

I know as a country we have to move towards net zero asap. So I am not against the SEA LINK project per se but the location of it. I am going to focus on the Kent side of it. Apparently there are other brown fields sites that could have been explored but this site at Minster Marshes may have been chosen because it is cheaper. It is a site of special scientific interest where there are many endangered animals birds and flora. It is also the last major biodiverse area in Thanet. In my comments I am going to mention several points brought up for comment and elaboration by the Secretary of State. It is by no means comprehensive but I wish to share some of my thoughts on the issues raised.

1. Tourism in Kent

I am concerned this has not been given the the proper assessment it deserves. Thanet has quite a fragile economy and high unemployment. It relies heavily on tourism. The compensation offered is very poor in the light of what will be affected ie peoples' livelihoods and wellbeing. The surrounding roads are going to be clogged by heavy lorries carrying cement and other resources onto the site for at least 4 years.(the roads are already quite inadequate in many places) Many tourists come to observe the nature and wildlife in Pegwell Bay. A lot of which will be destroyed or reduced because of the building going on.Its a beautiful area now but it is all under threat from devastation.

2. The Converter Station.

The converter station is going to be bigger than Dover Castle in an area of at least the size of 5 football pitches. It is going to be a carbuncle on the land there because of its size and ugliness and it may cause extra light and sound pollution. KWT has called for proper monitoring and mitigation of these which I agree with. How is this going to be achieved please?

3.Unexploded Ordnance.

National Grid need to respond about this issue which they haven't done yet. Intertidal detonation of UXOs may need habitat restoration.

4. Saltmarsh Survey and Mudflat Access Routes.

These need to be agreed before consent is granted not afterwards.

5. Converter Station Design.

Surely the minster needs to know the design of this building apart from knowing its going to be huge and ugly before the DCO is granted. National Grid have 4 designs on the table.The design will have a huge impact on the environment, landscape and people in the area. This has to be seriously considered because it is going to be a blight on the land for generations to come.

6.The Hazel Dormouse, Kent.

Kent is one of the main UK strongholds for this animal. It is a legally protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and a UK Biodiversity priority species. Kent is an important area for their survival. Natural England say that further surveys need to be carried out before the DCO can granted.

7. Valuable Chalk Habitat.

National Grid themselves agree that the chalk land is irreplaceable.Please could the minister applies the wholly-exceptional reasons and compensation test during her decision making.