

## **FF0A893ED – Sarah Bailey: Open Floor Hearing 12 November 2025**

Far more knowledgeable and articulate people than I have told you about the ecological impact of this scheme so I want to tell you about the impact on the people of the Isle of Thanet. Thanet is a densely populated area – a mere 103 square kilometres, a peninsula surrounded by sea on 3 sides with only one major road going in and out. A road which currently has a speed restriction for 9 miles of its length because the road surface has been damaged as it is built on the very same clay alluvial soil where National Grid want to build their converter station. There are 7 energy projects, an airport and 9 housing and mixed use developments – consented or being built – within 5km of the planned converter station. All of these will have to use that same road to get building materials into Thanet. In National Grid's cumulative impact assessment, they've said that only homes, businesses and open spaces within 500m of their draft order limits will be impacted. This is simply not true. Everyone in Thanet will be negatively affected.

While housing may be necessary for Thanet, the energy projects are not. There will be no jobs, nor do we need the power. We are Kent's most deprived area – recently jumping up the Index of Multiple Deprivation from 49<sup>th</sup> to 35<sup>th</sup> place. 18% of our children live in poverty and our unemployment and mental health issues are the highest in Kent. Salaries are 16% lower than national average. To reverse these statistics, we need development that supports our community's economic growth and wellbeing. Sea Link does neither. No jobs but 7 day a week construction and thousands of lorry movements, coupled with the devastation of our only remaining wild spaces which are so crucial to our community's mental health. It will be a blight on the landscape, impacting our tourism-reliant economy. In short, it will have a catastrophic impact on both our wellbeing and economy.

Nearly 5 million tourists visit our beaches every summer, many by road, often leading to long tailbacks. But National Grid traffic surveys were carried out in January. Tourism accounts for nearly ¼ of Thanet's economy, is growing year on year, and is a vital source of jobs and income for our deprived community. Sea Link will destroy that tourism industry. No one wants to sit in stationary traffic next to huge lorries belching diesel, only to holiday at a building site or look at an industrial landscape.

Finally, bringing three cables one after the other through a conservation area with multiple protections is indicative of a bloated business which is not exploiting efficiencies and lacks coherent strategy. I was astonished to hear National Grid say at the Issue Specific Hearing yesterday that the lasting damage caused by Nemo Link was the fault of a sister company. They've got the same parent company! Where is the corporate responsibility? Their inefficient siloed business structure must not be allowed to have such a detrimental impact on the people of Thanet, the environment or the British taxpayer.