

Representation made on Behalf of the Walberswick Parish Council at the Open Floor Hearings for Sealink. Session 3, 6 November 2025

Good morning. My name is Josie Bassinette and I am speaking today as the Councillor from Walberswick Parish Council delegated to deal with NSIP projects in our area.

I have three areas of concern that I would like to highlight. These are (i) the inclusion of Lionlink in the Sealink DCO, (ii) the cumulative impact on our communities and (iii) the impact on the natural environment.

My first point is very basic. Lionlink is a completely different project from Sealink. All that connects these two projects are the same company shareholders wishing to develop and profit from them. It is incredible, therefore, that we see in the Sealink DCO a request for approval for land for building a Lionlink substation. There is no Lionlink project. For now, it is simply a proposal for an interconnector that is universally opposed as grossly inappropriate. Its proposed landing site and cable route are within protected habitats and in the very heart of historic Walberswick village before trenching another 14km to reach a substation next to the one proposed for Sealink. I know that this is not a hearing on Lionlink and that is precisely why the Sealink DCO cannot be allowed to bypass the proper processes and sneak Lionlink through the backdoor. There is no reason for the Lionlink interconnector to come ashore here. We ask, therefore, that the Planning Inspectorate turn back this DCO which tries to force some kind of pre-judgement of Lionlink to justify the building of Sealink.

My second point relates to cumulative impact. On this, I support others on the need for an Issue Specific Hearing. I would like to highlight a key issue that whilst the first national study of deprivation undertaken since 2019 has just confirmed that Britain's coastal communities are amongst the most deprived areas of the country, our coastal communities here in Suffolk are vibrant. That is because the economies of our towns and villages are not post-industrial like so much of the country's coast, but rather have economies built around the provision of natural beauty -- undeveloped beaches, peaceful landscapes, dark skies and undisturbed wildlife. It is shocking that as a nation we should ever consider putting more NSIPs here to destroy exactly that which preserves us. There are so many other more appropriate options.

In addition to this economic impact, I would like to focus on the cumulative impact on human health and wellbeing. Those like me-- and all the other Councillors, charity trustees and NGO members you are hearing from -- have lives that are literally being taken over by the need to interact with these NSIPs. We are all volunteers, we few of us are experts and we now spend years in a David and Goliath fight with enormous developers who drop projects on our communities one after another. If we sit passively, our communities are crushed. But engaging with these serial, uncoordinated projects costs us days, months, years of time and incredible stress. We must fundraise to get some expert advice. We must set up and operate websites to help keep our bewildered and dispirited residents informed and involved. If a project goes through, we then must represent our villages and towns on various forums and working groups to try to hold the developers to account. We are all already exhausted.

For example, I personally represent Walberswick on Sizewell forums and working groups which are essential for us to protect what little bit of mitigation and voice we have. One of these, “The Northern Transport Forum”, met just last night. Many people in this auditorium were there and then had to pull themselves up all over again and come this morning to these hearings to deal with SeaLink. It is brutal and relentless. It is wrong to keep putting more NSIP infrastructure on the shoulders of the same small communities and pretend that we can properly engage. The impact on our physical and mental health is unsustainable and unjustified. And it is particularly unacceptable when there is absolutely no compelling reason for putting SeaLink here.

Finally, I would like to make a point on how the environmental impact of Sealink is particularly severe because of its cumulative effect. I would like to share with the Panel that during the Sizewell C hearings, we dealt with the protected Marsh Harriers which SZC itself admitted would lose important foraging habitat. The argument at the time, which the Government accepted, was that there were nearby, undisturbed habitats where these and other bird species could exist. It was on that basis that mitigation for Sizewell was agreed. But now some of these alternative habitats are being threatened by Sealink thus undermining the Sizewell mitigation argument and making a mockery of the entire process. We can’t pretend that Sealink can be judged in isolation as if it is the first and only NSIP in this tiny bit of land. Like our human communities, wildlife along the Suffolk coast has nowhere left to go. For these reasons, Sealink must not be built here.

Thank you.

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