

Sea Link

Volume 7: Other Documents

Document 7.4.1 Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and Natural England.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is a written statement produced as part of the application process for a Development Consent Order (DCO) and is prepared jointly between the applicant and another party. It sets out matters of agreement between both parties, as well as matters where there is not an agreement. It also details matters that are under discussion.
- 1.1.2 The aim of a SoCG is to help the Examining Authority manage the Examination Phase of a DCO application. Understanding the status of the matters at hand will allow the Examining Authority to focus their questioning and provide greater predictability for all participants in examination. A SoCG may be submitted prior to the start of or during Examination and then updated as necessary or as requested during the Examination Phase.
- 1.1.3 This SoCG is between National Grid Electricity Transmission Ltd (National Grid) and Natural England (NE) relating to the DCO application for the Sea Link Project (the Proposed Project). It has been prepared in accordance with the guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024).

1.2 This Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared to identify matters agreed and matters currently outstanding between National Grid and NE. The SoCG will evolve as the DCO application progresses through examination.
- 1.2.2 This early draft SoCG has been prepared by National Grid to submit with the DCO application, based on engagement with NE throughout development of the Proposed Project. This document is draft and was sent to NE in advance of inclusion in the DCO application, but no comments have been received from NE as at the date of National Grid including this draft for application purposes. National Grid will continue to work with NE to resolve issues as the project progresses through the Pre-Examination and Examination phases and will record those agreements in later versions of the SoCG.
- 1.2.3 For the purpose of this SoCG, National Grid and NE will jointly be referred to as the “Parties”. When referencing NE alone, they will be referred to as “the Consultee”.

1.3 Role of Natural England in the DCO Process

- 1.3.1 Natural England (NE) is an executive non-departmental public body established under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Natural England is the statutory adviser to Government on nature conservation in England and works to conserve, enhance and manage England’s wildlife and natural features.

- 1.3.2 Natural England's role in relation to the DCO process derives from the Planning Act 2008. The roles and responsibilities of Natural England under the 2008 Act fall into the following categories:
- Statutory consultee - as a prescribed consultee under the Planning Act 2008 in relation to any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or as a nature conservation body under the Habitats Regulations in respect of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA);
 - It is the Government's landscape advisor and the designating authority for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
 - It is the Government's designating authority for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a statutory consultee in relation to these sites; and
 - It is a consenting body/authority, which involves issuing licences such as bat mitigation licences and consents for operations within a SSSI.
- 1.3.3 The Consultee has been encouraged under the 2008 Act to discuss and work with National Grid to provide a local perspective at the preapplication stage of the application process for the Proposed Project.

1.4 Description of the Proposed Project

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Project is a proposal by National Grid to reinforce the transmission network in the Southeast and East Anglia. The Proposed Project is required to accommodate additional power flows generated from renewable and low carbon generation, as well as accommodating additional new interconnection with mainland Europe.
- 1.4.2 National Grid owns, builds and maintains the electricity transmission network in England and Wales. Under the Electricity Act 1989, National Grid holds a transmission licence under which it is required to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated, and economic electricity transmission system.
- 1.4.3 This would be achieved by reinforcing the network with a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Link between the proposed Friston substation in the Sizewell area of Suffolk and the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400 kV overhead line close to Richborough in Kent.
- 1.4.4 National Grid is also required, under Section 38 of the Electricity Act 1989, to comply with the provisions of Schedule 9 of the Act. Schedule 9 requires licence holders, in the formulation of proposals to transmit electricity, to:
- 1.4.5 Schedule 9(1)(a) '*...have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest;*' and
- 1.4.6 Schedule 9(1)(b) '*...do what [it] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects*'.
- 1.4.7 The Proposed Project would comprise the following elements:

The Suffolk Onshore Scheme

- A connection from the existing transmission network via Friston Substation, including the substation itself. Friston Substation already has development consent as part of other third-party projects. If Friston Substation has already been constructed under another consent, only a connection into the substation would be constructed as part of the Proposed Project.
- A high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable of approximately 1.9 km in length between the proposed Friston Substation and a proposed converter station (below).
- A 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station (including permanent access from the B1121 and a new bridge over the River Fromus) up to 26 m high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials, similar small scale operational plant, or other roof treatment) near Saxmundham.
- A HVDC underground cable connection of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed converter station near Saxmundham, and a transition joint bay (TJB) approximately 900 m inshore from a landfall point (below) where the cable transitions from onshore to offshore technology.
- A landfall on the Suffolk coast (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness).

The Offshore Scheme

- Approximately 122 km of subsea HVDC cable, running between the Suffolk landfall location (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness), and the Kent landfall location at Pegwell Bay.

The Kent Onshore Scheme

- A landfall point on the Kent coast at Pegwell Bay.
- A TJB approximately 800 m inshore to transition from offshore HVDC cable to onshore HVDC cable, before continuing underground for approximately 1.7 km to a new converter station (below).
- A 2 GW HVDC converter station (including a new permanent access off the A256), up to 28 m high plus external equipment such as lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials, and similar small scale operational plant, near Minster. A new substation would be located immediately adjacent.
- Removal of approximately 2.2 km of existing HVAC overhead line, and installation of two sections of new HVAC overhead line, together totalling approximately 3.5 km, each connecting approximately 3.5 km of new HVAC overhead line from the substation near Minster and the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line.

1.4.8 The Proposed Project also includes modifications to sections of existing overhead lines in Suffolk (only if Friston Substation is not built pursuant to another consent) and Kent, diversions of third-party assets, and land drainage from the construction and operational footprint. It also includes opportunities for environmental mitigation and compensation.

The construction phase will involve various temporary construction activities including overhead line diversions, use of temporary towers or masts, working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, parking spaces, storage, accesses, bellmouths, and haul roads, as well as watercourse crossings and the diversion of public rights of way (PRoWs) and other ancillary operations.

1.5 Format of Document and Terminology

- 1.5.1 Section 2 of this SoCG summarises the engagement the Parties have had with regard to the Proposed Project.
- 1.5.2 Section 3 of this SoCG summarises the issues that are ‘agreed’, ‘not agreed’ or are ‘under discussion’. ‘Not agreed’ indicates a final position where the Parties have agreed to disagree, whilst ‘Agreed’ indicates where the issue has been resolved. The Parties have also indicated the likelihood that agreement will be reached on each item.
- 1.5.3 Abbreviations used within the SoCG are provided in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
dB	Decibel(s)
DCO	Development Consent Order
DF	Design Freeze
EA	Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
ESC	East Suffolk Council
GCN	Great Crested Newts
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current
HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current
IAQM	Institute of Air Quality Management
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LEMP	Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
NE	Natural England
NPS	National Policy Statement
NRMM	Non-Road Mobile Machinery
OHL	Overhead Line
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PPA	Planning Performance Agreement
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
REAC	Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments
RSPB	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SCA	Seascape Character Areas
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TJB	Transition Joint Bay

2. Record of Engagement

2.1 Summary of pre-application discussions

2.1.1 Table 2.1 summarises the consultation and engagement that has taken place between the Parties prior to submission of the DCO application. Meetings generally fall into two categories, monthly update calls with the consenting team and thematic meetings with the specialists.

Table 2.1 Pre-application discussions

Date	Topic	Discussion points
13 December 2021	NE Terrestrial and Marine, NE, National Grid, AECOM ¹ – Terrestrial Introductory Meeting.	<i>Introduction to the proposed development and the need case, work to date, emerging route preference and impacts on environmental designations, surveys, next steps and questions/AOB</i>
23 February 2022	NE, National Grid, AECOM – NE Survey Scope Meeting	<i>Introductions and objectives, Sea Link Project survey scope – landfall surveys and survey timeframes; next steps and questions/AOB</i>
23 March 2022	NE, National Grid, AECOM – Natural England Meeting	<i>Introductions and objectives, Sea Link Project and timeline, outstanding actions, project update, survey scope – species methodologies, Great Crested Newts (GCN) District Licencing survey area and questions/AOB</i>
23 April 2022	NE, National Grid and AECOM – Natural England Meeting	<i>Introductions and objectives, Sea Link Project and timeline, outstanding actions, project update, ecological survey methodologies feedback, marine route development and questions/AOB.</i>
27 May 2022	NE, National Grid and AECOM –	<i>Introductions and objectives, Sea Link Project and timeline, outstanding actions, project update, emerging preference,</i>

¹ AECOM have been contracted to complete the deliverables for the DCO Application on behalf of National Grid. This includes drafting the Planning Statement, Environmental Statement, Statements of Common Ground and Coordination Document.

Date	Topic	Discussion points
	<i>Natural England Meeting</i>	<i>terrestrial route development, marine route development and AOB/questions.</i>
<i>13 December 2022</i>	<i>Site visit with National Grid, Suffolk County Council (SCC), East Suffolk Council (ESC), Suffolk Wildlife Trust, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), NE, Environment Agency (EA)</i>	Discussion of trenchless cable installation under RSPB reserve, exit pit, compound locations, convertor station design
<i>23 June 2022</i>	<i>NE, National Grid and AECOM – Natural England Meeting</i>	<i>Introductions and objectives, Sea link project and timeline, outstanding actions, project update, Sea Link options, Joint (terrestrial and marine) – existing and additional surveys, NE feedback – survey methodology confirmation, AOB</i>
<i>28 July 2022</i>	<i>NE, National Grid and AECOM – Natural England Meeting</i>	<i>Introductions and objectives, Sea link project and timeline, Project update, outstanding actions, ground investigation locations (joint terrestrial and marine) and AOB/questions.</i>
<i>06 October 2022</i>	<i>NE, National Grid and AECOM – Natural England Meeting</i>	<i>Introduction and objectives, Sea link project and timeline, project update, outstanding actions, GCN Direct Licensing, SSSI Assent and HRA and questions and AOB</i>
<i>24 November 2022</i>	<i>NE, National Grid and AECOM – Natural</i>	<i>Introduction and objection, Sea link project update and timeline, outstanding actions, non-statutory Consultation – eight-week public consultation, primary consultation zones and secondary consultation zones, all member briefings, 20 deposit locations, newsletters sent via post/social media, Four Parish briefing slots,</i>

Date	Topic	Discussion points
	<i>England Meeting</i>	<i>landowners 'Meet the Team' drop-in sessions, public events, LPA site visits, Webinars – 6 public webinars; and questions/AOB</i>
<i>26 January 2023</i>	<i>NE, National Grid and BECG – Natural England progress meeting</i>	<i>Introduction and objectives, Sea Link project update and timeline, outstanding actions, non-statutory consultation, site visits and questions/AOB</i>
<i>23 February 2023</i>	<i>NE, National Grid and AECOM – Natural England progress meeting</i>	<i>Introductions and objectives, project update and timeline, outstanding actions, responses to January queries from NE on method for crossing watercourses, borehole noise profiles, soil storage, shoreline management plan and Suffolk SSSI and questions/AOB</i>
<i>23 March 2023</i>	<i>NE, National Grid, Dalcour Maclaren and AECOM – Natural England progress meeting</i>	<i>Introduction and objectives, Sea Link project update and timeline, outstanding actions, design options, sinkholes and questions/AOB.</i>
<i>24 May 2023</i>	<i>SCC, ESC & Natural England Meeting – Landscape and Visual</i>	<i>Project update and timeline, viewpoints, study area and photomontages, approach to LVIA, landscape mitigation strategy and AOB/questions</i>
<i>29 June 2023</i>	<i>NE & AONB Partnership Meeting – Landscape and Visual</i>	<i>Project update and timeline, converter station location, AONB consideration in preliminary assessment and AOB/questions</i>
<i>19 December 2023</i>	<i>NE Statutory Consultation Response Letter – PEIR Review</i>	<i>This response letter set out NE position on aspects of the PEIR. NE raised concern over the approach to PEIR consultation, the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, Kent Onshore Scheme, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Suffolk Heath and Coast AONB, Goodwin Sands Marine Conservation Zone and Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit, Marine processes, subtidal and intertidal benthic ecology, fish and shellfish ecology, marine mammals, impact on Outer Thames Estuary Special Protected Area Red-Throated Diver and intertidal ornithology impacts.</i>

Date	Topic	Discussion points
16 January 2024	Email/letter from NE regarding Landscape and Visual aspects of the Kent scheme.	<i>This email/letter set out early in the Proposed Project that NE would not be commenting on Kent as there are no nationally designated landscapes affected. Therefore, any discussion on landscape and visual aspects of the Proposed Project will only relate to Suffolk.</i>
19 February 2024	NE Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting	<i>Ecology including horizontal direct drilling, golden plover offsetting land (Kent), noise impact assessment, overhead lines (Kent), marine works, marsh harrier (Suffolk), dust distances.</i>
22 February 2024	NE, National Grid, ERM and AECOM – Sea Link Natural England update	<i>Project update and timeline, thematic meetings, PPA progress, statements of common ground and questions/AOB</i>
27 February 24	SCC, ESC, Natural England & National Landscape Meeting – Landscape and Visual	<i>Project update and timeline, interface with other disciplines, statutory consultation feedback, predicted significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity, effects on the National Landscape/Heritage Coast, design principles and landscape strategy, outline landscape and ecology management plan and questions/AOB</i>
28 February 2024	Arcadis, Natural England and AECOM – Air Quality Thematic Meeting	<i>Project update and timeline, discussion on air quality assessment methodology, statutory consultation feedback, thematic meetings and questions/AOB</i>
28 March 2024	NE, National Grid, ERM – Natural England update meeting	<i>Project update and timeline, thematic meetings, PPA Progress, Statements of Common Ground and questions/AOB.</i>
23 April 2024	SCC, ESC, Natural England & National Landscape	<i>Project update and timeline, confirm agreement on the following aspects of the LVIA, long-distance cycling/walking routes that AECOM should consider in the assessment, Mitigation Design concepts, co-location illustrative master planning update and questions/AOB</i>

Date	Topic	Discussion points
	<i>Meeting – Landscape and Visual</i>	
24 May 2024	NE Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Kent proposals)	Summary of terrestrial ecology survey and assessment work since last meeting, confirmation of use of trenchless techniques, depth of drill and risk of frac out, noise modelling results regarding disturbance of adjacent SSSI, vantage point surveys and collision risk assessment for new section of OHL/Proposals for offsetting loss of golden plover habitat/Biodiversity net gain opportunities/AOB
07 June 2024	NE Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Suffolk proposals)	Summary of terrestrial ecology survey and assessment work since last meeting/confirmation of use of trenchless techniques, depth of drill and risk of frac out/noise modelling results regarding disturbance of adjacent SSSI and SPA from HDD and associated works/temporary loss of woodlark and nightjar foraging habitat outside SPA/proposals for offsetting loss of skylark nesting habitat/proposals for creation/enhancement of acid grassland/Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities / AOB
27 June 2024	NE and National Grid – update meeting	Project update and timeline, thematic meetings, co-ordination in Suffolk, red-throated diver seasonality, decommissioning of boreholes and questions/AOB
04 July 2024 and 08 July 2024	NE Written Feedback	Written feedback provided by emails (dated 04 July 2024 and 08 July 2024) on specific points raised: noise impacts on SSSI in Suffolk and Kent, proposed golden plover habitat creation in Kent, the bird vantage point surveys and bird collision risk assessment for Kent.
05 August 2024	NE – Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Suffolk)	<p>Summary of terrestrial ecology survey and assessment work since last meeting/confirmation of use of trenchless techniques, depth of drill and risk of frac out/noise modelling results regarding disturbance of adjacent SSSI and SPA from HDD and associated works/temporary loss of woodlark and nightjar foraging habitat outside SPA/proposals for offsetting loss of skylark nesting habitat/proposals for creation/enhancement of acid grassland/AOB. In particular, the differences between Design Freeze 2 and Design Freeze 3 were discussed.</p> <p>A request was made to NE that management prescriptions be provided for Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI required for the site to meet favourable condition</p>
06 August 2024	NE – Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Kent)	Summary of terrestrial ecology survey and assessment work since last meeting/confirmation of use of trenchless techniques, depth of drill and risk of frac out/noise modelling results regarding disturbance of adjacent SSSI and SPA from HDD and associated works/loss of functionally linked land for golden plover. In

Date	Topic	Discussion points
		<p>particular, the differences between Design Freeze 2 and Design Freeze 3 were discussed.</p> <p>A request was made to NE that management prescriptions be provided for Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI required for the site to meet favourable condition</p>
09 August 2024	NE Written Feedback via email	Written feedback from Natural England on further questions raised regarding the creation and management of the golden plover mitigation zone south of the River Stour. This included a recommendation that Natural England would accept arable land as mitigation for loss of functionally linked arable land for golden plover, if wet grassland (the initial mitigation concept) was not deliverable at the locations proposed.
22 August 2024	NE, National Grid – Sea link update meeting	Project update and timelines, thematic meetings programme, SSSI assent, red-throated driver seasonality and questions/AOB.
17 September 2024	Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Suffolk proposals)	Discussion of whether the bridge across the River Fromus can be moved to preserve the veteran oak and large horse chestnut that would be lost under DF3 alignment. Consideration of whether harvesting of willow plantation along the Fromus will affect BNG (subsequently confirmed plantation will be felled by landowner prior to scheme being commenced). Consideration of how to mitigate the effect of breaching hedgerows on bats e.g. use of hurdles to close gaps overnight. Discussion of duration of skylark plot mitigation.
18 September 2024	Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Kent proposals)	Summary of entire outline ES Ecology Chapter impact assessment and mitigation proposals. Outcome of riparian mammals' assessment. Discussion over the need to ensure recovery of the mudflats in the intertidal zone from the HDD connection works. Need to provide details of the type of culvert to be used to ensure no disruption of connectivity in ditches. Potential arable land enhancement areas for golden plover to offset loss of functionally linked land. Natural England agreed with the field clusters being considered and the broad mitigation strategy. Need to provide details of lighting impacts from the converter station in the ES chapter.
18 October 2024	NE Written Feedback via email	NE had no issues with proposed approach and welcomed the proposed air quality monitoring during the construction phase.
24 October 2024	National Grid, NE and AECOM – update meeting	Project update and timeline, thematic meetings programme, DCO changes, biodiversity net gain, deemed marine licence and questions/AOB

Date	Topic	Discussion points
28 November 2024	NE, National Grid, AECOM	<i>Introductions, project update and timeline, deemed marine licence and questions/AOB.</i>
10 December 2024	Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Kent proposals)	<i>Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain</i>
11 December 2024	Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Suffolk proposals)	<i>Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain. Key changes since the last meeting, particularly as a result of DF4. Alternative construction compound locations north of the Converter Station site and presence of Important Hedgerows. Suffolk County Council indicated a concern over the effect of compound S04/S05 on the nearby Important Hedgerow.</i>
11 December 2024	Written comments from NE on draft HRA received by email	<i>Comments received from NE on draft HRA report. These, and the changes made by the applicant in response, form Appendix D of the submitted HRA report.</i>
17 January 2025	Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Suffolk proposals)	<p><i>Updates since last meeting. Compound choices vs Important Hedgerow: confirming S04 and S05 are only a backup if Nautilus comes back. Nautilus now confirmed Isle of Grain.</i></p> <p><i>Advance planting – around River Fromus (other than bridge construction footprint) and south of Converter Station strengthening woodland edge and corridor.</i></p> <p><i>LEMP structure i.e. includes mitigation measures and habitat creation including roles and responsibilities, includes riparian planting around bridge</i></p> <p><i>Use of instant hedges for closing temporary gaps</i></p> <p><i>Confirmation shared HRA after last meeting and have updated following NE comments – mainly on the Kent end of the project</i></p> <p><i>Confirmation of works proposed in acid grassland enhancement area including confirming its suitability. Discussion over whether the landowner of the acid grassland to be restored/enhanced for 10 years could be encouraged to retain it after that time.</i></p>
21 January 2025	Terrestrial Ecology Thematic Meeting (Kent proposals)	<i>Discussion of golden plover mitigation parcel, including the fact wintering bird surveys are being undertaken and have confirmed presence of golden plover, and that lighting only affects the eastern boundary of the mitigation parcel. Confirmation that Natural England consider the updated collision risk assessment addresses their main concerns, with only some limited further comments. Confirmation Natural England have no specific comments on the type of deflector chosen for the new section of</i>

Date	Topic	Discussion points
		<i>overhead line. Confirmation there will be a stand-by generator as part of operation of development. Confirmation there will be scrapes created along the River Stour as long-term enhancement within South Richborough Pasture Local Wildlife Site. Use of instant hedges for closing temporary gaps.</i>

3. Areas of Discussion Between the Parties

3.1 Assessment Methodologies

Table 3.1 Assessment Methodologies

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.1.1	Application Document 6.14 Environmental Scoping Report 2022 Application Document 6.15 Scoping Opinion 2022	EIA Scoping Report	The Consultee agrees that the methodology and scope set out in the EIA scoping report is adequate.	The scope of the EIA that is set out in National Grid’s scoping report, taking account of The Consultee’s comments made in its response to the request for a scoping opinion, is adequate.	Agreed

3.2 Landscape and Visual

3.2.1 The Consultee sent a letter to National Grid on 16 January 2024 (see Table 2-1 for details) detailing that as the Proposed Project would not impact any nationally designated landscapes in Kent, the Consultee will not be commenting on Kent. Therefore, any issues discussed in Table 3.2 are solely in relation to Suffolk.

Table 3.2 Landscape and Visual

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.2.1		Thematic meetings	The Consultee agreed to the approach to thematic meetings as discussed in the 27 February 2024 thematic meeting.	Thematic Meetings between the Consultee and National Grid were discussed to enable a flow of landscape and visual matter information and have been scheduled for every eight weeks, which can be more or less regular if required.	Agreed
3.2.2		Interface with other disciplines	The Consultee agreed to the approach to the interface and interaction with other disciplines in the 27 February 2024 thematic meeting.	The landscape team are interfacing with other disciplines such as heritage and ecology and as part of a wider multi-discipline team to progress site master planning and input into documents including the outline Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Management Plan and into work that the ecology team are leading on important hedgerows.	Agreed
3.2.3	Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment. Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual	Landscape and Seascape Character baseline	<p>The Consultee raised no concerns on the basis of the landscape assessment as set out in the PEIR and acknowledged that the ES will provide further information. The minutes from the 27 February 2024 meeting asked for concerns to be raised via email, to which there has been no response.</p> <p>Within the 22 April 2024 meeting, the Consultee stated that they are not prepared to agree anything during thematic meetings to be minuted and recorded and that they would rather issue responses as written feedback themselves.</p> <p>No response from the Consultee on information emailed on 28 May 2024, including landscape character and seascape receptors.</p> <p>The Consultee issued a letter ‘No Capacity Letter’ on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	The Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) were set out in the baseline section of the PEIR. The Statutory Consultation responses required further detail of the key characteristics of the LCAs which is included within Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual and Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment - Suffolk .	Under discussion
3.2.4		Visual Amenity baseline – Representative Viewpoints	The minutes from the 27 February 2024 meeting asked for concerns relating to the Visual Amenity baseline to be raised via email, to which there has been no response. Within the 22 April 2024 meeting, the Consultee stated that they are not prepared to agree anything during	The representative viewpoints were set out in the baseline section of the PEIR. Following the production of the PEIR, five additional representative viewpoints were added following Statutory Consultation comments, additional site work and design development.	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
			<p>thematic meetings to be minuted and recorded and that they would rather issue responses as written feedback themselves.</p> <p>No response from the Consultee on information emailed on 28 May 2024, including representative viewpoint locations.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	<p>Following the meeting on 10 September 2024 National Grid agreed five of the additional 10 viewpoints requested by SCC on 18 June 2024 were not required. The exclusion of the other five requested additional viewpoints was not agreed by SCC.</p>	
3.2.5	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual	PEIR Assessment of effects on landscape character and visual amenity	The Consultee acknowledged and agreed the approach to the PEIR assessment of effects of the Proposed Project on landscape and character visual amenity within 27 February 2024 meeting.	<p>The assessment of effects on landscape character (including the AONB) and visual amenity were presented within the PEIR. The PEIR is a preliminary assessment.</p> <p>The assessment of effects on landscape character and visual amenity is presented within Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual in line with the methodology and professional judgement.</p>	Agreed
3.2.6	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual	Study Area – landscape and visual	<p>The minutes from the 27 February 2024 meeting asked for concerns to be raised via email, to which there has been no response.</p> <p>Within the 22 April 2024 meeting, stakeholders stated that they are not prepared to agree anything during thematic meetings to be minuted and recorded and that they would rather issue responses as written feedback themselves.</p> <p>No response from the Consultee on information emailed on 28 May 2024, including the study area.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	The Study Area was set out within the PEIR and is the same for the ES - see Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual .	Under discussion
3.2.7		Mitigation - Planting heights for mitigation planting within year 15 photomontages	<p>The minutes from the 27 February 2024 meeting asked for comments on the issued growth rates of mitigation planting and photomontages to be made via email, to which there has been no response.</p> <p>No response from the Consultee on information emailed on 4 June 2024, including the growth rates.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	The planting heights for year 15 visualisations have been discussed with the Consultees and agreed with ESC.	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.2.8	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual	LVIA methodology	<p>National Grid asked for concerns regarding the LVIA methodology to be raised via email. The Consultee did not provide any response to this request at that time.</p> <p>The Consultee stated, along with other stakeholders that they would not agree to any matters in meetings that are minuted and would prefer to provide their responses as written feedback.</p> <p>AECOM issued material, including the LVIA methodology to stakeholders for comment, which was sent out on 28 May 2024. The Consultee has not provided any feedback and as such, this matter remains under discussion.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	<p>The LVIA methodology was set out within the PEIR and is presented in the ES in Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual, with minor updates following the publication of the GLVIA3 Notes and Clarifications Technical Guidance Note by the Landscape Institute since the PEIR was prepared. The LVIA methodology was circulated again after the 27 February 2024 meeting. The 27 February 2024 thematic meeting discussed several points raised by the Consultees at Statutory Consultation regarding the LVIA methodology and concluded that more detail will be provided within the ES.</p> <p>The LVIA methodology presented in the ES is considered to be appropriate with guidance and typical approaches and referred to descriptive text in accompanying appendices. National Grid is reviewing the comments provided by SCC on 20 January 2025.</p>	Under discussion
3.2.9		Photomontage methodology	<p>National Grid asked for concerns regarding the photomontage methodology to be raised via email. The Consultee did not provide any response to this request at that time.</p> <p>The Consultee stated, along with other stakeholders that they would not agree to any matters in meetings that are minuted and would prefer to provide their responses as written feedback.</p> <p>AECOM issued material, including the photomontage methodology to stakeholders for comment, which was sent out on 28 May 2024. The Consultee has not provided any feedback and as such, this matter remains under discussion.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	The Photomontage methodology was updated following the PEIR and used for photomontages which have been prepared for the ES.	Under discussion
3.2.10		Design principles and landscape strategy	The Consultee is aware of the ongoing design process and have expressed an interest to be involved. This was discussed in the 27 February 2024 and 22 April 2024 meetings.	Design principles and landscape strategy, including reference to 'good design', have been in development for both Sea Link and an illustrative masterplan for co-location in parallel. Design principles have also been prepared.	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
			NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	National Grid will provide the Consultees with the design documents and landscape and visual ES chapter and Outline LEMP following the submission of the DCO Application for them to provide further comment on this matter then.	
3.2.11	Application Document 7.5.7.1 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk	Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan	<p>The attendees are aware of the progress on the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan and updates have been covered in future thematic meetings. Within the 22 April 2024 meeting, stakeholders stated that they are not prepared to agree anything during thematic meetings to be minuted and recorded and that they would rather issue responses as written feedback themselves.</p> <p>No response from the Consultee on information emailed on 4 June 2024, including the Outline LEMP draft structure.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	National Grid issued draft headings for the Outline LEMP and the fact that it proposed to provide separate Outline LEMPs for Suffolk and Kent which are included in the DCO Application.	Under discussion
3.2.12	Application Document 6.3.1.5.A ES Appendix 1.5.A Cumulative Effects Assessment Methodologies	Sequential Cumulative Effects	<p>National Grid asked for concerns regarding the sequential cumulative effects to be raised via email. The Consultee did not provide any response to this request at that time.</p> <p>The Consultee stated, along with other stakeholders that they would not agree to any matters in meetings that are minuted and would prefer to provide their responses as written feedback.</p> <p>AECOM issued material, including the approach to the sequential cumulative visual assessment, to stakeholders for comment, which was sent out on 28 May 2024. The Consultee has not provided any feedback and as such, this matter remains under discussion.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	It was discussed in the 27 February 2024 meeting that the ES chapter will assess sequential visual effects in relation to cumulative effects, as requested by stakeholders at Statutory Consultation. This will be proportionate based on the information available at the time of writing. A list of key routes in the area was put forward to the Consultees for comment. It was also explained that landscape cumulative assessment covers indirect and direct effects on perceptual qualities, so it is considered that landscape sequential effects have been covered.	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.2.13	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual	Year 15 effects for cable routes	<p>National Grid asked for concerns regarding the Year 15 effects to be raised via email. The Consultee did not provide any response to this request at that time.</p> <p>The Consultee stated, along with other stakeholders that they would not agree to any matters in meetings that are minuted and would prefer to provide their responses as written feedback.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	<p>It was queried in the 27 February 2024 meeting as to why the Consultees felt that year 15 effects on cable routes and the landfall are required as significant effects are not expected at year 1 and full reinstatement will occur after construction with reasoning given in the circulated meeting minutes. The Consultees requested that year 15 effects are still reported on, which National Grid agreed to and is included in the ES (Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual).</p> <p>National Grid agreed to include this restoration commitment in the ES at the request of the Consultees.</p>	Under discussion
3.2.14	Application Document 6.3.2.1.B ES Appendix 2.1.B Landscape Baseline	Visual Amenity baseline – Representative vs Illustrative Viewpoints	The Consultee agreed to the approach and will be to the visual amenity baseline presented in the 27 February 2024 meeting.	The 27 February 2024 meeting discussed whether illustrative viewpoints would be considered. It was set out that representative viewpoints are felt to be appropriate with reasoning given in the circulated meeting minutes.	Agreed
3.2.15	Application Document 7.5.9.1 Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Suffolk Application Document 3.1 draft DCO	Visualisation from diverted PRow	<p>It was requested at Statutory Consultation for a visualisation from diverted PRow. This was discussed at the meeting held on 25 June 2024 including challenges around taking summer photography due to access into cropped, working land and that the diverted PRow information was not available during winter photography. Cross-sections or an artist impression for illustrative purposes were discussed. National Grid landscape explained that an illustrative cross-section of diverted PRow would be provided within the ES and the Consultee will review this following the submission of the DCO Application.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	<p>The 27 February 2024 meeting discussed a request at Statutory Consultation for a visualisation from diverted PRow and challenges around this with reasoning given in the circulated meeting minutes.</p> <p>National Grid has prepared an illustrative cross-section of diverted PRow Application Document 7.5.9.1 Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Suffolk, as secured by Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of Application Document 3.1 draft DCO and will share this with the Consultees for agreement following the DCO Application submission.</p>	Under discussion
3.2.16		Photomontage presentation	<p>National Grid asked for concerns regarding the photomontage presentation to be raised via email. The Consultee did not provide any response to this request at that time.</p> <p>The Consultee stated, along with other stakeholders that they would not agree to any matters in meetings that are</p>	Following a request in the 27 February 2024 meeting, the presentation template for photomontages was issued following the meeting for comment.	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
			<p>minuted and would prefer to provide their responses as written feedback.</p> <p>AECOM issued material, including a draft photo sheet, to stakeholders for comment, which was sent out on 28 May 2024. The Consultee has not provided any feedback and as such, this matter remains under discussion.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>		
3.2.17		Separate assessment of the Heritage Coast	<p>National Grid asked for concerns regarding the separate assessment of Heritage Coast to be raised via email. The Consultee did not provide any response to this request at that time.</p> <p>The Consultee stated, along with other stakeholders that they would not agree to any matters in meetings that are minuted and would prefer to provide their responses as written feedback.</p> <p>AECOM issued material, including approach to assessment of National Landscape and Heritage Coast, to stakeholders for comment, which was sent out on 28 May 2024. The Consultee has not provided any feedback and as such, this matter remains under discussion.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	The 27 February 2024 meeting discussed the approach that the Heritage Coast should be assessed separately to the AONB with reasoning given in the circulated meeting minutes.	Under discussion
3.2.18		Strengthening duty towards the AONB	<p>It was discussed in the 22 April 2024 meeting that the AONB representatives will circulate guidance on this matter once it becomes available.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	The 27 February 2024 meeting discussed the strengthened duty towards the AONB and that further updates would be provided in future thematic meetings. This matter has been dealt with in liaison with the AONB Partnership as there is a delay to guidance being produced.	Under discussion
3.2.19		Landscape compensation	This has been an ongoing discussion point for stakeholders and internal teams and was covered in	It is National Grid's position that NPS EN-1 does not support this position. The definition of Critical National Priority on page 171 itself acknowledges that there will be	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
			<p>meetings on 27 February 2024 and 22 April 2024. No further comments were issued from the Consultee.</p> <p>NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.</p>	<p>in some cases residual effects that are not capable of being addressed by the mitigation hierarchy and implies that the application of the mitigation hierarchy is intended to address the effects of the scheme. Landscape enhancements that are remote from the site and therefore do not address those residual impacts on the landscape that is affected by the scheme would not be addressing the impact of the Proposed Project. Therefore, it is National Grid's view that landscape 'compensation' that addresses the effects of the scheme is not possible. This is different to the accepted approach taken on biodiversity impacts, which can be compensated for.</p> <p>This interpretation is supported by NPS EN-1. Paragraph 5.10.5 acknowledges that "virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape" and paragraph 5.10.6 states that "Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints [avoid] the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape [reduce], providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate [mitigate]" (square brackets and emphasis added). Any direct or indirect reference to compensation is conspicuous by its absence from paragraph 5.10.6 or any paragraphs of NPS EN-1, EN-3 or EN-5 that relate to landscape and visual impacts. This is in contrast to the Biodiversity and Geological Conservation section of NPS EN-1 (Section 5.4), which includes numerous references to compensation being required as part of the mitigation hierarchy for biodiversity impacts, including at paragraphs 5.4.35, 5.4.42, 5.4.43, and 5.4.44.</p> <p>Overall, it is National Grid's position that there is no policy or legal requirement that the mitigation hierarchy requires all residual landscape and visual effects to be compensated for or that it is appropriate for alternative landscape compensation to be provided if it is accepted that there are any residual adverse landscape and visual effects that result from the Proposed Project.</p>	
3.2.20	Application Document 3.1 draft DCO	Indicative Species Mix	NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	National Grid was wanting to agree the indicative species mixes. This includes the proposed mix % distribution and range of heights to be used in the year 15 visualisations (where relevant). This includes a variable distribution across the species to increase future resilience. The proposed indicative species mix was issued to the Consultees on 14 October 2024.	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
				National Grid agree that the species mix can be agreed at the detailed design stage as part of approval of the detailed LEMP under Requirement 6, Schedule 3 of the draft DCO (Application Document 3.1 draft DCO).	
3.2.21	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual	Landscape and Visual value judgements made in the ES	NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	In an email on 16 September 2024. National Grid requested agreement of the landscape and visual value judgements that are made within the ES (Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual).	Under discussion
3.2.22	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual	Landscape and visual sensitivity ratings made in the ES	NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	In an email on 16 September 2024. National Grid requested agreement of the sensitivity ratings in the landscape and visual methodology which are presented in the ES (Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual).	Under discussion
3.2.23		Presentation of the Visual Assessment Appendix of the ES	NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	In response to SCC's request to present the visual appendix in the style that was used for the Bramford to Twinstead DCO, which presents the baseline and assessment along with photography, National Grid presented this to Consultees at the thematic meeting held on 19 November 2024.	Under discussion
3.2.24		Landscape design mitigation plans	NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	The landscape design mitigation plans have been circulated as the design has progressed within thematic meetings. The latest version was sent to stakeholders on 10 October 2024 for comment and agreement.	Under discussion
3.2.25	Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual	Assessment conclusions	NE issued a letter 'No Capacity Letter' on 6 September 2024 which states that Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this matter and therefore has no comment to make on its details.	National Grid provide the Consultee with the landscape and visual assessment set out in Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual for agreement. As such, this matter remains under discussion.	Under discussion
3.2.26		Designated landscapes in Kent	Agreed	No nationally designated landscapes are affected by the Kent end of the scheme.	Agreed

3.3 Ecology

Table 3.3 - Ecology

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.3.1	Application Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) Application Document 3.1 draft DCO	Horizontal Direct Drilling	<p>This matter is still under discussion with the Consultee and National Grid.</p> <p>There will need to be monitoring for bentonite leakage during HDD at Suffolk. That will necessitate some foot access to the RSPB reserve/SSSI.</p>	<p>National Grid have provided further information on location and impacts of jack up barge.</p> <p>The risk will be managed in the outline CEMP (Application Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan) and within the REAC (Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)), as secured by Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of Application Document 3.1 draft DCO.</p>	Under discussion
3.3.2		Horizontal Direct Drilling	The Consultee would like the Proposed Project to commit to HDD or other trenchless methods, if possible.	National Grid have stated that HDD is not feasible for every location but have agreed to confirm whether HDD will be feasible in this instance prior to submission. It has been confirmed that HDD is possible at both Suffolk and Kent, under the relevant SSSIs.	Agreed
3.3.3	Application Document 7.5.7.1 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk and Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent.	Horizontal Direct Drilling	The Consultee agrees to this approach.	The HDD and vehicle movements will avoid the beach front. When the HDD is being undertaken there will, however, be a person on the on the beach in high visibility clothing to monitor the works. Areas of vegetated shingle can be avoided/coned off. This will be provided in Application Document 7.5.7.1 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk and Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent , as secured by Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of Application Document 3.1 draft DCO .	Agreed
3.3.4	Application Document 7.5.7.1 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk and	Horizontal Direct Drilling (HDD)	The Consultee would like bentonite monitoring to be included in scheme, noting that this would require foot access.	National Grid will provide further information on bentonite monitoring during HDD. This will be provided in Application Document 7.5.7.1 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk and Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent , as secured by	Under discussion

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
	Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent		The Consultee will review any monitoring on HDD once the documents have been finalised post submission of the DCO document.	Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of Application Document 3.1 draft DCO . This will be shared with the Consultee once finalised, post submission of the DCO application, so this matter is still under discussion.	
3.3.5	Application Document 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	Golden Plover Offsetting Land in Kent	The strategy agreed in principle with the Consultee. The specific area for habitat creation, and quantity of required mitigation land identified for golden plover offsetting also agreed in principle.	Broad strategy initially outlined in the presentation for how to address loss of functionally linked land for golden plover and accepted the ‘field days’ approach to determining the amount of offsetting and to be delivered. Details provided in HRA report.	Agreed
3.3.6	Application Document 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	Golden Plover Offsetting Land in Kent	Areas agreed in latest comments on HRA report. Further information required on management and securing of land, as well as duration of provision.	The information on the Golden Plover Offsetting Land in Kent is provided in the HRA report (Application Document 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report). This will be shared with the Consultee following submission of the DCO application, so this matter remains under discussion.	Under discussion
3.3.7	Application Document 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	Golden Plover Offsetting Land in Kent	<p>The Consultee confirmed the main matter over which they would need confidence, beyond identifying an actual area, is that appropriate water levels could be achieved and that it would be managed appropriately.</p> <p>It notes that the water levels in the ditches north of the river are very low compared to the land level. In contrast, south of the river the water levels in the ditches are relatively high compared to ground level and the land is therefore wetter.</p> <p>North of the river any restoration of marsh could therefore require considerable earthworks, although the area south of the old flood defence known as the Abbotts Wall would potentially be restorable to marsh. North of the river, the land is mainly arable of marginal viability, so removing land for marsh may affect viability of the farm. South of the river the landowner(s) has more pasture and livestock and therefore the viability of the farms can be better preserved. As you go further south from the river corridor it is likely to be more difficult to keep the land wet enough.</p> <p>The selected likely area for habitat creation is now south of the river and The Consultee have agreed it in principle, but further confirmation is required that it can be adequately wetted.</p>	Now superseded by the provision of enhanced arable land rather than a new area of wetland, as suggested by Natural England.	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.3.8		Golden Plover Offsetting Land in Kent	The Consultee confirmed that gaps in the potential areas for restoration of marsh to areas of arable land in the Lower Stour Valley were due to landowner reluctance. The Consultee agreed that this is outside of the control of the Proposed Project, so have no objection to this.	Now redundant as solution to functionally linked land losses is now to deliver arable land rather than marsh restoration.	Agreed
3.3.9		Golden Plover Offsetting Land in Kent	The Consultee has suggested that evidence of existing use by target species could help to show the field is in a suitable location and could have its carrying capacity increased.	National Grid confirmed that the golden plover mitigation area has been subject to wintering bird survey which has recorded use by golden plover.	Agreed
3.3.10		Noise Impact Assessment – threshold for determining bird disturbance	<p>The Consultee confirmed that they no longer agree with use of the blanket 70dB threshold for determining bird disturbance.</p> <p>Therefore, rather than using that blanket threshold noise contours should be produced showing noise from 55dB upwards.</p> <p>A 3dB change from the baseline should be used to determine whether a likely significant effect exists. However, since this simply denotes a perceptible change, it was agreed that this did not automatically translate to an adverse effect on integrity.</p> <p>Where the construction/operational sound levels are above 55dB and there is a greater than 3dB difference from the baseline, consideration should be given to ecological considerations as to whether an adverse effect on integrity would result, such as actual nesting locations for sensitive species.</p> <p>Noise modelling data have been shared with the Consultee and a 60dB threshold agreed for potentially significant disturbance June 2024 thematic meeting and in email correspondence in July 2024. Part of this zone overlaps with Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI which the Consultee have confirmed is partly designated in the affected location for nesting birds. Natural England content that seasonal avoidance can be introduced for most disturbing works (i.e. converter station platform construction can avoid March to June).</p>	Noise impact assessment was discussed with the Consultee and approach to using a 3dB change to screen in the potential for bird disturbance, followed by a 60dB threshold for assessment of actual disturbance was agreed. It was confirmed seasonal avoidance can be introduced for most disturbing works (i.e. converter station platform construction can avoid March to June).	Agreed
3.3.11		Overhead Lines in Kent	The ES should set out the options that have been explored for making this crossing and why HDD won't work or isn't appropriate. It was confirmed this information would be provided to accompany the DCO application.	<p>The ES sets out why it is not possible to make the connection to the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line by other methods.</p> <p>The overhead lines were discussed with the Consultee and the collision risk assessment has been shared, firstly</p>	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
			A vantage point survey report and collision risk assessment have been shared with the Consultee. The Consultee have responded (July 2024) with some queries and an updated collision risk assessment was provided in November 2024. However, the Consultee supported the inclusion of bird diverters on the new sections of OHL.	in July 2024 and again in November 2024. Natural England agree with its core conclusions.	
3.3.12	Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) Application Document 3.1 draft DCO	Marine Works at Landfall	The Consultee is concerned about the cumulative effect of project impacts on Red-Throated Diver. Vessel Transit Plan discussions currently being undertaken with The Consultee. .	National Grid has made a commitment in order to reduce the impact to Red throated diver through a full seasonal restriction (1 November-31 March) for offshore cable installation activities (with the exclusion of pre-lay grapnel run) and a reduced seasonal restriction (1 January-31 March) for landfall cable installation activities can/will be made. This is secured in the REAC (Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)), by Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of Application Document 3.1 draft DCO . National Grid will confirm the scope of activities to be included in the Marine Works with the Consultee in due course. As National Grid do not yet have contractors onboard, there is currently no vessel transit detail, but National Grid will continue to discuss with the Consultee as more information becomes available.	Under discussion
3.3.13		Marsh Harrier in Suffolk	Marsh harrier at Suffolk – The Consultee confirmed that since marsh harrier are being recorded in the breeding bird surveys and don't nest close to the works in the RSPB reserve, a dedicated marsh harrier survey is not required.	Marsh harrier surveys were discussed, with the Consultee agreeing that a dedicated marsh harrier survey is not required.	Agreed
3.3.14	Application Document:6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	Noise impact on Sandlings SPA and Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI	The Consultee has accepted by email in July 2024 that there will be no significant disturbance to SSSI features following review of noise contour mapping. They have accepted no SPA birds were recorded in the affected area of the SPA but asked for confirmation whether habitat is suitable for nesting.	National Grid confirms the habitat within the affected part of the SPA is suitable for nesting. Modelling undertaken shows 60dB contour for site establishment phase of compound and HDD would overlap with Sandlings SPA and very slightly with the SSSI. However, it is confirmed that site establishment for this compound can take place during September to February inclusive, avoiding disturbance. This has been secured in the Habitat Regulations Assessment (Application Document:6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report)	Under discussion
3.3.15		Mitigation for temporary loss of nightjar and woodlark foraging habitat	Following review of the draft HRA report in December 2024 the consultee did not raise any significant comments on the conclusion in the HRA that no adverse effect on integrity of Sandlings SPA will arise through	National Grid provided a copy of the draft HRA report in December 2024 which set out the basis for concluding no likely significant effect on Sandlings SPA from loss of functionally linked land	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
			loss of functionally linked land. Therefore, the consultee accepts this conclusion.		

3.4 Air Quality

Table 3.3 Air Quality

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	NE Current Position	National Grid Current Position	Status
3.4.1	<p>Application Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice</p> <p>Application Document 7.5.6.1 Air Quality Management Plan – Suffolk</p> <p>Application Document 3.1 draft DCO</p>	Leiston Aldeburgh SSSI	The Consultee is concerned about possible effects of dewatering on the water dependent SSSI, wider hydrological effects including saline incursion from the cabling on the coastal side, pollution and air quality. Referring specifically to Leiston – Aldeburgh SSSI.	<p>Air quality effects as a result of the Proposed Project have been fully considered for the Leiston – Aldeburgh SSSI. This is outlined in Application Document 6.2.2.8 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 8 Air Quality.</p> <p>Mitigation measures relevant to the control and management of impacts during construction have been included within Application Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice.</p> <p>Additionally, air quality monitoring is proposed at the boundary of the construction compound which is in close proximity to the Leiston – Aldeburgh SSSI to ensure the measures are working effectively, as detailed in the Air Quality Management Plan (Application Document 7.5.6.1 Air Quality Management Plan - Suffolk).</p> <p>Both management plans are secured by Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of Application Document 3.1 draft DCO.</p>	Under discussion
3.4.2		IAQM Construction Dust Guidance	<p>Further information is required on why 50m is the limit of dust impacts on the SSSI and European site.</p> <p>Further information is required on why 50m is the limit of dust impacts on both Sandlings SPA and Leiston – Aldeburgh SSSI.</p>	<p>This is based on the IAQM best practice guidance. Distances cited in the guidance takes account of the exponential decline in both airborne concentrations and the rate of deposition with distance, as well as practical experience of members of the Working Group. However, to address concerns, the study area for ecological areas has been amended so that it is the same as for human receptors (i.e. 250 m rather than 50 m).</p>	Under discussion

4. Approvals

Signed	
On Behalf of	National Grid
Name	
Position	
Date	

Signed	
On Behalf of	Natural England
Name	
Position	
Date	

5. References

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2024). *Planning Act 2008: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-examination-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects>

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