

**The Great Grid Upgrade**

Sea Link

# Sea Link

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**nationalgrid**

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# 1. Landscape Designations

## 1.1 Landscape Designations Overview

1.1.1 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.

1.1.2 The following landscape designations have been identified within the study area; their locations are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.2 Landscape Context and Designations**:

- 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)).

### Tree Preservation Orders

1.1.3 A TPO is an “*order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity*” (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2014). Within the study area, there are pockets of TPOs including to the west and north of Minster and on the southern cliffs of Ramsgate.

1.1.4 Within the landscape assessment, consideration of specific arboricultural assets has been restricted to the contribution TPOs make to present-day landscape character and visual amenity. Refer to **Application Document 6.10 Arboricultural Impact Assessment** for further information.

### Coastal Margin Access Land

1.1.5 The Folkestone to Ramsgate stretch of the Coastal Margin Access Land is located within the east of the study area (shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.2 Landscape Context and Designations**). This open access land is associated with the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail) that runs north to south through the area. The Coastal Margin Access Land provides publicly accessible land, part of Natural England’s scheme to improve public access to, and enjoyment of, the English coastline, so long as there are no specific restrictions, such as danger zones or potential to damage property or the landscape.

### Pegwell Bay Country Park

1.1.6 Pegwell Bay Country Park is located within the east of the study area, to the west of Pegwell Bay, and forms part of the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve (NNR). It provides a destination for people and nature with a network of paths, a birdwatching hide, interpretation panels, play areas, and picnic areas.



## Open Space

- 1.1.7 There are two areas of Open Space (designated in the Dover District Local Plan to 2040 (Dover District Council, 2024) that provide recreational value to the area; the sports fields to the west of Pegwell Bay and the Monks Well Nature Reserve. DDC's adopted Core Strategy notes that:
- 1.1.8 *"Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation supports healthy and active lifestyles and are essential for the creation of healthy and inclusive communities. In urban areas, open space can also make a significant contribution to the form, character and high-quality built environment of the District. Open space can sometimes be of historic significance, perhaps as part of a Conservation Area or simply contribute to visual amenity by providing views and vistas or simply through its beauty. It can also play a vital role in supporting biodiversity and contributing to green infrastructure and a reduction in recreational pressure on internationally designated environmental sites".*

## Relevant Designations

- 1.1.9 In addition to the above, the study area also contains the following designations:
- Listed buildings;
  - Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 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.
- 1.1.10 Whilst effects on these designated areas have not been assessed in the LVIA as they are considered in other discipline specific chapters, they have informed judgements of landscape value and in the case of CRoW Act Access Land and Coastal Margin Access Land, these areas are also an important recreational resource, views from which have been considered as part of the visual assessment.
- 1.1.11 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**, **Application Document 6.2.3.3 Part 3 Kent Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage** and **Application Document 6.2.3.10 Part 3 Kent Chapter 10 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism**.

## 2. Landscape Baseline

### 2.1 Baseline Conditions

#### Landscape and Seascape Character Overview

- 2.1.1 Landscape character is a composite of physical, cultural, perceptual, and aesthetic elements (Natural England, 2014). Landform, hydrology, vegetation, land cover, land use pattern, cultural and historic features, and associations combine to create a common “*sense of place*” and identity which can be used to categorise the landscape into definable types and areas. The level of detail and size of the types and areas can be varied to reflect the scale of definition required. It can be applied at a range of scales from national to local level.
- 2.1.2 Seascape character, like landscape character, is a composite of physical and cultural elements (Natural England, 2012). Landform, geology, coastal processes, flora and fauna, coastal features, surface features, sunken features, use and past use of coast and sea and associations combine to create an identity definable types and areas. The level of detail and size of the types and areas can be varied to reflect the scale of definition required. It can be applied at a national, regional, and local level.

#### National Landscape Character

- 2.1.3 Those National Character Areas (NCAs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.3 Landscape Character - National and County** and described in Table 2.1. The NCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Kent Onshore Scheme due to its scale but are described to provide context:

**Table 2.1 National Landscape Character**

National Character Area	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
113: North Kent Plain (NCA 113)	NCA 113 is described as being “ <i>an open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses</i> ”. The River Stour and its tributaries, which flow into the North Sea, are important features of the eastern NCA, with associated wetland habitats. The study notes that a “ <i>diverse coastline, made up of cliffs, intertidal sand and mud, salt marshes, sand dunes and shingle beaches</i> ” are included in the NCA. Much of the coastal hinterland has been modified by construction of sea walls, harbours and piers and urban infrastructure is visually prominent in the landscape.

## County Landscape Character

- 2.1.4 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** and are described in Table 2.2. These KCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Kent Onshore Scheme due to their scale but are described to provide context.

**Table 2.2 County Landscape Character**

County KCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
Thanet	This KCA is defined as an open, large-scale landscape, with long views over mainly arable land. It is an exposed landscape with open, bleak cliff tops, and settlements that have a suburban character. Key landscape actions include restoring the importance of historic, ancient, and natural features and restoring and enhancing sea views from key locations.
The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes	This KCA is defined as a flat, open, and remote landscape with a regular field pattern fringed with dykes and drainage ditches. River courses within the area cause flooding and waterlogging issues and flood defences are characteristic. Key landscape actions include restoring ecological and visual interest of drainage systems and creating new habitats such as wetland, marshland, grassland and reed beds.
East Kent Horticultural Belt	This KCA is defined as a small-scale farming landscape, enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts, with small isolated linear settlements. The key landscape actions include reinforcing the distinctive farming and drainage patterns as functional and visual elements within the landscape and reinforcing the character of the marsh edges by creating wetland areas.

## District Landscape Character

- 2.1.5 Those Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.4 Landscape Character - District** and are described in Table 2.3 and Table 2.4. A value judgement and additional baseline notes from the Applicant's field work undertaken to supplement the published study are given for those LCAs included in the assessment of the Kent Onshore Scheme. Other LCAs within the study area are described purely to provide context and are not assessed.

**Table 2.3 Thanet District Landscape Character**

District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
A1: Manston Chalk Plateau	<p data-bbox="461 353 1449 463">This LCA comprises an “<i>elevated plateau of farmland with arable and horticultural crops, former airport and runway interspersed with settlement at Manston and Woodchurch</i>”.</p> <p data-bbox="461 472 1034 506">The relevant key characteristics include:</p> <ul data-bbox="576 515 1461 1339" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 515 1385 586">• “<i>Elevated, flat landform with gently rolling undulations between 40-55 m AOD;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 611 1461 757">• <i>predominantly regular, medium to large scale arable and horticultural fields on ALC [Agricultural Land Classification] Grade 1 and 2 soils with little defining features which create a very open landscape;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 781 1449 927">• <i>tree belts and linear woodland with localised areas of paddocks and pasture provide enclosure around small villages of Manston and Woodchurch as well as scattered farmsteads;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 952 1461 1061">• <i>elevated plateau results in long distance panoramic views in the south over Minster Marshes and across Pegwell Bay and, in the west, across the Wantsum;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 1086 1406 1158">• <i>the elevated central chalk plateau also forms skyline in many views back from lower landscapes in Thanet;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 1182 1453 1254">• <i>land uses include Manston Golf Club and a solar farm and are generally well integrated into the landscape; and</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 1279 1433 1350">• <i>urban influences in form of exposed adjoining settlement edges”.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="461 1361 1458 1471">Key guidelines include maintaining the openness of views towards the sea, managing arable land to enhance biodiversity of farmland birds and conserving the sense of tranquillity and rurality.</p>
B1: Wantsum North Slopes	<p data-bbox="461 1512 1437 1545"><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p data-bbox="461 1554 1461 1664">This LCA is characterised by “<i>sloping topography, which forms fairly steep south facing slopes rising above and forming the North Shore of the Wantsum Channel</i>”.</p> <p data-bbox="461 1673 1034 1706">The relevant key characteristics include:</p> <ul data-bbox="576 1715 1453 2051" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 1715 1382 1825">• “<i>Sloping arable fields characterised by a transitional underlying geology formed of chalk and Thanet Sand formations;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 1850 1453 1960">• <i>regular, rectilinear field pattern with few defining boundary features between fields creating a large scale and open landscape;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 1984 1337 2051">• <i>localised areas of tree planting containing isolated farmsteads and roadside houses with intermittent</i></li> </ul>



District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<p><i>hedgerows lining connecting roads and around settlements;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>long views over the marshes into Dover and Canterbury Districts as well as sea views from the elevated ground and cliff tops over Pegwell Bay and the English Channel; and</i></li> <li><i>outside the villages there is relatively little development resulting in an undeveloped ridgeline and slopes interspersed with occasional woodland and tree belts”.</i></li> </ul> <p>Key guidelines include conserving the open rural character, long interrupted views across adjacent marshes and the managed farmland character.</p>
	<p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perception of residential development, industrial development, and Richborough Energy Park through a layered vegetation network;</li> <li>some smaller-scale arable field enclosures in the southern part of the LCA;</li> <li>vegetation along field boundaries is varied, including individual trees, sections of hedgerow, and scrub;</li> <li>detracting features include the perception of the existing towers and OHL and influence of noise and movement associated with the railway and the local road network of the southern boundary of the LCA which contrasts with more rural parts of the LCA; and</li> <li>large blocks of mature vegetation present.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The cultural heritage value of the LCA is increased with reference to the former Wantsum Channel and portside villages including Minster, the presence of Minster Abbey Grade I listed building and surrounding Conservation Area and various Scheduled Monuments which highlight the national historic importance of the area. Woodland and tree belts are generally dispersed within the large scale, open arable landscape which lessens the natural heritage value and there are some recreational opportunities, including the National Cycle Network (NCN) and the local PRoW network. The relatively sparse development outside the villages results in some sense of tranquillity and wildness and the woodland block edges increase scenic quality. The slopes form a strong skyline in views from the adjacent marshes.</p> <p>The value of LCA B1 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>
E1: Stour Marshes	<u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u>

District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<p data-bbox="461 257 1422 324">This LCA is defined as a “<i>low-lying, vast flat open landscape on the Thanet Sands</i>”.</p> <p data-bbox="461 338 1034 369">The relevant key characteristics include:</p> <ul data-bbox="576 383 1449 1093" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 383 1409 450">• “<i>Low-lying and flat marshland landscape occupying the former Wantsum river channel;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 479 1430 546">• <i>a vast, open landscape with huge skies, extensive views and a strong rural, even remote character;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 575 1441 678">• <i>irregular arable fields defined by straight and meandering drainage ditches representing an ancient enclosure pattern;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 707 1445 810">• <i>small embanked reservoirs are a feature within the arable fields highly visible by their bunded topography and associated scrub/tree growth;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 840 1414 907">• <i>limited tree cover with occasional small wooded copses absence of enclosure;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 936 1358 1003">• <i>a largely undeveloped landscape, with few roads or buildings; and</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 1032 1449 1093">• <i>long uninterrupted views across the marshes and Pegwell Bay and into marshes of neighbouring districts”.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="461 1122 1458 1301">Key guidelines include conserving the intact undeveloped rural character, enhancing the drainage network and conserving panoramic views across the open landscape, including those to and from the adjacent district and restricting new detracting/vertical features that would interrupt views.</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="461 1339 1393 1413"><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul data-bbox="576 1426 1471 1962" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 1426 1453 1494">• vegetation consisting of scrub with occasional larger vegetation and trees with gaps along the drainage ditches;</li> <li data-bbox="576 1523 1471 1697">• blocks of mature vegetation and linear belts of mature trees scattered across the landscape which creates a sense of enclosure in parts due to the layering effect and are distinctive in the flat landscape, notably closer to the A256 and this reduces further west;</li> <li data-bbox="576 1727 1471 1794">• road and railway line noise and movement in the landscape reduces tranquillity in parts of the LCA; and</li> <li data-bbox="576 1823 1441 1962">• other than reference to energy infrastructure within Richborough Energy Park and the existing towers and OHL, there are limited views to other built form other than pockets of residential properties.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p data-bbox="461 2000 865 2031"><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p>

District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<p>Part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) extends into this LCA which increases the natural heritage and functional value. The long-uninterrupted views across the marshes and to the coast increases the perceptual value, however this is somewhat decreased by the presence of the existing overhead line (OHL) and Richborough Energy Park including Richborough Substation and Nemo Converter Station. The Saxon Shore Way recreational route on the southern boundary of the LCA increases recreational opportunities along with the historic droves which now form PRoW which cross the marsh. The characteristic drainage ditches in the marshland landscape offers a sense of identity and distinctiveness, heightened by the sense of relative wildness. The silted marshes of this historically rich area of the former Wantsum Channel create a distinct low-lying landscape encircling the main part of Thanet, reinforcing its island quality and sense of separateness.</p> <p>The value of LCA E1 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>
F1: Pegwell Bay	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>This LCA is characterised by a <i>“complex mosaic of habitats including vast open marshes, intertidal area of mud and sand banks and shallow waters”</i>.</p> <p>The relevant key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“shallow waters with underlying sedimentary sandstone and mudstone partially contained by low chalk and flint cliffs;</i></li> <li>• <i>flat expanses of marshes and mudflats;</i></li> <li>• <i>ancient dune pasture and swards of sandy grassland within Pegwell Bay Country Park as well as extensive intertidal mudflats, salt marsh and shingle beach;</i></li> <li>• <i>high biodiversity value, with internationally significant numbers of waders and wildfowl;</i></li> <li>• <i>long panoramic views seaward across the Dover Strait with container ships and ferries forming features on the skyline, with the low white cliffs at Ramsgate forming a distinctive feature in view to the north; and</i></li> <li>• <i>a tranquil and natural area with a strong sense of remoteness prevailing”</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Key guidelines include conserving, enhancing and managing the diversity of coastal, wetland and intertidal habitats, conserving the open, remote character of Pegwell Bay and considering opportunities for restoring and enhancing the hoverport in the bay.</p>
	<p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p>

District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited built form and development in the LCA, including a café within the Country Park and a petrol station off Sandwich Road;</li> <li>• sense of enclosure from the wider landscape due to mature vegetation along Sandwich Road on the western edge of the LCA;</li> <li>• former hoverport site protrudes into Pegwell Bay and appears derelict;</li> <li>• vegetation also includes mature belts and groups of trees, including within Pegwell Bay Country Park, and areas of lower scrub;</li> <li>• scenic quality of outward views reduced due to residential edge of Cliffsend along the coastline, tower building in Ramsgate and the Port of Ramsgate industrial area extending out into the sea; and</li> <li>• sound associated with bird song and the sea which increases the tranquillity of the LCA.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The LCA covers multiple ecological designations, including a SSSI, Ramsar Site, Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and National Nature Reserve (NNR) which increases the natural heritage value. The presence of the River Stour/Wantsum Channel enhances the cultural heritage value. The landscape offers recreational opportunities, including Pegwell Bay Country Park, the Thanet Coastal Path recreational route, the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), coastal margin access land and the local PRoW network. The landscape has a strong sense of identity relating to the flat expanses of saltmarsh and mudflat, remoteness and open views, which also increase the scenic quality.</p> <p>The value of LCA F1 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>
G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>This LCA is defined as “<i>a continuous stretch of low white chalk cliffs containing small sandy bays</i>”.</p> <p>The relevant key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>cliffs backed by narrow areas of amenity grassland and almost continuous urban development fronting the sea;</i></li> <li>• <i>nationally and internationally designated coastal habitats support a rich diversity of marine and terrestrial wildlife;</i></li> <li>• <i>popular beaches for recreation and tourism with seaside attractions creation a busy area in Summer;</i></li> </ul>

District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>accessible coastline via the Coastal Path/Viking trail and the numerous bays and beaches;</i></li> <li>• <i>long views across the Dover Strait from the cliff tops and beaches, with inland views restricted by urban development; and</i></li> <li>• <i>offshore views include the Thanet wind farm and the busy shipping lanes of the Dover Strait”.</i></li> </ul> <p>Key guidelines include conserving the pattern of sandy bays and chalk cliffs, managing and enhancing habitats for wildlife, conserving the open sea views and enhancing nationally and internationally designated coastal habitats.</p> <p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• edge of the settlement of Ramsgate, with residential properties facing out to sea;</li> <li>• scrub vegetation on the edge of the cliff, with pockets of mature tree vegetation;</li> <li>• sounds associated with the sea which increase the tranquillity of the LCA; and</li> <li>• panoramic sea views increase the scenic quality, however, the influence from visible large-scale buildings at Discovery Park and energy infrastructure associated with Richborough Energy Park and the existing towers and OHL in the distance reduces this somewhat.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The LCA covers multiple ecological designations, including a SSSI and SAC which increases the natural heritage value. The cultural heritage value is also increased by numerous listed buildings, including Grade II* fringing the coastline. There are strong cultural associations and a wealth of architectural heritage. The LCA includes recreational opportunities, including the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), Thanet Coastal Path recreational route, coastal margin access land and the local PRow network. There are areas of relatively lower tranquillity associated within the heavily developed coastal hinterland and busy tourist activity, which reduces the tranquillity. However, the distinctive character of the chalk cliffs and sandy bays and open sea views maintains a sense of exposure despite proximity to the urban areas.</p> <p>The value of LCA G1 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>



**Table 2.4 Dover District Landscape Character**

District LCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
A2: Ash Levels	<p data-bbox="461 353 1417 425">This LCA is characterised by a <i>“distinctive large scale, flat and low-lying area of arable and pasture grazing”</i>.</p> <p data-bbox="461 450 979 483">The relevant key characteristics are:</p> <ul data-bbox="576 508 1471 1126" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 508 979 542">• <i>“flat low-lying marshland;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 566 1406 638">• <i>network of linear water-filled drainage ditches separate arable and some small pasture fields;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 663 1417 734">• <i>limited tree cover with occasional small wooded copses and orchards;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 759 1417 864">• <i>largely undeveloped landscape, with few roads or buildings, crossed by the railway, A257 and A256 in the south-east;</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 889 1422 960">• <i>the Saxon Shore Way Distance Footpath runs along the River Stour; and</i></li> <li data-bbox="576 985 1471 1126">• <i>open, visually exposed landscape with long views including to the large-scale buildings of the Discovery Park and development associated with the former Richborough power station.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="461 1167 1393 1238"><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul data-bbox="576 1249 1458 1641" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 1249 1458 1321">• presence of existing towers and OHL as well as wood pole lines through the LCA;</li> <li data-bbox="576 1346 1358 1487">• scrub and distinctive occasional trees are present intermittently along drainage ditches through the marshland, including wetter species such as willow, although generally limited vegetation cover;</li> <li data-bbox="576 1512 1011 1545">• irregular shaped fields; and</li> <li data-bbox="576 1570 1358 1641">• enclosure on the southern edge afforded by mature vegetation lining Richborough Road.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="461 1682 866 1715"><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p data-bbox="461 1727 1458 2013">Recreational opportunities include the local PRoW network within the marshes and the Saxon Shore Way recreational route on the northern boundary of the LCA. The distinctive large scale, flat and low-lying grazing marsh subdivided by drainage ditches is largely inaccessible and offers a strong sense of identity. The open, expansive landscape increases the scenic quality however this is somewhat decreased by the presence of the existing towers and OHL and views to large-scale buildings associated with Discovery Park and the former Richborough</p>

	<p>Power Station. The former Wantsum Channel and historic droves increases the cultural heritage value.</p> <p>The value of LCA A2 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>
B1: Great Stour Sandwich Corridor	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>This LCA is described as a “<i>flat, low-lying former marshland</i>”.</p> <p>The relevant key characteristics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>formed part of the former Wanstum Channel;</i></li> <li>• <i>Great Stour River channels contain the landscape, with access to the river provided along rights of way;</i></li> <li>• <i>broad leaved trees provide vegetation cover along roads and with more ornamental planting within the industrial estates;</i></li> <li>• <i>land use is dominated by industrial estates including Discovery Park. Pasture and some arable fields and grazing marsh remain between the road and estate infrastructure...with areas of former marshland character juxtaposed with the developed areas;</i></li> <li>• <i>Great Stour River and Stonar Lake are popular for walking and fishing; and</i></li> <li>• <i>open landscape, visually enclosed by large scale development. Contrast of developed and natural landscape in close proximity”.</i></li> </ul> <p>Key management guidance includes conserving and restoring former grazing marsh, fen and reedbed habitats, ensuring build form references local character and protecting the recreational use of landscape.</p> <p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail) is located through the LCA, partly along the River Stour.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The value of LCA B1 is reduced predominantly due to the dominance of industrial land use and the A256 through the LCA, which reduces scenic quality, wildness and tranquillity. Key characteristics which increase value include natural heritage comprising broad-leaved trees and wetland habitats, recreational opportunities including coastal margin land and local PRoW network and cultural heritage value comprising the former Wantsum Channel.</p> <p>The value of LCA B1 is considered to be <b>low</b>.</p>
C1: Sandwich Bay	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>The LCA is described as a “<i>distinctive area of flat, low-lying salt marsh, mud-flats, shingle beach and shallow waters forming a wide sweeping bay that transitions to an open seascape in the east</i>”.</p>

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The relevant key characteristics are:

- *“supports an important complex mosaic of habitats;*
- *central and northern areas are under arable farming within predominantly large, rectilinear fields;*
- *generally open, with the only limited built development at Sandwich Bay Estate, New Downs Farm and the club house of tree golf courses;*
- *good recreational land use in the form of coastal walking trails and tree golf courses;*
- *flat, open, horizontal landscape with very few vertical elements; tree cover limited to shelter belt planting;*
- *a sense of remoteness and wildness in places with sounds of sea, wind, and birds; and*
- *the adjoining urban areas...exert an influence on the open landscape, and notably views to large scale buildings in close proximity to Discovery Park”.*

Key management guidance includes conserving and enhancing the ecologically important wetland and coastal habitats, maintaining a sense of openness and protecting and managing recreational use of the landscape. Guidelines also include conserving the skyline, avoiding visually intrusive development that impacts the characteristic large open skies and horizons.

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Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area

- relatively flat landform with areas of undulating land and sand dunes in the intertidal zone;
- scenic quality of the LCA is reduced by views towards the edge of Ramsgate and nearby industrial areas, however there is a sense of wildness within parts of the LCA; and
- mature woodland belts and some distinctive mature individual trees.

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Landscape value judgement

Recreational opportunities include the Stour Valley Walk recreational route, King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), the local PRow network and golf courses. Cultural heritage value is enhanced by the associated historic cross channel landings. Natural heritage value is increased by various ecological designations, including NNR, SAC, Ramsar site and SSSI. The openness and sense of remoteness and wildness increases the value, with limited development, albeit reduced in parts of the LCA by the adjoining urban areas.

The value of LCA C1 is considered to be **high**.

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Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area

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The LCA is described as an “*area of gradually sloping landform, between the Ash Ridge in the south and south west and Stour Valley marshes but generally perceived as being generally flat*”.

The relevant key characteristics are:

- *“high agricultural soils support a variety of agricultural and horticultural land uses;*
- *moderate tree cover with small, scattered woodlands and copses and native hedgerows, with tall poplar and alder and beech windbreaks, plus orchard plantations;*
- *numerous glasshouses and poly-tunnels, although often well-concealed within the landscape;*
- *network of roads, narrow lanes, and tracks;*
- *an overriding rural character, although this is eroded in places, with some villages extended;*
- *a sense of openness within the larger arable fields, whilst there is a stronger sense of enclosure around orchards, along narrow lanes and within the smaller scale pasture fields near settlements; and*
- *views are generally limited across the LCA due to the relatively flat topography and enclosure by hedgerow and shelterbelts, although some longer-distance views are available from higher ground”.*

Key management guidance includes managing and enhancing the wildlife of agricultural fields and woodland cover, protecting the recreational use of landscape and conserving local distinctiveness.

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Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area

- relatively more hedgerow and vegetation cover lining agricultural fields than other LCAs in the study area;
- presence of wood pole lines across the LCA;
- scattered residential properties within the LCA as well as equestrian buildings and pasture with large-scale agricultural buildings;
- enclosure to the north by mature vegetation along Richborough Road; and
- fields appear more regular in shape and managed.

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Landscape value judgement

The rural character of the LCA enhances the scenic quality, but condition is eroded in places. The presence of conservation areas increases the cultural heritage value. The LCA offers recreational opportunities within the local PRoW network and Stour Valley Walk recreational route. The orchards increase the sense of identity. The

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generally rural character increases the sense of wildness and tranquillity.

The value of LCA D1 is considered to be **medium**.

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H1: Richborough Bluff Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area

The LCA is described as a *“distinctive knoll of higher land which sits above the surrounding marshes”*.

The relevant key characteristics are:

- *“locally prominent knoll rising from 2 m to 19 m AOD;*
- *small scale arable fields bound by native hedgerows with small areas of cattle pasture;*
- *the remains of an historic Roman port, amphitheatre and Saxon Shore fort designated as a Scheduled Monument;*
- *development limited to farmsteads and small cottages;*
- *popular visitor attraction with PRow and cycling routes through the landscape; and*
- *an open, peaceful area, with strong time-depth. The sense of remoteness is reduced in the east due to proximity to development at Discovery Park and the A256”*.

Key management guidance includes managing and enhancing the wildlife interest of agricultural fields and boundaries, conserving the character of Richborough Roman Fort and Amphitheatre and conserving the open landscape and wide views. Guidelines also include conserving the open landscape and wide views, avoiding the introduction of further large scale or incongruous elements within the flat expanse of the surrounding landscape.

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Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area

- row of linear residential properties along Castle Road in addition to the farmsteads and small cottages;
  - open feeling to the landscape due to elevated position despite mature vegetation within the LCA and wider landscape;
  - groupings of mature trees including distinctive poplars as well as mixed field boundary vegetation including hedgerow and scrub;
  - tranquillity reduced due to road and railway noise;
  - context of the River Stour within the eastern part of the LCA, albeit with reduced influence due to intervening mature vegetation; and
  - scenic quality reduced in part due to movement on the railway line, road network in the distance, perception of the existing towers and OHL, Richborough Energy Park and
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Discovery Park, albeit with reduced influence in parts due to intervening mature vegetation.

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#### Landscape value judgement

Recreational opportunities include Richborough Roman Fort and Amphitheatre, the local PRow network, NCN and Saxon Shore Way recreational route on the eastern boundary. The scenic quality and sense of wildness and tranquillity is reduced in part due to proximity to industrial and road infrastructure. The cultural heritage value is increased due to the presence of Richborough Roman Fort and Amphitheatre and the association with the Wantsum Channel. The landscape has a strong sense of identity as it rises above the surrounding landform with extensive views outwards.

The value of LCA H1 is considered to be **high**.

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### National Seascape Character

- 2.1.6 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** and described in Table 2.5. This Marine Character Area (MCA) is not specifically assessed in relation to the Kent Onshore Scheme due to its large scale but is described to provide context.

**Table 2.5 National Seascape Character**

National MCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
11: Goodwin Sands and North Dover Strait	<p>The relevant key characteristics defined in the study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “North easterly and south easterly facing coastline of Kent characterised by chalk cliffs separated by a shore of mud, sand and shingle;</li><li>• the River Stour flows into Pegwell Bay forming a wide sweeping bay of intertidal mud, sand flats and shallow waters rich in invertebrate life and supporting waterfowl;</li><li>• extensive freshwater marshes at Sandwich Bay provide further contrast and habitat diversity; and</li><li>• the 59 km (37 miles) stretch of the England Coast Path from Folkstone to Ramsgate is approved and open to the public providing recreation opportunities along the coast and views across this seascape”.</li></ul>

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### Regional Seascape Character

- 2.1.7 The Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.3.1.5 Seascape Character – National and Regional** and described in Table 2.6. A value judgement and additional baseline notes from Applicant

field work to supplement the published study are given for those SCAs included in the assessment of the Kent Onshore Scheme.

**Table 2.6 Regional Seascape Character**

Regional SCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
C3C: Ramsgate Harbour	<p data-bbox="461 495 1437 528"><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p data-bbox="461 551 1321 584">The relevant key characteristics defined in the study include:</p> <ul data-bbox="576 607 1474 1794" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“south and south east facing coastline of the Isle of Thanet, consisting of sandy beaches and relatively low chalk cliffs;</i></li> <li>• <i>high biodiversity value recognised by designations;</i></li> <li>• <i>a heavily developed coastal hinterland, with the town of Ramsgate, forming part of the almost continuous conurbation along the Thanet coast;</i></li> <li>• <i>the port of Ramsgate and Royal Harbour provides protection from the severe channel weather and safe anchorage for large numbers of recreational vessels;</i></li> <li>• <i>the commercial port was built on reclaimed land to the west of the Royal Harbour, in the 1970s. Until recently it operated ferry services to Dunkerque and Ostende and has become a construction and operational base for three offshore wind farms;</i></li> <li>• <i>wide, simple and unrestricted views along the coastline including to Pegwell Bay to the south, from high points such as West Cliff;</i></li> <li>• <i>the Thanet Coastal Path follows the cliff tops along the coast and provides long ranging views out;</i></li> <li>• <i>in view from the sea the looming shapes of the Pegwell Bay Hotel and golf clubhouses are dominant in this flat open coastal landscape, with long shingle beach evident;</i></li> <li>• <i>the Royal Harbour is a busy tourist and leisure attraction; and</i></li> <li>• <i>the popularity of Ramsgate as a seaside resort was captured in a famous painting by William Powell Frith “Ramsgate Sands (Life at the Seaside)” (1851 – 54)”.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="461 1827 1394 1899"><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul data-bbox="576 1910 1366 1982" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• edge of the settlement of Ramsgate, with residential properties facing out to sea;</li> </ul>

Regional SCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scrub vegetation on the edge of the cliff, with pockets of mature vegetation;</li> <li>• sound associated with the sea which increases the tranquillity of the LCA; and</li> <li>• panoramic sea views increase the scenic quality, however the influence from large buildings at Discovery Park and visible energy infrastructure associated with Richborough Energy Park and the existing towers and OHL in the distance reduces this somewhat.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The SCA covers multiple ecological designations, including a SSSI and SAC which increases the natural heritage value. The cultural heritage value is also increased by numerous listed buildings, including Grade II* on the coastline. The SCA includes recreational opportunities, including the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), Thanet Coastal Path recreational route, the local PRow network and coastal margin access land. Relatively lower tranquillity and wildness due to the heavily developed coastal hinterland and busy tourist activity, which reduces the value. There are also associations with artists, including William Powell Frith.</p> <p>The value of SCA C3C is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>
C5A/I1A: Sandwich and Pegwell Bays	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>The relevant key characteristics defined in the study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“shallow inlet onto the Strait at estuary of the River Stour strategic entry point to the river and inland;</i></li> <li>• <i>huge intertidal area of extensive area of mud and sandflats and shallow offshore waters;</i></li> <li>• <i>distinguished by distinct area of sedimentary sandstone and mudstone extending out from the bay;</i></li> <li>• <i>flat coastal land and inshore waters enclosed by prominent chalk and flint cliffs at Ramsgate to the east creating distinctive bay with wave cut platform;</i></li> <li>• <i>complex mosaic of habitats – including extensive inter tidal mudflats, salt marsh, shingle beach and dunes;</i></li> <li>• <i>distinctive stretch of low lying windswept coast invoking strong sense of remoteness and wildness;</i></li> <li>• <i>recorded in a famous landscape painting by William Dyce in 1858 depicting the area as a popular Victorian pleasure resort;</i></li> <li>• <i>shallow seas create a safe place for recreational watersports; and</i></li> </ul>

Regional SCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>in view from the sea the looming shapes of the Pegwell Bay Hotel and golf clubhouses are dominant in this flat open coastal landscape, with long shingle beach evident”.</i></li> </ul>
	<p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• built form and development in the SCA, including a café within the Country Park and a petrol station off Sandwich Road and part of Richborough Energy Park;</li> <li>• sense of enclosure from the wider landscape due to mature vegetation along Sandwich Road on the western edge of the LCA;</li> <li>• former hoverport site protrudes into Pegwell Bay and appears derelict;</li> <li>• vegetation includes mature belts and groups of trees, including within Pegwell Bay Country Park, and scrub;</li> <li>• scenic quality of outward views reduced due to residential edge of Cliffsend along the coastline, tower building in Ramsgate, energy infrastructure and the Port of Ramsgate industrial area extending out into the sea;</li> <li>• sound associated with bird song and sea which increases the tranquillity of the LCA;</li> <li>• areas of undulating land and sand dunes in the intertidal zone; and</li> <li>• mature woodland belts and some distinctive mature individual trees.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The SCA covers multiple ecological designations, including a SSSI, Ramsar Site, SAC and NNR which increases the natural heritage. The landscape offers recreational opportunities, including Pegwell Bay Country Park, the Thanet Coastal Path recreational route, the King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), the local PRoW network and coastal margin access land. The landscape has a strong sense of identity relating to the flat marshland, open views and a sense of remoteness and wildness which increase the value. There are also associations with artists, including William Dyce.</p> <p>The value of SCA C5A/I1A is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>

# References

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