LIONLINK

The Statutory Consultation for the LionLink Interconnector project has started. You should have received a paper version in the post – if you have not, please contact LionLink via its website. The deadline for comments is 10 March.

www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/lionlink/about

Overview

LionLink is an interconnector to allow the UK to buy energy generated by Dutch windfarms and power stations and visa versa. The project is being undertaken by National Grid Ventures (NGV) - a division of the National Grid which is a publicly listed company.

The cable is proposed to landfall at Walberswick - the cable will be drilled under the beach.

The cable is then proposed to be trenched over 20km to a field to the east of Saxmundham. The trenched cable route will pass around the north-west corner and west side of Westleton – at its closest, it will pass circa 1km from the village.

A field to the east of Saxmundham is proposed to house the LionLink Converter Station (converting electricity from Direct Current to Alternating Current). It will be next to an identical/very similar converter station for the Sealink project (currently undergoing examination by the National Planning Inspectorate). Each proposed converter station would house up to seven buildings up to 26 meters high and outdoor electrical equipment and each would have a footprint of up to 8.1 hectares. Both projects would also use (and possibly require change to) the 16-meter-high substation at Friston (Kiln Lane) due to be built for the Scottish Power Renewables project.

Below is a brief summary of some of the information included in the LionLink Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) – on-shore elements (available on the LionLink website).

LionLink will be in the Westleton Village Hall on Saturday 21 February 11am-4pm. LionLink staff will be available to answer questions.

NGV will draft a full Environmental Statement for the Planning Inspectorate Examination.

PEIR summary

- *Timeline:* Works may take up to four years – 2028-2032.
- *Landfall:* NGV states it selected Walberswick as the landfall site as it allows a shorter onshore cable route, has fewer environmental risks and lower construction complexity compared to the other options previously considered: Aldeburgh, Dunwich and Southwold.
- *The workforce:* NGV anticipates a peak of 669 workers.
- *Working hours:* are proposed to be from 07:00 to 19:00 on weekdays, and from 07:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The construction working hours exclude start up and

close-down activities which will take place up to one hour either side of the construction working hours – so in effect impacts from construction will be 06:00-20:00.

- *The cable routes:* NGV states it has selected routes avoiding sensitive habitats, veteran trees, and flood zones where possible. Their aim is to drill under roads, rivers and environmentally sensitive areas. No mitigations on drilling noise are proposed. Temporary work areas, access roads, and widened entrances will be needed during construction to allow vehicles and workers to get to and from the site.

- *Traffic and transport:* NGV gives no detail about traffic impacts and vehicle numbers. It references another similar project which required 60 HGVs per day suggesting that the same may apply to LionLink. NGV will only undertake detailed transport modelling and assessment - including traffic flows and cumulative impacts with other projects - in its subsequent Environmental Statement. NGV does anticipate significant effects[1] on some roads and at some junctions during the construction phase. The western end of Lymballs Lane (from the A12 to the cable route) and a section of the Darsham Road between Westleton and Darsham are proposed to be within the project's order limits and so can be expected to be used by the project. Additionally, HGVs will use the Yoxford Road to get from the A12 to the cable route works around Westleton and both the Yoxford Road and the B1125 are expected to be used by worker traffic.

- *Land-use:* NGV acknowledge that the Friston Kiln Lane Substation, proposed Converter Station and their respective permanent access roads will require a permanent change of land use and therefore loss of agricultural land, which is considered a significant effect.

- *Air quality:* NGV does not anticipate significant air quality effects because of mitigation measures such as dust suppression, use of low-emission machinery, and site layout planning.

- *Ecology and biodiversity:* NGV acknowledges significant effects during construction including potential effects associated with habitat loss (mature trees, hedgerows, woodlands), and disturbance to protected species.

- *Health and wellbeing:* NGV acknowledge that artificial lighting may diminish the tranquility of the environment, that temporary diversions and realignments of public rights of way will occur and that there will be significant effects around the proposed landfall site and converter and substation sites.

- *Historic environment:* NGV anticipates significant effects during construction around the Kiln Lane substation site and the proposed converter station site.

- *Landscape and visual:* NGV anticipates significant landscape and visual effects during construction because of the establishment of construction compounds and haul roads, earthworks and excavation, temporary use of construction plant and cranes, temporary displacement of arable land and changes to land use and lighting for night-time working. NGV states that these effects include a reduction in existing tranquillity, and visual disturbance for locals and visitors. NGV states that by year 15 of operation, most adverse effects are expected to become minor or negligible (not significant), with localised moderate significant effects remaining

[1] Significant effects require mitigation

near the permanent infrastructure (the Kiln Lane Substation and Converter Station). NGV states that the project will not compromise the distinctive natural features of the National Landscape (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

- *Noise and vibration:* NGV notes that the area is characterized by relatively low background sound levels and that the relatively quiet environment is considered particularly sensitive to changes in noise. However, NGV states that during construction, daytime activities are assessed to be unlikely to result in significant effects and therefore do not require additional mitigation over and above the embedded and control measures.

- *Socio-economics, recreation and tourism:* NGV states that there is sufficient capacity in the local accommodation market to temporarily house workers and so no significant effects are anticipated.

- *Public rights of way and recreational routes:* NGV states that they will remain accessible through managed diversions but adds that the project will also require the temporary diversion of public rights of way, which is likely to give rise to significant effects.

- *Decommissioning of LionLink:* the design life of LionLink's components is approximately 40 years, but NGV does not anticipate decommissioning as the lifespan of components can be extended through regular maintenance and refurbishment. In the event that decommissioning occurs, the Kiln Lane Substation and the Converter Station would be dismantled while cables will be left in the ground.

Observations/questions

The documentation makes repeated reference to the fact that it will provide: "clean, green, renewable energy". While this is true of the energy generated by the Dutch windfarms, the interconnector will also be linked to the Dutch grid which includes energy generated by gas (and presumably other non-renewable) power stations.

Walberswick is a scientific protected nature site and the field in Walberswick proposed to house the equipment for the offshore drilling is home to Marsh Harriers and Avocets and is a Nightjar breeding site. There and 11 different bat species in Walberswick including Barbastelle bats which are a European rare and protecting species.

The Converter station graphics do not show the Sealink Converter Station which (if approved by the Secretary of State) will be next to the LionLink Converter Station. It is difficult to realistically gauge the visual impact of the Saxmundham site without the Sealink Converter Station included in the graphic.

The PEIR does not include any information about traffic numbers or types of vehicles and sizes and numbers of abnormal indivisible loads (AILs). This is of particularly concern given that local roads – notably the B1125 – are already suffering from SZC and other NSIP traffic.

During the Sealink Planning Inspectorate Examination (currently underway), Sealink have suggested that the LionLink Converter Station design will mirror that used by Sealink (as they will be next to each other, better that both look the same…). If so, the Sealink design would determine the LionLink

Converter Station design before LionLink is even considered by the Planning Inspectorate – and also making the design questions in this consultation superfluous.

Recommendations

Westleton Parish Council (WPC) recommends that residents wait until after 21 February to respond to the consultation as LionLink staff will be in the Village Hall to explain the project and answer questions on 21 February – that occasion can inform your responses.

WPC recommends that you email your responses (instead of using the paper consultation document received in the mail) as you will not be confined to answering their set questions. Email responses are as valid as responses using their questionnaire.

In case you are unable to attend the event in the Westleton Village Hall, LionLink will be holding consultation events at High Lodge Leisure, Haw Wood, Hinton, Darsham, IP17 3QT on Friday 6 February 2-7pm and Yoxford Village Hall on Saturday 28 February 11am-4pm.

For further information

www.WALL-update.org

Suffolk Energy Action Solutions - Campaign against National Grid's Energy Hub on the Friston and Suffolk Coast

LionLink About website - in particular the FAQs and Document Library.

We will update this document if we receive additional useful information.