The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Sea Link

Volume 6: Environmental Statement

Document: 6.2.3.1
Part 3 Kent
Chapter 1
Landscape and Visual

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020026

Version: A
March 2025

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 Regulation 5(2)(a)

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the assessment of the likely significant landscape and visual effects that could result from the Proposed Project (as described in **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project**) specifically the Kent Onshore Scheme.

1.1.2 This chapter summarises the methodology used, the datasets that have informed the assessment, baseline conditions, mitigation measures and the landscape and visual effects that could result from the Proposed Project.

1.1.3 Landscape effects associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme relate to the changes to the fabric, character, and quality of the landscape and how it is experienced. As defined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third edition) (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment , 2013) the term landscape also encompasses urban landscape, often referred to as townscape. For the purpose of this assessment the term landscape is adopted and may include areas of townscape within towns or villages.

1.1.4 Visual effects relate closely to changes to the landscape; however, these consider the effects of change on the views available to people and their visual amenity resulting from the introduction of the Kent Onshore Scheme. Although effects on the landscape and visual environment are interrelated, they are assessed and reported separately in this chapter. The Order Limits, which illustrate the boundary of the Proposed Project, are illustrated on **Application Document 2.2.1 Overall Location Plan** and the Kent Onshore Scheme Boundary is illustrated on **Application Document 2.2.3 Kent Location Plan**.

1.1.5 This chapter should be read in conjunction with the following ES chapters:

- **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Chapter 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**;
- **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project**;
- **Application Document 6.2.1.5 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology**;
- **Application Document 6.2.1.6 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 6 Scoping Opinion and EIA Consultation**;
- **Application Document 6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity**;
- **Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage**;
- **Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport**;
- **Application Document 6.2.3.9 Part 3 Kent Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration**; and
- **Application Document 6.2.3.10 Part 3 Kent Chapter 10 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism**.

1.1.6 This chapter is supported by the following figures:

- **Application Document 6.4.3.1 Landscape and Visual**; and
- **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.

1.1.7 This chapter is supported by the following appendices:

- **Application Document 6.3.3.1.A Appendix 3.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology**;
- **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**;
- **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment**; and
- **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.

1.1.8 This chapter is supported by the following application documents:

- **Application Document 6.10 Arboricultural Impact Assessment**;
- **Application Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**;
- **Application Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice**;
- **Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**;
- **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent**;
- **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**; and
- **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.

1.2 Regulatory and Planning Context

1.2.1 This section sets out the legislation and planning policy that is relevant to the landscape and visual effects assessment. A full review of compliance with relevant national and local planning policy is provided within **Application Document 7.1 Planning Statement** submitted as part of the application for Development Consent.

1.2.2 Policy generally seeks to minimise landscape and visual effects from development and to avoid significant adverse effects.

Legislation

European Landscape Convention

1.2.3 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe, 2006) was signed by the UK Government in 2006 and came into effect in March 2007[1]. The ELC recognises

[1] The UK remains a signatory post-Brexit.

landscape in law. It focuses specifically on landscape issues and highlights the importance of integration of landscape into areas of policy, to promote protection, management and planning of all landscapes including the assessment of landscape and analysis of landscape change.

1.2.4 The ELC defines landscape as:

"an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors".

1.2.5 The ELC promotes an "*all-landscapes approach*", founded on the recognition of value in all landscapes. It recognises that the landscape is important as a component of the environment and of people's surroundings in both town and country and whether it is ordinary landscape or outstanding. The ELC considers landscape as a whole (land or marine), from urban to rural areas, and whether special or degraded.

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

1.2.6 In England and Wales National Parks and AONB are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (HM Government , 1949). The Environment Act 1995 revised the original legislation and set out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:

"Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage"

and

"Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public".

1.2.7 When national parks carry out these purposes, they also have the duty to:

"Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks (Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995)".

1.2.8 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 is referenced as it is of relevance to landscape and visual matters, however, there are no landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB) identified within the study area.

Tree Preservation Orders

1.2.9 The law on Tree Preservation Orders is contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (in particular sections 197-214, as amended) (HM Government, 1990) and in the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999 (as amended) (Statutory Instrument number 1892) (HM Government, 1999).

National Policy

National Policy Statements

1.2.10 National Policy Statements (NPSs) set out the primary policy tests against which the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Proposed Project would be considered. The 2023 revised NPSs (EN-1 to EN-5) came into force 17 January 2024.

1.2.11 Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 provide details of the elements of NPS for Energy (EN-1) (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023) and NPS for Electricity Networks

Infrastructure (EN-5) (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023) that are relevant to this chapter and how and where they are covered in the ES. NPS EN-3 Renewable Energy Infrastructure has relevance to the Proposed Project, but only in respect of the offshore elements. As such it has no relevance to the assessment presented in this chapter.

Table 1.1 NPS EN-1 requirements relevant to landscape and visual

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
Part 4.3 sets out the requirement for an ES which should describe *"the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project"*.	**Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** set out an assessment of landscape and visual significant effects for construction, operation and maintenance. This chapter of the ES includes a summary of the landscape and visual assessments (Section 1.11).
4.6.2 *"Biodiversity net gain is an essential component of environmental net gain. Projects in England should consider and seek to incorporate improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefits they deliver when planning how to deliver biodiversity net gain".*	**Application Document 6.12 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Feasibility Report** sets out the improvements to biodiversity and ecosystem services within the Proposed Project and provides information on the delivery of biodiversity net gain**.** There is a strong interface between Biodiversity Net Gain and the landscape mitigation proposed (refer to **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**).
Part 4.7.2 sets out criteria for *"good design"* for energy infrastructure and states that: *"Applying good design to energy projects should produce sustainable infrastructure sensitive to place, including impacts on heritage, efficient in the use of natural resources, including land-use, and energy used in their construction and operation, matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic as far as possible. It is acknowledged, however that the nature of energy infrastructure development will often limit the extent to which it can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area".*	**Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** identifies the environmental considerations, including landscape and visual considerations, which have informed the siting and outline design of the proposed Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. The design of these structures, in terms of the building form and the external materials, has been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
	development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
4.7.6 *"Whilst the applicant may not have any or very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure, there may be opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate good design in terms of siting relative to existing landscape character, land form and vegetation. Furthermore, the design and sensitive use of materials in any associated development such as electricity substations will assist in ensuring that such development contributes to the quality of the area. Applicants should also, so far as is possible, seek to embed opportunities for nature inclusive design within the design process"*	**Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** identifies the environmental considerations, including landscape and visual considerations, which have informed the siting and outline design of the proposed Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. The design of these structures, in terms of the building form and the external materials, has been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
4.7.7 *"Applicants must demonstrate in their application documents how the design process was conducted and how the proposed design evolved. Where a number of different designs were considered, applicants should set out the reasons why the favoured choice has been selected".*	The Order Limits have been developed through a detailed routeing and siting process. **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** sets out how the Proposed Project has evolved to date, and the alternatives considered. The evolution of the design has been informed by both environmental and technical desk studies and site surveys as well as consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. This evolution is documented in **Application Document 7.3 Design Development Report** and summarised in the **Application Document 6.2.1.3. Part 1**

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
	Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered.
4.7.12 *"In considering applications, the Secretary of State should take into account the ultimate purpose of the infrastructure and bear in mind the operational, safety and security requirements which the design has to satisfy. Many of the wider impacts of a development, such as landscape and environmental impacts, will be important factors in the design process".*	The Order Limits have been developed through a detailed routeing and siting process. **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** sets out how the Proposed Project has evolved to date, and the alternatives considered. The evolution of the design has been informed by both environmental and technical desk studies and site surveys as well as consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. This evolution is documented in the **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**.
Part 5.4 sets out information regarding Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and Part 5.9 sets out information regarding the Historic Environment, including reference to designations.	Assessments covering matters relating to biodiversity, geological conservation and the historic environment have informed judgements on landscape value within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**. This includes reference to natural heritage, such as habitats that are characteristic of the landscape character, and cultural heritage, such as an understanding of time depth in relation to historically defined 'Important Hedgerows'.
Paragraph 5.10.1 sets out that landscape and visual effects of energy development varies on a case-by-case basis and that *"references to*	The baseline landscape and seascape character is presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B**

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
landscape should be taken as covering seascape and townscape where appropriate".	**Landscape Baseline**, and takes into account townscape characteristics where relevant. Published landscape and seascape character documents have been used as a means of assessing the landscape effects presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised in this chapter.
5.10.4 *"Landscape effects arise not only from the sensitivity of the landscape but also the nature and magnitude of change proposed by the development, whose specific siting and design make the assessment a case-by-case judgement".* .	An iterative design process has informed the siting and routeing of the Kent Onshore Scheme. Mitigation measures including those which are embedded in the design of the Kent Onshore Scheme are presented in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter. Landscape character, quality and value are considered in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline** and have informed the landscape assessment in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment**. Embedded mitigation measures are considered within the assessment.
5.10.5 *"Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation".*	Mitigation measures including those which are embedded in the design of the Kent Onshore Scheme are presented in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter. Landscape character, quality and value are considered in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline** and have informed the landscape assessment in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment**. Embedded mitigation measures are considered within the assessment.

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
5.10.6 *"Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate".*	An iterative design process has informed the siting and routeing of the Kent Onshore Scheme. Mitigation measures including those which are embedded in the design of the Kent Onshore Scheme are presented in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter.
5.10.7 *"National Parks, the Broads and AONBs have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes. Projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. For development proposals located within designated landscapes the Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development".*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB) have been identified within the study area.
5.10.12 *"Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally. Where a local development document in England or a local development plan in Wales has policies based on landscape or waterscape character assessment, these should be paid particular attention. However locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse consent as this may unduly restrict acceptable development".*	There are no locally designated landscapes within the study area. Consideration of landscape value is provided in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline** and summarised in this chapter.
5.10.13 *"All proposed energy infrastructure is likely to have visual effects for many receptors around proposed sites."* 5.10.14 *"The Secretary of State will have to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents, and other*	The visual assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, has assessed the likely significant effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project. This has included a range of receptors,

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
receptors, such as visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the project."	including local residents and visitors as well as views experienced from recreational routes along the coast.
5.10.15 *"Coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion because of the potential high visibility of development on the foreshore, on the skyline and affecting views along stretches of undeveloped coast".*	The visual assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, has assessed the likely significant effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project. The visual assessment includes consideration of views in relation to coastal areas.
5.10.17 "*The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the proposed project. The applicant's assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these assessments in local development plan documents in England and local development plans in Wales*".	Published landscape and seascape character documents have been used as a means of assessing the landscape effects presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised in this chapter. The baseline landscape character is presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline** and on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.4 Landscape Character – District** and **Application Document 6.4.3.1.5 Chapter 1 Seascape Character – National and Regional**. The assessment takes account of relevant planning policy as identified in the Regulatory and Planning Context section of this chapter.
5.10.19 *"The applicant should consider landscape and visual matters in the early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established. This will allow the applicant to demonstrate in the ES how negative effects have been minimised and opportunities for creating positive benefits or enhancement have been recognised and incorporated into the design, delivery and operation of the scheme".*	The evolution of the design has been informed by both environmental and technical desk studies and site surveys as well as consultation and stakeholder feedback. This has included landscape and visual matters. This evolution is documented in the **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**.
5.10.20 (part) "…*The assessment should include the effects on landscape components and character during construction and operation."*	The landscape assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, has assessed the likely significant effects from

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
	the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project on landscape component and character.
5.10.21 *"The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts on views and visual amenity. This should include light pollution effects, including on dark skies, local amenity, and nature conservation".*	The visual assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, has assessed the likely significant effects on visual amenity from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project. The visual assessment makes reference to the effects resulting from lighting associated with the Proposed Project.
5.10.22 "*The assessment should also address the landscape and visual effects of noise and light pollution, and other emissions…..from construction and operational activities on residential amenity and on sensitive locations, receptors and views, how these will be minimised".*	Consideration of the landscape and visual effects of noise and light pollution during construction and operation is presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
5.10.25 *"In considering visual effects, it may be helpful for applicants to draw attention, in the supporting evidence to their applications, to any examples of existing permitted infrastructure they are aware of with a similar magnitude of impact on sensitive receptors. This may assist the Secretary of State in judging the weight they should give to the assessed visual impacts of the proposed development".*	Case study examples of existing permitted infrastructure are contained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Viking Link at Bicker Fen shares some similar sensitive residential and recreational receptors with a similar magnitude of impact.
5.10.26 *"Reducing the scale of a project can help to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design of a proposed energy infrastructure project may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function – for example, the electricity generation output. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances, where mitigation could have a very significant benefit and warrant a small reduction in function. In these circumstances, the Secretary of State may decide that the benefits of the mitigation to reduce the landscape and/or visual effects outweigh the marginal loss of function".*	As part of the iterative process of design and assessment, the Limits of Deviation (LoD) for the converter station have been minimised as much as is technically feasible in order to reduce the potential landscape and visual effects. See **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**. No other modifications to the scale of the Proposed Project are considered viable whilst still ensuring the project need is met.

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
5.10.27 *"Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure within its development site and wider setting. The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme, as will sympathetic landscaping and management of its immediate surroundings.".*	**Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** identifies the environmental considerations, including landscape and visual considerations, which have informed the siting and outline design of the proposed Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. The design of these structures, in terms of the building form and the external materials, has been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
5.10.33 *"The Secretary of State should ensure that any projects consented in these designated areas should be carried out to high environmental standards, including through the application of appropriate requirements where necessary".*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB/National Landscapes) have been identified within the study area.
5.10.35 *"The scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible across a very wide area. The Secretary of State should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits (including need) of the project".*	The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) plans are presented on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.7 Representative Viewpoint Locations and Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility**. Beyond the extents shown on the ZTV and the identified study area, potentially significant landscape and visual effects are not considered likely.
5.10.36 *"In reaching a judgement, the Secretary of State should consider whether any adverse impact is temporary, such as during construction, and/or whether any adverse impact on the landscape will be capable of being reversed in a timescale that the Secretary of State considers reasonable".*	The landscape assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, has assessed the likely significant effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project. The magnitude judgments consider the duration and reversibility of the impact.

NPS EN-1 section	Where this is covered in the ES
5.10.37 *"The Secretary of State should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to minimise harm to the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation".*	An iterative process of design and assessment has informed the siting and routeing of the Kent Onshore Scheme to minimise effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.

Table 1.2 NPS EN-5 requirements relevant to landscape and visual

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
Paragraph 2.2.10 *"... As well as having duties under section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, (in relation to developing and maintaining an economical and efficient network), applicants must taken into account Schedule 9 to the Electricity Act 1989 , which places a duty on all transmission and distribution licence holders, in formulating proposals for new electricity networks infrastructure, to "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 … do what [they] 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."*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB) have been identified within the study area. The key characteristics of the landscape character areas and their value which together inform 'natural beauty' are contained in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline.** Mitigation measures presented in **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** seek to minimise effects on landscape character and consequently on the natural beauty of the countryside.
Paragraph 2.2.11 *"Depending on the location of the proposed development, statutory duties under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995), and Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 may be relevant. Applicants should note amendments to each of these provisions contained in Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023".*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB) have been identified within the study area.

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
Part 2.5.1 "*When planning and evaluating proposed development's contribution to environmental and biodiversity net gain, it will be important – for both the applicant and the Secretary of State – to supplement the generic guidance set out in EN-1 (Section 4.5) with recognition that the linear nature of electricity networks infrastructure can allow for excellent opportunities to:* *i. reconnect important habitats via green corridors, biodiversity stepping* *zones, and reestablishment of appropriate hedgerows; and/or* *ii. connect people to the environment, for instance via footpaths and cycleways constructed in tandem with environmental enhancements".*	The landscape mitigation proposals (**Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**) for the Kent Onshore Scheme have been developed in collaboration with other disciplines, including ecological specialists and the design includes enhancement to the local green infrastructure network. Further information on Biodiversity Net Gain and Geology can be found in **Application Document 6.12 Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility (BNG) Report**, **Application Document 6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity** and **Application Document 6.2.3.6 Part 3 Kent Chapter 5 Geology and Hydrogeology**.
Part 2.9.7 *"While the government does not believe that the development of overhead lines is incompatible in principle with applicants' statutory duty under Schedule 9 to the Electricity Act 1989, to have regard to visual and landscape amenity and to reasonably mitigate possible impacts thereon, in practice new overhead lines can give rise to adverse landscape and visual impacts."*	The effects of the new overhead lines associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme are assessed in detail within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Part 2.9.8 *"These impacts depend on the type (for example, whether lines are supported by towers or monopole structures), scale, siting, and degree of screening of the lines, as well as the characteristics of the landscape and local environment through which they are routed."*	Landscape and visual considerations have informed the development of the above ground HVAC options and the siting of the converter station and substation. The HVAC options and substation are assessed within the preliminary assessments within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline** and Assessment and summarised in this chapter.
Part 2.9.9 *"…New substations, sealing end compounds (including terminal towers), and other above ground installations that serve as connection, switching, and voltage transformation points on the electricity networks may also give rise to adverse landscape and visual impacts."*	Landscape and visual considerations have informed the development of the above ground HVAC options and the siting of the converter station and substation. The HVAC options and substation are assessed within the assessments within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application**

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
	Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment and summarised in this chapter.
2.9.10 *"Cumulative adverse landscape, seascape and visual impacts may arise where new overhead lines are required along with other related developments such as substations, wind farms and/or other new sources of generation…"*	The consideration of landscape and visual cumulative effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme in combination with other projects are set out within **Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects**. This considers the removal of existing HVAC overhead line and the installation of new HVAC overhead line as part of the Kent Onshore Scheme.
Part 2.9.13 *"Where possible, applicants should ensure that the principles detailed in Sections 2.11.16-2.11.19 below [Holford Rules] are embodied in the design of their proposed overhead line route and its associated infrastructure. Applicants should also offer proposals (for instance those detailed in Section 2.10 below) for additional mitigation."*	The Holford Rules and the subsequent updates to them have informed the development of the HVAC options (see **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**) which are assessed within the assessments in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter.
Part 2.9.24 *"In these cases, and taking account of the fact that the government has not laid down any further rule on the circumstances requiring use of underground or subsea cables, the Secretary of State must weigh the feasibility, cost, and any harm of the undergrounding or subsea option against:* • *the adverse implications of the overhead line proposal;* • *the cost and feasibility of re-routing overhead lines or mitigation proposals for the relevant line section; and* • *the cost and feasibility of the reconfiguration, rationalisation, and/or use of underground or subsea cabling of proximate existing or proposed electricity networks infrastructure."*	The assessment of landscape and visual effects presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, considers the HVDC cable, the removal of a section of existing HVAC overhead line and the installation of a new HVAC overhead line as part of the Kent Onshore Scheme.

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
Part 2.9.25 *"In such cases the Secretary of State should only grant development consent for underground or subsea sections of a proposed line over an overhead alternative if they are satisfied that the benefits accruing from the former proposal clearly outweigh any extra economic, social, or environmental impacts that it presents, the mitigation hierarchy has been followed, and that any technical obstacles associated with it are surmountable. In this context it should consider:* • *the landscape and visual baseline characteristics of the setting of the proposed route, in particular, the impact on high sensitivity visual receptors (as defined in the current edition of the Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment), residential areas, designated landscapes, valued landscapes, designated heritage assets and Heritage Coasts (including, where relevant, impacts on the setting of designated features and areas), noting the policy in EN-1 section 5.4.53 on regional and local designations;* • *the additional cost of the proposed underground or sub-sea alternatives, including their significantly higher lifetime cost of repair and later uprating;* • *the potentially very disruptive effects of undergrounding on local communities, habitats, archaeological and heritage assets, marine environments, soil (including peat soils), hydrology, geology, and, for a substantial time after construction, landscape and visual amenity. (Undergrounding an overhead line will mean digging a trench along the length of the route, and so such works will often be disruptive – albeit temporarily – to the receptors listed above than*	The assessment of landscape and visual effects presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter, considers the HVDC cable, the removal of a section of existing HVAC overhead line and the installation of a new HVAC overhead line as part of the Kent Onshore Scheme.

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
would an overhead line of equivalent rating);	
Part 2.10.5 *"In addition to good design in accordance with the Holford and Horlock Rules, and the consideration of undergrounding or rerouting the line where possible, the principal opportunities for mitigating adverse landscape and visual impacts of electricity networks infrastructure are:* • *consideration of network reinforcement options (where alternatives exist) which may allow improvements and/or extensions to an existing line rather than the building of an entirely new line;* • *selection of the most suitable type and design of support structure in order to minimise the overall visual impact on the landscape. In particular, ensuring that towers are of the smallest possible footprint and internal volume; and* • *the rationalisation, reconfiguration, and/or undergrounding of existing electricity networks infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed development."*	The Holford and Horlock Rules and the subsequent updates to them have informed the development of design options for the Proposed Project (see **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**). An iterative process of design and assessment has informed the siting and routeing of the Kent Onshore Scheme to minimise effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.
Part 2.10.6 *"There are more specific measures that might be taken, and which the Secretary of State could mandate through DCO requirements if appropriate, as follows: Landscape Schemes comprising off-site tree and hedgerow planting, are sometimes used for larger new overhead line projects to mitigate potential landscape and visual impacts, softening the effect of a new above ground line whilst providing some screening from important visual receptors. These maybe implemented with the agreement of the relevant landowner(s), or the developer may compulsorily acquire the land or land rights in question. Advice from the relevant statutory authority may also be needed"*	Landscape mitigation proposals are identified on **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**. Within the Order Limits additional landscape planting beyond the Converter station and Substation Limits of Deviation has been identified to assist in reducing landscape and visual effects, which are set out within the assessment of effects detailed within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Part 2.10.8 *"…since long-term management of the selected mitigation schemes is essential to their mitigating function, a management plan,*	**Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent** sets out the outline

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
developed at least in outline at the conclusion of the examination, and which sets out proposals within a realistic timescale, should secure the integrity and benefit of these schemes. This should also uphold the landscape commitments made to achieve consent, alongside any pertinent commitments to environmental and biodiversity net gain."	management plans for landscape and ecological mitigation proposals. The management plan has been produced to create a robust future plan to create a successful landscape mitigation scheme which includes adaptive techniques.
Part 2.11.2 *"The Secretary of State should be satisfied that the development, so far as is reasonably possible, complies with the Holford and Horlock Rules (please see paragraphs 2.9.16 - 2.9.19) or any updates to them."*	The Holford and Horlock Rules and the subsequent updates to them have informed the development of design options for the Proposed Project (see **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**). An iterative process of design and assessment has informed the siting and routeing of the Kent Onshore Scheme to minimise effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.
Part 2.11.3 *"The Secretary of State should also be satisfied that all feasible options for mitigation – including the rationalisation, reconfiguration, or undergrounding of existing electricity networks infrastructure, have been considered and evaluated appropriately."*	An iterative process of design and assessment has informed the siting and routeing of the Kent Onshore Scheme to minimise effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**. Within the Order Limits additional landscape planting beyond the converter station boundaries has been identified to assist in reducing landscape and visual effects.
Part 2.11.4 *"In circumstances where it can be demonstrated that a mitigation measure and/ or technological approach is appropriate and/ or necessary for a project, including to limit landscape and visual impact as set out above, the Secretary of State should take this into account in decision making."*	Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**. Within the Order Limits additional landscape planting beyond the converter station

NPS EN-5 section	Where this is covered in the ES
	boundaries has been identified to assist in reducing landscape and visual effects.
Part 2.11.5 *"Nationally designated landscapes have specific statutory purposes which help ensure their continued protection. The Secretary of State should have special regard to nationally designated landscapes, where the general presumption in favour of overhead lines should be reversed to favour undergrounding."*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB) have been identified within the study area.
Part 2.11.6 *"Away from these protected landscapes and in locations where there is a high potential for widespread and significant adverse landscape and/or visual impacts, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the applicant has provided evidence to support a decision on whether undergrounding is or is not appropriate, having considered this on a case-by-case basis, weighing the considerations in paragraph 2.9.24 above."*	**Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** provides a summary of the appraisal outcomes and reasons for the selection of the overhead HVAC line opposed to an underground HVAC cable.

National Planning Policy Framework

1.2.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as revised in December 2024 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024) sets out national planning policies that reflect priorities of the Government for operation of the planning system and the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the development and use of land. The NPPF has a strong emphasis on sustainable development, with a presumption in favour of such development. The NPPF has the potential to be considered important and relevant to the Secretary of State (SoS) consideration of the Proposed Project.

1.2.13 Table 1.3 below provides details of the elements of the NPPF that are relevant to this chapter, and how and where they are covered in the ES.

Table 1.3 NPPF requirements relevant to landscape and visual

NPPF section	Where this is covered in the application documents
Paragraph 132 states: *"Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics…".*	Statutory consultation as part of the DCO process has enabled local communities to respond to and comment upon the landscape mitigation proposed. Consultation is recorded in the Consultation Report (**Application Document 5.1**)

NPPF section	Where this is covered in the application documents
Paragraph 135: *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:* • *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;* • *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;* • *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);* • *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and* • *distinctive places to live, work and visit;* • *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and* • *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*	The design of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials, has been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
Paragraph 139 states: *"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:* • *development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*	The design of the converter station and substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials, have been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback as well as a Design Panel Review (refer to **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**). Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be

NPPF section	Where this is covered in the application documents
• *outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."*	adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** and **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
This is further developed in paragraph 140 that states: *"Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used)."*	The design of the Minster Converter station and Minster Substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials, have been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
Paragraph 187 states: *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:* • *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);* • *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;* • *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*	Landscape and visual considerations have informed the development of the Kent Onshore Scheme (see **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**). Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and have been developed collaboratively with disciplines including cultural heritage and ecology. **Application Document 6.12**

NPPF section	Where this is covered in the application documents
• *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;* • *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and* • *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*	**Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility (BNG) Report** sets out the improvements to biodiversity and ecosystem services within the Proposed Project and provides information on the delivery of biodiversity net gain. Further information on protection of ecology and biodiversity, water environment, geology and hydrogeology, agriculture and soils, noise and vibration and air quality should be referred to within **Application Document 6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity**, **Application Document 6.2.3.4 Part 3 Kent Chapter 4 Water Environment**, **Application Document 6.2.3.5 Part 3 Kent Chapter 5 Geology and Hydrogeology**, **Application Document 6.2.3.6 Part 3 Kent Chapter 6 Agriculture and Soils**, **Application Document 6.2.3.9 Part 3 Kent Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration** and **Application Document 6.2.3.8 Part 3 Kent Chapter 8 Air Quality** respectively.
Paragraph 189: *"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues".*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and AONB) have been identified within the study area.
This is further expanded in paragraph 190 which states: *"When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:* • *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*	No landscape related nationally designated areas (including National Parks and National Landscapes) have been identified within the study area.

NPPF section	Where this is covered in the application documents
• *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and* • *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."*	
Paragraph 198 states: *"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:* • *mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and* • *limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."*	Cumulative effects are considered in **Application Document 6.2.3.12 Part 3 Kent Chapter 12 Kent Onshore Scheme Intra-Project Cumulative Effects**. The landscape and visual assessments presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter have assessed the likely significant effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Kent Onshore Scheme including potential effects from lighting on landscape character and visual amenity.

National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance for the Natural Environment

1.2.14 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for "*Natural Environment*" (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2016) under the subheading of Green Infrastructure, the PPG notes the importance of green infrastructure as a natural capital asset and should be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals.

1.2.15 Under the subheading of biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems, the PPG notes biodiversity opportunities in relation to green infrastructure provision.

1.2.16 Under the subheading of Landscape, paragraph 036 (Reference ID: 8-036-20190721) states:

"…plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes.

This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside."

1.2.17 Paragraph 036 also notes:

"Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully."

1.2.18 Paragraph 037 supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character of the landscape.

1.2.19 Green infrastructure provision and landscape screening and integration measures have been considered early on as part of the development of landscape mitigation which are set out in Section 1.8 in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and have been developed collaboratively with disciplines including cultural heritage and ecology.

1.2.20 Cumulative landscape and visual effects are set out in **Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects**.

1.2.21 Published landscape character assessments have been used to inform the baseline landscape character and have been supplemented with site analysis presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

Planning Practice Guidance for Light Pollution

1.2.22 PPG for "*Light Pollution*" (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2014) sets out that:

"Artificial lighting needs to be considered when a development may increase levels of lighting, or would be sensitive to prevailing levels of artificial lighting."

1.2.23 Relevant to landscape and visual matters, the PPG sets out factors that can be considered when assessing whether a development proposal might have implications for light pollution. This includes the following points:

"Will a new development, or a proposed change to an existing site, be likely to materially alter light levels in the environment around the site and/or have the potential to adversely affect the use or enjoyment of nearby buildings or open spaces?" and

"Is the development in or near a protected area of dark sky or an intrinsically dark landscape where new lighting would be conspicuously out of keeping with local nocturnal light levels, making it desirable to minimise or avoid new lighting?"

1.2.24 Effects of lighting on landscape and visual receptors during construction and operation from the Kent Onshore Scheme are presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation** and **Landscape Character Assessment and Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.

Local Planning Policy

1.2.25 The Kent Onshore Scheme Boundary (refer to **Application Document 2.2.3 Kent Location Plan**) lies entirely within the jurisdiction of Kent County Council, and within the boundary of Thanet District Council Local Plan and Dover District Local Plan.

County Plans

1.2.26 County planning guidance which is relevant to a study of landscape and visual matters and has informed the assessment of preliminary effects in this chapter are as follows.

Kent County Council Framing Kent's Future – Our Council Strategy 2022 to 2026

1.2.27 The Kent County Council Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy for 2022 to 2026 (Kent County Council, 2023) includes four key priorities, one of which is Environmental Step Change. This includes the commitment "*to consider Kent's environment as a core asset that is valued, strengthened and protected*".

Kent Design Guide

1.2.28 Kent Design Guide (Kent County Council, 2006) was published by Kent County Council (KCC) in 2006. This document seeks to *"provide a starting point for good design while retaining scope for creative, individual approaches to different buildings and different areas"*. The document is split into three key sections, the value of good design, creating the design and getting the planning process right.

1.2.29 Under the first section: the value of good design, the document sets out what "*Good Design"* means, including "*enriching existing character – reinforcing local patterns of development and landscape while not ruling out innovation*".

1.2.30 Under the second section: creating the design, the document refers to landscape character areas (LCAs) and the landscape setting in order to understand the site and the importance of new buildings forming a "*harmonious composition with surrounding buildings or landscape features in local views and vistas*". The document also states that existing landscape features should be retained and enhanced where possible. These LCAs have informed the baseline presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline** and the development of the landscape mitigation set out in Section 1.8 in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.

Kent Environment Strategy

1.2.31 Kent Environment Strategy (Kent County Council, 2016) was published by KCC in 2016. The document sets out the vision for Kent across three themes: 1) building the foundations for delivery, 2) making best use of existing resources, avoiding or minimising negative impacts, and 3) toward a sustainable future.

1.2.32 Under theme two: making best use of existing resources, avoiding or minimising negative impacts, the document sets out a number of priorities including to "*conserve and enhance the quality and supply of the county of Kent's natural and historical resources and assets*". Several of the sub-priorities of this priority are relevant to landscape and visual matters and are stated within the document as follows:

- *"establish a coherent, landscape-led approach to decision making through identification of the natural and historic features that underpin landscape character and a strategic approach to assessment of character and trends in landscape condition;*
- *improve and increase functional habitat networks on land and in the sea, identifying opportunities and protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment and landscape character through planning and decision making; and*
- *establish land-use management approaches that create, preserve and enhance healthy, viable soils and respect landscape character".*

1.2.33 The above themes have informed the Design Principles in **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1 and the landscape mitigation creates functional habitat networks and reinforces features characteristic of the landscape character. These measures are set out in Section 1.8 of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.

Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy

1.2.34 Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy (Kent Nature Partnership, 2020) was published by Kent Nature Partnership, including KCC, in 2020. The document looks to *"protect and recover threatened species and enhance the wildlife habitats that Kent is particularly important for"*.

1.2.35 The document sets four goals, including: *"Terrestrial habitats, ecosystems and species: by 2045 Kent has a rich and growing terrestrial biodiversity, underpinned by more resilient and coherent ecological networks and healthy, well-functioning ecosystems."* Under this goal, the document sets out priority habitats in need of restoration and expansion, including lowland mixed broadleaved woodland and hedgerows, and various objectives such as:

- *"more, bigger and less fragmented areas of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected sites network for wildlife, with an increase in the overall extent of all priority habitats to ensure greater connectivity and resilience to climate change;*
- *new development to better provide for a greener urban environment, through increased urban tree planting, the inclusion of integral wildlife niches and green building and landscape design; and*
- *protect and restore existing trees and woodland, whilst increasing tree cover within the county that supports the recovery of wildlife, delivers natural climate solutions and enriches people's lives".*

1.2.36 Native woodland planting is a large part of the landscape mitigation measures which are set out in Section 1.8 of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.

Local Plans

Thanet District Council

1.2.37 The majority of the Kent Onshore Scheme lies within the jurisdiction of Thanet District Council (TDC). Local planning policy for Thanet District Council consists of the Thanet

Local Plan (adopted July 2020) (Thanet District Council, 2020). Thanet Local Plan policies which are relevant to landscape and visual assessment matters and have informed the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) are detailed in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4 Local planning policies relevant to landscape and visual – Thanet Local Plan

Thanet Local Plan - Policy	Where this is covered in the ES
SP24: Development in the Countryside This policy states that: *"All development proposals to which this policy applies should be of a form, scale and size which is compatible with, and respects the character of, the local area and the surrounding countryside and its defining characteristics. Any environmental impact should be avoided or appropriately mitigated".*	Landscape and visual considerations have informed the routeing, siting and design development of the Kent Onshore Scheme to reduce the potential landscape and visual effects as far as possible. This is set out in **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**. Mitigation measures are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section in this chapter. The design of the Proposed Project has been informed by landscape and visual considerations, other environmental and technical desk studies and site surveys as well as consultation and stakeholder feedback.
SP26: Landscape Character Areas. This policy states the importance of conserving and enhancing landscape character and local distinctiveness and makes reference to published Landscape Character Assessments. The policy notes that development should be directed away from Landscape Character Areas E1, E2 and F1 as they are largely undeveloped and notes the importance of protecting the undeveloped coast, specifically proposals *"should respect the traditional seafront architecture of the area, maintain existing open spaces and should ensure that recreational and wildlife opportunities are not compromised by development".* The policy also states that the distinction between town and countryside should be retained. The policy sets out elements of	Thanet District Council Landscape Character Assessment (Thanet District Council, 2017) published in 2017 forms the basis of the landscape assessment. The Kent Onshore Scheme Boundary lies within LCA E1 and F1. The landscape assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised in this chapter has assessed the likely significant effects from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Kent Onshore Scheme on these LCAs. The routeing and siting of the Kent Onshore Scheme has been informed by landscape and visual considerations to minimise effects on both LCA E1 and F1 which are

Thanet Local Plan - Policy	Where this is covered in the ES
Thanet's local distinctiveness to conserve and enhance, including: • *"its island quality surrounded by the silted marshes of the former Wantsum Channel and the sea;* • *a sense of openness and "big skies", particularly in the central part of the District;* • *its long, low chalk cliffs and the sense of "wildness" experienced at the coast and on the marshes;* • *gaps between Thanet's towns and villages, particularly those areas designated as Green Wedges;* • *long-distance, open views, particularly across the Dover Strait and English Channel, North Sea and across adjacent lowland landscapes; and* • *subtle skylines and ridges which are prominent from lower lying landscape both within and beyond the District".*	identified in **Application Document 6.2.1.3 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered**.
SP27: Green Infrastructure This policy notes the importance of conserving and enhancing the green infrastructure network. The policy also sets out the management and maintenance of new or existing green infrastructure assets should be considered for the long-term.	The landscape mitigation proposals provide green infrastructure networks and are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and consider connectivity with the green infrastructure network.
SP28: Protection of the International and European Designated Sites The policy makes reference to SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites and states that where possible *"applicants should incorporate*	**Application Document 6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity** considers potential effects on the SPA, SAC, and Ramsar sites.

Thanet Local Plan - Policy	Where this is covered in the ES
measures to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts".	
SP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets This policy sets out that *"development proposals will, where appropriate, be required to make a positive contribution to the conservation, enhancement and management of biodiversity and geodiversity assets resulting in a net gain for biodiversity assets".* The policy refers to ways in which this could be achieved, including restoring, enhancing and creating habitats.	Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and have been developed collaboratively with the ecology team to ensure BNG and the conservation, enhancement and management of biodiversity and geodiversity assets is positively considered.
SP36: Conservation and Enhancement of Thanet's Historic Environment This policy sets out ways in which the historic environment will be conserved and enhanced, including "*protecting the historic environment from inappropriate development"* and *"supporting development that is of high quality design and supports sustainable development".*	**Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage** considers potential effects on the historic environment. The historic environment has informed the historic landscape character and in particular consideration of landscape value (see **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**).
GI06: Landscaping and Green Infrastructure This policy sets out the importance of describing the landscape baseline and how the proposals will enhance the setting of the development. The policy refers to several ways of achieving this, including retaining historic features, creating new wildlife corridors, softening of development, establishing a sense of enclosure and increasing connectivity. The policy also notes the importance of maintenance of landscape.	Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and consider connectivity with the green infrastructure network and BNG principles. The landscape baseline should be referred to within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline** and summarised in this chapter.
QD01: Sustainable Design This policy sets out ways in which development can be designed sustainably, including providing safe and attractive cycling and walking	The design of the converter station and substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials have been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design

Thanet Local Plan - Policy	Where this is covered in the ES
opportunities and the use of sustainable materials.	Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1. The Design Principles have regard to local sustainable design policies, including the provision of cycling and walking opportunities, where appropriate, as well as the potential for use of sustainable materials where they meet technical requirements.
QD02: General Design Principles This policy sets out that the *"primary planning aim in all new development is to promote or reinforce the local character of the area and provide high quality and inclusive design and be sustainable in all other respects"* and that *"external spaces, landscape, public realm, and boundary treatments must be designed as an integral part of new development proposals and coordinated with adjacent sites and phases".* The policy sets out various elements that proposals must do, including relating to surrounding development, ensuring trees and other planting is appropriate to the scale of built form and space available and retaining and enhancing existing trees and natural habitats.	The design of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials, has been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent Tables 3.1 and 4.1**. The indicative landscaping strategy is provided in **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**.
CC07: Richborough This policy states that: *"Proposals for the development of renewable energy facilities at Richborough will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the*	**Application Document 6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity** and **Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage** consider potential effects on the ecological and

Thanet Local Plan - Policy	Where this is covered in the ES
development will not be detrimental to nearby sites of nature conservation value or heritage assets and that any potential effects would be fully mitigated."	historic environments respectively. Representative viewpoint 8 considers the potential effects on visitors to Richborough Roman Fort. Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section in this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and have been developed collaboratively with the ecology and heritage teams.

Dover District Council

1.2.38 DDC published the Dover District Local Plan to 2040 in October 2024 (Dover District Council, 2024). Local Plan policies which are relevant to landscape and visual matters are identified in Table 1.5 below.

Table 1.5 Local planning policies relevant to landscape and visual – Dover District Local Plan to 2040

Dover District Local Plan to 2040	Where this is covered in the ES
SP13: Protecting the District's Hierarchy of Designated Environmental Sites and Biodiversity Assets. This policy sets out the various designated environmental sites and biodiversity assets in the District, including SAC, SPA, Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) ancient woodland and veteran trees. The policy then outlines that the mitigation hierarchy should be followed for development affecting such designated sites.	Potential effects on biodiversity assets are considered in **Application Document 6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity**. No ancient woodland or veteran trees would be impacted. The landscape mitigation proposals in Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter have been developed collaboratively with the ecology team.
SP14: Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity. This policy notes the importance of conserving and enhancing green infrastructure, habitats and	Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter**

Dover District Local Plan to 2040	Where this is covered in the ES
biodiversity, improving ecological networks.	**Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation** and consider connectivity with the green infrastructure network, ecological habitats and networks.
CC8: Tree Planting and Protection. This policy states that trees should be native species and a presumption for on-site delivery. The policy highlights the need for a detailed landscaping scheme and landscape management plan.	Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**. Indicative native species mixes are included in the **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent**.
PM1: Achieving High Quality Design, Place Making and the provision of Design Codes Making and the provision of Design Codes. This policy promotes high quality design, including reference to understanding of the local landscape context and character, making a positive contribution to visual character, incorporation of trees, supporting habitat conservation and creation, long-term management and adding to the overall quality of the area for the lifespan of the development.	The design of the Minster Converter station and Minster Substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials, have been developed alongside consultation and stakeholder feedback including engagement with a Design Review Panel as explained in **Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**. Design Principles have been provided with the application for development consent. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent that would be adopted and embedded into the detailed design of the structure. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1.
NE1: Biodiversity Net Gain. This policy states that development proposals must result in a 10% gain in biodiversity and sets out a number of criteria including focusing on local priorities outlined in published documents.	Biodiversity net gain is currently not mandatory for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, with local policy reflecting the mandatory requirements for applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (National Grid) has nevertheless voluntarily committed to the delivery of 10% biodiversity net gain on major projects and will explore how this will be delivered on the Proposed Project through a combination on on-site and off-site measures.

Dover District Local Plan to 2040	Where this is covered in the ES
NE2: Landscape Character and the Kent Downs AONB. This policy sets out various published Landscape Character Assessments which should be referred to where relevant. The policy sets out key landscape characteristics including the pattern and composition of trees, woodland and field boundaries.	Dover District Council Landscape Character Assessment published in 2020 (Dover District Council, 2020) forms the basis of the landscape assessment. The landscape assessment presented in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised in this chapter has assessed the likely significant effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Kent Onshore Scheme on these LCAs. The Kent Downs AONB would not be affected by the Kent Onshore Scheme.

Dover Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Evidence Report

1.2.39 The Dover Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Evidence Report (Dover District Council, 2022) was published by DDC in May 2022 as an evidence base document to inform the new Local Plan but also supporting the adopted Core Strategy. The document "*sets out a strategic network of green and blue infrastructure across Dover District*" and notes the importance of the network, including benefits for climate change, protecting biodiversity and connectivity and developing a greener economy. The document also notes that there is a good provision of PRoWs across Dover district, which form part of the Dover District Local Plan. There is a good provision of promoted routes across the district, which are promoted by Kent County Council.

1.2.40 With reference to the Kent Onshore Scheme, the document notes the links along river valleys associated with the River Stour. The document sets out strategy priorities for green and blue infrastructure, including:

- *protect, enhance and improve the core biodiversity sites and take action for priority species;*
- *create an ecologically resilient network to join habitats, allow species to move and to help nature adapt to climate change;*
- *link people and nature;*
- *ensure development is sustainable;*
- *protect and enhance biodiversity of water and wetland habitats, including chalk streams, and protect the quality and quantity of water resources;*
- *utilise green and blue infrastructure solutions to manage water flows, including incorporating SuDS into new development and retrofitting into existing green infrastructure where such an approach is appropriate to help address flooding issues;*
- *support increased active travel, to relieve congestion and air pollution and encourage healthy living through a strategic cycle network and walking routes;*

- *maximise the benefits of recreation and access to Dover's unique landscapes and green spaces, whilst ensuring that this does not have a negative impact on them or their biodiversity;* and
- *strengthen and reinforce landscape character and ensure green and blue infrastructure enhances and fits with local landscape character".*

1.2.41 The document also notes that "*landscape character is an important underpinning element of green and blue infrastructure planning*", that the local landscape character should be taken into account and refers to published landscape character assessments. Refer to **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, Strategic Access Mitigation and Monitoring Strategy

1.2.42 The Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, Strategic Access Mitigation and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy (Dover District Council, 2023) is not referred to as it provides a "*strategic approach to mitigating the potential in-combination impacts of new housing development*", which is not relevant to the Kent Onshore Scheme.

Ash Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2037

1.2.43 The Ash Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2037 (Ash Parish Council, 2021) was made in September 2021 to guide future development. The Plan notes the distinctive landscape of the Ash Levels which comprises a strong landscape pattern of drainage ditches along field boundaries. The Plan also states that "*the landscape forms an intrinsic part of the character and setting of the parish*" and that the "*distinctive character and sensitive landscape would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location and/or design that would interrupt these views*". Refer to **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

1.3 Scoping Opinion and Consultation

Scoping

1.3.1 A Scoping Report for the Proposed Project was issued to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 24 October 2022 (**Application Document 6.14 Environmental Scoping Report 2022**) and a Scoping Opinion was received from the SoS on 1 December 2022 (**Application Document 6.15 Scoping Opinion**). Table 1.6 sets out the comments raised in the Scoping Opinion and how these have been addressed in this ES. The Scoping Opinion takes account of responses from prescribed consultees as appropriate. **Application Document 6.3.1.6.A Appendix 1.6.A Responses to Scoping Opinion** provides responses to the comments made by the prescribed consultees at scoping stage and how each comment has been considered.

Table 1.6 Comments raised in the Scoping Opinion

ID	Inspectorate's comments	Response
4.1.1	*[Alteration to landscape character and visual amenity as a result of operational*	**Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description**

ID	Inspectorate's comments	Response
	lighting for the converter station (operation)] This matter is to be scoped out on the basis that there is less potential that significant effects will result on landscape character or visual amenity as any additional lighting will be limited to maintaining site security and safety and would be within the context of existing lighting at Richborough Energy Park and adjacent development. The Scoping Report also acknowledges that should the approach to lighting change, this aspect will be scoped into the landscape and visual assessments. Reference to this effect is not included in Table 3.2.9 (Proposed scope of the assessment). The Inspectorate does not agree that operational lighting of the convertor station can be scoped out at this stage in the absence of information confirming the type and location of any such lighting, and in the context of the existing environment. The ES should include an assessment of operational lighting on sensitive landscape and visual receptors, where likely significant effects could occur.	**of the Proposed Project** provides details on the lighting proposals at the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. Permanent external lighting would comprise security lighting on sensors or manually controlled and low-level egress lighting. Potential effects associated with the proposed lighting on landscape character and visual amenity have been considered in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
4.1.2	*[Alteration to visual amenity from the Operational HVAC overhead line (to be decided) (operation)]* The Scoping Report states that this matter is to be scoped out on the basis that "*The introduction of an overhead line HVAC connection has less potential to result in significant effects on visual amenity at operation given the existing context of vertical structures, including a wind turbine, communication masts and numerous overhead lines terminating at Richborough substation*." However, it also states that "*in order to ensure that potential effects on the additional wirescape are adequately covered, it will be scoped into the visual assessment*." Table 3.2.9 states that this matter is scoped in for receptors including: settlement, isolated dwellings, recreational facilities, recreational routes and access land, employees, occupiers of vehicles and railway line passengers. For	This is an error in the Scoping Report (Table 3.2.2). The HVAC overhead line has been considered in the landscape and visual assessments in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.

ID	Inspectorate's comments	Response
	the avoidance of doubt, the Inspectorate considers this matter should be scoped in to the assessment, where likely significant effects on sensitive visual receptors could occur.	
4.1.3	*[Alteration to landscape character and visual amenity from operational HVDC underground cable (and HVAC if underground)]* This matter is proposed to be scoped out on the basis of there being less potential to have significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity at operation. It is stated that the landscape will be returned to previous land use and landscape components lost at construction will be reinstated as soon as reasonably practical after construction. The Inspectorate considers that the ES should address the potential for permanent landscape character effects due to any planting restrictions introduced for any easement required.	**Application Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice** commits to the complete reinstatement of the HVDC corridor. However, the landscape and visual assessments contained in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter do consider the short and long-term operational effects on landscape character and visual amenity associated with the HVDC corridor until it is reinstated.
4.1.4	[*Permanent alteration to landscape character and perceptual qualities as a result of the operational converter station on the following receptors: Thanet District Council Landscape Character Assessment (TDLCA) LCA A1: Manston Chalk Plateau, and Dover District Council Landscape Character Assessment (DDLCA) LCAs B1: Great Stour Sandwich Corridor, D1: Preston, and H1: Richborough Bluff (operation)].*iThis matter is proposed to be scoped out on the basis that the Kent Scoping Boundary does not lie within these LCAs. Whilst there is the potential for indirect effects on the perceptual qualities of these LCAs there is less potential that the effects would be significant. The Inspectorate is of the view that these LCAs can be scoped out of the landscape assessment for the operational converter site on the basis of the likely nature of potential effects relative to the distance between these LCAs.	No further comment required.
4.1.5	*[Temporary and permanent alteration to landscape character and perceptual*	No further comment required.

ID	Inspectorate's comments	Response
	qualities as a result of the construction and operation of the converter station, HVDC and HVAC on the following receptors: TDLCA Local Character Areas C1: St Nicholas at Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland and LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland (all stages)] Scoped out on the basis of there being no theoretical visibility between any aspect of the Kent Scoping Boundary during construction and operation and consequently there are not considered to be any effects on these LCAs. The Inspectorate is of the view that these LCAs can be scoped out of the landscape assessment on the basis of no pathway of effect between the Proposed Development and these LCAs.	
4.1.6	*[Representative viewpoints]* The viewpoints to be used for assessment should be agreed with the relevant consultation bodies, including the Local Authorities. The Applicant's attention is directed to the comments of Thanet District Council at Appendix 2 of this Opinion with regards to requested additional viewpoints.	National Grid has agreed viewpoints with Thanet District Council at a thematic landscape meeting on the 10 May 2023. Suggested viewpoints from Thanet District Council have all been incorporated into the revised representative viewpoint schedule (viewpoints 4 and 5, see **Application Document 6.4.3.1.6 Representative Viewpoint Locations**) other than viewpoints at the junction of Canterbury Road West and the A299 and the Lord of the Manor Roundabout. As it has not been possible to gain safe pedestrian access to them, viewpoints 11 and 13 respectively were suggested as alternatives, an approach which has been agreed within Thanet District Council (see **Application Document 6.4.3.1.6 Representative Viewpoint Locations**).
4.1.7	*[Viewpoints and cultural heritage Receptors]* The Applicant is advised to consider, and include as appropriate, heritage specific viewpoints to support the heritage assessment. Suitable cross-referencing between the LVIA aspect chapter and	Five heritage viewpoints have been identified and agreed with stakeholders, further details can be found within **Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage**. Cross-referencing between the Landscape and Visual chapter and **Application Document**

ID	Inspectorate's comments	Response
	Cultural Heritage aspect chapter should be included.	**6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage** has been carried out where appropriate including in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

Statutory Consultation

1.3.2 Statutory consultation for the Proposed Project took place between 24 October and 18 December 2023. A further Targeted Consultation exercise on the main changes to the Proposed Project introduced after the 2023 statutory consultation, was undertaken between 8 July and 11 August 2024. In addition, a project update and a local engagement exercise took place between 22 November 2024 and 12 January 2025, focusing on design amendments made following the targeted consultation. A summary of relevant feedback received during consultation relating to landscape and visual is provided below. Further details on how consultation responses have informed the assessment can be found in **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report** and **Application Document 5.1.9 Appendix H Pre-submission Engagement**.

1.3.3 Feedback from Statutory Consultation was extensive for landscape and visual matters. Table 1.7 sets out the stakeholders that were involved in Statutory Consultation, a summary of their responses and a summary of National Grid responses.

Table 1.7 Key aspects raised at statutory consultation and National Grid responses

Stakeholder	Key topic raised by stakeholder	Summary of response from National Grid
Thanet District Council	Stour Marshes LCA and impact on landscape character and visual amenity	The key characteristics of the Stour Marshes LCA, along with all other relevant LCAs and Seascape Character Areas (SCAs), are presented within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**. The likely significant landscape and visual effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Kent Onshore Scheme have been assessed within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter. Landscape mitigation proposals are identified in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation**

		Outline Landscape Mitigation, which consider the key characteristics of the Stour Marshes.
	Engagement on design development	Stakeholders have had the opportunity within landscape thematic meetings to engage with landscape mitigation design proposals presented in the Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1 for further design information.
	Layout and orientation of the converter station and substation	The assessment set out in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter assumes a worst-case layout of the Minster Converter Station and Substation. Should the Proposed Project be consented, the site and orientation of the converter station and substation would be further developed with impacts on landscape and visual receptors considered.
	Construction and maintenance compounds	The assessment set out in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter includes the consideration of construction compounds. There are no separate maintenance compounds as part of the Proposed Project as these will be an integral part of the overall layout of the Minster Converter Station and Substation design. The materiality and detailed design of the compounds would be developed should the Proposed Project be consented.
East Sussex County Council	Effects on the King Charles III England Coast Path	The preliminary visual assessment presented **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** and summarised in this chapter have assessed the likely significant visual effects from the construction, operation and maintenance of the Kent Onshore Scheme,

		including those on the users of the King Charles III England Coast Path.
Kent County Council	Further mitigation including a legacy fund for the PRoW network	It is National Grid Electricity Transmission's (NGET) position that there is no policy or legal requirement that requires all residual effects to be compensated for or that requires alternative landscape compensation to be provided where there are any residual adverse landscape and visual effects that result from the Proposed Project.
Dover District Council	Converter Station design	Stakeholders have had the opportunity within landscape thematic meetings to engage with landscape mitigation design proposals presented in the Predicting the future baseline involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty as acknowledged at paragraph 5.33 in GLVIA3 . It requires projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time. The nature of the future baseline is influenced by a combination of natural and human processes, including climate change. Scoping and consented development proposals are able to influence the future baseline and are discussed in the cumulative assessment in **Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects**. The landscape of the Kent Onshore Scheme study area is predominantly characterised by the Minster marshes and the Ash Levels. These are open, low-lying marshland landscapes in which development is typically sparse. They are agricultural landscapes where pastoral and arable farmland is actively managed. Trees, woodland, scrub and riparian habitats will continue to mature but the inherent character and the contribution that they make to views and visual amenity is unlikely to substantially change. Thanet Local Plan policy CC07 is broadly supportive of renewable energy developments at Richborough providing they are not detrimental to adjacent nature conservation and heritage assets. It is therefore likely that energy related infrastructure has the potential to expand in this area. The undeveloped coast around Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Bay is likely to remain

		unchanged given its protected status. There could be continued expansion along the western settlement edge of Ramsgate and around Thanet Parkway station area. Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation section of this chapter and **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**. Refer to **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Table 3.1 for further design information on the Converter Station.
Minster Parish Council	Objection based on impact to marshes landscape. Requests for provision of compensatory environmental benefit and a footbridge over River Stour.	It is NGET's position that there is no policy or legal requirement that requires all residual effects to be compensated for or that requires alternative landscape compensation to be provided where residual adverse landscape and visual effects result from the Proposed Project.

Further Engagement

1.3.4 Landscape and visual thematic meetings have been held approximately every eight weeks from 20 February 2024 up until DCO submission. Stakeholders that have typically been present at these thematic meetings include Thanet District Council, Kent County Council and Dover District Council. A summary of key matters raised and discussed within the landscape and visual thematic meetings is outlined below:

- study area for the landscape and visual assessment;
- LVIA approach and methodology, and photomontage methodology;
- Landscape and Seascape Character receptors for the landscape assessment;
- representative viewpoint locations;
- photosheet layout;
- sequential cumulative visual assessment;
- outline landscape mitigation design;
- structure of the Outline LEMP; and
- planting heights and indicative species mix for landscape mitigation planting.

1.3.5 Indicative planting heights for the Year 15 visualisations included within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.A Appendix 3.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology** and used in **Application Document 6.4.3.1.8 Representative Viewpoint Visualisations** have been developed based on site information provided by stakeholders for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme; however they are considered to be equally appropriate to the Kent Onshore Scheme. Further information is provided within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.A Appendix 3.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology**.

Summary of Scope of Assessment

1.3.6 This section details what aspects have been scoped in and scoped out of the assessment through the scoping process and consultation with stakeholders.

Aspects scoped into the assessment

1.3.7 The scope of this assessment covers the temporary impacts on landscape character and visual amenity during the construction stage.

1.3.8 The permanent effects on landscape character and visual amenity during Year 1 of the operational phase have been considered in this assessment including the permanent operational infrastructure and the reinstatement of landscape features along the cable route. Longer term effects on landscape and visual receptors at Year 15 of operation are also considered when landscape mitigation planting would begin to establish.

1.3.9 It is considered that the effects at decommissioning would be no greater than the effects identified at construction. Therefore, this project stage is considered to be no different to the findings of the construction stage assessment and is consequently not considered separately.

Aspects scoped out of the assessment

1.3.10 Three published LCAs (Thanet District Landscape Character Assessment (TDLCA) LCAs A1, C1 and C2) have been scoped out of the landscape assessment at all stages of the Proposed Project as there would be no potential for anticipated significant effects on them.

1.3.11 Three published LCAs and two SCAs (TDLCA LCAs F1 and G1, Dover District Council Landscape Character Assessment (DDLCA) LCA C1 and Seascape Character Assessment for the Dover Strait (SCADS) SCAs C3C and C5A/I1A) have been scoped out of the landscape assessment of effects at the operational stage as there would be no potential for anticipated significant effects due to lack of or very limited visibility. This is set out within the Baseline Conditions section of this chapter and has been agreed with stakeholders through thematic meetings (see **Application Document 7.4.5 Draft Statement of Common Ground Thanet District Council** and **Application Document 7.4.6 Draft Statement of Common Ground Dover District Council**).

1.4 Approach and Methodology

1.4.1 **Application Document 6.2.1.5 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology** sets out the overarching approach which has been used in developing the ES. A full explanation of the LVIA method and criteria used to assess sensitivity, magnitude of effect and classification of landscape and visual effects is included in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.A Appendix 3.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology** and summarised in this section. This includes where terminology differs from the standard approach, such as the reference to magnitude of effects.

Summary of Landscape Assessment Methodology

1.4.2 In assessing and classifying the likely effects from predicted impacts to the landscape resulting from the Proposed Project, the following criteria have been considered:

- landscape character baseline characteristics;
- landscape sensitivity;
- magnitude of landscape effects; and
- resulting significance of landscape effects.

1.4.3 Landscape receptors are described as components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the Proposed Project. These can include overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

1.4.4 The relationship between sensitivity of receptor and magnitude of impact allows an assessment of the relative significance of predicted landscape effects to be made. The sensitivity of the landscape to change is a combination of the value of the LCA combined with the degree to which a particular LCA or feature can accommodate changes or new features, without unacceptable detrimental effects to its key characteristics.

1.4.5 The magnitude of landscape impact relates to the size/scale, extent or degree of change likely to be experienced as a result of the Proposed Project. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a physical change resulting in the loss of landscape components, or a change beyond the land-take of the Proposed Project that might impact the character of the area, the duration of the effect, and whether the impact is permanent or temporary. Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3 Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (Landscape Institute, 2024) notes that the size/scale of effect is likely to be the most important factor with geographical extent and duration/reversibility considered as ‘modifiers’. The levels of landscape magnitude of effect are described as being very large, large, medium, small, negligible, and none.

1.4.6 The combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of landscape impact determines the significance of landscape effects. For the purposes of this assessment, moderate and major effects have been deemed ‘significant’. Where significant environmental effects are identified, measures to mitigate these effects are proposed (where feasible) and remaining residual effects are identified.

Summary of Visual Assessment Methodology

1.4.7 The assessment of visual effects is structured by receptor groups (e.g., residential, recreational and road users). Individual receptors are identified through the analysis of the ZTV, within which views of the Proposed Development are likely to be possible, and field survey.

1.4.8 Individuals are subsequently categorised into receptor groups within different areas and representative viewpoints have been selected. Views from each identified representative viewpoint are recorded, considering the receptor type, a baseline description of the existing views and the value of the view.

1.4.9 Sensitivity of visual receptors has been defined through an appraisal of the viewing expectation, or value placed on the view as identified in the baseline study, and its susceptibility to change. Overall visual sensitivity has been described as very high, high, medium, low, and negligible.

1.4.10 Visual magnitude of effect relates to the extent to which the Kent Onshore Scheme would alter the existing view and is an expression of the size or scale of change in the

view, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3 Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (Landscape Institute, 2024) notes that not all components of magnitude of effect are equally weighted. It is considered that the scale of change and degree of contrast are likely to be the most important factors with the nature of view, angle of the view and duration/reversibility considered as 'modifiers'. The levels of visual magnitude of effect are described as being very large, large, medium, small, negligible and none.

1.4.11 The sensitivity of a receptor and the magnitude of effect on that receptor have been combined to determine the significance of effect that the Proposed Development is predicted to have on existing baseline visual conditions for that given receptor. For the purposes of this assessment, moderate and major effects have been deemed 'significant'. Where significant environmental effects are identified, measures to mitigate these effects are proposed (where feasible) and remaining residual effects are identified.

Assumptions and Limitations

1.4.12 No technical difficulties or practical problems were encountered in producing the landscape and visual ES chapter. Fieldwork was undertaken in weather with good to moderate visibility of at least 3 km.

1.4.13 Site visits to inform the landscape and visual assessment contained within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** have been conducted in both Winter and Summer, therefore allowing a comparison of the landscape and visual baseline over two seasons. This allows an assessment based on broadleaf vegetation not being in leaf and represents the most open views. Potentially significant differences between seasonal views have been outlined where relevant within the assessment and taken into consideration in assessing the impacts and reaching conclusions.

1.5 Basis of Assessment

1.5.1 This section sets out the assumptions that have been made in respect of design flexibility maintained within the Proposed Project and the consideration that has been given to alternative scenarios and the sensitivity of the assessment to changes in the construction commencement year.

1.5.2 Details of the available flexibility and assessment scenarios are presented in **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project** and **Application Document 6.2.1.5 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology**.

Flexibility Assumptions

1.5.3 The environmental assessments have been undertaken based on the description of the Proposed Project provided in **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project**. To take account of the flexibility allowed in the Proposed Project, consideration has been given to the potential for effects to be of greater or different significance should any of the permanent or temporary infrastructure elements be moved within the Limits of Deviation (LoD) or Order Limits.

1.5.4 The assumptions made regarding the use of flexibility for the main assessment are set out in Table 1.8 below.

Table 1.8 Flexibility assumptions

Element of flexibility	How it has been considered within the assessment
Lateral LoD HVDC cables	The maximum flexibility has been assessed under the assessments within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Lateral LoD Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation	Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation could be constructed anywhere within the lateral LoD, which has been assessed within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Vertical LoD Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation	The maximum flexibility has been assessed under the assessments within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Lateral LoD overhead line	The maximum flexibility has been assessed under the assessments within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Vertical LoD overhead line	The maximum flexibility has been assessed under the assessments within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.
Order Limits – temporary construction works	Temporary construction works proposed within the Order Limits have been assumed to be up to the closest proximity to viewpoints. It is assumed that vegetation clearance could occur anywhere within the Order Limits; however, this would be limited to the extents set out in the **ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project**, taking into account any commitments included in the **Application Document 6.10 Arboricultural Impact Assessment** and **Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**.

Sensitivity Test

1.5.5 Under the terms of the DCO, construction could commence in any year up to five years from the granting of the DCO which is assumed to be 2026. Consideration has been given to whether the effects reported would be any different if the works were to commence in any year up to year five. Where there is a difference, this is reported in Section 1.12.

1.6 Study Area

1.6.1 The extent of the study area has been informed by a review of the design of the Kent Onshore Scheme, desk-based research, field-based appraisal, ZTV mapping, and professional judgement. This has been developed to ensure a proportionate approach is followed which focusses on likely significant effects. It is important to note the study area defines the area within which it is judged that significant landscape and/or visual effects could occur, rather than the area from which the Kent Onshore Scheme would be visible.

1.6.2 The study area for the landscape and visual assessment of the Kent Onshore Scheme comprises an area of 3 km from the Order Limits, including the Minster Converter Station, Minster Substation, HVAC overhead line (OHL) and from the proposed landfall (denoted as the high-water mark). The 3 km extent of the study area from the landfall is considered to be appropriate as the nature of the coastline around the landfall comprises of a bay in which views are typically focused into and across it from the surrounding landscape. The study area extends 1 km from the HVDC cable route. Whilst the study area includes the construction access routes, the 1 km study area is not set from these scheme components as traffic using the access routes is not considered to have any potential to lead to a significant landscape and visual effects. This is mainly due to the landscape context of the access routes and their limited spatial extent. The study area is shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.1 Topography** to **Application Document 6.4.3.1.7 Representative Viewpoint Locations and Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility**.

1.6.3 The study area was agreed with statutory consultees at the scoping stage and reconfirmed during the thematic landscape meeting on the 10 May 2023, to ensure a proportionate approach is followed which focusses on likely significant effects.

1.6.4 The computer generated ZTV (**Application Document 6.4.3.1.7 Representative Viewpoint Locations and Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility**) was run for the converter station and substation as part of the permanent above ground infrastructure. The ZTV is based on the maximum parameters of the converter station and substation, as described in **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project**. This is based on a maximum vertical heights above existing ground level of 28 m for the converter station and 20 m for the substation.

1.6.5 The other above ground permanent infrastructure associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme comprises the HVAC OHL; however, as a ZTV of an OHL has the potential to overestimate the theoretical visibility this has not been included. Professional judgement, visualisation tools and field work have been used to estimate the potential visibility of such works.

1.6.6 The ZTV has been used to inform the assessment of effects and uses the following data:

- digital terrain model (DTM) generated using Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5 DTM;
- existing buildings have been incorporated into the DTM from OS Open Map Local, based on an assumed building height of 7.5 m; and
- woodland from the National Forest Inventory (NFI) has also been incorporated into the DTM, based on an assumed woodland height of 10 m.

1.6.7 The ZTVs indicate areas from where it may be possible to view part of or the entire converter station and substation.

1.6.8 The use of the ZTVs needs to be qualified by the following considerations:

- the ZTVs are limited by the detail of the digital terrain model data used and do not take account of local topographic variations;
- some areas of theoretical visibility may comprise woodland (not accounted for in the NFI) or agricultural land, where there is effectively no public access and the likelihood of views being experienced is consequently low; and
- the ZTVs do not take account of the likely orientation of a viewer, such as the direction of travel and there is no allowance for reduction of visibility with distance, weather or light.

1.6.9 These limitations mean that the ZTVs tend to overestimate the extent of the visibility of the converter station and substation. Consequently, the ZTVs should be considered as a tool to identify areas of potential visibility for further targeted survey and assessment, and not a measure of the likely visual effect.

1.7 Baseline Conditions

Location and Context

1.7.1 The landscape varies within the study area, which is illustrated on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.1 Topography.** It includes low-lying landform within the Ash Levels and Minster Marshes in the southern and central part. This landscape comprises a series of drainage ditches separating small to medium sized field enclosures, within the former Wantsum Channel. The landscape rises towards the settlement of Minster, comprising some comparatively larger scale field enclosures. The landscape also includes the low-lying coastal areas extending around Pegwell Bay which are characterised by larger intertidal areas of marsh and mudflat along the coastline.

1.7.2 The landscape of the study area is well-settled in the northern part, including the villages of Minster, Cliffsend and Manston on the southwestern edge of Ramsgate and off the A299 road corridor. Settlement within the southern part of the study area is comparatively sparse, with smaller settlements including Richborough, Great Stonar, small clusters of dwellings, and scattered properties.

1.7.3 The land use within the study area is largely associated with agriculture, with predominantly pastoral fields particularly adjacent to the various drainage ditches which dissect the lower lying marsh and around the watercourses including the River Stour, with larger arable fields in the surrounding landscape. Orchards, which are characteristic of the horticultural landscape, are present across the southwestern part of the study area in the higher areas of the Ash Levels. Other land uses include the Richborough Energy Park in the western part of the study area which encompasses a

considerable sized linear strip of land adjacent to the River Stour, a golf course, country park and various solar farms.

1.7.4 The vegetation within the Ash Levels and Minster Marshes in the southern and central part of the study area comprises hedgerows and mature individual and linear tree blocks. Within the northern part of the study area, the landscape includes smaller blocks of woodland such as Minster Woods, along with hedgerow planting. The coastal landscape is comparatively more wooded and treed than the remainder of the study area, notably around Richborough Energy Park.

Landscape Designations

1.7.5 Landscapes can be designated for their special landscape or scenic qualities. These areas may be identified in development plans at the national, regional or local scale.

1.7.6 The following landscape designations have been identified within the study area and their locations are shown in **Application Document 6.4.3.1.2 Landscape Context and Designations**. Further detail on these landscape designations is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- Coastal Margin Access Land.
- Pegwell Bay Country Park.
- Open Space (designated within Dover District Local Plan to 2040 (Dover District Council, 2024).

Relevant Designations

1.7.7 In addition to the above, the study area also contains the following designations:

- Listed buildings;
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 Access Land;
- National Nature Reserve (NNR) - Sandwich and Pegwell Bay;
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR) - Prince's Beachlands;
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes;
- Scheduled monuments;
- Ramsar Site - Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay; and
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - Sandwich Bay.

1.7.8 Whilst effects on these designations have not been assessed in the LVIA as they would be considered in other discipline specific chapters, they inform judgements of landscape value and in the case of CRoW Act 2000 Access Land and Coastal Margin Access Land, these areas are also an important recreational resource, views from which are considered as part of the visual assessment.

1.7.9 Within the landscape and visual impact assessment, consideration of specific heritage, access or ecological assets has been restricted to the contribution the designations make to present-day landscape character and visual amenity. Further consideration of specific heritage, access or ecological assets is contained in **Application Document**

6.2.3.2 Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity and **Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage**.

Landscape and Seascape Character

National Landscape Character

1.7.10 Natural England has identified and mapped landscape character at the national level by identifying National Character Areas (NCAs) (Natural England, 2014) in 2013-15. The Kent Onshore Scheme falls within the North Kent Plain (NCA 113) as shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.3 Landscape Character - National and County**. The NCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Kent Onshore Scheme due to its scale but are described to provide context. Further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

County Landscape Character

1.7.11 At the county scale, KCC published The Landscape Assessment of Kent (Kent County Council, 2004) in 2004. Those Kent Character Areas (KCAs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.3 Landscape Character - National and County**. These KCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Kent Onshore Scheme due to their scale but are described to provide context. Further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

District Landscape Character

1.7.12 At a district scale, TDC has published the Thanet District Council Landscape Character Assessment (TDLCA) (Thanet District Council, 2017). The study defines Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and LCAs which provide a district level landscape characterisation that has been used as the basis of the preliminary landscape character assessment. Those LCAs that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.4 Landscape Character - District**. Value judgements are given as follows (see Landscape and Seascape baseline for assessment) and further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

- B1: Wantsum North Slopes: **High**;
- E1: Stour Marshes: **High**;
- F1: Pegwell Bay: **High**; and
- G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs: **High**.

1.7.13 At a district scale, DDC published the Dover District Council Landscape Character Assessment (DDLCA) (Dover District Council, 2020). The study defines LCTs and LCAs which provide a district level landscape characterisation that has been used as the basis of the preliminary landscape character assessment. Those LCAs that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.4 Landscape Character - District**. Value judgements are given as follows and further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

- A2: Ash Levels: **High**;
- B1: Great Stour Sandwich Corridor: **Low**;
- C1: Sandwich Bay: **High**;

- D1: Preston Horticultural Belt: **Medium**; and
- H1: Richborough Bluff: **High.**

Historic Landscape Character

1.7.14 The historic landscape character context within the landscape and visual study area includes various designated assets. These include listed buildings and a Scheduled Monument at Richborough Castle, which consists of a Saxon shore fort, Roman port and other associated remains dating from the Iron Age through to the medieval period. The former Wantsum Channel also falls within the study area, which consists of a former navigable channel. Consultation with the Kent County Archaeologist highlighted significant early Roman remains that had been discovered immediately north of Ebbsfleet Farm on the north bank of the former Wantsum Channel. Further details are provided within **Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage**.

National Seascape Character

1.7.15 At the national scale, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) published the Seascape Character Area Assessment East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plan Areas (Marine Management Organisation, 2012) in 2012. The study defines South East Marine Character Areas (MCAs). The study area falls within the Goodwin Sands and North Dover Strait (MCA 11) as shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.5 Seascape Character – National and Regional**. Further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

Regional Seascape Character

1.7.16 At the regional scale, KCC published the Seascape Character Assessment for the Dover Strait (SCADS) (Kent County Council, 2015) in 2015. The study defines Seascape Character Types (SCTs) and Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) at a regional scale which have been used as the basis of the preliminary seascape character assessment. The SCAs that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.5 Seascape Character – National and Regional.** Value judgements are given as follows and further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.B Appendix 3.1.B Landscape Baseline**.

- C3C: Ramsgate Harbour: **High**; and
- C5A/I1A: Sandwich and Pegwell Bays: **High**.

Landscape and Seascape baseline for assessment

1.7.17 The published district level landscape character assessment and regional seascape character assessment information form the basis of the landscape baseline for assessment of the Kent Onshore Scheme. Table 1.9 sets out which LCAs and SCAs are screened in and out of the preliminary assessment of effects on landscape character at both construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning. An explanation for screening out certain LCAs and SCAs is provided below, as agreed with stakeholders through thematic meetings (see **Application Document 7.4.5 Draft Statement of Common Ground Thanet District Council** and **Application Document 7.4.6 Draft Statement of Common Ground Dover District Council**).

Table 1.9 LCAs and SCAs screened in and out of the preliminary assessment of effects on landscape character

Project Phase	Scoped in	Scoped out
Construction and decommissioning	TDLCA: LCAs B1, E1, F1 and G1 DDLCA: LCAs A2, B1, C1, D1 and H1 SCADS: SCAs C3C and C5A/I1A	TDLCA: LCAs A1, C1 and C2
Operation and maintenance	TDLCA: LCAs B1 and E1 DDLCA: LCAs A2, B1, D1 and H1	TDLCA: LCAs A1, C1, C2, F1 and G1 DDLCA: LCA C1 SCADS: SCAs C3C and C5A/I1A

1.7.18 TDLCA LCAs A1, C1 and C2 are screened out for construction, maintenance, and decommissioning and operation due to a lack of inter-visibility with the Kent Onshore Scheme, such that effects on the setting or perceptual qualities of these LCAs would be limited with no significant residual effect.

1.7.19 At operation, TDLCA LCAs F1 and G1, DDLCA LCA C1 and SCADS SCAs C3C and C5A/I1A are also screened out as all areas would be reinstated post construction of the landfall and whilst there is scattered theoretical visibility across these areas from the permanent infrastructure (converter station, substation and HVAC cable corridor), the effects on the setting or perceptual qualities of these LCAs would be limited with no significant residual effect.

Visual Amenity Baseline

1.7.20 Visual amenity is defined in the GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment , 2013), p.158) as:

"the overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area"

Summary of visibility

1.7.21 The screened ZTV (shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.7 Representative Viewpoint Locations and Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility**) indicates theoretical visibility within the landscape and visual study area. This shows the majority of theoretical visibility across the relatively lower landform across the Minster Marshes and Ash Level. Theoretical visibility is limited to the north of the A299 by the landform of the Manston chalk plateau and to the northeast by existing built form on the edge of Ramsgate. There are only pockets visibility along the coastline due to intervening vegetation and existing built form, largely associated within Richborough Energy Park.

The theoretical visibility has been tested during fieldwork (refer to section 1.4.13) to inform the baseline and the assessment of potential effects.

Representative Viewpoint Locations

1.7.22 Table 1.10 outlines the 14 representative viewpoints chosen to represent the receptors described above within the landscape and visual study area, including the value for the visual receptors at each of the viewpoints. The methodology for determining the visual value is detailed within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.A Appendix 3.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology**. These are illustrated on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.6 Representative Viewpoint Locations.** Further detail is given in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**. The representative viewpoints have been agreed with stakeholders through landscape thematic meetings (see **Application Document 7.4.5 Draft Statement of Common Ground Thanet District Council** and **Application Document 7.4.6 Draft Statement of Common Ground Dover District Council)**.

1.7.23 Cultural heritage viewpoints have been identified and are assessed within the Cultural Heritage chapter for effects of the Proposed Development on historic aspects of the landscape (**Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage**). References to cultural heritage assets have been made where relevant.

Table 1.10 Representative viewpoint locations

Viewpoint Description	Approximate Easting	Approximate Northing	Reason for Selection	Value
Representative Viewpoint 1: Jutes Lane, north of Ebbsfleet Roundabout, looking northwest	633469	162513	Representative of local road users and workers within the Solar Energy Farm. Located within TDLCA Local Character Area E1: Stour Marshes.	**Negligible**
Representative Viewpoint 2: Pegwell Bay Country Park along King Charles III England Coast Path, northeast of Richborough Energy Park, looking north	634329	163184	Representative of recreational users of Pegwell Bay Country Park, users of the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), users of the Thanet Coastal Path recreational route, users of the Coastal Margin land and users of the nearby NCN route 15 Located within TDLCA Local Character Area F1: Pegwell Bay, close to the boundary of	**High**

Viewpoint Description	Approximate Easting	Approximate Northing	Reason for Selection	Value
			Local Character Area E1: Stour Marshes.	
Representative Viewpoint 3: Saxon Shore Way, west of Richborough Energy Park, looking northeast	633256	161604	Representative of recreational users along the Saxon Shore Way recreational route. Located on the boundary of DDLCA LCA A2: Ash Levels and LCA B1: Great Stour Sandwich Corridor.	**Low**
Representative Viewpoint 4: Public footpath (boundary of 0173/TE40/1 and 0173/TE37/2), east of Minster, looking south	632170	164051	Representative of recreational users of the local PRoW network and users of the railway. Located within TDLCA Local Character Area E1: Stour Marshes, close to the boundary of TDLCA Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Slopes.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 5: Junction of Grinsell Hill and Ebbsfleet Lane North, looking southwest	633108	164456	Representative of residential receptors within Sevenscore, albeit views are partially screened by intervening vegetation, users of the promoted cycling route Viking Coastal Trail and users of the local road network. Located within TDLCA Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Slopes.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 6: Public footpath (0173/TE32/1), south of Minster, looking southeast	630389	163925	Representative of users of the local PRoW network and the local railway network. Located within TDLCA Local Character Area E1: Stour Marshes, in close proximity to the boundary of Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Slopes.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 7:	635304	161602	Representative of recreational users of the King	**Medium**

Viewpoint Description	Approximate Easting	Approximate Northing	Reason for Selection	Value
Sandwich Bay, adjacent to King Charles III England Coast Path, looking northwest			Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), users of the Stour Valley Walk, users of the Coastal Margin Access land and users of the Princes Golf Club. Located within DDLCA LCA C1: Sandwich Bay.	
Representative Viewpoint 8: Viewing tower within Richborough Roman Fort, looking north	632461	160188	Representative of visitors to Richborough Roman Fort viewing tower. Located within DDLCA LCA H1: Richborough Bluff, in close proximity to the boundaries of LCA A2: Ash Levels and LCA B1: Great Stour Sandwich Corridor.	**High**
Representative Viewpoint 9: Richborough Road, between Lower Gladstone and Richborough, looking northeast	630277	160906	Representative of local road users, recreational users of NCN route 1 and receptors within residential properties along Richborough Road. Located within DDLCA LCA D1: Preston, in close proximity to LCA A2: Ash Levels.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 10: Saxon Shore Way, on the River Stour, looking east	629850	162960	Representative of recreational users along the Saxon Shore Way recreational route. Located on the boundary of TDLCA Local Character Area E1: Stour Marshes and DDLCA LCA A2: Ash Levels.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 11: Thorne Hill, south of the A299, looking south	632730	165480	Representative of scattered residential receptors to the east of the settlement of Minster and roads users including from Way Hill, Thorne Hill and the A299 corridor.	**Medium**

Viewpoint Description	Approximate Easting	Approximate Northing	Reason for Selection	Value
			Located within TDLCA Local Character Area A1: Manston Chalk Plateau, in close proximity to Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Slopes.	
Representative Viewpoint 12: Public Bridleway (0173/TE29/1), north of Minster, looking southeast	630642	165510	Representative of recreational users of the local PRoW network and users of the local road network, including the A299, as well as residential receptors on the northern edge of the settlement of Minster. Located on the boundary of TDLCA Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Slopes and Local Character Area A1: Manston Chalk Plateau.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 13: Traffic-free cycle route along Chalk Hill (NCN route 15), west of Ramsgate, looking southwest	635873	164707	Representative of recreational users along Chalk Hill, NCN route 15 and users of the promoted cycling route Viking Coastal Trail. It is also representative of residential receptors and users of allotments on the southwestern settlement edge of Ramsgate. Located within TDLCA Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Slopes.	**Medium**
Representative Viewpoint 14: King Charles III England Coast Path, West Cliff, Ramsgate, looking west	636975	164082	Representative of recreational users of the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), NCN route 15 and the promoted cycling route Viking Coastal Trail, at West Cliff, Ramsgate. Located on the edge of TDLCA LCA G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs.	**Medium**

1.7.24 Winter and summer baseline photography has been captured from all of the above representative viewpoints and is contained in **Application Document 6.4.3.1.6 Representative Viewpoint Locations**.

Summary of visual receptor groups

1.7.25 The below sets out a summary of the different types of visual receptors within the landscape and visual study area.

Residential receptors - settlement

- the settlements of Cliffsend and Minster in the northern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 12**); and
- the western settlement edge of Ramsgate within the northeastern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 13**).

Residential receptors – scattered properties

- isolated farmsteads and properties located along Richborough Road within the southern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 9**); and
- isolated properties and small clusters of dwellings between Minster and Cliffsend within the northern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 5 and 11**).

Recreational

- users of the PRoW network:
  - the Stour Valley Walk, which runs east to west across the study area within the southern part of the study area and along the coast (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 7**);
  - the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), which runs along the coast and around the Great Stonar area within the eastern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 2, 7 and 14**);
  - the Saxon Shore Way, which follows the route of the River Stour through the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 3 and 10**); and
  - users of the local PRoW network within the study area, including public footpaths and public bridleways (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 4, 6 and 12**).
- users of cycle routes:
  - NCN 1 and 15, which runs west to southeast, following the route of Richborough Road, within the southern part of the study area and runs north to south, following the route of the A256 and Sandwich Road, before reaching the route of the Viking Coastal Trail at the southern edge of Ramsgate (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 2, 9, 13 and 14**); and

  - the Viking Coastal Trail, promoted cycle route, which runs east to west within the northern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 5, 13 and 14**).

- Recreational aspects of the coast, including those using or visiting:
  - users of Pegwell Bay Country Park, which is located within the eastern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 2**);
  - users of Prince's Golf Club, which is located within the southeastern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 7**);
  - users of Stoneless Golf Centre and St Augustine's Golf Club, which is located within the central part of the study area; and
  - visitors to Richborough Roman Fort, which is located within the southern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoint 8**).

Road and railway users

- major 'A' roads, including the users of:
  - A256, which runs north to south through the central part of the study area; and
  - A299, which runs east to west, within the northern part of the study area (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 11 and 12**);
- 'B' roads and the local (unclassified) road network (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 1, 5, 9 and 11**); and
- passengers on the railway route between Sandwich and Minster and between Ramsgate and Canterbury (refer to **Representative Viewpoints 4 and 6**).

Future Baseline

1.7.26 Predicting the future baseline involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty as acknowledged at paragraph 5.33 in GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment , 2013). It requires projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time. The nature of the future baseline is influenced by a combination of natural and human processes, including climate change. Scoping and consented development proposals are able to influence the future baseline and are discussed in the cumulative assessment in **Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects**.

1.7.27 The landscape of the Kent Onshore Scheme study area is predominantly characterised by the Minster marshes and the Ash Levels. These are open, low-lying marshland landscapes in which development is typically sparse. They are agricultural landscapes where pastoral and arable farmland is actively managed. Trees, woodland, scrub and riparian habitats will continue to mature but the inherent character and the contribution that they make to views and visual amenity is unlikely to substantially change.

1.7.28 Thanet Local Plan policy CC07 (Thanet District Council, 2020) is broadly supportive of renewable energy developments at Richborough providing they are not detrimental to adjacent nature conservation and heritage assets. It is therefore likely that energy related infrastructure has the potential to expand in this area.

1.7.29 The undeveloped coast around Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Bay is likely to remain unchanged given its protected status. There could be continued expansion along the western settlement edge of Ramsgate and around Thanet Parkway station area.

1.8 Proposed Project Design and Embedded Mitigation

1.8.1 The Proposed Project has been designed, as far as possible, following the mitigation hierarchy in order to, in the first instance, avoid or reduce landscape and visual impacts and effects through the process of design development, and by embedding measures into the design of the Proposed Project.

1.8.2 As set out in **Application Document 6.2.1.5 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology**, mitigation measures typically fall into one of three categories: embedded measures; control and management measures; and mitigation measures. Embedded, and control and management measures are set out below. Additional mitigation measures are discussed in Section 1.10.

Embedded Measures

1.8.3 Embedded measures have been integral in reducing, and where possible avoiding, the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Project. Measures that have been incorporated are:

- sensitive routeing and siting of infrastructure and temporary works.
- relevant embedded measures set out within **Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**.
- the design of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation, in terms of the building form and the external materials, has been developed in response to the Design Approach Document (**Application Document 7.11.2 Design Approach Document – Kent**) and the Design Principles presented in **Application Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent** Tables 3.1 and 4.1. The Design Principles provide guidance regarding the design intent and design principles that will be adopted and embedded into the detailed proposals of these structures.
- landscape design principles: an outline landscape strategy has been prepared for the converter station and substation site which provides a collaborative approach to delivering landscape and ecological mitigation (**Application Document 7.5.7.2 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent and Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**). This outline strategy has been developed in recognition of the local landscape policies and landscape character, considering the opportunities for local landscape and biodiversity enhancement. It has been developed as part of the iterative process of design and assessment. The principles of the outline landscape strategy seek to:
  - respond to both the immediate landscape pattern of the site as well as the wider landscape character;
  - use native woodland planting to provide structural screening to the converter station and substation in views from the north and northwest whilst providing containment to the converter station and substation site so that it appears visually connected to the Richborough Energy Park rather than the wider marsh landscape;

- reinforce the pattern of drainage ditches with appropriate marginal planting and establishing a sensitive interface with the wider marsh landscape;
- provide connectivity with wider blue and green infrastructure networks;
- protect existing vegetation wherever possible;
- consider opportunities for advanced planting to provide early establishment of woodland planting;
- provide an integrated drainage solution with attenuation ponds and swales, planted with marginal wetland species set within a wider context of marshland and native scrub planting to improve the biodiversity value within the site; and
- monitoring and maintenance of new planting and seeding to ensure successful establishment.

Control and Management Measures

1.8.4 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** and **Application Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**. The following measures have been taken into account in assessing the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Project:

- GG02: A CEMP, Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan (CTMTP) will be produced and submitted to the relevant authority for approval prior to construction of the relevant stage of the Proposed Project to which it relates. The plan produced will be substantially in accordance with the outline versions submitted as part of the application for development consent. In accordance with the Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of the draft DCO, the contractor will need to comply with the approved plans (including any amendments to the plans subsequently approved).
- GG04: A suitably experienced Environmental Manager will be appointed for the duration of the construction phase. In addition, a qualified and experienced Environmental Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be available during the construction phase to advise, supervise and report on the delivery of the mitigation methods and controls outlined in the CEMP. The ECoW will monitor that the works proceed in accordance with relevant environmental DCO requirements and adhere to the required good practice and mitigation measures. The ECoW will be supported as necessary by appropriate specialists, including ecologists, soil scientists and arboriculturists.
- GG06: A full photographic/aerial footage and descriptive record of condition (pre-condition survey) will be carried out of the working areas that may be affected by the construction activities prior to these works commencing. This record will be available for comparison following completion of reinstatement works to ensure that the standard of reinstatement at least meets that recorded in the pre-condition survey, or as agreed in the LEMP or if the DCO provides otherwise, then in accordance with the DCO.
- GG07: Land used temporarily will be reinstated (bearing in mind restrictions on planting and land use) to its pre-construction condition and use, unless agreed otherwise, save where the DCO provides otherwise, in which case such

reinstatement will be in accordance with the DCO. This is subject to the provisions of Article 27 of the draft DCO. Hedgerows, fences and walls (including associated earthworks and boundary features) will be reinstated to a similar style and quality to those that were removed where possible, with landowner consultation.

- GG08: Where sensitive features will be retained within or immediately adjacent to the Order Limits, an appropriate protective area will be established using appropriate fencing and signage and will be inspected, repaired and replaced as necessary. The protective areas will be shown on the Retention and Reinstatement Plans contained within the LEMP.
- GG19: Earthworks and stockpiled soil will be protected by covering, seeding or using water suppression where appropriate.
- GG21: Construction lighting will be of the lowest levels necessary to safely perform each task. It will be designed, positioned and directed to reduce the intrusion into adjacent properties, protected species and habitats e.g. watercourses.
- GG26: Where working areas are fenced, the type of fencing installed will depend on the area to be fenced and will take into consideration the level of security required in relation to the surrounding land and public access, rural or urban environment and arable or stock farming. Consultation on the type of fencing will be undertaken with the relevant landowner and tenant where required. For some locations the fence used may also serve to provide acoustic and visual screening of the work sites and reduce the potential for disturbance of users in the surrounding areas. Fencing will be regularly inspected and maintained and removed as part of the demobilisation unless otherwise specified.
- LV01: The contractor(s) will retain vegetation where practicable. Where vegetation is lost and trees cannot be replaced in situ due to the restrictions associated with land rights required for operational safety, native shrub planting approved by National Grid will be used as a replacement, in accordance with the outline vegetation reinstatement plans included within the Outline Landscape Environment Management Plan.
- LV02: The contractor(s) will apply the relevant protective principles set out in British Standard (BS) 5837:2012: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. This will be applied to trees within the Order Limits which will be preserved through the construction phase, and to trees outside of the Order Limits where such measures do not hinder or prevent the use of the relevant working width for construction. All works to high grade trees, including trees under Tree Preservation Orders and veteran trees, will be undertaken or supervised by a suitably qualified arboriculturist.
- LV05: Subsoil and topsoil will be separated and stored to ensure no degradation in quality and reinstatement undertaken as soon as possible after completion of construction of each section/area of works.
- LV06: Temporary and separate placement of topsoil and subsoil will be stored adjacent to the trench where possible, with the additional height of the subsoil storage used on whichever side requires greater screening benefit, where practicable. In some locations stockpiles will be remote from the trench, such as at pinch points where the corridor has been narrowed, and the additional height of the storage will be sensitively placed as far as possible.

- B04: To control the spread of invasive weeds in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, any plant or machinery that has been used in areas infested with invasive species (both terrestrial and aquatic), such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, will be thoroughly cleaned. Water used to clean vehicles will be controlled to prevent the spread of the plant (through seeds, rhizomes, fragments, etc.). The area will be cordoned off to prevent any inadvertent spreading.
- B07: Where the works require the crossing or removal of hedgerows, the gap will be reduced to a width required for safe working. Where hedge removals are necessary, 'dead hedging' should be used, where practicable, in the interim periods to retain connectivity during construction. Dead hedging can comprise vegetation arisings or artificial provision, such as willow screening panels or Heras fencing covered in camouflage netting. New hedgerow planting will contain native, woody species of local provenance.
- B12: Mature vegetation removed from hedgerows and ditches will be retained as close to the area of removal as possible, retaining intact root balls, where feasible and desirable, such that it can be re-used.
- W03: Riverbank and in-channel vegetation will be retained where not directly affected by installation works. Where ditches retaining seasonal flows are crossed, culverts in waterbodies will either preserve the natural bed or be box culverts with inverts sunk a minimum of 300 mm below the hard bed of the watercourse and natural / existing bed material placed across the inside of the culvert, to maintain existing channel gradients and habitat for aquatic invertebrates, as well as to ensure continued passage for in channel species.
- TT03: All designated Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) will be identified, and any potential temporary and/or permanent diversions applied for/detailed in the DCO. All designated PRoWs crossing the working area will be managed with access only closed for short periods while construction activities occur. Any required diversions will be clearly marked at both ends with signage explaining the diversion, the duration of the diversion (for temporary diversions) and a contact number for any concerns. This is outlined in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plans.
- A01: All tree work will follow the principles of BS3998:2010 Treework – Recommendations (BS3998:2010) (British Standards Institute) and will be carried out by suitably qualified and insured contractors.
- A02: A pre-construction check will be undertaken of trees within the Order Limits and remedial works actioned where appropriate (e.g. where they pose an unacceptable risk to people or property). Trees will be monitored during the construction period, and during operation where they pose a risk to infrastructure constructed as part of the Proposed Project. All staff operating on the Site are to be made aware of the need to look out for obvious signs of tree defects and to report them to the Site Manager who will seek further advice as necessary.
- A03: A banksman will be used where the movement of plant or long reach machinery occurs within 5 m of any part of a retained tree to ensure no damage is sustained.
- A04: All storage or mixing of materials will take place in agreed allocated areas at least 5 m from the edge of the RPA of retained trees and at least 5 m from the edge of an ancient woodland buffer zone.

- A05: Retention of all veteran and ancient trees within or immediately adjacent to the Order Limits.
- A06: All tree works required which are not identified within the Arboricultural Method Statement and final Tree Protection Plans will require consent from the relevant local planning authority.

1.9 Assessment of Impacts and Likely Significant Effects

1.9.1 The assessment of the effects of the Proposed Project on landscape and visual receptors described in **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment** considers the assessment scenarios, assessment assumptions, embedded, control and management measures described in this section.

Assessment assumptions

1.9.2 There are several assessment assumptions set out below which are considered in the landscape and visual assessments detailed within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.C Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.

1.9.3 Advanced planting assumptions:

- advanced planting would occur as part of the enabling works package, however, at Year 1 operation the landscape and visual assessment would assume that the growth of advanced planting would not be of a sufficient height to have a material change in the view or contribution to landscape character. However, by Year 15 operation, it is assumed that advanced planting would be fully established.

1.9.4 Planting height assumptions:

- the assumed planting heights for landscape mitigation planting at Year 15 operation are outlined within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.A Appendix 3.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology**. These planting heights have been agreed with stakeholders and have been used to inform the height of mitigation planting shown in the visualisations and considered within the landscape and visual assessment.

1.9.5 Assumptions regarding construction lighting requirements:

- associated lighting is expected to be localised and limited to temporary task lighting at the construction compound and potentially individual working areas during the construction period.

1.9.6 Assumptions regarding operational and maintenance lighting requirements for Minster Converter Station and Substation:

- associated lighting is expected to be limited to external column and building mounted lighting. It would be controlled manually as required during periods of low light or darkness and has been designed to minimise light spill.

- there would also be security lighting on sensors within the access gate area / entrance gates which would automatically turn on lighting at the gate when approached in sufficient darkness.
- should maintenance activities be required to be undertaken in poor light conditions, additional temporary task lighting would be brought to site.

1.9.7 Assumptions on seasonal differences at operation for the visual assessment:

- the operational part of the assessment considers Year 1 Winter (where the mitigation planting would be young, not established and the existing deciduous vegetation would not be in leaf) and Year 15 Summer when mitigation planting would have established and would be in leaf; and
- unless stated in the assessment text, it is assumed that there would be no difference in the magnitude of effect between Winter and Summer. For Year 15 Winter, it is assumed that there would be the same height of mitigation planting as for Summer and it would not be in leaf, so visualisations have not been prepared.

1.9.8 It is acknowledged that one of the representative viewpoints is representative of users of the public bridleway and therefore would have slightly elevated views compared with a pedestrian. This is limited to representative viewpoint 12. It should be assumed that there would be no change to the magnitude of effect or significance of effect reported for the respective representative viewpoint unless stated in the assessment text within **Application Document 6.3.3.1.D Appendix 3.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment**.

1.9.9 Key elements of the Kent Onshore Scheme that are considered as part of the landscape and visual assessments are summarised below. See **Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project** for detailed information on the elements of the Kent Onshore Scheme.

- During construction:
  - construction compounds, including site offices, welfare facilities, parking, storage areas, hard standing and cranes. Maximum height of activity is assumed 30 metres at the Converter Station, 20 m at the Substation and 65 m at the site of overhead line works;
  - security fencing located around the site;
  - hoarding around long-term construction works and heras fencing with acoustic barriers around short-term works;
  - construction of bellmouths and haul roads;
  - construction of HVDC cable corridors, which would consist of a haul road on one side of the proposed corridor with occasional movement of vehicles and use of excavators;
  - drilling rigs at landfall;
  - temporary task lighting at construction compounds and individual working areas including at the joint bays and the trenchless drill site;
  - temporary attenuation ponds near to the Converter Station and Substation site;
  - presence of near shore vessels off the coast of Pegwell Bay;

- potential for screening or hoarding where there is residential development within 100-200 metres of construction activity. (see **Application Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice** for further information);
- temporary closure of PRoW (**Application Document 2.7.2 Access, Rights of Way and Public Rights of Navigation Plans – Kent)**; and
- overhead line works including the 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 from the substation near Minster and the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line.

- During operation:
  - Converter Station and Substation;
  - external lighting on the Converter Station and Substation comprising LED bulkheads on external walls of buildings and column mounted lanterns to illuminate gate entrances. Those on buildings would be switched on manually and those on gate entrances would be activated by movement;
  - permanent access road;
  - landscape mitigation planting (see Figure **Application Document 7.5.7.2 Figure 1 Minster Converter Station and Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation**).
- Maintenance:
  - maintenance access would be by way of light vehicle, using existing access routes.

Construction (including Decommissioning) Phase

1.9.10 The likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Project are set out in Table 1.11 below.

Table 1.11 Summary of likely landscape and visual effects (Construction including Decommissioning)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Likely Significant Effect	
			Magnitude	Significance
TDLCA LCA B1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
TDLCA LCA E1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
TDLCA LCA F1	Very high	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
TDLCA LCA G1	Very high	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA A2	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
DDLCA LCA B1	Medium	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA C1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA D1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA H1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
SCADS SCA C3C	Very high	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
SCADS SCA C5A / I1A	Very high	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 1	Low	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Likely Significant Effect	
			Magnitude	Significance
Viewpoint 2	Very high	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 3	Medium	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 4	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Very Large	Major adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 5	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Large	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 6	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 7	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 8	Very high	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 9	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 10	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 11	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 12	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 13	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 14	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)

Operation and Maintenance Phase

1.9.11 The likely landscape and visual effects as a result of the Proposed Project are set out in Table 1.12 and Table 1.13.

Table 1.12 Summary of likely landscape and visual effects (Operation and Maintenance (Year 1))

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Likely Significant Effect	
			Magnitude	Significance
TDLCA LCA B1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
TDLCA LCA E1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
DDLCA LCA A2	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA B1	Medium	No change on landscape character	None	No change (not significant)
DDLCA LCA D1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA H1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 1	Low	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 2	Very high	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 3	Medium	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 4	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Very Large	Major adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 5	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Likely Significant Effect	
			Magnitude	Significance
Viewpoint 6	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 7	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 8	Very high	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 9	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 10	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 11	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 12	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 13	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 14	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)

Table 1.13 Summary of likely landscape and visual effects (Operation and Maintenance (Year 15))

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Likely Significant Effect	
			Magnitude	Significance
TDLCA LCA B1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
TDLCA LCA E1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA A2	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
DDLCA LCA B1	Medium	No change on landscape character	None	No change (not significant)
DDLCA LCA D1	High	No change on landscape character	None	No change (not significant)
DDLCA LCA H1	High	Adverse impact on landscape character	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 1	Low	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 2	Very high	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 3	Medium	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 4	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Very Large	Major adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 5	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 6	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 7	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 8	Very high	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Likely Significant Effect	
			Magnitude	Significance
Viewpoint 9	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 10	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 11	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Medium	Moderate adverse (significant)
Viewpoint 12	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 13	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Small	Minor adverse (not significant)
Viewpoint 14	High	Adverse impact on visual amenity	Negligible	Negligible adverse (not significant)

1.10 Additional Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

1.10.1 As landscaping proposals have responded to the design of the Proposed Project throughout its development, the embedded mitigation within the design has addressed visual effects wherever possible. As such no additional mitigation measures have been identified in addition to the embedded measures set out previously.

1.11 Residual Effects and Conclusions

1.11.1 As there were no additional mitigation measures identified, the residual landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Project are as reported in Table 1.11, Table 1.12, and Table 1.13 in section 1.9. It is considered that the effects at decommissioning would be no greater than the effects identified at construction. Therefore, this project stage is considered to be no different to the findings of the construction stage assessment and is consequently not considered separately.

Summary of significantly affected landscape receptors

Construction

1.11.2 During construction, two out of the 11 landscape and seascape receptors within the landscape and visual study area would experience significant adverse effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme. These are TDLCA LCA E1 and DDLCA LCA A2 within which the Minster Converter Station, Minster Substation, and HVAC OHL works would be constructed.

1.11.3 Regarding LCA E1, the Kent Onshore Scheme, in particular the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation, would be constructed within a large-scale agricultural field enclosure near to the edge of the LCA. This would be located to the east of the railway line, which exhibits some differing characteristics to the wider marshland further to the west, reducing the alteration to the key characteristics of the LCA. The more enclosed landscape (due to vegetation cover) and proximity to existing road and energy infrastructure (including Richborough Energy Park) lessens the change to the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape. Due to the location on the edge of the marshes, the construction activity is considered to impact the key characteristics at a local level, including detracting vertical features in views. The majority of key characteristics would remain largely unaffected as they are either not present in the baseline or are conserved, including the existing drainage ditch pattern.

1.11.4 Regarding LCA A2, the Kent Onshore Scheme, in particular the HVAC OHL works, would be constructed within a small part of the LCA already influenced by towers and OHL; however, works would temporarily increase movement and activity in an otherwise agricultural setting. The geographical extent of change would be across a large proportion of the LCA due to the open and flat nature of the marshes, however, the scale of change would be limited and concentrated within an area already influenced by OHLs.

1.11.5 The duration of change for all activity would be short-term.

Year 1 – Operation and Maintenance

1.11.6 At Year 1 of operation and maintenance, one out of the 11 landscape and seascape receptors within the landscape and visual study area would experience significant adverse effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme. This is TDLCA LCA E1 within which the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation would be permanently located.

1.11.7 Regarding LCA E1, the Kent Onshore Scheme, in particular the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation would be permanently operational within a large-scale agricultural field enclosure near to the edge of the LCA.

1.11.8 This would be located to the east of the railway line, which exhibits some differing characteristics to the wider marshland further to the west, reducing the alteration to the key characteristics of the LCA. This includes a localised change to the flat landform at Wetherlees Hill. The more enclosed landscape (due to vegetation cover) and proximity to existing road and energy infrastructure (including Richborough Energy Park) lessens the change to the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape. The vegetation cover in the local landscape would reduce the geographical extent of change within the LCA and wider landscape due to enclosure afforded, including vegetation along the railway line and immediately to the south of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. Due to the location on the edge of the marshes, the operational infrastructure is considered to impact the key characteristics at a local level, including localised increase in development. The majority of key characteristics would remain largely unaffected as they are either not present in the baseline or are conserved, including the existing drainage ditch pattern. The duration of change for all activity would be long-term.

Year 15 – Operation and Maintenance

1.11.9 At Year 15 of operation and maintenance, none of the landscape and seascape receptors within the landscape and visual study area would experience significant adverse effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme.

Summary of significantly affected visual receptors

Construction

1.11.10 During construction, five out of the 14 representative viewpoints within the landscape and visual study area would experience significant adverse effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme. These comprise receptors from representative viewpoints 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 which are all located in the local landscape around the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation and also the HVAC OHL works. All but one of the significantly affected representative viewpoints are from the north of the Kent Onshore Scheme and include those on rising land with expansive views across the wider landscape to the south.

1.11.11 Due to the proximity of these receptors, there would be views of the construction activity and plant associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme, including the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation, often occupying a large proportion of the horizontal extent of the view. The views would either be direct views of all or part of the construction works dependent on the positioning of the receptor and the amount of intervening built form, landform, or vegetation.

1.11.12 The construction works associated with the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation would introduce large-scale machinery and material into views of otherwise arable land. The degree of contrast would be reduced in part due to the context of the existing towers and OHL and existing buildings within Richborough Energy Park and Weatherlees Hill Wastewater Treatment Plant which are typically in a similar part of the view but noting some detachment due to intervening vegetation cover from more elevated views. The construction works would also be set against the backcloth of landform and existing vegetation cover; however, the scale of change in the view would remain noticeable as the change would typically be in closer proximity to the receptor.

1.11.13 The construction works associated with the HVAC OHL would introduce temporary towers which have the potential to contrast with the existing OHL and could be present at the same time as the new permanent towers, which would result in an increased concentration of wirescape. This activity would typically be within the same part of the view as the construction works associated with the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation and existing energy infrastructure at Richborough Energy Park, which would lessen the scale of change and degree of. The duration of change for all of the above activity would be short-term.

Year 1 – Operation and Maintenance

1.11.14 At Year 1 of operation and maintenance, four out of the 14 representative viewpoints within the landscape and visual study area would experience significant adverse effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme. These comprise receptors from representative viewpoints 4, 5, 6, and 11 which are all located in the local landscape to the north of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation and also the HVAC OHL works. Due to the proximity of such receptors, there would be views of the operational infrastructure associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme, including the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation, occupying a proportion of the horizontal extent of the view. The views would either be direct views of all or part of the operational infrastructure dependent on the positioning of the receptor and the amount of intervening built form, landform, or vegetation.

1.11.15 The operational Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation would introduce a large-scale feature within the view of otherwise arable land. The context of existing energy infrastructure, including within Richborough Energy Park, would typically be within the same part of the view, reducing the degree of change, however the Kent Onshore Scheme would be in closer proximity to the receptor which would increase the scale of change and emphasises the scale and massing of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. From elevated receptors, the operational infrastructure would appear slightly detached from existing energy infrastructure at Richborough Energy Park due to intervening vegetation; however, the operational infrastructure would be set against such vegetation and would not the break the skyline from such angle, which reduces the scale of change.

1.11.16 The operational HVAC OHL works would be located in the same part of the view as the existing towers and OHL; with an increased concentration of wirescape. The new towers and HVAC OHL would be within the context of other vertical infrastructure including a communication mast but would still be a noticeable addition to the view.

1.11.17 The duration of change for all activity would be long-term.

Year 15 – Operation and Maintenance

1.11.18 At Year 15 of operation and maintenance, four out of the 14 representative viewpoints within the landscape and visual study area would still experience significant adverse effects arising from the Kent Onshore Scheme. These comprises receptors from representative viewpoints 4, 5, 6 and 11 which are located in close proximity to the north and north west of Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation. The permanent infrastructure of the Kent Onshore Scheme would remain to be permanently visible in a proportion of the horizontal extent of view from nearby receptors, with the remainder of the panorama unaffected.

1.11.19 By Year 15, the proposed landscape mitigation planting to the north of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation would have matured increasing the depth of planting between the viewpoint receptor and the permanent infrastructure. The upper extents of the Minster Converter Station and Minster Substation would remain directly visible due to the scale and massing of the infrastructure.

1.11.20 The duration of change for all activity would be long-term.

1.12 Sensitivity Testing

1.12.1 There are not considered to be any differences in the likely landscape and visual effects if construction commences in any year up to five years from the granting of the DCO, which is assumed to be 2026.

1.13 References

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