

Monday, 19 January 2026

Dear Sarah Holmes and colleagues – re CR1

A note on the process for the Sea Link application

This is starting to feel like a horrible game of Whack-a-Mole. We (and you) challenge one assertion and five more documents spring up, not remotely addressing those objections, but adding in a whole load more information. And while you're busy reading those, BAM, the documents you originally objected to are back with tracked changes (can you find them all? Are they significant or is it a game of Where's Wally in a 200-page document which has 3 corrections which could be substantial and significant or could be adding a missing comma in three places?). WHO KNOWS? It's a terrible, terrible process and weighted so heavily in the developer's favour, it's almost laughable. But like the plucky little English people we are, we will continue to plug away. So, on that note:

CR1 comments (change 1 – hoverport)

Document 9.76.3 is the Change Request (CR1) Consultation Report where National Grid (NG) as the applicant, responds to stakeholders on their initial (a laughable <500 words) Change Request for the hoverport (change 1). All my subsequent comments relate to documents issued under CR1 although I also refer to Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (REP1-108) as it is relevant .

My overarching point is that this entire consultation process is dishonest. National Grid have repeatedly stated throughout all the documentation since the start of the DCO process that the hoverport would only be used for maintenance. However, in the CR1 documents, they say they always intended to use the hoverport for construction, operation and maintenance. This may be what they intended but it is **absolutely not** what they have stated in their documentation. After CR1 was submitted, and as you are I'm sure aware, they redacted the lines in multiple documents that they only required access to the hoverport for 'occasional access for maintenance'. In the 'Technical Note' they tossed in that they want to take equipment back and forth to the hoverport between 4 and potentially up to 40 times a day. This is not occasional access.

NG state that they know there are numerous protected species of flora and fauna at the hoverport (because Kent Wildlife Trust told them). How are they planning on avoiding damage? They say they're going to drive their massive equipment around the plants. How do they know where the plants are? They went and had a look at the site in June 2025. Do we have any record of that? Nope.

But don't worry – they're going to have an ecologist on site directing traffic! This would be laughable if it weren't so serious. How about the bats, reptiles and other fauna which use the hoverport? Not mentioned at all. Because they haven't had time to do any

surveys you see. Busy, busy! And they know they're going to get consent anyway, so they simply don't care.

This is catastrophic for Thanet's biodiversity and its people

The applicant has said repeatedly that it hasn't had time to carry out ecological surveys of the hoverport. Then in its new documentation, it says it hasn't been given a licence by Thanet District Council. Which is it? They have had at least 18 months since they alleged that they hadn't had time. Why have they not resolved this issue?

In my view, the applicant has been dishonest in their documentation and dishonest in their application. The Pegwell Bay Construction Note made it abundantly clear that it was always NG's plan to use the hoverport as their primary point of access to transport heavy machinery onto Pegwell Bay SSSI for their construction. But I think they knew that would cause a massive public outcry so they maintained they only wanted to use the hoverport for occasional maintenance and then revealed their actual plans after their CR1 request.

Not only will their plans to use the hoverport massively disrupt the King Charles III national coastal footpath and the Contra Trail, it will have a huge impact on the many people who use the hoverport for daily recreation. NG say is it largely unused. That is untrue which they'd know if they'd carried out any surveys, which they haven't.

Loss of the hoverport will have a huge impact on the people who rely on it for accessible recreation and those of us who don't have accessibility needs but love it for its wild beauty and accessibility to the stunning wildlife which rely on the Bay. My son and his friends have played in it since they were little. As teenagers, it is a heady mix of wilderness and industrial which is absolutely unique. We have always felt so very lucky to have this precious space. Thanet has so few open spaces that it would be criminal to deny us this.

It will also have a dreadful impact on the people who live opposite the hoverport, less than 100m from what will be a construction site if their plans are granted consent. Not to mention the owners of the Viking Ship café whose livelihood will be destroyed by NG's plans (fewer than 5 years of disruption = no compensation). In their contempt for the people and businesses who will be affected by their plans, NG haven't bothered to contact any of them.

These are not the actions of a socially responsible company which wishes to build a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship with the UK and its people or the communities it is destroying. NG has shown itself to be a rapacious self-serving business which has no care for either the UK's environment or its people but instead wants to trample all over both to maximise shareholder value. How can the UK

government allow any such duplicitous behaviour from a private company? It is unconscionable.

Shame on the ExA if it approves this disastrous project.