National Infrastructure and Energy Projects – Town and Parish Council Update

On behalf of East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for Energy and Climate Change and the Head of Energy Planning and Coastal Management, here is an overview of this month's energy projects updates:

Sea Link – National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)

National Grid proposes to reinforce the electricity network between Suffolk and Kent via a new 2GW high voltage direct current link between a proposed substation near Friston in Suffolk and the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400kV overhead line in Kent.

On 30 July 2026, the Examining Authority sent its Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, detailing whether they consider the Project should be granted development consent. The Project is therefore now in the Decision stage, during which the Secretary of State has a statutory period of three months to make and publish their final decision. The Secretary of State issued a request for information from various interested parties, including ESC, on 28 August 2026. ESC provided a response to this request on 17 September 2026, reiterating its concerns in relation to the proposed operational noise DCO Requirement and securing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

ESC's response has been published, alongside other parties' responses, on the Planning Inspectorate's Sea Link project page. Following the deadline, the Secretary of State launched a further consultation to provide Interested Parties with an opportunity to comment on the responses submitted to the Request for Information. Officers are currently reviewing responses, particularly those provided by the Applicant, and will provide comments ahead of the 22 October 2026 deadline. A decision by the Secretary of State is expected by the 30 October and if consented, as with all DCOs, there will be a six-week window for any legal challenges to be lodged regarding the decision.

Ofgem held a consultation on its project assessment for the Sea Link project during September. Sea Link is an Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) project, meaning it is subject to Ofgem's ASTI regulatory and funding framework which is aimed at accelerating the delivery of transmission projects deemed to be essential to deliver on the Government's 2030 net zero ambitions. At the project assessment stage, Ofgem reviews and ultimately sets the revenue and outputs associated with the delivery of an ASTI project. Further information about the consultation can be found here - Sea Link: project assessment | Ofgem.

ESC provided a response to the consultation on 28 September 2026, noting particular concern that a lack of information provided by NGET may result in missed opportunities to secure funding for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and sustainability initiatives.

ESC has experienced significant difficulties obtaining detail from NGET in relation to a range of matters, most notably BNG, throughout the consenting process to date, and is extremely concerned that a continuation of these issues could result in missed opportunities to deliver environmental benefits that mitigate and compensate for the project's local impacts. Cllr Daly has sought to reiterate that it is not acceptable that BNG is treated as a discretionary add-on, and ESC has urged NGET to provide Ofgem with additional detail in relation to BNG delivery and its proposed Sustainability Implementation Fund in order to justify funding allowances for these purposes.

- Up-to-date Sea Link project information is available on the Planning Inspectorate's website: Sea Link - Project information.
- ESC's closing statement, submitted at the close of the Examination, can be found here.
- ESC's response to the Ofgem Project Assessment Consultation can be found here.

LionLink Multi-Purpose Interconnector – National Grid Ventures

LionLink is a new subsea electricity cable (known as an interconnector) proposed to run between Great Britain and the Netherlands with a transmission capacity of up to 2GW of electricity. LionLink is currently in the pre-application phase.

ESC submitted their response to the targeted consultation in early August. These changes include an alternative landfall location site at Walberswick, construction access refinements and highways safety improvements, and reduced core working hours. Following this consultation, officers have continued to engage on regular topic specific workshops and liaison meetings with National Grid Ventures as the project continues to develop. Officers will be attending the second Suffolk Design Review Panel Meeting which is scheduled to take place in mid-October.

Non-intrusive geophysical surveys will be undertaken at the proposed landfall site in first half of October. A local flyer has been issued to residents and elected members as notification of the works.

ESC will continue to engage on thematic reviews in preparation for the project entering examination in April 2027.

- The Planning Inspectorate's project page can be found here.
- ESC's response to the targeted consultation is available on ESC's website: LionLink | East Suffolk Council

Sizewell C – SZC Co

Sizewell C was granted development consent in 2022, and construction formally commenced in January 2024. The Sizewell C Works Tracker provides the most current construction activity updates: Home - Sizewell C Works Tracker (szcworkstracker.co.uk)

SZC Co. submitted a Non-Material Change application to the Planning Inspectorate on 12 May. East Suffolk Council submitted a response and provided comments on the eight proposed changes on 24 June 2026, raising concerns about potential noise impacts of the proposed steel cut and bend facility. ESC's response can be found here.

An extended consultee list has now been mutually agreed by SZC Co. and the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, which includes occupiers of all residential and business premises within Leiston-cum Sizewell Parish. As a result, SZC Co. is currently holding a further consultation period until 28 October. ESC's previous response will not need to be resubmitted during the further consultation period. Additional comments can be submitted by consultees if desired.

Once the further consultation period has closed, SZC Co. will be expected to provide responses to consultation responses received. The Secretary of State, as the decision-maker, will decide on next steps, including whether they deem an examination of the application to be necessary. Updates will be published on the Planning Inspectorate's Sizewell C project page in due course.

Officers continue to determine discharge of requirement applications. Recent submissions include updated Site Clearance Plans for the Main Development Site, and recent approvals include a Bespoke Mitigation Plan for the control of noise and vibration on the Northern Park and Ride Site.

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR)

The East Anglia TWO and East Anglia ONE North offshore wind farm projects have concluded the primary discharge of requirements attached to the DCO requirement consents for the onshore works. ESC has now discharged the DCO requirements for both projects associated with the substations stage, and for the onshore cable stage for EA2, and the cable duct installation stage for EA1N.

Substation civil and ground works commenced on site in early March 2026 and are currently ongoing. Works at the landfall location involving Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) commenced in July 2026, these are expected to continue until December.

The Energy Projects Team and Environmental Protection Officers have continued to work closely with SPR to address the impacts of noise resulting from drilling activity being audible within Thorpeness. Since September, additional measures have been put in place on site, these include:

- Extra acoustic panels on Heras fencing on the southern site boundary and on the frame of the upper level of the water recycler;
- Straw bales at southern boundary and internally within site close to the rig itself;
- Additional bentonite bags stacked to form a makeshift acoustic barrier, and;
- Reducing the RPM of the power pack, however this cannot necessarily be sustained all of the time due to operation constraints.

SPR states that they are exhausting every avenue possible to keep reducing levels as far as they can reasonably achieve.

A discharge of requirement application has recently been approved by ESC to amend the landscaping around the Kiln Lane substation in Friston. These amendments were sought in anticipation of the Sea Link and LionLink projects which, if consented and implemented, will require access through the site, necessitating changes to the consented landscaping arrangements. The key elements of the approved Landscape Masterplan remain unchanged, with the proposed changes confined to discrete areas where cable corridors interact with approved planting. This includes the substitution of select areas of planting with shallow rooted scrub and trees which can be safely planted over the cable duct locations to achieve the desired screening and landscaping effect.

- More details on the projects can be found here for EA1N and here for EA2.

Norwich to Tilbury

The Project proposes to reinforce the high voltage (400 kV) electricity transmission network between Norwich Main down to Tilbury in Essex.

The DCO Examination closed on 10 August 2026. The project is currently with the Examining Authority who will, over the next three months, formulate their recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will provide the decision by February 2027.

ESC is monitoring the project given potential regional and cumulative implications, but as the project is entirely outside the East Suffolk district, ESC defers detailed technical consideration to the host authorities.

- More details can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's Norwich to Tilbury project page.

Other updates

The Rt Hon Miatta Fahnbulleh MP was appointed Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on 20 July 2026, replacing Ed Miliband as part of new Prime Minister Andy Burnham's Cabinet reshuffle. Cllr Daly wrote to the new Secretary of State to inform them of the unique position East Suffolk Council is in with regards to NSIPs currently impacting the district. The letter asks the government to take a more coordinated strategic approach to the planning of energy infrastructure, allocate greater weight to the cumulative impacts of multiple ongoing projects when assessing potential alternative solutions, and to review the arrangements for community benefits and compensation in hosting areas.

- Cllr Daly's letter can be found here.
- The Secretary's department has responded to Cllr Daly's letter which can be found here.

ESC continues to engage with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero around proposals for a post-consent discharge unit for certain Development Consent Orders, following recommendations made in the Nuclear Regulatory Review (also known as the Fingleton Review). Through these workshops, officers have sought to provide constructive feedback based on East Suffolk's experience of hosting a significant concentration of NSIPs and the practical realities of discharging requirements, monitoring compliance, and maintaining relationships with local communities. ESC has provided insight into the process for discharging requirements and has reiterated the importance and value of local knowledge in the post-consent stage where details and proposals are finalised. ESC remains concerned that a centralised approach to discharging requirements risks losing the benefits of this expertise while leaving local authorities responsible for managing much of the project's relationship with the communities affected by it.