



## Hearing Transcript

<b>Project:</b>	Sea Link
<b>Hearing:</b>	Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3) - Day 2 - Part 1
<b>Date:</b>	26 March 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:06:12 - 00:00:42:19

Good morning. Before I begin, can I just confirm with the case team that I can be heard clearly and that the live streaming of this event has commenced? Thank you. The time is now ten o'clock, and I'd like to welcome you all to the continuation of issue specific hearing three for the application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an order granting development consent for the Sealing Project. My name is Sarah Holmes. I'm a planning inspector and a charter civil engineer, and I've been appointed by the secretary of state to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application. I'm going to ask my fellow panel members who have also been appointed by the secretary of state to examine this project to introduce themselves.

00:00:44:09 - 00:00:48:28

Good morning. My name is doctor Richard Hunt. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered environmentalist.

00:00:49:25 - 00:00:54:11

Good morning. My name is Luke Regan. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered transport planner.

00:00:55:20 - 00:01:00:12

Good morning. My name is Steven Renny. I am a planning inspector and a chartered town planner.

00:01:01:13 - 00:01:32:13

Together with Nancy Thomas, we form the examining authority or EXA for this application. I can confirm that all members of the examining authority have made a formal declaration of interests, and there were no known conflicts of interest with regard to examining this application. There were other colleagues from the planning inspector with us today. For those who are present in the room, you may have already spoken to or heard from Louise Howaway, who is the case manager for this project. For those of you who have joined us virtually, you have spoken to Javier Kerr or Caroline Allen, our case officers in the joining conference.

00:01:32:25 - 00:02:05:09

Together, they are the case team for this project, and if you have any questions or queries, they should be your first point of contact. Their contact details can be found at the top of any letter you've received from us or on the project page of the National Infrastructure website. In addition, there are technicians from CVS International who are attending solely for the purpose of managing the recording and live streaming of the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the application process in general, could I ask that you please email the case team who will be happy to help? So for those of you who weren't in the hearing yesterday, I will quickly go through a few housekeeping matters.

00:02:05:21 - 00:02:42:18

Can everyone attending please make sure your phone's switched off or turned silent? For those in this room, there's no fire test planned this morning. So should an alarm sound, it is an emergency, and we will need to vacate the building. Ex emergency exits are located on the side of the room, and the fire assembly point is outside the western entrance of the building. If anyone needs any assistance, please let the case team know. Toilet facilities, including disabled facilities, are out of the doors past room twenty to the left. As far as I'm aware, no requests have been made for any special measures or arrangements to enable participation in this meeting, such as needing to take a break for any medical reasons or having to leave the event at a certain time.

00:02:42:25 - 00:03:20:19

But if anyone does need a break or extra support later on, please do let the case team know. For those attending the satellite venues, to minimize background noise, please make sure your phones are switched off or turned silent. If you wish to speak, please raise your hands, and a roving mic will be brought to you, or you can move to the desk at the front to speak. And for those attending virtually, can I repeat the request made in the arrangement conference that to minimize background noise, you make sure your phone is switched off or turned silent and that you stay muted with your camera off unless you were speaking? I would also ask that if you want to speak, you switch your camera on and either use a raise hand function or just ask to speak at the appropriate time.

00:03:21:13 - 00:03:28:00

Can I also remind people that the chat function on Teams will not work, so please do not use this to ask any questions or post any comments?

00:03:29:15 - 00:03:58:10

This event is being livestreamed and recorded. Our letter of the nineteenth of September, which we refer to as the rule six letter, explained that because we retain and publish the digital recordings, they form a public record to which the general data protection regulation or GDPR applies. Please read that letter, which can be found in the examination library reference with p d zero one zero for further information about GDPR. Are there any comments or questions regarding any points I've just made in the room or online?

00:04:01:28 - 00:04:13:01

Not seeing any hands. So can I ask the applicant to display the agenda? So today, we'll be starting with item five, which is socioeconomics and tourism.

00:04:21:20 - 00:04:49:23

You'll have seen for the agenda that we do have a lot to get through today and tomorrow, and the EXA do have specific questions that they need answers from from certain parties. This is a predominantly for some process. So if you don't get the opportunity to speak on today a particular topic, please do submit your point in writing. Before we move on to the first agenda item, I'd just like to ask mister Mackay if the action raised yesterday about setting a date for the meeting between Old Wood Town Council and the applicant, has this meeting been arranged now?

00:04:51:07 - 00:05:19:11

It's not been arranged, but the applicant provided us with some dates within a very short period after your kind intervention yesterday, and I was provided with some dates by the counselors. I'm

optimistic that two of the dates that have been given by the applicant are going to be okay, but I'm waiting for confirmation of that. Thank you, madam.

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Thank you. I will leave that in your capable hands. But if it isn't arranged by till the end of today, please do mention it tomorrow. Thank you.

00:05:27:08 - 00:05:28:00

Thank you, madam.

00:05:29:28 - 00:05:34:01

Okay. I'll now pass over to Mr. Mene for item five on the agenda.

00:05:34:08 - 00:06:06:18

Ma'am, if I may just raise one matter. Sarah Kabochek for the applicant. Ma'am, it's just in relation to the point that you raised at the start of the second session yesterday, which was, EN one and table two. You recall we had it up on the screen. Ma'am, we're very grateful to you for raising that. And obviously, as the applicant, we, are listening carefully to any, indications that we get from you, and we we appreciate the points that you made about needing to provide you with the evidence and demonstrate that we've applied the mitigation hierarchy.

00:06:06:20 - 00:06:23:28

We'll do that, of course, in three Gen one and three Gen two, and we'll make sure that you have everything you need. But overnight, we were reflecting, and I wanted to just ask whether there's a particular topic or topics that you had in mind at this stage so that we can make sure that we assist you specifically on on those matters.

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I think it'll probably become clear through the hearing, but in particular, cumulative impact is an area we're particularly concerned about.

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I'm very grateful. And, Ma'am, as I said, we we appreciated your your your indications yesterday. And at the end of perhaps tomorrow, if there's anything else that you think that you should draw to our attention, we would appreciate that. Okay. No problem.

00:06:55:10 - 00:07:26:12

Okay. Thank you. So I have several questions on socioeconomics, including tourism. Due to time constraints, there are some questions I have which I shall add as action points because they'll be fine with a written response to those. This will be also the same for health and well-being and also for cultural heritage. Again, to make sure I get through these questions, I will generally wait until the end of the agenda item before seeing if people have any other comments to make on what they've heard.

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So firstly, and this is a question that could also fit into the health and well-being topic I think. But

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Suffolk County Council in response to deadline four required that the applicant should implement, monitor and coordinate mitigation measures to minimize disruption on healthcare access. This includes engagement with healthcare providers and communities, consideration of temporary access arrangements where required and coordination with other NSIPs where cumulative construction impacts may affect access routes. So first of all, can I speak Suffolk with County Council to firstly explain why it considers that access to health care would be an issue and how would the monitoring help?

00:08:13:21 - 00:08:54:08

Lois Lane, Suffolk County Council. Yes. So we're we're in essence, we are concerned about, again, sort of cumulative impacts here. And I think we we might have miss Jones online possibly who can tell you more about the the the specific access points. But it's essentially we're concerned that that there's an intersection here between construction traffic and between pressures on accommodation sectors and the kind of wider economic impact of so many projects happening in such quick succession.

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I see that mister Jones has has appeared on screen. In essence, I think we've we've we've picked this up in our most recent iteration of the pads about the idea of the need for for a monitoring process essentially to make sure that there's potentially a similar essentially to what what Sizwell have have committed to on this. We think that that would be appropriate here too under the circumstances. If embedded mitigation isn't feasible and that potentially then a compensatory approach of a proportionate contribution could be appropriate.

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I'm just gonna hand over to mister Jones to pick up specifically on that point about access to GP services and other health care access.

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Okay. Thank you.

00:09:40:12 - 00:10:12:03

Yeah. Matt Jones, Suffolk County Council. Yeah. I mean, you've summed it up perfectly, really. We we are concerned about that particular area of Suffolk. There will be a cumulative impact from size well, potentially, Glyne Lake, Norwich, Tilbury, and a whole a whole load of other end sets that will be happening. So, you know, we are concerned about the the I mean, I'm here specifically to talk about tourism, but the, you know, the the general principle applies that, you know, the the road system could be potentially be be overwhelmed. So we need to make sure that emergency access will be in place,

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that's that services and accommodation and attractions and everything. Whilst we are aware there will be an economic benefit, we don't want there to be a disbenefit, and we would still like there to be a, you know, a thriving tourism, a visitor economy at the end of it.

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Okay. Thank you. Can I go across to the applicant then just to get your response to what you've heard and whether that's something the applicant could agree to?

00:10:46:01 - 00:11:16:28

Sorry, Rukhoshik, for the applicant. So in terms of the health issue, we have a meeting in the diary with Suffolk County Council, and we will discuss these matters. I think as matters stand at the moment, we have, of course, undertaken a cumulative assessment of this issue and do not that hasn't demonstrated any cumulative impacts in this context, in the health context. We do recognise that there will be an addition to the impacts from our scheme.

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In that respect, we have considered a number of measures that we can take. We don't think monitoring is the answer because you will have too much background noise from Sizwell. It'll be difficult to understand what the impacts are from our scheme. And I think, suspect previously, have taken the same approach to tourism. They it's difficult to separate the background noise. We do have a number of measures that we consider would be helpful, and our proposals would include, for example, a community liaison officer who would be able to be trained in mental health awareness, meet the project CLO events in Saxmandom and Oldborough, one to one surgeries where people can meet National Grid's community liaison officer in a neutral space so that they can ask questions and make suggestions without having to travel to the main construction compound, which could be intimidating and also give rise to safety issues.

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Providing a community contact phone line, email address so that people can be rapidly and personally responded to, and also ensuring that all contractors have mental health aware community behavior standards. We would also attend and contribute to Sizwell Health and Well-being working group meetings, and Sizwell have agreed to that approach. So we are looking at we're alive to this, and we are looking to looking at a number of proposals that would would go towards this issue and mitigating it.

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But for the reasons I've given, we don't think monitoring is productive.

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Okay. And can you let me know when that meeting is planned for?

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Yes. I will just check.

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Seventh of April, sir.

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Seventh of April. Okay.

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I'll return to the Suffolk County Council on that about the meeting and what you've just heard. And well, I'm just sort of thinking if the meeting's coming up, then these are the sort of things can be discussed and hopefully resolution on what can be brought forward.

00:13:11:12 - 00:13:46:05

Lower Steyneshopper County Council. Yes. It sounds like this is probably something that that we can report back on once that meeting has taken place. I should just say that one point which I I didn't pick up on before, slightly straying into the health and well-being topic here, but the particular concern that we raised in our last round of written representations in terms of demand for health services was particularly around mental health impacts. Mhmm. And and potentially, there's there's obviously there's the the physical access to GP services point, which which has been assessed.

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But we do have concerns which will probably come on to, I would imagine, in more detail under the agenda item six about the mental health impacts of both intra project cumulative impact and inter project cumulative impact. And that the method of assessment that's been used is obviously relying on on impart on GP data, for example. But there may be a lot of people that don't self report, and we do have concerns about about those cumulative mental health impacts. This is all stuff that we we can pick up outside of this forum, but Mhmm.

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It's just to note that that is a particular concern that's kind of a running thread through our response on on a number of different agenda items, certainly on on six point two.

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Yes. Okay. Thank you.

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Moving on.

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Bit more now on the sort of tourism side of things. From the Suffolk County Council principal areas of disagreement document, it states that the applicant should commit to monitor effects on accommodation capacity and tourism in coordination with cumulative developments, particularly Sizeable C, as well as wider tourism impacts. A proportionate contribution to foster tourism of a similar vein to the fund created by Seizeable C may be appropriate.

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Could I ask the applicant, would you agree to a fund to be used, particularly if monitoring showed significant adverse effects?

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So thank you. Hugh Flanagan for the applicant. So in respect of that accommodation and tourism issue, I will answer your question, but just to give it a broader context to what we say is appropriate, we we now have committed to monitor worker accommodation and the location of it and consider

responsive steps if required. So that's s e o five, which you have seen. As I understand, Suffolk may have some comments on the wording of s e o five, and we're certainly happy to discuss those, and and we'll take those on board.

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Yes. So we we we think that is a sort of proactive step to address the issues which you're raising and Suffolk have been raising. In respect of

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any matters going beyond that, tourism monitoring going beyond that, we, in similar ways to health, don't think monitoring is feasible or or likely to be effective because it's not realistically possible to isolate ceiling's influence, which is likely to be marginal compared to projects like Sizwell, from those wider impacts given the relatively modest scale of ceiling in terms of extent, worker numbers, and time. So we don't think monitoring of tourism is is is not really possible given the scale of it and the nature of it, but we do have committed to what is SEO four, which is commitment to liaison and collaboration with two organizations Yes.

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The local destination management organization and the local visitor economy partnership to seek to both sort of communicate what we're doing and also to have their input about how to minimize impacts on tourism receptors at peak times, etcetera. And mister Widget, who sits to my left, is meeting with those organizations to make sure that can be taken forward effectively. So and for similar reasons, we we don't say a a tourism fund is is justified, but but what we are doing is putting in place those steps both specifically in terms of accommodation, that commitment, and also, the wider tourism, engagement work through SEO four.

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Okay. And on SEO four, talks about liaison with the tourism related businesses and groups on how tourism impacts can be minimized. But there's no particular commitment within that to address those views of other parties with mitigation particularly. Is a more detailed tourism

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commitment needed to include some sort of potential adaptive management or mitigation if needed? It sort of says they will discuss their views, that sort of thing, but it doesn't sort of commit to any action that might be put forward.

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So Hugh Valliga of the applicants. I mean, I I think the certainly, the intention behind the SCA four is that it would, you know, it would take on board their views and consider responsive steps. So it talks about impacts being minimized through phasing of works, etcetera. We we certainly can look at the wording of that to see if if it can be adjusted to to make that clearer, I suppose, and take on board your your comments.

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Yeah.

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So that that that's noted. Just turn to my left in case there's anything extra notes. So that that's noted, and it's it's intended to be an effective commitment, so we'll we'll see what if anything can be said on that.

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Okay. Thank you. Just wonder if East Suffolk Council's online and would like to comment on what you've heard about commitment SC04 and the tourism monitoring.

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Mark Westman and Smith, Suffolk Council. I have with me Simon Charlesworth, who's the sector development and trade lead at the council, and Alexis Corleys, who's the sizeable seat tourism fund manager. In broad terms, we are aligned with Suffolk County Council on this issue. We set out our concerns in our NIR originally, and at deadline four, the our comments on the applicant's visitor and tourism assessment technical name, which is rep four one eight four.

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And at deadline five, various documents have been provided to which we will respond in writing. Mhmm. But they include the REAC measures that have just been discussed, s e o four and s e o five, appendix d to the applicant's response to your second written questions, which is the tourist accommodation stock and the applicant's response or the applicant's Suffolk coastal accommodation analysis, which underlies s e o five in the REACT.

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And I was just gonna ask mister Charlesworth to

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provide his initial responses, which we'll follow-up in writing to those three points. The long and short of it is that we think there needs to be more specific commitments to what we call a workforce accommodation strategy. And I think what we will do is, in responding to the deadline five documents, set out a specific requirement that would what we would fall into requirement six to approve the workforce accommodation strategy in order to put some beef under the commitments that the applicant is putting forward under SCA four and SCA five.

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Can I just hand this to Charlesworth?

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Yes. Thank you. Simon Charlesworth, your piece of council. Good morning. In response to well, first of all, for the REAC, we're at five one one five. In principle, we welcome the commitments outlined by the applicant within s e zero four and s e zero five. However, we are concerned that they don't go far enough. And specifically for s e zero four, it's noted by the council that

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both Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk County Council are not listed as potential organizations which with which the applicant intends to engage regarding tourism despite both councils' active

involvement. And as you'll hear from my colleague Lexi later, we run extensive tourism mitigation programs and mitigation and development programs for East Suffolk and wider locality.

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for s e zero four, and I think the examiner's already touched on this, is that talking is one engaging is one thing. But, actually, east of the council request that the mechanism for liaison is given considerable thought about how this will be implemented in practice and that it is integrated into established working groups. And we are concerned that applying another layer of engagement on top of what already happens, which is quite a sophisticated

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program, is is is required for s c zero four.

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Now I'm not sure if you want me to go into s c zero five at this stage, but that's my response to s c zero

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do. Carry on.

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Yeah. Yeah. So s c zero five,

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which talks which examines the need the intention, the commitment to monitor where workers are staying. Again, we we welcome this this commitment, but, again, it doesn't talk about how that information, that monitoring will be shared with local stakeholders, particularly the council, of course, which has both private housing officers, and we pay very close attention to tourism accommodation stock on a regular basis.

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So, you know, I I suppose it's taking the case here that the local government local authorities need to be involved in any of this monitoring activity. We feel that the utilization of the trigger point, it can irrespective of its value, the applicants suggested a figure of eighteen nonhome based workers staying in visitor accommodation. That feels very arbitrary. And but we don't understand where eighteen came from whilst the applicant has suggested we can amend that.

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That's even if we were to suggest a number, that would be an arbitrary figure as well. And a trigger point is only part of the solution. It's also quite a retrospective or reactive approach to the problem. What we are saying is that we do need to be having a forward look and a forward examination of work nonhome based workers' use of tourism accommodation. It's no use waiting until the trigger point is reached for considering any mitigation activity.

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So what we would like to do is make sure that from the offset that we are monitoring the adult or use of the of of tourism accommodation right up to the point that you know, so that allows us to plan for any mitigation strategies and allows us to incorporate other cumulative effects resulting from from other NSIPs. And it's fair to say, I think, that, you know, within within but answer the county council and our private sector colleagues, we have a very

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developed, you know, program of of meetings, etcetera.

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Just additionally as well, you know, ESC the council recognizes the economic benefits that the nonhand based workers bring to East Suffolk. And, no doubt, during the low season accommodation, providers would welcome the opportunity to fill any spare capacity. However, we also need to know a little bit more about how the applicant's discussions with other local developers are progressing because, of course, particularly thinking about special specialist accommodation that is being constructed within East Suffolk.

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For example, may there be spare capacity within that accommodation that can be utilized on the the ceiling project and also park and ride or transport facilities that that exist as well.

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Also, for s e zero five, we and this drops into the accommodation analysis a little bit, really, is that we do need confirmation from the from the app applicants about whether that commitment relates purely to serviced accommodation or whether they're thinking about non serviced accommodation as well. The I was made aware of very late in the day of document rep four two three seven, which is the applicant's updated assessment of worst case level of

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impacts of nonhand based workers on on accommodation. We have not had a chance to review that document at this stage, but we'll do so by the upcoming deadline. And yeah. So, please, clarity on on whether we're talking about service accommodation only or are we talking about non service accommodation or are we talking about both? Because what we often have seen and we have responded to is a mismatch in the figures that the council has provided and that is provided by the applicant.

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And I will add this in just here, which is East Suffolk Council would welcome the opportunity and initial talks with you, you know, over an engagement meeting is East East Suffolk Council welcome the opportunity to opportunity establish local governance and working groups to monitor and shape delivery of the applicant's commitment. As we've seen, that that has so far not been we the councils have not been approached by the applicant. We think that would be a huge step forward because we, you know, we we but we we we feel that we have something to offer as to other tourism organizations.

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Then, finally,

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relating to rep five one three six, which is towards accommodations talk. So this is appendix d. I don't know if my colleague, Lexi, has anything to add, but in terms of Taurus and combination stock, as we've already mentioned, is that there are differences between our own analysis and that of the applicant and which it's is concerning.

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Total accommodation stop does not translate into availability as this will be dictated by occupancy throughout the year. And we know, and Lexi made comments on this, is that we know that next in the next two weeks, condo occupancy is about nine one hundred percent, which would translate into challenges for both visitors and nonhome based workers next year should should the project be given consent. And

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I suppose the only other element here at this point is,

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you know

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yeah. The the applicant suggests that non non home based workers would want to share rooms. Our belief is that that's not necessarily true, and it's it's wrong to assume that working nonhand based workers would want to share accommodation.

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I think for me, that's it. If I could just it might be worth just picking up because SCC put forward the idea of a proportionate fund to support tourism in the area. And Alexis Corless manages the or Sizwell fund on behalf of the council. So can I just ask her to explain what she does with that fund and why a proportionate fund in similar terms would be appropriate and necessary here?

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Yes, please. Thank

00:30:22:13 - 00:31:00:00

you. Good morning. Alexis Corliss, East Southwark Council. So as as described, I manage the tourism fund, which is a twelve billion pound fund, strategic program over fourteen years. We're currently two years into that. It's designed to maintain visitor confidence, sustained demand, and strengthen the tourism offer during, what is a a difficult construction period, to hopefully remain competitive. Annual payments come through to the council, and there are mandatory minimum spends on data and monitoring as part of that.

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There is, as Simon has alluded to, there is a working group that actually is made up of the two councils and those other, organisations, which is the local visitor economy partnership and the destination management organisation, Suffolk Coast, National Landscapes, and Sizwell themselves.

So that working group, well, that board effectively sits and approve, the approach and, are part very much part of the monitoring approach, to understand what the industry is doing during this period. As I said, the money comes down on an annual basis.

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And to date, what we've been doing is focusing on acquiring those data sources and understanding what the the position is and, like, understanding the baselines. Now we're starting off during this very long period of construction process. So what we do as of part that program, as well as now we are understanding those, is the audiences. Each part of the program plays a specific role. So there's money allocated towards marketing and PR, particularly to manage perceptions and to keep the destination viable.

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Destination development structures are the core reasons why people want to come to Visier, and those could include things like grants to enable businesses to adapt and for sector development. So, in essence, again, keep us viable during this time. Particular emphasis, again, is gonna be on food and drink tech sector, which is so important to East Suffolk and Suffolk as a whole. What we do in terms of data and monitoring is really important. So we get the data sources include spend and footfall. I'm just going back to the applicant in regards to why we're asking for that data and monitoring requirement.

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Because during Seizwell's examination, it was established they acknowledged that actually perceptions are really key to how it motivates, visitors in in terms of, area of appeal. It was acknowledged during that process that perceptions need to be managed. There was perception studies during their examination. We have since commissioned those as longitudinal perception studies, and the idea behind that is very much to, again, really understand what our current audiences are and where the opportunities are to grow those audiences, but what are affecting those audiences in terms of motivations.

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And both during that perception study during the examination and the one that we did last year, it has acknowledged that our key audiences are very sensitive to environmental changes, transport disruption, and all the things we've been talking about in the last few days. So I just wanted to to flag that, actually, that's why it's so important to have adequate monitoring and data so that we can really understand where we should be targeting that those mitigation funds in the right way and to get return on investment.

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Can I ask about that point that the applicants raised, that it'd be quite difficult to differentiate between the impacts size is having from the future C Link potential impacts?

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Yeah. Shall I go back on that? Yeah.

00:34:00:24 - 00:34:34:22

Certainly. Thank you, Alexis Corless. So, yeah, it is going to be hard. It's gonna be hard to establish one worker from another. I think the the point from our perspective is that we understand what's happening in the industry as a whole. So, again, I go back to that spend data, that footfall data. If we're seeing declines or changes, a really good example might be around, say, food and drink. We've seen that on a localized level and the town nearest to Seiswell, where the food and drink average transactional value has dropped off. And we can tell that because it's now workers from that that spend detail.

00:34:34:24 - 00:34:54:21

We can actually see that workers are now buying, you know, takeaway foods and, sandwiches as opposed to perhaps sit sit down meals at a restaurant. So that's the sort of level of detail, which again means that we can then target that response in a different way. But it is they are right. It's gonna be difficult to be able to ascertain what is as a result of one project versus another.

00:34:55:10 - 00:34:55:25

Yes.

00:34:55:27 - 00:35:01:15

I think it's more about that cumulative effect again, isn't it? That actually it's the combination of all these things in the area.

00:35:01:27 - 00:35:33:20

Yes. Can I just come back to the applicant just on a couple of those points? Obviously, there's a lot there, and if you could respond in writing to those, that would be very useful. I'd also flag up the point about I think they were saying about maybe having a meeting because they feel they've got some constructive points to work with you. So it'd be really good to know that there's meeting a with East Suffolk Council about these points. And the point about the number of eighteen being arbitrary, I'm just wondering how where that number eighteen came from.

00:35:34:14 - 00:35:49:14

Yes. So Hugh Lang of the applicant, it's not arbitrary. It's there is a reason for it. So I'm gonna ask, firstly, miss Leader to deal with just comment briefly on the requirements, and then maybe mister Widget, who sits to my left, to comment on the eighteen unless miss Leader wants to cover that. Hand over, please.

00:35:50:13 - 00:36:32:14

Thank you. I'm Ali Leader for the applicant. And, Jen, we we really welcome East Suffolk's comments on on the positive steps we are taking at managing constructor worker accommodation and also how rapidly they've turned around comments. So we did provide them a draft before that we submitted it to you. We did have comments back on the twelfth of March, and we also had the meeting on the eighteenth of March where we run through actually a lot of the comments that have been raised today and some some further comments which are around how the applicant manages worker accommodation and giving a bit of confidence into how we manage that process.

00:36:32:16 - 00:37:10:25

So I think, actually, that's order already in train. That meeting has already happened, and we have taken away those comments. So I'm hoping that that you suffer we'll see that that we positively responded to that. I mean, in terms of the comparisons with size, well, I mean, we're talking about comparing a project with seven thousand nine hundred workers in a peak year to one with less than two hundred workers. And, yes, we are contributing to a cumulative impact, and it is in recognition entirely of that context that we are providing this type of actually quite unusual commitment.

00:37:11:16 - 00:37:42:20

And one of the reasons that we feel we can have this commitment is actually we have been really proactive in this. So we've got main works contractors on board. We've already spoken to them about how we would manage this commitment, about how we would identify areas within the Suffolk coastal area, about how we would how we would direct them to different types of accommodation. And we have been proactive in working towards that because, of course, we would have to be to be confident we can meet that requirement.

00:37:44:01 - 00:38:16:20

So I think we we are also taking comments on board about defining that area along the coast and also on on the numbers. And in terms of the eighteen, it it isn't arbitrary. We've got a methodology, and we we can talk through that. But what I would say is that I think you do need a threshold because that for refinement to have any bytes, it needs a threshold. We do feel like eighteen workers is very, very low. You know, that is a very significant commitment that we are making there.

00:38:16:22 - 00:38:47:22

We are really committing to not using that accommodation as far as is absolutely possible. And we feel in that context whilst we can talk about whether it's fifteen or twenty or or, you know, or ten. And we're happy to have those conversations, and we have asked East Suffolk to suggest alternatives. The point here is we're that in a context where we are nowhere near significant effects. We are we are not making a significant contribution compared to size.

00:38:47:24 - 00:39:00:28

Well, we're not in the same context, and applying the same mitigation isn't appropriate. But even in that context, we are making this very significant commitment around workers. So we'll hopefully see that as positive.

00:39:01:02 - 00:39:07:00

Yes. I think, yeah, maybe a bit of explanation on the eighteen. And also

00:39:09:23 - 00:39:26:25

in terms of the actual commitment itself, it sort of suggests that if it was over eighteen, then you would look to encourage workers to stay elsewhere. But it doesn't seem that you could demand the workers to stay elsewhere from the wording. Is that right?

00:39:27:23 - 00:40:01:14

So we are looking at Ali leader for the applicant. We are looking at strengthening that commitment because that's a comment made by Suffolk. I mean, we we certainly can't demand the temporary workers. So we were looking at, for example, the fact that National Grid employees, we can we can

dictate that. They, you know, have booking systems. The main works contractors also actually are already looking at securing preferential rates and block booking. So and we know where that accommodation is, and it's not within that area.

00:40:01:16 - 00:40:25:03

So Yes. We do actually have a quite a lot of confidence. But there will be occasions where we have an ecologist that is going out for some reason who books their own accommodation that doesn't fall under any of those controls. So I I think we can't commit to all workers, which is why we've got eighteen. But we can put in stronger wording around the action taken, and and that's what you'll see at deadline.

00:40:25:05 - 00:40:25:20

So

00:40:25:22 - 00:40:51:27

Yes. It seems like it could be that the vast majority of workers could come under a certain element of control, national good workers, that sort of thing. Okay. What I want to do is come around now just to see, first of with the other councils and then with anyone else within the room or online to finish off the topic of tourism. Could I just come first of all to Suffolk County Council?

00:40:53:13 - 00:41:02:09

Lois Lane, Suffolk County Council. I can see that mister Jones has been waiting with his hand up patiently for a while, so I will pass over to him to comment on that.

00:41:02:11 - 00:41:02:26

Thank you.

00:41:03:16 - 00:41:33:15

Okay. Thank you. Yeah. I just wanna pick up on a couple of points. Happily, Lex and Simon have said most of it, so I'm not I'm not gonna go through it all again. But I kind of align myself very strongly with all the comments that they've made. On the issue of workers staying outside of, East Suffolk, again, it would be useful to see how that is gonna be, how that's gonna happen in practice because that that was a question I had, but I'm I'm encouraged to hear that that's that's sitting in motion. On the subject of of monitoring,

00:41:35:05 - 00:42:02:05

I agree with what, Lex and Simon have said. I think it will be important to monitor the effects, and I appreciate that Sizwell is having a huge impact. And, certainly, with any there's there was a general perception at the moment that that any traffic issues are automatically to do with Sizwell. And we have a number of other construction projects taking place as well. So I think while Sizwell are are going to great great lengths to sort of own their own

00:42:04:17 - 00:42:24:27

traffic issues and construction issues. I think it's important that any NSIP does the same as well. So whilst I appreciate that in comparison to size well, ceiling might be minor, I think it will be important

that that we take steps to make sure that that we understand which are c link, which are saw as well, and and which are any of the others. So I just want to make that point.

00:42:25:02 - 00:42:33:16

Thank you very much. And could I ask if can can cancel online if they want to make any comments from what you've heard? Because these commitments would also apply.

00:42:40:10 - 00:42:44:24

No one from Kent at the moment? Okay. FANUC Council.

00:42:51:28 - 00:43:19:03

Good morning. Helen Johnson, Thanet District Council. Morning. We would say good morning. We would say that we would welcome the monitoring of the impact on tourist accommodation availability in Kent. And due to the location of the development, demand is likely to be highest within the Thanet district. And as we've already highlighted previously, we have concerns with regards to bed space and, tourism capacity as it is. I do have quite extensive an statement from our tourism and culture manager, but I think perhaps that's better to put in writing to you given the time we

00:43:19:05 - 00:43:20:07

have today.

00:43:20:17 - 00:43:45:15

But in just to sum up, while Suffolk have multiple DCOs, the potential for similar effects in Kent with the scenic project, Manston Airport, and wider residential development, which we alluded to yesterday in the cumulative applications list. We consider that the the area is likely to experience maybe not similar, but, you know, effects give me some effects too, and we would welcome consideration of this, please.

00:43:46:12 - 00:43:47:03

Thank you.

00:43:47:20 - 00:43:50:21

Thank you. And Dover Council.

00:43:53:03 - 00:43:59:25

Good morning, sir. Rachel Morgan for Dover District Council. We have no further comments to add but would support the comments from Fanate District Council.

00:44:00:04 - 00:44:01:20

Okay. Thank you very much.

00:44:03:08 - 00:44:06:14

And I've got FG online.

00:44:08:24 - 00:44:10:07

Do you wanna kill more, is it?

00:44:10:09 - 00:44:43:29

Good morning, sir. Representing today, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions Seas. We very much welcome Alexis Cornus' comments at East Suffolk Council. It's a breath of fresh air, music to our ears. We're most concerned that they are alive to the issues, but we disagree that National Grid is alive to these issues. We think they are sleeping on the subject. We are putting in detailed comments, such as SEO five is reactive and weak.

00:44:44:01 - 00:45:23:16

But what I want to do now briefly is I want to mention the fact that a proportionate fund can be set up whereby SeaLink, LionLink, Scottish Power, they all have to pay their bit towards the monitoring and tracking using a benchmark now in twenty twenty six, which has already been initiated for size well seen, where we can monitor the perception, attitude of visitors, regular visitors, and first time because we need to remember that over ninety of percent our visitors are day visitors.

00:45:23:23 - 00:46:04:16

They rely on easy access, and they're not going to necessarily get it. I would also like to point out that the reason James why Burton mentioned the ninety nine plus one yesterday, the absolute figures on traffic flow, is that if you look at the peak flow during the high season, the traffic on, for example, the a ten ninety four is bumper to bumper already. And when you have too much traffic, you have the danger of fatalities, the danger of more car accidents, but you also put off visitors ever coming back.

00:46:05:03 - 00:46:35:21

So we would urge the examining authority to insist on these reviews of traffic flow where we look at absolute figures of peak season. We don't rely on January and February, seasonal, lows, which are so atypical. The final point I would like to make is that, we believe that the accommodation strategy is absolutely imperative.

00:46:36:00 - 00:47:29:20

We already know of people who have been made homeless homeless because their rented properties, the price has been increased by the landlords, and they can't afford them anymore. We are most concerned for the very vulnerable in our community that they will no longer be able to afford to live here. So we would ask that a secured accommodation strategy is an imperative. It's mandatory. And finally, I would like to just point out that when people talk about the economic benefit of workers living here during the low season, Let us look at that quantitatively against the amount of business that people are losing here, and bear in mind, that this has always been a quality premium offer.

00:47:30:09 - 00:47:58:10

And that, like Polesth and Padstow, if they had this sort of infrastructure threatened three miles from Polesth, you can understand why the people of Ulbrich, in particular, are absolutely threatened by SeaLink because the SeaLink proposals come very close to Albras. So thank you for your attention, and we will send in a much more detailed commentary.

00:47:58:22 - 00:48:01:07

Thank you very much. Mr. Burton?

00:48:03:09 - 00:48:45:13

Thank you very much, sir. James Burton on behalf of SEAS, and thank you to Ms. Gilmore. I won't repeat. I have a rather dry contribution to make to you, but I do feel it's important, and we feel it's important to get it out there. What we're hearing from the applicant, despite many words and a great deal of paper, is that really, at the end of the day, you are not going to be given a cumulative assessment of impacts on the tourist economy, worth the name, that you can actually pick up, understand, and have any sense of of what it will do.

00:48:46:00 - 00:49:22:29

And we're hearing that part of the explanation for that is that, well, we're very small compared to size well. Now that, of course, is the wrong approach as a matter of law. The EIA regs are very clear, as is policy, that a cumulative assessment of the impacts, likely significant effects, must be carried out. This one of them. The applicant cannot hide behind its comparative size relative to size or because of the requirement for a cumulative effect.

00:49:24:23 - 00:49:57:00

Bringing that forward into AN1, the applicant cannot similarly hide behind, and it hasn't been mentioned today, but no doubt it's their in mind. They can't hide behind provisions of power five thirteen ten of EAM one, which of course is the one where it says the Secretary of State may conclude may, not must, but may conclude that limited weight is to be given to assertions of socioeconomic impacts that are not supported by evidence.

00:49:57:24 - 00:50:02:08

Because actually, you do have some rather good evidence here.

00:50:03:26 - 00:50:34:09

East Suffolk Council put it extremely well with that example about, the, hospitality industry by size, we're already seeing that very significant drop in discretionary spend. We've, of course, given you, and we're not the only ones, the the figure of I mean, this is in our in our rep four one five eight, a hundred and eleven pounds discretionary tourist visitor spend that, of course, you don't get with a construction worker spend.

00:50:34:11 - 00:50:36:26

And this is this is all good, hard evidence.

00:50:38:21 - 00:51:18:23

If, and it seems to be the case, it's very much like traffic and track traffic, in fact, that miss Gilmore mentioned. If the applicant isn't going to provide you with an assessment that actually gives you any sense, and it isn't, any sense of what the impact is going to be on the local tourist economy, the absent evidence means a precautionary approach must be taken. And that's notwithstanding what's in EM one. That's what the law says, and that's what we would urge you to do, And that we hope would then feed on to appropriate requirements that the councils have both been discussing.

00:51:18:25 - 00:51:19:17

Thank you very much.

00:51:19:19 - 00:51:20:04

Thank you.

00:51:24:05 - 00:51:54:13

David Mackie for Aldbridge Home Council. Three points, if I may. The first is this, that in its I I r, the county council said this, in collaboration with the cons the applicant should identify and characterize the tourism businesses within two kilometers of the red line boundary of the project. Likely likely impacts on these businesses should be identified and a package of mitigation measures developed.

00:51:54:25 - 00:52:28:13

If this if accepted, this would reduce the risk of any compensation being spread around the county rather than here where it matters. Can we enthusiastically endorse that approach? There is another reason, which is why we're very pleased with our district and county councils. We having our council having moved into its new quarters in the Mood Hall in fifteen twenty and operated ever since, we're a bit bemused at all the changes with the district and county council boundaries.

00:52:28:15 - 00:52:40:19

But there's a serious point there, which is that we don't know what's coming next, and we do strongly support the council's proposal for which we're most grateful. That's point one.

00:52:42:09 - 00:53:16:13

Point two concerns what is nowadays called mindset. As a council, the councils were most concerned at the approach of the applicants at the time of the application in terms which I think have never been changed. Because you would have noticed when you went on your recent visit for which we're most grateful. As I understand it, you got the opportunity to see the scallop on the beach and the red house.

00:53:17:13 - 00:53:33:00

Now when the approach of the applicants to tourism was set out, they drew a line, which I think was five hundred meters from the scheme area. And for the purposes of tourist evaluation,

00:53:34:16 - 00:54:04:26

took into account the scallop and the red ice. But as you've seen, it's rather more than that. And that sounds like a jibe, but we are concerned about the broader mindset. If I may say so, it was put very well by either miss Gilmore or mister Burton but went in and they said the tourism economy of the Suffolk Coast is closely tied to the distinctive qualities of the Aldeburgh area.

00:54:05:08 - 00:54:35:15

Aldeburgh, in particular, combines an unspoiled coastal setting, historic landscape, and internationally recognized and culture internationally recognized arts and culture centered at the Oldborough Festival in Snake Maltings. Visitors are drawn by the experience of tranquility, landscape character, and cultural identity of the area rather than by conventional resort infrastructure. Exactly. It's not a conventional resort nor infrastructure.

00:54:35:27 - 00:55:09:08

So that's the second point. The third point is just a slight one relating to the accommodation. The council is most concerned, and one appreciates it's all the projects. We we take that point. It's all the

projects. But the council is most concerned about how modest the more modest accommodation for the people greatest in need is being made more and more expensive by the expected effect of the projects, of which this will be one more.

00:55:09:28 - 00:55:44:26

I see this each week in the citizens' advice and list. It's a fact of life, and we don't want it to get worse. On your visit to Warbrown, you may have gone straight down the main road past the towards the Moutaus Moutaus. You would have seen, perhaps on the right, as you turn into the high street, a sign for a business called Sizwell Lettings. Now Sizwell Lettings is not a business for advertising Sizwell holidays for Albury residents.

00:55:45:04 - 00:55:46:05

It is there,

00:55:48:05 - 00:56:02:26

quite legitimately, seeking and competing for such modest accommodation is available. So we respectfully endorse all that the councils and seats have said about that. Thank you very much.

00:56:02:28 - 00:56:14:23

Okay. Thank you. There's a couple of comments I can see online, so we'll take those and then we'll come back to the applicant and to conclude the topic. So I think in this Suffolk Hub

00:56:21:16 - 00:56:55:01

Thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Marion Fellows, resident of Albrecht. Firstly, as the applicant should see, this project is approved here versus elsewhere, which would still meet the need, is going to cost a lot more money because of the solutions that are needed to be put in place. The applicant stated it was impossible to monitor because of the small geographic scale and the background noise it was referred to, but it would be able to do so by time frame.

00:56:55:03 - 00:57:26:12

No one has mentioned that. We will have a start and a finish to the works that are going on to this project. So it can be measured against the time of impact. But if they can't monitor the level of harm, then, of course, we must say that we can't then mitigate for it, and so therefore they can't say that it's insignificant. People choose where to visit based on a feeling as well, a sense of place, the characters you've heard from mister Mackey and others.

00:57:27:02 - 00:58:03:26

And this project would damage that, and it's already done so during the consultation stages. Specifically to another point the applicant mentioned, the one liaison person, That's not going to be sufficient because they can't work twenty four seven. Evenings, weekends, when a point of problem arises. HS two advocated for a public advisory group, and I think that is needed for the applicant as a critical friend or to actually get the perspective of the public and local residents directly.

00:58:05:10 - 00:58:35:18

What we're really missing today, though, is the principle of avoid, reduce, mitigate, compensate because the use of tourism accommodation, especially in a national landscape, should be avoided at

all costs by looking else way to where to alternative settings. But if people are going to be accommodated outside of Suffolk, that would then mean additional traffic. So that would skew the traffic monitoring and the compensation.

00:58:36:00 - 00:59:17:12

So it's not really a solution. My last point, sir, thank you, is that it's actually a very dangerous precedent to say that previously examined insects and the elements that went into those can now be used for other schemes because they were weighted as to the benefit and harm very fragile. And your colleagues in SBR East Anglia one, North and East Anglia two cautioned you that anything else added in in terms of the harm would have to be very seriously considered.

00:59:19:17 - 00:59:46:12

If the developer uses the mechanism they've used today throughout the rest of these issue specific hearings to say, well, because Seizwell is here, this is not going to add any more harm. As you've heard, that's really not appropriate. It is purely because it is in addition to whatever we are now experiencing that this has become intolerable and should not be approved. Thank you.

00:59:47:02 - 00:59:50:03

Okay. Thank you. And there's an EA online.

00:59:53:14 - 01:00:30:02

Thank you, sir. Edward R. Ashbedian on behalf of Save Minister Marshes. So just two brief points for now. I will follow-up, obviously, with more detailed comments in writing on these points. Just in respect to the kind of element of the scheme. The first concern from, say, mister Marshes is in respect of the impact on public footpaths, and in particular, the recently opened King Charles the third coastal path, which it's not clear has been adequately considered as part of the applicant's documentation or their assessment.

01:00:30:04 - 01:00:52:27

So we would welcome some clarity from the applicant, please, on on the coastal path, on it, the impact to it, on what should be a significant feature of the tourist economy in this area. The second point concerns the scale of the assessment area employed by the applicant. I think we've heard from others in respect of some of the

01:00:54:20 - 01:01:32:20

the five hundred meter area being used. I think the the applicant's assessment of the impact on business tourism and residential properties used a five hundred meter limit and then a one kilometer limit for communities within the draft order limits. And the obvious point to anyone who lives in the area is given the limited number of routes in and out of Thanet, it's the entire aisle that will be affected. So from, say, mister Marsh's point of view, the assessment by the applicant here is deficient if it's only assessing impacts within such a restrictive and what we say unrepresentative area.

01:01:33:00 - 01:01:33:19

Thank you.

01:01:34:06 - 01:01:47:13

Thank you. So for the applicant, there's quite a few points there. And, obviously, a response in writing to all those would points be very useful. But is there well, do you want to make a verbal response on a few of those points at this point?

01:01:47:15 - 01:02:33:09

Yes. Thank you. So Hugh Flanagan, the applicant. I'll make a short verbal response and follow-up in writing on the detail. Save Mr. Marsh's point just then about the public rights of way in Kent. That is a point takeaway and respond in writing with the relevant specialist input on public rights of way. The three points just to touch on now from Cees. So I do say mister Burton's quite wrong to say there's been no cumulative assessment. There is a cumulative assessment. It's in the ES. It shows no likely significant effects. Second point, the reference to proportionality, which mister Burton referred to, we are talking about proportionality in terms of what is justified and necessary in terms of requirements, and that is important because policy requires that to be considered.

01:02:33:21 - 01:03:12:19

And we do say that the requirements, the commitments we're putting in place, they're robust, they're effective, they go beyond what you'd usually see, and we are happy, obviously, to take on board the comments from East Suffolk when we get them. And then thirdly and finally, seasonal traffic came up again, Obviously, we touched on it yesterday. We do say that our approach on that is robust. We're obviously alive to the the context in Suffolk and any seasonal as seasonal aspects in that respect. But given it's been raised again, we will set our response out in writing to that matter again, and that will hopefully help seize on that point.

01:03:13:18 - 01:03:14:26

So I'll leave it there. Thank you.

01:03:14:28 - 01:03:48:26

Thank you very much. So I'll look to move on now from that topic. Thank you all for your contributions on that. If there's anything else anyone wants to submit, then please do so at deadline six. I'd also ask if anyone considers this should be an inclusion of new wording within the DCO or in one control of and management documents related to socioeconomic or tourism industry impacts, please submit the wording for our consideration at deadline six. So thank you for that. And we can now move on to the next item, which is health and well-being,

01:03:50:11 - 01:03:52:11

which I'll be covering also.

01:04:00:11 - 01:04:04:11

Just give the applicant just a couple of minutes just to move around a bit.

01:04:47:04 - 01:05:14:00

Okay. So I want to discuss the core hours here a little bit more. Core hours could be something that easily features into many of the other topics like traffic, socioeconomic, and also core hours is a cumulative issue too. Nonetheless, today we will discuss this under the health and well-being item. My questions here are mainly for the applicant council, but there will be opportunities at the end for my questions

01:05:15:18 - 01:06:02:20

well, for any others to comment on. So initially for the applicant, in the latest draft DCO at deadline five and the requirement seven, there is a reference to the exception, which is the completion of works delayed or held up by severe weather conditions, which disrupted or interrupted normal construction activities. However, the definition of severe weather seems to be any weather that could prevent work from taking place during the core working hours. So sort of exam authorities question is, could that really be described then as severe weather? And couldn't weather impacts happen quite often under this definition, especially over the winter months, which could then result in many occasions of work outside those core hours?

01:06:08:11 - 01:06:15:05

Sir, thank you. I think I can deal with that very shortly. I think we need to provide a tighter definition, and we'll do that in writing.

01:06:15:20 - 01:06:17:05

Okay. Thank you very much.

01:06:20:15 - 01:06:33:26

For the councils, in terms of the exceptions that are listed under requirement seven, are the councils concerned about any particular one or want to comment on these which are set out at the moment?

01:06:37:00 - 01:07:15:27

First name, Suffolk County Council. We've made obviously a pardon me. I'm just getting requirement seven up to check if I have specific comments on that one. We've obviously made a range of comments about the core working hours more broadly. We are pleased to see that there's been some movement on, in particular, on the piling works and the fact that that's now not going to be on Sundays, we would still like to see that extended to Saturdays as well.

01:07:17:03 - 01:07:35:18

I mean, I think that that that's in the context of just this broader concern about lengthy co working hours generally. I mean, I I I don't know whether it would be helpful for the panel to hear our our overarching comments on that now because it kind of sets the context for for the most specific points of of detail.

01:07:37:01 - 01:07:41:01

Is there anything particular though on the exceptions I was just going through at this point?

01:07:42:28 - 01:08:18:28

Zachary Farndon, Suffolk County Council. I believe we may have commented on made some comments on this in our local impact report, but also noting the appendix that we submitted at deadline five comparing the ceiling DCO to the SBR DCOs. I believe looking at the core working hour requirements of the two DCOs, there are substantially greater number of exceptions in the ceiling DCO compared to the SBR DCO. So I think we can perhaps give more detail in writing on specifically what our concerns about that would be, but I think that's an area of concern.

01:08:19:00 - 01:08:43:14

And I believe we have raised this in our local impact report, so I would refer to that. And also, think another thing to note is that SeaLink's core working hours include an added hour before and after the time period for setting up and standing down activities, which is not included in the SPR working hours, I believe. So that further sort of elongates the working hours as well.

01:08:43:21 - 01:08:57:06

So on those sort of shoulder hours either side, is that something that you as a council would want to see removed from the core working hours? So the core they would have to do so within the core working hours, that sort of setup.

01:08:57:08 - 01:09:21:18

Yes. That would certainly be our preference. I suppose we'd be open to perhaps if there was greater clarity or perhaps certain, I don't know, restriction in the DCO around what those activities would be. If they were essentially had no impact, then it wouldn't necessarily be an issue. But I think that's something we need to learn more about before we could commit to that. But ideally, they would be removed.

01:09:21:20 - 01:09:33:28

Okay. And for any of the other councils, do they want to make any comment on the exceptions and some of those details that are in deadline five. East Suffolk?

01:09:36:01 - 01:10:15:11

Mark Westman Smith for East Suffolk Council. I don't want to repeat points that have already been made. We are adding them with Suffolk County Council on this. And further, we've set out our position in rep five one seven two, page seventeen, in answer to a one point two six. And there, we set out a concern in relation to the breadth when taken together of all of the exceptions, which allied with the, start up and close down our either side

01:10:15:13 - 01:10:17:11

of