

Saxmundham Town Council

Sea Link Development Consent Order Application – EN020026

Secretary of State's Invitation to All Interested Parties

Design

We refer to C1-178, National Grid Electricity Transmission's (NGET) response, paragraph 13. The Council is disappointed that, despite a range of external design options being presented during the Statutory Consultation, curved roof forms have been discounted by the Applicant. The Applicant has instead selected the 'baseline' design, described as the simplest and considered most in keeping with the agricultural landscape.

It appears that part of the proposed visual mitigation relies upon coordination with the proposed National Grid Ventures (NGV) Lion Link converter station, including through coordinated colour schemes. Admittedly, if constructed, the proposed Lion Link converter station would occupy a more prominent location and is likely to have greater visual prominence. However, Lion Link remains a separate proposed project for which Development Consent has not yet been sought or granted. The Council considers that the visual effects of the Sea Link converter station should therefore be assessed and mitigated on its own merits and should not rely upon a separate, unconsented project. We ask the Secretary of State to consider this matter.

Benhall Railway Bridge

In relation to Network Rail's response, C1-160, it is apparent that agreement has not yet been reached regarding Network Rail's standard protective provisions in the draft Order and associated agreement. Network Rail has indicated that, should agreement not be reached, it will maintain its objection to the DCO. Saxmundham Town Council therefore maintains its objection to this route.

Permanent or temporary works to strengthen Benhall Railway Bridge would result in closure of the B1121, with traffic diverted through Saxmundham. The Council's concerns regarding traffic diversion during these works have been extensively documented during the Examination. In light of the outstanding Network Rail issues associated with strengthening the bridge, the significant visual and heritage harm arising from construction of the access road and River Fromus bridge, and the additional congestion resulting from diverted traffic, the Council remains concerned that Suffolk County Council's Northern Access Route has not been pursued.

Harmonics

The unresolved issue of harmonics was identified in Ofgem's Project Assessment of 1 September 2026. The Council is concerned that the potential implications of this issue do not appear to have been fully established during the Examination.

Depending upon the technical solution ultimately required, there may be implications for additional infrastructure, environmental effects and mitigation which have not yet been assessed. The Council therefore considers that the implications of the harmonics issue should be fully understood before Development Consent is determined.