

Planning Inspectorate

Reference: OR-0010868/01

Customer reference: EN020026

18 September 2026

Response to Secretary of State's request for information questions 36 and 38

Sea Link

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above request for information. We have reviewed the Letter from the Secretary of State dated 28 August 2026 and respond as follows.

36. Water Environment

Our concern, raised in our response letter Late submission accepted at the discretion of the Examination Authority [[REP7-362](#)], was related to the potential vertical limits of deviation, and floor levels identified in the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). However, we were also concerned regarding vertical limits of deviation, and any interaction with groundwater bodies. We are content to resolve this issue in regards to both concerns, and we do not require any further amendments to Part 2 Principle Powers of the draft DCO.

We have reviewed the 9.155 Applicant's Update on Environment Agency's Outstanding Issues [[REP7-174](#)], and the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [[REP7-360](#)]. Within the latter, a commitment is included (W34) to construct the River Stour Crossing with a soffit level above the 0.5% annual exceedance probability flood level, including a minimum freeboard allowance of 300mm. We also note that the floor level of the River Fromus Crossing is secured under requirement 3. (3) within the Draft Development Consent Order [[REP7-003](#)]. We are therefore satisfied that the Applicant has provided suitable mechanisms to secure floor levels within the FRA, and therefore our flood risk concerns are resolved.

In regard to the interaction between the proposed vertical limits of deviation and groundwater receptors, we have reviewed a report titled "9.157: Suffolk Landfall

Trenchless Installation Depth Review Assessment Technical Note" by National Grid (dated September 2026, Version A), which provided an assessment deeper vertical limits and the potential to impact environmental receptors. The report stated that the expected depth of cabling and drill works (up to 25m below ground) is not expected to interact with the chalk aquifer located at -79.6m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Furthermore, commitments B09 and B60 in the REAC include mitigation and management measures to minimise impacts from frac-out and drilling fluid release. We are therefore content to resolve our concern relating to the interaction with groundwater bodies.

38. Water environment

We note that this question is addressed to Suffolk Country Council (SCC), however, we would like to provide comment, as it related to an unresolved issue (EA070) from our relevant representation [[RR-1586](#)]. We have been engaging with the Applicant and SCC, and are content to resolve this issue, subject to the inclusion of a requirement in the draft DCO.

Our original concern (EA070) related to a temporary attenuation basin in Suffolk referenced as TC-40-ATPN in Suffolk Drainage Strategy [[REP5-083](#)]. Flood zone modelling data obtained by the Applicant showed this to be located in Flood Zone 2 and 3. At deadline 7 during the examination, the Applicant submitted 9.17.1 (D) Suffolk Drainage Strategy (Clean) [[REP7-148](#)] which replaced it with a "Temporary construction linear attenuation along haul road" feature. A document titled "Linear Drainage Feature Note DRAFT ISSUE TO EA 090926" (dated 09 September 2026, ref.100107414), provided an illustrative arrangement of the drainage feature, showing it to be located outside of flood zone 3, except for an associated outfall. We note that this document is for illustrative purposes only, and may not reflect the final design. To provide us with confidence that future detailed design will not lead to development in flood zone 3, we proposed a requirement ensuring that we'll be consulted on the detailed design in due course. The Applicant proposed amendments to this wording, which we now accept. Therefore, subject to the Draft DCO being updated to include the following requirement, we are content to resolve issue EA70:

'(1) No works which form part of the authorised development related to Work No. 2 (Works to connect the Suffolk Substation to the Suffolk Converter Station) or Work No. 5 (Underground electric line connection in Suffolk) as shown on Sheet 1 of the Works Plans [[REP4-006](#)] only, may commence until details of the temporary drainage solution referenced to as the 'temporary construction

linear attenuation along haul road' in Appendix A of Application Document 9.17.1(c) Suffolk Drainage Strategy have been submitted to and approved by Suffolk County Council, following consultation with the Environment Agency.

(2) The works referred to in sub-paragraphs (1) also include pre-commencement activities where those activities are related to the works described and could increase surface water run-off.'

If you have any questions regarding our response, please contact
Nlteam@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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