

Cllr Rebecca Wing
Central Harbour Ramsgate
Thanet Green Party

This document seeks to detail concerns and objections re the National Grids proposal as part of their Kent Sea Link plans, to expand the use of the old Hoverport at Cliffsend.

As a Councillor and resident of Ramsgate who enjoys and benefits from the wide variety of open spaces in Thanet, one of which as a dog owner, is the use of the Hoverport, I would like to submit the following concerns and objections:

Environmental Concerns: There appears to be little if any attempt by the NG to understand the unique flora and fauna at the old Hoverport, there have been no ecological surveys that would have identified what is there, in what numbers and how it links to the wider ecology of the area. There is little effort to acknowledge the importance of the site given it has now been rewilding for the last 30 plus years and its significance now as a biodiverse habitat located within a designated RAMSAR site, National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Risk of Pollution: The makeup of the Hoverport is a mixture of concrete, making up the old landing site for hovercraft, scrubland and saltmarsh. There has been no assessment of how what is planned will impact all these distinct areas. I am especially concerned about the extensive concrete area which was built on the sands of Pegwell Bay near Cliffsend, using reclaimed land formed from 300,000 tons of spoil from the now closed Chislet Colliery. This was used to build up the chalk bedrock, to create a terminal and apron. Coal mine spoil is well evidenced as a significant potential pollutant and environmental hazard, consisting of waste rock, shale and coal rejects generated during mining, which can cause long-term pollution to air, soil, and water through leaching, spontaneous combustion, and erosion. My concern is that the extensive use of this site by the NG will disturb the already fragile cement surface and in so doing will pollute the environment. The NG have not addressed this very real concern at all and it is hard to see how what they propose will not speed up the damage to the already fragile cement surface.

Loss of Local Amenity & Impact on Neighbours: NG documentation indicates that the impact to loss of this amenity for the many people that use the hoverport has been assessed as 'insignificant'. They state that much of the hoverport will still be accessible but it is hard to see how a narrow strip by the cliffs next to their construction site would offer the peace, tranquillity and right to explore the whole site and the flora and fauna that presently exists. Bird song will be replaced by the noise and pollution of heavy machinery and much of the site will be destroyed and inaccessible. The loss of local amenity and impact on neighbours is hardly 'insignificant' and the NG have made no attempt to engage with users or locals to assess the present use and value of the site as an extremely important and highly valued amenity or the impact on the health and well-being of those that use it, including myself, should this part of their DCO application be approved.

Assessed Need and Transparency: This site has been a late addition to the main DCO and involves an extremely wide area of Pegwell Bay as well as a proposed CPO of the old Hoverport site. It is not clear why they need to CPO the old Hoverport site which would mean a total loss of amenity and ongoing negative impact on the biodiversity of the site and Pegwell Bay, forever. Given the lack of detail here it would seem that the NG have simply decided to try and take the site, with little evidence to justify their decision making or indeed why they need it. The only justification seems to be to avoid negative impact at another location, indeed, they make little or no attempt to investigate negative impacts at this site and present a comparison, which would justify their need for this site.

In summing up, the NG appears to have done little to assess the real value and importance of the site in relation to biodiversity, amenity and its significance within the wider environmental network of the area, of which significant parts are high value biodiversity.

Kind regards
Cllr Rebecca Wing
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