

Clare Dove [REDACTED]

South East Anglia Link

To: SouthEastAngliaLink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Subject: Response to Request for Information - Interested Party [REDACTED]

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

I am writing to share my comments on the Secretary of State's Request for Information regarding the South East Anglia Link project.

The overriding priority that must be addressed is that the Minster Marshes location remains an entirely ill-conceived site for the whole Converter Station. The destructive archaeological works currently despoiling the marshes already illustrate the environmental tragedy of National Grid's short-term, cavalier decision-making. Furthermore, National Grid's plans for the site of the old Hovercraft Port amount to ecocide. Over the last four and a half decades, this long-abandoned area has naturally re-established incredibly vibrant habitats for resident wildlife and migratory birds. To turn the clock back half a century and destroy this thriving ecosystem just for parking construction plant is unacceptable. I strongly urge the Inspectorate to see sense, refuse this application, and demand a total rethink of SeaLink.

In direct relation to the points raised in the Minister's request, the following specific details highlight why this application is flawed and must be rejected:

‡ **The Old Hoverport Site & Plant Parking (Priority Concern):** The old port site has become an invaluable wildlife haven since operations ceased half a century ago. Destroying these re-established habitats to park heavy plant machinery must not be permitted. Regarding the concerns raised in paragraphs 6-7 of the Request for Information, any potential disturbance to this area, including its sensitive seal population, must be subject to a worst-case assessment, with advance notification and ongoing monitoring required for any disruptive activities.

‡ **Pegwell landfall winter works (Priority Concern):** There must be a total ban on all works at Pegwell Bay from November to February to protect migratory winter birds. National Grid's attempt to limit this restriction to areas "below mean high water springs" means disruptive winter work could still happen near the old hoverport, which is entirely unacceptable.

‡ **Converter station design:** National Grid has still not chosen a specific design and is keeping four different options open. The Minister cannot properly assess the visual,

landscape, and construction impacts on the Minster Marshes if the applicant does not even know what the final facility will look like.

‡ **Breeding birds & local wildlife damage:** National Grid's lack of care for this site is already clear; they have placed a site office right next to an active barn owl box on Minster Marshes. To prevent further harm, they must commit to a complete ban on works within the SSSI from March to September. The loophole phrase "after a nest check" must be removed.

‡ **Benthic mitigation plan:** Environmental mitigation must be fully secured before any damage takes place, and long-term monitoring must be legally required afterward.

‡ **Intertidal features (Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI):** The damage already caused by Nemo Link is serious and ongoing. National Grid's current approach to preventing harm is insufficient, especially considering the cumulative impact of their plans to bring a third cable through Pegwell Bay.

‡ **Chalk habitat:** Chalk is an irreplaceable habitat. The Minister must strictly apply the "wholly exceptional reasons" and compensation tests (EN-1 para 5.4.53) during the decision-making process.

‡ **Overhead-line collision monitoring:** Flight diverters must be fitted to the power lines from the start, rather than waiting for bird collisions to happen. Monitoring must last for five years, not the two years suggested by National Grid.

‡ **Hazel dormouse:** I agree with Natural England that further environmental surveys are required before works proceed.

‡ **Unexploded ordnance (UXO):** National Grid has ignored Natural England's point that detonating UXOs in intertidal areas may require active habitat restoration. This must be added to their formal commitments.

‡ **Saltmarsh survey and access routes:** The exact locations and widths of mudflat access routes must be formally agreed upon before any consent is granted, not left until afterward.

‡ **Tourism in Kent and Suffolk:** National Grid has failed to properly assess the negative impact this project will have on Thanet's tourism industry. The current compensation offered to our community is completely inadequate.

‡ **Converter station noise:** I support the call for strict monitoring and mandatory mitigation if the noise limits inside Requirement 18 are breached.

I urge the Inspectorate and the Minister to recognise the ongoing damage to our marshes, protect the re-established habitats at Pegwell Bay, and refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Dove

22 October 2026

Interested Party Reference Number: [REDACTED]