From:	[redacted]
To:	South East Anglia Link
Subject:	Subject: Sea Link (EN020026) and LionLink: Request for Further Scrutiny of Consumer Value and Local Impacts
Date:	17 September 2026 20:24:32

To: The Rt Hon Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
c/o Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team, DESNZ

By Email: SouthEastAngliaLink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing as a property owner in Walberswick with a longstanding interest in both the future of Suffolk's communities and the wider energy transition. Having reviewed recent developments concerning Sea Link and LionLink, together with the latest assessments from Ofgem and the National Audit Office, I believe there are important questions that require much closer examination before further commitments are made.

I fully support investment in renewable energy and recognise the importance of modernising the electricity network to achieve Net Zero. However, support for decarbonisation should not be confused with support for every individual infrastructure proposal. Large-scale projects must still demonstrate clear need, affordability, transparency and, above all, good value for the consumers who ultimately pay for them.

The National Audit Office's recent observations regarding the Great Grid Upgrade are particularly relevant. Its concerns about oversight, monitoring of costs and the ability of regulators to ensure that consumers receive value for money strike at the heart of the Sea Link debate. These issues become even more significant when viewed alongside Ofgem's latest assessment of Sea Link's cost.

During the development consent process, the project was widely presented on the basis of an estimated cost of around £1.1 billion. We now see Ofgem assessing Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion. Such a substantial divergence inevitably raises concerns about the reliability of the assumptions available during examination and whether decision-makers and local communities were ever provided with a realistic understanding of the financial implications.

The justification for Sea Link also appears less straightforward than originally presented. The circumstances that gave rise to the project's claimed need have evolved significantly, particularly following the relocation of Nautilus away from Friston. Given these changes, it seems entirely reasonable to revisit the underlying assumptions and determine whether the project still represents the most proportionate and cost-effective solution.

Further uncertainty surrounds the technical work that may still be required elsewhere on the transmission network before Sea Link can operate at its intended capacity. If additional reinforcement works are necessary and their scope remains undefined, consumers deserve clarity regarding the eventual total cost rather than only a partial picture of expenditure.

What concerns me most is the possibility that cheaper alternatives may not have received the level of independent scrutiny they deserve. During the examination process, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions advanced proposals based on upgrading existing transmission corridors at a fraction of the cost. Whether those proposals ultimately prove preferable or not, the scale of the potential cost difference warrants rigorous and transparent assessment.

The same principle should be applied to LionLink. As I understand it, LionLink is a separate commercial interconnector project rather than an essential component of the Great Grid

Upgrade. Given the passage of time and changes in market conditions, I believe there is a strong case for revisiting its economic justification using up-to-date evidence rather than relying solely on earlier conclusions.

From a local perspective, I remain deeply concerned about the proposed Walberswick landfall location. While precise engineering solutions may evolve, the fundamental issue remains unchanged: this is an exceptionally sensitive coastal community, characterised by residential properties, protected habitats and a local economy heavily dependent upon tourism and recreation.

The prospect of years of construction activity, including prolonged periods of continuous drilling operations, would inevitably affect residents' quality of life through noise, vibration and light intrusion. The impacts would be particularly difficult for elderly residents, families with young children and those who are vulnerable or dependent upon a peaceful environment.

The practical consequences for Walberswick should not be underestimated. The B1387 serves as the village's principal access route, and any major construction programme would create significant pressures on transport movements, emergency access arrangements and the experience of visitors. Local businesses, many of which depend on seasonal tourism, would be exposed to considerable uncertainty at precisely the time when rural economies are already under pressure.

My concern is not opposition to renewable energy. Rather, it is that the Government should ensure that infrastructure is delivered in the right place, at the right cost, and for the right reasons. Public confidence in the energy transition depends on demonstrating that alternatives have been properly considered and that consumers are not being asked to fund unnecessarily expensive solutions.

I would therefore respectfully ask that the Government:

- Commission an independent reassessment of the need, cost and consumer value of Sea Link in light of current evidence.
- Ensure that lower-cost alternatives are fully and transparently evaluated.
- Re-examine the economic and consumer case for LionLink using the most recent data and assumptions.
- Give serious consideration to coordinated offshore solutions and greater use of existing infrastructure before further irreversible commitments are made.

The transition to a cleaner energy system is a national priority, but so too is maintaining public trust. That trust is strengthened when decisions are demonstrably evidence-led, financially responsible and sensitive to the communities most affected.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

Yours sincerely,

Simon P.G. Padley BSc, MB BS, FRCP, FRCR.
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