



SEA Link Meeting note

Project name	Sea Link
File reference	EN020026
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	05 October 2023
Meeting with	National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees/ additional contacts to share meeting note

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project update/timelines

National Grid (The Applicant) provided an update on the Sea Link Project (Proposed Development). The Applicant outlined the reasons for network reinforcement, such as historical location issues, a growth in energy generation, a growth in electricity demand and changing industry standards.

The Applicant provided an updated timeline with expected events:

- October – December 2022: Non-statutory Consultation
- October 2022 - Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping opinion submitted to the Planning Inspectorate
- September – October 2023: Pre-consultation stakeholder briefings
- 24 October – 18 December 2023: Statutory Consultation
- Autumn 2024 - Intended Submission of Development Consent Order application
- Autumn 2024 – Autumn 2025: Pre-examination, examination and reporting
- Spring 2026: Secretary of State decision
- 2026 – 2030: Construction

The Applicant highlighted recent updates regarding the Proposed Development:

- Ground Investigations (GI) and geophysics works are progressing in both Suffolk and Kent in September.
- Ecological surveys are ongoing and will continue to 2024. There were initially some access issues hence ecological surveys started later in the year than planned

meaning information from surveys could not be included fully in the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) but will be included in the Environmental Statement (ES).

- Contractual delays to marine surveys, now due to commence in late October – early November 2023.
- Statutory Consultation to commence October 24 – December 18 2023.
- Presentations have been held with Parish Councils to update on methods of consultation.

The Applicant confirmed that its Statutory Consultation is planned to commence on 24 October 2023 and is proposed for a period of eight weeks. The Statutory Consultation includes the PEIR for the Proposed Development. The Applicant detailed that the worst-case scenario would be described in the aspect chapters of the ES, which may be with or without other projects depending on the progress of all projects in coordination.

Approach to consultation

The Applicant detailed the upcoming Statutory Consultation, which will explain project changes since the previous consultation.

The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be available to view on the Proposed Development website on 24 October. The Applicant confirmed that a draft version of the SoCC was shared with the five local authorities prior to the consultation. Mediums such as post, public notices and posters will be used to advertise the consultation. Digital advertising will also be used via social media and newspaper websites, as well as local publications and legal notices. The Applicant also mentioned the 3D model of the indicative converter station will be used and presented at the consultation events.

The Applicant detailed dates and locations of public events to be held, spanning the geographical area of the Proposed Development. The Applicant will hold briefings and online webinars (live and recorded). The Proposed Development's website will have a range of info such as maps and other consultation material.

Section 47 notices are due to be published in the following publications from 17 October 2023:

- Eastern Daily Press
- East Anglian Daily Times
- Ipswich Star
- Kentish Gazette

For those wanting to view physical documents, the Applicant outlined deposit locations for stakeholders to submit information.

AOB/Next Steps

The Applicant explained that a section of cable previously proposed in Kent to be installed underground is now proposed as 2.2km of overhead line (OHL). This has changes since

the non-statutory consultation where two options were proposed including undergrounding and OHL. This option has been progressed due to technical issues with the underground option and the area being in the flood zone. The Inspectorate explored the planning implications of this element, to which the Applicant who confirmed its position that the proposed OHL link to an existing Richborough to Canterbury (400kv OHL) is partially a new OHL and partially a replacement of an existing OHL and it does not meet the criteria for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) in its own right.

The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant should ensure the details for the proposed 2.2km OHL, which forms a part of the Proposed Project is clear in all publications in terms of this position.

The Applicant stated that they had met with a local interest group in Kent, the 'Save Minster Marshes Group' to understand their concerns with the Applicant's proposals in the Minster Marshes area.

The Inspectorate drew the Applicant's attention to other NSIP proposals in the marine area, including the North Falls and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm proposals, and asked the Applicant to expand on any matters under consideration in relation to these two proposals. The Applicant noted the existing published statement between National Grid and the applicants of the offshore wind projects and explained that they were continuing to work with them.

A follow up meeting post-statutory consultation was proposed for February/March 2024.