LionLink Community Newsletter

December 2023

Affordability – Zero Carbon Electricity – Energy Security

Britain urgently needs low carbon energy from renewable sources at home and abroad to reduce our reliance on imported gas. This will help to make the cost of electricity more affordable and the country more energy secure.

To support these goals, National Grid Ventures (NGV) proposes that a new subsea cable (known as an interconnector) is built between England and the Netherlands. The interconnector, called LionLink, could transport enough clean electricity to power 1.8 million homes – this is enough energy to power every home in Suffolk five times.

The power of interconnectors:

NGV's North Sea Link interconnector which launched in October 2021 saved 800,000 tonnes of carbon in its first year and has the capacity to power 1.4 million homes a year.

LIONLINK

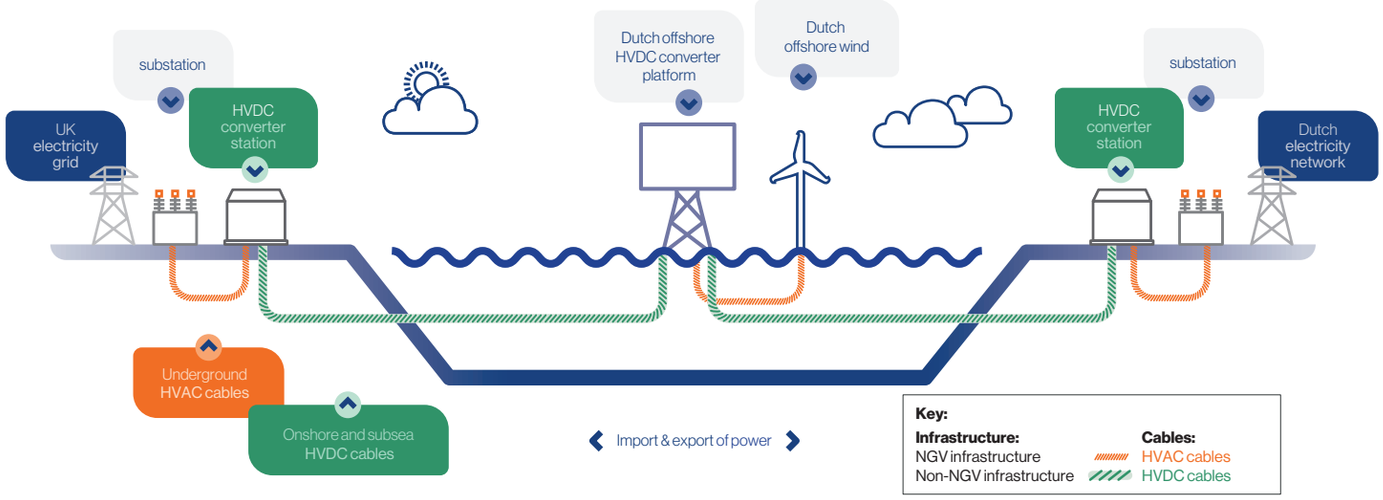
Your feedback

The project has been the subject of public consultation in East Suffolk since 2022. That is because after careful consideration, East Suffolk was judged to be the best place for LionLink to connect to the UK's National Grid.

Our last stage of consultation ended in November 2023. Thank you to everyone who shared their feedback during this period. Your responses help inform the development of our proposals. A response to the feedback we received will be shared with you in the New Year, but in the meantime, we wanted to use this newsletter to provide you with an update on the project and a response to some of the key issues that were raised during the consultation.

LionLink: sharing energy between the UK and the Netherlands

The LionLink interconnector will run under the sea between the Netherlands and the UK. When it reaches the UK, the cable will need to come onshore and be connected into the UK's electricity grid as demonstrated by the diagram below.



Undersea and underground: a key feature of the project is that no cables will be seen in the local area at all: they are all subsea or underground.

Why are we proposing to bring LionLink to Suffolk?

Whenever an interconnector, a windfarm or other power supply wants to connect to the National Grid, it must apply to the National Grid Electricity Systems Operator (NGESO) to decide where in the system it should connect.

East Suffolk was decided as the best connection point into the electricity system for a new interconnector between the Netherlands and Great Britain. The NGESO considered environmental, technical, and cost factors when making this decision.

As a result of this decision, we propose that the interconnector comes onto land along the Suffolk coast and joins the electricity grid via the substation which has been proposed at Friston. This will enable the co-location of infrastructure.

How can we limit the impact of construction?

Construction of the project will be phased to reduce its impact. We are planning to use lower impact methods such as Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) to bring the cables from sea to land. This will reduce the impact of the works on public areas such as the beach.

We know that East Suffolk is a popular tourist destination and has many sites of ecological importance for wildlife. Working with feedback from local residents, businesses and other interested parties, we will take into account wildlife breeding seasons, wintering bird season, and tourism patterns of the area when planning the timing of the works.

How can we minimise the impact on the environment?

We understand the community's concerns about the impact of the project on the natural environment. Reducing the environmental impact is front of mind as we plan the project, and this includes marine impacts as well as land. The Environmental Statement for the project will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2025 we will carry out several environmental assessments to inform this.

Public feedback has already resulted in some changes to our initial proposals. For instance, in response to feedback around traffic and access (particularly around Walberswick), an alternative landfall site at Walberswick was identified, which could reduce access constraints and traffic impacts.

Lessons from other projects on reducing our environmental impact

During the construction of our Viking Link interconnector we closely monitored the impact the project had on local wildlife. Following intervention to re-route an existing badger set, we found the number of badgers in the set increased in the months after construction was completed.

Why don't we locate the project offshore?

It is sometimes suggested that putting infrastructure offshore will lessen the impact of projects like LionLink on the onshore environment. Housing infrastructure offshore does not remove the need for infrastructure onshore. For instance, cables will still need to run onshore and onshore converter stations and substations are still needed to convert the electricity and connect the energy into the electricity grid.

Additional offshore infrastructure significantly increases the environmental impact of projects on the marine environment but does not significantly lessen the onshore impact.

Can we coordinate with other infrastructure projects?

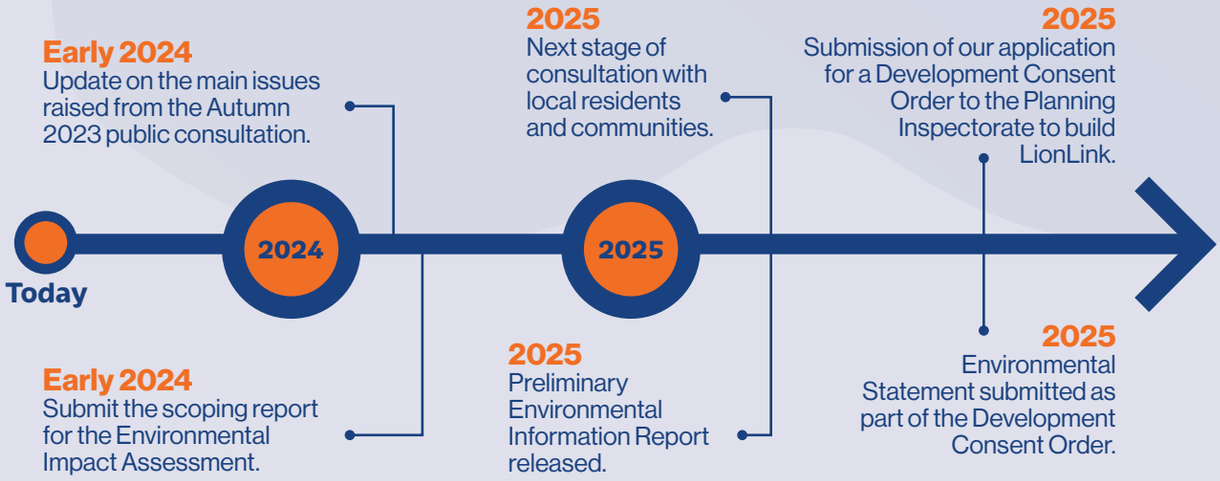
We are exploring ways to coordinate our works with other developers in the area, including Scottish Power Renewables (East Anglian Offshore Wind Farms), National Grid Electricity Transmission (Sea Link) and Sizewell C Co Ltd (Sizewell C), to minimise the impact on local communities and the environment. The cumulative impacts arising from other projects in the area will also be assessed in our Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Who will use the energy that is brought in using LionLink?

Like all other energy sources in the UK, the energy brought to the UK via LionLink will be distributed across the UK by the national grid. The purpose of this project is to bolster the security of Great Britain's energy supply as a whole rather than a particular area.

Next steps

This newsletter is the first in a series of regular communications that you will receive from LionLink updating you on the project. Other key dates for the project are as follows:



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