



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Sea Link
Hearing:	Recording of Open floor hearing 3 (OFH3) - Session 1 Part 2
Date:	24 March 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:05 - 00:00:36:26

Okay. Welcome back. The time is now 1140 and we will recommence the meeting and we start the live stream. So for the next, um, few speakers, we have a, uh, Sharon O'Brien, David Stevens, uh, East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership, represented by um, Councilor Robin Saunders, uh East Suffolk Council, represented by councillor Tom Daley, Elizabeth Duffield and Fiona Gilmore.

00:00:36:28 - 00:00:41:18

So first of all, um, Sharon O'Brien, you have three minutes.

00:00:42:15 - 00:00:43:28

Hello? Can you hear me?

00:00:44:00 - 00:00:44:22

Yes.

00:00:44:29 - 00:01:20:13

Great. Thank you. First, I'd like to thank and commend the Save Mr. Marsh's group for all their hard work. These documents have not been easy to navigate. Please, can I also ask that not just a small percentage of homes in the surrounding area receive the National Grid leaflets, but every and each home in it. I did my own survey and found there were streets that only a couple of houses had received them. I'll go into my speech now. I'm deeply concerned about the National Grid's plans to compulsory purchase the former Ramsgate hover port for the Sealink pipeline.

00:01:20:17 - 00:01:53:06

The old hover port might appear as nothing more than a lump of old concrete on a map, but it's more than that. It's a truly special place, cradled within unique surroundings. This area isn't merely land, it's a sanctuary for nature, a place where we, as the community, can connect with the environment and experience its wonders. The thought of losing such a valuable and irreplaceable space is devastating. We must also consider the impact of heavy machinery and prolonged construction on this environment.

00:01:53:08 - 00:02:29:05

The noise generated by such operations won't just disrupt the serene atmosphere. It will drive away the very organisms and wildlife we cherish. Noise pollution possesses a significant threat and extends beyond the physical environment. It will add stress to residents and wildlife alike. In a world brimming with constant noise and activity. The hover pool is a rare oasis where we can. You can hear your own heartbeat. The gentle silence of nature around the airport is breathtaking, something I truly cherish.

00:02:29:12 - 00:02:59:13

While beautiful beaches and coastlines surround us, this spot holds a magic like no other location in or around than it can replicate. It's a haven that I have personally found solace in my own healing journey, taking daily bike rides and appreciating the magnificent tidal mudflats. I fondly remember school trips to the old hover port. Filled with learning and exploration. And I've shared these experience with my own children. and one day my grandchildren. For many of us.

00:02:59:15 - 00:03:19:06

This base has been a refuge, a place for walking, cycling, or simply enjoying a picnic. Let us not lose this vibrant space. Let's protect the old but beautiful hover port. Not just for ourselves, but for the sake of our health, happiness and future generations. Thank you.

00:03:20:04 - 00:03:21:00

Thank you.

00:03:22:26 - 00:03:27:12

And now, um, David Stevens also have three minutes.

00:03:29:27 - 00:04:04:16

Yeah. My name is David Stevens. I'm a Pequot resident. Uh, notwithstanding that, I believe there is no need for Sealink as there is a better, cheaper and more environmentally friendly solution that satisfies the need for additional infrastructure. I will address the specific issue of change one. I do not believe the applicant just can justify the increase in order limits simply by saying it gives them more flexibility in my rep for 209. Explain what? Explain why areas that had already been ruled out by the applicant, such that the area around the mountain outfall should be excluded from the change to the order limits.

00:04:04:24 - 00:04:45:10

They cannot give an increase in flexibility if they can't be used, and I would urge the WSA to not allow these areas to be included within the new order limits due to the need to avoid the salt marshes stated in CR 1002, and from the alternative route shown in rep 3070. The applicant has ruled out using the southern edge of the apron. This area can and should also be removed from the order limits as they are aware in A1 5.4.35, which states that the applicant should demonstrate that during construction they will seek to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works.

00:04:45:20 - 00:05:31:10

The report is used extensively by the public, and every effort must be made to minimise the area loss to them. The fact that the applicant talks of the need for flexibility shows that they have no idea which areas are suitable for use. If a suitable structural survey had been carried out, they would know and they would not need to set aside land that is unlikely to be used. It is not acceptable to wait until after the DCO has been granted for them to carry out a precondition. Precondition survey. What happens if there are no suitable routes following this survey? We know from District Council that Edinburgh was granted a permission under section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to carry out survey work at the airport, presumably for the applicant.

00:05:31:17 - 00:06:05:05

This permission was granted in October 2025. Do we know if any surveys have been carried out by them? The route across the apron passes within ten metres of dense vegetation, which has been acknowledged by the applicant in A0 93 to be suitable for reptiles? No doubt the applicant would argue, as they did during issue one, that the effect of very noisy equipment of up to 99dB is not significant because it is just passing by. The reality is very different, and it will cause serious disturbance to creatures living within that habitat.

00:06:05:07 - 00:06:08:18

The roots of this land are totally unacceptable. Thank you.

00:06:10:13 - 00:06:29:13

Thank you very much. And now representing East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership, I've got Councillor Robin Sanders. Oh. Uh. Okay. Sorry. Uh, in that case, it's, uh, East Suffolk Council, represented by councillor Tom Daley.

00:06:35:00 - 00:06:36:23

Uh, can you hear me? Am I on? Yes.

00:06:36:25 - 00:06:38:07

That's right. You have six minutes.

00:06:38:09 - 00:07:10:11

Six minutes. Thank you very much. All right. East Suffolk Council is the local planning authority. And we have statutory dealings with all the CIPs at all levels. As cabinet member for energy and Climate Change with East Suffolk Council. I would like to convey to the examiner some serious concerns we have in our dealings with the applicant to date. They have an approach that is in contrast to all the other incidents we are dealing with, and the attitude that Sealink is the only project in the frame.

00:07:10:13 - 00:07:42:16

It trumps all others and it will definitely be consented. Whatever the lack of constructive engagement with the planning authority or meaningful coordination with other projects using the same sites, for example working hours, this is a prime example. During the process of these huge developments, there must be periods of respite for the local community. ScottishPower renewables respect this in that they don't work Saturday afternoon, Sundays or bank holidays.

00:07:43:20 - 00:08:16:00

Ingot must be required to do the same. I mean if Scottish Power can make that respect for the community and get must do the same or it becomes meaningless noise. Another example operational construction machinery noise at landfill site at Friston, at the Saxmundham converter site can be minimised and mitigated in its current attitude is not conducive to this. A crucial example is coordination of all.

00:08:16:06 - 00:08:48:12

The coordination of all projects is so crucial if we're going to minimise impacts on communities and environment. Other projects are showing willing and get know, for example, the HVAC cables to be

laid from Friston to converter site at Saxmundham and get refuses to consider laying the ducting for line leak so that there's just one set of impacts. This is the opposite of coordination. Similarly with master plan in the converter site itself.

00:08:49:24 - 00:09:22:13

Another crucial example is the discharge of consents. This is the crucial detail of how major works can be done most effectively in Get are demanding 35 days with deemed consent. That is, they automatically go ahead SPR 56 days with a very definite we'll get it right attitude. These things have to be done properly. Under these rules, ingot could dump many discharges at once, making the process of safeguarding our communities and environments unworkable.

00:09:22:27 - 00:10:03:04

And this is yet another example of ignoring those other projects going on with other pressures. The intention of working with us, uh, to make the best of this development, seems missing within the appreciation of the other projects and the cumulative effects that have been described here today on our common, on our communities. Seems lacking. We must have a constructive, productive working relationship with Engie. If this project is consented for it to be delivered in the best interests of all involved, particularly our communities most impacted by so much at this time.

00:10:03:08 - 00:10:36:06

This is just one project. Project amongst many. This change of attitude must start now. I appeal to the examiners, to examiners to insist that this constructive engage there is constructive engagement, particularly on these areas of working hours, noise coordination and discharge of requirements, but also across the board as indicated on that powerful document, the Suffolk Council page report. The applicant must accept it is part of a much bigger picture.

00:10:36:08 - 00:10:43:12

It must take a responsible approach and that needs to start now. Thank you.

00:10:46:00 - 00:10:51:06

Thank you very much. Um, now we have, um, Elizabeth Duffield.

00:10:52:04 - 00:11:30:23

Hello. I'm a Starfield resident, and I'm concerned about the proposed change to the DCO in relation to Bainbridge. Should this be granted, any closure to Bainbridge will cause immense difficulties for our local community and beyond. The examiners will be aware we are currently living with frequent transport disruption in relation to other energy projects in the area. Just this weekend the A12 was closed at Friday Street and the constant stream of traffic through Stone field, including HGVs, illustrates the impact of the closure of Benner Bridge.

00:11:31:10 - 00:12:03:16

Church Hill and Stanfield is a minor B route and part of these routes have no footpath access, making it really unsafe for those travelling by foot or bicycle. Any reasonable person can accept occasional disruption, but the applicant's proposals for Ben or Bridge will go beyond occasional disruption. Suffolk County Council have proposed a new northern route utilising the Sizewell Hall Road, and that would avoid closure at Bennell.

00:12:04:03 - 00:12:35:03

The applicant does not seem to understand or care that, although we may involve some extra mileage for them, it reduces the inconvenience on us. In my volunteer role in the community, many local people feel extremely anxious about the roads being closed or diverted. Many local residents need good links to Ipswich and beyond. We cannot continually be expected to build in more travel time to live our lives.

00:12:35:27 - 00:13:07:05

And if Ben Bridge was closed, it would cause us hold ups a more travel time. The northern route has a distinct advantage of not disturbing the Frommer's valley and the heritage landscape in front of her soul and Saint John's Church. It would also mean access to Saxmundham from the B1 121 will not be disrupted and so local people have their local services protected. This is especially important for the elderly and vulnerable.

00:13:07:12 - 00:13:45:04

In the past eight weeks, the applicant has been doing investigative work in relation to Benwell Bridge and the Sealink access road. This has given me an opportunity to chat to the workforce, as they had access to the site from Church Hill. Many of the workforce have commented on the access problems they had with our local roads, and also the beauty of the landscape they were now working on. I did not feel they were appeasing me when we discussed the merits of the northern route, especially in the relation to the movement of ales onto the Sealink site.

00:13:45:15 - 00:14:13:07

Took to close Ben or Bridge for more. Ales would involve weekend working and possible overnight work, which is deeply stressful for many who live close by. I now dread a Sealink envelope coming to my home. The applicant has constantly moved their red lines and the project is constantly increasing in size, bringing stress and anxiety for all local people. Thank you.

00:14:14:12 - 00:14:16:03

Thank you very much. And

00:14:17:24 - 00:14:21:07

we have now Fiona Gilmour. You have three minutes.

00:14:23:12 - 00:14:56:29

Good morning sir. Thank you very much. Um, I'd like to talk apologies in advance for my voice, which is a bit husky. I'd like to talk about tourism, and I'd like to talk about alternative sites because I've personally spent six years researching those two subjects. We're gravely concerned for the economic security of the small and medium sized businesses serving the visitors who are seeking tranquility, beautiful landscapes, and ease of access.

00:14:57:08 - 00:15:35:05

The conservative estimates from the DMO quantitative perception research for visitor numbers indicates the decline of at least 17% over a 10 to 15 year construction period, which is, by the way, conveniently sidelined by each individual developer, including the National Grid plc, who own ingot.

That will equate to a loss of around £0.5 billion for this region. We urge the authority to consider how this loss can be compensated by and get NGV, EDF and SPR.

00:15:35:07 - 00:16:06:23

They need to come together and they need to put forward a proposal on how they're going to compensate half a billion sterling to those small, medium sized businesses where there are going to be significant loss of livelihoods. And it's an aspect of cumulative adverse impact, which has yet to be addressed. Each developer tries to ignore the huge importance of the Aldeburgh tourism hotspot. It is a strong brand in its own right. Its value has been built up over decades.

00:16:06:25 - 00:16:39:07

A brand can be destroyed in one year and yet it's built up over many. This industrialisation process, proposed for coastal Suffolk, will profoundly and permanently change the essential character of this haven. So that is the first thing I wanted to say. And the second thing is we have researched and I've spent a lot of time talking to Belgium, to the Netherlands and to other developers who are state owned companies like Elia.

00:16:39:21 - 00:17:20:08

And when you talk to them, they find it laughable that we are being considered as an ideal area for one of the biggest energy hubs in Europe. Nautilus, North Falls and five estuaries have gone elsewhere. Line link can easily go to grain or to Bradwell, which we did. A financial study will only cost a 10% price differential increase if you went to Bradwell instead of Friston. All energy infrastructure hubs A core design principle is that they should be constructed at shoreline, not inland shoreline.

00:17:20:10 - 00:17:52:10

And that is why Bradwell and Grain are ideal and they have never been considered properly by National Grid plc. That is neat. And I have to tell you that Ofgem has gone along with National Grid PLC far too easily. There has not been any proper check of their figures and no transparency. So we are saying you have to consider alternatives for this.

00:17:52:12 - 00:17:59:13

This Sealink, we personally believe that Sealink is a white elephant. We are going to talk later on.

00:17:59:21 - 00:18:02:25

Okay. So your time. Your time about wine, please.

00:18:02:27 - 00:18:11:15

Yes. Thank you. I'll finish my sentence. Why? It is not an appropriate site and why you don't need Sealink. Thank you very much.

00:18:11:25 - 00:18:40:21

Thank you. Um, thank you to that group of speakers. Um, the next group we have is, um, representing Friston Parish Council. And also Suffolk's actions save East Suffolk is, um, Michael Mahoney. And then this saved Minister Marsh's, represented by George Cooper, uh, Glynis Robertson, Gordon Young and Karen McKenzie.

00:18:43:21 - 00:18:50:24

So, first of all, um, for six minutes, representing first and parish council, um, Mr. Mahoney.

00:18:51:29 - 00:18:55:23

Thank you. Um, I was going to combine the two sixes.

00:18:55:28 - 00:18:57:26

That's. That's fine. Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

00:18:57:28 - 00:19:30:06

Thank you. Uh, Michael Mahoney, representing Friston Parish Council and Stacey's. My comments today are primarily directed to change to. And the change request relating to the location and limits of deviation of the National grid connection hub. But also, I want to say something about the context in which that change is being sought. Fundamentally, this change is being sought because National Grid is refusing to honour the existing requirements for the substation site in the draft C link DCO. Um, fundamentally, this has created an environment of zero trust.

00:19:30:17 - 00:20:05:01

Therefore, whatever National grid may say in relation to change two is not meaningful. Our concern is making sure that requirements and mitigation are clearly secured on the face of the DCO, and that my community has the benefit of the mitigation and requirements which it already has. Under the Scottish Power DCS. By the way, I would not want there to be any assumption that my community is happy with the terms of the Scottish Power DCS. We are not, however, they have been granted and therefore we have to live with them.

00:20:05:15 - 00:20:40:09

In contrast, National Grid seems to think that it can effectively relitigate the requirements and mitigations at the substation site. I have been involved in many legal processes over the years, and none of them permits the re litigation of issues which have already been determined. Quite frankly, the situation is ridiculous and represents a failure by the Planning Inspectorate to ensure the efficient running of the planning process. The need for the additional consent in the draft DCO was on the original premise that there was a risk that the Scottish Power projects would not go ahead.

00:20:40:15 - 00:21:23:18

That risk no longer exists, as there is no doubt that EA two is going ahead and National Grid has the rights it needs in the EA to DCO. My concern is that National Grid's tube directive is, and has always been, to ensure that the National Grid substation and the substation site falls under the Sealink DCO. Regardless, this was never really about addressing the risk that neither of the Scottish Power projects would go ahead. That objective is now clear from the wording of paragraph 15 of schedule three of the DCO, and that states where any part of work number one be, and that is the substation has been completed pursuant to another development Consent order.

00:21:23:20 - 00:22:04:22

These works must not be consented, constructed under this order. And then there's some very dubious wordings about, say, where amendments to those works are required for the purposes of the

authorized project. I'll deal with that in a written submission. So the effect of that, that wording is that National Grid can start works under the EA two DCO, which by the way, they are doing. The groundworks are underway at the moment and we're hearing lots of reversing alarms and construction noise. So they have started. But then ultimately, once the ceiling subject to your recommendation, the secretary, once the ceiling DCO is granted, they can unilaterally decide to complete them under the ceiling DCO.

00:22:04:24 - 00:22:37:09

That wording permits that unilateral decision to be made, thereby ensuring that the substation site will be governed by the Sealink DCO with its reduced mitigation and requirements. The question is why should National Grid escape its existing obligations simply by saying it completed the substation under the ceiling DCO. By the way, the terms of those dsos were not arrived at. Without due consideration, there was a nine month examination. The Secretary of State had to extend the examination by three months because of the serious impacts at Friston.

00:22:37:11 - 00:23:12:01

There were 17 issue specific hearings. Now, admittedly, not all of those were about the onshore issues, but the vast majority were. And the question is, is it really open for National Grid to ignore the result of that examination, particularly when they are involved in it because they were involved, they were involved in the compulsory acquisition hearings, and they were very much in the background during the entire process. Fundamentally, this is unreasonable, absolutely unreasonable, dealing with the specifics of change, too. Ironically, this need has arisen because National Grid has not respected the existing consent.

00:23:12:03 - 00:23:44:27

In essence, it wants to make sure that the limits of deviation for the National Grid substation as the same as they are in the Scottish Power consent. Even more ironically, part of the justification for the change is how, in effect, the differences are, making it challenging for National Grid to develop consistent plans. Well, there's an easy solution to this not change to simply adopt the existing terms. The DCO relations substation site, our concern and the local authorities have touched upon this, particularly Suffolk County Council, and I thank Mr.

00:23:44:29 - 00:24:20:01

Routt for his comments. Our concern is that the development of a substation, both now in the future, will not be sufficiently controlled in the manner which it currently is under the EA to DCS. In other words, could National Grid expand a GIS substation 16m high over the footprint of an AI substation, which is six meters high? The footprint which is secured in the ScottishPower DCS is 16,800m² for a GIS substation and 44,950m² for an EIS substation that is not controlled in the existing draft ACA.

00:24:20:19 - 00:24:50:20

I would also remind the examining authority that despite our invitation, National Grid has refused to engage us on this issue. National grid did comment a deadline for these concerns, and whilst there is a lot of warm words, those words do not provide any comfort as our issues are not addressed or secured on the face of the DCO as they are on the Scottish Power DCS. In essence, Scottish Power wants to have its cake and eat it. It wants the flexibility of the DCO but not the requirements that come with it.

00:24:51:01 - 00:24:56:00

Our concerns can be easily addressed. First, the maximum footprint of GI substation should be.

00:24:56:02 - 00:24:59:20

Sorry to interrupt. Can I just ask for the. Yeah. There we go. Another six minutes.

00:24:59:22 - 00:25:32:28

Okay, thanks. Thank you. Our concerns can be easily addressed. Um, I've not had an opportunity of considering what the county council is putting in detail of yet, because some of us have a have a day job. Um, but first, the maximum footprint of a GI substation should be limited and secured as it is in the a2 dco. Second, there should be a definition of a GIS substation, i.e. the use of gas insulated switchgear. There shouldn't be the ability to introduce air switchgear into what is supposedly a GIS substation, because there are noise implications of an A of air switchgear.

00:25:33:00 - 00:26:04:16

And I appreciate you're aware of this, but the whole issue of FSC needs to be addressed. And essentially National Grid should not be able to. National grid should not refuse to have an alternative to SFF six simply because it's more expensive. Going back to the Scottish Power Examinations Examining Authority, in that case, we're very concerned about the use of SS six because it is such a terrible greenhouse gas. And all through that examination, it essentially an AI substation was one that was primarily considered.

00:26:04:18 - 00:26:49:28

So I do hope if we are going the GIS route that SF six is properly dealt with. Third, the newly introduced exclusion of roof mounted equipment in the height requirement should be removed. There is no ability to have roof mounted equipment beyond 16m in the Scottish Power DCO, and then fourth, the requirement to protect against uncontrolled permitted development, which is requirement 44. In the Scottish Power, DCO should be DCO. And I think going back to the hearings we had earlier this year, it was telling that National Grid had not originally produced a visualization of the expansion of the National Grid substation, and I think that was because they felt that they were free to expand the National Grid substation without reference to any planning authority.

00:26:50:12 - 00:27:23:03

Fundamentally, National Grid do not needs change to what is required is either for National Grid to finally accept the reality that E2 is going ahead, or do what they should have done at the outset, which to have a separate part of the DCO which deals with the substation site replicating what is in the Scottish Power DCO. Otherwise, unless we have the existing terms of the Scottish powers Dsos, my community will have significantly reduced mitigation across the substation site simply by a national grid unilaterally deciding that it completes the substation under the Sealink DCO.

00:27:23:26 - 00:27:55:29

Examples of that reduced mitigation include the fact that they will no longer be a ten year landscape planting replacement period that is ten years under the DCO, and it was heavily argued for the examination. You've heard comments about how difficult it is to establish planting in Suffolk with a clay soil in certain areas, and then the very low rainfall in the summer. Still, only five years is being

offered, and the only rationales given for that by Scottish by National Grid is that was standard no thought to the environmental requirements of the area.

00:27:56:01 - 00:28:36:18

At Friston we will have seven days a week working out on the substation site, and I make the distinction here between the site and the substation. Yes. National grid. Very generous of them, have agreed to go back to the original working hours under the DCO, but it doesn't extend to the entirety of the substation site, which is the requirement in the Scottish Power DCO. I've mentioned the exclusion of undefined roof mounted equipment. I've mentioned the absence of a footprint requirement. I've mentioned the issue about it being confirmed to the GIS not as EIS, but there's also issues such as lighting, which had to be approved under the Scottish Power DCO both in construction and operation and is not in the ceiling.

00:28:36:20 - 00:29:09:19

DCO. I could go on. I sent you a very boring and detailed submission on the fact that they have not replicated the requirements in the DCO. I'm sorry you had to read it. I certainly hated drafting it. Um, I could go on, but I think that's enough on that subject for the moment. Um, in closing, in many ways my my community feels it's already been thrown under the bus in the national interest. So be it. What is not acceptable is the national grid is now turning that bus around and running us over all, running over us all over again.

00:29:09:25 - 00:29:50:03

And I do wonder, as somebody with a legal background, how did National Grid instruct its lawyers to draft the DCO? Did they tell them was there existing consent at the substation site? Did the lawyers figure out there was an existing consent at the substation site? Or more concerning. Did National Grid say, oh, ignore that existing consent. Pay no attention to it. I think that's a very important question about how lawyers were instructed. Um, in closing, and as somebody who used to advise for many years a FTSE 100 company on ethics and corporate responsibility issues and governance generally, I would just like to say, and I appreciate this is not relevant to you.

00:29:50:05 - 00:30:21:11

It's more direct to the national grid. Um, I do think that senior people in National Grid need to reflect upon the way the company is conducting itself. It is not ethical or corporately responsible to ignore requirements and mitigation, which already exist because it is not convenient, particularly when a community which is already paying a very high price is being deprived of protection and mitigation, which has already been determined. It smacks of an ethical approach where essentially anything goes, as long as you can get away with it.

00:30:21:13 - 00:30:33:06

Is it really appropriate for a major public company, which is responsible for a key piece of national infrastructure, to behave in that way? And I'll end there on that question. Thank you.

00:30:34:13 - 00:30:44:18

Thank you very much. Um, next on the list is Save Mr. Marshes, who are represented by George Cooper. You have six minutes.

00:30:44:29 - 00:30:46:25

Good afternoon. Um, George.

00:30:46:27 - 00:31:17:09

Cooper, the founder of Save Minster Marshes. And I'm speaking on behalf of Save Minster Marshes and key for us. My name is Keith Ross. I'm a wildlife guide running nature walks from Ramsgate to Pebble Bay. I'm part of the active Ramsgate initiative for Ramsgate Town Council and the steering group member of Southminster marshes. I'm objecting to the National Grid's proposed use of the old pedal hover pool as a compound for the ceiling project.

00:31:17:15 - 00:31:52:12

This is a very special area that is located between the chalk cliffs of Ramsgate and next to sandwich Bay and Pebble Bay National Nature Reserves. The hover pool is now a sensitive area for wildlife, as it has been left to nature to reclaim it since it closed down in 1987. Kestrels and sparrowhawks use it to nest and hunt. It is one of the last remaining strongholds for breeding greenfinch in the area. Migrant birds use it to rest and feed before and after crossing the channel, including rye neck and hoopoe.

00:31:52:19 - 00:32:30:14

Kingfisher also uses site as the as they pass along the coast in autumn and winter. The hover pool is famous for its wild orchids that grow there, including man, bee and more recently, rare rarely did orchids. It all also has a population of reptiles, including common lizards, slow worms, and grass snakes. In fact, one of the hoverboard grass snakes was going to star in David Attenborough's wildlife documentary Wild Isles. But sadly, the other grass snakes at the nearby Monkton Nature Reserve didn't perform as hope, so sadly, it didn't make it to the episode.

00:32:30:18 - 00:33:02:13

However, this area is so special that it's featured in numerous wildlife films made for the BBC, Springwatch and BBC Countryfile over the past few years. The Hover Pool is one of the best places to find nest in long tailed tits. Wildlife cameraman and present a Richard Taylor drones filmed in nest building for BBC Countryfile. And he's also filmed the mass arrival of cormorants that line the edge of the home, caught on one of the spectacular occasions a few years ago.

00:33:02:26 - 00:33:37:10

The red bellied at the side of the hover attract bearded tits most years as they erupt from the breeding grounds at the stud Marsh National Nature Reserve in autumn last year, I watched green woodpeckers raised two chicks from their nest in a tree along the cliff edges. Every spring and autumn, the hover pool attracts ringers, owls and spotted flycatchers on their migration. During the summer months, cuckoos can sometimes be seen perched on the top of the tallest cypress tree on the Humboldt, where it calls to its females.

00:33:37:12 - 00:34:07:19

They make their way up and down the coast looking for nests to lay their eggs in. One of the most memorable wildlife experiences watching a sparrowhawk catch a wood pigeon and drag it out of the bushes to eat it in front of me on the edge of the hover pool. Tarmac butterflies love the hover pool

two with painted lady green hair streaks and red white letter hair streaks. Their mace the amazing huge buddleja bushes lie in the back of the edge of the hot pool in summer.

00:34:07:21 - 00:34:43:02

These are alive with feeding butterflies like the Red admiral and peacock. It's also a great spot to see hummingbird hawk moths feeding on the nectar produced by their flowers. Foxes are also breed on hover, pull rabbits and even weasels. For these reasons, part of my nature is around the old Peggy Bay, a hover pool that is, as it is, a great example of nature recovery. Any closure or disruption will affect these walks and will be a backward step for nature, wildlife and tourism in the area.

00:34:43:24 - 00:35:07:18

The idea that hover pool would be taken over by heavy machinery for years, depriving the local population and visitors of such a tranquil place to walk around and for wildlife to rest, feed and breed would be appalling. National grid needs to be more sensitive where it develops its products so it doesn't cause damage to the wildlife and the environment. Thank you.

00:35:09:25 - 00:35:12:20

And also you have three minutes as a individual.

00:35:12:25 - 00:35:44:24

Yeah. National grid's ecological surveys do not show the true scale of wildlife that use the proposed converter site and wider Minster marshes. Since 2021, myself and a licensed British Trust of Ornithology birding have been ringing birds on the proposed converter site and a large proportion of the draft limits for the Sealink project. We ring more than a thousand birds a year in the hedge and scrub area in the centre of the proposed converter site.

00:35:44:26 - 00:36:28:05

Over 40 species of birds, including many red listed birds such as nightingale, linnets and song thrush. We also do night ringing of birds using a thermal imager. We ring Skylark, woodcock, jack snipe, and other species. The proposed converter site at night is a wildlife spectacle, with many thousands of birds using the area to feed excess excess water and to roost. For the past three years, we have ringed between 90 to 100% of the skylark, jack snipe and woodcock ringed in the whole of Kent on Minster Marshes, many of which we have ringed on the converter site.

00:36:28:15 - 00:37:00:10

National grid plans show they are proposing to acquire the land right up to the boundary of the sandwich Bay and Parklands Triple Sea. The plans do not show a buffer zone between the infrastructure and the site. This could have a huge detrimental effect on the on an area already impacted by electrical infrastructure projects already under construction and granted planning permission. It would encircle the sea, leaving it in an island in the middle of an industrial desert.

00:37:00:12 - 00:37:38:05

It would end up degraded and worthless to the abundant wildlife that calls its home. The loss of this area cannot be mitigated for or replicated. It is unique close to Pebble Bay, with high ground sheltering it from the sea, and is positioned in a vast landscape, giving plenty of room for overwintering birds to forage. Unlike the mitigation site National Grid and proposed surrounded by

industry, main roads, noise and light pollution, I implore you to turn down this ill conceived and hugely environmentally damaging project.

00:37:38:07 - 00:37:39:03

Thank you.

00:37:41:07 - 00:37:47:23

Thank you very much. Um, next we have, uh, Gordon Young. You have three minutes.

00:37:49:09 - 00:38:20:07

Hi. Morning. Afternoon. Uh, Gordon Young, resident of Saxmundham. I will start by saying I, I, I echoed supported points raised by others during this hearing. I focus on three points access, site selection and a need for the project. Firstly, access the proposal to rely on the Bentall Bridge and the B117 is deeply concerning. This is a route with uncertain structured capacity and proven solutions. A very likelihood of considerable disruptions to local road networks.

00:38:20:17 - 00:38:55:13

A Suffolk County Council has clearly set out. The deliverability of this route remains in serious doubt. We have already seen the impact of the disruption locally. The recent A12 closure at Friday Street caused widespread delays and long diversions. That was just one road. Now consider what is proposed disruption to the B117, major, major structural works of Bennett Bridge and risk to the East Suffolk rail line. This raises serious concerns about emergency access, commuting and functioning of our towns and villages.

00:38:55:27 - 00:39:34:02

For those of us living here, this is simply not acceptable. There is a credible alternative, and I support Suffolk County Council's proposed Northern access route, avoiding both Ben Hill Bridge and Neil crossing the river from us. This is what real coordination should look like. Secondly, site selection. The access problem only exists because the site itself is fundamentally flawed. This is a site that only works that would force access into it through major engineering works, including interventions at Ben Bridge and a new bridge across the river from us with harm to the City of Herts Hall and the wider landscape.

00:39:34:18 - 00:40:06:02

This is a disproportionate solution to this self-imposed problem. Given the sensitivity of this location. Any intervention would need to be outstanding quality. Yet there is no confidence in this can be achieved, and in sufficient detail has been provided by the applicant so far. The examiners would hopefully have seen a clear contrast at Hornsea Three converter station is near the A47, accessible and set away from communities. This is what appropriate site selection should look like.

00:40:06:20 - 00:40:42:27

By comparison, this proposal is trying to engineer its way out of problems. Co-location aligning is presented as coordination, but it is not. It is simply the easiest way to proceed while communities are asked to absorb the combined impacts. Finally, the need. There is a fundamental question to whether sealing is required in this form at all. Evidence suggests that alternatives such as upgrading existing

transmission infrastructure could deliver the same outcome, but far lower costs and impacts, thus seriously undermine any Earth claim.

00:40:42:29 - 00:41:16:18

Urgent need. It is less harmful and more efficient solution exists than this proposal. Must be rigorously justified When combined your size with C, E1 and E2 line link and actually suffer water project. This is no longer a single project. We're facing over a decade of continuous disruption, with little meaningful respite for those of us who live here. This constant uncertainty affects how we sleep, how we work, and how we live day to day. As you have heard today, the stress and fatigue in the community are already evident.

00:41:16:29 - 00:41:20:29

To protect community mental health, working hours must be limited so.

00:41:21:01 - 00:41:23:09

That over time, in the moment, if you could just conclude you're.

00:41:23:15 - 00:41:24:00

Okay.

00:41:24:02 - 00:41:24:17

Saying.

00:41:24:19 - 00:41:49:13

Um, the cumulative impact on mental health is real and must be given proper way. This is an ill project with ill considered access, a fundamentally flawed site, and justification has not been convincingly proven. But beyond all that, it feels like the people who know this place best are the ones being heard the least. And if local knowledge is set aside, then what confidence can we have that the right decisions being made? Thank you.

00:41:50:08 - 00:41:58:03

Thank you very much. And next on the list here I have Karen Mackenzie. I.

00:42:01:14 - 00:42:02:26

Also have three minutes.

00:42:05:12 - 00:42:24:02

Good morning sir. I'm Karen Mackenzie, resident of Barnet and member of Save Mr. Marsh's group. I would like to begin by saying I'm a little confused about the timetable now. I prepared for the open floor hearing in February to address CR one

00:42:25:19 - 00:42:27:00

and. Sorry. Can you hear me?

00:42:27:17 - 00:42:28:11

Yes, we can hear you.

00:42:28:13 - 00:43:04:08

Fine. Oh, sorry. Um, but that hearing was cancelled, and I therefore assumed that today's hearing covers not only CR one, um, but also any documentation that has been changed or added since deadline for. I'm sure I'm not alone in the confusion. And then regarding the additional documentation in the last 11 days, only the applicant has submitted another 149 documents, 56 of which are updates to existing ones. Many are on their sixth iteration and Habitat's alone is on seventh already.

00:43:04:28 - 00:43:46:27

In many cases, the changes appear minor, such as altered titles or capitalization, and the volume is making it extremely difficult to identify what has materially changed. It seems deliberate. It's been well nigh impossible to review all of these documents in the time frame. I think the applicant is now pushing the Rochdale envelope too far. They weren't ready and they still are not. I'm sure I'm not alone in finding this process is unfairly stacked in favour of the applicant and disadvantages those of us who do not work full time on this project as the applicant and you yourselves do.

00:43:47:21 - 00:44:22:23

And given the volume of new and revised material. I imagine it's even a challenge for you to keep up. Turning specifically to change one and the proposed extension to the draft order limits of the hover port. The document documentation appears to imply that the applicant now intends to use the north eastern part of the slipway, rather than the southernmost section, in order to avoid salt marsh. However, by allowing the southern area to remain part of the deal, it appears to me that the applicant still is permitted to damage this area if this section is not removed from the application.

00:44:23:06 - 00:44:54:29

I also note that. Rep 2011 construction method. Technical note only published on the 18th February, tabled to one of which has a number of options for construction, which suggests there still remains uncertainty about whether the least damaging methods will actually be used in the end. As I've said previously, the project has completely failed to apply the first step of the first step of the mitigation hierarchy, which is avoidance of damage to this important Ramsar site.

00:44:55:04 - 00:45:16:11

I recognise that this is primarily a written process and that three minutes is insufficient to address remaining concerns. I therefore respectfully request that you allow me and others to provide additional written information where concerns have not been adequately addressed throughout the remainder of the examination. Thank you for listening.

00:45:17:00 - 00:45:25:00

Thank you very much. And yes, if you're anything more you want to put in writing, you can do for deadline six, that is absolutely fine. We'll take that into consideration then.

00:45:25:02 - 00:45:26:03

Thank you very much.

00:45:27:16 - 00:45:45:01

And um, the next group we've got. Um, so first of all, thank you to the speakers. We just had the the next group um, I have is, uh, Carl Piersall, uh, Marian Fellowes, Norman Bates, Paul Atkinson and Piers Sturridge.

00:45:46:29 - 00:45:51:13

And first on that list was Carl Piersall. Um.

00:45:53:06 - 00:45:55:09

If you're there now, you have three minutes.

00:45:56:12 - 00:45:57:09

Thank you.

00:45:57:15 - 00:45:58:05

I am a.

00:45:58:07 - 00:46:28:23

Resident and business owner in Saxmundham, now at the epicentre of this cumulative and escalating disruption. We are being encircled to the west. A housing expansion is planned to increase the town's size by 40%. To the north, significant infrastructure works, including water constraints linked to Sizewell. To the east, Sizewell significantly impacts us along with other energy developments. And now to the south, this proposal for major works at Benwell Bridge, which is our primary access route.

00:46:29:14 - 00:47:02:00

This work at Bainbridge would be prolonged. It would worsen cumulative impacts. It is a key access corridor that residents rely upon daily. The proposed works are unacceptable. A northern route must be properly considered and implemented instead. I don't want to be trapped further. This last weekend we witnessed the failure of coordination and planning. The A12 closed at Friday Street while simultaneously rail services were suspended and replaced with buses, resulting in no reasonable access in or out of the area.

00:47:02:04 - 00:47:32:22

If basic alignment between road and rail closures cannot be achieved, there is no confidence that more complex long term infrastructure planning will be managed effectively with no accountability or penalty. The consequences of all this compound tourism is being actively undermined. Fewer return visits and negative word of mouth. People want to escape for beauty, not for roadworks. Meanwhile, the town's character is changing. Short term worker accommodation is replacing tourism based occupancy.

00:47:32:26 - 00:48:04:17

This alters spending patterns and service types, reduces support for local businesses and erodes the cultural fabric of our high street. We also are also facing a sustained decline in quality of life, constant roadworks, traffic management, noise and overnight freight movements. This is not a temporary inconvenience, it is a long term degradation. Residents I know are considering leaving but cannot do so without financial losses. Property values are already affected by uncertainty and prolonged disruption.

00:48:04:24 - 00:48:36:10

Hospitality is under pressure from all directions. The impacts. This impacts young people starting out in life with employment opportunities. The elderly and vulnerable residents face increasing barriers to accessing healthcare. I am a carer under heavy vehicle use and subject to diversions. Local roads are becoming congested and unsafe. Therefore, for Saxmundham, the southern access route must be preserved and kept open. Ben Bridge must not be reinforced or used as the primary solution.

00:48:36:18 - 00:49:07:03

Northern route must be properly developed and utilized instead. If this overall bad idea of the ceiling goes ahead at all times. Coordination. Access. All projects must be demonstrated, improved and enforced. The community is already under significant strain. The cognitive impact of these proposals are excessive and unreasonable. I urge you to rule out works at Ben or Bridge for the Southern Access route. Protect the community. Accessibility.

00:49:07:05 - 00:49:08:02

Thank you.

00:49:09:06 - 00:49:16:00

Thank you very much. And, um, now we have, uh, Marian Fellowes. You also have three minutes.

00:49:18:24 - 00:49:20:14

Thank you. Good morning, ladies.

00:49:20:16 - 00:49:21:01

And.

00:49:21:03 - 00:49:21:20

Gentlemen, Marian.

00:49:21:22 - 00:49:22:07

Fellowes.

00:49:22:09 - 00:49:58:13

Resident of Aldeburgh. Amidst uncertainty. One looks for Constance, for connection to place and community, for peace and tranquility, to find beauty in nature, do something to make a difference. In fact, that's what social prescribers would prescribe. So this weekend I did a little pick at Bennell, and I had watched. In theatre terms, it's called a presentiment. It's a taste of things to come. With the A12 closed, I witnessed a dangerous increase in traffic and speeds along all the feeder roads that residents and visitors use and navigate.

00:49:58:15 - 00:50:31:03

This is what it's going to be like if these proposals are accepted, I ask you to consider the people of Friston, Aldeburgh and Saxmundham and those along the cable routes, especially the 25 households of Manor Gardens, the White Arch retirement village of 20 homes, the 54 households in

Stanfield and the 190 on the east side of the A12 in Bennell. And all the businesses in this area who are going to face a disproportionate harm to the benefit in these changes.

00:50:31:06 - 00:51:03:24

There's clear evidence between uncertainty and reducing mental health and increased anxiety and depression. This is made worse by perceived poor communication that we've had from the developer, and their lack of assessment and their inadequate level of detail in this DCO being forced now to find other solutions. As you have seen, a lack of trust and limited involvement in decision making creates a feeling that personal well-being is not being prioritized. The people most affected are not being heard.

00:51:04:04 - 00:51:40:05

Worse still is the increased harm that we're actually already experiencing. There is a guidance for the developer to do more to support individuals and businesses. HS2 phase two a Commons select committee have advocated for mental health monitoring and set up a public advisory group as a critical friend to give advice from a public perspective. Public Health England in 2020 also stated that incest schemes can be of such scale in nature that they will impact the overarching protective factors.

00:51:40:09 - 00:52:12:19

Mental health and wellbeing should be assessed. Identified and mitigation provided. An estimation of community anxiety and stress must be considered if agreed. Additional traffic added to the size or link road will also have negative consequences that must be assessed and mitigated. The cost to the developer to include these better solutions and mitigate is actually going to be very, very high. I asked them today, you may wish to reconsider, pause and reevaluate this whole scheme.

00:52:12:21 - 00:52:17:28

It is in the wrong place. It is the wrong time. It is not needed. Thank you.

00:52:20:01 - 00:52:25:00

Thank you. Um. And now, um, Norman Bate.

00:52:26:23 - 00:53:00:27

I'm Ken bate, I'm from Saxmundham. The new suggested road routes to convert stations in Saxmundham. Traffic coming from the south via Ipswich will travel to the New South Wales Sea roundabout at Friary Street. It will be built to ease traffic and to improve accident blackspot. Especially at traffic will be increased due to sizeable sea. So already our idyllic Suffolk is under pressure from a massive infrastructure project. The traffic was supposed to turn right off the A12 through Bethel, but should no longer be an option. So now the extra traffic will continue north along the A12 towards Saxmundham to the south.

00:53:00:29 - 00:53:44:13

We'll see traffic gathering at Oxford between sacks between Saxmundham and the Poacher's Pocket Junction. There are two footpaths which cross the A12. They will be far too dangerous with the increase in traffic, so we will need at least one new footbridge plus four new traffic islands or better still, underpasses for the junction between Friday Street and Oxford. Otherwise they will become accident black spots running underneath this section of infamous A12 voted the worst air road in the country from three waterways, namely the brook, the goal and the River for all of us, which runs

through Saxmundham and all will be negatively impacted by the extra toxic cocktail of chemicals coming from the brake pads and tires from the increased traffic further polluting our river system.

00:53:44:27 - 00:54:20:15

The traffic will take the new Sizewell C road towards less than one. Instead of going through less than another new road, crossing the old airstrip and onto the level crossing near the Kirk, Neil's caravan park is planned. This single lane size will cross this single lane. Sizewell level crossing will be a massive bottleneck then joining the main list to Saxmundham Road, which is as narrow and in places very twisty. So yet again another traffic outlet will be required. National National Grid expect 350 lorry loads per day but per converter station, so that's 700 with return trips plus line link.

00:54:20:18 - 00:54:53:04

The traffic is 1400 lorry trips but plus the sizeable sea traffic. The traffic on the Saxmundham to Lessen Road is getting steadily more congested, especially now that the huge size will see buses are using it. Lorries will be queuing to cross the tiny level crossing and then again as they try to manoeuvre onto the proposed converter station site. This will cause massive congestion and problems for years and years to come. And this is the better route, but neither route makes sense. The converter stations need to be offshore anyway, as it's much safer and simpler to engineering.

00:54:53:06 - 00:55:31:19

Solution line link should never should mirror Nautilus going straight to a brownfields like site closer to where the power is needed. Then there will be no need for Sealink saving £1.8 billion. Any competent engineer would have taken one look at this earlier, and concluded it was probably the most unsuitable place in the UK to build these converter stations, especially during the construction of Sizewell C, and to finish a national security question why would any government put 30% of our country's power into a five mile radius when we can see how easily it could be destroyed by Russia or Iran.

00:55:32:16 - 00:55:33:12

Thank you.

00:55:33:14 - 00:55:34:07

Thank you.

00:55:34:19 - 00:55:35:04

Okay.

00:55:36:04 - 00:55:40:04

Um, next, I have, uh, Paul Atkinson.

00:55:42:15 - 00:55:44:18

Hello? Yes, hello.

00:55:44:28 - 00:56:16:29

Hi. Um, I'm a Saxmundham resident. And firstly, before I begin, I want to ask the applicant one simple question. Does anyone on the Sealink team actually live here? Because reading their

submissions, it often feels as though they believe they understand our communities, our landscape, our daily experience better than the people who live here, and even better than the councils who work with these conditions every day. Nowhere is this disconnect clearer than the impacts on Access and Ben Hall Railway Bridge.

00:56:17:11 - 00:56:47:14

The applicant's own feasibility study confirms the bridge is restricted to 46 tons and anticipates 15 closures just for Ale movements, and if full strengthening is required, then they will allow a worst case 28 day closure of the B-1 121 tied to Network Rail positions and weekend blockades of the East Suffolk Line, the Saxmundham and the surrounding villages losing this access even once disruptive, losing it repeatedly or for weeks is devastating.

00:56:47:23 - 00:57:20:08

None of this has been properly assessed. What may be deliverable for the applicant is simply not liveable for us. There is also a serious contradiction in their own evidence in the Ben Hall Bridge feasibility study. Each transformer weighs 315 tonnes. But in their Suffolk design approach for the Frommer's new Frommer's bridge, they state the combined weight could be up to 500 tonnes. These figures cannot both be correct if the applicant cannot provide a consistent Ale weight.

00:57:20:10 - 00:57:52:22

How can the examination have confidence in their engineering, their traffic modelling or their appraisal of alternatives. This inconsistency goes to the heart of whether their preferred access route is credible. All of these problems stem from a deeper issue. The wrong site was chosen. The Sacramento converter station site is fundamentally inaccessible. Every potential access route requires major engineering interventions, environmental harm, or community disruption.

00:57:52:28 - 00:58:23:22

The applicant is now trying to retrofit access solutions to a site that was never suitable. This is why I support the alternative Northern route proposed by Suffolk County Council. The applicant's preferred route requires a completely new bridge over the from us. A permanent structure in a sensitive valley with irreversible landscape harm. Their claim that mitigation will reduce this to minor after 15 years is speculative at best.

00:58:24:00 - 00:58:57:24

Why damage and unspoilt valley when a viable alternative exists? The council's northern route avoids the Premier's valley entirely. Avoids months of disruption at Ben Hall Bridge, avoids diverting construction traffic through Saxmundham and used an existing strategic corridor already suited to heavy loads. Those of us who live here will carry the consequences of feeling long after the applicant has left, and even more so if line link is added on top. We are already living with the cumulative burden of multiple assets in a small area.

00:58:57:26 - 00:59:11:16

We should not be expected to absorb further avoidable harm. Simply because the applicant chose the wrong site is now trying to engineer its way out of its mistake. These are the wrong plans in the wrong place, and it's the people who live here and who will pay on the price. Thank you.

00:59:12:24 - 00:59:18:08

Thank you. Um, and next I've got Piers Sturridge.

00:59:20:11 - 00:59:22:07

Are you on the online?

00:59:25:13 - 00:59:26:18

Hello? Can you see me?

00:59:27:12 - 00:59:31:11

I can hear you. Um, yes. Um.

00:59:31:15 - 00:59:32:19

I can't see me. Oh, well.

00:59:32:21 - 00:59:36:28

I can't, but that's fine. Um. So. Yeah, if you've got three minutes.

00:59:39:01 - 00:59:39:18

Okay,

00:59:41:05 - 00:59:51:13

first a question. Whatever happened to the plans for various projects to reduce their impact by working together? Even the three National grid projects are not really cooperating.

00:59:53:05 - 01:00:23:20

The road chaos on the A12 and Friday Street over the past year has ably demonstrated the inability of the local road system to be able to cope with the numbers and tonnage of construction vehicles. It has had a major effect on the viability of local shops and businesses. The essential business trade has disappeared and substantially reduced local use of the A12 to move around the area, despite the imminent completion of the Friday Street roundabout.

01:00:23:22 - 01:00:53:26

The massive cumulative effect of construction for all the Energy Hub projects, as the real build works ramps up, will completely overwhelm small local roads. The weakness of the mental bridge and the proposed access straight off the A12 will be another long term major blockage and result in pushing traffic chaos back onto the A12 around Bennell and into the streets of Saxmundham, further denigrating the viability of the town.

01:00:54:06 - 01:01:09:11

Moving the Saxmundham site, access to the new Sizewell Link road may be inconvenient for National Grid, but will protect local businesses and residents and perhaps sorry and perhaps demonstrate some cooperation between the projects.

01:01:10:26 - 01:01:51:20

National Grid Dream dreamt up their scheme some 15 years ago. Over the past decade, sorry decade. We have all suffered and paid for the rest of politicians and big corporations only caring about their shareholders. We need only look at the Ukrainian war or the current Iran conflict to realize that the days of three ranked infantry squares and cavalry charges on foreign fields are long gone, and battles and wars are now won by destroying infrastructure, using low flying drones or high flying planes with powerful bombs controlled by operators hundreds, if not thousand miles away,

01:01:53:20 - 01:02:28:19

working on AI back computers to destroy the past, present and futures of their enemies. Drone costs, in munitions terms, are minimal. The risk to the operator is negligible, and the effect on infrastructure, the local population and the national and the national economy just devastating. National grid and ETF by creating one of the largest energy hubs in Europe in under five square miles. It's supposed to supply a third of UK's energy, but size will see towers on a clifftop rising 60m above the North Sea.

01:02:28:29 - 01:03:00:18

Its golf balls, sister size, will be glistening in the sunlight next door. The ceiling can line link converted stations, each the size of Buckingham Palace. Sitting hugger mugger on top of a hill, a ribbon of pylon stretching to the horizon, and farms planted with solar panels and battery parks. Just sitting ducks like us local residents. There are no plans to change the schemes, no plans to hide them, mitigate their vulnerability or protect them or any of us. Not going to happen here.

01:03:00:25 - 01:03:08:21

Tell that to Dubai and Qatar. Maybe this was energy security, but it's not today's world. Thank you.

01:03:09:22 - 01:03:31:07

Thank you and thank you to that group of speakers. Um, the next group of speakers I've got here is, um, Reid Griffiths. Sarah. Courage. Saxmundham town council, represented by Councillor Geraldine Barker. Uh, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions, represented by Fiona Gilmore.

01:03:33:03 - 01:03:37:11

And first I've got Rhett Griffiths with three minutes.

01:03:38:29 - 01:04:14:21

Um. Good afternoon. I'm Rick Griffiths. I'm an Aldeburgh resident who's made written submissions on cumulative impact before, in terms of lived experience and the cumulative impact of even the current active projects, is already weighing very heavily on the area and is extraordinarily stressful. We're already seeing increasing and significant traffic disruption feeding into all areas of life, pressure on the tourism experience, businesses growing impacts on people's wellbeing and mental health well before the main construction phases have begun.

01:04:14:27 - 01:04:58:28

Sizewell C is only just ramping up and other projects including but not limited to the National Grid, Friston Hub, Scottish Powers projects etc. are only just starting. When you look at the predicted overlap of peak construction activity across multiple projects, which has not been properly assessed in a realistic way when nowhere near the peak. Yet we're at the foothills of the Himalayas well before the most significant impacts kick in. The realistic prospect is a continuous multi project programme of

construction over many years, bringing with it prolonged and overlapping duration of these cumulative effects with little or no respite.

01:04:59:06 - 01:05:37:05

Sizewell C alone places very significant strain on the area. Sealink would add to that, particularly through its use of the existing fragile local road network which supports everyday life, emergency services and tourism economy, including the A1 094, effectively the sole and in places narrow arterial route from the A12 to the coast. Yet a proper cumulative traffic assessment, including junction modelling has still not been provided. That modelling was raised by Exa in the second written questions for deadline five, but necessarily modelling is necessary.

01:05:37:07 - 01:06:09:11

Modelling is only expected at deadline six, with very limited time remaining in the examiner examination. For a project that's been in development for many years. This is staggering and unacceptable, and highlights my concern that cumulative traffic effects have not been properly assessed. There's been no complete or coherent cumulative assessment. The material provided is not sufficiently location specific and does not reflect lived experience conditions on the ground, as well as no complete assessment.

01:06:09:13 - 01:06:33:10

There is insufficient data and as a result, the assessment of significance is not robust. In the absence of a complete cumulative assessment and sufficient data, impacts cannot be assumed to be limited. It is not possible to conclude that effects will be minor. A precautionary approach is therefore required, and there is a clear and credible risk of adverse cumulative effects.

01:06:37:04 - 01:07:07:00

In summary, the cumulative impact is already being experienced. The assessment remains incomplete despite repeated requests from the XAT, and there is a clear and credible risk of significant adverse cumulative effects in those circumstances. The application does not demonstrate a lawful or policy compliant cumulative impact assessment, and this is a matter which goes to the heart of whether development consent can properly be granted. Thank you.

01:07:08:07 - 01:07:13:18

Thank you. And now, also with three minutes, it's Sarah. Courage.

01:07:21:13 - 01:07:23:15

Her courage might not be there at the moment.

01:07:25:02 - 01:07:30:29

Okay. Um, we'll move on to Saxmundham Town Council, represented by Councillor Geraldine Barker.

01:07:33:09 - 01:07:35:02

Yes. Six minutes.

01:07:35:05 - 01:07:36:29

Right. Caught me on hold. Thank you.

01:07:37:01 - 01:08:14:01

Yes. Good. Good afternoon. Yes. I'm Geraldine Barker, representing Saxmundham Town Council. Um, our representation today relates to bridges, both physical and metaphorical. Firstly, I'll talk about the Brent Bennell bridge and then the proposed new bridge over the river from us. Let's go for the bend railway bridge. We refer to the Applicants Bend Railway Bridge crossing feasibility study reference rep 14 101.

01:08:14:06 - 01:08:47:26

We have significant concerns regarding their option three, which proposes to do nothing at Bennell Bridge with abnormal indivisible loads using an alternative access route. The removal of the extensive construction works to Bend Bridge would indeed reduce the impact on the vulnerable. Residents of White Arch Park, eliminate disrupted road closures and diversions through Saxmundham and prevent closure of the railway line, which is both vital for passengers and for freight.

01:08:48:00 - 01:09:22:12

Serving size will see. That's welcome. However, the alternative route proposed under option three is not satisfactory. It would transfer significant traffic impacts to communities already experiencing human Effects from sidewalk under Pistons substation, particularly Middleton and Thebarton. Until the Sizewell relief road is completed and the parishes of list and an additional. Furthermore, option three does not materially alleviate existing traffic pressures within Saxmundham.

01:09:22:23 - 01:09:55:29

Under the applicant's proposal. HGV and workforce Vehicles will continue to access the site via the BW 121 through Bennell and or Saxmundham. A new road and bridge over the River Frome would then be constructed to provide access to the converter station. Saxmundham Town Council has consistently expressed concerns regarding the proposed Riverfront Bridge due to its impact on ecology, heritage assets and landscape character.

01:09:56:01 - 01:10:38:15

We therefore maintain our objection to this element of the scheme. However, we believe that there is an alternative approach that more appropriately considers the interest of healthy communities. And that's why I'm coming on to building bridges metaphorical bridges. Saxmundham, Bennell and Sternfeld are host communities for this nationally significant infrastructure project. It should be incumbent upon the applicant to work constructively with those communities to identify solutions that mitigate the impact of 21st century traffic demands on a 20 20th century road network.

01:10:39:11 - 01:11:12:15

Suffolk County Council's proposals in rep for one for nine to avoid works to Bend Railway Bridge through the use of a permanent hall road, offers such an opportunity. A Hall Road route using the sizable link road via the former Leiston Airfield to connect with the BW Id109 would remove construction traffic from the parishes of Bethel and Saxmundham. It would prevent cumulative traffic and impacts placed in a nodule.

01:11:12:18 - 01:11:54:07

It would avoid harm to the historic parkland setting of Hartshorn. It would maintain the operational railings serving size, Wolsey and local communities. It would remove National Grid Ventures line link. Should the project be consented from Saxmundham and increase resilience and emergency planning for Sizewell B and C. This approach would demonstrate meaningful coordination between SIPs, both operational and at a statutory consultation stage, and would represent a constructive, cooperative response to cumulative infrastructure pressures.

01:11:54:17 - 01:12:27:21

We acknowledge that revising traffic Arrangements may create delays. However, the National Energy System operators are vital in achieving clean power for Great Britain by 2030. Indicated that projects including Citylink had delivery dates beyond 2030, and that the projects needed bringing forward to meet the clean energy targets. Given this current delivery timetable, this will not be achieved.

01:12:28:00 - 01:13:16:02

The imperative to accelerate delivery should not override the need for coherent planning, coordination and appropriate mitigations for cumulative impacts. Now we strongly endorse the applicants review through the pardon. We strongly endorse that the applicant reviews its traffic. Stop strategy. Engage constructively with Suffolk County Council's alternative proposal and seek to build a lasting and positive metaphorical bridge with its whole host communities through coordinated and sustainable infrastructure planning.

01:13:16:04 - 01:13:19:08

And I've made it in time. Thank you.

01:13:21:06 - 01:13:31:03

Thank you very much, councillor. And, um, now we have Suffolk East Energy Action Solutions and that's represented by Fiona Gilmore.

01:13:33:21 - 01:13:34:06

You see you have.

01:13:34:08 - 01:13:34:23

Six.

01:13:34:26 - 01:13:35:12

Also.

01:13:36:09 - 01:14:19:16

Thank you. Thank you sir. I'm speaking on behalf of Seas in my role as one of the directors. There is much community exasperation with Njit seemingly cavalier approach to the DCO application and now continued through the DCO examination. In particular, there are three aspects of this cavalier approach which we wish to highlight. First, an application launched on the basis of an already out of date need case as Sizewell need in quotes that had in fact shrunk to a fraction of the asserted figure.

01:14:19:25 - 01:14:55:24

You know, once you've said that Nautilus is going elsewhere. Um, there isn't a Nautilus, there isn't a five estuaries and a mere 325MW. Yet, astonishingly, Enger did not acknowledge that until seas pressed them. And now what her n get doing. They're frantically trying to rewrite the needs case keeps changing every time they write a submission to demonstrate the need, but shifting the rationale for the need to more nebulous Qualitative objectives.

01:14:55:26 - 01:15:37:26

They don't like quantitative because they show inconvenient truths. The second reason why we are concerned about their cavalier approach is that it is an application launched without adequate assessments of impacts. The data is lacking. Third, without grappling with some of the most basic practical issues such as bin or bridge, even now, N gets continued failure to present the examination with proper assessment of key impacts made particularly egregious by the fact the points were raised.

01:15:37:28 - 01:15:52:03

We then get long ago, and we are now approaching the final months of the examination with very limited opportunity for residents and the public to respond to whatever comes forward now.

01:15:53:23 - 01:16:37:26

Points that stand out for sees in this regard are one. Nugget has still not provided a satisfactory traffic transport assessment worth the name. Certainly as regards cumulative impacts, and it is frankly astonishing that Suffolk Junction modelling, such as it is, will not appear presented until deadline six, despite what was revealed at issue two regarding the deficiencies in its local economy tourism assessment work, ingot has not moved to provide a quantitative assessment of the impact of the local economy, in particular tourism.

01:16:38:00 - 01:17:28:12

What we appear to have is simply a promise of some future monitoring. Well, that is not acceptable. It's too late to do something once the projects have already been given consent, we are talking about a proper impact assessment. Now, where you look at perceptions of tourists and visitors towards this area, given the fact that the tourism economy is the most important revenue earning sector for this region, it beggars belief that now that has had years to set up a quantitative attitudinal tracking research programme and has shied away from this crucial work, relying instead on benchmarking inappropriate destinations and on generic desk research.

01:17:29:10 - 01:18:01:20

The same cavalier approach has been in evidence across other issues, where qualitative judgements have been used in place of rigorous quantitative assessments, notably with regards to noise, vibration ecology, alternative sites where there are no financial assessments that are transparently presented, and also mental health, where significant attitudinal research is available and should be considered by Njit and the examiners.

01:18:02:01 - 01:18:35:19

We suggest that the precautionary principles apply in this case where there is doubt. It requires the assessment to assume the worst case scenario. I also want to briefly mention defense. We had a meeting with a defense strategist for this country who said that our Navy is threadbare and that we have no significant defense anymore for our pipelines in the North Sea.

01:18:36:02 - 01:19:16:13

We here at Aldeburgh and this area are the closest place in Britain to Moscow. It is absolutely absurd. Ridiculous that we are considering a third of all our energy to come through this through road, and we suggest that the examining authority ask for defence strategists to contribute to this discussion urgently. In conclusion, Njit has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to cruise through the examinations as if the decision is a foregone conclusion.

01:19:17:02 - 01:19:57:09

Well, it is not. They have been disingenuous in their apparent surprise regarding the mental bridge issue, given that Suffolk County Council raised the issue in December 2023. There is every reason to believe that National Grid are not engaging with this process in good faith, and that means that one cannot accept anything said by them at face value. The cumulative adverse impacts are such that the concluding words of the examiners at the SPR, E1 and E2 DCO should be considered as highly significant.

01:19:57:21 - 01:20:33:12

The effects of the cumulative delivery of the proposed development with the other EA development are so substantially adverse that utmost care will be required in the consideration of any amendments or additions to the proposed development in this location. National grid chose to stay away from those Scottish Power DCO examinations time and time again, because I attended all of them. They were asked to attend and to answer questions regarding what were their true intentions.

01:20:33:14 - 01:20:38:04

What was really behind Friston. They remained stumm.

01:20:38:06 - 01:20:38:26

Sorry about.

01:20:39:04 - 01:20:40:09

All their plans.

01:20:40:11 - 01:20:43:10

On a minute over the time at the moment. Can you just conclude?

01:20:44:04 - 01:21:02:24

Thank you. I conclude by saying my last sentence is this a developer who has taken its responsibility to community, countryside and economy? Seriously? Or is this a developer riding roughshod over anyone and anything in its way? Thank you sir.

01:21:03:13 - 01:21:14:01

Thank you very much. And if there is anything that someone that you've had to cut short or something like that to get in within the time, then put it in writing to us for the next deadline and we'll look.

01:21:14:03 - 01:21:15:03

Thank you very much.

01:21:15:15 - 01:21:38:15

Um, so, uh, the time is now 1:01. Um, I therefore propose we take an adjournment for lunch. Um, for those watching on the live stream, you need to refresh your browser page to view this here. And when we recommence, um, and so, uh, we shall come back from lunch at 2 p.m.. Thank you.