From: [redacted]
To: South East Anglia Link
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Secretary of State Request for Information.
Date: 22 October 2026 17:31:43

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Dear Secretary of State.

Re: Sealink - Minster Marshes and Pegwell Bay Kent.

Interested Party Reference Number : [redacted] (Lindy Whitfield)
Interested Party Reference Number : [redacted] (Derek Whitfield)

Further to your request for information we would like to comment on the following:

Paragraph 3. Benthic Mitigation Plans. It is crucial that the relevant statutory nature conservation bodies, in this case Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust, are consulted fully to ensure any potential for damage is mitigated prior any works being commenced. It is also crucial that monitoring is regular and ongoing during the works.

Paragraph 4. Intertidal benthic features of Sandwich Bay and Hawklinge Marshes SSSI. Previous damage to the SSSI caused by the Nemo Link as noted by Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust, has been significant and still continues to be so. Should National Grid bring in a third cable through Pegwell Bay this additional disturbance will cause more disruption and significant damage to this precious SSSI.

Paragraph 5. Disturbance and permanent loss of a small amount of chalk habitat. Once the chalk has gone , it has gone and cannot be replaced. This needs to be recognised in any decision made regarding the Sealink Project.

Paragraph 6 - 7. Hovercraft at Pegwell Bay. The intention to have hovercraft on standby at Pegwell Bay in the event of emergencies and notify Natural England and Thanet District Council within 24 hours is very concerning. The noise levels and increase to disturbance to the area will impact significantly not only on marine life but all wildlife in the vicinity. It is crucial that appropriate assessments are carried out in order to mitigate any horrendous outcome for all wildlife associated with the area. Additionally notice should be given of hovercraft use prior to the event and not after and reassurances given that the situation is being fully monitored. It should be noted that in recognition locally of the importance of the Bay, Thanet District Council and Kent Wildlife Trust state that jet skis and other watercraft are prohibited inside the Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Nature reserve areas. In addition any disturbance to " local grey seal colonies or rare bird populations violates the Thanet Beaches and Coastal Public Protection Order (PSPO) and offenders risk police reporting or fines." This should be recognised for the protection it provides.

Paragraph 16. Breeding birds Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes. The importance of protecting breeding birds through the breeding season cannot be underestimated. It is vital that no work take place during the season from March to September and that there is consistent and appropriate oversight by an experienced individual that this is not breached or ignored.

Paragraph 19. Overhead-line collision monitoring. It is well known that overhead lines cause danger to birds and there needs to be every measure taken to prevent the new overhead line arrangement causing increased injuries and deaths to the birds. To that end diverters should be fitted at the beginning not after the event of collisions and monitoring, as requested by Kent Wildlife Trust, should be for five not two years.

Paragraph 20. River Stour Beavers. Beavers are protected by law and it is illegal to kill them or disturb their habitat. They are now an established species around the River Stour at Sandwich to Coningbrook Lakes at Ashford with a recent government grant secured by Kent Wildlife Trust to support the long term resilience of the Stour population. The possible dismantling of the beaver lodge due to the temporary bridge over the River Stour should be fully assessed for the impact this could cause to the local beaver population.

Paragraph 21-22. Hazel dormouse Kent. Dormice sleep during the day, are active during the night and hibernate through the winter months in nests of woven vegetation on the ground. Any change or loss to their habitats is a major concern and extensive in depth surveys are needed.

Paragraphs 26 and 33. Unexplored Ordinance (UXO). There must be a firm commitment by National Grid that habitat restoration must happen should detonation of a UXO occur.

Paragraph 28. Saltmarsh survey and mudflats access routes. The identification of access locations and widths of access routes must be agreed with the relevant statutory agencies prior to and not after consent is granted.

Paragraph 32. Landfall works at Pegwell Bay. There is an indication from National Grid that landfall work at Pegwell Bay including near the hoverport could occur during the winter months. There must be a guarantee that these works do not happen at all during November to February to safeguard and protect the over-wintering migratory bird population.

Paragraph 44. Tourism in Suffolk and Kent. In respect of Kent and in particular the Thanet area, tourism is a vital ingredient in the area's economic survival in an area recognised as being the most deprived district in Kent. It is imperative that a thorough impact assessment is carried out by the National Grid to ensure that tourism can thrive and more importantly survive. This is people's livelihoods and there needs to be assurances that every measure is and has been taken to prevent future damage. The prospect of limited weekend and bank holiday working and lorry movement to keep disruption to a minimum is not assurance to those businesses who rely on tourism or locals who want to make the most of their weekend leisure time. The offer of £1.5 million compensation is derisory, insulting and by no means compensates for the disruption to our protected natural sites, our wildlife or the residents of Thanet.

Paragraph 55. Convertor station noise. It is imperative that due diligence is paid to noise levels in an area of such environmental importance to ensure all wild life are protected from any disturbance to their natural habitat. It is also important that residents in close proximity to the workings and lorry movements are also not inconvenienced through noise. There must be appropriate monitoring and where any breach occurs this is addressed urgently.

We would like to add that any monitoring whether of noise, wildlife impact etc be conducted by a professional independent individual eg Wildlife Trust to ensure accuracy of all recording.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely.

Lindy and Derek Whitfield
Residents - [redacted]