

Nurturing Growth – Driving Excellence

Southeastanglia@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

OFH2 SESSION 2

19th November 2025

Dear Planning Inspectorate

Please find below issues Great Oaks Small School faces due to the potential siting of National Grid's Sealink Project:

- Endangering students, staff, parents, visitors and taxis entering and exiting the school with very large construction traffic
- Impeding the delivery of goods etc. to the school
- Endangering students and staff using Jutes Lane travelling on foot or in vehicles to and from the school, particularly at the lower curved section of Jutes Lane and when entering and exiting the roundabout
 - School is already experiencing double TIRs driving down Jutes Lane in error, causing disruption to the beginning of the school day; this will only increase with increased traffic
 - The roundabout is already an issue with increased traffic making it dangerous to enter and exit Jutes Lane. It is only time before there is a serious/fatal accident
- Noise disturbance and destruction of the hedgerows, trees and wildlife along the current farm track which borders the end of the school garden and Forest School area
 - Educating children and young people is a privilege until teaching results in attempting to justify the unjust. It is a travesty when adults are causing irreversible damage to the diverse wildlife and their habitats, we naturally teach our children to care for.
- Noise and vibration disturbance from piling and construction of the access road causing significant distress to students and disturbance to teaching, meetings and examinations

Information on Great Oaks Small School in National Grid DCO documents:

9.3.16 Application Document 6.2.3.9 Part 3 Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration... States 'Great Oaks Small School is highly sensitive'... however, the impact of this statement is reduced by a further statement concluding 'the potential equality impacts are not considered to be substantial but could arise on an individual basis'. Anyone researching autism in depth will understand sensory overload in relation to sound and vibration in this instance. The impact upon our students being particularly damaging due to their already active fight and flight responses. In simple terms the sound enters the ears, this is detected by the amygdala, the

emotional centre of the brain, triggering a release of stress hormones e.g. cortisol and adrenaline which activates the nervous system. This in turn increases heart rate, blood pressure and inflammation in the body with the accumulation over time resulting in increased risk of heart attack, stroke and early death. Many of our students experience hyperacusis, misophonia, phonophobia, anxiety and trauma. An example of misophonia and hyperacusis at play can be seen across the school with some students needing to eat in very quiet conditions i.e. no one speaks, others eat 1:1 (alone with supervision) due to the outsized emotional response such as agitation or rage to specific sound like chewing, sniffing or heavy breathing.

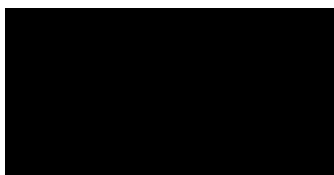
I have been liaising with National Grid Sealink Project personnel in person once and via Teams twice from December 2024 to just before the Summer break 2025, when I was told at the last meeting with them, I would be contacted during August 2025 regarding an update. This did not happen. I contacted them again in relation to confirmation regarding screening, noise control, air pollution, construction timings, traffic access and compensation for the disruption and inconvenience the Sealink Project will cause our small but important community and received an email following my second attempt at setting one up. Just recently I received a short email acknowledging my request to meet with them, but again I await a date and time. Breaking ones word in such delicate circumstances does not bode well for having confidence in the proposed ameliorations.

On that note, we are not the typical secondary special school catering for autistic students for profit, we are a small charity school registered in 2001, when I and friend, Liz Baker, found ourselves with our own youngest respective children unable to attend secondary school due to the inability of mainstream school not being able to cater for their individual needs. We know first-hand how important small, quiet environments are for the welfare of children and young people.

Our students at Great Oaks Small School take pre GCSEs, GCSEs, AS level, A levels and equivalents, subjects and levels they were unable to comprehend studying within mainstream due to the busy and noisy environments and systems imposed upon them. They move on into jobs, onto colleges and into universities studying a wide range of subjects. Should the National Grid Sealink project go ahead in the location planned for currently, it will not only be destroying invaluable wildlife and their habitats but the futures, and for some lives, of the neurodiverse children and young people we serve.

I thank you for the opportunity in allowing me to represent the worrying concerns of the Great Oaks Small School community.

Yours sincerely



Julie-Anne Kelly
Headteacher

On and behalf of Great Oaks Small School