LionLink Community Newsletter

Summer 2025

Welcome to our latest Community Newsletter.

In this newsletter you will find a project update following our March drop-ins and webinars, as well as our ongoing survey works.

We'll also take a closer look at the North Sea Link project, another National Grid Ventures interconnector, answer key frequently asked questions from our March events and outline the next steps for the project.

National Grid Ventures (NGV) is developing plans to build LionLink, a new subsea electricity cable (known as an interconnector) between the UK and the Netherlands. LionLink will bring offshore wind energy to the UK by connecting to a Dutch offshore wind farm.

It will enable the flow of energy between the UK and Dutch electricity systems. LionLink will connect enough energy to the UK's electricity grid to power c.2.5 million homes. It will play an important role in keeping household energy bills down and providing the UK with a secure and reliable energy supply.

Lionlink will deliver a range of benefits, including:

- Strengthening the UK's national energy security – supplying up to 2 gigawatts of electricity, enough energy to power approximately 2.5 million homes.
- Lowering energy bills – LionLink is expected to save UK consumers almost £300 million in its first ten years of operation.
- Providing clean, green, renewable energy – the carbon savings of its first year is equivalent to taking nearly 600,000 cars off the road.

NGV already operates six interconnectors across the UK, including North Sea Link in Cambois, Northumberland, which is the world's longest subsea interconnector, as well as Viking Link in Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire.

LIONLINK

Project updates

March community drop-ins

In March, we hosted two drop-in events and a webinar for the community to find out more about our decision to locate our selected landfall site in Walberswick, meet our team and ask questions on the project. We were pleased to welcome over 400 attendees at our events and more than 40 participants at our webinar.

We appreciate the feedback shared by those who attended, which will help us as we continue our work to progress the project. Our team engaged on a wide range of topics, including construction areas, environmental considerations, and the siting of project infrastructure.

Catch 22

LionLink is collaborating with Catch 22 on a Social Mobility Enabling Fund to support local people in Suffolk.

Building upon a successful four-year partnership between Catch22 and National Grid, which has focused on supporting young people facing restricted access to education, training and limited job opportunities, this new initiative will see a bursary fund made available for young people in Suffolk. The fund is particularly designed to support driving lessons – which is vital for many job opportunities in the area and a major limiting factor in social mobility.

The fund will also support initiatives to alleviate:

- social isolation
- impact on long term economic independence.

Find out more about Catch 22 at **www.catch-22.org.uk**

Survey works

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys – August 2025
ALC's involve taking soil samples at regular intervals across the project route. The samples are assessed using a grading system to compare the quality of the agricultural land, and are used for drainage plans for pre and post construction drainage systems.

Archaeological surveys – Summer 2025
Archaeological surveys across the route will identify the potential presence, nature and condition of any remains. Trial trenches are opened to carefully remove layers of soil until the archaeological layer is identified. Features are then hand excavated by archaeologists, recorded and sampled, prior to the full reinstatement of the trenched area.

Magnetometry surveys – September 2025
A magnetometry survey measures the earth's magnetic field. We will be using a drone fitted with a specialist system to detect objects in the ground near the landfall site. The drone will be flown below 3m above ground.

Ground Investigation (GI) surveys – September 2025
GI surveys will be undertaken across the project route to support with design. These are essential to help understand what is beneath the surface, such as soil, rocks, and groundwater.

You can also visit our website surveys page for the latest information at: www.nationalgrid.com/lionlink/

Spotlight on North Sea Link

NGV is experienced in constructing interconnector projects, having built our first nearly forty years ago. We currently operate six interconnectors from the UK to five European nations. To provide clarity on what the construction on LionLink may look like, we have reached out to our colleague James, who worked on the North Sea Link and Viking Link interconnector projects.

Q. Has National Grid Ventures made landfall close to an existing settlement for another project?

James: At Cambois, Northumberland, where we made landfall for North Sea Link, some works took place within 50 metres of residential properties. For LionLink at Walberswick, more space is available for us to conduct the works, giving us the flexibility to set construction further away from residential properties and businesses and reduce potential impacts.

Q. What's going to be different about the construction method this time?

James: At the landfall point, North Sea Link used open trenching, which required heavy machinery and closing sections of the beach. For LionLink, horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is planned , which allows cables to be installed underground with minimal surface disruption. This approach was also taken on Viking Link and significantly reduced visual and environmental impacts.

Q. Were you able to keep the beach at Cambois open and what is proposed for Walberswick beach during the works?

James: Yes, Walberswick beach is intended to remain open. On North Sea Link the beach access had to be temporarily closed for safety due to the scale of machinery and trenching involved. With HDD, we can keep the beach open throughout construction which was the case for the landfall works we undertook for Viking Link.

Q. How long did landfall works take for both North Sea Link and Viking Link?

James: Landfall construction at Cambois lasted approximately 4–6 months, however, on our Viking Link project which used HDD, the landfall drilling was done across a shorter period of 3 months. Whilst this timeframe doesn't include enabling works and demobilisation, works are carried out in carefully phased stages to avoid prolonged disruption to the community. All land used will be fully reinstated.

Q. How can disruption be managed during the landfall works?

James: We monitor noise, light and vibration to manage impact. These are standard measures to ensure the environment is protected and community disruption is minimised. Mitigations, for example sound barriers, can be implemented where required.

Q. Will farmland still be available for agricultural use after the cables are installed?

James: Yes. Cables will be buried at depths that allow the land to be returned to exactly how it was before and can continue being used for agricultural purposes.

Q. Using the experience of work on past interconnectors, how will the cable route on LionLink be constructed?

James: To keep the cable installation at a high quality we would typically progress about 100–150 metres of the route per day through a phased approach—each section is stripped, trenched, ducted, and reinstated with the removed topsoil before moving on. This avoids long-term disruption in any one location. Some temporary haul roads will be needed throughout the construction, but similarly these will be reinstated when works across sections of the route are completed. We will have more detail on our approach at our statutory consultation.

Your questions answered

During the March events and webinars, several key topics and questions were raised by the community. Below, you can find our latest updates to these questions and how they are shaping our work. You can also view our full FAQs page on our website.

Why can we not locate more of the project offshore?

A. 84% of LionLink's UK cable is offshore. Currently, there is no fully offshore solution to connecting offshore wind and/or interconnectors to the electricity grid. Putting infrastructure offshore does not remove the need for infrastructure onshore. Energy generated or transmitted offshore needs to be connected to the onshore grid to provide the electricity needed to power UK homes and businesses.

LionLink is an essential part of the transition to putting more infrastructure offshore and bringing offshore energy sources into the Grid. LionLink will run between the UK and the Netherlands via the Nederwiek 3 windfarm in the North Sea.

Given that landfall at Aldeburgh was discounted due to offshore impacts associated with a longer offshore, how are offshore considerations balanced against the onshore?

A. From a planning and environmental perspective, we must consider impacts onshore and offshore. Following extensive surveys on land and at sea, we gained an understanding of the potential sensitivities across both, informing the siting of our key infrastructure.

A connection at Aldeburgh was discounted last year due to the likely impact on the marine environment and species, as several crossings of designated sites would be required given a longer route from the North Sea windfarm.

As we intend to make landfall in agricultural land and use that alone to traverse the route onshore from Walberswick to Saxmundham, we will not be working within any protected habitats. This would not have been the case from an offshore perspective were we to have made landfall at Aldeburgh, or a site further south.

How many HGV movements will be required each day?

A. On our recently completed Viking Link project, there was a peak of 60 HGV movements a day at the height of the construction period. Whilst exact numbers for LionLink will be determined later in the project's development, Viking Link is a comparable interconnector project in scale. Factors such as proximity of construction materials and suppliers will influence this figure, and we will always seek to use local suppliers where possible. Construction and traffic management plans will be created to identify expected movements, working movements, and any mitigations required.

How will the project minimise construction traffic and avoid disruption?

A. Our traffic management plan is being developed to assess traffic flows and establish construction traffic routes and will be informed by analysis undertaken and public feedback. Our primary approach will be to create temporary haul roads or use existing farm tracks. Where this isn't possible, we will carry out assessments of the existing roads to find suitable locations and minimise impacts.

We are considering a range of measures that would help control the management of impacts on local traffic and transport. These include road improvements, if required, and inputting systems to monitor HGV movements and ensure drivers are

using the correct routes. Our Traffic Management Plan will set out how we plan to reduce route and journey mileage and ensure considerate parking in local areas. We are also looking to work with other developers to share temporary roads where possible.

Will construction be completed in sections along the route?

A. Construction is anticipated to take up to five years. This will not be continuous at all locations as works will be completed in phases. Each stage of construction will have a Construction Management Plan in place to identify any impacts and mitigations required.

What suggests that Walberswick is less susceptible to coastal erosion and flooding?

A. The Southwold landfall location is located within the 100-year coastal erosion boundary and therefore indicates a heightened risk of erosion, posing a risk to the project's installation and operation. This risk is not present at Walberswick, where the landfall location would be outside the 100-year coastal erosion boundary. On flood risk, the Environment Agency data identifies the Walberswick landfall as located in flood zone 1, the lowest flood risk, while Southwold landfall is located within flood zones 2 and 3, which carry a greater risk of flooding.

The information on flood risk and coastal erosion is based on Environment Agency Flood Map data and the Environment Agency Shoreline Management Plan. The Project Team assessed the information as part of the wider analysis.

What will the visual impacts of the landfall works be?

A. We are currently assessing an area of Manor Field, Walberswick, to determine the location of the temporary works. This will be refined as we continue to develop the design. During construction, we expect the largest machinery used on site to be HGVs transporting stone and excavators. In addition to this, temporary welfare cabins will be installed on site.

Mitigation for the landfall site is currently being reviewed, including visual mitigations as well as noise and pollution, and this will be confirmed as we continue to develop the design. Further information will be provided at our statutory consultation.

How is the converter station being designed and when will plans be published?

A. The converter station will comprise of a range of buildings that will vary in height and size.

Further information on the converter station will be presented at our statutory consultation. Here, there will also be an opportunity for the community to feedback on the appearance of the converter station.

Next steps

Winter 2025/26
Preliminary Environmental Information Report published

January 2026
Statutory consultation

2026
Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement finalised

Development Consent Order (DCO) submitted

We are finalising our proposals ahead of our statutory consultation. Our consultation will start in January 2026.

At our consultation, we will be inviting feedback on key aspects of the plans, such as the Walberswick landfall site, converter station, onshore cable route, and proposed environmental measures. A range of in-person and online events will be held to support the community in sharing their feedback.

Our commitment to you

If you would like to keep up to date with the latest news on LionLink and to receive a virtual copy of future newsletters, please sign up via our website.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the LionLink project.

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