

Interested Party Reference: [REDACTED]

Submission to PINS against the Sea Link proposals to come ashore across Minster Marshes

I write, with great concern, of the damage that will be done to several irreplaceable sites if this proposal is allowed to go ahead.

The proposed development covers Pegwell Bay and marshland, the Minster Marshes, and more recently (and still yet without detailed proposals) the old Hoverport at Cliffsend.

These areas are protected by various SSSI designations, including Ramsar designation for the wetlands that provides international oversight. They are an extremely important overwintering area for many rare species of birds and the marshes provide support for many animals, some of which are on the Red List, as well as the birds.

The proposed development rides rough-shod over these protections, with pathetically inadequate protection and remediation efforts. There are no apparent costs in the overall project budget, associated with the potential loss of wildlife, making a comparison with other potential landfill sites impossible.

National Grid seems to have chosen this particular site as the least cost option, without any consideration of the environmental and ecological costs, in the expectation that the ultimate planning authority will be happy to override the substantial protections consequent upon the SSSI and other designations as has happened before. There are other suitable brownfield landfill sites without such critical environmental impacts and I urge the Inspectors to determine on what grounds these other sites have been rejected.

In addition to the environmental impacts, the site has many features that make it unsuitable for the creation of such a large set of buildings. As its name suggests, Minster Marshes is marshland, continually wet and boggy and at times flooded completely. National Grid's own site selection criteria rule out such sites, but this is being ignored. The flooding will only increase as sea levels rise as a consequence of climate change (the mean water level is already noticeably higher than only a few decades ago); and the increasing storm activity and ferocity will only add to the problem. The ground is also unsuitable for heavy building (and the traffic required for the same) adding significant extra effort for piling and concrete 'rafts' which will be rendered useless by sinkage and flooding even in the short term.

The old Hoverport site has been recently added to the plans, but is itself a wildlife haven enjoyed by many, and particularly the disabled due to the remaining hardstanding making access easy for wheelchair users and those with mobility or vision impairments. National Grid's detailed plans for this site are pending, but will include complete destruction of the existing hardstanding and the natural environment that has taken over the site in the last decades. It is thought that the land under the asphalt is very contaminated which, if disturbed, could have terrible consequences for both wildlife and local residents.

The more that is uncovered about National Grid's plans, the more unsuitable these sites become for such a massive development. The proposed site and buildings are far larger than required for

the current project plans. Is Pegwell Bay to become the landfall site for many more interconnects? How much damage can one company inflict on our beautiful landscape, wildlife and green lung?

I urge you to give this proposal the thumbs down that this plan deserves, and make National Grid think again.

Yours in hope

Dr Philip Shotton
Concerned Ramsgate resident