



The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Sea Link

Volume 6: Environmental Statement

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Part 1 Introduction
Chapter 6
Scoping Opinion and EIA Consultation

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6. Scoping Opinion and EIA Consultation

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) explains the Development Consent Order (DCO) consultation requirements, stakeholder engagement to date, the Non-Statutory Consultation, the Statutory Consultation and the Targeted Consultation. Effective stakeholder engagement and consultation is intrinsic to the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008) consenting regime and is considered to be fundamental to the success of Sea Link (hereafter referred to as ‘the Proposed Project’).
- 6.1.2 The process of consultation is critical to the development of a comprehensive and proportionate ES. The views of statutory and non-statutory consultees serve to focus the environmental studies and to identify specific issues that require further investigation.
- 6.1.3 In the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), consultation enables mitigation measures to be identified and agreed with stakeholders and then incorporated into the design of the Proposed Project, thereby reducing adverse effects and enhancing environmental benefits.
- 6.1.4 The Proposed Project has a wide range of stakeholders (including landowners, statutory/prescribed consultees, local communities and their elected representatives, and specialist interest groups) with differing interests that will require varied levels of consultation. Specific communication activities therefore need to be focused to meet the needs of individuals and groups. This requires an understanding of the stakeholders and their interests in the Proposed Project.
- 6.1.5 Stakeholder engagement for the Proposed Project is based on the following core principles:
- early and ongoing engagement to inform and influence the design process;
 - seeking feedback through the iterative design process and taking this feedback into consideration;
 - building of long-term relationships with key stakeholders throughout the different stages of the Proposed Project to help better understand their views;
 - where possible and practicable, ensuring concerns are addressed; and
 - ensuring appropriate statutory consultation is undertaken in compliance with requirements of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008), Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations) (HM Government, 2017) and associated guidance.
- 6.1.6 Full details of the consultation undertaken for the Proposed Project can be found in the **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report**, which is in accordance with Section 37(7) of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008).

6.2 DCO Consultation Requirements

6.2.1 The DCO process has several statutory requirements regarding consultation. These requirements stipulate that certain statutory/prescribed consultees and the community must be consulted as part of the pre-application process, as set out in Sections 42, 47, 48 and 49 of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008), Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) and the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (HM Government, 2009) as follows:

- Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the applicant to consult with 'prescribed persons' which includes certain consultation bodies such as the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, relevant statutory undertakers, relevant local authorities, those with an interest in the land, as well as those who may be affected by the development.
- Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the applicant to consult with the local community on the development. Prior to this, the applicant must agree a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) with the relevant local authorities. The SoCC must set out the proposed community consultation and, once agreed with the relevant local authorities, a notice must be published in local newspapers circulating within the vicinity of the land in question. The consultation must then be undertaken in accordance with the final SoCC.
- Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 places a duty on the applicant to publicise the proposed application in the 'prescribed manner' in a national newspaper, The London Gazette, and one or more local newspapers circulating within the vicinity of the land.
- Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008 places a duty on the applicant to take account of any relevant responses received to the consultation and publicity that is required by Sections 42, 47 and 48.

6.2.2 **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report** provides further detail on how each of these requirements have been met for the Proposed Project, with a general summary provided within the sections below.

6.3 Early Stakeholder Engagement

6.3.1 National Grid commenced engagement activities in 2020 / early 2021, where it held initial meetings with local planning authorities in Suffolk and Kent, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation. These meetings focused on identifying the Proposed Project study area, mapping constraints, identifying and appraising corridor and siting options.

6.3.2 In the summer of 2021, project-specific marine surveys (geophysical/geotechnical/environmental) were undertaken. Marine stakeholders were engaged at this stage to discuss the emerging landfall and routing preferences in the marine environment, ensuring any feedback that may influence route selection/ optimisation could be taken into consideration prior to surveys starting. Stakeholders involved included the Marine Management Organisation, Historic England (marine), the Crown Estate, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities, Trinity House, developers (including Greater Gabbard, National Grid Ventures, Galloper, Scottish Power

Renewables, North Falls and Five Estuaries), aggregate operators and the Port Authorities of London, Harwich Haven, Felixstowe, Lowestoft and Ramsgate.

- 6.3.3 Feedback from early stakeholder engagement was reviewed on a regular basis by the Proposed Project team and, where appropriate, considered for further investigation to inform the ongoing design of the Proposed Project.
- 6.3.4 Following the early engagement detailed above, a series of formal consultation periods have been carried out for the Proposed Project. These are described in more detail below but consisted of:
- Non-Statutory Consultation – 24 October to 18 December 2022;
 - Statutory Consultation – 24 October to 18 December 2023; and
 - Targeted Consultation – 8 July to 11 August 2024.

6.4 EIA Scoping Report

- 6.4.1 Scoping forms a key stage of the EIA process; providing a framework for identifying likely significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Project and defining the environmental topics to be addressed within the ES.
- 6.4.2 The Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.14 Environmental Scoping Report 2022**) for the Proposed Project was submitted on 24 October 2022 supported a request by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (National Grid), under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) and with due regard to the Planning Inspectorate Advice Note Seven (Inspectorate, 2020), for a written Scoping Opinion from the SoS, administered by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS, to inform the EIA for the Proposed Project. The Scoping Report clearly outlined the intended scope of each environmental topic and the overall structure of the ES.
- 6.4.3 A Scoping Opinion (**Application Document 6.15 Scoping Opinion**) was received from the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS on 1 December 2022. The Scoping Opinion takes account of responses from prescribed consultation bodies, relevant statutory undertakers, Local Authorities, and non-prescribed consultation bodies as appropriate. The advice contained within the Scoping Opinion has been taken into account for the EIA assessment methodology, topics, and presentation of the ES.
- 6.4.4 In examining the proposed scope of the EIA, the Planning Inspectorate engaged a range of prescribed consultees (comprising statutory and non-statutory bodies, agencies and groups) for their views on the content of the assessments. Specific responses to each of the items within the Planning Inspectorate's Scoping Opinion are summarised within each of the relevant technical topic Environmental Statement chapters, the prescribed consultee stakeholder Scoping Opinion comment responses are provided within **Application Document 6.3.1.6.A Appendix 1.6.A Response to Scoping Opinion**.
- 6.4.5 Table 6.1 below provides the responses to the generic overarching comments from the Planning Inspectorate in the Scoping Opinion that do not relate to a specific technical environmental assessment. The Planning Inspectorates comments relating to specific environmental assessments are contained in the relevant technical ES chapters.

Table 6.1 Overarching Planning Inspectorates comments raised in the Scoping Opinion

ID	Inspectorates Comments	Response
2.1.1	<p>Co-ordination of projects – cumulative effects</p> <p>The Inspectorate encourages the Applicant to make effort to coordinate the delivery of the Proposed Development with other relevant developments in the area. This may include sharing infrastructure requirements e.g. converter stations and/or cabling, where possible in an effort to reduce the cumulative impacts and significant effects.</p>	<p>The design of the Proposed Project has been developed for Sea Link as a standalone project but has been designed in a coordinated way with other projects, including two potential National Grid Ventures (NGV) projects and also with Scottish Power Renewable (SPR) in relation to the proposed Friston Substation (further detail is provided in Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project).</p> <p>As such, the Proposed Project has been designed to allow space for the future delivery of other projects. National Grid will continue to work collaboratively with NGV and other developers to consider the most appropriate of developing the site in a coordinated way. For further details, please refer to Application Document 7.13 Coordination Document and Application Document 7.10 NGV Coordination Suffolk Masterplan. The cumulative effects of the Proposed Project with other developments in the area are considered within Application Documents 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects, Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Inter-Project Cumulative Effects and Application Document 6.2.4.11 Part 4 Marine Chapter 11 Inter-Project Cumulative Effects.</p>
2.1.2	<p>Friston substation</p> <p>The Scoping Report contains a limited description of the likely parameters for the works at Friston substation. The ES should clearly set out the worst-case parameters for the assessment, in particular in relation to landscape and visual impacts.</p>	<p>A description of the parameters for Friston substation is set out in Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project. How the parameters have been assessed in relation to each technical chapter are set out at section 5 (Basis of</p>

		Assessment) of each of the technical chapters in Volume 6 Parts 2-5. Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape & Visual sets out the basis of assessment in relation to landscape and visual impacts.
2.1.3	Offshore High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cable Noting the statement that the offshore cable system is still under development at this stage, the ES should clearly set out the parameters for the offshore HVDC cabling system that have been applied for in the assessment.	The parameters for the offshore HVDC cable are set out in Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project . This chapter informs the parameters for assessment for the marine topic assessments.
2.1.4	Construction programme - converter stations The Scoping Report states construction of the converter stations would take ‘...between 27 months.’ It is unclear if this is intended to be a range or an approximation. The construction programme for the Proposed Development is also not consistent between chapters of the Scoping Report. The ES should clearly state the anticipated construction programme used for the assessment and ensure aspect chapters are consistent in this regard.	An indicative construction programme is presented in Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project . This has been used in the assessments presented in the Environmental Statement technical chapters within Volume 6 Parts 2-5 whilst also applying a sensitivity test as to the implementation of consent as explained in Application Document 6.2.1.5 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology .
2.1.5	Overhead High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) Connection – pylon foundations It is unclear whether the final choice of pylon foundation would be made prior to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application or whether flexibility is to be sought. The ES should clearly state the assumptions made with regards to foundation type.	An explanation of different foundation types that could be used is presented in Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project . The type used will depend on the ground conditions where the pylon is located. As the exact locations of the pylons would be subject to a Limit of Deviation (LoD) it is proposed to include flexibility within the application so the most suitable type can be selected for each location. The technical chapters in Volume 6 Parts 2-5 have applied a worst-case assessment in relation to foundation types.
2.1.6	Onshore cable installation – crossings As the landfall and onshore route is still being defined, it is not yet clear where any	Application Document 6.3.1.4.A Appendix 1.4.A Crossing Schedules provides details of each of the

	<p>temporary or permanent crossings of watercourses, major roads and/or railways would be required. The ES should identify the locations and types of all such crossings. The Applicant should also seek to agree the depths of any trenchless crossings (such as Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)) to be undertaken below obstacles such as watercourses and flood defences with the relevant consultation bodies, including the Environment Agency (EA) and Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), as appropriate. The ES should also provide detail of protocols/measures to be put in place to prevent break outs or frack-outs of bentonite from occurring or to minimise impacts should such events occur.</p>	<p>proposed crossings for watercourses, roads, railways, cycleways, and Public Rights of Way (PRoW). This includes the location of the crossing, what the crossing comprises of (e.g. cable or access road) and any commitments made in relation to crossing technique such as trenchless or the use of a bridge.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Natural England is ongoing, as appropriate, in relation to the depths of crossings.</p> <p>Application Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice sets out measures for control of break outs and frack outs.</p>
2.1.7	<p>Vessel movements</p> <p>The ES should detail the type, number and frequency of vessel movements required to construct and operate the Proposed Development. If these are unknown, then the ES should explain the assumptions that have been made about vessel movements to inform the worst case assessment.</p>	<p>Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project details the vessels and vessel movements associated with the construction of the Offshore Scheme.</p>
2.1.8	<p>Operation and maintenance</p> <p>The ES should provide a full description of the nature and scope of operation and maintenance activities, including types of activity, frequency, and how works will be carried out for both offshore and onshore elements of the Proposed Development. This should include consideration of potential overlapping of activities with the coordinated projects (where applicable) and other consented projects such as the East Anglia Offshore Windfarms One North/Two and Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station, where possible.</p>	<p>Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project provides a description of operation and maintenance for the Proposed Project. Consideration of potential overlapping of activities with other projects is covered within the cumulative impact assessments for the Onshore Schemes and Offshore Scheme (Application Documents 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects, Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Inter-Project Cumulative Effects and Application Document 6.2.4.11 Part 4 Marine Chapter 11 Inter-Project Cumulative Effects).</p>
2.1.9	<p>Decommissioning of marine cable</p>	<p>Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description</p>

	<p>The Scoping Report states that marine cables may either be removed or left in-situ, in the event that the Proposed Development is decommissioned. The Inspectorate notes that a decommissioning plan will be prepared post-consent and updated across the lifetime of the development. However, in order to ensure that all likely significant effects associated with the Proposed Development are included in the ES, the ES should include an assessment of decommissioning effects based on a reasonable worst-case scenario.</p>	<p>of the Proposed Project outlines the approach to decommissioning and assessments have been undertaken as appropriate within each technical environmental statement chapter.</p>
2.1.10	<p>Impacts to utilities</p> <p>The Scoping Report states that trenchless methods will be used where utilities are required to be crossed by the Proposed Development. For clarity, the embedded measures/design should first consider avoidance of such infrastructure (where possible), then consider trenchless techniques. This should include potential impacts to wastewater infrastructure, which has not been identified as a utility consideration in the Scoping Report</p>	<p>Utilities have been sought to be avoided where possible. Where avoidance has not been possible the Proposed Project will continue to engage with those asset owners to agree appropriate crossing methodologies.</p>
2.2.1	<p>Intra-project assessment methodology</p> <p>The Inspectorate queries whether the yes/no arrows in this flowchart image are correct. For example, where a receptor 'is impacted by more than one type of effect' at stage 1 pre-screening stage, whether it should be carried forward to the stage 2 screening stage. The ES should clarify the approach.</p>	<p>The flowchart image now found in Application Document 6.3.1.5.A Appendix 1.5.A Cumulative Effects Methodologies has been amended to correct this error.</p>
2.2.2	<p>Definition of significance</p> <p>Whilst it is noted that Section 1.5 sets out the overarching approach to be taken when determining the significance of effects, the phraseology used in Table 1.5.1 is not applied consistently throughout the Scoping Report. The ES should apply such phraseology consistently, where aspect assessments depart from this approach it should be clearly stated and provide reasons for the approach.</p>	<p>This has been reviewed and reflected across all of the technical chapters in Volume 6 Parts 2-5. The methodology used to inform the environmental assessments contained within the ES are outlined within Application Document 6.2.1.5 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology. Where deviations from the standard EIA methodology for a specific environmental topic has occurred, this is stated within the relevant environmental statement topic chapter.</p>
2.2.3	<p>Figures</p> <p>There are a number of Figures where the legends/keys make it difficult to distinguish</p>	<p>Noted, the figures supporting the planning application have considered</p>

varying features. For example, Figure 2.2.3 contains two hatchings of very similar colour, thus making it difficult to distinguish between the regional Landscape Character Types 0 and 16. Figure 2.11.1 is missing the legend/key and the Conservation Areas of Aldeburgh, Thorpeness, Leiston, and Saxmundham are not apparent on Figure 2.4.1, despite being included in the legend/key. The ES should include clearly labelled figures with a clear legend/key to enable interpretation of the information. legibility and have been amended where possible.

6.5 Non-Statutory Consultation

- 6.5.1 National Grid acknowledges that undertaking effective consultation is critical to the overall success of the Proposed Project. As a result, a Non-Statutory Consultation was undertaken. This was held for eight weeks, from Monday 24 October to Sunday 18 December 2022.
- 6.5.2 This Non-Statutory Consultation introduced the Proposed Project and the emerging preference and alternative options, seeking feedback from members of the public, impacted landowners and key stakeholders on the emerging preference and alternative options that could deliver the required transmission system reinforcement in the South East of England. The consultation had the following aims:
- Introduce the Proposed Project to the public, providing an overview of the proposed Project and why the reinforcement is needed.
 - Set out options that have been considered and the decision-making undertaken so far.
 - Present early plans, including proposed cable corridors with graduated swathe, proposed converter sites and landfall locations.
 - Provide an opportunity for stakeholders and those interested in the Proposed Project to give their feedback on our work-to-date.
 - Outline the next steps and onward programme for the development of the Proposed Project.
- 6.5.3 Following feedback from this consultation, and further technical work by the project team, some key changes were made to the corridor.
- 6.5.4 A range of consultation materials were developed to present the Proposed Project information including the Corridor and Preliminary Routing and Siting Study. A number of public information events, online webinars, and stakeholder briefings were carried out.
- 6.5.5 340 responses to the feedback form on the proposals in Suffolk and 120 responses to the feedback form on the proposals in Kent were received as part of the non-statutory consultation. The 2022 Non-Statutory Consultation Report (**Application Document 5.1.6 Appendix E 2022 Non Statutory Consultation**) includes a full narrative of the

non-statutory consultations undertaken and the feedback provided to those consultations.

6.6 Statutory Consultation

Overview

- 6.6.1 Following the Non-Statutory Consultation, Statutory Consultation for the Proposed Project took place over an eight-week period from 24 October 2023 to 18 December 2023. The Statutory Consultation was pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008) and EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017).
- 6.6.2 Consultation was carried out with prescribed stakeholder bodies, affected landowners and local communities, in accordance with Sections 42, 45, 46, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008) and Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017).
- 6.6.3 The methods of engagement that were undertaken as part of the Statutory Consultation included in-person events at various locations (Aldeburgh, Ramsgate, Minster, Sandwich and Saxmundham), online live webinars, a series of appointment-only 'ask the experts' sessions, engagement with local authorities and elected members as well as publication of relevant material including the **Application Document 8.2 Historic Report: Option Selection and Design Evolution Report**, **Application Document 7.2 Strategic Options Report** and the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) (NationalGrid, 2023).
- 6.6.4 The purpose of the Statutory Consultation was to comply with the requirements under the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008), as part of the planning process and to gain valuable feedback from stakeholders with regard to the emerging design and construction methodology.
- 6.6.5 All the responses received during the Statutory Consultation were carefully considered in the design evolution of the Proposed Project in accordance with Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008). Details of the full responses to the feedback received during the Statutory Consultation is included within **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report**.
- 6.6.6 **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report** demonstrates how National Grid has complied with the consultation requirements of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008) and EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017).

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

- 6.6.7 Under Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations, National Grid is required to set out in its SoCC how it intends to publicise and consult on preliminary environmental information relating to the Proposed Project, refer to Appendix F of the Consultation Report (**Application Document 5.1.7 Appendix F 2023 SoCC**) for the Proposed Projects SoCC. Regulation 12 defines preliminary environmental information as being the information referred to in Regulation 14(2) which has been compiled by National Grid; and is reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the development (and of any associated development).
- 6.6.8 Consequently, the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) (NationalGrid, 2023) was published in October 2023 as part of the Statutory Consultation process and

presented the preliminary findings of the assessment of potential significant environmental effects of the Proposed Project as available at that time.

- 6.6.9 The feedback received from consultees during the Statutory Consultation period has been used to inform the EIA and the Proposed Project design. Details of how the Proposed Project has evolved following statutory consultation is set out within **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**.
- 6.6.10 In addition to the Statutory Consultation detailed above, topic specific technical and procedural consultation has continued throughout the EIA process and where this is the case, further detail is provided within the relevant technical ES chapters.

6.7 Targeted Consultation

Following the feedback received at Statutory Consultation as well as further technical and environmental assessment work, a number of changes were introduced to the Proposed Project. A Targeted Consultation exercise took place from Monday 8 July to Sunday 11 August 2024 targeted at those who were likely to be affected by the changes in the proposals.

- 6.7.1 Changes consulted on during the Targeted Consultation included:
- Permanent infrastructure: proposed changes to the permanent infrastructure planned as part of the Proposed Project, including the cable routes and converter station/substation(s).
 - Construction and maintenance work: proposed changes to how the Proposed Project would be built and maintained during the construction and operational phases.
 - Mitigation, enhancements and approach to biodiversity net gain: proposed changes to mitigation for the Proposed Project on the environment and deliver enhancements to the local environment.
 - Strategy for coordination: proposed changes to how construction and operation of the Proposed Project may be coordinated with other projects planned in Suffolk.
 - Order Limits: proposed refinements, including reductions and increases to the size of the Order Limits.
 - Working Hours: the proposed core working hours set out at statutory consultation did not include Sundays or bank holidays. However, to accommodate contractor requirements, and to give the flexibility to deliver the construction programme on time, a need was identified to include 7am to 5pm on Sundays and bank holidays within the core working hours.
- 6.7.2 As a result of these changes an additional Preliminary Environmental Information ('additional PEI'), was produced and provided as part of the Project Update Documentation for Targeted Consultation. It set out the potential for any additional or different likely significant environmental effects associated with the proposed changes to the Proposed Project, comparing against those presented within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('original PEIR') (NationalGrid, 2023) produced in October 2023 and presented at statutory consultation. Whilst changes to likely environmental effects were noted, the additional PEI did not identify any changes to the

scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as a result of the changes to the Proposed Project.

- 6.7.3 Further details on how National Grid responded to the feedback from the Targeted Design Revisions Consultation and National Grid's response is provided within **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report**.

6.8 2024-2025 Pre-Submission Engagement

- 6.8.1 Following the feedback received at Targeted Consultation as well as further technical and environmental assessment work, a series of further minor amendments were made to the Proposed Project. The pre-submission engagement took place between 22 November 2024 and 12 January 2025 targeted at those who were likely to be affected by the changes in the proposals.
- 6.8.2 The amendments to the Proposed Project were not material or substantial changes to the proposals. The changes included:
- Realignment and rotation of the proposed crossing of the River Fromus in Suffolk, to avoid valuable trees on the eastern bank, moving the bridge approximately 40m further north along the river.
 - Reintroduced, removed and moved construction compound areas.
 - Moved, introduced, or refined areas of land proposed for ecological mitigation and/or enhancement, following feedback from key stakeholders.
 - Various other adjustments were proposed to the design, including access routes and underground cable alignments.
- 6.8.3 Realignment of the proposed River Fromus crossing had the potential to result in new and/or worse likely significant effects on heritage assets. Additional preliminary heritage information was provided as part of the consultation material.
- 6.8.4 Further details on how National Grid responded to the feedback from the pre-submission engagement is provided within **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report**.

6.9 Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement and Thematic Meetings

- 6.9.1 In addition to the main consultation periods outlined above, continued stakeholder engagement has taken place with key stakeholders and Local Planning Authorities throughout this period and up to submission of the DCO application. The purpose of this engagement was to continually take on board feedback from stakeholders in order to inform the Proposed Project emerging design and environmental assessments.
- 6.9.2 Regular liaison with the relevant Local Authorities and the MMO, including strategic and topic specific meetings were arranged. The relevant local authorities have also been consulted on the draft SoCC.
- 6.9.3 As well as this, meeting with statutory stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, and non-statutory stakeholders such as the RSPB and Port and Harbour Authorities, to update them on the Proposed Project, discuss technical issues and respond to questions has taken place throughout the preparation of the DCO application.

- 6.9.4 Where feedback of relevance to the EIA has been provided through these engagements, this has been considered and reflected where appropriate.
- 6.9.5 As part of the meetings and workshops with statutory stakeholders, topic meetings and thematic groups have been held to discuss EIA methodologies, survey requirements, and the baseline environment.
- 6.9.6 Where relevant the specifics of these meetings are referred to within each of the technical chapters.
- 6.9.7 A list of the thematic meetings that have occurred and further detail of ongoing engagement can be found in the **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report** and **Application Document 7.14 Statements of Common Ground**.

6.10 Summary

- 6.10.1 As part of the evolution of the Proposed Project's design, and in line with the prescribed regulations, extensive consultation has been undertaken both with statutory bodies and with members of the community. Feedback received has been directly fed into the design process and has helped influence the final design and routing of the Proposed Project as presented in **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project**).
- 6.10.2 National Grid acknowledges how valuable the consultation and engagement process is to the success of the Proposed Project. This is why longer than stipulated periods were allowed during both the Non-Statutory Consultation and the Statutory Consultation.

6.11 References

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