



Meeting note

Project name	Sea Link
File reference	EN020026
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	29 November 2021
Meeting with	National Grid Electricity Transmission Arup AECOM
Venue	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting objectives	Project Introduction meeting
Circulation	All attendees

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.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted (if requested by an Applicant for commercial reasons).

Details of the proposed development

The Applicant provided an overview of the Sea Link project, a high voltage undersea electricity link between Suffolk and Kent. The aim of the project is to create a link between the areas of East Anglia and Kent, in order to contribute to the reinforcements required to support future increases in power flows over multiple network boundaries across the UK. An overview of the marine routeing was shared with the Inspectorate (see Appendix A below).

The Applicant gave a description of the proposed works of the development:

- Construction of a new converter station within 5km of the proposed Friston substation with HVAC underground cables between the substation and a converter station and HVDC underground cables between the converter station and the coast north of Aldeburgh.
- Construction of a new offshore HVDC cable between the Thanet Coast (in the area of Pegwell Bay) and near Aldeburgh or Sizewell. Final routing is subject to further design and the interplay with other local cable infrastructure.
- Construction of a new converter station within 5km of the existing 400kv Richborough substation with HVAC underground cables between the substation

and a converter station located north of the substation. It is proposed there will then be HVDC underground cables between the converter station and Pegwell Bay.

The Inspectorate noted that the drainage outfall for Manston Airport was located in Pegwell Bay and queried whether the onshore connection route in Kent would have any interface with this infrastructure. The Applicant responded that the matter would be considered.

Activities to date

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that consultation with the appropriate local planning authorities (LPAs), Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, Kent County Council, Thanet District Council and Dover District Council, has started.

The Applicant is engaging with National Grid Ventures regarding co-location with the Nautilus Interconnector onshore infrastructure. This collaboration would include the potential to co-locate the landfall locations, onshore cable routes and converter stations. Conversations with other key stakeholders, such as Historic England, Natural England, have also started. A project [website](#) has been set up in preparation for public consultation.

Consenting programme

A table showing an indicative timeline of the project's stages was shared. Stakeholder engagement and Preliminary Route and Siting commenced in 2020; and Marine Survey took place in 2021. Non statutory consultation will take place during summer 2022 and will include the presentation of early proposals of the routing of the onshore and undersea cables, as well as the potential landfall and converter station locations. Statutory consultation is planned for Q1 2023 and the Development Consent Order (DCO) application is proposed to be submitted in Q4 2023.

The Applicant explained that individual components of the emerging development were not listed under Part 3 Section 14 of the Planning Act 2008 and will submit a s35 request to BEIS. (**post meeting note** – the request to BEIS is due to be submitted w/c 28 February 2022).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that Marine Surveys had been completed by October 2021 and that preliminary onshore surveys commenced in December 2021. This information is intended to inform the Applicant's non-statutory consultation. The surveys include noise, ground conditions, landscape and visual, traffic and biodiversity, amongst others. The Applicant stated that its EIA Scoping Request, was programmed for submission in late Q2 2022.

Practical Arrangements

The Inspectorate shared a form with the Applicant regarding the project information needed to set up a National Infrastructure page to which the Applicant confirmed it would complete (**post meeting note** – this information has been provided by the Applicant). The Inspectorate will create a project email account and notify the Applicant of it in due course.

Appendix A – Marine routeing overview

