

1. Good morning. My name is Julie Blackman-Nandi
2. I'm here today as an interested party, in a professional capacity and as an individual who is deeply concerned about the ecologically sensitive and vulnerable site that the National Grid proposes for the only Sea Link (SL) project landfall in Kent. I would also like to challenge how the initial scoping and research for possible sites and the application of criteria for selecting a site for landfall was made. I believe that it is evidently flawed, and that due process has not been followed by the applicant.
3. My hope is that through these hearings – the Examining Authority's assessment of Principal Issues will also include the negative impact on the community-wide aspect of Mental Health. My professional concern is based on the loss of the only green and blue open space in this part of Thanet.
4. I'm a qualified and BACP Registered Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist, working systemically with Health, Social Care and Education. My case load since 2012 has been predominantly in Thanet.
5. My concern for this cohort of the population, the children, young people, their families and carers who live in Thanet, is based on the impact on their mental health when the natural resources offered by Pegwell Bay, Minster Marches and the rewilded hover port at Cliffs End are restricted in access or destroyed.
6. I'd like to refer to the NHS policy of Green Social Prescribing. For those to whom this is new, the NHS defines it as:
 - a. *The practice of supporting engagement in nature-based interventions and activities to improve a person's mental and physical health.*
 - b. *Green social prescribing includes both what is known as green and blue activities. These could include local walking schemes, community gardening projects, conservation volunteering, green gyms, open water swimming or arts and cultural activities which take place outdoors.*

It concludes:

 - c. *there is strong and growing evidence that nature based social prescribing plays an important role in improving mental and physical health.*
7. Take a look at Pegwell Bay Country Park, the old hover port, Minster Marches on any day of the week and you will find numerous informal walking groups formed without any other reason than walking in nature. There is also the facilitated Pilgrims Hospice walking group, which meets regularly to support those who have experienced bereavement and loss.

8. In addition to these, there is the regular weekly Park Run which has an enormous local attendance, whatever the weather. People want to be connected to nature, and by this connection, connected with others too.
9. I've not yet mentioned the cycling groups, both families and formal clubs which meet and use Pegwell Bay as a route linking Sandwich Bay and Route One along the coast.
10. I mentioned the Education sector and bring your attention the SEND independent school at Ebbsfleet. Students at this school will have an Education Care and Health Plan (ECHP) due to their neurodiversity or other complex needs. This is a developmentally vulnerable cohort and the disruption, both sensory such as noise, and changes in daily routines to travel will have a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of the students, and by association their families and carers. The impact on the school staff will be, by extension, significant.
11. And as a clinician who also uses Green Social Prescribing in support of my work with my clients, I also use these sites as part of my self-care. I regularly walk at Pegwell Bay to decompress, to engage and connect with the natural environment. Be it observing birds, or noticing if the Sea Buckthorn is in flower, or any other aspects of nature which connects me to this amazing natural resource. It is these green and blue open spaces that I hope to protect and save for the future of the children and young people of Thanet.
12. I would like to focus on the *National Grid Sea Link Options Appraisal* where it clearly states the process is *'underpinned by a set of overarching principles'* That include:
 - a. *Using or adapting existing infrastructure will generally be of benefit/advantage compared with creating new infrastructure.*

And:

- b. *Options which minimise and mitigate impacts on environmental or socioeconomic constraints.....*

Will align with the:

- c. *National Grid's statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to 'have regard to the desirability of preserving amenity' and will more readily achieve consent.*

13. It is these very principals which I believe have not been followed in the selection of the proposed Kent landfall site. Therefore, this also implies National Grid have not adhered to their statutory duty.
14. I challenge the recent Sea Link (SL) Community Update, (dated *October 2025*, published after the Kent OFH on *11/12 November 2025*) that the Sea Link Project team:

- a. ...*'did look at brown field sites in Kent, however none of them were large enough for the infrastructure we need to build, or near enough to where Sea Link must connect'*.
15. I would challenge that **there are** alternative brownfield sites which meet the revised acreage now needed by SL as 22 acres – but the site would not be evident from a facile desk survey and would need meaningful engagement with Thanet District Council, the owners of the 32 acre site. This alternative brownfield site is no longer used for its original purpose but is not derelict. It has secure parking for construction plant and equipment needed for the repurposing of the site. It has an access road suitable for heavy articulated traffic. It is only mentioned once in the *National Grid October 2022 Sea Link Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study 5.2.14* and in this instance it is defined as a working port. It states:
- a. *Consideration has also been given to the navigational shipping channels that serve the ports of Ramsgate, Harwich and Felixstowe... (pg 31 – 32)*
16. If a brownfield site, such as Ramsgate Port were to be repurposed and were to be approved for the Kent landfall site, this would then mean that Option B for the Kent converter station location would also become the more appropriate site. This would alleviate the need to use any of the current land within Option A as the location for the Converter Station at Minster Marshes, Pegwell Bay or the rewilded hover port at Cliffs End.
17. In both the letter of the law and intention of process this change would fulfil the *National Grid's statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to 'have regard to the desirability of preserving amenity' and will more readily achieve consent.*

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