

ENERGY PROJECTS REPORT – 13 October 2025

Sizewell C:

Sizewell C enabling works are affecting many road users - it is useful to refer to the Works Tracker and register for updates at: [Sizewell C Works Tracker - Track SZC Projects & Get Alerts for New Activities \(szcworkstracker.co.uk\)](https://szcworkstracker.co.uk).

Additionally, rail crossing closures are planned for Melton from 10.00pm, October 24 until 6.00am on October 29 and Ufford from 12.01, October 25 to 6.10am November 3.

Sea Link:

The past few weeks have been dedicated to the Sea Link Examination meeting deadlines to register to take part in the Preliminary Meeting and Open Floor Hearings.

Those that registered as an Interested Party (IP) will have received invitations from the Planning Inspectorate, (PINs) to attend and if they wish, speak at the Preliminary and Open Floor Hearings.

The Preliminary Meeting is a virtual meeting to be held on the morning of 5 November and the Open Floor Hearings, (OFHs) are scheduled for 5, 6 and 7 November at Snape Maltings, (participants can either speak virtually or in person at the OFHs). The Town Council has registered to speak at both meetings.

The uppermost concern at this early stage is the Draft Timetable. Week commencing 26 January 2025 and week commencing 23 February 2025 are scheduled for Issue Specific Hearings (ISHs). These dates will coincide with National Grid Ventures (NGV) Lion Link Statutory Consultation. This will render not only the Town Council but also our neighbouring parishes and the upper tier council's staff extremely stretched. Thus, we have requested that the hearing dates for issues that affect our area are altered. This is necessary taking into consideration that NGET issued changes to the Development Consent Order (DCO) that has been accepted by PINs.

These changes that affected our area are:

- Changes to the works at Friston substation
- Changes of the 'order' area for the newly discovered henge in Friston
- Increase in area for maintenance of a new hedge to the south of the B1119 (Saxmundham to Leiston Road) **and most importantly:**
- Three different options to strengthen Benhall Bridge (plus an associated request for compound land for the bridgeworks).

The issue of the bridge will affect Saxmundham and Benhall and Sternfield and requires an appropriate response. The bridge needs some background explanation. Suffolk County Council (SCC) informed NGET months ago that Benhall Bridge taking the B1121 over the railway would not accommodate the weight of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AiLs) and that they wished NGET to include the bridge within the project 'order' area. NGET have now agreed to this request, hence the late changes to the DCO.

NGET have submitted three options to strengthen the bridge:

1. Install a mini bridge. This would require road closures to install the mini bridge on approximately 15 occasions. The outstanding query in this scenario is just how long the road closures would be. How many days to install, one day for the AIL and how long to remove the temporary structure?
2. Improvements to the bridge. This would be the best solution as it would negate the need for constant mini-bridge installations for both Sea Link and if granted permission, Lion Link projects. However, there may be objections from Network Rail and Sizewell C regarding disruption to services for a line that is required 24/7 for passenger and freight traffic.
3. Installation of a semi-permanent overbridge installed for the duration of the works. NGET considers that this option is likely to have more adverse environmental and traffic impacts.

Whatever solution is agreed, there will be significant impacts for Saxmundham and Benhall/Sternfield residents. Traffic will not be able to access the A12 at the Benhall junction and will enter Saxmundham leading to stress at the traffic light crossroads at South Entrance, use unsuitable roads including Chantry Road, Mill Road and Rendham Road and increase traffic at the far from satisfactory Rendham Road/A12 junction.

The date for IP's to respond to the bridge and other amendments is 7 January 2026, with the changes being considered during the ISH of week commencing 26 January 2026. Thereafter there will be further opportunity for IPs to respond by 10 February 2026 with ISHs week commencing 23 February 2026. As previously noted, these dates are already scheduled for the Lion Link Statutory Consultation.

One further issue that will be raised at the Open Floor Hearing relates to noise affecting Manor Gardens and Hurts Hall. Whilst this issue was raised in the Council's Relative Representation, NGET do not consider the properties to be badly affected and classed as noise and vibration 'hot spots'.

Cllr Geraldine Barker
30 September 2025