

[REDACTED]

South East Anglia Link

Dear Planning Inspectors,

I am emailing you with my comments for the 22nd October deadline.

My name is Caroline Pope, interested party reference number is [REDACTED]

Mitigation must be done in advance of any works within an agreed timescale by a specialist in the field of the areas being damaged and destroyed, if at all possible.

The Nemo Link has caused irreversible damage to the National Nature Reserve, and it would be best practice for the Sealink Landfall site to come in elsewhere, not in such an important Natural and Ecological habitat for marine mammals and wildlife. Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve has the highest protections on it, as continually stressed by worried people and environmental groups; this proposed landfall site is hypocritical when this project is supposed to be helping our planet; it will only serve to cause more damage to what we are trying to protect!

The effects of Sealink on the Saltmarsh are unknown, and permission for the Sealink landfall must not be granted at Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve.

If permission is granted this time, there is I have heard plans for another cable in the future to also come into land here! This is protected RAMSAR land, please keep it protected!

Using a Hovercraft at Pegwell Bay will adversely affect the birds and mammals that use this area. We have a very large variety of seabirds, and two large colonies of Seals, two different species, that use this area, and they are extremely sensitive to noise and disturbance, which Hovercrafts will cause, even in emergencies! This again I must stress is the wrong area for this proposed Sealink project..

Horizontal direct drilling methods failed for the Nemo Link, this method will likely fail again for Sealink, again this demonstrates that this is the wrong location!

We have so many birds that use these areas that works noises must be restricted during the bird nesting season, and monitoring must be done by someone independent from National Grid.

Bird collision monitoring is not good enough! We have already had terrible disasters with birds colliding with the cables and pylons that are already there; installing more and at differing heights is just a matter of time until much worse disasters occur, resulting in terrible deaths and maiming of our birds, many of which are critically endangered! Diverters that can be seen in all light and night conditions must be used on the cables and pylons to try to help make them visible for our birds. Bird collision monitoring should last more than 2 years; at least 5 years should be implemented, with updated measures used as they become available to help reduce these collisions.

Known wildlife habitats such as European Beaver lodges must be protected, and no harm done to it. The European Beaver burrows under the river banks, and there is Beavers living in the location where National Grid wants to put a temporary bridge over the River Stour!

The Dormouse surveys that National Grid originally had done were not good enough, and the nest boxes were destroyed by the hedging being cut back. The New survey is not due to finish until November 2026, so any decision on the planning consent should not be made beforehand..

Impacts on Tourism in the area has been very underestimated. There has been no detailed accounts of how National Grid intends to help, apart from a Compensatory payment scheme which is insufficient and an insult to all the local businesses and local residents living in the Thanet and Suffolk areas. Polly Billington, Thanet MP, and the Suffolk MP Jenny Riddell Carpenter, are both in agreement that the compensation offered is minuscule! The disruption and disturbances this proposed project will cause to locals, tourists, and pilgrims who want to use the St Augustines Way have also been seriously understated and minimised in order to play down its importance to the area.

As a local resident, I am extremely concerned and worried about all the extra traffic, including thousands of heavy goods vehicle movements on our local roads! Our roads

are already heavily congested due to all the extra housing developments going on. This proposed project will add immensely to the traffic congestion and damage that our roads will suffer! We are already inundated with continuous road closures due to them having to be repaired or dug up for various reasons. Not only will this add extra burdens to our already under-pressure highway system, but it will also add more disruptions, noise and pollution to our environment.

Unresolved action point 76 from EV9-018: There is a 312-meter-long, 24 meter wide double row hedge on the proposed Converter site location that National Grid wants to remove. This is vital habitat for so many of our birds and insects that the removal of this will be truly devastating! There has been no reason put forward to tell us why this hedging cannot be retained, despite requests to explain why it needs to be removed if it indeed does! This hedging is extremely important for our birds and wildlife, and this situation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency as so much depends upon it, If it has to be removed how will this precious habitat be mitigated for, because it is a very well-established habitat that has taken many many years for it to be established to the extent that it is, and there are so many different species of wildlife and insects that rely on this, it is their home, as well as migratory birds and temporary wildlife that use it. It is my opinion that this environment is irreplaceable and will cause extreme loss and suffering to all the many species that use it. We should be doing no harm if at all possible, and no new mitigation measures will replace such an important established habitat!

Bearing in mind not only all the bad impacts this proposed Sealink project will have on our natural environment, our wildlife, flora and fauna, and biodiversity, but also the risks to our National Security, with the largest Converter Station in Europe being a prime target in times of hostilities. I urge you to reject this Sealink proposal. Building such a large energy infrastructure on the Coastline of our country will put all the residents in Thanet, Kent, and beyond at risk from hostile enemies, as it will be an easy target and cause mass disruption, chaos, and destruction if it is bombed or damaged. There are better energy solutions out there for us that are not so detrimental to our environment and not so easily identifiable as targets. After all, we should be protecting our environment and looking after it responsibly, not ruining it! We could start with upgrading the current cables and pylons to carry more power; this will be a mere fraction of the cost of the proposed Sealink project!

Thank you for your consideration,

Kind Regards,

Caroline Pope