

LIONLINK Multi-Purpose Interconnector

Interim Non-Statutory Consultation Feedback Summary Report

August 2023





LIONLINK MULTI-PURPOSE INTERCONNECTOR

To support the UK's growing energy needs, National Grid Ventures (NGV) is bringing forward proposals for a multi-purpose interconnector (MPI) called LionLink, which will deliver a new electricity link between Great Britain and the Netherlands.

A non-statutory consultation on the LionLink project was held between October and December 2022, and this report aims to summarise the feedback received during the consultation and how it has informed the refinement of our proposals.

Following the non-statutory consultation, we have identified an alternative landfall site at Walberswick and an alternative cable corridor to the north of Southwold. We will be holding a supplementary non-statutory consultation on these options later this year. The feedback received will be added to this report, which is why this report is marked as an interim.

EuroLink becomes LionLink

In April 2023, EuroLink was renamed LionLink to better reflect our Anglo-Dutch partnership. The fundamentals of the project remain the same, it is only the name that has changed.

LIONLINK PROPOSALS

LionLink proposals

LionLink will be the first link of its kind between the UK and the Netherlands enabling the cross-border flow of electricity and the direct connection to Dutch offshore wind. LionLink will deliver a range of national benefits including:

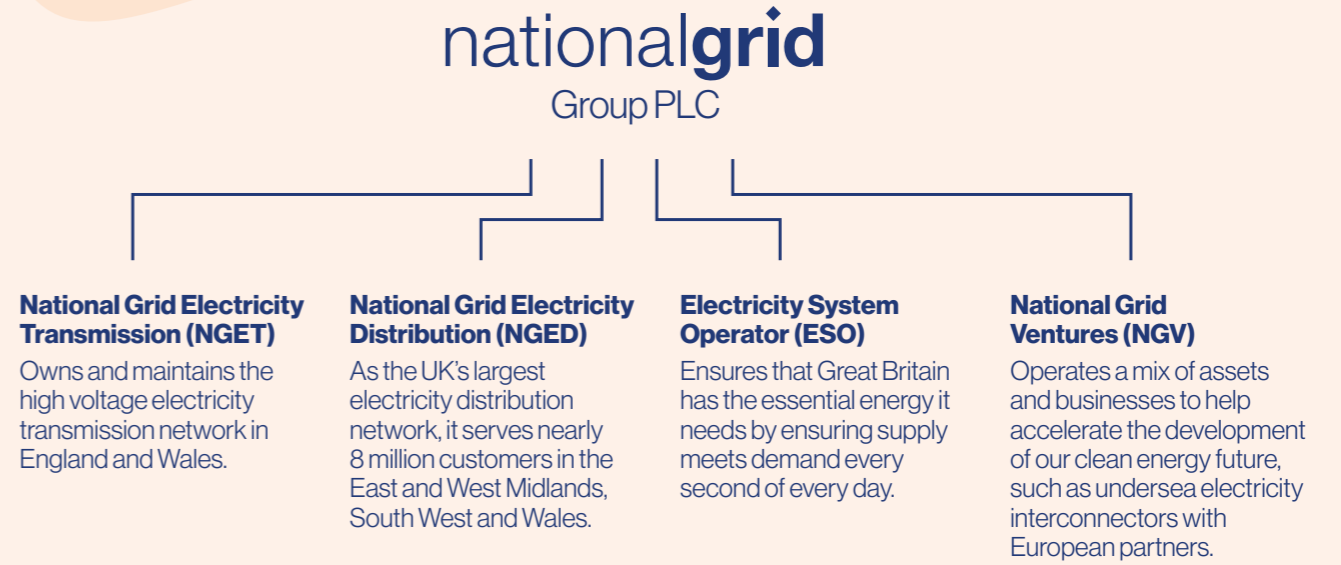
- Potential to supply up to 1.8 gigawatts (GW) of electricity, which would be enough to power approximately 1.8 million homes.
- Delivering increased interconnector capacity by 2030 towards Government targets, including the target of 18GW of interconnector capacity by 2030.
- Strengthening our national energy security.
- Supporting the UK and Europe's climate and energy goals.
- Boosting competition in the energy market and improving the affordability of energy.



National Grid Ventures

Proposals for LionLink are being developed by National Grid Ventures (NGV) and our partner in the Netherlands, TenneT.

NGV is part of National Grid Group, which is one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the world and plays a vital role in connecting people throughout Great Britain to the energy they use.



There are four distinct electricity business entities under the umbrella of National Grid, as detailed in the diagram above, all with different roles and responsibilities.

NGV is a legally separate entity to National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET), National Grid Electricity Operator (NGESO) and National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED), which are subject to separate regulations. NGV operates and invests in energy projects, technologies, and partnerships to accelerate the development of a clean energy future.

NGV has partnered with TenneT, the Dutch Transmission System Operator (TSO), to deliver the LionLink project.



OUR NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION

We held an eight-week non-statutory consultation with a mixture of in-person and digital activities, which included:

- Sending out over 15,000 consultation leaflets to properties and businesses in the area.
- Holding five in-person community events in Leiston, Saxmundham, Aldeburgh, Reydon and Dunwich.
- Location-specific social media advertising via Facebook and Instagram.
- Hosting two community webinars and a virtual exhibition of our project proposals throughout the eight-week consultation period.
- Meeting political representatives and local community groups throughout October to December 2022.
- Publishing an advert in the Eastern Daily Press.
- Being available via our dedicated communication channels (phone line and email), which remain open for enquiries:

info@lionlink.nationalgrid.com

0800 083 1787



The consultation took place from Monday 24th October until Sunday 18th December 2022. We would like to thank the local communities, businesses, elected bodies and community groups who came to our events and provided feedback.

During this time:

234

feedback responses were received from community members and stakeholders, including town and parish councils, and Members of Parliament.

87

people attended our community webinar events.

8,006

views of our website and virtual exhibition.

535

people attended our in-person community events.



YOUR FEEDBACK

The non-statutory consultation provided an opportunity for people to view and comment on our initial siting and routing options.

Feedback was received via various channels, which has given us valuable local community insights into matters, such as the local geography, environment, wildlife, culture, heritage, infrastructure and highways. The local community feedback and the comments received from statutory consultees are being used to refine our proposals and identify preferred siting and routing options. The feedback has helped us identify some recurring themes about what the public want from this project.

We have identified that most respondents supported infrastructure that would strengthen the UK's energy security and net zero and agreed that such infrastructure should continue to be a national priority. At the same time, many respondents remained unsure of the need for new infrastructure with several responding "Don't Know" when asked if new infrastructure was needed to strengthen energy security and improve affordability of energy. NGV is committed to demonstrating the significant national benefits of interconnection but also explaining how LionLink can specifically benefit local communities via economic growth, skills training and community investment.



56% of respondents either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" that delivering the energy infrastructure required to achieve net zero should be a national priority.

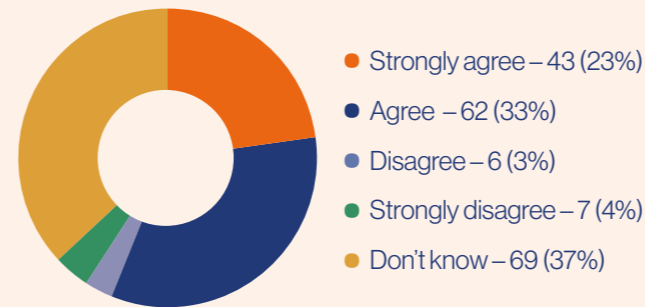


NGV as a responsible and sustainable business, is currently looking at appropriate ways in which it could support local organisations and charities located in the areas potentially impacted by LionLink.

We are committed to working with local stakeholders to identify the most appropriate approach to community involvement in the areas impacted by the project.

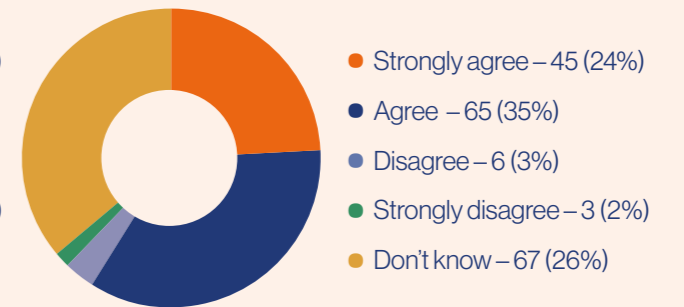
1. Delivering net zero

56% of respondents either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" that delivering the energy infrastructure required to deliver net zero and reduce carbon emissions should continue to be a national priority.



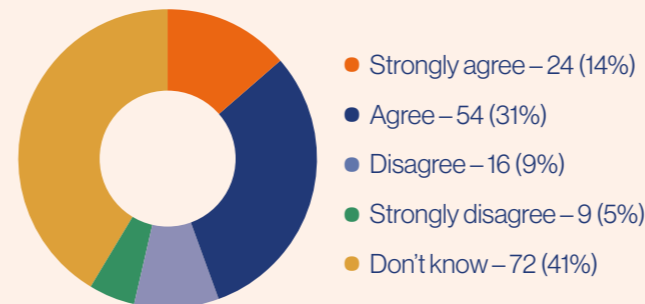
2. Improving energy security

59% of respondents "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that the UK needs to improve its energy security to protect against fluctuations in supply and demand.



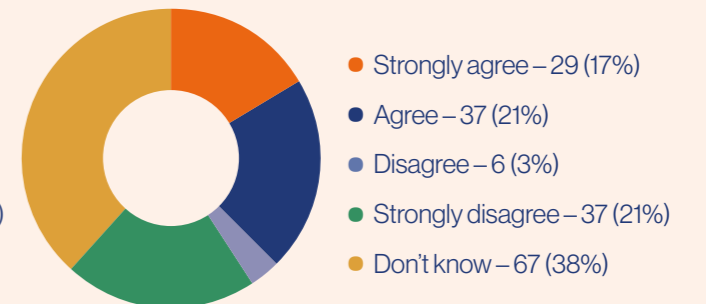
3. Keeping prices down

45% of respondents "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that energy infrastructure should be delivered if it would help keep energy prices down.



4. Commitment to coordination

38% of respondents "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that NGV's commitment to working with other developers in East Suffolk is a welcome step in improving coordination in the region.



KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM FEEDBACK

As LionLink progresses, we are utilising the feedback received to refine our proposals and identify preferred siting and routing options. The three most common topics which emerged from the feedback were:

01 Preference for coordinated infrastructure options

More residents supported developers working together than opposed it. There was significant support for developers to explore working together to deliver an offshore solution, whereby no onshore infrastructure is required in East Suffolk. They also suggested identifying a brownfield site closer to London for any necessary onshore infrastructure.

NGV received a connection agreement to a new substation in the Leiston area. For LionLink, we have assumed that the point of connection will be at the proposed Friston substation, as this benefits from an existing consent.

There was some agreement that one landfall for multiple projects might help reduce cumulative impact of in the area.

02

Avoiding protected areas

Many respondents wanted to see HM Government policy refocus toward more offshore infrastructure and away from protected areas, particularly AONB and SSSIs, with connections on brownfield land closer to London, which are perceived to need the energy more. This was related to the impact on local ecology and biodiversity, as well as the lack of suitable identified landfall locations due to their protected status.

The consultation was focussed on the onshore infrastructure and did not include detailed offshore constraints.

03

Cumulative impact on local communities

Concerns were raised about the potential for adverse cumulative impacts of several major new infrastructure projects planned in East Suffolk, including LionLink, Sizewell C, EA1/EA2 and Sea Link, particularly on highways. Most concerns related to ongoing construction traffic.

There were concerns about the potential negative impact this ongoing construction traffic would have on the local tourist industry, which benefits from historic villages and towns. Some questioned how the local community would benefit directly from the project.



ADDITIONAL THEMES EMERGING FROM FEEDBACK

In addition to the three most common topics summarised on pages 10 and 11, the following themes were also raised by respondents:

01 Climate change

Most respondents supported the need to decarbonise our energy system to reduce our carbon emissions. However, concerns were raised for the balance of this against building new infrastructure in areas of AONB and protected sites. Some respondents called for HM Government to explore an offshore energy network that connected to brownfield sites closer to London.

02 Land quality

Respondents questioned whether the land quality at certain potential landfall locations was suitable for energy infrastructure, particularly regarding cliff erosion at Dunwich and flood risks in Walberswick. There were concerns that the new infrastructure and construction works would further erode the coastline and cliffs, which respondents felt were already falling into the sea.

03 Landscape and views

Respondents raised concerns about the impact on the local historic environment of the area and the development of infrastructure in an historic rural area.

04 Local ecology and biodiversity

Concerns were raised about the potential impact on local ecology and wildlife, particularly protected/ designated areas, such as Minsmere. There were related concerns about loss of habitat caused by cliff erosion, and whether some potential landfall locations, particularly Dunwich, could speed up erosion.

05 Tourism and local economy

Comments were made about the impact on tourism, relating to potential high levels of cumulative construction traffic and the potential increase in accommodation lettings to contractors rather than holidaymakers. Likewise, comments were made about beach closures during construction and the potential damage this would do to the tourism industry.

06 Archaeology and local heritage

Respondents emphasised the importance of protecting the area's heritage during construction, especially sites like Aldeburgh beach, and ensuring cultural benefits were not lost. Key archaeological sites were also identified, particularly around Dunwich.

07 Flood risk and water quality

Questions were asked about whether there would be an increased flood risk in the area during the construction phase or operation. There were concerns raised about the potential landfall location at Walberswick, which already sits on a floodplain.

08 Traffic and access

Many respondents raised concerns about the increase in traffic during the construction phase and increased possibility of accidents. Many mentioned that the roads are already busy, and disruption could cause issues for local residents and businesses.

09 Consultation process and materials

Most respondents thought the materials were informative and of good quality. Residents of Walberswick would have liked to have had an event in their parish to avoid needing to travel to Reydon/Southwold.



NEXT STEPS

The non-statutory consultation provided valuable feedback to the project team and has resulted in some refinements to our proposals (detailed below). We value your views and will continue to work with local communities and stakeholders, to develop the proposals further.

Following the non-statutory consultation, we are refining our proposals as follows:

- In response to feedback around traffic and access (particularly around Walberswick), an alternative landfall site at Walberswick has been identified, which could reduce access constraints and traffic impacts.
- An alternative onshore cable corridor to the north of Southwold has been identified, which may reduce impacts on designated sites of ecological importance.
- We are continuing to explore the potential for co-location of infrastructure in respect of the converter stations and HVAC route, which aligns with feedback received calling for a more coordinated approach with other developers.

We will be holding a supplementary non-statutory consultation later this year on the alternative landfall site at Walberswick and cable corridor to the north of Southwold. This will provide an opportunity to feedback on our proposals and help us to further refine them before a statutory consultation in 2024.

Our full consultation report, detailing all feedback, will be submitted with our DCO application in 2025. We would then anticipate a DCO decision in 2026. If approval is granted, the site would be operational for 2030.

Further information about the supplementary non-statutory consultation will be shared with you and published on the [project website \(nationalgrid.com/LionLink\)](https://www.nationalgrid.com/LionLink) soon.

If you wish to contact us or would like to find out more information about LionLink, you can find all our contact details on the back page.



Contact us

LionLink Multi-Purpose Interconnector

Freepost NGV LionLink

info@lionlink.nationalgrid.com

0800 083 1787

nationalgrid.com/lionlink

