

Dear Secretary of State,

I watched and listened to you on the Martin Lewis money programme last night and welcome the Government's commitment to reducing household energy bills. With billions of pounds being invested in energy projects, it is essential that they provide genuine value for money for consumers.

Whilst I am not a listed recipient, I feel compelled to write in light of two recent and significant reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office, which raise serious questions about the cost, deliverability and value for money of Sea Link and, more widely, the effectiveness of the current regulatory approach in protecting consumers.

These concerns are particularly relevant to Sea Link, the proposed 2GW transmission project through East Suffolk.

Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion – around three times the cost presented during the DCO examination.

The circumstances underpinning Sea Link's original need have also changed. Sea Link was developed around an assumed 1,852MW export deficit at Friston, associated with the proposed Nautilus interconnector. Nautilus was subsequently relocated away from Friston before the Sea Link application was submitted, reducing the apparent deficit to approximately 352MW.

This raises a fundamental question: what is the true need and total cost to consumers of delivering Sea Link?

During the DCO examination, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) identified an alternative based on upgrading and reconductoring existing pylon corridors, estimated to cost under £300 million, potentially saving consumers approaching £3 billion.

The NAO's concerns about consumer protection must also prompt renewed scrutiny of LionLink, National Grid Ventures' proposed commercial multipurpose interconnector affecting the Suffolk coast.

LionLink is not part of the Great Grid Upgrade. Ofgem expects LionLink to operate predominantly as an export route from Great Britain to the Netherlands, increasing GB wholesale electricity prices compared with the position without LionLink.

Furthermore, I would also like to emphasise that in addition to the overall case against LionLink, the latest proposed landfall site in Walberswick (G3) is wholly unsuitable, as it was with the previous proposed sites at G1 & G2.

Concerns regarding noise, vibration and light pollution have not been addressed.

Concerns regarding the use of the only road B1387 into Walberswick have not been addressed.

Concerns regarding the impact on the thriving tourism Walberswick relies on have not been addressed.

Concerns about the destruction of wildlife habitats, especially after the northward drift of wildlife displaced by the wildfires on Dunwich heath this year, have not yet been assessed.

I support offshore wind. However, achieving Net Zero should not mean accepting unnecessary expenditure on projects without establishing whether there are cheaper, better coordinated and less environmentally damaging alternatives.

I therefore ask the Government to ensure that:

Sea Link's cheaper alternative is properly and independently assessed;

LionLink's economic and consumer case is reassessed using current evidence; and
coordinated offshore solutions and better use of existing infrastructure are fully considered.

Thank you for your consideration

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Godfrey

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