

Nik Mitchell <[REDACTED]>

South East Anglia Link

Save Minster Marshes

Dear Secretary of State,

RE: Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an Order Granting Development Consent for the South East Anglia Link Project (EN020026) – Comments on Request for Information

Please accept this response as an Interested Party (Reference: [REDACTED]) regarding the Secretary of State's Request for Information dated 28th August 2026 and the subsequent responses provided by consultees.

I would like to highlight several critical areas of concern that require proper safeguards and rigorous conditions:

- Benthic Mitigation and SSSI Protection: Mitigation measures for damage to the Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI must be fully secured and guaranteed before any harmful works commence, supported by rigorous ongoing monitoring. The wide-reaching and ongoing damage caused by Nemo Link demonstrates the severe risks involved, and National Grid's approach to preventing further cumulative harm remains deeply concerning – particularly given proposals for a third cable through Pegwell Bay.
- Irreplaceable Chalk Habitat: The chalk habitat is demonstrably irreplaceable, as National Grid acknowledges. We urge the Minister to explicitly apply the wholly-exceptional-resasons and compensation test in this decision-making process.
- Breeding Birds & Seasonal Restrictions: National Grid must commit to an absolute restriction on working from March to September within the SSSI to avoid disturbing breeding bird populations. The caveat allowing work "after a nest check" should be removed entirely, especially given troubling precedents such as the placement of a site office directly next to an active barn owl box on Minster Marshes. Furthermore, works at Pegwell Bay (including near the hoverport) must be completely prohibited between November and February to protect the overwintering migratory bird population, closing loopholes regarding "mean high water springs".
- Overhead-Line Collision Monitoring & Mitigation: Diverters should be fitted to power lines from the very beginning rather than retrofitted reactively after bird collisions occur. In addition, post-construction monitoring should span five years as requested by Kent Wildlife Trust, rather than the inadequate two-year period proposed by National Grid.
- Unexploded Ordnance (UXO): National Grid's commitments must explicitly include full habitat restoration for any intertidal detonation of unexploded ordnances, addressing

omissions identified by Natural England.

- Survey and Access Routes: Access locations and route widths for saltmarsh surveys and mudflat access must be formally agreed upon prior to development consent being granted, rather than deferred to a later date.
- Tourism and Local Impacts: National Grid has failed to conduct a proper assessment of the economic and tourism impacts on Kent and Suffolk, and the proposed community compensation is entirely inadequate.

Thank you for considering these representations in your decision.

Yours faithfully,

Nik Mitchell

Interested Party number [REDACTED]