

# National Grid Ventures – LionLink

## Saxmundham Town Council – Statutory Consultation Response

### 1. Introduction

Saxmundham Town Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the statutory consultation for the LionLink interconnector project promoted by National Grid Ventures.

The Council recognises the national importance of strengthening the United Kingdom's electricity transmission network and supporting the transition to low-carbon energy. However, the Council has serious concerns regarding the proposed siting of the LionLink converter station in close proximity to Saxmundham and Sternfield, and the cumulative impacts arising from multiple Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within the same locality.

Saxmundham is a historic rural market town which serves as a service centre for surrounding villages and forms part of the gateway to the Suffolk Heritage Coast. Its character, economy and community identity are closely linked to its landscape setting, heritage assets and rural environment. The introduction of large-scale industrial energy infrastructure on elevated land adjacent to the town would represent a profound and lasting change to this setting.

The Council's principal concerns relate to the scale and proximity of the proposed infrastructure, the disruption associated with construction activity, and the cumulative effects arising from the concentration of nationally significant infrastructure projects within a relatively small geographic area. In particular, the Council highlights concerns regarding:

- significant landscape and visual impacts arising from the siting of a large converter station close to the town
- construction traffic passing through or close to Saxmundham, with associated risks to road safety and congestion
- noise, vibration, dust and disturbance affecting residential amenity and community facilities
- potential impacts on the health and wellbeing of residents resulting from prolonged construction activity
- the cumulative burden created by multiple infrastructure projects including Sea Link, the EA1N and EA2 substations at Friston, and the Sizewell C nuclear power station.

The Council is also concerned that several key assessments, including detailed traffic modelling and intra-project cumulative effects, are not yet available at the statutory consultation stage. The absence of this information makes it difficult for consultees to fully understand the likely impacts of the project or to engage meaningfully with the proposals.

While the Council maintains significant concerns regarding the siting and impacts of the project, it has sought to engage constructively with the consultation material. In particular, the Council welcomes the acknowledgement within the design documentation that the proposed landscape strategy has been informed by Saxmundham Town Council's *Empowering Nature – Protecting Saxmundham* initiative.

The Council believes that, if appropriately developed, landscape-led design and ecological restoration could help mitigate some of the impacts of major infrastructure while also delivering meaningful environmental benefits for wildlife and local communities. However, such measures must form part of a coherent strategy that addresses the cumulative impacts of infrastructure development across the area.

This response therefore sets out the Council's detailed observations on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), together with recommendations intended to ensure that the impacts of the LionLink project are fully assessed and appropriately mitigated.

The Council remains committed to constructive engagement with National Grid Ventures and other stakeholders to ensure that any development proceeds in a manner that properly safeguards the landscape, environment and communities of East Suffolk.

## **2. Overview of Local Impact**

The proposed converter station is located on elevated land immediately adjacent to Saxmundham and Sternfield. The scale and industrial character of this infrastructure represents a significant change to the rural landscape setting of the town.

The Council's primary concerns relate to:

- the proximity of construction compounds and infrastructure to residential areas
- the scale of landscape and visual impacts
- construction traffic passing through the town
- noise, dust and disturbance affecting residential amenity
- cumulative impacts arising from overlapping infrastructure projects.

The Council therefore considers that the project requires significantly stronger mitigation, clearer construction management proposals and meaningful engagement with host communities.

## **3. Traffic and Transport**

The Council is concerned that the PEIR does not include a full quantitative assessment of traffic movements associated with the project at the statutory consultation stage. This omission makes it difficult for consultees to properly assess potential impacts on the local highway network.

Traffic congestion and road safety are major concerns for the local community. Saxmundham already experiences increasing pressure on its road network due to regional development and Sizewell C construction traffic.

Particular concerns relate to:

- the capacity of key junctions including the A12/B1119 and B1121 crossroads
- the suitability of rural roads proposed for construction traffic
- the safety of pedestrians and vulnerable road users within the town
- the potential for construction traffic to pass through Saxmundham town centre.

Detailed observations are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1 – PEIR, Volume 1, Chapter 17, Traffic and Transport**

Reference	PEIR Extract/Statement	Saxmundham Town Council comments:
17.1.1	<p>There is no Traffic Assessment, or assessment of construction related traffic movements, either HGV's or worker's vehicles in the PEIR document.</p> <p>NGV states: It does not include a quantitative assessment of potential significant effects using the methodology set out for Traffic and Transport in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report. (Ref 1); the full assessment will be provided in the subsequent Environmental Statement (ES) when the required data to inform the assessment has been fully captured.</p>	<p>The Council is concerned that traffic and transport data is not included at the PEIR stage. Sizewell C Co. and other developers have undertaken extensive modelling, and there is an abundance of traffic data available for this area. The Council therefore considers that this omission prevents full and informed consideration of the facts as part of its response to the statutory consultation.</p> <p>Traffic impacts arising from construction activity in Saxmundham are a significant concern for the local community.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council requests information on the proposed numbers of HGV, Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) and worker vehicle movements associated with the project. The Council assumes that this information is available to NGV and should be provided to support proper assessment and engagement at this stage.</p>
17.4.12	<p>The assessment of traffic impacts will be based on two weekday morning peak periods: 07.00-08.00 and 08.00 – 09.00 daily and two weekday evening peaks: 17.00-18.00 and 18.00-19.00.</p>	<p>Within Chapter 2 (paragraphs 2.5.11 and 2.5.12), NGV states that core working hours exclude start-up and close-down activities, including staff arrival at and departure from site.</p> <p>The Council therefore considers that the shoulder periods of 06.00–07.00 and 19.00–20.00 should be included within the traffic assessment, as vehicle movements during these times are likely to have material impacts on the community.</p>
17.4.15	<p>Site surveys – Traffic and Transport</p>	<p>The Council suggests that NGV works with Sizewell C Co. to incorporate readily available traffic data into the assessment.</p>
17.5.6	<p>A list of HGV routes</p>	<p>In the absence of this data, it is difficult for the Council to comment</p>

		<p>fully at this stage (noting the concluding comments at the end of this section regarding the implications of traffic in Saxmundham).</p> <p>The Council requests that NGV provides an indication of anticipated vehicle numbers on each proposed route.</p>
17.5.9	<p>Preferred construction HGV access routes: B1121 Main Road/Bigsby's Corner/South Entrance and B1119 Church Street/Church Hill, Leiston Road</p> <p>Thereafter: Buckleswood Lane and Pretty Road</p>	<p>The Council queries why NGV is not proposing to utilise the proposed Sea Link access road from the B1121, just north of Bigsby's Corner, to access the B1119.</p> <p>The Council recommends that, should the access road be constructed, consideration is given to extending it through the site to bypass the traffic-light-controlled junction in the centre of Saxmundham, which is at times exceedingly busy.</p> <p>Furthermore, as a wider benefit to the area, the Council considers that, following completion of construction, this route could potentially form part of the local highway network, helping to relieve traffic for vehicles travelling from the Leiston area to the A12 without entering Saxmundham.</p> <p>Whilst recognising that detailed highway matters sit outside the Council's remit, the Council nevertheless questions whether sufficient consideration has been given to the use of very rural and narrow routes elsewhere within the proposed transport strategy.</p>
17.6.6	<p>Relevant accident data for the road network study area has been obtained from Crashmap. Data for the most recent five-year period (2019 to 2023) has been assessed.</p>	<p>The Council notes that the data includes a significant quiet period during the COVID pandemic and therefore does not provide an accurate or representative assessment.</p> <p>The Council recommends that traffic data up to 2025 is included to ensure</p>

		that the assessment reflects current and emerging conditions.
17.6.7	No accident clusters were identified within the study area. However, Suffolk County Council has advised that they have particular safety concerns at the following junctions within the study area' including the B1119/A12 junction.	<p>The Council considers this junction to present a significant road safety risk. Tragically, a fatal accident occurred at this location in December 2025. In light of this, the Council strongly recommends that this route is not used by workers accessing the site(s) via Saxmundham.</p> <p>The Council further notes that the route is wholly unsuitable for HGVs due to the 7.5-tonne weight restriction on Chantry Road. Reference is also made to the Council's concluding comments at the end of this section regarding the wider implications of construction traffic in Saxmundham.</p>
17.9.12	<p>Changes in traffic flows due to construction traffic could lead to significant adverse effects on driver delay (congestion) at junctions.</p> <p>Point d. A12/B1119 Rendham Road - junction improvement proposed by Sizewell C.</p> <p>Point l. B1121 South Entrance/B1119 Chantry Road/B1121 High Street/B1119 Church Street.</p>	<p>Sizewell C, whilst committed to undertaking improvements at this junction, does not propose to carry out major realignment works. The Council considers that the A12/B1119 junction requires significant intervention in order to improve safety.</p> <p>The Council therefore recommends that all NSIP developers contribute to the delivery of substantive highway works to address safety concerns at this location.</p> <p>The Council also notes that Chantry Road and Mill Road, which lead off the B1119 at Rendham, do not form part of the designated B1119 route. The B1119 runs via Fairfield Road to meet the B1121 on North Entrance, before continuing to the High Street.</p> <p>Chantry Road, Mill Road and Fairfield Road are not suitable for use as recommended construction routes. Reference is made to the Council's concluding comments at the end of this section regarding the wider implications of traffic in Saxmundham.</p>

17.9.15	No accident clusters were identified within the study area -A12/B1119 Rendham Road junction.	Several accidents, including one fatal incident, have occurred at this location. Reference is made to the Council's comments at paragraphs 17.6.6 and 17.6.7.
17.9.19	<p>Changes in traffic flows are anticipated to lead to significant adverse effects on severance for non-motorised users in the following locations' – including:</p> <p>Point a. B1121 South Entrance between LL-BM23 and the B1119 Church Street - due to peak hour construction HGV traffic in Saxmundham</p> <p>Point c. B1121 High Street/North Entrance/Main Road between the B1119 Church Street and Clay Hills Road - due to peak hour worker trips (car/LGV) in Saxmundham</p>	<p>The Council questions why workers are not proposed to use Sea Link's B1121 access road between Benhall and Saxmundham, using the A12 turn-off to Benhall. Reference is made to the Council's comments at paragraph 17.5.9.</p> <p>The Council also queries why worker traffic is proposed to use Clay Hills Road. This route is not an A or B road and is, in parts, narrow with passing places only, making it unsuitable for construction-related traffic.</p>
17.12.3	<p>Changes in traffic due to the construction of the Proposed Onshore Scheme with either the Amendments to Kiln Lane Substation Scenario or the Full Build out of Kiln Lane Substation Scenario could potentially lead to significant adverse effects in terms of congestion and delays for road users on the following road links and junctions:</p> <p>Road links:  B1121 South Entrance between LL-BM23 and the B1119 Church Street  B1119 Church Street/Church Hill/Leiston Road/Saxmundham Road between B1121 High Street and LL-BM26</p> <p>B1121 High Street/North Entrance/Main Road between the B1119 Church Street and Clay Hills Road</p> <p>Junctions:  A12/B1121 Main Road (south)  A12/B1119 Rendham Road</p>	<p>Reference is made to the Council's comments at paragraphs 17.5.9, 17.9.12 and 17.9.19 above. Further comment is also set out in the Council's concluding remarks at the end of this section regarding the implications of traffic in Saxmundham.</p> <p>The Council notes the following statement from Suffolk County Council (SCC):</p> <p>"B1119/B1121 Saxmundham Crossroads. Sizewell C data shows that this signalised junction is already operating over its theoretical capacity. Improvements have been made to the signals, including retrofitting MOVA. Local knowledge supports this data, with significant delays occurring on a daily basis, particularly on the B1119 from the east, exacerbated by the presence of the two supermarkets. Although only peak and shoulder hours were assessed, there is concern that delays occur throughout the day."</p>

	B1121 South Entrance/B1119 Chantry Road/B1121 High Street/B1119 Church Street	
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#### 4. Noise and Vibration

The Council is concerned that the main construction compound is located in close proximity to residential areas of Saxmundham.

Residents living in areas including Manor Gardens, Church Hill and Prior's Grange are likely to experience noise, vibration, dust, air pollution and light pollution associated with construction activity and construction traffic.

In addition, St John the Baptist Church, a Grade II\* listed building and an important community facility, is located approximately 330 metres from the draft order limits and may also experience disruption.

The Council considers that the noise assessment should clearly identify all affected properties and provide transparent mitigation measures or compensation where impacts cannot be adequately mitigated.

Detailed comments are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2 – PEIR, Volumes 1, 3 Chapter 15, Noise and Vibration**

Reference	PEIR Extract/Statement	Saxmundham Town Council Response:
Chapter 2, Description of the Proposed Scheme, Vol. 3, Ch. 2, Figures, Fig.2.2 Proposed Onshore Scheme, Sheet 1	Introduction	<p>The main temporary construction compound is located in very close proximity to Saxmundham. As such, it places residential properties unacceptably close to significant construction activity. In addition to noise and, for some residents, vibration, households would be subjected to sustained levels of dust, air pollution and light pollution throughout the construction period. These intra-project cumulative effects pose a serious risk to both the physical and mental wellbeing of affected residents.</p> <p>Moreover, activity associated with the compound is also likely to disrupt services and community events held at St John the Baptist Church, located approximately 330 metres from the Draft Order Limit.</p> <p>Site traffic travelling uphill into Saxmundham will require the use of</p>

		<p>lower gears, significantly amplifying engine noise and vibration. This is particularly problematic along Church Hill, where the gradient will result in additional acoustic disturbance. The Council therefore strongly recommends that this route is avoided for construction traffic.</p> <p>Furthermore, in addition to Manor Gardens, Prior's Grange and Hurts Hall (discussed below), residents of South Entrance, Church Street and Church Hill would be subject to significant noise and vibration impacts from site-related traffic. Properties along Church Street are particularly vulnerable, as many front doors open directly onto a narrow pavement with no front gardens or buffer between homes and the road, leaving residents exposed to noise, vibration and reduced air quality at very close proximity.</p>
15.4	East Suffolk Council (ESC) recommends a 'rating level of at least 5dB below typical background should be achieved' in relation to 'fixed plant and machinery'.	The Council welcomes and accepts ESC's recommendations in relation to technical noise assessment. The Council therefore confines its comments to non-technical matters, reflecting local knowledge and community experience.
15.4.8 Figure 15.1a	The construction noise study area is 300 metres around the Draft Order Area (DOL)	<p>The Assessment Location IDs (ALIDs) are shown on Figure 15.1a; however, identifying addresses are not provided.</p> <p>The Council recommends that locations are clearly identified by address (for example, ALID_25 relates to Manor Gardens, Saxmundham) to improve transparency. Although the study area is defined as 300 metres from the Draft Order Limit, the assessment locations within Saxmundham appear to be located on, or only marginally beyond, the DOL.</p> <p>The Council considers that residents in the eastern part of Prior's Grange, Church Hill, Hurts Hall and St John the</p>

		<p>Baptist Church should also be included within the assessment.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council considers that all affected properties should be subject to appropriate mitigation, or compensation where noise disturbance cannot be adequately mitigated.</p>
<p>15.4.9</p> <p>Figure 15.1b</p>	<p>The operational noise study area is 1 km around the Draft Order Limit (DOL)</p> <p>Operational Noise and Vibration and Study Area</p>	<p>The Assessment Location IDs (ALIDs) are shown on Figure 15.1b; however, identifying addresses are not provided.</p> <p>The Council recommends that assessment locations are clearly identified by address (for example, ALID_25 relates to Manor Gardens, Saxmundham) to improve transparency. Although the study area is defined as 1 kilometre from the Draft Order Limit, the assessment locations within Saxmundham appear to be located on, or only marginally beyond, the DOL.</p> <p>The Council considers that residents at Prior's Grange, Church Hill, Hurts Hall and St John the Baptist Church should also be included within the assessment.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council considers that all affected properties should be subject to appropriate mitigation, or compensation where noise disturbance cannot be adequately mitigated.</p>

## 5. Health and Wellbeing

The Council is extremely concerned about the potential impacts of prolonged construction activity on the health and wellbeing of residents.

The PEIR indicates that a full assessment of health impacts will be undertaken at Environmental Statement stage. The Council considers it disappointing that this information is not available during statutory consultation.

If both the LionLink and Sea Link projects proceed, Saxmundham may experience almost continuous construction activity in its vicinity for a period approaching a decade.

The Council considers that the cumulative environmental changes associated with construction activity - including noise, traffic congestion, dust and loss of environmental amenity - have the potential to affect mental wellbeing, community cohesion and residents' attachment to place.

The Council therefore urges the applicant to give greater consideration to mitigation measures and community benefits that support local wellbeing.

Detailed comments are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3 – PEIR, Volume 1, Chapter 10, Health and Wellbeing**

Reference	PEIR Extract/Statement	Saxmundham Town Council Response:
<p>10.3.10</p> <p>10.4.4</p> <p>10.4.32</p>	<p>Saxmundham Town Council is identified as a key stakeholder in connection to Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>‘The assessment in this section considers population health, rather than individual health’.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing assessment of intra and inter-project cumulative effects will be carried out and reported within the ES.</p>	<p>The Council is extremely concerned about our community’s health, particularly as this is likely to be exacerbated by both inter- and intra-project cumulative effects. We are disappointed that a Health and Wellbeing assessment is not included within the Statutory Consultation documents.</p> <p>If consented, the Lion Link and Sea Link projects will overlap, resulting in near-continuous construction activity on the outskirts of the town from at least 2026 to 2035, and realistically for a period of at least ten years.</p> <p>This prolonged activity will affect many residents. Those living in close proximity to the works will experience both inter- and intra-project impacts from noise, dust and air pollution.</p> <p>In addition, residents living along the B1119 and B1121 will be subject to sustained increases in traffic noise and air pollution. The implications of Sizewell C construction are already noticeable locally, with a substantial increase in non-HGV through-traffic heading east towards Leiston as a result of the Sizewell works.</p> <p>Generally, as a result of the extensive and prolonged construction works, we anticipate that some residents may find it difficult to sell their properties and that property values could be adversely</p>

		<p>affected. Moreover, it is not solely the National Grid developments that will impact the town.</p> <p>From the list of projects set out in Appendix A, it is clear that Saxmundham is likely to be surrounded by, and subject to, major construction activity for many years to come.</p> <p>As noted in Chapter 10, Volume 2, Appendix 10.1 (Health and Wellbeing Evidence Review), “changes in environmental amenity can affect people’s mental wellbeing, satisfaction with their local environment, sense of place and the value people attach to their neighbourhood... Attachment to place is identified as a characteristic of resilient communities and is closely related to strong social networks.”</p> <p>The Council considers that the prolonged and cumulative nature of construction activity anticipated in and around Saxmundham has the potential to undermine these characteristics over time, with consequential impacts on mental wellbeing and community resilience.</p> <p>It is vital that major infrastructure developers work together to ensure that impacts on the community are fully mitigated, and that an attachment to place and strong social networks are maintained and, where possible, enhanced through rigorous mitigation measures and meaningful community benefit.</p> <p>Whilst not exhaustive, the Council recommends that, in order to reduce traffic movements and congestion, NGV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• utilises Sizewell C Co.’s park and ride facilities;</li> <li>• utilises Sizewell C Co.’s Offsite Freight Management Facility for HGV deliveries;</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schedules multiple Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) movements on the same day, where feasible, to minimise repeated road closures; and</li> <li>• ensures all project vehicles are clearly identifiable.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst not exhaustive, the Council strongly urges NGV to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engage with the <i>Empowering Nature</i> scheme, which aims to provide “a future landscape which will allow all of us to thrive”; and</li> <li>• consider additional initiatives that would actively enhance community cohesion and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
10.6.2	Community Facilities within 300 metres of the Draft Order Limits (DOL)	<p>Grade II* St John the Baptist Church has not been included and does not appear on Figure 10.0 (Health and Wellbeing Receptors – Sheet 1), despite being located within the relevant area.</p> <p>By contrast, the United Reformed Church in the centre of Saxmundham is shown. The Council seeks clarification as to whether this omission is an oversight.</p>
10.8.6	No significant noise and air quality effects have been identified as a result of construction activities. Noise and air quality effects arising from construction traffic will be assessed and reported at the ES stage.	<p>The Council questions the statement that “no significant noise and air quality effects have been identified as a result of construction activities.” The Council refers to its detailed observations within responses to PEIR, Volume 1, Chapter 7 (Air Quality) and Chapter 15 (Noise and Vibration).</p> <p>The Council is disappointed that assessment relating to construction traffic has not been included within the Statutory Consultation, particularly as NGV has identified that Saxmundham will be affected by HGV traffic and that this “will likely result in a reduction in perceived quality of the environment” (Volume 1, Chapter 10, paragraph</p>

		<p>10.8.7).</p> <p>Furthermore, the PEIR states that “given the extent of the traffic information available at this stage, the worst-case assumption is that multiple HGVs an hour will be travelling through small villages and town centres. This results in a medium magnitude of impact on environmental amenity” (Volume 1, Chapter 10, paragraph 10.8.8).</p>
10.8.21	<p>At this time, traffic movements and routes are unknown; further assessment of will be reported in the ES.</p>	<p>Without a full traffic impact survey and assessment, the Council is concerned by NGV’s conclusion at Volume 1, Chapter 10, paragraph 10.8.22 that “the general population is considered to have medium sensitivity to changes in access to community facilities. This will result in a minor, adverse and temporary (not significant) health effect.” The same conclusion is applied to vulnerable groups at paragraph 10.8.23.</p> <p>The Council considers that these conclusions are premature and effectively rely on the statement at paragraph 10.8.21, thereby predetermining outcomes in advance of traffic data that has yet to be provided or assessed.</p>
10.9.2	<p>No additional mitigation is proposed at this stage. Consideration will be given to measures that could help minimise disruption to residents, particularly in relation to traffic delays and access to essential services, and to noise. Opportunities to reduce potential impacts from construction traffic, including noise and delays on local routes, will be explored as part of ongoing design and assessment work. These may include general traffic management approaches and screening where appropriate. Opportunities to reduce potential impacts from noise will be</p>	<p>The Council refers to the responses set out above in relation to paragraphs 10.3.10, 10.4.4 and 10.4.32.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council challenges NGV’s assessment of Health and Wellbeing set out in Table 10.12 (Summary of assessment of likely significant effects in respect of Health and Wellbeing during construction). The effects are recorded as minor, adverse and temporary (not significant) and are stated to require no additional mitigation. The Council does not consider that this conclusion adequately reflects the scale, duration or cumulative nature of the</p>

	explored as part of ongoing design and assessment work.	construction impacts anticipated to affect the community.
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## Appendix A – Projects – Estimated Dates

Project	From	To	Note
Sizewell C	2024	2035/37	Enabling works - roadworks 2024-25
SPR EA1N/EA2	2026	2031/32	Enabling works underway 2025
NGET Sea Link	2026	2032	If consent is granted
NGV Lion Link	2028/29	2034/35	If consent is granted
South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood	2026	2028/29	Enabling works and employment area
South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood	2028/29	2038	House building
Essex and Suffolk Water	2030	2032	If consent is granted

## 6. Socio Economics, Recreation and Tourism

The Council has reviewed the PEIR in respect of socio-economic impacts, recreation and tourism. While the Council welcomes the inclusion of Saxmundham within the local study area, it considers that several assumptions within the assessment underestimate the potential impacts on the town’s housing market, visitor economy and local businesses.

In particular, the Council considers that the assessment does not adequately reflect the cumulative pressures arising from multiple NSIPs occurring within a relatively small geographic area, including Sizewell C, EA1N, EA2 and the proposed Sea Link converter station.

Detailed observations are set out in Table 4.

Reference	PEIR Extract/Statement	Saxmundham Town Council comments:
Table 16.5 3.11.5 16.47	The buffer which forms the local study area has been extended to include all of Saxmundham.	The Council welcomes the inclusion of the whole of Saxmundham within the study area. However, given the proximity of the proposed converter station to the town, the Council considers that there are likely to be socio-economic implications for local residents and businesses.
16.5.6	In relation to the workforce and labour market: ‘A proportion of the construction and maintenance workers are likely to live locally to the site, while a proportion will travel from non-local locations to the site to work. More detail on the	The Council is disappointed that workforce profiles have not yet been undertaken and are stated only to “likely be refined for the ES”. This information is important for East Suffolk Council in order to ensure that appropriate levels of accommodation

	workforce profile expected to work across the construction and maintenance period, and the proportion of workers who will be expected to live locally to the site, will likely be refined for the ES, taking into account other developments taking place or planned locally. This will inform the assessment of construction employment effects.	are available both for local residents and for contractors working on the numerous NSIPs located within less than nine miles of Saxmundham.  This is particularly relevant in the context of the statement at paragraph 16.6.11 below.
16.6.11	Given the specialist nature of the some of the construction activities, it is likely that a proportion of the workforce will be sourced from outside of the local area and therefore require temporary accommodation. From experience on similar schemes subject to examination, this temporary accommodation could include a combination of private rented accommodation, or the use of serviced and non-serviced tourism bed space.	Whilst a single project might be accommodated within existing spare capacity, the combined demand arising from Sea Link, EA1N, EA2, Sizewell C, and potentially the Essex and Suffolk Water and Helios Solar projects will result in a large number of workers seeking accommodation in the area.  The Council is concerned that this may lead to a shortage of available housing, with local residents ultimately bearing the consequences through reduced availability and increased accommodation costs.
16.6.12	The availability of private rental homes is 'considered to be the principal sector for accommodating demand for housing from non-local construction workers.  There were an estimated 585 private rental properties within East Suffolk in 2023 that could potentially be available to construction workers.  However, whilst noting that private rental homes is 'considered to be the principal sector for accommodating demand for housing from non-local construction workers' in 16.8.7: NGV state, 'it is assumed that a proportion of the workers required would be non-local and therefore require....(accommodation) serviced from hotels and similar serviced accommodation'	The data relies on 2021 Census records and modelling data from 2023. Since then, construction of Sizewell C has commenced and, as of February 2026, approximately 2,000 workers are on site, with around one third being locally based. This means that roughly 1,300 workers are reliant on accommodation within the local area. The Council considers that this significantly undermines the assumption that sufficient spare housing capacity exists, particularly when based on an assumed occupancy of two people per dwelling.  Moreover, the situation is likely to deteriorate as the Sizewell C workforce increases. The Council therefore respectfully requests that NGV review its accommodation assumptions and calculations, and
16.8.7		

		<p>give consideration to utilising Sizewell C's dedicated worker accommodation where possible.</p> <p>The Council requests that NGV fully explain how and where non-local construction workers will be accommodated, as paragraph 16.8.7 appears to contradict paragraph 16.6.12.</p>
16.6.13	<p>Serviced, non-serviced accommodation including B &amp; Bs, hotels, holiday lets, caravan parks and tourist campsites etc.</p>	<p>The survey was undertaken ten years ago and the data is therefore out of date. In addition, the following factors should be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel accommodation is generally too expensive for contractors.</li> <li>• Tourist accommodation is primarily used by visitors, and the tourism season in Suffolk extends across much of the year.</li> <li>• Some hotel accommodation may be used by the Government to accommodate asylum seekers.</li> <li>• Much of the accommodation identified would be unlikely to be attractive to contractors, who typically prefer to stay as close as possible to their place of work in order to minimise travel time. Accommodation located in districts such as Babergh, Mid Suffolk or West Suffolk is therefore unlikely to be a practical option.</li> </ul>
16.8.8	<p>NGV based their accommodation assessment on the Visit the England survey of 2016, (a document that is now ten years old) noting that based on an occupancy rate of 80.5% across the East of England during the peak months of July and August, there is a capacity of spaces available amounting to some 4000 bed spaces.</p>	
16.8.9	<p>The initial assessment indicates that accommodation stock (not including private rented accommodation) should have the capacity to accommodate the anticipated demand from non-local workers.</p>	

<p>16.8.10</p>	<p>The likely demand for worker accommodation could lead to a small impact through an overall reduction in accommodation bed space for up to five years during construction.</p>	<p>The Council refers to its comments above and considers that basing assumptions on the entirety of the East of England, including locations more than one hundred miles from Saxmundham and areas without significant tourism economies, does not provide a realistic assessment of the availability of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>The Council considers that this assumption is incorrect, as it fails to take account of the cumulative impacts arising from the construction workforces associated with Sizewell C, EA1N and EA2, and Sea Link.</p> <p>When these projects are considered alongside LionLink, the cumulative demand generated by at least four major NSIPs would clearly not represent a “small impact” on the availability of bed spaces within the area.</p>
<p>16.8.11</p>	<p>The demand for bed spaces would also bring a beneficial small impact, with potential for medium to long term bookings and more consistent occupancy, particularly during the low/shoulder seasons’ .... NGV consider there would be a ‘minor beneficial effect.</p>	<p>The Council considers this assumption to be incorrect. If consent is granted, by the time the LionLink project commences it is likely that much of the available local accommodation will already be occupied. The Council has already received anecdotal reports from businesses on Aldeburgh High Street that trade has declined as a result of contractors occupying holiday accommodation. Contractors typically make limited use of local high street shops, which can have a detrimental effect on the local visitor economy.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council reiterates its concern that NGV’s accommodation assumptions fail to take account of the cumulative impacts arising from the construction workforces associated with Sizewell C, EA1N and EA2, and Sea Link.</p>

		When considered together, the cumulative demand generated by at least four NSIPs, including LionLink, would clearly not represent a “small impact” on the availability of bed spaces within the area.
Table 16.16	Community Facilities and open space	<p>List of Saxmundham assets: Saxmundham Town Council notes that the following have been omitted from the list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorial Field, Skate Park, Youth Booth building, and Scouts Association building and the Memorial Garden</li> <li>• Chantry Road Play Area</li> <li>• Seaman Avenue Play Area</li> <li>• Chantry House, Nursing Home, Chantry Road</li> <li>• Brook Farm Road Play Area</li> <li>• Newly planned SEND school at Seaman Avenue</li> </ul>
Table 16.17	Visitor/tourism facilities	<p>List of Saxmundham facilities should also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Arts Station</li> <li>• Fromus Square – weekly Wednesday markets all year and monthly Saturday markets throughout summer</li> </ul>
Table 16.18	Other local businesses:	<p>Businesses to be included in addition to the few identified in NGV’s list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costa</li> <li>• Carpet Shop (2)</li> <li>• Children’s Wear</li> <li>• Beauticians (2)</li> <li>• Pharmacy</li> <li>• Turkish Barbers</li> <li>• Butchers</li> <li>• Charity shops (2)</li> <li>• Queens Head – public house</li> <li>• Jewellers</li> <li>• Gifts and Stationery</li> <li>• Hairdressers (3)</li> <li>• Solicitors (2)</li> <li>• HSBC Bank</li> <li>• Cafe</li> <li>• Sandwich Shop</li> <li>• Hardware</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience Shops (2)</li> <li>• Chiropodist</li> <li>• Dry Cleaners</li> <li>• Vaporium</li> <li>• Interior Designers</li> <li>• Chinese Take a Way</li> <li>• Turkish Restaurant</li> <li>• Kebab Take a Way</li> <li>• Pet Shop</li> <li>• Tea Room and Cake Shop</li> <li>• Estate Agents (2)</li> <li>• Opticians</li> <li>• Care Agency</li> <li>• Book Store</li> <li>• Barbers (3)</li> <li>• Clothing Shop</li> <li>• Building Society</li> <li>• Church Shop and Café</li> <li>• Framers</li> <li>• Railway Inn</li> <li>• Saxmundham Ex Servicemens' Club</li> <li>• Fromus Centre</li> <li>• Doctors Surgery</li> <li>• Dentist Surgery</li> <li>• Fishing Tackle Shop</li> <li>• Whole Foods Shop</li> </ul>
16.8.4	Although these jobs are temporary, they represent a positive impact for the scale and type of activities required to construct the Proposed Onshore Scheme (through local recruitment and upskilling opportunities).	<p>If this were a single NSIP in the area, it could create additional employment opportunities. However, with Sizewell C already employing a large proportion of the available workforce, the Council considers that NGV may struggle to recruit sufficient local staff and may therefore need to rely on a greater number of workers travelling to the area.</p> <p>This pressure could potentially be mitigated if NGV were to consider offering apprenticeships and training opportunities for local residents to develop the skills required for employment on the project.</p>
16.8.6	The scheme will 'lead to displacement from other construction projects'	Workers currently employed at Sizewell C, where contracts are of significantly longer duration, are unlikely to leave for shorter-term

		employment on other projects. The Council therefore encourages NGV to consider offering apprenticeships and training opportunities to develop a local workforce.
Table 16.22	Community facilities and open space Saxmundham – ‘There will likely be an increase in construction along the B1121 and B1119 which could lead to small impacts on some receptors’.	<p>NGV states that this would represent a “minor adverse, not significant effect”. The Council refers to its comments in relation to traffic and transport (see comments on Chapter 17) and the observations set out below.</p> <p>The Council considers that this conclusion fails to take into account the likely increase in traffic associated with other NSIPs in the area.</p>
Table 16.23	Visitor/tourism facilities – Saxmundham	<p>NGV states that this would represent a “minor adverse, not significant effect”. The Council refers to its comments in relation to traffic and transport (see comments on Chapter 17) and the observations set out below. The Council considers that this conclusion fails to take into account the likely increase in traffic associated with other NSIPs in the area.</p> <p>In addition, Saxmundham Museum, the Art Station, and the Fromus Square markets should be included within the assessment.</p>
Table 16.24:	Other local businesses – Suffolk Escape Room	Irrespective of the proximity of this business to both the proposed converter station and the HVDC cable corridor, NGV has assessed the effect as “minor adverse, not significant”. However, this receptor is likely to be subject to intra-project cumulative construction effects, including construction noise, traffic disruption and dust. The Council therefore requests that the assessment of this business be reviewed.
16.8.29 Table 16.19	Development land  Community Facilities and Open Space, Visitor / Tourism Facilities, Other Local	Whilst the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood is included in Table 16.19, it appears to have been omitted from Figure 16.2. The Council

Figure 16.2	Businesses, Promoted Recreational Routes, and Development Land – Sheet 1	queries whether this omission is intentional.
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## 7. Landscape and Visual Impact

The Council considers that the proximity of the converter station to Saxmundham and Sternfield represents a significant concern.

The proposed infrastructure would introduce large-scale industrial structures into a landscape that currently forms part of the town’s rural setting.

The Council notes that the PEIR acknowledges that high and very high landscape impacts may occur during construction and in early operational years.

The Council also considers that several important viewpoints identified within the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan have not been fully reflected within the assessment.

Detailed comments are provided in Table 5.

**Table 5 – PEIR, Volume 1, 3, Chapter 13, Landscape and Visual**

Reference	PEIR Extract/Statement	Saxmundham Town Council comments:
Various	NGV acknowledges that during and immediately following construction there would be high and very high impacts on and around Saxmundham, resulting in major adverse and therefore significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity. The assessment also indicates that, even after fifteen years, some residents in isolated properties outside Saxmundham would continue to experience adverse visual effects arising from the presence of the converter station.	<p>The proximity of the proposed converter station is the Council’s primary concern. The site lies very close to both Saxmundham and Sternfield, on elevated ground and in close proximity to residential properties. Unlike comparable onshore infrastructure, such as the Viking Link and Hornsea converter stations, which are located adjacent to major dual carriageway A roads or in more remote locations, this proposal represents an unprecedented imposition on a small rural market town and its surrounding communities.</p> <p>The Council opposes both NGET’s Sea Link and NGV’s LionLink location of converter stations, which would permanently alter Saxmundham and neighbouring communities through unprecedented levels of disruption, landscape change, biodiversity loss, traffic impacts and wider socio-economic effects. However, the Council considers that, should consent ultimately be granted, these projects could, through constructive collaboration, become a catalyst for positive change for both the community and the many species that depend on our local environment. In 2025 the Council therefore presented its concept for change: <i>Empowering Nature – Protecting Saxmundham</i>.</p> <p>The Council therefore welcomes the fact that NGV has incorporated elements of the <i>Empowering Nature – Protecting Saxmundham</i> vision within the</p>

		<p>document Converter Station – Background to Potential Design Approaches. These proposals have the potential to help alleviate some of the visual and environmental impacts associated with the development while also creating opportunities to enhance habitats for both wildlife and people.</p> <p>The Council considers that this approach provides a constructive foundation on which further landscape-led mitigation and ecological enhancement could be developed. Section 8 below therefore sets out the Council’s <i>Empowering Nature</i> proposals in greater detail and identifies practical opportunities through which the project could contribute to long-term environmental recovery and community benefit.</p>
Volume 3, Chapter 13, Figure 13.7 Viewpoints sheet 1	Viewpoints 14 and 15 broadly correspond with Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan paragraph 11.31, points 1a and 1b, which identify views from the B1121. Viewpoints 16 and 17 are located in the vicinity of image 5 from the B1119.	<p>The Council requests that NGV include an additional viewpoint within the assessment. This corresponds to image 2 in section 11.31 of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan. The view is taken from the high point of the Layers footpath, looking across farmland towards the River Fromus and Hurts Hall. It illustrates the contrast between the open landscape of the valley and the wooded ridge beneath which the town is situated.</p> <p>It is important that this view is assessed, as it is experienced from well-used public rights of way. The vista would be affected by the presence of two proposed converter stations on the horizon to the right of Hurts Hall, together with the proposed access road and bridge crossing the River Fromus.</p>
Volume 1, Table 13.13	Residents of Saxmundham, ‘Value attached to the view at related viewpoints’ is classed as ‘Medium’.	<p>Two 26-metre converter stations would fundamentally alter this viewpoint, transforming the vista from a rural landscape into an industrialised one. The Council refers to the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan, which states:</p> <p>“View towards the town from the B1119. The approach from Leiston is across a wide-open plateau. Looking west at a point about 400 metres east of the access to Wood Farm, the tree line along the ridge becomes conspicuous; the town below remains hidden, but the view of the trees and the change in the landscape provide the first clear indication that the town is nearby.”</p>

		In light of this, the Council considers that the value attached to this viewpoint should be assessed as 'High'.
Volume 1, Table 13.13	People travelling along the B1121 (road users) are identified as receptors. VP23, located in close proximity to Leiston, is included within the assessment.	Viewpoints 16 and 17 along the B1121, close to Saxmundham, appear to have been omitted from the summary, as has the reference to the road number. The Council queries whether this is an oversight.  For the reasons set out above, the Council considers that the value attached to these viewpoints should be assessed as 'High'.
Volume 1 Tables 13.16  13.18	Local Landscape Character Areas – Summary of likely significant effects during construction on landscape receptors  Visual receptor groups – Summary of likely significant visual effects during construction	Area LLCA 07, Saxmundham South Sandlands, is not included within this summary. The Council questions this omission, as it excludes image 2 from the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.  Image number 2 in the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan is excluded.
Volume 1 Table 13.17	Summary of likely significant effects in year 1 of operation on landscape receptors	Area LLCA 07, Saxmundham South Sandlands, is not included within this summary. The Council questions this omission, as it excludes image 2 from the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.
Volume 1 Table 13.19	Summary of likely significant effects in year 1 of operation	Image number 2 in our Neighbourhood Plan is excluded.
Volume 1 Table 13.20 and 13.21	Summary of residual effects at year 15 of operation on landscape receptors  Summary of residual effects	The Council welcomes the mitigation measures set out in the Converter Station – Background to Potential Design Approaches, which seek to ameliorate the impacts of the development and help offset the industrialisation of the eastern gateway to Saxmundham.

## 8. Converter Station – Background to Potential Design Approaches

The Council welcomes the references within the consultation material to the Council's *Empowering Nature - Protecting Saxmundham* vision and the acknowledgement that the emerging design approach for the converter station has been informed by this work. The Council supports a landscape-led approach to infrastructure design and considers that ecological restoration, habitat creation and nature recovery should form an integral part of the project.

The consultation material notes that the landscape design approach for the proposed converter station has been informed by wider strategies, including the emerging Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Council's *Empowering Nature* initiative. This recognition is welcome and reflects the Council's long-standing view that infrastructure of this scale must be planned in a way that delivers environmental enhancement and meaningful long-term benefits for local communities.

Following engagement with Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the *Empowering Nature* initiative has been refined to focus on:

- a small number of priority species
- habitat creation capable of supporting those species locally
- practical community interventions aligned with county nature recovery priorities.

This approach ensures that proposals are credible, deliverable and consistent with wider ecological strategies.

### **Priority species**

Four species have been identified as indicators of wider ecosystem health within the East Suffolk landscape.

#### **Hazel Dormouse**

A woodland and hedgerow species in long-term national decline due to habitat fragmentation.

#### **Turtle Dove**

One of the UK's most rapidly declining farmland birds. East Suffolk remains an important landscape for recovery.

#### **Hedgehog**

A widespread but sharply declining species associated with urban and peri-urban environments.

#### **Water Vole**

A priority riparian species closely linked to river corridor condition and water quality.

Together these species support a landscape-scale approach spanning woodland, farmland, river corridors and urban habitats.

### **Habitat opportunities**

#### **Restoration of the historic Great Wood**

Historic mapping shows that woodland formerly occupied the northern part of the site. The Council therefore supports the principle of restoring native woodland in this location as part of the landscape integration of the converter station.

Woodland restoration would:

- assist landscape integration of the development
- create habitat for priority species
- contribute to wider ecological connectivity
- provide opportunities for community engagement with nature.

Meaningful woodland creation should achieve a minimum width of approximately 50 metres, with connections to nearby woodland blocks such as Bloomfields Covert and Coltsclose Pickle achieved through linear woodland belts of approximately 30 metres width.

Forestry England has indicated that native trees could be made available where suitable land is secured, supporting East Suffolk Council's wider tree-planting ambitions.

### **Scrub and hedgerow habitat**

Creation of scrub and woodland edge habitat linked to hedgerow networks, including the widening and thickening of existing hedgerows to create structurally diverse corridors, would support hazel dormice and turtle doves while improving ecological connectivity across the landscape. Given the apparent scarcity of dormice locally, the Council also considers that, subject to ecological advice and licensing requirements, a reintroduction programme could be explored alongside habitat restoration to support the long-term recovery of the species within the area.

### **Seed-rich farmland habitat**

Seed-rich grassland, arable weed margins and wildlife-friendly farming practices could provide important foraging habitat for turtle doves and other farmland species, particularly where located close to suitable nesting cover. Such seed-rich field margins would be especially valuable in providing feeding habitat for young birds during the breeding season.

### **River Fromus corridor improvements**

Enhancement of the River Fromus corridor could include bankside vegetation restoration, improved river morphology and the creation of backwater habitat suitable for water voles.

A sensitively designed raised boardwalk could allow controlled public access to the river corridor without damaging sensitive habitats.

### **Urban biodiversity**

Recovery of hedgehogs and other urban wildlife could be supported through improved green connectivity across Saxmundham, including wildlife-friendly boundaries and small-scale biodiversity interventions.

### **Community outcomes**

The Council considers that nature recovery interventions should be accompanied by community-facing outcomes that are visible and capable of building long-term stewardship.

These could include:

- managed public access to restored woodland
- a River Fromus boardwalk providing controlled access to the river environment
- community allotments and orchard spaces
- provision of water butts as part of a community rainwater storage and release initiative
- improved green connectivity and active travel routes linking Saxmundham with the surrounding landscape.

These measures would deliver benefits for both biodiversity and community wellbeing.

## **Alignment with the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

The proposals align closely with the objectives of the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy, particularly in relation to:

- restoring habitat networks
- improving ecological connectivity
- supporting priority species
- delivering nature-based solutions for climate adaptation and flood resilience.

## **Land requirements**

Delivery of woodland restoration and community growing space will require land availability.

The Council therefore asks that NGV give consideration to:

- how land within the Order Limits might support these outcomes
- alternative mechanisms to secure land following construction where land is not required for permanent operational infrastructure.

## **Community benefit delivery**

The Council considers that developer community benefit arrangements associated with LionLink could support:

- woodland and habitat creation
- River Fromus improvements
- the proposed water butt programme
- enabling infrastructure such as paths, access and interpretation.

These measures would provide a visible environmental legacy and support local nature recovery.

## **Governance**

To ensure transparency and effective delivery, the Council considers that any community benefit funding should be administered by an independent grant-managing body with relevant experience in infrastructure-related community funds.

The Council therefore proposes that an organisation such as GrantScope be considered for this role.

Under such a model:

- the Council would set strategic priorities
- grant administration would be undertaken independently
- the Council would retain oversight of outcomes.

The Council considers that the cost of administering such a fund should be met by the developer and should not reduce the value of the community benefit funding itself.

The Council considers that the *Empowering Nature* initiative provides a credible and deliverable framework through which the LionLink project could contribute positively to nature recovery and community wellbeing within Saxmundham and its surrounding landscape.

## 9. Cumulative Effects

The Council is deeply concerned about the cumulative burden being placed on Saxmundham and surrounding parishes by multiple infrastructure projects.

The LionLink project must be considered alongside:

- Sea Link
- EA1N and EA2 substations at Friston
- Sizewell C nuclear power station
- the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood development.

These projects will overlap in both time and location, creating sustained construction activity, traffic disruption and environmental pressure.

The Council considers that there is currently no coordinated strategy addressing the combined impacts of these developments.

Furthermore, the cumulative burden created by multiple consultations and examinations places significant strain on small communities with limited administrative resources.

Detailed comments are provided in Table 6.

**Table 6 – PEIR, Volumes 1 and 2 (Appendix), Chapter 18, Cumulative Effects**

Reference	PEIR Extract/Statement	Saxmundham Town Council comments:
28.4.1	The intra-project effects assessment will be undertaken and reported in the ES.	The Council is disappointed that this information is not available during the statutory consultation.
28.4.5	Where identified in table 28.3, the potential for intra-project effects will be included within the relevant ES chapter and a judgement made whether a theoretical pathway exists	The Council therefore reiterates its concern regarding the absence of this information.
28.4.6	This will determine the need for additional mitigation	<p>The Council therefore reiterates its concern regarding the absence of this information.</p> <p>The Council is very concerned about the combined intra-project effects of noise and vibration, traffic congestion and air pollution, which have the potential to impact the health and wellbeing of residents, the landscape and visual character of the town, and the socio-economic viability of the community. This concern arises from the proximity of the proposed development to Saxmundham.</p>

		The Council will provide further comment once NGV's ES has been published.
Table 28.3	Potential for intra-project cumulative effects onshore	<p>In respect of the Traffic and Transport (TT) assessment, Socio Economics and Tourism (SET) is not considered to constitute an intra-project cumulative effect. The Council questions this conclusion.</p> <p>Increased vehicle movements within the town have the potential to create traffic congestion, which may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay all forms of traffic, including delivery vehicles, private cars, tradespeople and buses, thereby adversely affecting businesses through extended delivery times and increased transport costs. It may also affect productivity where employees experience delays travelling to work or are required to leave work earlier to collect children from school.</li> <li>• Deter visitors from travelling to Saxmundham from outside the area, which would be detrimental to visitor attractions, independent shops and other local businesses.</li> </ul>
28.4.14 28.4.15	<p>Inter-project cumulative effects</p> <p>Stage 1, establishment of a long list of other developments has been completed (stages 2-4 shortlists of other developments will be undertaken at ES stage).</p>	<p>The South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, comprising approximately 800 dwellings, an employment area and associated highway work to the A12, is identified as a Tier 3 project. The Council understands that outline planning permission is expected imminently and therefore considers that the tier level assigned to this development should be reviewed and given greater prominence within the assessment.</p>
Volume 2	Appendix of 28.1, Long List of Other Developments	The Council is deeply concerned about the cumulative burden being placed on Saxmundham and surrounding parishes

		<p>by multiple NSIPs. While each scheme may be presented and examined in isolation, their combined impact on the local landscape, population and infrastructure is both significant and unsuitable.</p> <p>The LionLink project is only one of several major developments proposed for this area. Saxmundham lies close to the onshore substation complex at Friston for the EA1N and EA2 offshore windfarm projects. These substations, already approved despite strong local opposition, have introduced permanent industrial infrastructure into the countryside and are expected to result in long-term noise, visual and environmental impacts. Their construction is only just commencing, meaning there will be significant temporal overlap with NGET's Sea Link converter station project.</p> <p>Commensurately, the LionLink project will overlap with the proposed Sea Link project, which is currently at Examination stage. LionLink would represent a second converter station and would effectively double the scale of industrial infrastructure in the area surrounding Saxmundham, locking the town into a prolonged period of development, traffic disruption and loss of amenity.</p> <p>These projects also run in parallel with the Sizewell C nuclear power station development, which is already generating significant HGV movements, A12 upgrades and worker accommodation pressures across East Suffolk, including in Saxmundham. The cumulative impacts relating to traffic, noise, air quality, housing and public services have not been adequately assessed in relation to the LionLink project.</p> <p>There is no coordinated strategy that addresses the combined effects of the</p>
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		<p>NSIPs referred to above, all of which intersect in this part of Suffolk. Saxmundham is therefore being disproportionately burdened with infrastructure projects of national scale.</p> <p>In addition to the physical and environmental impacts, the cumulative burden on affected communities arising from overlapping statutory consultations and examinations is considerable. Saxmundham residents, councillors, officers and community groups have had to engage with multiple complex and technical NSIPs, each requiring detailed scrutiny within strict timeframes. The capacity of the public to participate meaningfully in these processes is therefore being significantly stretched, particularly in small towns with limited administrative resources.</p>
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## 10. Conclusion

Saxmundham Town Council recognises the strategic importance of national energy infrastructure and the role that projects such as LionLink may play in supporting the UK's transition to a low-carbon energy system.

However, the Council remains deeply concerned about the scale and proximity of the proposed development and the cumulative impacts arising from multiple major infrastructure projects affecting Saxmundham and the surrounding area.

The Council's concerns relate in particular to:

- the proximity of the proposed converter station to Saxmundham and Sternfield
- construction traffic and highway safety implications
- potential impacts on residential amenity arising from noise, dust and disturbance
- the effects of prolonged construction activity on community health and wellbeing
- the potential for extended daily disturbance arising from construction working hours, including early morning and evening "shoulder periods" associated with staff arrival, site start-up and vehicle movements
- the cumulative impacts arising from the overlap of LionLink with Sea Link, the EA1N and EA2 substations at Friston, the Sizewell C development and other major projects in the area.

The Council therefore urges the applicant to:

- provide clearer and more complete information on construction traffic and transport mitigation
- strengthen the assessment of health and wellbeing impacts

- ensure that landscape and visual impacts are fully recognised and appropriately mitigated
- adopt a genuinely landscape-led design approach that reflects the sensitivity of Saxmundham's landscape setting
- work collaboratively with local authorities and host communities to address the cumulative impacts of infrastructure development in this part of Suffolk.

The Council also reiterates the importance of the *Empowering Nature – Protecting Saxmundham* initiative as a framework through which landscape restoration, ecological connectivity and community wellbeing could be strengthened alongside infrastructure delivery.

The Council remains committed to constructive engagement with National Grid Ventures and other stakeholders to ensure that any development proceeds in a manner that properly safeguards the landscape, environment and communities of East Suffolk.