

PROPOSED SOUTH EAST ANGLIA LINK (SEA LINK) DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

PINS REFERENCE: EN020026

LONDON GATEWAY PORT LIMITED (LGPL) ()

DEADLINE 2: LGPL’S COMMENTS ON DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT AT DEADLINE 1 AND DEADLINE 1A

A) RESPONSE TO TABLE 2.1 OF THE APPLICANT’S RESPONSE TO ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 1 (11 NOVEMBER 2025) [REP1-124]

Action Number	ExA Description	Applicant’s Response	LGPL Comment / Response
AP10	Technical note regarding protection of under keel clearance including in relation to cable crossings on bedrock where external protection or backfilling will be required above seabed level.	<p><i>A technical note will be supplied at Deadline 1A which will provide a detailed response to the protection of under keel clearance across the three areas of interest identified by PLA London Gateway and HHA: (a) “Sunk Pilot Boarding area”, (b) “Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing” and (c) North East Spit area”. This will include an explanation of how the Applicant’s proposed marine works (Work No.6) would not impede the dredging of those parts of the areas of interest to the following depths: (a) “Sunk Pilot Boarding area” to a level of 22 metres below Chart Datum (CD); (b) “Long Sand Head Two Way Route crossing” to a level of 12.5 metres below CD and; (c) North East Spit area” to a level of 12.5 metres below CD. Recent discussions with PLA and HHA have also set the requirement for an additional allowance for an ‘over-dredge’ tolerance of 0.5 metres beyond the specified depths. The technical note will also detail any expected reductions in water depth greater than 5% at proposed crossings and explain how under keel clearance will be maintained in the three areas of interest.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant is actively consulting with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a common understanding of their specific requirements, including geographic areas and the recent requirement for over-dredge tolerances. Technical assessments are ongoing to facilitate final agreement and the wording of the proposed protective provisions.</i></p> <p><i>The primary methodology for protecting the cable and for installing the works (Work No.6) at a level which would not impede future dredging and would safeguard under keel clearance, is by lowering the cable below seabed to the proposed target depth of lowering. The Target Depth of Lowering (TDOL) along the Offshore Scheme is described in AS-018 Table 4.15. The minimum depth of lowering (DOL) to the top of the cable is 0.5 m in areas of weak bedrock Chalk, with a target DOL for the Proposed Project approximately 1 m to 2.5 m. In sections of the route identified as having the highest risk of cable strike due to marine traffic, a TDOL between 2.0 m to 2.5 m is proposed. The trench along these sections – specifically KP 38 to KP 58, and KP 81.5 to KP 96.5 – is proposed to be backfilled using rock to a level below the original seabed level.</i></p>	<p>Our comments on the technical note provided by the Applicant at Deadline 1 A [REP1A-038] are set out in the table titled LGPL Comments on Shipping and Navigation Under-Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note below.</p> <p>In particular, as set out below, LPGL does not see how a TDOL approach alone guarantees the possibility of a future dredge of -22m CD (with necessary tolerances).</p>

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		<i>Table 4.18 and 4.19 of AS-018 lists the developments also likely to cross the Offshore Scheme. Crossings of cables would be undertaken using agreed crossing designs in accordance with the crossing agreements with the third-party owners and would consider the requirements to safeguard under keel clearance. The proposed crossing locations within the three areas of interest, including in areas of bedrock (stiff clay or chalk) provide sufficient water depth to safeguard under keel clearance. The exception is the currently proposed Grid Link crossing location, where the agreed mitigation is to cross further east in deeper water within the order limits.</i>	
AP12	Ports such as Medway, Tilbury and London Gateway Port do not appear to have been consulted on the Navigational Risk Assessment [APP-203]. Provide an explanation as to how the necessary additional consultation will be carried out.	<p><i>The ports of Medway, Tilbury and London Gateway Port were assessed as being outside the Navigational Risk Assessment [APP-203] 10 Nautical Mile shipping and navigation study area and therefore were not included in the consultation sessions undertaken for the NRA. The Applicant has since received Relevant Representations from Port of London Authority stating that the Port of Tilbury and London Gateway Port should be consulted, and from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) stating that Medway Port should be consulted with on the Navigation and Installation Plan (NIP).</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant has therefore contacted the Port of Medway, Port of Tilbury and London Gateway Port via email. The Applicant has received a Relevant Representation and are in the process of arranging a meeting with the Port of Tilbury, currently planned for the 24 November 2025. The Applicant had a meeting with the London Gateway Port on the 17 November 2025, and the Applicant is in discussions via email with the Port of Medway (Peel Ports), with the possibility of arranging a meeting as required.</i></p>	Notwithstanding LGPL's status as a statutory consultee (the basis on which LGPL is a statutory consultee is set out in paragraph 4 of its Written Representation [REP1-142]). Contrary to the Applicant's statement at para 3.13.5 of REP1-112 (Applicant's Comments on the Relevant Representations of the Port of London Authority), LGPL has no record of any engagement from the Applicant prior to 28 October 2025. LGPL's first discussions with the Applicant regarding the Application took place on 17 November 2025.
AP13	Consideration as to whether there are adequate controls in the draft Development Consent Order/Deemed Marine Licence with regard to under keel clearance during construction and future requirements.	<p><i>The Applicant has submitted draft DCO and Deemed Marine Licence (DML) documents, with further updates to be incorporated, as details are agreed with the various stakeholders. A first draft of the proposed wording for the Protective Provisions within the DCO has been provided to the PLA. The Applicant is currently reviewing the feedback and comments received from the PLA. Further discussions are ongoing with other relevant stakeholders including HHA and London Gateway.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant is actively working to ensure a common understanding of the various stakeholders' specific requirements pertaining to the safeguard of water depth / under keel clearance as well as their requirements to consult on the proposed works (Work No.6) including survey, monitoring and preconstruction/construction activities.</i></p> <p><i>Once the Protective Provisions are finalised, subject to any necessary amendments, agreement will be reached on how to secure them within the DCO to the satisfaction of the stakeholders. The DML and Protective Provisions (or other agreed means of securing the requirements) will be provided alongside the draft management plans, such as the Navigation Installation Plan (NIP), and outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP). Together, these are intended to provide stakeholders with the</i></p>	<p>As set out in LGPL's Written Representations [REP1-142], presently there are not adequate controls in the dDCO to secure the passage of vessels in the future. The Applicant has indicated the DML, protective provisions (or other agreed means of securing the requirements) will be provided alongside the management plans, such as the NIP and outline CSIP. Whilst this is helpful, we note the Applicant has: (i) not yet committed to securing the necessary controls in respect of under keel clearance by way of a Requirement in the dDCO (the reasons for a Requirement being necessary are set out in paragraph 5 of LGPL's Written Representations [REP1-142]); (ii) not committed to a deadline for the provision of the NIP and outline CSIP nor the cable protection plan for LGPL's consideration; and (iii) has not confirmed LGPL will be given adequate approval rights (either by way of protective provisions or by provision in the DML) of the plans and documents governing cable laying works and future maintenance.</p> <p>LGPL looks forward to sight of a revised draft of the dDCO as soon as possible so that these matters can be progressed and agreement reached with the Applicant.</p>

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		<i>necessary assurance that the interests of shipping and navigation stakeholders will be protected both now and in the future.</i>	
AP14	Response to London Gateway Port's questions about provision of draft cable laying and burial plan, cable protection plan and the cable specification installation plan.	<p><i>The Applicant has submitted a draft DML which describes the provision of pre-construction plans and documentation including (but not limited to) the cable laying and burial plan, cable protection plan and cable specification and installation plan. The details of these plans will be provided in a single document known as the Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP).</i></p> <p><i>The CSIP will be submitted pre-construction in accordance with the DML and will be informed by the Contractor's final assessment of the site data, burial assessment study and detailed design and methodologies. The Contractor's detailed design is still to be undertaken and therefore the final design and methodologies to inform the final CSIP is not currently known. An outline version of the CSIP will be submitted into the DCO process at an agreed deadline.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant is in discussions with London Gateway and other relevant stakeholders on the scope of the CSIP to be submitted pre-construction. Discussions are ongoing to understand whether any further additional documents are required or whether the scope of information required can be captured in the documents proposed in the draft DML.</i></p>	<p>It is unclear at what stage the outline version of the CSIP will be provided in the Examination. LGPL will require sight of the outline CSIP at the earliest possible opportunity and reserves its position regarding approval rights over the CSIP which is to be submitted pre-construction in accordance with the DML. In addition, the proposed content that the plans comprising the CSIP must cover should be prescribed in the outline CSIP (i.e. the outline CSIP must not simply reference the plans which will make up the CSIP without saying what they must cover). LGPL request the Applicant provides the outline CSIP as soon as possible and by Deadline 3 at the latest.</p> <p>The DML must contain sufficient provisions in the conditions to ensure that the final form of the CSIP is in accordance with the outline CSIP and LGPL (and the other relevant harbour authorities and the MCA) should have rights of approval (or otherwise similar effect must be achieved in protective provisions).</p>

B) LGPL'S COMMENTS ON THE APPLICANT'S SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION UNDER-KEEL CLEARANCE MARINE ENGINEERING TECHNICAL NOTE [REP1A-038]

Technical Note Paragraph Number	Applicant's Analysis	LGPL Comment / Response
2.1.4 (Introduction)	<p><i>The following summarises the ongoing engagement with stakeholders on the matter of under-keel clearance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Port of London Authority (PLA) has provided GIS data for three Areas of Safeguarded Depth (the Areas of Interest): — 1) "Sunk Pilot Boarding area" where PLA have requested 22 m below Chart Datum (CD) minimum water depth; — 2) "Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing area" where PLA request 12.5 m below CD to be preserved; and — 3) "North East (NE) Spit area" where 12.5 m below CD is to be preserved.</i> <i>The PLA also require in all areas of interest (1) to (3) to makes allowance for an 'over-dredge' tolerance of 0.5 m in addition to the stated depths attributable to standard dredging methodology.</i> <i>Harwich Haven Authority (HHA) has also requested that 22 m below CD is safeguarded within "the Sunk area". Further detail on precise geographical extent of this area was provided on 7 November 2025. Further communication has established that the area of interest for the HHA consists of two circles centred at the Sunk Pilot Boarding Station charted and actual boarding locations.</i> <i>London Gateway Port has expressed that they support the PLA in seeking safeguarding of 22 m in the PLA's "Sunk Pilot Boarding Area", and 12.5 m below CD within the "Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing area" and "NE Spit area". They also have interest in regards powers of dredging rights adjacent to the Sunk which need to be considered.</i> <p>[...]</p>	<p>LGPL are of the view a Requirement must be added to the draft DCO [REP1-036] to ensure a dredge depth of 22 metres below CD is not precluded in the Sunk Pilot Boarding Area. LGPL also endorses the proposed over-dredge tolerance 0.5 metres in addition to the stated depth proposed by the PLA and this must also be secured as part of the Requirement. These are allowances are required to ensure larger vessels in the future can use the Sunk route into the Thames Estuary.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, LGPL maintains the view expressed in its Written Representations [REP1-142] that 12.5 metres below CD should also be maintained at Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing area and the North East Spit area. An allowance of 0.5 metres for over-dredging should also be secured in addition to the stated depths. Again, this safeguarding must be secured by way of a Requirement in the draft DCO.</p>
2.3.8 – 2.3.13 (PLA's Sunk Pilot Boarding Area)	<p><i>Analysis of the seabed morphology within the PLA's "Sunk Pilot Boarding area" indicates that the seabed is in the main greater than 22 m CD, however in the northwest of the area there are linear seabed features trending SSW to NNE. The seabed features comprise of London Clay ridges with local accumulations of sands and granular material. The baseline depth along the corridor which passes through the low point in the ridge, is shallower than the PLA's requested 22 m below CD.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant's main protection strategy for Sea Link is cable lowering, with the intention to lower the cable bundle between 2 m to-2.5 m deep within identified "High Risk Areas", of which the Sunk region is one (Application Document 9.21 Sea Link Cable Burial Risk Assessment [PDA-039]). The trench containing the lowered cable bundle will be backfilled with up to 2 m of protective rock, to 80% (maximum 2 m backfill) of the lowered depth, to provide additional protection against anchor strike or drag interactions.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant is currently assessing the engineering implications of the additional cable Depth of Lowering (DoL) that may be required in areas of the "Sunk Pilot Boarding area" that are already shallower than the 22 m CD safeguard level. In the worse case, the cable DoL required may increase from 2.5 m to approximately 4.5m in the shallowest sections of the route. These changes require further investigation in terms of cable burial methodology and cable system design. The Applicant is undertaking the necessary technical assessments in order to reach agreement on wording of Protective Provisions on this matter.</i></p> <p><i>To note, the PLA and HHA have informed the Applicant that the current Sunk Pilot Boarding Station charted diamond is located to the west of the previously described shallow seabed feature within the Sunk region and therefore is not an area where large ships can receive pilots.</i></p> <p><i>Pilot boarding does not take place at the Sunk Pilot Boarding Station charted diamond, but currently takes place up to approximately 1.5 km to the east of the charted diamond i.e. in the vicinity of the large ridge where water depths are considerably shallower than 22 m CD.</i></p> <p><i>In discussions with PLA and HHA, they currently have been no detailed applications or provision of confirmed development plans for dredging of the natural features in question within the Sunk area,</i></p>	<p>LGPL notes the Applicant is considering additional cable depth of lowering in respect of parts of the Sunk Pilot Boarding Area which are already shallower than 22 metres below CD and that the Applicant is assessing engineering implications of the additional depth. The Applicant also notes the presence of London Clay ridges in the northwest of the identified area. LGPL has no concerns in respect of the methodology adopted by the Applicant, provided the approach does not preclude LGPL's ability to dredge to 22 metres below CD across the Sunk Pilot Boarding Area. Such is required notwithstanding (i) current depths already being shallower than 22 metres below CD; and (ii) the presence of the London Clay ridges. For this reason, describing the methodology alone is not sufficient as DoL is always relative to the existing bathymetry – instead the Requirement (which delivers an absolute, not relative outcome) must be included.</p> <p>In addition, the Applicant's commentary refers to the current absence of dredging applications in respect of the Sunk which, although not expressly stated, calls into question the need for depths to be secured across the area of concern and whether those areas would, in reality, be dredged. LGPL is not aware of any reason why the entirety of the Sunk Pilot Boarding Area could not be dredged nor why the necessary consents to carry out such dredging would not be issued.</p> <p>We also note the Applicant has suggested there are no "known cable crossings planned" (our emphasis) within the PLA's Sunk Pilot Boarding Area. LGPL's position is that there must be no cable crossings due to Work No. 6 within the Sunk unless such crossings are either (i) in areas where depths already exceed 22 metres below CD (with a 0.5 metre tolerance for over-dredging); or (ii) are implemented using a methodology which ensures a future dredge depth of 22 metres below CD plus the 0.5 metre tolerance is not precluded. Again, this must be secured by way of a Requirement in the DCO.</p> <p>A fuller description of the pilotage activities in the Sunk area is set out in the Written Representations of LGPL [REP1-142] and the PLA [REP1-155].</p>

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	<p><i>which the Applicant could incorporate into detailed cable design plans, other than the intention to require 22 m in the future throughout the PLA's "Sunk Pilot Boarding area".</i></p> <p><i>There are no known cable crossings planned within the PLA's "Sunk Pilot Boarding area."</i></p>	
2.3.14 – 2.3.16 (PLA's NE Spit Area)	<p><i>The Applicant has been engaging with the Port of London Authority in respect of under-keel clearance within the PLA's "NE Spit area". Of particular consideration is the GridLink planned cable crossing, which is expected to be located within this area at approximately KP 101.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant has engaged with GridLink to understand the development's plans for installation in this area, and with the goal of co-engineering and collaborating as required in order to ensure that the PLA's requirement for 12.5 m depth below CD can be met within the "NE Spit area", which is an area with shallow sections.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant is satisfied that it has a solution to ensure that the 12.5 m depth is preserved even at the GridLink crossing location, by moving the planned Sea Link cable route at this point into deeper waters to the east (while still within the Order Limits) ensuring sufficient water depth above the expected crossing location. The Applicant had kept the Order Limits wide here to enable such solutions to be possible.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant is undertaking the necessary technical assessments in order to reach agreement on wording of Protective Provisions on this matter.</i></p>	<p>LGPL are content for the GridLink crossing at NE Spit to be located in deeper waters so as to ensure sufficient water depth in the area of concern. We assume therefore that there would be no difficulty in entering into the Requirement sought in the DCO. LGPL's rights to approve the cable specification and installation plan (CSIP) must be secured by way of protective provisions or pursuant to the deemed marine licence.</p> <p>LGPL provided the Applicant with example wording for the relevant protective provision on 21 November 2025.</p>
5.2.1 – 5.2.2 (Cable Specification and Installation Plan)	<p><i>The Applicant has submitted a draft DML which describes the provision of pre-construction plans and documentation including the CSIP.</i></p> <p><i>The CSIP will be submitted pre-construction in accordance with the DML and will be informed by the Contractor's final assessment of the site data, burial assessment study and detailed design and methodologies. The Contractor's detailed design is still to be undertaken and therefore the final design and methodologies to inform the final CSIP is not currently known. The Applicant is in discussions with the relevant stakeholders on the scope of the CSIP to be submitted pre-construction. Discussions are ongoing to understand whether any further additional documents are required or whether the scope of information required can be captured in the documents proposed in the draft DML. The Applicant currently intends to submit an outline version of the CSIP once these discussions have progressed further.</i></p>	<p>The Applicant has not committed to a deadline to provide the outline CSIP.</p> <p>LGPL requests sight of the draft outline CSIP as soon as possible and at the latest by Deadline 3 of the Examination (9 December 2026). A summary of the details to be contained in the documents/plans comprising the CSIP must be included in the outline CSIP (i.e. not simply references to the plans which will make up the CSIP).</p> <p>LGPL's right to approve the final CSIP must be secured by way of protective provisions or pursuant to the deemed marine licence.</p>

C) LGPL'S COMMENTS ON TABLE 6.1 OF THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSES TO SELECTED RELEVANT REPRESENTATION RESPONSES [REP1-115]

Applicant's Reference	Summary of relevant representation	Applicant's Response	LGPL Comment
6.11.1	Introduction and Background London Gateway Port Limited, LG Park Freehold Limited and LG Park Leasehold Limited (collectively hereinafter referred to as DPWLG) are the owners and operators of DP World London Gateway Port (the Port) and DP World London Gateway Logistics Park (the Logistics Park) on the north bank of the Thames Estuary in Stanford-le Hope, Essex. The Port is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and makes a significant contribution to the national economy ¹ . Once fully developed, the Port will comprise deep sea shipping and container handling facilities with an annual throughput that will equate to approximately 27% of the predicted national growth in such trade by 2030. The Logistics Park will provide up to approximately 740,000sq.m of vital commercial floorspace. Both are of national significance and importance.	The location, details and significance of the London Gateway Port are acknowledged by the Applicant.	As explained in paragraph 4 of its Written Representation [REP1-142] LGPL is a statutory consultee. .
6.11.2	<p>DPWLG Concerns The proposed cable corridor appears to run close to the Sunk and North Est Spit pilot station areas The aforementioned pilot stations are the only ones available for larger vessels to access London Gateway Port. In addition, the cable burial depth is key to ensure future vessel can be accommodated.</p> <p>Possible impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent impacts because of cable depths • Permanent and temporary impacts from surveys, cable laying and repair/maintenance • Permanent impacts from interaction with third party schemes (cable crossings) • Temporary impacts from interaction with third party schemes simultaneous operations) • Temporary and permanent impacts from the safety zones • Temporary and permanent impacts from dredging • Permanent impact from the change in cable depth due to changes in riverbed/sea • Temporary impact in the dredged depth during installation. The range of impacts vary from vessel displacement and delays to placing a constraint on the size of vessel that achieve access to London Gateway port and thus, its future growth and overall capacity. 	<p>The Applicant acknowledges the London Gateway Port's concerns around potential impacts to shipping and navigation and the importance of minimising such impacts. These impacts are assessed within Application Document 6.3.4.7.A ES Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [APP-203].</p> <p>As noted in the Navigational Risk Assessment regarding safety zones, rolling 500 m radius Recommended Restricted Zones (RRZs) will be in place around operation fleet vessels, to protect both operation fleet vessels (restricted in their ability to manoeuvre) and passing vessels from collision, as standard practice. Such RRZ are therefore temporary during the construction phase.</p> <p>Specifically regarding the potential impacts of simultaneous operations and cable crossings, these matters are subject to further discussion and engagement between the Applicant and key shipping and navigation stakeholders. The Applicant is working with shipping and navigation stakeholders to reassure and find agreement on simultaneous operations and water depth concerns.</p> <p>Additionally, the Applicant is producing a communication protocol in the form of a Navigation Installation Plan (NIP) to enable collaboration with other offshore developments. The NIP will establishes the plan for communication throughout key project phases, in particular the construction phase. This is noted in Application Document 6.2.4.7 Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [APP-080]. The NIP also establishes the 'Concurrent Activity Area' within which restrictions would apply to simultaneous Restricted in Ability to Manoeuvre (RAM) vessel operations with other offshore developments. The Applicant has submitted a draft Outline NIP to PINS on 1st September 2025, as part of the Applicant's response to the ExA's s89(3) letter dated 5 August 2025.</p> <p>Regarding concerns surrounding water depth and cable depth placing possible constraints on the size of vessel achieving access to London Gateway Port, the Applicant has been in discussion with the Port of London Authority (PLA) and Harwich Haven Authority (HHA) in order to safeguard water depths in key areas to secure future access to ports. The Applicant has been working with the PLA to understand areas where the PLA wishes to safeguard water depth to ensure long term access to the Port of London and will continue to do so through pre-Examination with the goal of reaching agreement on this matter and minimising potential impacts.</p>	Please see the relevant points made in relation to the action points and technical note above.

D) LGPL'S COMMENTS ON THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSES TO SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 1 [REP1A-033]

Reference	Question / Clarification	Applicant's Response	LGPL Comment
ISH1.01	<p>The shipping and navigation chapter 7 part 4 [APP-080] from paragraph 7.9.69 deals with the reduction in under-keel clearance. It acknowledges that this is an issue in particular locations including the Sunk but there is no clear assessment of baseline conditions in terms of depths below chart datum along the cable route or a clear conclusion as to the effect. The chapter [APP-080] states in paragraph 7.9.75 that the aim will be for the cable to be located in the deepest waters possible through the Sunk to avoid reduction to water depth.</p> <p>Provide a clear baseline for areas where sea depth is critical to shipping.</p>	<p>The Sunk region contains the Sunk Traffic Separation Scheme and is an area of busy shipping activity. The Applicant understands this and is therefore committing to increased cable burial depth (to approximately 2 to 2.5 m) throughout this region in so far as reasonably practicable to ensure minimal impact to shipping and navigation within this critical shipping region (9.21 Sea Link Cable Burial Risk Assessment [PDA-039]).</p> <p>The Applicant has consulted closely with key stakeholders in this region to refine the Sea Link cable route, such as that it does not overlap with the Sunk Deep Water Route or Trinity Deep Water Route as highlighted by stakeholders as areas where it is critical to avoid reduction in water depth and to avoid causing disruption to shipping. The Sea Link route was therefore rerouted to avoid these features, and route further to the east within the Sunk TSS.</p> <p>The Applicant is working collaboratively with the Port of London Authority and Harwich Haven Authority to understand the further specific locations along the cable route and particularly within the Sunk region, where avoiding reduction in water depth is critical to ports and shipping.</p> <p>The Port of London has shared with the Applicant three Areas of Safeguarded Depth. The Applicant is in discussions with Harwich Haven to further define their precise geographic area of interest within the Sunk region. Discussions with these ports on this matter is ongoing, with the Applicant seeking to come to agreement with the stakeholders and commit to their requirements as far as is practicable.</p> <p>The Applicant has produced Examination Submission Document 9.74 Shipping and Navigation Under-Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note in response to Issue Specific Hearing 1 Hearing Action 10 which provides an overview of bathymetry along the route with a focus on stakeholder highlighted areas of interest, namely the Port of London Authority's Areas of Safeguarded Depth, which are also backed by ports including the London Gateway Port and Port of Tilbury. Appendix A of this document also summarises the bathymetric conditions along the route.</p>	<p>The Applicant explains its commitment to increasing cable burial depth throughout the Sunk Traffic Separation Scheme area, however, its commitment is then caveated by references to the need to ensure "minimal impact" to shipping and navigation and such measures will be carried out "so far as reasonably practicable". LGPL has no concerns in respect of the methodology adopted by the Applicant, provided (i) the approach does not preclude LGPL's ability to dredge to 22 metres below CD across the Sunk Pilot Boarding Area; and (ii) such is secured by way of Requirement. The importance of Gateway to UK trade is set out at paragraph 2 of LGPL's Written Representations [REP1-142].</p> <p>Please see the relevant points made above in relation to Applicant's engagement with LGPL (being a statutory consultee and therefore a key stakeholder).</p> <p>Also, please see out comments above in respect of Document 9.74 Shipping and Navigation Under-Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note [REP1A-038].</p>
ISH1.02	<p>Paragraph 9.9.2 of the other sea users chapter 9 part 4 [APP-082] states that where burial of the cable cannot be achieved, rock backfill or external protection will be required where soil or rock conditions are too hard to achieve effective burial, or third party assets cross the route. Expected areas of rock backfill are located between KP38 to KP58 and KP81.5 to KP96.5. On this basis, the first area roughly coincides with the Sunk. The second area coincides with the North East Spit. These areas include anchorages and pilot boarding stations as well as having a high vessel track density, as shown for example on Figure 6.4.4.7.A 10 [APP-283].</p> <p>Has this information been carried across to chapter 9 as it shows that cables may not be buried in these areas. If not, why not?</p>	<p>An updated version of Application Document 6.2.4.9 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 9 Other Sea Users [APP-082] was submitted at Deadline 1 to provide further clarity on the areas where rock backfill (placement of rock in the cable trench up to or below seabed level) will be required which is between KP38 to KP58 and KP81.5 to KP96.5 and where additional cable protection (rock berms) may be required.</p> <p>The Applicant has made a commitment that where rock backfill is required (between KP38 to KP58 and KP81.5 to KP96.5) no additional external cable protection (rock berms) will be required. These areas correspond to the Sunk and North East Spit. The Applicant can also confirm that requirements for cable crossings and associated rock berms required as part of these crossings have also been considered in [APP-082].</p> <p>The information provided in Application Document 6.2.4.9 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 9 Other Sea Users [REP-061] was informed by Application Document 6.2.4.7 Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [APP-080] and Application Document 6.3.4.7.A ES Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [APP-203].</p> <p>However, the assessment in Application Document 6.2.4.9 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 9 Other Sea Users [APP-082] is not intended to replicate information from the shipping and navigation assessment.</p> <p>Specific impacts on shipping and navigation including anchorages and pilot boarding stations have been assessed in detail in Application Document 6.2.4.7 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [APP-080] and Application Document 6.3.4.7.A ES Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [APP-203]. This includes a commitment to avoiding disruption to the Sunk anchorage area and Sunk pilot boarding station (within</p>	<p>Please refer to our comments below on the updated version of Application Document 6.2.4.9 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 9 Other Sea Users submitted at Deadline 1 [REP1-061].</p> <p>We also refer to paragraphs 4.13 to 4.14 of LGPL's Written Representations [REP1-142] which consider the shortcomings of the Applicants assessment in Document 6.2.4.7 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [APP-080]. Measures to avoid disruption during construction are to be welcomed and LGPL looks forward sight of the outline CSIP on that point, but such measures do not deal with the more fundamental issue of ensuring sufficient future depths and ensuring no reduction in present under-keel clearance.</p> <p>LGPL's position is that there should be no cable crossings in the areas of interest (see para 5.2 of REP1-142). Outside those areas, LGPL defers to and supports the MCA's position.</p>

Reference	Question / Clarification	Applicant's Response	LGPL Comment
		<p>the Sunk TSS) during construction by minimising time spent in this region during construction and avoiding cable joints in these areas where possible. Concern has been raised about proximity to these navigational features by relevant stakeholders in their Relevant Representations (RRs). These concerns are noted by the Applicant. Responses to the RRs will be provided at Deadline 1.</p> <p>Requests have also been made by relevant stakeholders, including port and harbour authorities, to preserve minimum water depths in areas such as the “Sunk Pilot Boarding Area” and “NE Spit area”. These requests also include considerations for cable crossings. This matter remains subject to further discussion and engagement between the Applicant and stakeholders to provide reassurance and reach agreement on water depth concerns. The Applicant will continue these efforts during the Examination phase with the aim of providing clarity, achieving consensus (through the Statement of Common Ground process), and minimising potential impacts (i.e., through Protective Provisions to secure water depths and producing a plan showing the minimum water depths to be safeguarded).</p> <p>Full details on cable burial and cable crossings is available in Application Document 9.74 Shipping and Navigation Under Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note.</p>	
ISH1.03	<p>Chapter 9 [APP-082] table 9.12 indicates future developments that would have cable crossings in the study area. Five Estuaries, NeuConnect and North Falls are all planned to cross between KP50 and KP54. This is also within the Sunk.</p> <p>The proposed development design as set out in [APP-037] indicates that where cables cannot be buried they would be covered in rock berms, to a height of 1 metre. Where cables cross over unburied assets it would result in a reduction in under-keel clearance of in excess of 1 metre, with the use of a mattress over the unburied asset, followed by a rock berm over the new cable. Can the applicant confirm that the reduction in depth due to cable crossings could be in excess of 1 metre?</p> <p>In the context of the baseline depths below chart datum, what would be the effect of the development on depths within the Sunk area, including cumulatively with existing and proposed cable routes, in situations where they cannot be buried?</p>	<p>There are no cable crossings within the “Sunk Pilot Boarding area” as defined by the Port of London Authority (PLA) as an area where depth should be safeguarded to 22 meters below Chart Datum. There are cable crossings in the wider Sunk area which includes areas of high vessel traffic, and the applicant can confirm that these include Five Estuaries export cable, NeuConnect interconnector and North Falls export cable. These crossings are outside of the “Sunk Pilot Boarding area” Area of Interest defined by PLA and are in deeper water depths that means cable burial is readily achievable to the water depth restrictions required by the PLA. For cable crossings in the wider Sunk area, an indicative berm height ranges from 1m to 2m, with 2m being a worst case scenario. However, in practice the maximum berm height at cable crossings should typically be closer to 1m. Consultation with MCA will be ongoing to determine whether there is a potential impact to the 5% MCA requirement should the berms be more than 1m in height.</p> <p>The analysis of the ground model indicates that there are no areas where there is an expectation that the Sea Link bundled cables cannot be buried, even in outcrop/subcrop areas of weak CHALK. Either mechanical cutting (chain-cutter) trenching or rock cutting trenching equipment will be utilised in these areas.</p> <p>Similarly, the survey data carried out to locate and identify existing in-service cables does not indicate that any existing cables are extant on the seabed in the areas of rock outcrops / subcrops, therefore there is not a scenario where the Sea Link cables will cross over unburied cables.</p> <p>As part of the detailed engineering for the cable installation route, each individual crossing location will be surveyed in detail, to provide a baseline of the crossing area prior to installation, and confirmation of the cable conditions, with particular reference to depth of lowering at the crossing point and recording a visual record of the crossing interval. This information is used for finalising the engineering crossing designs.</p> <p>The specific requirements for each crossing survey will be detailed in the Crossing Agreement with each third-party asset owner, and relevant Stakeholder requirements to preserve under-keel clearance in areas of under-keel clearance safeguarding, and MCA requirements, as defined within the DCO. Full details on cable burial, cable crossings and baseline water depths below chart datum is available in Application Document 9.74 Shipping and Navigation Under Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note.</p>	<p>LGPL welcomes the confirmation that there will be no cable crossings within the Sunk area of interest. This will need to be secured by the DOC Requirement. LGPL looks forward to similar confirmations regarding the other areas of interest.</p> <p>LGPL's right to approve the final CSIP must be secured by way of protective provisions or pursuant to the deemed marine licence.</p> <p>(Otherwsie, please refer to our comments immediately above with regards LGPL's requirements for cable crossings.)</p>
ISH1.04	Chapter 7 [APP-080] states in paragraph 7.9.80 that reductions greater than 5% will be discussed with the harbour authorities and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), but the MCA has said that less than 5%	The Sea Link cable route has been refined via collaboration with key stakeholders including ports and harbours, to avoid key areas such as the Sunk Deep Water Route and Trinity Deep Water Route, where any under-keel clearance would have presented	The Applicant states <i>“The Applicant considers that pilots of these very large vessels would be very well versed in navigating these waters in the Sunk region, very well trained and skilled,</i>

Reference	Question / Clarification	Applicant's Response	LGPL Comment
	<p>reduction in under-keel clearance could still be a problem for the larger vessels. If there is a reduction in under-keel clearance that would affect the ability of large vessels to access the ports have you considered what the implications are for those ports?</p> <p>Provide more precise assessment of the effects of a reduction in under-keel clearance on shipping through important routes such as the Sunk. What is the basis for concluding that this would not result in a likely significant effect for shipping and navigation, particularly in terms of access to ports by the largest vessels, when considered cumulatively with other planned cable crossings?</p>	<p>likely significant effects in terms of shipping and navigation. Engagement with Port of London Authority and Harwich Haven Authority, as well as the UK Chamber of Shipping and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, has resulted in the identification of key areas along the Sea Link cable route where reduction of under-keel clearance could have impacts on future shipping and navigation.</p> <p>A Technical Note 9.74 has been supplied at Deadline 1A in response to ISH1 Hearing Action 10 which provides a detailed response to the protection of under keel clearance across the three Areas of Interest identified by PLA London Gateway and HHA: (a) "Sunk Pilot Boarding area", (b) "Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing" and (c) North East Spit area". This Technical Note includes an explanation of how the Applicant's proposed marine works (Work No.6) would not impede the dredging of those parts of the areas of interest to the following depths: (a) "Sunk Pilot Boarding area" to a level of 22 metres below Chart Datum (CD); (b) "Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing" to a level of 12.5 metres below CD and; (c) North East Spit area" to a level of 12.5 metres below CD. This preservation of these specified depths avoids potential disruption to future larger vessels accessing the ports of the Thames Estuary, including the Port of London, London Gateway and Harwich Haven. Recent discussions with PLA and HHA have also set the requirement for an additional allowance for an 'over-dredge' tolerance of 0.5 metres beyond the specified depths. The technical note also details any expected reductions in water depth greater than 5% at proposed crossings and explains how under keel clearance will be maintained in the three areas of interest.</p> <p>The Applicant has also updated Part 4 Marine Chapter 11 Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-084], as requested by the ExA in ISH1 Hearing Action 11. This update provides further in-depth assessment on how the Applicant is confident in concluding that any reduction in under-keel clearance would not result in a likely significant effect when considered cumulatively with other planned cable crossings. This has been provided at Deadline 1A.</p> <p>The Applicant considers that pilots of these very large vessels would be very well versed in navigating these waters in the Sunk region, very well trained and skilled, and would pay close attention to charted water depths, and as such would not route through specific areas where water depth is insufficient for their vessels, and would instead utilise different routes. Therefore, in terms of likely significant effects, potential for vessel collision impacts is considered low.</p> <p>The Applicant is actively consulting with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a common understanding of their specific requirements, including geographic areas and the recent requirement for over-dredge tolerances. Technical assessments are ongoing to facilitate final agreement and the wording of the proposed protective provisions.</p> <p>The primary methodology for protecting the cable and for installing the works (Work No.6) at a level which would not impede future dredging and would safeguard under keel clearance, is by lowering the cable below seabed to the proposed target depth of lowering. The Target Depth of Lowering (TDOL) along the Offshore Scheme is described in AS-018 Table 4.15. The minimum depth of lowering (DOL) to the top of the cable is 0.5 m in areas of weak bedrock Chalk, with a target DOL for the Proposed Project approximately 1 m to 2.5 m. In sections of the route identified as having the highest risk of cable strike due to marine traffic, a TDOL between 2.0 m to 2.5 m is proposed. The trench along these sections – specifically KP 38 to KP 58, and KP 81.5 to KP 96.5 – is proposed to be backfilled using rock to a level below the original seabed level.</p> <p>Regarding consideration of other planned cable crossings, Table 4.18 and 4.19 of AS-018 lists the developments also likely to cross the Offshore Scheme. Crossings of cables would be undertaken using agreed crossing designs in accordance with the crossing agreements with the third-party owners and would consider the requirements to safeguard under keel clearance.</p>	<p><i>and would pay close attention to charted water depths, and as such would not route through specific areas where water depth is insufficient for their vessels, and would instead utilise different routes Therefore, in terms of likely significant effects, potential for vessel collision impacts is considered low.</i>" (emphasis added). This relies on the pilots avoiding areas where the required depths are not available – LGPL does not dispute that of course pilots would do so, so as to manage this risk. But none of this considers the concern that this need to ensure safety may mean that larger vessels have to cease to call at the Thames ports at all. Indeed, it is not clear from this Applicant's response it has grasped LGPL's concern that unless the necessary Requirement is included in the DCO then the routes into the Thames Estuary could be precluded (rendering the Applicant's statements which focus on safety and rely on the skill of pilots, irrelevant).</p> <p>Whatever cable laying and installation methodology is proposed to be adopted by the Applicant the result must not preclude LGPL's ability to dredge to 22 metres below CD across the Sunk Pilot Boarding Area – this much be secured by way of Requirement. The detail in relation to additional TDOL does not alter that position.</p> <p>We refer to our comments above in respect of cable crossings.</p>

Reference	Question / Clarification	Applicant's Response	LGPL Comment
		The proposed crossing locations within the three PLA Areas of Safeguarded Depth, including in areas of bedrock (stiff clay or chalk) provide sufficient water depth to safeguard under keel clearance. In addition, following recent discussions with PLA and GridLink surrounding the currently proposed GridLink crossing location, the agreed mitigation is to cross further east in deeper water within the order limits as well as a co-engineered crossing to meet water depth restrictions.	
ISH1.05	If there are likely significant effects in relation to the reduction in under-keel clearance, both as an individual project and cumulatively, how could this be mitigated?	<p>The Sea Link cable route has been refined via collaboration with stakeholders including ports and harbours authorities, to avoid areas such as the Sunk Deep Water Routes, where any under-keel clearance would have been likely to lead to more significant effects in terms of shipping and navigation.</p> <p>Engagement with Port of London Authority and Harwich Haven Authority, as well as the UK Chamber of Shipping, London Gateway Port and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, has resulted in the identification of areas along the Sea Link cable route where reduction of under-keel clearance could have impacts on future shipping and navigation. Engagement is therefore ongoing to ensure that the cable routeing and design can avoid any significant reductions in under-keel clearance within these highlighted areas. The Applicant is working to meet these stakeholder requirements wherever practicable.</p> <p>The Applicant proposes to ensure the provision of the as-built locations of the cable (and any external protection) to the UKHO and KIS-ORCA as well as to key ports and harbours, to ensure awareness of any such locations. This will ensure clarity for all parties as to where under-keel clearance may be reduced. Notice to Mariners and notification of marine authorities will likewise reduce the risks of shipping and navigation impacts.</p> <p>The Applicant has been working to engage with other developments where cable crossings may occur. In cases where required to avoid likely significant impacts to shipping and navigation, the Applicant's current position is that a solution co-engineered with the other developments would be designed which minimises the height of rock berms / protection structures but maintains required protection levels, to ensure any potential impacts are minimised.</p> <p>A Technical Note 9.74 on under keel clearance has been provided at Deadline 1A to fully outline the primary mitigation which is cable burial to a DoL, and cable routing in deeper water areas which does not result in an impact to shipping and navigation.</p>	<p>As set out above, whatever cable laying and installation methodology is proposed to be adopted by the Applicant the result must not preclude a future dredge depth of the specified depths in the areas of interest (i.e. 22 or 12.5m respectively, with the appropriate tolerances).</p> <p>LGPL's right to approve the final CSIP must be secured by way of protective provisions or pursuant to the deemed marine licence.</p> <p>LGPL requests sight of the draft outline CSIP as soon as possible and at the latest by Deadline 3 of the Examination (9 December 2026). A summary of the details to be contained in the documents/plans comprising the CSIP must be included in the outline CSIP (i.e. not simply references to the plans which will make up the CSIP).</p>

E) LGPL'S COMMENTS ON REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT CHAPTERS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Applicant's Reference	LGPL Comment
CHAPTER 7 OF PART 4 - SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION [REP1-059]	
7.7.3	The Applicant has amended the list of harbour authorities "which overlap with the shipping and navigation Study Area" to include Sizewell C Harbour Authority, yet continues to overlook LGPL, notwithstanding LGPL as harbour authority, has express statutory powers within the Study Area as defined in para. 7.6.2 ('a 10 nautical mile buffer around the Offshore Scheme') as set out in the London Gateway Port Harbour Empowerment Order.
7.7.53	Future Baseline – despite the representations made by LGPL, the MCA and the other harbour authorities (see for example para 2.16 onwards of REP1-142 , no update has been made to the Future Baseline description to acknowledge the increase in vessel sizes / draughts.
7.9.75	In relation to the assessment of the reduction in under-keel clearance, amendments have been made acknowledging the PLA's concerns and the importance of the NE Spit buoy. However, there is no acknowledgement of LGPL or its concerns. As LGPL was not consulted, understandably the Applicant has not been able to add LGPL to the paragraph 7.9.85. However, in any event, the key point as set out in paragraph 4.13 onwards of REP1-142 remains – that is to say there is still no assessment of reduction in under-keel clearance from the perspective of preventing access of vessels to the Thames estuary. Ultimately, as set out in paragraph 7.9.87 of REP1-059 , the conclusion on EIA significance still considers only the risk of vessel foundering.
Table 7.11	Through the table, additions have been made to acknowledge the <i>commercial</i> impacts of the various impacts listed. This in particular includes the commercial impacts of 'reduction in under-keel clearance' and 'disruption to multiple vessels using established routes and areas due [to] activities of the Offshore Scheme'. However, in all cases there has been no change to the mitigations identified (and see on this point the comment on the REAC below) and the conclusions on significance also remain unchanged. There is no clarity of how these conclusions have been reached.
General	In LGPL's view there has been no substantive changes to assess really the concerns that LGPL (and the other harbour authorities) raise regarding the impacts of preventing access by larger vessels if future dredge depths are prevent by the presence of the cable (Work No. 6)
CHAPTER 9 OF PART 4 – OTHER SEA USERS [REP1-061]	
9.9.1	Additional text has been added in relation to cable crossings between KP 38 and KP 58 and KP 81.5 and KP 96.5. Those areas contain certain areas of interest to LGPL and the PLA. The additional text states that "where cable crossings are required in these areas, these will be designed in consultation with key shipping and navigation stakeholders to avoid, where possible, any potential reductions in current and future navigable water depths." LGPL does not raise concerns about the methodologies used or rock backfill save that in all cases, these should not preclude a future dredge depth of the specified depths in the areas of interest (i.e. 22 or 12.5m respectively, with the appropriate tolerances).
9.9.1	The additional text also states that "An assessment of potential impacts of cable protection and cable crossings on shipping and navigation receptors is provided in Application Document 6.2.4.7 (B) Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation" – as set out in REP1-142 and above in this document, LGPL does not consider that to be the case.
REGISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS (REAC) [REP1-103]	
	The concerns set out in para 4.16 to 4.18 of REP1-142 also remain - although the above assessment acknowledges the potential for impact and asserts measures will be proposed, LGPL notes (i) there is currently no meaningful assessment of the impacts on shipping and navigation and areas where cables are to be buried have not been identified; and (ii) the Applicant has not proposed any means of securing mitigation beyond "avoiding disruption" and holding discussions with stakeholders. All of the measures focus on safety which we assume would be in place anyway. No additional provision has been set out in the revised document. The proposed mitigation therefore continues to be insufficient and do not give LGPL the certainty that it requires.
NAVIGATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT (NRA) [REP1-064]	
Table 7.7	Contrary to the Applicant's statement at para 3.13.5 of REP1-112 (Applicant's Comments on the Relevant Representations of the Port of London Authority), there is no reference in Table 7.7 (as now amended) to any consultation with LGPL on the NRA.

General	No relevant substantive changes have been made to the NRA to take into account the harbour authorities' concerns regarding future vessels sizes / draught.
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Addleshaw Goddard LLP
9 December 2025