Save Our Fields[redacted]

South East Anglia Link

[redacted]

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on and ask for further information on this application from National Grid to build a converter station at Minster marshes and a third pipe at Pegwell Bay in addition to the Nemo Link.

We would like to request further information on the following areas:

Paragraph 3 - Benthic migration condition plan, the group supports Natural England's and Kent Wildlife Trust's view that water tight assurances of mitigation are required before harm takes place, and stringent monitoring.

Paragraph 4 - Intertidal features Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI, we agree with Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust that damage to the SSSI caused by the Nemo Link is having a far reaching ongoing impact. We have significant concerns regarding National Grid's proposals to prevent harm and a cumulative impact to the SSSI. We also wish to draw attention to the fact that National Grid wants to bring a third cable in through Pegwell Bay.

Paragraph 5 - Chalk Habitat and EN-1 para 5.4.53, National Grid agrees that the chalk is irreplaceable. We request that the Minister stringently applies the whole exceptional reasons and compensation test in her decision making.

Paragraphs 6 - 7 - Hovercraft at Pegwell Bay, the group supports Natural England that a worse case assessment of impact on wildlife, especially the seal population is vital. And we agree with Kent Wildlife Trust's request for advance notification of use of the hovercraft and that there is ongoing rigorous monitoring.

Paragraph 16 - Breeding birds Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes, there must be a commitment from National Grid not to work during the breeding season from March to September at the SSSI to avoid disturbance of breeding birds. The inclusion of their words 'after a nest check' must be removed. They have already put up a site office next to a barn owl box on Minster marshes which was known to be used by barn owls. So we are sceptical of their commitment to protect breeding birds.

Paragraph 19 - Overhead - line collision monitoring, we support Kent Wildlife Trust's call for diverters to be fitted to power lines before the start of the project, and not put in place after collisions between birds and power lines have occurred. We also support Kent Wildlife Trust's position that there should be a five year monitoring period, not the two year one that National Grid has asked for.

Paragraph 21-22 - Hazel dormouse, Kent, we would like to see as Natural England has called for further surveys undertaken, especially as Kent is a primary stronghold for our native dormouse.

Paragraphs 26 and 33 - Unexploded ordnance (UXO), National Grid needs to respond to Natural England's point that intertidal detonation of UXO will require habitat restoration, assurances that this would take place needs to be included.

Paragraph 28 - Saltmarsh and mudflat access routes, the access routes and the width of the access routes should be agreed before consent for the application is given, not retrospectively.

Paragraph 32 - No Pegwell landfall works between November and February, National Grid have said that this only applies ‘below mean high water springs’ meaning work at Pegwell Bay, including the hoverport could go ahead in winter. There cannot be any work at all from November to February to ensure there is no harm to wintering migratory birds.

Paragraph 44 - Tourism in Kent and Suffolk, National Grid has not carried out an in depth assessment of the impact of the project on tourism in Kent and Suffolk and the compensation they have offered to the communities is abysmal. They have said that Thanet’s tourism industry will not be impacted, but the group does not agree with this. Businesses in the surrounding towns and villages will be affected.

Paragraph 55 - Converter station noise (Minster 9B and 11, inside requirement 18; Friston 1B excluded), the group supports Kent Wildlife Trust’s call for ongoing monitoring to identify any breaches and mitigation failures that need to be dealt with

Thank you for listening to our views.

With kind regards,

[redacted]

Westgate & Garlinge Action Group Against Housing Development on Farmland - Chair


WESTGATE & GARLINGE
ACTION GROUP AGAINST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT