
Ramsgate Town Council Response to Hearings 24th & 25th March

From Town Clerk <town.clerk@ramsgatetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Date Wed 2026-03-25 15:09

To contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com <contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com>; South East Anglia Link <SouthEastAngliaLink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Cc cllr-trevor.shonk <cllr-trevor.shonk@ramsgatetowncouncil.gov.uk>; Cllr Tricia Austin <cllr-tricia.austin@ramsgatetowncouncil.gov.uk>; Becky Wing <cllr-becky.wing@ramsgatetowncouncil.gov.uk>; Dean Williams <dean.williams@ramsgatetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Dear Teams,

Please may I report the following responses from Ramsgate Town Council that were given at this weeks' hearings:

24th March 2025: Open floor hearing 3 (OFH3)

Ramsgate Town Council accepts the principle of the Sea Link project. But we remain deeply concerned that the Kent onshore component—particularly the converter station and associated land-take around Minster Marshes and the Pegwell Bay area—falls on one of the most environmentally sensitive landscapes in our region.

This is an area valued not simply for scenery, but for its ecology, floodplain function, bird migration routes, and connection to the Pegwell Bay protected site complex. For many local people, it is also one of the few remaining places that offers quiet, open natural space—something that is increasingly scarce in Thanet.

We are not persuaded that the project as currently configured demonstrates that this location is the only viable option, nor that lower-impact alternatives—particularly brownfield opportunities near Richborough—have been properly tested or evidenced.

Concerns about cumulative pressure

Thanet is carrying the burden of multiple major development demands: offshore grid connections, transport upgrades, housebuilding, and regeneration pressures. As a coastal district with limited land and significant deprivation, our communities are already experiencing the cumulative loss of green space, marshland, biodiversity and amenity.

Sea Link's footprint in Kent would impose long-term industrialisation on an area whose environmental value is high but whose landform is fragile, low-lying, and increasingly vulnerable to climate-driven flood risk. We believe these factors have not yet been meaningfully reconciled with the land-take proposed.

Community impact and fairness

For local residents, particularly in Ramsgate, Minster, Cliffsend and the surrounding parishes, there is a sense that nationally significant infrastructure is repeatedly routed to areas least able to resist the loss of valued natural space.

We hear regularly from residents who do support renewable energy and want the grid to be strengthened—but they ask a simple question: “Why here, when alternatives exist?”

We believe that is a fair question, and one the Examination should test robustly.

What we are asking the Examining Authority to do

We ask the Examining Authority to:

a. Rigorously test whether Minster Marshes is genuinely unavoidable

Require a transparent demonstration that alternative sites—especially brownfield areas around Richborough—have been fully modelled, compared and discounted for sound reasons.

b. Require the Applicant to minimise land-take and permanent impacts

Where temporary possession, rights-only arrangements, or rerouting can significantly reduce damage to the marshes, these should be preferred.

c. Scrutinise hydrological and flood-risk implications

Raising platforms, piling, haul roads and cable infrastructure cannot be allowed to worsen flood behaviour in an area already prone to groundwater and tidal interactions.

d. Protect access, recreation, and cultural landscape

The Way of St Augustine and the marsh routes are integral to local identity. Their loss, even temporarily, will be deeply felt.

e. Require stronger community engagement and mitigation commitments

Communities must not be left worse off—environmentally, socially, or visually—because of a national infrastructure scheme.

Closing

Chair, Members, our message today is constructive and clear:

We support the national need, but not the unnecessary local harm.

Ramsgate Town Council asks that this Examination ensures the full range of alternatives is honestly weighed, and that the final outcome—whatever form it takes—is not simply the easiest route for the developer, but the right one for both the nation and the people who live here.

Thank you for hearing our representation.

25th March 2026: Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 2

Ramsgate Town Council supports the national need for grid reinforcement but objects to the **compulsory acquisition of Minster Marshes and adjacent land**, where harm is high, alternatives exist, and the statutory tests under **Planning Act 2008 s.122** have not been met.

1. Necessity Test – s.122(2)

The Applicant has not shown why **permanent acquisition** is essential for several plots associated with:

- Construction compounds, haul routes and temporary access;
- Drainage and flood attenuation;
- PRow realignments.

Request: **Convert permanent CA to temporary possession or rights-only powers** wherever feasible.

2. Alternatives – brownfield before marshland

Sea Link's Kent configuration—Pegwell Bay landfall, TJB, 2 km HVDC to a converter station near Minster—drives land-take on highly sensitive marshland.

RTC asks the ExA to require a **side-by-side alternatives matrix** including **Richborough brownfield options** to demonstrate whether Minster Marshes acquisition is truly unavoidable.

3. Environmental & Ecological Harm

Minster Marshes is hydrologically fragile and **functionally linked to Pegwell Bay** (SSSI/SPA/Ramsar/NNR/MCZ). Loss, fragmentation and disturbance to wetland ecosystems and migratory bird routes (EAF) risks irreversible damage.

Request: ExA to test the Applicant's **HRA and in-combination assessment** rigorously.

4. Flood Risk, Hydrology & Drainage

Raising platforms, piling and extensive drainage works increase land needs and may alter groundwater pathways.

Relevant evidence: **Kent Drainage Strategy & Surface Water Flood Risk Technical Note** lodged in the Examination.

Request: Demonstrate that drainage-related land-take cannot be reduced, and provide **restoration guarantees** for temporarily occupied areas.

5. Open Space, PRow & Access

Where land meets "open space" definitions or includes PRow (e.g., Way of St Augustine), the Applicant must justify closures/diversions and provide functional **exchange land** if required.

6. Negotiations & Good Faith

Applicant should table a **Schedule of Negotiations**, including discussions with TDC (hoverport access), KCC, IDB, Kent Wildlife Trust, and local councils. Some acquisition appears avoidable if agreements are reached.

7. Funding & Restoration

RTC requests confirmation that the **Funding Statement** covers:

- Restoration of marshland after temporary possession;
 - Worst-case drainage/flood risk design scenarios.
- This is required under CA Guidance.*

With kind regards



Laura Fidler
Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Ramsgate Town Council
Email:
town.clerk@ramsgatetowncouncil.gov.uk
Working Hours:
Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm

www.ramsgatetown.org

01843 598751 Ext: 2008
(Option 5)



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