

I strongly object to the Sea Link project and believe it must not go ahead.

The proposal presents unacceptable environmental risks that have not been adequately assessed and directly threatens the integrity of one of Kent's most important and protected coastal ecosystems - Sandwich and Pegwell Bay. Kent Wildlife Trust's formal representations highlight numerous serious failings in National Grid's assessment, including:

Non-compliance with the Habitats Regulations, with the Applicant unable to demonstrate - beyond reasonable scientific doubt - that the project will not damage the integrity of the SPA, Ramsar and SAC sites at Sandwich and Pegwell Bay.

Failure to apply the Mitigation Hierarchy, with avoidance ignored in favour of unproven mitigation measures. This is particularly concerning given the long-term, still-unresolved damage caused by the earlier Nemo Link project.

Risk of irreversible habitat loss, including to protected saltmarsh, intertidal mudflats, floodplain grazing marsh, ditches, hedgerows and Functionally Linked Land that support internationally important bird species.

A legally inadequate alternatives assessment, with Pegwell Bay pre-selected despite being the most environmentally constrained landfall option.

A deficient cumulative impact assessment, which fails to consider the compound effects of Sea Link alongside Nemo Link, large solar developments, nearby housing applications and National Grid's own forthcoming offshore cable proposal for the same site.

Inconsistent and unreliable mitigation claims, with no binding guarantee that trenchless methods will succeed, raising a real risk of open-cut trenching through protected habitats - contrary to law, precedent and national policy.

Pegwell Bay has already suffered long-term ecological harm from previous infrastructure works. Allowing Sea Link to proceed would repeat these failings and undermine national commitments to halt biodiversity loss by 2030.

For these reasons, and based on the evidence submitted by Kent Wildlife Trust, I urge the Examining Authority to reject the Sea Link proposal in its current form.