

APPLICATION BY NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION FOR AN ORDER GRANTING
DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR SOUTH EAST ANGLIA LINK (SEA LINK)

PINS REFERENCE: EN020026

Interested Party Reference [REDACTED]

Response to CR1 – extension to Draft Order Limits to include Hoverport

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My response to CR1 covers 7 brief sections – but I request the opportunity to expand on these points later in the process. I will refer to the Applicant as NG throughout.

1. Environmental Impacts on protected species and lack of survey data
2. Impact of noise and vibration on cetaceans, seals and birds
3. Impact of noise and vibration for Cliffsend residents
4. Increased pollution risks
5. Impact on Amenities for residents
6. Impacts for Tourism and Businesses
7. Traffic impacts

Introduction: The increase to the extent of the use of the Hoverport appears to be in response to previous requests from the ExA to avoid damaging the saltmarsh habitat, which is laudable. But NG's response is disproportionate. It appears that the Hoverport is no longer to be used for access & maintenance by light vehicles – but is now to be used as the main access to the mudflats for drilling the HDD route.

1: Environmental Impacts

- NG state that the Hoverport is home to Fiery Clearwing and Sussex Emerald Moth as well as Lizard orchids. Local records also show reptiles and bats.
- NG have had plenty of time to survey for these – but have made no effort to do so. It is now too late in the DCO process to undertake these and they are 'gaming the system'.
- NG state they will undertake surveys prior to works and will mark out a safe route. Their current lack of attention to this site – despite being advised of this - suggests we cannot trust this will be done or adequately monitored.
- The extension to the Hoverport seems to be so that heavy plant can be taken onto the Bay. It is longer to be light maintenance vehicles only – but is now a main construction route.

2. Impact of Noise & Vibration

- The late submission of the Construction Technical Note (REP2-011) has only recently allowed me to review the impacts of this on wildlife. I am concerned that the dB(A) levels for the construction vehicles cumulatively and drilling noise will be above levels that can damage hearing in seals and cetaceans. There is evidence of the likelihood of this supplied by Save Minster Marshes. Vibration too is a big issue for these animals and birds. Data from the RSPB and other research indicate that birds will be disturbed by noise at quite low levels and Lapwing and Plover in particular may never return when disturbed by noise. Curlew will take flight within 600m. The construction of coffer dams with vibro-piling (24hr working?) cannot but disturb the birds who use this important site. This is heart-breaking for me and the hundreds of visitors to Pegwell Bay come to

watch birds. We will be watching mudflats with construction and no birds – for years to come.

3. Impact of Noise & Vibration on Cliffsend Residents

- My conversations with some residents tells me that NG are still not informing people of what is going on. Many are unaware. Will you ask NG to prove their communication with the Cliffsend residents who will be impacted?
- The noise of HGVs and the construction on the Bay will be impossible to bear and will blight their homes.
- The 'noise receptors' along the Sandwich Road appear not to have been updated for this CR. Is that allowed?

4. Increased pollution risks

- Any construction in the bay will introduce oil leaks. All heavy machinery leaks oil and sheds metals and rubber. Plus there is a big concern about the likelihood of the drilling causing pollution. NG's mitigation appears to be a guy with a hand pump and spotters to check for problems. This sounds like a pantomime rather than serious pollution control.
- NG say that they have had 'anecdotal' evidence of the Hoverport being built on colliery spoil. This is FACT and not anecdotal. Colliery spoil leaches heavy metals and the surface of the Hoverport is breaking up. Heavy machinery down there will make it much worse. I can provide documentation to support this and TDC and KCC have not pressed for development there for that reason.

5. Impact on Amenity for Residents

This is one area of open space that is re-wilding in Thanet, where we are already putting up with a massive spread of concrete and roads. This is important for less abled people and those with prams and pushchairs to be able to get closer to a wild bit of the coast. The track and footpath to the Hoverport apron will be closed for probably 4 years. And if the Scottish Power project comes in afterwards probably more likely 8. Why are we being sacrificed for the benefit of the rest of the country? There is no benefit for us.

6. Impacts on Tourism and Business

- What's going to happen to businesses like The Salty Seal, The Viking Café and Njord? Who will want to sit out looking over a bay that is full of construction with heavy vehicles thundering past? It will destroy their business.
- The Park Run people have a massively popular run here. It will totally destroy that and impact adversely on the health of local people who enjoy running here
- Likewise the footpaths and cyclepaths will be closed. The cycle path is to be permanently re-routed – but despite trying – I couldn't find any detail of when or where to.

7. Traffic Impacts

It is now clear that traffic movements will navigating the narrow shicanes and small roundabouts around cliffsend and Ebbsfleet lane and onto the Hoverport. None of these roads are designed for this traffic. There is a 7.5t weight restriction on Sandwich Road. There is

mention in the documentation of 120t crane! And 4 x 20t excavators. The roads and the Hoverport are not designed for this.

Conclusion

The late addition of the CR into the process appears to be gaming the system to the disadvantage of us poor residents in Thanet. Poor in terms of measures of deprivation and poor in terms of how NG appear to think of us, “Oh poor little them – they’re so stupid - they won’t understand and won’t complain”. Well some of us are worried sick about this to the point that it is making us ill. We all know that we can’t carry on burning fossil fuels for energy. I do understand that. But this is not a green energy project if it wrecks the ‘green’ environment we are trying to save.

Please be brave and reject CR1 and tell the Secretary of State that this is simply the wrong location for the Kent Landfall and the CR is therefore not acceptable. Get NG to go back to the original scoping and look again at the Sellindge and Dungeness options. They have the money to do it. Once our habitat and wildlife is gone it’s gone for good and future generations will know who made the decisions and will want to know why.

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