

# Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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## **Application ref 20231313**

**Eastcourt Marshes Electricity Distribution Site Mark Lane Gravesend Kent DA12 2HN**

**Proposed construction of a new cable tunnel beneath the River Thames between Gravesend and Tilbury to provide additional transmission capacity. Above-ground infrastructure in the form of a new Cable Sealing End compound and a new head house building along with associated electricity infrastructure, access, parking, boundary treatment and two overhead gantry structures for future overhead lines. Temporary compound for the duration of the project to provide parking, staff welfare facilities, delivery vehicle parking, and equipment and machinery storage, including boundary treatment and lighting.**

A Parish Council representative previously attended a webinar about this project. While understanding and accepting the need for this work, the Parish Council has some concerns about the secondary effects of the proposals:

### Increase in traffic on A226:

There will be an increase in traffic due to the works.

The A226 is increasingly busy and this is contributing to adverse safety issues at Shorne Crossroads where pedestrians and vehicles need to cross (and turn across) the stream of traffic.

The additional project traffic will exacerbate this situation.

### Abnormal loads:

The project will require the widest and heaviest loads ever seen in the area to use a variety of local roads.

We have concerns about whether these roads are structurally able to support such loadings. In particular, at Gads Hill Higham where the Dickens tunnel runs under the A226 roadway, and at Mark Lane/the Canal towpath (please also see below).

#### Potential damage to the Canal towpath, and bank/walls:

Mark Lane runs along the first part of the Canal bank heading east from Gravesend. It is in poor condition with many linear cracks, which we understand indicate deficient underlying structure. This is to be expected as it was not constructed as a road normally would be but runs along the former northside canal bank and towpath dating from the early 1800's. It is narrow with soft verges, and it was never envisaged that vast weights would traverse it.

We therefore have significant concerns that damage will result from such use, and request that full repair and remediation must be included as a Condition, in the event of any damage occurring to the Canal walls and bank as well as to the towpath itself.

#### Thames and Medway Canal Association (TMCA):

The TMCA maintain the Canal and should be consulted on the proposals. They will require maintenance access.

#### Closure of Footpath NG2 and Sustrans cycle route 1:

The Canal towpath is a footpath and National cycle route, it has an all-weather type surface.

We are very concerned about the proposed closure of these for the long duration of the works, so causing severance, and request that the need for full closure should be reviewed - e.g. could it be only closed during peak construction activity or remain open at weekends/bank holidays when recreational use is greatest.

#### Diversion routes for Footpath NG2 and Sustrans cycle route 1:

The suggested footpath diversion route is to use NG1/Saxon Shore Way to the north, however this becomes extremely muddy and rutted in winter and poor weather, as well as being much longer, so it is not an equivalent or always a viable route.

The suggested cycling diversion is also longer, being to use either Lower Higham Road or the A226. Both of these are extremely busy with traffic of all kinds and pose much greater hazards than the official cycle route. Commercial traffic on the narrow winding lanes, and blind corners and the blind summit on the Lower Higham Road are particularly hazardous. The alternative routes would certainly result in "fear and intimidation" for cyclists. Solving hazard creation for the project will create many others.

We disagree with some of the impact assessments, the impacts being greater than suggested.

#### Post-project repair and remediation:

Full remediation of all temporary construction areas, and repair of all damage caused by the project must be required by Condition.