

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Sea Link and LionLink in Suffolk

The recent significant reports issued by Ofgem and the National Audit Office (NAO) raise substantial questions about the effectiveness, cost and value for money of the Sea Link proposal.

The NAO has identified shortcomings in the current system that must be resolved if the Grid Upgrade programme is to deliver an effective service and represent good value for consumers. It also highlights the need for Ofgem to review whether its regulatory framework is sufficiently effective in protecting consumers while enabling the rapid delivery of network upgrades. Ofgem has now confirmed that the cost of Sea Link is approximately £3.2 billion, rather than the £1.1 billion previously estimated by National Grid.

During the DCO examination, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) presented an alternative proposal involving the upgrading and reconductoring of existing pylon routes. This option was estimated to cost less than £300 million, representing a very substantial potential saving.

The issues identified by the NAO should also prompt fresh examination of LionLink, the proposed commercial interconnector put forward by National Grid that would affect large parts of the Suffolk coastline. In addition to the broader concerns regarding the case for LionLink itself, the most recently proposed landfall location, G3 at Walberswick, is entirely inappropriate. The same was true of the two earlier proposed locations, G1 and G2. All three sites are located in the centre of a village and surrounded by residential properties.

I therefore urge the Government to ensure that the lower-cost alternative to Sea Link receives an independent assessment; that the economic and consumer case for LionLink is independently reconsidered using current evidence from 2026; and that coordinated offshore approaches, together with improved use of existing infrastructure, are given full and proper consideration.

I welcome the Government's commitment to reducing household energy bills. However, this objective must be pursued on the basis of complete, accurate and independently verified information, rather than through a process that is rushed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Howard

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