



# LionLink

National Grid Lion Link Limited

## PINS Pre-application Planning Service Programme Document

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this document

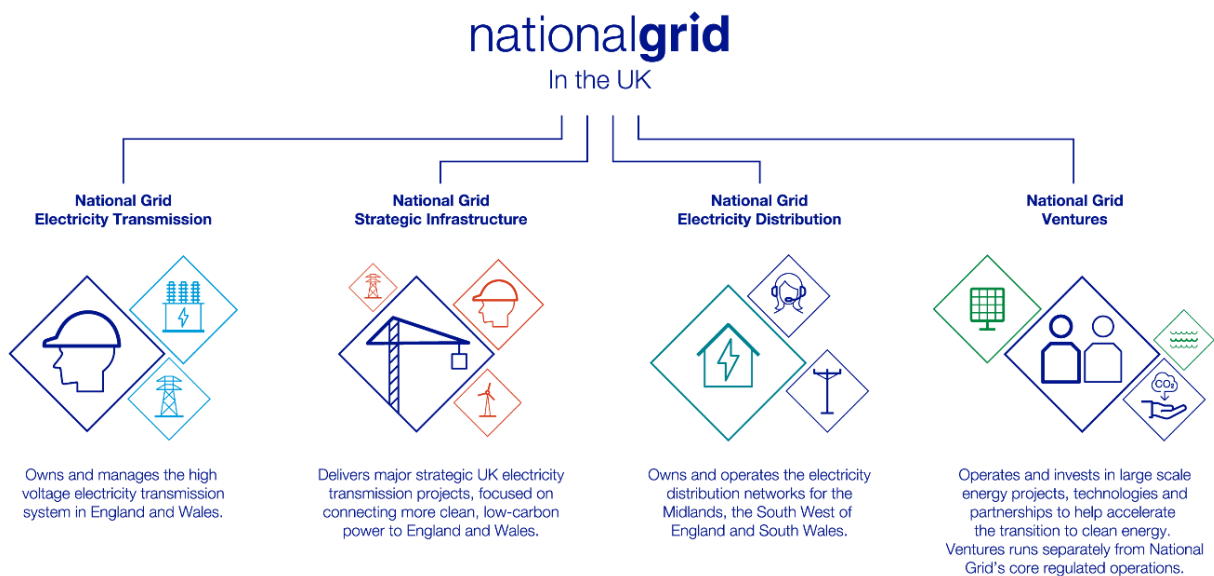
- 1.1.1 This Programme Document has been prepared by National Grid Lion Link Limited (NGLLL) (a division of National Grid plc), the Applicant, as a requirement under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-Application Prospectus in respect of LionLink (the Project).
- 1.1.2 This Programme Document sets out the timetable and describes the activities proposed to ensure an effective pre-application process, including the level of pre-application service requested from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and consultation with various parties required under the Planning Act 2008.
- 1.1.3 This Programme Document will be updated at regular intervals as appropriate and is made available on the LionLink website throughout development of the Project and will continue to be updated as appropriate.

# Chapter 2 Background to the Project

## 2.1 The Applicant

2.1.1 NGLLL, the Applicant, will be submitting to PINS a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Project, which forms one aspect of the National Grid Ventures (NGV) portfolio, part of the National Grid Group.

2.1.2 NGV, the commercial arm of National Grid, is responsible for building and operating energy projects such as LionLink. It focuses on investments in energy infrastructure, technologies, and strategic partnerships that support a secure, resilient, and affordable energy system.. The structure of the National Grid Group can be seen in **Figure 1** - National Grid Group structure below. Figure 1 - National Grid Group structure



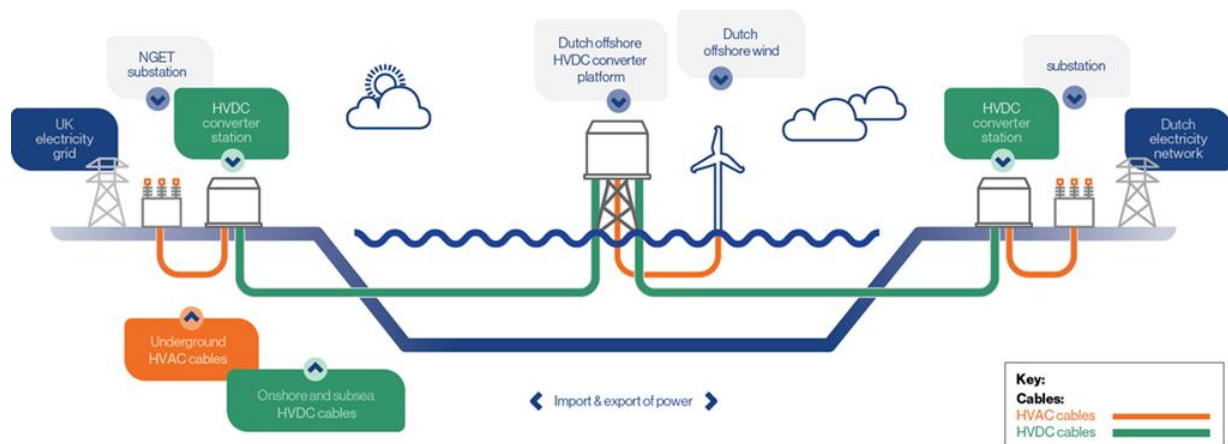
**Figure 1 - National Grid Group structure**

2.1.3 NGV already operates six interconnectors across the UK: BritNed, IFA 1, IFA 2, Viking Link, North Sea Link and Nemo Link - with a combined capacity of 7.8 gigawatts (GW).

## 2.2 The Project

2.2.1 LionLink is a new subsea electricity cable (known as an interconnector) between the UK and the Netherlands. LionLink is a first of its kind technology, which will connect to the Dutch offshore windfarm, Nederwiek 3. LionLink will enable the cross-border transmission of clean electricity with the capacity to deliver up to 2 GW of electricity, which will be vital in supporting greater energy security. LionLink will deliver a range of benefits, including strengthening the UK's national energy security – supplying up to 2.0GW of electricity, enough energy to power approximately 2.5 million homes.

An overview of the Project is illustrated in **Figure 2** - Overview of the LionLink Project below.



**Figure 2 - Overview of the LionLink Project**

2.2.2 The key infrastructural components of the Proposed Scheme (being sought for through the planned DCO application) are illustrated on the left side of **Figure 2** comprise:

- Extension to Kiln Lane Substation to facilitate LionLink's connection;
- Proposed Underground High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cables between the Kiln Lane Substation and the proposed Converter Station;
- Proposed Converter Station;
- Proposed Underground High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables between the proposed Converter Station and Landfall;
- Landfall; and
- Proposed Offshore HVDC cables from the Landfall to the edge of the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

2.2.3 The Project falls within the administrative boundaries of the following local authorities:

- Suffolk County Council
- East Suffolk District Council

## **2.3 The Planning Act 2008**

2.3.1 LionLink is treated as a development for which development consent is required, pursuant to a section 35 direction issued by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (as then known) on 22 August 2022.

2.3.2 In line with the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), LionLink is legally required to consult with the community and stakeholders before the application for development consent is submitted to PINS on behalf of the Secretary of State.

## **2.4 Other Licenses and non-planning consents**

2.4.1 The Applicant is in the process of identifying license or non-planning consents that will be included within the DCO. This will continue to be monitored and updated as appropriate. A position statement will also be provided within the DCO application documents.

# Chapter 3 The Planning Inspectorate's pre-application service

## 3.1 Pre-application service

- 3.1.1 LionLink requested the 'Standard' tier of pre-application service. It is considered the standard level of service will provide the project with an appropriate and proportionate level of pre-application engagement with PINS, reflective of the scale and nature of the project, the Project team's delivery of other interconnector projects and the level of experience of the Applicant's project team.
- 3.1.2 LionLink was confirmed as being appropriate for the Standard tier by PINS in August 2024. The Standard tier of service will provide the Project with project update meetings, draft document review and risk review.

# Chapter 4 Pre-application Programme

4.1.1 An anticipated timeline of the pre-application process is set out in **Table 1** below, including already completed activities. The pre-application timeframe will be refined, and further detail added as required and as the period of submission draws closer.

**Table 1 – Timeline of Pre-application activities<sup>1</sup>**

Key Activity	Timeframe (Status)
Non-statutory Consultation	24 October 2022 – 18 December 2022 (complete)
Supplementary Non-statutory Consultation	08 September 2023 – 03 November 2023 (complete)
EIA Scoping	16 March 2024 – 16 April 2024 (complete)
Habitat Regulations Assessment (Stage 1 Screening)	October 2025 (complete)
Statement of Community Consultation	October 2025 (complete)
Project Update Meeting with PINS (pre-statutory consultation)	12 November 2025 (complete)
Statutory Consultation, aligning with s42, s47 and s48 of PA2008	13 January 2026 – 10 March 2026 (complete)
Regard to relevant responses to the Statutory Consultation, and preparation of Consultation Report	Q2-Q3 2026 (ongoing)
Project Update Meeting with PINS (post-statutory consultation)	June 2026 (complete)
Targeted Consultation	July to August 2026
Preparation and development of DCO documentation including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft DCO,</li> <li>2. Environmental Statement,</li> <li>3. Explanatory Memorandum,</li> <li>4. Book of Reference,</li> <li>5. Statement of Reasons,</li> <li>6. Funding Statement,</li> <li>7. Works/Land/Public Rights of Way and other Plans.</li> </ol>	Q3-Q4 2026
Project Update Meeting with PINS (post-Targeted Consultation)	Q3 2026
PINS and statutory stakeholder review of draft DCO documentation	Q4 2026
Adequacy of consultation milestone report	Q4 2026
DCO submission	Q2 2027

<sup>1</sup> Subject to change following Project updates

# Chapter 5 Main Issues for Resolution

- 5.1.1 The Applicant has completed two rounds of scheme-wide Non-statutory Consultation: one round in 2022, and a further round in 2023.
- 5.1.2 A Statutory Consultation on the project was held in Q1 2026. This included the publication of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and supporting documentation. The consultation ran between Tuesday 13 January and Tuesday 10 March 2026. All feedback received is being summarised in the Consultation Report, which will form part of the DCO application documents.
- 5.1.3 A Targeted Consultation on specific matters will be undertaken between 7 July and 5 August 2026. The specific matters being consulted on include:
- an alternative landfall site location in Walberswick;
  - options for works to Benhall Railway Bridge and its inclusion into the Draft Order Limits;
  - widening of the Draft Order Limits at Lymballs Lane to facilitate construction of the haul road to reach the HVDC cable route; and
  - Refinements to vehicle access points and Draft Order Limits to;
    - provide additional space for access and visibility at junctions;
    - allow large construction vehicles to pass through constrained bends or junctions; and
    - accommodate environmental measures (such as planting) and temporary protective measures (such as matting).
- 5.1.4 Any changes to the Proposed Scheme, following Targeted Consultation, will be reported on within the DCO application documentation.
- 5.1.5 The main issues set out in **Table 2** below reflect some of the key themes raised by consultees and local communities from our Statutory Consultation.
- 5.1.6 Issues and Agreements logs for relevant statutory bodies are being prepared to provide a comprehensive summary of the main issues raised at Statutory Consultation. Further details will be presented, where required, at subsequent document updates.
- 5.1.7 The feedback will allow the Applicant to undertake further analysis in identifying the potential main issues. This will be refined into a 'potential main issues for examination document' for submission with the application.
- 5.1.8 An issue being listed below is not intended to imply that the Project considers it to be insurmountable or unduly challenging to overcome. They are listed because they reflect the key feedback from consultation and ongoing discussions, and these are issues that will continue to be considered and addressed as the project progresses towards application submission.

5.1.9 The application for a DCO will be supported by documents explaining the consideration of issues arising from consultation and the application of the relevant National Policy Statements. The Environmental Statement will set out how environmental effects have been identified; and measures taken to avoid, reduce, mitigate and compensate for effects.

**Table 2 - Main Issues**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Description of Issue</b>
<b>Landscape and visual effects associated with the Converter Station</b>	Consideration of landscape and visual effects at the Converter Station Site, including cumulative impacts associated with the Sea Link converter station which is located on the same site, and possible mitigation including siting, planting & design approaches
<b>Proposed access route to Converter Station</b>	Approach to accessing the proposed Converter Station, including considering alternative vehicular accesses, the proposed vehicular crossing of the River Fromus (including the scale of the bridge and associated heritage and landscape setting impacts), construction traffic, methodology for Abnormal Indivisible Loads, impacts on the local road network, and interproject traffic effects.
<b>Landfall Location</b>	<p>Impacts (noise and disturbance) on the local community and nearby sensitive environmental designations associated with the construction works at the landfall location in Walberswick.</p> <p>Note the forthcoming Targeted Consultation includes a revised landfall location sited further inland from the landfall presented at Statutory Consultation.</p>
<b>Socio-economic and tourism effects</b>	In respect of onshore proposals, the likely effects on socio-economic receptors and tourism, including residential and visitor accommodation.
<b>Construction Traffic and Works</b>	<p>Impacts associated with construction traffic and works, including construction working hours, on nearby sensitive receptors, particularly in relation to noise and disturbance</p> <p>Note the forthcoming Targeted Consultation includes an update to construction working hours.</p>
<b>Cumulative Effects (Coordination)</b>	Coordination – the interface with EA1N, EA2, Sea Link and Helios Energy Park around the proposed Kiln Lane Substation; the interface with Sea Link around the proposed HVAC Cable Corridor and Converter Station Site masterplan. The proposed Anglian Water Suffolk

Issue	Description of Issue
	Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage (SWRTS) interface with the proposed Converter Station Site.
<b>Cumulative Effects</b>	Cumulative - the approach to assessment and mitigation of intra-project cumulative effects, in particular construction traffic and noise and disturbance with Sizewell C, EA1N, EA2, Sea Link, and Helios Energy Park.
<b>Consenting Scenarios at Kiln Lane Substation -</b>	<p>Early stages of the project development considered multiple scenarios for the consenting and construction of the Kiln Lane Substation (either full build of the substation or extension of an existing substation). For certainty of delivery an extension scenario and full build out scenario were assessed at Statutory Consultation.</p> <p>The extension scenario relied on the main substation construction having been completed by another project in advance of LionLink. Significant progress has been made on the design of the Kiln Lane Substation, the discharge of Requirements within the relevant DCO's, and a start of works on site. As a result, the Project considers that the full build scenario is not required and as such only the extension scenario will be included in the application for development consent.</p>

# Chapter 6 Engaging with statutory bodies

## 6.1 Engagement with Statutory Bodies

- 6.1.1 The Applicant began early engagement with a number of statutory bodies prior to the Non-Statutory consultations in 2022 and 2023 and EIA Scoping in Q1/2 2024. Engagement has continued, and in Q1 2026 the Applicant carried out its Statutory Consultation ahead of DCO submission and its Examination.
- 6.1.2 The Applicant considers that the main statutory bodies affected by the application are:
- a. Natural England
  - b. The Environment Agency
  - c. Historic England
  - d. Suffolk Highways (the local highway authority)
  - e. The Marine Management Organisation
  - f. Joint Nature Conservation Committee
  - g. Maritime and Coastguard Agency / Trinity House
  - h. Cefas
  - i. The Crown Estate
  - j. Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape Team
- 6.1.3 The Applicant has also undertaken engagement with a number of other organisations such as statutory undertakers, other interest and stakeholder groups, and other infrastructure developers who are progressing DCO projects in the same locality.
- 6.1.4 Separate monthly meetings are held with the following stakeholders: Natural England, The Environment Agency, the Marine Management Organisation, and Suffolk Highways. Meetings with the other organisations are currently undertaken as necessary.
- 6.1.5 A Service Level Agreement is in place with Natural England; an Enhanced Advisory Service agreement is in place with Historic England; and a Discretionary Advice Service agreement is in place with the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.
- 6.1.6 Following the analysis of feedback from statutory bodies to the Statutory Consultation, the Applicant will be able to produce pre-application 'principal areas of disagreement summary statements' where these are identified. These will also include an indication of the degree to which it is considered that the specific issues raised will be resolved before the application for development consent is submitted.

# Chapter 7 Engagement with local authorities

- 7.1.1 The Project is located within and affects the local authorities of East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. The Applicant began early engagement with a number of statutory bodies prior to the Non-statutory consultations in 2022 and 2023. Specific engagement was also undertaken with the local authorities and their technical specialists as part of the EIA Scoping request in Q1/2 2024 and prior to Statutory Consultation throughout 2025 with engagement ongoing ahead of Targeted Consultation in 2026.
- 7.1.2 The Applicant has developed a programme of monthly meetings with the local authorities, with additional meetings for technical specialists as required and is engaging in accordance with that programme. Engagement has continued and will be maintained through the post Statutory Consultation stage, during Targeted Consultation and as we head into DCO submission through to Examination. The Project will continue engagement post decision in regard to the discharge of any relevant Requirements. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPAs) has been agreed in principle and is being finalised with East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council.
- 7.1.3 It is anticipated that pre-application 'principal areas of disagreement summary statements' will be developed with both authorities. These will also include an indication of the degree to which it is considered that the specific issues raised will be resolved before the application is submitted.

# Chapter 8 Pre-Application Risks

- 8.1.1 The Applicant has held two rounds of Non-statutory consultation, and one Statutory Consultation from 13 January to 10 March 2026 and is carrying out a Targeted Consultation from 7 July to 5 August 2026.
- 8.1.2 It is considered that there are limited residual pre-application risks and these are listed in **Table 3** below. The Applicant does not consider that these risks are being or will be realised, subject to the risk management measures that are being undertaken and which are set out in the below table. They are provided however in order to record those areas which the Applicant considers could introduce delays to the pre-application timescale should the risk profile change.

**Table 3 – Pre-application Risks**

Risk	Description of Risk	Tracking and Management of Risk
Lack of sufficient resource/capacity within host Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to engage with proposals in detail	<p>Resource availability and/or the volume of DCO projects, including those at Examination, causing delays in receiving stakeholder inputs or review.</p> <p>Numerous developments within proximity of the Project demand additional resource from Local Authorities which could reduce their ability to adequately engage with the Project proposals.</p>	The Applicant has agreed in principle and is finalising a joint Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the host LPAs. In the interim, all parties continue positive engagement across a number of technical workstreams in accordance with the principles of the PPA, including cost recovery.
Lack of sufficient resource/capacity within stakeholder organisations to engage with proposals in detail	Limited resource and capacity of some statutory consultees due to staffing and the volume of DCO and other projects in the region to which they are required to engage. Potential to result in limited engagement on the proposals and inability for statutory consultees to provide feedback throughout the pre-application stage of the project.	<p>Stakeholder engagement continues with key stakeholder organisations with meetings providing the sharing of regular updates regarding project progress and programme.</p> <p>Where applicable the Applicant has undertaken paid pre-application services with Statutory Consultees.</p>

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