



The Planning Inspectorate

The Planning Act 2008

Application for Development Consent for the Sea Link Project

Case Ref: EN020026

The Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection

Background

The Examining Authority (ExA) undertook an unaccompanied site inspection (USI) to support the examination of an application for development consent for the proposed Sea Link Project (the application) on Tuesday 24 June 2025.

The ExA carried out its USI from publicly accessible land (roads, footpaths and bridleways).

The USI was undertaken to view the location of the proposed development including the proposed landfall areas and proposed locations of a substation, convertor station and construction compounds, and to observe the existing character, appearance and environment of the surrounding area and adjoining land uses.

Particulars of the Unaccompanied Site Inspection

The USI was undertaken by: Sarah Holmes, Richard Hunt, Steven Rennie, Nancy Thomas and Simon Warder. The ExA was accompanied by Louise Harraway from the case team and Marie Shoesmith from the environmental services team.

The USI was undertaken on foot and by car. Weather conditions were light showers changing to dry and sunny with temperatures between 16 and 26 degrees centigrade. Weather conditions were suitable to appreciate long range views. The USI commenced at approximately 09:20 and finished at approximately 14:00. A list of the locations visited is attached at Annex A.



The Planning Inspectorate

Annex A: List of locations visited on the Unaccompanied Site Inspection on the morning of Tuesday 24 June 2025

The ExA commenced the USI from the A256-A299 roundabout by car, taking in the location of the proposed construction compound (part of work no. 8) and access immediately south of the roundabout and of the old hoverport access in Cliffsend and noting areas of new housebuilding en-route. The ExA then proceeded to St Augustine's Cross, also noting the proposed construction access adjacent to St Augustine's golf course.

At the crossroads north of Sevenscore, the ExA viewed viewpoint VP5, looking south towards the railway line and the site of the proposed converter station and substation. The ExA then travelled south through Sevenscore on Ebbsfleet Lane north, noting the location of a caravan which appeared to be in residential use at the southernmost extent of the lane, just north of the A256. The ExA then returned through Sevenscore to Thorne Hill, immediately south of the A299 to viewpoint VP11, also noting nearby solar farm development.

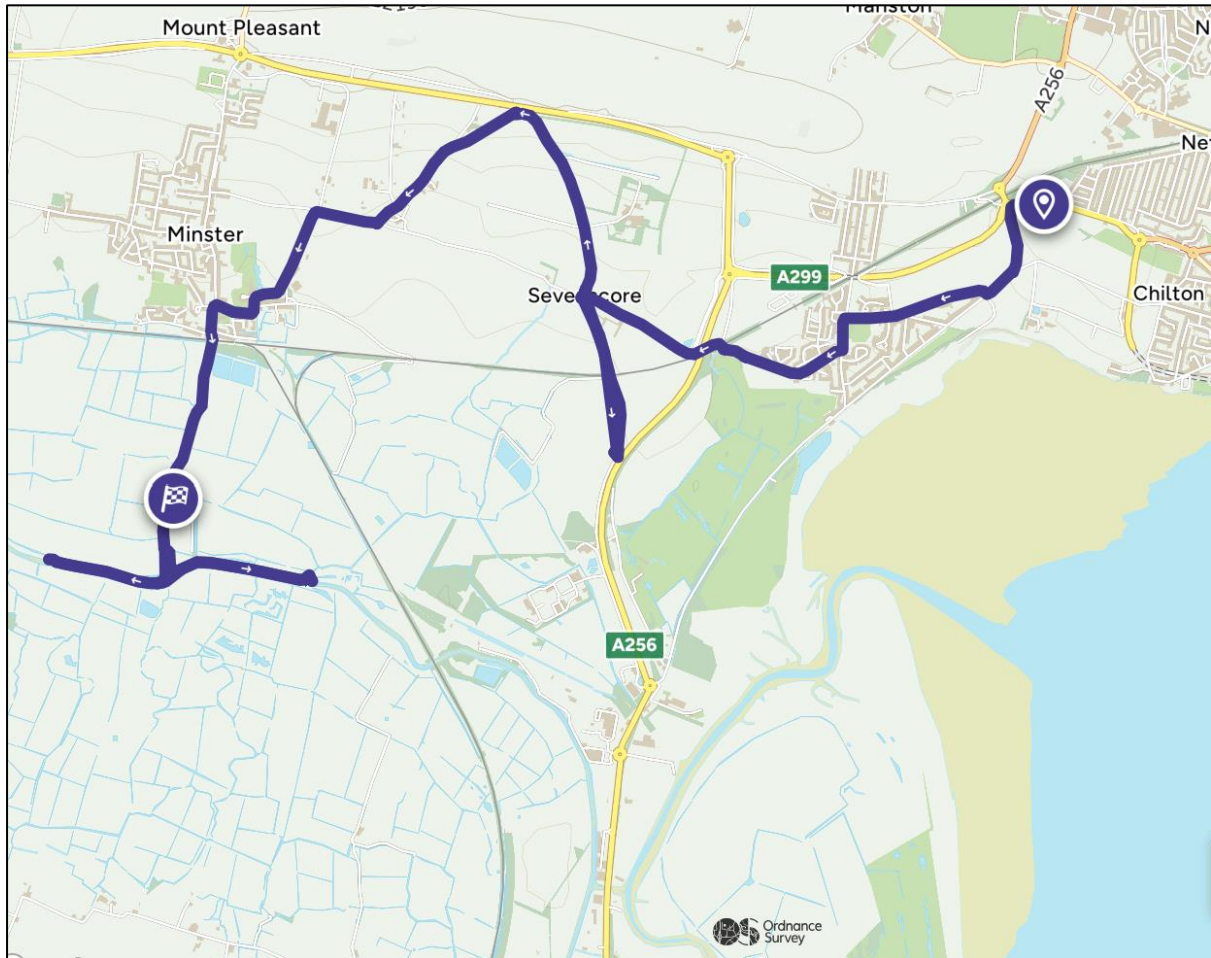
From viewpoint VP11 the ExA drove through Minster, passing the Abbey and parking outside the sewage works on Marsh Farm Road. From here the ExA walked along bridleway TE35, past the Abbot's Wall and then west on footpath TE26, close to the location of viewpoint VP10 with views to the east and west of the existing overhead power line arrangement and to the east of the proposed converter station and substation site. The ExA then walked east, close to the route of the Abbot's Wall to an area signposted 'private – conservation area' just west of the railway line and within the northern extent of the Ash Level and South Richborough Pasture Local Wildlife Site. There we observed the location of a proposed temporary bridge over the River Stour and the approximate location of proposed pylons in an area of land currently screened by vegetation.

The ExA observed cattle and bird life in the surrounding fields and marshland. A single pleasure vessel was noted to be travelling east on the River Stour at the time of the USI.

The route is shown below.



The Planning Inspectorate



The ExA then walked along Watchchester Lane in Minster in a westerly direction. The ExA followed footpath TE32 southwards over the railway line to VP6 and observed views towards the proposed converter station, substation and OHL. The ExA then drove to the railway station at Minster to view the area to the south of the railway line (such as where the converter station and substation are proposed) and the heritage assets to the north (including St Mary the Virgin Church and Minster Abbey). The ExA also took in the views from the elevated position of the railway footbridge.

After this, the ExA drove east along Grinsell Hill then through the small village of Sevenscore and over the railway line before turning onto Brook Lane via proposed construction access K-AP-6.

From here the ExA walked west along the public right of way (TE37) adjacent to the railway line to viewpoint VP4. From this viewpoint the ExA could observe Minster Marshes to the south and the proposed location of the converted station.

The ExA then walked back to Brook Lane (TE39) and headed south to where the public right of way crossed the field towards the A256. Here the ExA observed the



The Planning Inspectorate

public right of way network and landscape/visual setting in relation to the proposed works numbered 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

The route is shown below.

