OFFICIAL

From: Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP [redacted]>
Sent: 29 September 2026 09:23
To: DESNZ Correspondence [redacted]>
Subject: FW: Response to call for information from Secretary of State DESNZ (Case Ref: JR09361)

Dear Correspondence Team,

Please see below correspondence from a constituent of Suffolk Coastal regarding the Sea Link and LionLink projects.

I would be grateful if you could provide a response to the points raised.

Best wishes,
[redacted]

Caseworker
On behalf of Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP
Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal

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The letter is as follows:

[redacted]

c/o: Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team, DESNZ :

Ref: Sea Link (EN020026) – Request for Information

Dear Secretary of State,

SEA LINK – THERE IS A BETTER COST EFFECTIVE AND FASTER ALTERNATIVE

I am writing following your letter of 28 August requesting further information from several parties in relation to the Sea Link DCO. Although I am not a listed recipient, as a local resident I feel compelled to write in light of two recent and significant reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office raising serious questions about the cost, deliverability and

value for money of Sea Link and, more widely, the effectiveness of the current regulatory approach in protecting consumers.

I welcome the Government's commitment to reducing household energy costs. With billions of pounds being invested in energy infrastructure, it is essential that projects are necessary, proportionate and provide genuine value for money for consumers.

With reference to the recent National Audit Office (NAO) report, **Value for Money – Upgrading the Electricity Transmission Network**, dated 11/09/26, the NAO highlights weaknesses in the existing system which need addressing if the Great Grid Upgrade is to provide value for money, including the need for stronger oversight, transparent monitoring and sufficient regulatory capability to scrutinise costs. Importantly, the NAO recommends that Ofgem assess the effectiveness of its regulatory approach in protecting consumers while supporting rapid delivery of network upgrades.

These concerns are particularly relevant to **Sea Link**, the proposed 2GW transmission project through East Suffolk.

Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately **£3.2 billion – around three times the cost presented during the DCO examination**.

This raises serious concerns about the reliability and transparency of the information presented during that Examination. **National Grid presented an estimated project cost of approximately £1.1 billion, despite Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) challenging that figure and presenting evidence the true cost was likely to be nearer £3.2 billion. Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion, broadly confirming the figure put forward by SEAS.** The £1.1 billion figure presented during the Examination therefore proved wholly unrealistic. It is deeply concerning that a project of this scale was examined without decision-makers and affected communities being provided a realistic assessment of its likely cost.

The circumstances underpinning the need for Sea Link have also changed. Sea Link was developed around an assumed **1,85GW export deficit at Friston**, associated with the proposed Nautilus interconnector. Nautilus was subsequently relocated away from Friston before the Sea Link application was submitted, reducing the apparent deficit to approximately **352MW**.

Ofgem also identified unresolved harmonic issues which may require additional works elsewhere on the transmission network before Sea Link can operate compliantly at its intended 2GW capacity. The precise scope and location of these works have yet to be determined. In addition, identified reinforcement between Richborough and Canterbury in Kent is excluded from NGET's current £3.2 billion Project Assessment submission.

This raises a fundamental question: **what is the true need and total cost to consumers of delivering Sea Link?**

During the DCO examination SEAS identified an alternative based on upgrading and reconductoring existing pylon corridors, estimated to cost **under £300 million**, potentially

saving consumers approaching **£3 billion**. NGET had previously identified this need in the Network Operation Assessment to be required around 2035 to replace and upgrade the existing Sizewell to Bramford transmission line.

The NAO's concerns about consumer protection must also prompt renewed scrutiny of **LionLink**, National Grid Ventures' proposed commercial multipurpose interconnector affecting the Suffolk coast. LionLink is not part of the Great Grid Upgrade. Ofgem expects LionLink to operate predominantly as an **export route from Great Britain to the Netherlands**, increasing GB wholesale electricity prices compared with the position without LionLink.

Given the NAO's recommendations, I urge the Government to require an **independent and transparent reassessment of the economic need and consumer case for LionLink against current 2026 evidence**, rather than continuing to regard that case as established by the 2024 regulatory decision.

Furthermore, I would also like to emphasise that in addition to the overall case against LionLink, the latest proposed landfall site in Walberswick (G3) is wholly unsuitable, as it was with the previous proposed sites at G & G2. Homes sit directly adjacent on two sides of the landfall site, with nearly half of all village homes within 500 metres with dozens much closer. This means:

- Unacceptably high levels of noise, vibration and light pollution from construction work lasting for 2 years or more with severe impacts from 24/7 HDD drilling for weeks on end.
- Impacts on elderly residents, children and vulnerable people will still be severe, along with significant disruption to wildlife on the protected habitats which lie in close proximity.
- Severe traffic disruption and emergency evacuation risks arise from use of the B1387 which is the **sole** access road for residents and tens of thousands of visitors.
- Significant impacts on recreational tourism, and consequent threats to the viability of local businesses and jobs.

I support offshore wind and the transition to Net Zero. However, achieving Net Zero should not mean accepting unnecessary expenditure or successive major infrastructure projects without establishing whether there are **cheaper, better coordinated and less environmentally damaging alternatives**.

The energy transition needs public support. That support will be much stronger if people can see that Government is challenging unnecessary expenditure, protecting consumers and ensuring that the infrastructure being built is genuinely needed.

Before consumers and communities are committed to these projects, I therefore ask the Government to ensure that:

- **Sea Link's cheaper alternative is properly and 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.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Chandler