

## SEALINK - DEADLINE 6 - WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM OPEN FLOOR HEARING

Like many who have already spoken, I participated in the extended 9-month examination for Scottish Power's EA1N & EA2 projects. We all willingly donated money so that SASES and SEAS could engage the best experts to address issues such as heritage, landscape, noise, flooding, lighting. We did this because - even if unable to stop the project - it was important to secure the best possible DCO with maximum mitigation firmly in place. These mitigations are essential owing to the unprecedented proximity of the substations and the NG hub to Friston village. As the examiners noted: "the local harm identified is substantial and should not be underestimated in its effect. Its mitigation has, in certain key respects, been found to be only just sufficient..."

As the Sealink examination progresses it is alarmingly apparent that NG seeks to row back on much of the mitigation secured under the Scottish Power DCOs. It was understandable last year that, in the event that the Scottish Power projects did not go ahead, NG might seek to reapply for consent for the NG hub under its Sealink DCO.

But EA2 is proceeding and its DCO, which includes design details and other mitigation relating to the NG hub, has been approved by the Secretary of State. These should now apply as an absolute minimum. A failure to do so would be an abuse of due process.

At the end of the Scottish Power examinations the ExA observed "that the cumulative effects of the proposed development with other development on the connection site at Friston are "so substantially adverse that utmost care will be required in the consideration of any amendments and additions". Quite the opposite appears to be happening. Instead of certainty and firmly established design principles, the Sealink DCO is riddled with vague generalisations and obfuscation so that everything can be reinterpreted by the developer further down the line. This is far from reassuring for those who have to live with the consequences. It is also unacceptable as, without a fully developed DCO setting out its legally binding obligations, the developer can do much as it likes.

I don't live in Friston but I live close by and have friends that do. Over the last 8 years I have witnessed the increasing toll that successive energy projects are having on their health and wellbeing. But it is the fear of what is yet to come that is causing wider anxiety. We foresee what is happening in Friston being repeated in Sternfield, Saxmundham, Walberswick. Villages that once thought themselves immune from the dangers of one project suddenly find themselves at the centre of another whether as host for more infrastructure, the location for landfall, part of the cable route, or the site for a mega solar farm. We live in fear of NG as they provide connection offers to further energy projects at what is clearly becoming a strategic NG connection hub - one that has never been consented but is being created by stealth. This is a huge imposition on the local community, particularly one that is already hosting Sizewell C, construction of which coincides with all NG's proposed projects. At the very least we expect honesty and clarity, and why the hard won mitigations contained in the EA2 DCO must prevail. Anything less suggests a DCO is not worth the paper it's written on calling into question the credibility of the whole NSIP process.