

By email to: Guljinder.Mann@nationalgrideso.com

2 February 2024

Guljinder Mann
Public Affairs and Policy Officer
National Grid ESO
Faraday House, Gallows Hill
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Dear Guljinder Mann,

Thank you for emailing ESO's standard reply to SEAS response to National Grid's proposed SeaLink project and thereby officially informing us about the new OCSS development of linking Five Estuaries and North Falls to SeaLink.

First, Offshore Transmission Network proposals have been put forward by East Anglia Community Groups for the last five years yet this is what National Grid present, a sticking plaster that goes nowhere to resolving the many energy issues in East Anglia. This along with The East Anglia Review, do not address the concerns of East Anglia Communities as a whole. Far from it, the East Anglia Review options fail to address the call to use existing brownfield sites closer to London for these massive concrete monolith converter stations and substations. National Grid Plc is not listening nor is the Government.

It is unforgivable that National Grid SeaLink Team have known about this development well in advance of its October to November 2023 statutory consultation which is now rendered effectively redundant.

To comply with the National Planning Framework, it will now necessitate another SeaLink statutory consultation putting the communities of Suffolk and Kent under further relentless, deplorable stress and pressure.

Second, please explain what happened to proposals stating that Five Estuaries and North Falls were investigating a pooling of energy and connection to National Grid's Nautilus Interconnector with a single connection to the Isle of Grain. This Pilot Test One was discussed openly at meetings with National Grid over the last 12 months and it was even mentioned in the media.

Pilot Test One would reduce the wind farms infrastructure footprint significantly as there would be no need for substations or cable trenches at a coastal resort in Suffolk.

A second Pilot Test pooling energy at sea from wind farms East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two with LionLink and connecting at Grain, Bradwell or Tilbury was discussed. A third Pilot Test could see the Norfolk Offshore Windfarm Zone (NOWZ) connecting to Tarchon's interconnector to Norway.

The benefits of these Pilot Tests are clear and SEAS proposals have signalled the environmental and socioeconomic positive outcomes.

These solutions are cheaper in the mid-term, because there are cost efficiencies to be gained through pooling wind farm energy at sea.

Furthermore, the marine damage is an issue for the turbines but not so much relating to the subsea cabling. By pooling energy there are fewer long cables and Belgium's ELIA has shown that they are buried deep in the sand. This damage is judged to be far less an issue than the desecration to the countryside, the wildlife corridors, and the hugely successful important tourism sector along the unique Suffolk Heritage Coast and to the communities and their wellbeing.

It appears to us that National Grid is faltering in its duty to do the best for East Anglia and the rest of the UK by failing to fully explore these Pilot Tests which would pave the way to a fully integrated offshore transmission network over the next 15 years.

We are in favour of offshore wind energy, but not the current misguided and ill-conceived plans for the associated onshore infrastructure. The cumulative impact of these plans will devastate nationally protected environmental areas, bring rural roads to a standstill and destroy the local tourism economy with the loss of jobs for many years.

We are copying this email to Ofgem's CEO, the Crown Estate CEO and DESNZ Secretary of State and the media because we do not accept this callous disregard for serious issues for local communities when there are better hub locations available at brownfield sites closer to London and offshore solutions. Belgium and Holland have chosen Zeebrugge and Rotterdam for their major Hubs. Little England has chosen a medieval village called Friston. This is testament to the lack of strategic vision and concern for good infrastructure planning, and why this country appears to be lost at sea.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Gilmore
SEAS

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