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South East Anglia Link

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Dear Secretary of State,

SEA LINK, LIONLINK AND VALUE FOR MONEY FOR CONSUMERS

I am writing following your letter of 28 August requesting further information regarding the Sea Link DCO. Although I was not a listed recipient, I feel compelled to respond in light of the recent Ofgem assessment and the National Audit Office (NAO) report *Value for Money – Upgrading the Electricity Transmission Network* (11 September 2026).

The NAO identifies weaknesses in the current regulatory system, including the need for stronger oversight, transparent cost monitoring and greater regulatory capability to protect consumers while delivering the Great Grid Upgrade. These concerns are directly relevant to Sea Link.

Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately **£3.2 billion**, around three times the cost presented during the DCO Examination. National Grid presented a figure of approximately £1.1 billion, despite evidence from Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) that the true cost was likely to be around £3.2 billion. Ofgem's assessment has broadly confirmed the SEAS figure, raising serious questions about the reliability of the cost information on which the Examination was conducted.

The need for Sea Link has also materially changed. It was originally associated with an anticipated 1,852MW export deficit at Friston linked to the Nautilus interconnector. Nautilus was subsequently relocated, reducing the apparent deficit to approximately 352MW. Ofgem has also identified unresolved harmonic issues and further reinforcement requirements which may be necessary before Sea Link can operate at its proposed 2GW capacity. These additional costs are not yet fully established.

SEAS also identified an alternative involving upgrading and reconductoring existing pylon corridors, estimated at **under £300 million**, potentially saving consumers approaching £3 billion. This alternative deserves independent and proper assessment before consumers are committed to the much greater expenditure of Sea Link.

The NAO's findings also warrant renewed scrutiny of **LionLink**, National Grid Ventures' proposed multipurpose interconnector affecting the Suffolk coast. Ofgem expects LionLink to operate predominantly as an export route to the Netherlands, increasing GB wholesale electricity prices compared with a position without LionLink. I therefore urge

Government to reassess LionLink's economic and consumer case using current 2026 evidence rather than relying solely on the 2024 regulatory decision.

Separately, the proposed **G3 landfall at Walberswick remains wholly unsuitable**. Homes lie immediately adjacent to the site, with nearly half the village's homes within 500 metres. Construction lasting two years or more, including potentially weeks of 24/7 HDD drilling, would create substantial noise, vibration, light and traffic impacts. It would also affect elderly and vulnerable residents, wildlife and protected habitats, while the B1387—the village's sole access route—would face significant congestion and emergency-access risks. Tourism and local businesses would also be adversely affected.

I support offshore wind and the transition to Net Zero. However, this must be achieved through infrastructure that is demonstrably necessary, proportionate, properly coordinated and provides value for money.

I therefore ask the Government to ensure that:

- **Sea Link's substantially cheaper alternative is 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.**

The energy transition will command much stronger public support if Government can demonstrate that it is challenging unnecessary expenditure, protecting consumers and ensuring that major infrastructure is genuinely required.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Watson

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