk Constabulary in the DCO process

2.1.1 The Consultee is a member of the emergency services, and the SC is the official police force for the county of Suffolk. SC handles everything from emergency response and crime investigation to community safety and public events. The SC have a responsibility to help maintain road safety and collaborate with the proposed project regarding AIL deliveries. Additionally, support the proposed project in upholding security and safety concerns associated with the works. The consultee should provide guidance and comments on the Sea Link proposal and co-own the SoCG between Suffolk Constabulary and National Grid.

2.1.2 Suffolk Constabulary is encouraged to discuss and work with the Applicant at the pre-examination stage of the application process for the proposed project.

2.2 Summary of engagement

2.2.1 Table 2.1 summarises the consultation and engagement that has taken place between the Parties.

Table 2.1 Record of meetings and correspondence with the SC

Date	Topic	Discussion points
17/07/2025	*Initial Contact from SC*	*Initial email sent from SC to NG. The email requested a meeting between SC and NG regarding the potential impacts of Sea Link on policing in Suffolk. The email includes details as to why SC are concerned, namely the requirement of escort vehicles for AIL vehicles.*
03/09/2025	*Meeting between NG and SC*	*Attendees at meeting:* *National Grid – Helen Langford, Ali Leeder, Tim Dawson, John Weeks, Stephen Campbell.* *Suffolk Constabulary – Leigh Jenkins, Kirsty Dorrell, Amy Delacruz, Victoria McIntee.* *……..* *Meeting to discuss the information the Suffolk Constabulary requires to inform their traffic modelling and forecasting of AIL movements. This will inform if they can support the Sea Link project as 'business as usual' or if it will need a 'dedicated team'. It was agreed that the Design Team will provide Suffolk Constabulary with the below information to support their initial modelling and forecasting. Subsequent discussions with NG and SC will take place following this.* *Required information (provided below in Table 3.1)* - *Number of AILs* - *Delivery Schedules* - *Dimensions of vehicles* - *Routes* - *Port of Origin*

Date	Topic	Discussion points
		It was noted in the meeting that the above information can be provided, however it is caveated that it will be subject to change following the appointment of a contractor and their supply chain and the development of detailed design.
04/12/2025	*Meeting between NG and SC*	*Attendees at meeting:* *National Grid – Tim Dawson, John Weeks, Stephen Campbell, Aidan Williams.* *Suffolk Constabulary – Leigh Jenkins, Justine Petrie, Amy Delacruz, Victoria McIntee.* *……...* *Meeting to discuss the results of Suffolk Constabulary forecasting and modelling from the information provided to them. The findings of the Constabulary's assessment indicated that a dedicated AIL team would be required, as the number and frequency of movements would impact baseline policing. As a result, the Suffolk Constabulary are to provide NG with a breakdown of the pricing associated with providing the dedicated team. It was noted that the costing is a worst-case scenario, and efficiencies will be supported if it's possible to reduce their workload and stand-up periods. Suffolk Constabulary are also to provide NG with an estimated cost for support on 'preparatory work'.* *NG confirmed that the formal instruction and refined traffic movements would come from the appointed contractor, and NG will confirm a traffic co-ordinator who will continue communications with the constabulary.* *A further meeting was scheduled for 12/01/2026. It was noted that this meeting may focus on financial matters.*
12/01/2026	*Meeting between NG and SC*	*Attendees at meeting:* *National Grid – Tim Dawson, John Weeks, Aidan Williams.* *Suffolk Constabulary – Leigh Jenkins, Justine Petrie, Amy Delacruz, Victoria McIntee, Laura Jarvis.* *……...* *Meeting to discuss the updated results of Suffolk Constabulary forecasting and modelling, including preliminary 'preparatory' works. The Proposed Project is to review the commercial requirements of the constabulary and provide a response regarding a purchase order.* *The SC noted considerable stand-up periods and a need for further details on the programme and movements when available. NG confirmed that the formal instruction and refined traffic movements would come from the appointed contractor, and NG will confirm a traffic co-ordinator who will continue communications with the constabulary. NG to provide the currently assumed AIL movements in a tabular form to the SC.* *A further meeting was scheduled for 10/02/2026.*
10/02/2026	*Meeting between NG and SC*	*Attendees at meeting:* *National Grid – Tim Dawson, John Weeks, Stephen Campbell* *Suffolk Constabulary – Leigh Jenkins, Justine Petrie, Amy Delacruz, Victoria McIntee, Laura Jarvis.* *……...* *Funding for preparatory work was discussed.* *Assumed AIL movements in a tabular provided to the SC as part of the SoCG and updated modelling results discussed.* *NG noted that the Transport Coordinator was still yet to be appointed.*

Date	Topic	Discussion points
10/03/2026	*Meeting between NG and SC*	*Attendees at meeting:* *National Grid – James Buckley, Aidan Williams* *Suffolk Constabulary – Leigh Jenkins, Justine Petrie, Amy Delacruz, Victoria McIntee, Laura Jarvis.* *……..* *SC confirmed that the PO for preparatory work was received.* *NG provided a contact for other NSIPs in the area and SC involvement in a Strategic Energy Projects Update Meeting was discussed.* *The traffic coordinator is still to be confirmed, but it was highlighted to SC that there will be 2 or 3 coordinators for Converter and one for Cable route.* *NG also agreed to arrange a meeting for transport plans once construction teams have produced them and to share a draft construction management plan.*

3. Areas of Discussion Between the Parties

3.1 AIL deliveries

Table 3.1 AIL deliveries

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	SC Current Position	The Applicant's Current Position	Status
3.1.1	N/A	Number of AIL movements and delivery routes.	SC notes that the two parties have engaged through numerous meetings, and the Applicant has been proactive throughout the process. Following these discussions, and the information which has been provided by the Applicant, SC has undertaken extensive modelling which meets the identified demand. Ultimately, SC's position is that the onus remains on the Applicant to ensure that the data that has been provided is accurate, and that it remains accurate as the project evolves. Therefore, if the Applicant's requirements change then SC expects that they will provide SC with	Seven AIL movements will be required for the Saxmundham Converter Station transformers, which will either be routed via the B1121 Main Road or from the Snape Road Access (via Leiston). The cable delivery drums may meet the AIL requirements depending on the detailed design and proposed section length to be used on the project, the number of cable drum movements will be defined at detailed design stage but it is assumed that approximately 40 vehicles will be required	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	SC Current Position	The Applicant's Current Position	Status
			updated data as early as possible so that the modelling can be accurately re-run. If the revised modelling reveals additional demands on SC, then additional mitigation will be required, but this is a matter that can be dealt with directly with the Applicant on an ongoing basis. With respect to the haul roads, SC notes that the Applicant has confirmed that these will be able to accommodate movements on site and that therefore no additional requirements will be imposed on SC once these are operational.	(22 for the HVDC and 18 for the HVAC), these will access site from Snape Road (via Leiston). In addition, there is the potential that the Contractor may select cranes or piling rigs that require AIL movements, we have assumed crane and piling rig mobilisation to four areas of the site for the Fromus Bridge, Saxmundham Converter Station, Kiln Lane Substation and landfall works. The first two of these would be accessed from the B1121 Main Road, Kiln Lane Substation will be accessed from Snape Road and the landfall accessed from Leiston Road. Where possible, the proposed project will look to use standard vehicles by breaking large elements down.	

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	SC Current Position	The Applicant's Current Position	Status
				We therefore anticipate approximately 55 AIL vehicles which would equate to 110 AIL movements. Noted that once on site, internal haul roads will be used to move vehicles and hence no escorting is required from this point. As requested, this information has been provided in a tabular format in Appendix 1. The Applicant will provide further information when it becomes available from its contractor and will meet regularly with SC to continue the discussions over the project	
3.1.2	N/A	Delivery schedules	As above, SC's starting position is that there is an onus on the Applicant to	Should the project receive consent in late 2026 we would be	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	SC Current Position	The Applicant's Current Position	Status
			provide SC with accurate data in order to inform modelling. This includes providing SC with any updated delivery schedules in good time so that SC is able to realistically train and 'stand up' an escort team. SC also notes that the Applicant must be prepared to pay for services which reflect their demand. With respect to the Fromus bridge works that are intended to commence in winter 2026, SC requests that the Applicant provides the applicable dimensions so that modelling can be undertaken. Without prejudice to the results of any modelling, SC considers that it is likely that these movements could be escorted on a BAU basis. With respect to the movement of cable drums, SC considers it almost certain that police escorts will be required, and arrangements will need to be made in due course to fund	looking to commence works in Spring 2027 with initial AIL movements associated with the Fromus bridge works in late spring 2027. The Converter station foundation works would likely occur in late summer 2027 and the substation and landfall works in spring 2028, all requiring additional minor AIL movements. The significant AIL movements associated with the cable drums would occur over Summer and Autumn 2028. The transformers would likely be brought in in late 2028 or early 2029 following the cable drum movements. It is noted that if the window of delivery changes, SC may need to re-model and assess their support capabilities.	

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	SC Current Position	The Applicant's Current Position	Status
			the provision of these services.	As requested, this information has been provided in a tabular format in Appendix 1. The Applicant will provide further information when it becomes available from its contractor and will meet regularly with SC to continue the discussions over the project	
3.1.3	N/A	Vehicle dimensions	In order to appropriately assess whether a police escort is required, SC requires further information on the vehicles, in particular the loaded and unloaded dimensions for both cable drum and transformer delivery vehicles. Whilst SC understands that the Applicant has provided SC with all known dimensions so far, SC emphasises that the final known dimensions will need to be disclosed at the earliest	**Transformer delivery vehicle** • AL50 Girder 12 axial (with trailer); • Overall length 74.720 m; • Overall width 5.336 m; and • Overall body height 5 m.	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	SC Current Position	The Applicant's Current Position	Status
			convenience in order to facilitate modelling.	**Cable drum delivery vehicle** • Overall length 25.440 m; • Overall width 4.500 m; and • Overall body height 4.8 m.	
3.1.4	N/A	Port of origin	SC has no preference in terms of the port of origin. However, from an operational perspective SC requests that advance notice of the ultimate port of origin is given to SC as soon as possible in order to facilitate the modelling process. SC also notes that it prefers that a consistent port of origin can be adopted in order to facilitate the management of an escort team.	The decision on the port used for the deliveries will be subject to the final decision of the Contractor. However, at this stage of the project the Port of Lowestoft should be assumed. The Applicant will provide further information when it becomes available from its contractor and will meet regularly with SC to continue the discussions over the project	Agreed

4. Approvals

Signed	
On Behalf of	Suffolk Constabulary
Name	[redacted]
Position	Business Liaison Manager
Date	16/04/2026

Signed	[redacted]
On Behalf of	NGET
Name	James Buckley
Position	Senior Project Manager
Date	20/04/2026

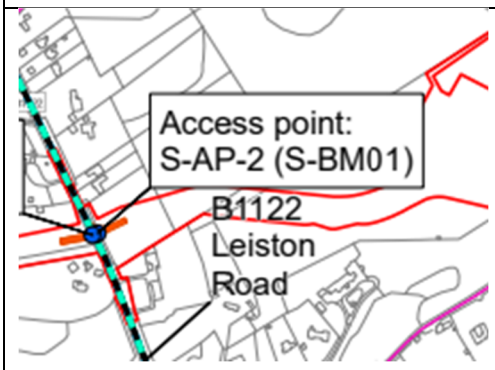
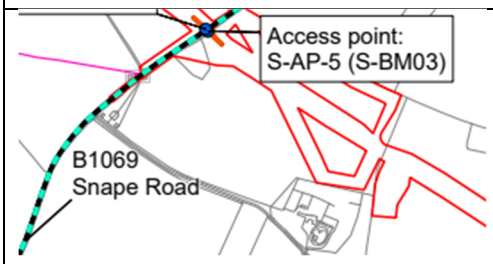
5. References

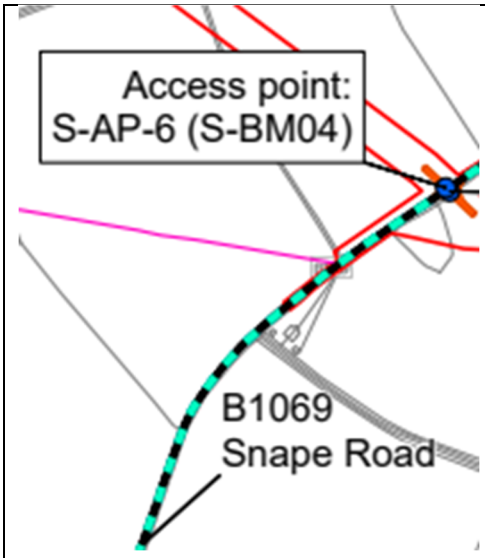
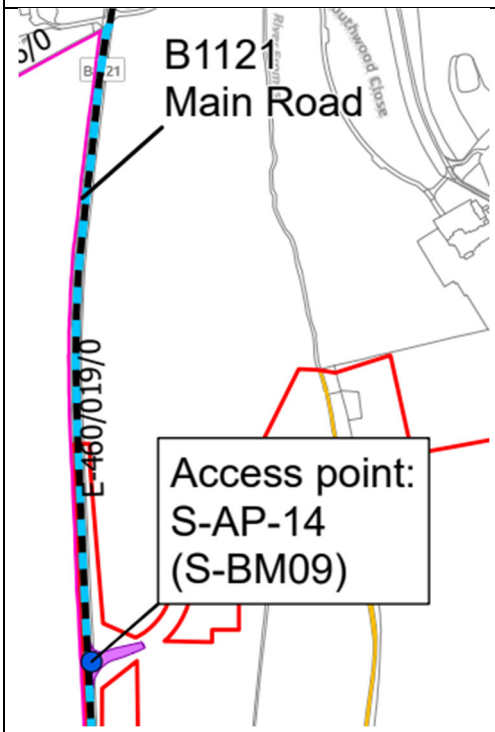
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2024). *Planning Act 2008: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-examination-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects

Appendix

Appendix 1

AIL movements and additional details

Localised project entry Location (access points can be cross-referenced with the 2.7.1 Access, Rights of Way and Public Rights of Navigation Plans – Suffolk)	**AIL Route**	**Number and type of AIL movements (Vehicle details to be confirmed by contractor at later stage)**	**Approximate Programme – (Detailed Programme to be provided by the contractor at a later stage)**
	Cable drums are assumed to be from construction compound off B1069 via B1353 and B1122. Drilling Rig will be from A12 via B1122, B1069, B1353 and B1122. Depending on vehicle dimensions vehicle may proceed to construction compound on B1069 to turn around before accessing B1353.	Cable drums (maximum 2 no.), plus the trenchless landfall drilling rig. All vehicles are likely to require access and egress so maximum of 6 movements. *Cable Drum Delivery Vehicle:* *Overall length 26m* *Overall width 4.5m* *Overall body height 4.8m*	Drilling Rig movements Q1 and Q3 2028. Cable Drums movements Q3 to Q4 2028
	Cable drums are assumed to be from Lowestoft via A12, B1122 and B1069.	Cable drums (maximum 10 number), likely to require access and egress so a maximum of 20 movements. (Inclusive of drums that could be moved to S-AP-2) *Cable Drum Delivery Vehicle:* *Overall length 26m* *Overall width 4.5m* *Overall body height 4.8m*	Cable Drums movements Q3 to Q4 2028

	Cable drums are assumed to be from Lowestoft via A12, B1122 and B1069. Piling Rig and Mobile Crane assumed to be from A12 via B1122 and B1069 or via A1094 and B1069.	Cable drums (maximum 30 number), likely to require access and egress so a maximum of 60 movements. *Cable Drum Delivery Vehicle:* *Overall length 26m* *Overall width 4.5m* *Overall body height 4.8m* Piling Rig and mobile crane estimated to be 4 movements.	Cable Drums movements Q3 2028 to Q1 2029 Piling Rig and Mobile Crane Q2 2027 – Q1 2029
	Transformers are assumed to be from Lowestoft via A12 and B1121. Piling Rig and Mobile Crane assumed to be from A12 via B1121.	Transformers required for the converter station (maximum 7no.), it is assumed vehicles will move in and out under the same movement order. *Transformer Delivery Vehicle:* *Overall length 75m* *Overall width 5.3m* *Overall body height 5m* Piling Rig and mobile crane estimated to be 4 movements.	Piling Rig and mobile crane initial movements in Q4 2026 and Q1 2027 with initial AIL movements associated with the Fromus bridge, followed by additional movements for the converter station works Q3 2027 -Q4 2028. Transformers anticipated Q4 2028 to Q2 2029.

The access bellmouths can also be seen with the Design and Layout Plans found here. Note that approximate AIL vehicle schematics are provided in these drawings.

National Grid plc
National Grid House,
Warwick Technology Park,
Gallows Hill, Warwick.
CV34 6DA United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales
No. 4031152
nationalgrid.com