



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Sea Link and Nautilus Interconnector
<b>File reference</b>	EN020026/ EN020023
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	8 April 2022
<b>Meeting with</b>	NGET/ NGV
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams meeting
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Induction meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

### ***Project Summaries***

Sea Link is a project developed by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) that consists of 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.

The Nautilus Interconnector is a project proposed by National Grid Ventures (NGV) consisting of a 1.4 Gigawatt multi-purpose interconnector (MPI), with the potential to connect offshore wind farm/s between GB and Belgium, connecting to the National Transmission System (NTS) to a new NGET substation in proximity to the Sizewell 400Kv network. A new NGET substation in this area has been consented through the Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) East Anglia 1 North (EA1N) and East Anglia 2 (EA2) Development Consent Orders (DCOs).

In addition to Nautilus, NGV have a second project in the same geography; the EuroLink Interconnector. Further information on proposals for EuroLink will be shared in the coming months.

The Applicant shared a schematic of the different projects being delivered in the East Anglia area and how they relate to each other. The current intent is for the Sea Link, Nautilus and EuroLink projects to connect to the proposed Friston Substation which has been consented as part of the EA1N and EA2 DCOs.

The objective of the meeting is to discuss the possible strategies for onshore co-ordination between the projects.

### ***Nautilus Project update***

The Applicant highlighted feedback from the community and stakeholders in response to the Nautilus non-statutory consultation (held September – October 2021). Principal themes which emerged included feedback that given the number of projects in the area, opportunities for co-ordination should be considered.

Nautilus multi-purpose interconnector completed its 6-week non-statutory consultation from September to October 2021. The consultation sought feedback on a series of different converter station site options, onshore high voltage direct current (HVDC) and high voltage alternating current (HVAC) cable corridor options and five landfall site options. The feedback received highlighted the need to engage with other projects to search for coordination opportunities. NGV intends to progress the onshore coordination work with the Sea Link project to explore opportunities for coordination prior to identifying a preferred route onshore.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Section(s) 35 Direction needed to be updated. The Applicant confirmed that the current s35 Direction describes the project as a point-to-point interconnector as opposed to a multi-purpose interconnector. The Applicant is intending to update the Direction before submitting a scoping report, which they are aiming to submit late Q3/ early Q4 2022.

### ***Sea Link Project update***

The Applicant gave a summary of the proposed Sea Link project. This includes an approximately 127km HVDC marine cable from proposed landfall points in Aldeburgh/Sizewell area to Kent. The project comprises an underground HVDC route from landfall in Suffolk to a DC/AC converter station within 5km of the proposed Friston 400kv substation.

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate with the proposed date for the beginning of the non-statutory consultation, to begin in Q3 2022 as opposed to Q1 2022. The delay reflects the need to explore the coordination between projects further and allow the Applicant time to include this collaboration in the consultation process. The Applicant's [project page](#) launched in January 2022, with Parish Councils and other key stakeholders made aware of the project and landowners contacted regarding land access.

The Applicant confirmed that it has received its [Section 35 Direction](#) from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to progress with the project under the Planning Act 2008 and the DCO consenting regime. The Inspectorate confirmed that this has now been published on the project webpage. The Applicant advised that it will be scoping at the end of Q3/ early Q4 2022.

### ***Onshore Coordination between NGET and NGV in East Suffolk***

Both Applicants are jointly considering the possible opportunity for onshore co-location of converter sites. The Sea Link, EuroLink and Nautilus projects would all need separate converter stations to convert DC to AC such that the energy can be transmitted through the national transmission system. The Applicants are considering whether there are any suitable sites that could accommodate up to 3 converter stations as well as possible shared cable corridors.

The Inspectorate enquired if by “co-location” the converter station would result in a lesser visual impact on a reduced amount of space as opposed to being separate. The Inspectorate also asked if

they would still be considered as different infrastructures or whether it would be a single building. The Applicants responded that the projects are being delivered by different partners with different drivers and objectives, therefore each project must be developed and consented separately, including separate buildings, but the joint coordination exercise will consider whether these buildings could be located on the same wider site. The Inspectorate further commented whether this would also entail a shared construction. The Applicants advised that if the timescales were to overlap, the converter stations could potentially share construction compounds to reduce possible noise and traffic impacts.

The Inspectorate asked if there would be any associated development. The Applicants responded that it was likely but would still look at ways both projects can coordinate to deliver any additional development and asked how this could be translated into any DCO applications, standalone and associated DCOs. The Inspectorate advised the Applicants to read the Secretary of State decision (and ongoing process) for the AQUIND Interconnector in respect of possible lessons learned.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicants that the yet to be confirmed Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) and Holistic Network Design (HND) would ease the opportunity for coordination. An example of two offshore windfarms currently collaborating in their non-stat consultation (Morgan and Morecambe offshore windfarms) was given to the Applicant. The Inspectorate advised the Applicants that in the event of having a shared consultation, both projects should be separated clearly to prevent any confusion for consultees, for example distinct branding, perhaps by using different colouring.

The Applicants informed the Inspectorate that the local authorities (LA) have been made aware of the coordination work that is underway between the projects. The Inspectorate reiterated that the LAs should be involved in the timetabling of the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) meetings to allow them to save resources and improve relationship between stakeholders. Some offshore windfarm developers have implemented Evidence Plans meetings and focus groups to discuss particular issues.

## **AOB**

The Inspectorate will send the Applicants the Morgan and Morecambe contact details.

A follow up meeting has been agreed for w/c 20 Jun.