



Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) for Sea Link
The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ2)
Issued on 25 February 2026

The following table sets out the Examining Authority's (ExA) written questions and requests for information – ExQ2. If necessary, the examination timetable enables the ExA to issue a further round of written questions in due course. If this is done, the further round of questions will be referred to as ExQ3.

Questions are set out using an issues-based framework developed following the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues provided as Annex C to the Rule 6 letter and informed by representations received to date with a view to assessing of the application against relevant policies and legislation.

Column 2 of the table indicates which Interested Parties (IPs) and other persons each question is directed to. The ExA would be grateful if all persons named could answer all questions directed to them, providing a substantive response, or indicating that the question is not relevant to them for a reason. This does not prevent an answer being provided to a question by a person to whom it is not directed, should the question be relevant to their interests. The order of questions does not imply any form of hierarchy or importance or any judgement on the relative importance of each topic.

Each question has a unique reference number which starts with 2 (indicating that it is from ExQ2) and then has an issue code and a question number. For example, the first question on General and Cross-Topic issues is identified as ExQ 2GEN1**Error! Reference source not found.** When you are answering a question, please start your answer by quoting the unique reference number.

If you are responding to a small number of questions, answers in a letter format will suffice. If you are answering a larger number of questions, it will assist the ExA if you use a table based on this one to set out your responses. An editable version of this table in Microsoft Word is available on request from the case team: please contact southeastanglialink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk and include 'Sea Link ExQ2' in the subject line of your email.

Due to the period of time between deadline 4 and the issuing of these questions, it has not been possible for the ExA to fully evaluate all the information submitted at that deadline. It is therefore possible that submissions may have already provided the information requested. If that is the case, then there is no need for a party to re-submit the information. Therefore, in response to the question, please signpost where the information can be found by specific reference within a document identified through its [Examination Library](#) reference.



Use of artificial intelligence (AI) in casework evidence

If you use AI to create your submission, you should tell us that you have done this. You should specify which systems or tools you have used, the source of the information that the AI system has based its content on, and what information the AI has been used to create or alter. Further information can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [guidance](#). By following this guidance, you will help the ExA to understand the origin and accuracy of the information submitted, thereby supporting fair and impartial decision-making. **If you do not declare the use of AI in any evidence submission where it has been used or remove evidence such as watermarks we reserve the right to reject the submission.**

The Examination Library

References in these questions set out in square brackets (eg [[APP-001](#)]) are to documents catalogued in the Examination Library. The Examination Library can be obtained from the following link:

[EN020026- Sea Link - Examination Library.pdf](#)

It will be updated as the examination progresses.

Responses are due by deadline 5: 10 March 2026.



Abbreviations used:

Abbreviation	Description
AEoI	Adverse Effect on Integrity
AIL	Abnormal indivisible load
AONB	Suffolk & Essex Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BMV	Best and most versatile
BNG	Biodiversity net gain
BoR	Book of Reference
CA	Compulsory Acquisition
CBRA	Cable burial risk assessment
(o)CNVMP	(outline) Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan
(o)CSIP	(outline) cable specification and installation plan
(d)DCO	(draft) Development Consent Order
DL	Deadline
DML	Deemed marine licence
ES	Environmental Statement
ESC	East Suffolk Council
ExA	Examining Authority
EA	Environment Agency
HDD	Horizontal directional drilling

Abbreviation	Description
HHA	Harwich Haven Authority
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IP	Interested party
IPMP	In principle monitoring plan
ISH	Issue specific hearing
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
KCC	Kent County Council
KEIFCA	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
KWT	Kent Wildlife Trust
km	Kilometre
LCA	Landscape character area
LIR	Local impact report
LSE	Likely significant effect
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
NE	Natural England
NFFO	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
(o)NIP	(outline) Navigation and installation plan
NPS	National Policy Statement



Abbreviation	Description
NPS EN-1	Overarching NPS for Energy
NPS EN-5	NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure
NRA	Navigational risk assessment
oLEMP	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
REAC	Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments
RR	Relevant Representation
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RTD	Red-throated diver
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SEAS	Suffolk Energy Action Solutions Ltd
SNS SAC	Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation

Abbreviation	Description
SNCB	Statutory Nature Conservation Body
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPHC	Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SWG	Southwold Fishermen's Group
TDC	Thanet District Council
TECFO	Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order
TFA	Thanet Fishermen's Association
TP	Temporary possession
UKHO	United Kingdom Hydrographic Office
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VMP	Vessel management plan
WFA	Whitstable Fishermen's Association
WR	Written Representation



Index	
1. General and Cross-topic Questions (GEN)	6
General	6
Design, parameters and other details of the Proposed Development	7
Draft development consent order (dDCO).....	7
Compulsory acquisition (CA).....	12
2. Landscape and visual	14
3. Ecology and biodiversity	17
4. Cultural heritage	28
5. Water environment.....	29
6. Geology and hydrogeology	30
7. Agriculture and soils	30
8. Traffic and transport	31
9. Air quality	32
10. Noise and vibration	33
11. Socio-economics, recreation and tourism	34
12. Onshore Cumulative effects (intra-project).....	35
13. Onshore Cumulative effects (inter-project).....	36
14. Marine physical environment	37
15. Benthic ecology	38
16. Fish and shellfish ecology.....	42
17. Marine mammals	42
18. Marine Ornithology.....	44
19. Marine archaeology	46
20. Shipping and navigation	46
21. Commercial fisheries	47
22. Other sea users.....	50
23. Marine intra-project cumulative effects	51
24. Marine inter-project cumulative effects	51
25. Climate change	51
26. Project-wide (combined) effects.....	51
27. Other	51

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
1. General and Cross-topic Questions (GEN)		
General		
2GEN1.	Applicant	<p>Need</p> <p>At deadline 3 (DL3) [REP3-144], in issue specific hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-156] and summarised in [REP4-238] Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) raised concerns in relation to need. SEAS state that there is no need for the proposed development and that any shortfall in capacity could be met through reinforcement of existing infrastructure. In ISH2 the ExA specifically asked the applicant to respond to SEAS [REP3-144] submission [EV6-011]. This has not been done. The ExA accepted a late DL4 submission from the applicant [REP4-236]. At paragraph 1.1.4 of this submission it states, “Some submissions are not responded to again in this document because it is the Applicant’s view that all matters raised have been responded to previously, or that no further comments are necessary.” The applicant is requested to provide appropriate responses to all submissions.</p> <p>Provide a response to the SEAS submissions detailed above, and any other submissions not already responded to. In the responses either provide a detailed answer or clearly sign post to where this answer can be found using examination library references/page or paragraph numbers.</p>
2GEN2.	All parties	<p>Need</p> <p>The need for the project was explored at ISH1. Several parties have made submissions requesting that the topic of need be discussed again at a future ISH. The ExA reminds all parties that the examination is a predominately written process. Due to the highly technical nature of need as a topic and the necessity for considered responses to questions, the ExA’s current view is that it will be most assisted by examining the evidence in writing.</p> <p>To date the ExA has received extensive evidence on the topic of need, both orally and in writing, and is carefully considering the cases of the parties. If any party has any new or additional evidence they believe is important and relevant to the examination of need, we ask that it is submitted for DL5 in order to allow a fair opportunity for all parties to comment on each other’s submissions.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN3.	Natural England (NE)	<p>Kent landfall</p> <p>Clarify your concerns about the applicant's screening out of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) pathways to European sites at the Kent landfall, as summarised in Ex1.4.5 of the HRA Report [REP4-057]. The pathways described are temporary physical disturbance, underwater sound impacts, permanent loss of benthic habitat and species, and disturbance due to thermal emissions. Confirm which sites, qualifying features and LSE pathways are of concern, and what further detail you consider is needed to address your concerns (if these have not been dealt with by the applicant's responses in [REP4-241]).</p>
Design, parameters and other details of the Proposed Development		
2GEN4.	Applicant	<p>Design</p> <p>Demonstrate how the post consent independent design review process would be accommodated in the indicative construction programme in table 4.10 of [REP1A-003].</p>
2GEN5.	Applicant	<p>Detailed design in the dDCO requirement 3</p> <p>Provide comments on the relevant planning authorities' suggested wording provided at DL4, including any implications for the delivery of the proposed development.</p>
2GEN6.	East Suffolk Council (ESC), Thanet District Council (TDC), Kent County Council (KCC), Suffolk County Council (SCC), Historic England	<p>Detailed design in the dDCO requirement 3</p> <p>Provide comments on the applicant's wording in requirement 3 of the dDCO [REP4-217] and whether it would provide adequate controls over the design of above ground elements of the proposed development.</p>
Draft development consent order (dDCO)		

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN7.	Applicant	<p>Article 2 (1)</p> <p>Consider if the drafting of the interpretation of the terms 'authorised development', 'ancillary works' and 'authorised project' could be made clearer by using the wording in The Associated British Ports (Immingham Green Energy Terminal) Order 2025. If not, why not.</p> <p>Review the dDCO to ensure all references to 'authorised development' and 'authorised project' are correctly used.</p> <p>Explain why Schedule 1, Part 2 'Ancillary works' do not list the 'any other works authorised by this Order' as stated in 2(1)(b) – Interpretation "Ancillary works".</p>
2GEN8.	Applicant	<p>Article 2 (1)</p> <p>The relevant representation (RR) from the Environment Agency (EA) [RR-1586] raised the concern that some pre-commencement activities could be undertaken without the controls that only apply following commencement. In particular, the EA stated that remediation of the site could take place without the onshore or offshore Construction Environmental Management Plans (Requirement 6) being approved or in place. The EA noted that significant environmental effects could therefore not be ruled out. The EA requested that "remediation in respect of any contamination" be removed from the list of pre-commencement operations and that such works be undertaken with controls that apply at commencement (i.e. controls within Requirement 10 apply).</p> <p>Consider removal of the text as suggested by the EA or provide other suitable alternative drafting to satisfy the EA concern.</p>
2GEN9.	Applicant	<p>Article 3</p> <p>Explain the need for article 3(2)(b) when schedule 1 part 1 sets out the works which are part of the authorised development (for which development consent is given in article 3(1)(a)).</p> <p>Amend the explanatory memorandum to ensure it accurately correlates with article 3(3) including an explanation why there is a specific need (for example in the Electricity Act 1989) for such a power to be included in the dDCO.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN10.	Applicant	<p>Article 5</p> <p>The Table of Parameters provides the height above existing ground level for the substation and converter station in Kent but elsewhere in the table it refers to height 'above finished ground level'.</p> <p>For improved precision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using 'existing ground level' for all heights in the table or include detail to clarify where 'finished ground level' is specified. • Ensure only the word "finished" or "finish" is used, and not both, throughout the dDCO. • Add any definitions in relation to above ("existing ground level", "finished/final ground level") as required to article 2 for the avoidance of doubt.
2GEN11.	Applicant	<p>Article 14</p> <p>Provide additional clarification within the Explanatory Memorandum to explain why the broader power in article 14(2) is required.</p>
2GEN12.	Applicant	<p>Article 24</p> <p>Clarify if decommissioning would require different land to that needed for construction/operation/maintenance and if so, which plots are affected.</p>
2GEN13.	Applicant Local authorities	<p>Article 49 - Defence to proceedings in respect of statutory nuisance</p> <p>Applicant: Article 49(1)(b) provides for a defence against statutory nuisance in operation and if "the defendant shows that the nuisance— (i) relates to premises used by the undertaker for the purposes of or in connection with the use of the authorised project and that the nuisance is attributable to the use of the authorised project which is being used in accordance with the Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan". As the outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plans [AS-131] and [AS-133] contain no operational noise controls, explain the purpose of this clause and whether additional operational noise controls should be referenced.</p> <p>Local authorities: To comment.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN14.	Local authorities Applicant	<p>Article 51 - Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)</p> <p>Local authorities: The applicant's response to ISH2 AP18 [REP4-086] explains that there is no need to amend Article 51 of the dDCO in respect of ancient and veteran trees because any tree works would be detailed in the AMS secured by requirement 8 of the dDCO, which is subject to local authority approval. Requirement 8 does not make explicit reference to ancient and veteran trees. If requirement 8 is the correct mechanism to control effects, should it explicitly make reference to retention of ancient and veteran trees, for example linking to a specific dDCO schedule?</p> <p>Applicant: To comment.</p>
2GEN15.	Local Authorities and Environment Agency (EA)	<p>Article 53</p> <p>Article 53(2)(b) allows for complete closure of the navigation on health and safety grounds only. 53(3) secures that this is kept to a minimum period. Should additional wording be included to specify what is a reasonable period or any seasonal constraints where closure may be inappropriate. If yes, please include suggested drafting.</p>
2GEN16.	Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners (SPHC)	<p>Article 53</p> <p>Confirm that SPHC is aware of article 53 of the dDCO [REP4-217] and provide any comments it may wish to make on its implications for the area of the River Stour and Pegwell Bay for which it has responsibility. If SPHC considers that the wording needs to be amended, provide details of suggested changes.</p>
2GEN17.	Local authorities Applicant	<p>Schedule 3 – Requirements - trenchless landfall</p> <p>Local authorities: In light of interested party (IP) concerns, the sensitivity of the receiving environment (including designated European sites) and notwithstanding the applicant's updated wording in the revised Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235], provide draft wording to secure the use of a trenchless landfall technique as a dDCO requirement. The wording should provide for construction and operation/maintenance and may also provide for a minimum depth of burial to address concerns regarding coastal erosion.</p> <p>Applicant: To comment or provide its own form of wording.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN18.	Applicant and East Suffolk Water Management Board	Schedule 15 - Protective Provisions Confirm if bespoke protective provisions will be included for East Suffolk Water Management Board and if so, provide an update on progress in that respect including the likelihood that this will be resolved during the examination.
2GEN19.	Applicant and Harwich Haven Authority (HHA)	Schedule 15 - Protective Provisions Confirm if bespoke protective provisions will be included for HHA and if so, provide an update on progress in that respect.
2GEN20.	Applicant and Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	Schedule 15 - Protective Provisions Provide an update on progress with respect to protective provisions for Network Rail Infrastructure Limited include the likelihood that this will be resolved during the examination.
2GEN21.	Applicant and Riveroak Strategic Partners	Schedule 15 - Protective Provisions Confirm if bespoke protective provisions will be included for Riveroak Strategic Partners in relation to Manston Airport Development Consent Order 2022 and if so, provide an update on progress in that respect including the likelihood that this will be resolved during the examination.
2GEN22.	Applicant and Sizewell C Ltd	Schedule 15 - Protective Provisions Confirm if bespoke protective provisions will be included for Sizewell C Ltd and if so, provide an update on progress in that respect.
2GEN23.	Applicant and East Anglia THREE Limited	Schedule 15 - Protective Provisions Confirm if bespoke protective provisions will be included for East Anglia THREE Limited and if so, provide an update on progress in that respect.
2GEN24.	Applicant	Schedule 16 – deemed marine licence (DML) Paragraph 2(a) has been amended to refer to paragraph 5 rather than paragraph 6 but this appears to be incorrect. Provide clarification and any necessary amendments.
2GEN25.	Applicant	Schedule 16 – deemed marine licence (DML) Condition 1 of the DML sets out some design parameters. Should it specify the maximum number of cable crossings. If not, why not.

ExQ2: 25 February 2026**Responses due by deadline 5: Tuesday 10 March 2026**

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN26.	All parties	New requirements and conditions Notwithstanding any questions below, highlight and provide specific wording for any commitments currently included in the REAC [REP4-235] that you believe should be secured as requirements or conditions on the face of the order.
2GEN27.	Applicant	Offshore design parameters Should any of the design parameters specified in condition 1 of the DML be replicated as a requirement or within the limits of deviation in article 5. If not, why not.
Compulsory acquisition (CA)		
2GEN28.	Applicant	Class 10 land The response to action point 12 (AP12) from compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) [REP4-086] states that the applicant does not consider the removal of Class 10 plots in the order limits is necessary, however did not provide any explanation as to why the land should remain. The response also acknowledged the ExA concern in relation to Class 10 land and article 27. Given the time left in the examination the ExA invites the applicant to remove the Class 10 plots from the Book of Reference (BoR) and to amend the order limits accordingly. However, if these plots are not removed then provide justification as to why they should remain and alternative drafting of article 27 to ensure exclusion of any Class 10 land from entry and temporary possession (TP).
2GEN29.	William Notcutt Estates Limited	Suffolk plots 1/1 to 1/5 and 1/7 to 1/11 If you have an outstanding objection to the compulsory acquisition (CA) or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection including which plots the objection relates to.

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN30.	Applicant	<p>Kent plot 2/133</p> <p>The applicant is seeking to compulsorily acquire Kent plot 2/133 to allow for reinstatement of the construction compound for any future maintenance. This plot is also intended for environmental mitigation post construction. AP13 [EV6-034] asked the applicant to explain how the potential reinstatement of the temporary construction compound in plot 2/133 would interact with landscape mitigation.</p> <p>The applicant responded in [REP4-086] <i>'The proposed landscape mitigation for plot 2/133 is set out in OLEMP as 'potential early planting' which is defined as 'prior to operation'. The Applicant does not believe these proposed uses are in conflict as the mitigation would follow construction in this case.'</i></p> <p>Provide justification that reinstating a construction compound during the lifetime of the development (even temporarily) is appropriate if this land is also required for environmental mitigation. Include explanation how it would be ensured that the mitigation proposed would not be damaged/affected by the reinstatement of a construction compound?</p>
2GEN31.	Edward Martin Spanton	<p>Kent plots 3/44, 3/45, 3/49 to 3/51, 3/53 to 3/57, 3/63, 3/77 to 3/80, 3/82, 3/83, 3/87, 4/7 and 4/8</p> <p>[RR-1410] of Dyas Farms (1988) Ltd listed a Martin Spanton. Please confirm if Martin Spanton is Edward Martin Spanton as listed in the BoR [REP4-021] and, if you have an outstanding objection to the CA or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection including which plots the objection relates to.</p>
2GEN32.	John Robert Collins	<p>Kent plots 2/23, 2/24, 2/27-2/30, 2/32, 2/36, 2/39, 2/40 to 2/42, 2/88</p> <p>If you have an outstanding objection to the CA or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection including which plots the objection relates to.</p>
2GEN33.	Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT)	<p>Kent plots 3/102, 3/104, 3/107, 3/109, 3/110, 5/1, 5/9, 5/10, 5/13, 5/18, 5/26 to 5/29, 5/34, 5/37, 5/38, 5/40 to 5/44</p> <p>If you have an outstanding objection to the CA or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection including which plots the objection relates to.</p>
2GEN34.	Pippa Southorn	<p>Kent plots 2/56, 2/65 to 2/67, 2/69, 2/70 to 2/76, 2/78, 2/79, 2/84, 2/107 to 2/109, 2/111 to 2/113 and 2/187</p> <p>If you have an outstanding objection to the CA or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection including which plots the objection relates to.</p>

ExQ2: 25 February 2026

Responses due by deadline 5: Tuesday 10 March 2026

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2GEN35.	Richborough Estates Ltd	<p>Kent plots 2/125 and 2/126</p> <p>If you have an outstanding objection to the CA or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection.</p>
2GEN36.	Struan Robertson	<p>Kent plots 2/118 to 2/124, 2/127 to 2/130, 2/133, 2/134, 2/137 to 2/143, 2/146, 2/151, 2/155 to 2/184, 2/186, 3/1 to 3/3, 3/6 to 3/11, 3/17, 3/20 to 3/26, 3/29, 3/35, 3/98, 3/98a, 4/1, 4/4 and 4/29</p> <p>If you have an outstanding objection to the CA or TP of land or rights, please provide detail of the reasons for the objection including which plots the objection relates to.</p>
2GEN37.	Applicant	<p>Errata</p> <p>The Schedule of Negotiations (SoN) [REP4-017], the Land Rights Tracker (LRT) [REP4-077] and the post hearing submission [REP4-084] lists Andrew Johnson as 'Administrator to the Estate of Michael Cotton Garratt'. The BoR [REP4-021] lists Christopher Russell John Domville and Clive Robert Stevens as the administrators. Please clarify who is the administrator for this estate and amend the BoR, LRT or SoN accordingly.</p>
2. Landscape and visual		
2LVIA1.	NNE	<p>Suffolk & Essex Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</p> <p>Provide updated comments in response to the applicant's additional information received at DL4, including the Applicant's responses to ISH2 Action Points [REP4-087], The Planning Statement Addendum [REP4-092] and applicant's comments on responses to ExQ1 [REP4-083]</p>
2LVIA2.	Applicant	<p>AONB</p> <p>Provide an updated assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the setting of the AONB through open trenching, including whether any long-term effects are likely to occur. Consider whether any impacts could be avoided and/or are justified.</p>
2LVIA3.	Applicant	<p>Acid grassland enhancement area</p> <p>Explain the existing habitats on the parcel of land that has been identified for enhancement and explain the management measures that would be required to ensure that the enhancement is successful. A standalone implementation and management plan should be provided. This should include details of baseline pH and effects of the agricultural use of adjacent land on the success of enhancements.</p> <p>Provide an explanation of the pre-commencement management of the area.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2LVIA4.	Applicant	<p>Acid grassland enhancement</p> <p>In view of the direct impacts to acid grassland in the National Landscape, what safeguards are there that the enhancement would be delivered as stated. What would be the implications for the proposed development if the acid grassland enhancement were to be managed as such for a longer period, such as 20 years, in case reinstatement is not successful or is compromised?</p>
2LVIA5.	Applicant NE	<p>Acid grassland on land west of Leiston Road</p> <p>Applicant: Clarify the areas of existing acid grassland that would be affected by the proposed development and reinstated. Provide further assessment of the complexity of the habitats that would be affected, including the risks of reinstatement and the time taken to reach functionality. Include in this clarification whether works that have already been carried out to the golf course within the order limits have affected its quality as acid grassland and its reinstatement potential. For example, it is stated that the land has been affected by the golf course extension which has resulted in disturbance and reprofiling. Provide further detail, including a plan, as to the extent to which land within the order limits has been directly affected by the golf course extension.</p> <p>Clarify whether the 4.05ha of land within the extended golf course will be able to be reinstated as acid grassland if it is to be used as a golf course. Clarify how the land within the extended golf club will be restored to a higher quality than its current position.</p> <p>As the area of temporarily affected acid grassland is estimated by the applicant to be 7.06ha in [REP1-120], explain why only 6ha is provided as mitigation/ compensation/ enhancement.</p> <p>NE: Paragraph 5.3.1 of the Suffolk outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [REP4-065] suggests that good quality acid grassland is a priority habitat under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Clarify whether the quality of acid grassland affects whether it should be considered a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat, as suggested by the applicant.</p>
2LVIA6.	Applicant	<p>Acid grassland enhancement</p> <p>It is stated that the acid grassland would be a multifunctional enhancement. Clarify what is meant by this term with details of each impact in terms of avoidance, prevention, reduction and offsetting for each impact, as required by the mitigation hierarchy. Explain whether the s85 duty (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) enhancement is in addition to the functions of the land as mitigation or compensation.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2LVIA7.	Applicant	<p>Trenchless techniques in AONB</p> <p>The ExA notes the applicant's response to NE's written representation (WR) in [REP2-034] that horizontal direction drilling (HDD) is not proposed for areas of acid grassland as it would involve extending the duration of works close to Sandlings Special Protection Area (SPA) and Leiston-Aldeburgh. Provide a more detailed explanation as to how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to the effects on acid grassland as a defining element of natural beauty for the AONB.</p>
2LVIA8.	ESC, TDC, KCC, SCC	<p>Lighting and fencing</p> <p>Further to your responses to ISH2 Action Point 131, explain whether you consider that relevant planning authorities require control over details of lighting and fencing. If so, provide suggested wording. If not, explain why you consider that there would be adequate existing controls.</p>
2LVIA9.	Applicant, TDC	<p>Stour Marshes landscape character area (LCA) E1</p> <p>Environmental Statement (ES) Appendix 3.1B [APP-144] identifies the key characteristics of LCA E1 as including long uninterrupted views across the marshes to the coast. ES Appendix 3.1C [APP-143] identifies that the partial loss of openness and the change to the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape would be lessened by the context of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Provide clarification as to whether the Weatherlees Hill wastewater treatment plant is an existing detracting feature in LCA E1 that indicates that the effect on landscape character would be lessened.</p> <p>The assessment in [APP-143] considers that at year 15 the mature planting around the converter station and substation would reduce the effect from moderate adverse (significant) to minor adverse (not significant).</p> <p>Provide a detailed explanation of how the presence of mature planting would reduce the significance of effects on a landscape characterised by long uninterrupted views.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2LVIA10.	Applicant ESC, SCC, SEAS and other relevant stakeholders	<p>Cumulative effects on the AONB</p> <p>Applicant: The updated assessment of effects on the sub-factors of the special qualities and natural beauty indicators set out in the Planning Statement Addendum [REP4-092] is welcomed. The cumulative assessment provided in table 4.1 of the National Landscape Section 85 Duty Technical Note [REP1-120] is only in relation to the indicators rather than the sub-factors. Provide a more detailed cumulative assessment in relation to the sub-factors for the natural beauty indicators and special qualities indicators with a greater level of detail as to the factors that have led to the conclusions for each indicator and the magnitude of the effect.</p> <p>Where a temporary significant adverse effect is identified, specify the likely duration of the temporary effect and whether any avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures could be identified that would reduce the magnitude of the effects.</p> <p>ESC, SCC, SEAS and other relevant stakeholders: Suggest potential mitigation or compensation measures for the likely significant cumulative effects on the special qualities and natural beauty of the AONB, as identified in table 4.1 of [REP1-120].</p>
2LVIA11.	Applicant	<p>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP)</p> <p>Include contingency measures for acid grassland in case reinstatement plans fail or are not achievable within the timeframes stated. This should be reflected in the REAC [REP4-235].</p>
3. Ecology and biodiversity		
2ECOL1.	Applicant	<p>Duration of ecological effects</p> <p>Provide further justification for the definitions of duration set out in the ecology and biodiversity chapters and paragraph 2.4.61 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) [REP3-028]. In responding, explain how the assessed durations align with paragraphs 5.14 to 5.15 of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' 2018.</p>
2ECOL2.	Applicant	<p>Environmental Clerk of Works</p> <p>Explain why the outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-223] now refers to an ecological clerk of works rather than an environmental clerk of works as the skillset of the two roles may be quite different, for example an environmental clerk of works may not have the same depth of ecological knowledge.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL3.	Applicant	<p>Preconstruction surveys</p> <p>To provide certainty regarding the scope of preconstruction surveys, provide a schedule of proposed preconstruction surveys for inclusion within the oLEMP for Suffolk [REP4-065] and Kent [REP4-067].</p>
2ECOL4.	Applicant	<p>Increased sensitivity of bird species during the dawn, dusk and night periods</p> <p>Respond to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) comments as reported in the draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) [REP3-067] that birds may be more sensitive to noise while roosting or during hours of low light (dawn and dusk) and darkness and explain whether this could affect the overall assessment of significance.</p>
2ECOL5.	NE RSPB Local authorities	<p>Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)</p> <p>Explain whether the proposed approach to UXO outlined in the applicant's response to ISH2 AP16 [REP4-086] is sufficient to ensure that potential effects on the designated sites could be appropriately mitigated.</p>
2ECOL6.	Applicant NE	<p>Ground investigations</p> <p>Applicant: NE appendix J4 [REP4-195] notes that ground investigation works can have significant impacts or adverse effect on integrity (AEol) and suggests that works would be subject to separate permissions. As the dDCO [REP4-217] schedule 1, part 1, section 2 includes reference to surveys, confirm whether a separate permission would still be required from NE?</p> <p>NE: The ExA notes your advice that ground investigations can result in AEol [REP4-195] but that the applicant confirmed any further ground investigation at Kent landfall would be subject to a separate marine licence from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), on which NE would be consulted. Are you satisfied that this activity would fall outside of the DCO and therefore that there would be no AEol of the Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from this pathway?</p> <p>The ExA is also unclear as to NE's outstanding concerns about drilling activity for the SAC, as [REP3A-028] does not appear to include advice on this matter. Please clarify NE's outstanding concerns.</p>
2ECOL7.	Applicant	<p>Hedge gap closures</p> <p>Provide evidence to demonstrate that it is feasible to close hedge gaps between the proposed Friston Kiln Lane substation and the Saxmundham Converter Station site in light of the proposed 39m working width in this location and if gap closure is not possible, confirm whether this would affect the assessment of significance.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL8.	Applicant Local authorities	<p>Benhall bridge works</p> <p>Applicant: Explain what the potential is for the rail corridor at Benhall Bridge to act as a bat commuting corridor and dormouse habitat and whether this would require additional survey and/or mitigation measures? Where relevant provide a commitment in the REAC [REP4-235] or Suffolk oLEMP [REP4-065].</p> <p>Local authorities: It is noted that the extent of pre-construction surveys has been restricted in the revised oLEMP as follows “These surveys will include surveys of breeding and non-breeding birds (particularly nesting Schedule 1 species), bat activity (focussed on locations where failures of automated bat detectors occurred during baseline surveys resulting in fewer than the standard 5 nights of activity being recorded in those locations), riparian mammals, dormice (specifically regarding Area D where an ambiguous record exists from the original survey) and badgers.” Comment on whether the extent of surveys should be increased.</p>
2ECOL9.	Applicant	<p>Reptile trapping and translocation</p> <p>Update the oLEMP [REP4-065] to allow for discussions with ESC regarding the final approach to mitigation for reptiles, such as trapping and translocation, in areas of acid grassland as suggested in the applicant’s response to WR [REP2-034].</p>
2ECOL10.	RSPB Applicant	<p>Works affecting North Warren</p> <p>Provide an update on the discussions regarding access, grazing and vegetation management proposals at North Warren. Also comment on the known distribution of water voles at North Warren in areas of wet grassland and whether any preconstruction survey is necessary in respect of this species close to the HDD compound.</p>
2ECOL11.	NE	<p>Sandlings SPA – acid grassland</p> <p>The applicant responded to NE’s concerns regarding Sandlings SPA in ([REP2-034], table 2.8)). It updated the HRA Report to clarify the impacts to acid grassland within Sandlings SPA and to adjacent functionally linked land. It also confirmed that the acid grassland enhancement was not being proposed as mitigation for loss of functionally linked land for Sandlings SPA and that the assessment did not rely on its provision to conclude no AEoI. NE’s Risk and Issues log ([REP4-197], point 20, tab A) shows this matter to still be outstanding. Does NE consider there to be an AEoI to the Sandlings SPA as a result of impacts on acid grassland. If so, provide reasoning.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL12.	RSPB Local authorities NE	Updated wintering bird survey Comment on the applicant's statement in [REP4-241] that "since the North Warren RSPB Reserve is being treated as a sensitive receptor, the Applicant does not consider that updated information regarding the number and distribution of wintering birds within the Reserve is required, particularly since RSPB have good data for their Reserve."
2ECOL13.	NE RSPB Local authorities	Suffolk Wintering Bird Survey Report Provide any further comments on the assessment of effects on wintering birds, based on the updated Suffolk Wintering Bird Survey Report appendix 2.2.b [REP4-037] .
2ECOL14.	Applicant Local authorities RSPB	Seasonal restrictions - Suffolk Applicant: Section 6.7 of the Suffolk oLEMP [REP4-065] explains that topping/flailing works would be restricted during the bird ground-nesting season (i.e. avoiding March to August). In light of previous amendments relating to the bird breeding season, should this read February to August? Other parties: To comment.
2ECOL15.	SCC Applicant	Seasonal restrictions - Suffolk SCC [REP4-150] suggests that compound works in Suffolk should not be undertaken in the winter months. Explain whether the applicant's proposed 1 January to 31 March restriction on works as set out in provision O03 of the REAC [REP4-235] satisfies this requirement. The applicant may wish to comment.
2ECOL16.	Applicant	Retention of veteran trees The route of the cable passes within the root protection areas (RPA) of two veteran trees (T447S and T423S). How realistic is it to keep these trees and is it possible to maintain trees over the alignment, given that the applicant is elsewhere seeking planting restrictions over the alignment (for example in dDCO Article 27 [REP4-217])? Noting that large loads and swept paths must dictate access route alignments to some extent, provide evidence of the work that has been done to assess alternative access options around trees T525S and T523S.
2ECOL17.	Applicant	Incursion into veteran tree RPA Respond to the Forestry Commission's [RR-1660] comment that any incursion into the RPAs of veteran trees would need to be extensively monitored even post-construction.

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL18.	Applicant Local authorities	Deer management Provide an update on discussions regarding deer management with EDF as referenced in section 6.4 of the Suffolk oLEMP [REP4-065] . The local authorities may wish to comment on the proposed approach.
2ECOL19.	Applicant EA Local authorities	Potential ecological opportunities Applicant: Paragraph 1.35 of the Aquatic Ecology Survey Report [APP-104] suggests that the River Fromus has poor ecological status due to diffuse and point source pollution and barriers, issues which would be disproportionately expensive to fund. Blue Spaces – Saxmundham [RR-0589] also suggests measures to improve the River Fromus. Does the applicant consider that there is any potential to address some of the identified constraints as part of the applicant’s proposed biodiversity net gain (BNG) measures? EA and local authorities: To comment.
2ECOL20.	Applicant	Impact of displacement of dog walkers TDC’s Local Impact Report (LIR) [REP1-132] suggests that works in the hoverport at Pegwell Bay could result in displacement of dog walkers with implications for ecological designated areas in terms of recreational pressure and disturbance. The applicant’s comments on the LIR [REP2-029] discusses proposed mitigation but does not explicitly address potential recreational pressure and disturbance effects. Explain how such effects have been taken into account within the HRA and any proposed mitigation measures.
2ECOL21.	Applicant Local authorities NE	Impact of pylon base installation Table 9.23 of Kent chapter 9 noise and vibration [AS-111] identifies use of pad foundations for pylon construction as an example means of achieving 10 to 20dB reduction in noise levels. Should this measure be secured to reduce noise and vibration effects on bird species in Kent?
2ECOL22.	Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust	Data sets Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust’s WR [REP1-242] suggests that it offered detailed tidal bird survey records to Sea Link’s ecological team but was not contacted. The applicant’s comments on WR [REP2-034] explained that it drew on the public record for these datasets. Confirm whether the Trust still considers that it holds data that the applicant should have taken into account in its assessment?

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL23.	Applicant	<p>Seasonal restrictions for Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</p> <p>Notwithstanding discussions during ISH2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant: Explain in detail how the construction programme would change if a strict March to August restriction was placed on works within the Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI and on the works to install pylon bases in Kent. • Applicant: Recognising that programme constraints may affect restrictions during construction, explain in detail why a seasonal restriction on routine tree height maintenance works at Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marsh SSSI could not be planned and implemented during the operation and maintenance phase.
2ECOL24.	Applicant	<p>Hoverport access</p> <p>Update the dDCO or environmental control documents to take account of TDC’s proposed control measures in paragraphs 1.10 to 1.1.13 of its post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral cases made at hearings the w/c 26 January 2026 [REP4-160], or explain why this is not necessary.</p>
2ECOL25.	Applicant	<p>Pegwell Bay – remedial action for cable exposure</p> <p>[REP4-241] responds to NE’s concerns about future change in conditions at Kent landfall leading to risk of cable exposure by reference to the Landfall Sediment Modelling Report [PDA-038]. It states that if cable were exposed, remedial action would be carried out to avoid wider scale effects, a situation which is discussed in your response to ISH2 AP75 [REP4-086]. Explain how such activities have been considered in your HRA assessment work or otherwise justify why this is not required.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL26.	Applicant NE	<p>Effects on European sites from release of contaminants and debris</p> <p>Applicant: Respond to NE's concerns about release of contaminants and debris arising from use of the hoverport for access to the intertidal area, including the potential to affect designated sites and their qualifying features. In doing so, present analysis of publicly available evidence from Vattenfall and Thanet Extension projects. Confirm how you propose to mitigate any risks identified from this pathway and update assessment work (ES and HRA) as relevant.</p> <p>NE: Regarding the new issue [REP4-191] of release of contaminants and debris arising from use of the hoverport to access the intertidal area, confirm which European sites and qualifying features you consider could be subject to likely significant effects. Advise on any potential mitigation the applicant could implement to address this matter, and whether you consider it is possible to avoid an AEoI of the European sites.</p>
2ECOL27.	NE	<p>Lighting of cofferdams</p> <p>NE: Does NE agree with the applicant's response table 3.1 [REP4-241] that lighting of the cofferdam in the intertidal area would not result in AEoI, as it would be focused only on the intertidal area. If not, explain what further assessment NE considers is necessary to assess such disturbance effects as suggested in appendix J3a [REP3A-028].</p>
2ECOL28.	Applicant	<p>Vehicle movements within the intertidal area.</p> <p>NE: NE [REP3A-028] noted that no consideration had been given to the disturbance to Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA birds from vehicle movements within the intertidal area. The applicant stated amendments were made to Version D of the HRA Report [REP2-010], providing clarification on such effects. The ExA notes the noise contours provided in [REP4-051] (figures 6.4.4.5.7 and 6.4.4.5.8) depicting predicted maximum noise levels along an illustrative access route corridor and that additional noise information was included in section 7.3 of the HRA. Can NE confirm whether the information provided now addresses its concerns.</p> <p>Applicant: Signpost to where the assessment of disturbance from vehicle movements on SPA features is presented or provide additional assessment information to address NE's concerns.</p>
2ECOL29.	KWT Local authorities NE	<p>Hoverport access – reptiles</p> <p>In light of the acknowledged presence of reptiles within the hoverport, should two stage clearance of any vegetation, or other measure, be secured as a REAC or oLEMP provision and if not, why not?</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL30.	Applicant RSPB	<p>RSPB further management measures</p> <p>Applicant: At DL3, the applicant stated in its response to first written questions (1ECOL47, [REP3-069]) that it would consider further management measures suggested by the RSPB for the 10ha arable mitigation land for golden plover associated with Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA. No updates have been made to the oLEMP (section 5.4 [REP4-067]). Does the applicant intend to make such updates?</p> <p>RSPB: To comment.</p>
2ECOL31.	Applicant	<p>Winter bird survey of golden plover area</p> <p>Confirm whether additional survey data will be made available to the examination for the period November 2025 onwards to provide two full winter seasons of data and if so explain when this would be submitted.</p>
2ECOL32.	Applicant	<p>Low frequency and continuous noise impacts</p> <p>Comment on the potential for low frequency (50Hz) noise and continuous noise from the Minster converter and substation site to affect owl, cuckoo and nightingale as suggested by Thanet RSPB Local Group [RR-4652] and Bird Wise East Kent [RR-0584].</p>
2ECOL33.	Applicant Dover District Council	<p>Outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (Kent)</p> <p>Paragraph 5.3.3 of the Kent oLEMP [REP4-067] states “We could therefore add this species to the list for which localised control is proposed for Ash Level” The ExA considers that this is not sufficiently definitive. Agree finalised wording with Dover District Council, or explain why it is not necessary.</p>
2ECOL34.	Applicant	<p>BNG provision</p> <p>Noting discussions at ISH2 relating to a unilateral undertaking in respect of BNG, explain how the BNG calculation and provision would be adjusted to account for any changes in the habitat lost as a result of detailed design or construction stage changes to the proposed development.</p>
2ECOL35.	Applicant	<p>BNG – accounting for trading rules</p> <p>Paragraph 2.3.3 of the BNG feasibility report [REP1A-025] states that trading rules are not accounted for. The applicant’s draft SoCG with KCC [REP3-038] suggests that applying trading rules would result in an unwieldy BNG requirement. Quantify how applying the trading rules would affect the BNG calculations.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL36.	Applicant	<p>BNG – accounting for incoming connections</p> <p>Paragraph 2.3.20 of the BNG feasibility report [REP1A-025] explains that only a proportion of the landscaping is included in the BNG assessment to account for incoming connections in Suffolk. Provide further detail to explain what provisions have been made in respect of the connections.</p>
2ECOL37.	Applicant	<p>BNG parameter line</p> <p>Explain whether the parameters line should be amended to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised order limits due to the change request. • The proposed construction compound adjacent to the Lord of the Manor/A299-Sandwich Road roundabout. • The acid grassland enhancement area. <p>Or explain why this is not necessary.</p>
2ECOL38.	Applicant	<p>BNG - veteran trees within the parameter lines</p> <p>The baseline habitat figures in appendix B of the BNG Feasibility Report [REP1A-025] do not include all of the veteran trees that would appear to overlap with the BNG parameter lines (for example T103S, T107S, T135S, T129S, T393S, T841S, T842S, T861S, T862S, T938S, T940S, T941S), explain why certain trees and not others are shown in the plans.</p>
2ECOL39.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision A03</p> <p>Provision A03 of the REAC [REP4-235] includes the tailpiece “Works within 5 m of any part of a retained tree should only occur if they cannot be avoided”, explain how this commitment would be enforced.</p>
2ECOL40.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision GG21</p> <p>Provision GG21 of the REAC [REP4-235] states that construction lighting will be of the lowest levels necessary to safely perform each task and will reduce intrusion into properties and habitats. Explain how the requirements of the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) would be integrated into the construction lighting requirements (e.g. in terms of bulb specifications etc).</p>
2ECOL41.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision B07</p> <p>Should REAC provision B07 [REP4-235] (and the associated oLEMP provision) include reference to monitoring of implementation by the Ecological Clerk of Works?</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL42.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision B12</p> <p>Should REAC provision B12 [REP4-235] contain explicit provision for monitoring trees in their out of ground phase as suggested by the SCC LIR [REP1-130].</p>
2ECOL43.	Local authorities	<p>REAC provision B14</p> <p>The REAC [REP4-235] explains that a precautionary method would be followed “when undertaking vegetation clearance potentially suitable for dormice”. Comment on whether this provision should specify particular locations or the process for establishing ‘potentially suitable’ vegetation.</p>
2ECOL44.	Local authorities EA	<p>REAC provision B18</p> <p>Confirm whether provision B18 of the REAC [REP4-235] provides sufficient detail to provide certainty regarding eel mitigation measures. Is any additional construction mitigation for eel required during eel migration periods in addition to the measures identified in the REAC for Minster Marshes and if not, why not?</p>
2ECOL45.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision B23</p> <p>Provision B23 of the REAC [REP4-235] proposes noise monitoring to confirm that mitigation measures achieve the required noise thresholds. It states that should these thresholds be exceeded, further measures would be introduced to meet the levels, however it does not specify what the measures would comprise. Can the applicant confirm what further measures would be available to them and make amendments to the REAC accordingly, to ensure certainty of mitigation in respect of the designated sites?</p>
2ECOL46.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision B42</p> <p>The ExA notes the change to the wording of commitment B42 in the REAC [REP4-235]. Given that the qualifying features of the Sandwich Bay SAC are dune habitat, should the wording also include reference to dune habitat? If so, submit an updated version of the REAC.</p>
2ECOL47.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision B53</p> <p>REAC provision B53 [REP4-235] states that “Larger gaps in hedgerows or woodland belts would be reduced to 10m maximum where practicable during the night by hurdles or similar.” Explain what reliance can be placed on this mitigation for the purposes of the environmental impact assessment if it is only ‘where practicable’.</p>

ExQ2: 25 February 2026

Responses due by deadline 5: Tuesday 10 March 2026

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL48.	Local authorities NE	<p>REAC provision B55</p> <p>Are the local authorities and NE satisfied with the commitment in REAC [REP4-235] provision B55 to “making the lines visible in adverse weather or low light conditions” or should specific reference be made to night time? The ExA has considered the applicant’s response to ISH2 AP24 [REP4-086] but considers that based on plain English, ‘low light’ may not be inclusive of the night period.</p>
2ECOL49.	Applicant	<p>Collision risk</p> <p>Applicant: On the basis of the applicant’s response to ISH2 AP25 [REP4-086] which explains that earth wires are considered to be responsible for a higher rate of collisions than other parts of the overhead line infrastructure, provide an updated collision risk assessment accounting for the 6m limits of deviation or further justification regarding the applicant’s response to first written question 1ECOL09 [REP3-069].</p>
2ECOL50.	NE	<p>Bird diverters</p> <p>Appendix K4 [REP4-196] states that NE does not consider there to be any need for additional diverters to be fitted to other lines in the area. Can NE expand on its reasoning for this?</p>
2ECOL51.	Applicant NE, KWT, RSPB	<p>REAC provision B59</p> <p>Applicant: The applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at DL3 and DL3A [REP4-241] suggests that contractor(s) would prepare a HDD landfall Method Statement and Drilling Fluid Management Plan in consultation with NE, KWT and the RSPB “as appropriate”. Can the applicant explain what is meant by “as appropriate” in this context.</p> <p>Other parties: Comment on this caveat.</p>
2ECOL52.	NE	<p>REAC provision B67 - use of low pressure vehicles</p> <p>The applicant has committed to use of low pressure vehicles across the intertidal area in REAC provision B67 [REP4-235] and further consultation with NE and others regarding routes. Does this alleviate your concerns that further measures should be considered to reduce impacts to intertidal habitats and sediment compaction?</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2ECOL53.	NE, KWT, RSPB	<p>Frac out effects - Kent</p> <p>All parties: Are the applicant's measures in the REAC [REP4-235] sufficient to manage frac out and exclude AEol for the Sandwich Bay SAC, Thanet Coast SAC and Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA & Ramsar site from changes in marine water quality or pollution by drilling fluid. If not, confirm what further commitments you consider are needed.</p> <p>NE: With regards to the impacts of frac out, the applicant (table 3.6 [REP4-241]) considers that the HDD location for East Anglia One was a constrained environment with little coastal wave action, which is not comparable with Pegwell Bay. It noted that the saltmarsh in Pegwell Bay is dry 50% of the time and frac-out could be easily removed. Does this alleviate NE's concerns regarding the impacts of frac out on the supporting habitats of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA?</p>
2ECOL54.	Applicant	<p>Habitats of Protected Species and Important Habitats Plan – Kent</p> <p>Update document 2.9.2 Habitats of Protected Species and Important Habitats - Kent (Version 2, change request) [CR1-016] to include the extent of saltmarsh habitat in Pegwell Bay.</p>
2ECOL55.	Applicant	<p>Errata</p> <p>Respond to SEAS RR on Ecology and Biodiversity [RR-5210] paragraph 7.24, which suggests that there are errors in the presentation of the bat survey report (ES Appendix 2.2.1 Nighttime Bat Walkover and Static Detector Survey Report the Bat Survey Report [APP-107]), for example plate A.3 and plate A.4 (page 97/98) are described as being different species on different dates, but the graphic is exactly the same for both plates. Where this is confirmed to be an error, provide an updated report ensuring that all errata have been addressed.</p>
4. Cultural heritage		
2CH1.	Applicant	<p>Single heritage asset list</p> <p>Provide a single list of all designated heritage assets where there is considered to be any level of harm to their significance (including where harm is at the lower end of less than substantial), whether scoped in or out of the ES assessment. This should be in the form of the table at Appendix B (Information in Response to Cultural Heritage Actions (AP53-AP56)) of the Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from CAH1 and ISH2 [REP4-086]. However, please also include a column to consider cumulative impact for each heritage asset.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2CH2.	Applicant	<p>Cumulative impact assessment on certain heritage assets</p> <p>For those heritage assets where there has been assessed to be no harm from the proposed development (for example Friston House) are there any heritage assets where the cumulative impact of the proposed development together with the other projects in the area would result in a level of harm to the setting and significance of these assets?</p>
5. Water environment		
2WE1.	Applicant, SCC, KCC, EA	<p>Water environment – joint position statement</p> <p>Notwithstanding previously submitted documents, representations and statements of common ground, the ExA requires a joint position statement on areas of agreement and differences with respect to meeting the relevant policy requirements in the National Policy Statement (NPS) EN1 regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood risk and assessment • Compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive • Sequential and Exception test (in answering clearly set out all reasonings relating to NPS EN1, paragraph 5.8.42)
2WE2.	SCC, EA	<p>Need to relocate temporary drainage pond out of fluvial flood zone 3 in Suffolk</p> <p>SCC and EA: Do the parties accept the applicant's response to AP85 [REP4-086], which concludes it is not necessary to relocate the particular drainage pond, or if not why not?</p>
2WE3.	EA, KCC	<p>Loss of floodplain storage</p> <p>Do all parties agree with the findings of the Kent Onshore Scheme - Fluvial Flooding from the River Stour [REP4-096]? In answering, can parties specifically have regard to the requirements of NPS-EN1, paragraph 5.8.2 and address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that floodplain compensation is required to ensure there is no net loss of storage, • that there is sufficient space to create the compensation areas within the order limits, and • if it can be appropriately secured through addition of a new REAC commitment?

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2WE4.	Applicant SCC	<p>River Fromus crossing - bridge soffit height</p> <p>The EA has identified proposed wording for a requirement in response to ISH2, Action Point 77 [REP4-185] to ensure that the River Fromus Crossing does not impact Water Framework Directive macro invertebrates. Can the parties confirm if they are in agreement with the proposed wording, or if not, why not?</p>
2WE5.	Applicant EA	<p>Flood risk assessment - coastal erosion</p> <p>Applicant: Explain why you consider that the response to ISH2, Action Point 84 regarding coastal erosion and its potential to impact flood risk addresses the relevant EA matters raised in [REP4-185]? Address any outstanding matters in your response.</p> <p>EA: Confirm if the applicant's response regarding coastal erosion and flood risk as provided in response to ISH2, AP84 [REP4-086] addresses the concerns expressed in this regard or summarise any remaining outstanding issues?</p>
6. Geology and hydrogeology		
2GH1.	KCC	<p>Kent Council - Local Impact Report</p> <p>The KCC LIR [REP1-129] does not comment on geology or hydrogeology. Can KCC set out their position in this regard, including identifying any concerns?</p>
7. Agriculture and soils		
2AS1.	Applicant	<p>Loss of best and most versatile land (BMV)</p> <p>In the continued absence of agricultural land classification for the land to be used temporarily and permanently for the proposed development, using worst case scenario, where all the land is grade 1, provide an assessment of the effects of the proposed development in terms of loss of BMV.</p>
2AS2.	Applicant	<p>Beneficial effects on BMV land at decommissioning</p> <p>Explain how the reinstatement of land within the footprint of the decommissioned infrastructure would result in major to moderate beneficial effects when considered in relation to the baseline, as set out in [PDA-019] and [PDA-023].</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
8. Traffic and transport		
2TT1.	Applicant KCC SCC	Junction modelling It is understood that some of the junction modelling is set to be submitted at DL6. However, given the remaining time within the examination period after DL6, the ExA requests this information at DL5. If this is not possible then explain why this is the case and update on progress.
2TT2.	Applicant	Transport cooperation Provide an update on discussions with EDF, the developers of Sizewell C, about shared transport from Ipswich station and use of Sizewell park and ride locations [REP4-281]. Clarify if any commitments could be secured within this proposed development and if so how. Explain if this would make a significant difference to traffic flows and pressure on junctions in Suffolk?
2TT3.	Applicant SCC	Journey time analysis The ExA requests that SCC and the applicant work together to identify if any journey time analysis should and could be produced within the remaining examination period, such as for the A12 for example. Is there data that SCC has, such as a Strategic Transport Model, which could help with this exercise?
2TT4.	SCC East Suffolk District Council	Alternative Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) route The applicant has presented an Option 3 [REP4-101] which would avoid use of Benhall Railway Bridge for the transformer AIL deliveries. Provide comments on Option 3 and its route.
2TT5.	Applicant	Phasing of Benhall railway bridge works Can the applicant commit to not undertaking any works which involve Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) traffic for the Suffolk onshore proposals until the Benhall Railway Bridge is strengthened, if Option 1 is chosen?
2TT6.	Applicant	Benhall Railway bridge strengthening option If the option to strengthen the Benhall Railway Bridge is available, can the application confirm this would be the option taken in preference to the other options.

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2TT7.	Applicant All County and District Councils	<p>Caps on HGVs</p> <p>If there are no caps on HGVs using certain routes, then would there be any enforcement possible for the County or District Councils if it transpired that there were more HGVs using certain routes than anticipated in the ES assessment, including cumulatively with other projects?</p> <p>For the Councils, is there a concern that capping HGV movements may displace them to other more sensitive routes with adverse impacts or that it could elongate the construction programme.</p>
2TT8.	SCC Applicant	<p>Benhall railway bridge works</p> <p>Would SCC have control over when the works to Benhall railway bridge would be undertaken (if the strengthening works were to be done); and also, would SCC have control over any diversion routes if the Benhall railway bridge was closed for a time for these works?</p>
9. Air quality		
2AQ1.	Applicant	<p>SF₆ in switchgear</p> <p>The applicant's response to first written questions [REP3-069] acknowledges that SF₆ may be required to be used in gas insulated switchgear. Provide information to demonstrate that the requirements of paragraphs 2.9.62 to 2.9.65, 2.10.14 to 2.10.15 and 2.11.17 of the NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) have been satisfied.</p>
2AQ2.	Local authorities Applicant	<p>Appendix A Air Quality Technical Note [REP4-241]</p> <p>Local authorities: Provide comment on the technical note.</p> <p>Applicant: Confirm whether the high predicted NO_x process contributions identified in Table A.7 maximum impact scenario could indicate any potential for exceedance of the hourly limit values for NO₂ and if so, what further analysis or mitigation might be required in respect of the Kent or Suffolk converter station sites to address human health issues? Applicant to also re-provide appendix tables A.8 and A.9 with headings that are aligned with columns as the tables are difficult to read as presented.</p>
2AQ3.	Local authorities	<p>Outline Air Quality Management Plans (oAQMP)</p> <p>Are any further changes required to the outline AQMP [REP3-052] and [REP3-054] to take account of the amended order limits as part of the change request?</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2AQ4.	Applicant Local authorities	<p>Operation and maintenance air quality controls</p> <p>Applicant: SCC's LIR paragraph 12.23 [REP1-130] suggests that it is vital for appropriate mitigation to be put in place to minimise operation and maintenance air quality impacts from major works. The applicant's comments on SCC's LIR [REP2-026] simply states that it notes SCC's comments. Provide an appropriate mechanism within the applicant's suite of control documents to control operation and maintenance works emissions or explain why this is not required.</p> <p>Local authorities: To comment.</p>
2AQ5.	Applicant Local authorities	<p>REAC provision AQ11</p> <p>Applicant: Update REAC [REP4-235] provision AQ11 to specify a minimum 120m offset from Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI consistent with the proposed mitigation in the applicant's updated air quality assessment [REP4-241].</p> <p>Local authorities: Suggest wording for a requirement to ensure that a 120m offset is secured between the generators and the SSSI.</p>
2AQ6.	Applicant	<p>Errata</p> <p>Item 3.11.2 of the draft SoCG with KCC [REP3-038] refers to the outline soil management plan rather than the air quality management plan.</p>
10. Noise and vibration		
2NV1.	Local authorities	<p>Operational noise and vibration</p> <p>Suggest draft wording for operational noise and vibration requirements in respect of the detailed converter and substation designs that sets limits for operational noise at specific receptors and a mechanism for agreeing the final acoustic design.</p>
2NV2.	Applicant	<p>Control of noise from arrival/departures at sites with 24 hour noise</p> <p>Explain what additional controls would be employed by the applicant to ensure that noise from contractors working 24 hours (for example for internal fit outs) would be controlled during late night arrival and departures.</p>
2NV3.	Local authorities	<p>s61 controls</p> <p>Suggest an alternative form of wording for the outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (oCNVMP) s61 controls or a suitable requirement to secure s61 controls for specific construction activities.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2NV4.	Applicant	<p>REAC provision NV01</p> <p>The applicant's noise assessments [AS-109] and [AS-111] have relied extensively on the application of Best Practicable Means to achieve a 10dB reduction for all receptors and set out examples of measures that can achieve reductions in table 9.22 of the chapters. Update REAC [REP4-235] provision NV01 to include reference to securing 10dB reduction from predicted levels, in order to demonstrate that likely significant noise effects and exceedance of the significant observed adverse effect level would be avoided, or explain why this is not necessary.</p>
2NV5.	Applicant High Quality Lifestyles Limited (Priory Group)	<p>Ebbsfleet House and Martins, Ebbsfleet Lane</p> <p>Applicant: Confirm whether the need for any specific mitigation measures in respect of Ebbsfleet House and Martins has been assessed as part of the environmental or equalities impact assessment. In responding, explain what, if any, specific mitigation measures are required.</p> <p>Priory Group [RR-2021]: Where relevant provide any suggestions for potential mitigation measures, explaining why these are necessary.</p>
2NV6.	Applicant	<p>oCNVMP</p> <p>Update the Kent oCNVMP [AS-133] in paragraph 1.3.8 so that TDC is notified of material deviations to the oCNVMP controls within 24hrs or explain why this is not necessary.</p>
2NV7.	Applicant	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment – noise figures</p> <p>Explain why the night noise 3dB change figures for Kent (figure 4 [REP4-057]) mirror the daytime levels, whereas they extend over a significantly greater distance in Suffolk (figure 2 [REP4-057]).</p>
2NV8.	TDC	<p>Piling data</p> <p>Provide comment on the extent to which the noise levels selected to inform the piling noise assessment in Pegwell Bay are representative of the spreadsheet of data relating to piling noise levels [REP4-088] that has been used to inform the assessment.</p>
11. Socio-economics, recreation and tourism		
2SERT1.	Applicant	<p>Tourism accommodation figures</p> <p>Appendix C of ESC's DL4 submission [REP4-184] provides a review of tourist accommodation by the Council's consultants. Provide a full and detailed response to this review. In doing so provide a breakdown of the applicant's accommodation figures and confirm whether this is based on bedspaces or rooms.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2SERT2.	Applicant	<p>Affordability of accommodation</p> <p>Given the types of hotels and tourist accommodation in the coastal East Suffolk area, has the affordability of accommodation been considered in the applicant's assessment? If not, provide an updated assessment which does factor in tourism accommodation affordability.</p>
2SERT3.	Applicant	<p>Cumulative worker accommodation</p> <p>Provide information as to when (within the construction phase) the applicant considers there would be the peak demand for worker accommodation cumulatively and then provide a breakdown of the forms of accommodation that would likely be used at that time for all workers. Furthermore, provide an anticipated percentage and absolute figure of remaining capacity for each type of accommodation modelled for that time.</p>
2SERT4.	Applicant	<p>Monitoring and adaptive management</p> <p>Can the applicant commit to monitoring of tourism impacts (including monitoring of worker and tourism accommodation) and potential adaptive management during the construction phase, both for the proposed development and cumulatively with other projects, for Kent and Suffolk in the areas of the proposed works. If so, provide details of what this would entail and how it would be secured. If this is not a commitment that the applicant is willing to make, then explain why this is the case.</p>
2SERT5.	Applicant	<p>Skills and Employment Plan</p> <p>It is understood that the applicant is preparing a Skills and Employment Plan for DL6. However, given the remaining time within the examination period the ExA requests this to be submitted at DL5. If this cannot be done, ensure that the draft Skills and Employment Plan is circulated with the County and District Councils prior to submission and incorporate any suggested amendments for DL6.</p>

12. Onshore Cumulative effects (intra-project)

2CEIntra1.	All Councils	<p>Mitigation of intra-project cumulative effects</p> <p>Do you consider that further mitigation measures are required to mitigate significant intra-project cumulative effects in addition to those already identified by the applicant? If yes, explain what specific additional measures should be considered. In answering identify the specific significant cumulative effects that the mitigation is considered to address, how it accords with appropriate planning tests and how it could be secured? If it is to be secured in the DCO, provide suggested wording.</p>
------------	--------------	--

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2CEIntra2.	All Councils	<p>REAC commitment to review / mitigate significant intra-project cumulative effects</p> <p>Having regard to the applicant's response to AP112 [REP4-086], can all Councils confirm if they agree with the suggested commitment wording for the REAC (and subsequent approval through discharge of requirement 6 via relevant management plans) to review intra-project cumulative effects and establish what additional mitigation measures could be applied to reduce their significance? In answering, summarise any remaining concerns, if you consider it should be secured in the DCO provide suggested text.</p>
2CEIntra3.	All Councils	<p>Quantification of significance of effects</p> <p>Having regard to the applicant's response to AP111 [REP4-086], can all Councils confirm if they agree with the applicant's stated position regarding quantification of magnitude/degree of significance of effects in cumulative (intra-project) assessments on residential properties and how the various effects interact with each other? In answering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain if you agree with the conclusion that if any significant effects on residential receptors were to occur, they would be likely to be moderate not major? • set out if there are any other concerns regarding possible significant effects on non-residential receptors (including road, public rights of way and recreational users) and how any specific significant cumulative effect could be mitigated, how that accords with appropriate planning tests and could be secured?
2CEIntra4.	All Councils	<p>REAC mitigation commitments (GG27, GG03, NV03)</p> <p>In responding to AP112 [REP4-086] the applicant has set out initial comments regarding REAC commitments GG27, GG03 and NV03? Can the identified Councils confirm if they agree with the applicant's position / proposed amendments, or if not provide details of the additional changes you consider necessary?</p>
13. Onshore Cumulative effects (inter-project)		
2CEInter1.	All Councils	<p>Mitigation of inter-project cumulative effects</p> <p>Do you consider that further mitigation measures are required to mitigate significant inter-project cumulative effects in addition to those already identified by the applicant. If yes, explain what specific additional measures should be considered. In answering identify the specific significant cumulative effects that the mitigation is considered to address, how it accords with appropriate planning tests and how it could be secured? If it is to be secured in the DCO, provide suggested wording.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
14. Marine physical environment		
2PE1.	ESC, MMO	<p>Pneumatic casing installation</p> <p>The applicant's response to ExQ 1PE5 [REP2-034] explains that there are currently 'no plans' to use pneumatic casing as part of the trenchless technique installation method and its use has not been included in any noise modelling. However, paragraph 2.2.2 of the outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (oCSIP) [REP4-090] references temporary casing as part of the installation methodology. Should use of pneumatic casing be excluded from the working methods secured in the dDCO/deemed marine licence (DML) or be subject to some form of control in the event that plans were to change and if not, why not?</p>
2PE2.	Applicant	<p>Coralline Crag Technical Note Plate 2.3</p> <p>The ExA notes that plate 2.3 of the Coralline Crag Technical Note [REP4-102] shows one horizontal alignment intersecting with two boreholes. Confirm whether this is the proposed alignment and if so detail any risks associated with the HDD bore, intersecting boreholes. In addition, the northernmost horizontal alignment is coloured orange, explain why this is a different colour.</p>
2PE3.	Applicant NE	<p>Appendix D4 – comments on baseline characterisation</p> <p>NE's Appendix D4 [REP4-191] makes a number of comments regarding the need for robust characterisation of the baseline. The applicant should meet with NE to confirm the exact requirements for any outstanding assessment and either provide the updated assessment information or a technical note justifying why this is not necessary.</p>
2PE4.	NE	<p>Maximum design scenarios</p> <p>The ExA notes NE's concerns [REP4-191] about the MDS for construction phase coastal and marine processes impacts as considered in the Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment [REP4-027] and its advice that these impacts need to be quantified to inform assessment in the HRA [REP4-057]. Confirm if the applicant's updates to [REP4-027] address your concerns about the MDS. If not, advise what further detail is needed. Also confirm whether NE agrees with the applicant's conclusions of no AEol of Sandwich Bay SAC, Thanet Coast SAC and Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA & Ramsar site in the HRA Report [REP4-057] for pathways arising from coastal and marine process impacts following the applicant's updates.</p>
2PE5.	Applicant	<p>Microplastics</p> <p>Make provision in the REAC or control documents to ensure that the contractor considers measures to avoid use of microplastics where possible.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
15. Benthic ecology		
2BE1.	Applicant	<p>Disposal material impacts</p> <p>The applicant has confirmed that disposal of all excavated material would be within the order limits [REP4-241], but does this have a potential to adversely impact benthic ecology (species and/or habitats)? Provide details to explain your response.</p>
2BE2.	Applicant	<p>Grounded or jack-up barge</p> <p>At the offshore HDD exit it is explained by the applicant [REP4-241] that a grounded barge or jack-up vessel could be used as marine support. Explain the impacts to benthic ecology of using such vessels?</p>
2BE3.	NE	<p>Thanet Coast SAC</p> <p>The applicant has responded to NE's remarks in relation to the sensitivity of Thanet Coast SAC reef biotopes on page 58 of the updated Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology [REP4-029]. Is NE satisfied with this re-assessment with use of a medium sensitivity? If so, is NE content that the proposed development would not have any likely significant effects on the benthic aspects of Thanet Coast SAC?</p>
2BE4.	NE	<p>Seabed disturbance – Thanet Coast SAC</p> <p>The ExA notes that you have raised concerns [REP3-118] about how the applicant has calculated the total area of intertidal seabed disturbance during construction and the potential for this to be underreported, in the context of potential LSE from temporary disturbance to Thanet Coast SAC. Noting that the applicant confirmed that the footprint of seabed disturbance does not intersect with the SAC qualifying features, the ExA requests clarification of your concerns and if these relate to suspended sediment concentration and sediment deposition, which have been separately assessed in the applicant's HRA?</p>
2BE5.		<p>Potential effects from temporary disturbance on Thanet Coast SAC</p> <p>The ExA notes that you have raised concerns [REP3-118] about how the applicant has calculated the total area of intertidal seabed disturbance during construction and the potential for this to be underreported, in the context of potential LSE from temporary disturbance to Thanet Coast SAC. Noting that the applicant confirmed that the footprint of seabed disturbance does not intersect with the SAC qualifying features [REP4-057], the ExA requests clarification of your concerns and if these relate to suspended sediment concentration and sediment deposition, which have been separately assessed in the applicant's HRA?</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2BE6.	Applicant	<p>Cable protection location</p> <p>Clarify if there is a possibility that along the 38 kilometre (km) of cable corridor considered as high risk of cable strike (specifically Kilometre Point (KP) 38 to KP 58, and KP 81.5 to KP 96.5) that geological constraints might mean that target cable depths are not achievable and that an alternative to rock backfill would be necessary, such as concrete mattresses for example? Provide details to support your answer.</p>
2BE7.	Applicant	<p>Cable protection removal</p> <p>Whilst it is understood that the safety of other sea users is an important factor in choosing the form of cable protection, could removability at decommissioning stage also be a factor in this choice?</p>
2BE8.	NE MMO	<p>In principle monitoring plan for benthic</p> <p>The applicant states [REP4-241] that given that no likely significant effects had been identified for benthic ecology, and there are no requirements for additional mitigation or any areas of uncertainty/data gaps, no specific offshore receptors have been identified at this stage that would require further monitoring. The applicant therefore considered that an outline in principle (IPMP) is not required for benthic ecology. Do you agree with these points made by the applicant? If not please explain why.</p>
2BE9.	Applicant MMO NE	<p>Benthic mitigation</p> <p>Under BE05 and BE06 of the REAC [REP4-235] it is understood that where benthic habitats of principal importance are identified during pre-construction surveys and there is potential for an impact on these habitats, the applicant would prepare a Benthic Mitigation Plan and an IPMP.</p> <p>For NE and MMO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These commitments state that these plans would be prepared in consultation with the MMO and Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB) but does not require any agreement from MMO and/or a SNCB. Is such agreement on these plans necessary or would a consultation suffice? • If an IPMP records impacts worse than anticipated with the ES assessment, should there be a requirement for adaptive management, and how should this be secured? <p>For the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would further post-installation survey work be necessary as part of monitoring if an IPMP were considered necessary?

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2BE10.	Applicant MMO NE	<p>Final cable route</p> <p>Is it necessary for MMO and NE to agree on the final proposed cable route prior to installation, including areas of micro-routing where necessary? If so, how would this be secured?</p>
2BE11.	NE MMO	<p>Baseline benthic surveys</p> <p>Do the submitted subtidal and intertidal surveys submitted (including, for example, [APP-196] [APP-198], [AS-006], [APP-197]) by the applicant provide sufficient coverage at this stage for the assessment of impacts on benthic ecology?</p>
2BE12.	NE	<p>Kent landfall exit pits – Sandwich Bay SAC</p> <p>Confirm if the applicant’s clarifications about concrete mattresses or rock bags at the Kent landfall HDD exit pits have addressed your concerns about potential effects to the SAC from placement of cable protection. If not, explain what further evidence you consider is needed. Also, if the applicant commits to use of concrete mattresses or rock bags in the SAC, does this address NE’s concerns as related to HRA?</p>
2BE13.	NE Applicant	<p>Cable protection restriction in the Sandwich Bay SAC</p> <p>MMO [REP4-126] have requested amendments to the wording of schedule 16, DML condition 13 in the dDCO [REP4-217] to prevent placement of cable protection in the SAC after the end of the construction period.</p> <p>NE: What is your opinion on this request from MMO? Do you advise that there could be LSE of the SAC in the absence of such a commitment?</p> <p>Applicant: What is your response to MMO’s request for amendments? If your position is that such a restriction is not required, explain why with reference to relevant precedent.</p>
2BE14.	Applicant	<p>Clarification regarding permanent cable protection</p> <p>The ExA notes that there appear to be inconsistencies across application documents about the requirement for permanent cable protection at the Kent landfall. For example, the HRA Report ([REP4-057], paragraph 4.3.41) states that there would be cable protection at the HDD exit pits during operation but the Outline Offshore Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan ([REP1-027], table 1.3) states there would be no permanent cable protection at Kent landfall.</p> <p>Applicant: Confirm what it is proposed in the Sandwich Bay SAC and ensure that all documentation reflects the proposal.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
		NE: Do you consider that it is necessary to secure in the DCO that cable protection used at the HDD exit pits within the Sandwich Bay SAC would be restricted to concrete mattresses or rock bags to avoid LSE?
2BE15.	NE	<p>Margate and Long Sands SAC</p> <p>Confirm if you agree with the applicant's conclusion [REP4-057] of no AEoI of Margate and Long Sands SAC from the LSE pathway of suspended sediment concentrations and subsequent sediment deposition during construction. If not, explain your outstanding concerns.</p>
2BE16.	Applicant	<p>Effects on Goodwin Sands Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)</p> <p>The updated MCZ Assessment ([REP4-059], paragraph 1.5.29) confirms that the Goodwin Sands MCZ sandbanks are morphologically resilient based on experience from recovery after dredging, and that the low-lying nature of any remedial rock berms placed adjacent to the MCZ would mean that coastal processes are highly unlikely to be affected. The ExA also notes that NE ([REP4-197], E49, E34) continues to have concerns about potential effects from placement of cable protection and the evidence provided to demonstrate there would be no disruption, and that it cannot advise that hindrance of the conservation objectives can be ruled out. Respond to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm if you have undertaken any modelling or if there is any other relevant precedent from comparable projects to support your position that the low-lying nature of the rock berms would not affect coastal processes? • Do the maximum parameters of the potential cable protection specified at paragraph 1.5.26 of [REP4-059] need to be secured in the DML or other control document? If not, why not? • The ExA notes the applicant's response as to why monitoring is not required in [REP4-241]. Given NE's ongoing advice [REP3A-027] that residual concerns should be monitored at the MCZ and that it is not satisfied by the evidence provided that there would be no disruption to coastal processes, the ExA is concerned that contrary to your position there are gaps and uncertainties that do require monitoring. The ExA requests further justification for your position.
2BE17.	Applicant	<p>Locally sourced or environmentally benign materials</p> <p>The ExA notes your commitment to using locally sourced or environmentally benign materials in grout bags where possible in the REAC ([REP4-235], BE04). Explain why this is caveated to where possible, and confirm if this can be amended to refer to local sediment where such protection is placed adjacent to the MCZ as requested by NE [RR-3920].</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2BE18.	NE	<p>Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]</p> <p>The oCSIP [REP4-090] sets out the applicant's proposals for handling boulder clearance along the offshore cable route if needed. Advise if the proposed methods would be suitable for boulders cleared adjacent to the MCZ. If not, confirm what measures would be required and why.</p>
2BE19.	NE	<p>Implications for MCZ conservation objectives</p> <p>The Risk and Issues Log ([REP4-197], E52 and E55) raises concerns about hindrance of the conservation objectives for various MCZ. The ExA understands that this is primarily about Goodwin Sands MCZ but notes that NE also refers to Thanet Coast and Kentish Knock East MCZs. Confirm if the applicant's response in [REP4-241] about the absence of direct effects due to distance between the sites/ protected features and offshore cable addresses NE's concerns about Thanet Coast and Kentish Knock East MCZs. If not, confirm which protected features and impact pathways NE remain concerned about. Provide any advice on mitigation that could be used to address these matters.</p>
16. Fish and shellfish ecology		
No further questions at this time.		
17. Marine mammals		
2MM1.	Applicant	<p>Effects on seals at Goodwin Sands</p> <p>In the applicant's response to the ExA's first written question reference 1MM1 it is stated that cable installation vessels can only operate in the area close to Goodwin Sands at high tide where water depth is sufficient for the cable lay and other vessels and that this will be part of the project design secured through the cable specification and installation plan (CSIP). The oCSIP has been provided [REP4-090]. Provide clarification as to where the minimum depth of water where cable installation may be undertaken by vessels is secured.</p>
2MM2.	Applicant	<p>Technical Guidance</p> <p>Update table 4.18 footnote of ES Part 4 Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [REP4-031] to reflect that the NMFS Acoustic Technical Guidance update (Version 3.0) is not in draft form any more or under consultation; it was finalised on October 24, 2024 with the publication of a Federal Register notice (89 FR 84872), as set out in the MMO's comments in [REP4-126]. Update [REP4-031] to reflect the guidance with a qualitative commentary on the potential differences.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2MM3.	NE, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)	<p>Peak abundance and density estimates</p> <p>NE's risk and issues log [REP4-197] requests further information from the applicant regarding the seasonality of the peak abundance and density estimates. The applicant provided further narrative on the implications of the use of the Winter SCANS 2025 harbour porpoise abundance data in Revision D of the HRA Report [REP4-057]. It concluded in response to 1MM7 [REP3-069] that the revised baseline did not change the overall outcomes of the assessment as the numbers estimated to be disturbed were still significantly lower than the threshold criteria for impacts to harbour porpoise SACs. Do the JNCC and NE agree with this conclusion?</p>
2MM4.	NE	<p>Underwater noise modelling</p> <p>NE's concern regarding the underwater noise modelling [RR-3920] is unresolved in the DL4 risk and issues log [REP4-197]. The applicant in [REP2-014] confirmed that modelling used the standard NMFS/NOAA acoustic tools, as detailed in [REP4-031].</p> <p>Can NE confirm whether this resolves its concerns, and if not do the concerns regarding modelling have implications for the HRA?</p>
2MM5.	JNCC	<p>Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation (SNS SAC)</p> <p>With regards to conservation objective 3, the applicant has calculated that <0.01% of that habitat of the SNS SAC could be affected by the proposed development and considers that the impact pathways relating to effects to prey species can be screened out in response to 1MM12 [REP4-083]. The MMO has also confirmed that further to consultation with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture, it agrees with the applicant's conclusion of no likely significant effects. Further to this explanation, does the JNCC agree with the applicant's conclusions of no likely significant effects to harbour porpoise of the SNS SAC as a result of impacts to prey species?</p>
2MM6.	JNCC	<p>Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (oMMMP)</p> <p>The JNCC [RR-2635], [REP1-210] made several comments on the oMMMP. The applicant has made several revisions to the oMMMP, the most recent being [REP4-069]. Can the JNCC confirm whether it is satisfied with the revisions made?</p>
2MM7.	JNCC	<p>Collision risk</p> <p>Further to the applicant's response in table 3.8 of [REP2-016] is the JNCC satisfied that compliance with International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (International Maritime Organisation,</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
		1972) is sufficient to ensure slow vessel speeds and reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects to marine mammals for vessel collision risk?
2MM8.	Applicant	<p>In-combination assessment in the Report to Inform HRA [REP4-057]</p> <p>The in-combination assessment considers the potential for impacts of the proposed development to interact with each identified project on a one-by-one basis. Can the applicant calculate the sum total area from which the harbour porpoise could be displaced, using the latest effective deterrent ranges. The assessment needs to be supplemented to enable the consideration of potential in-combination effects at a site or conservation objective level.</p>
2MM9.	NE	<p>Updates to risks and issues log</p> <p>The applicant has provided updates at previous deadlines including to ES Part 4 Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [REP4-031] in response to NE's comments. Provide an update to the risks and issues log for marine mammals indicating whether the issues have been resolved and if so reference the document that has resolved them.</p>
2MM10.	Applicant	<p>Errata</p> <p>Paragraph 4.7.47 of [REP4-031] refers to three surveys but four have been carried out. Correct and check chapter to ensure accuracy.</p>
18. Marine Ornithology		
2MO1.	Applicant NE	<p>Red-throated diver (RTD) displacement</p> <p>Applicant: The applicant confirmed in table 3.1 [REP4-085] that a quantification exercise is underway to assess the implications of vessel movements on RTD of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. Submit the quantification exercise at DL5. The exercise should interpret findings against conservation objectives, as requested by NE (table 1, [REP4-193]).</p> <p>NE: Comment on any progress with assessments.</p>
2MO2.	Applicant NE MMO	<p>Red-Throated Diver Protocol</p> <p>Applicant: Should the RTD protocol be updated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect the need to restrict non-emergency operational and maintenance activities to NE and the MMO for the full duration of the seasonal restriction? • Confirm mitigation for the decommissioning phase? <p>Other parties: Comment.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2MO3.	NE Applicant	<p>2km buffer from Outer Thames Estuary SPA</p> <p>NE: Noting that RTD numbers are likely to decrease substantially towards the boundary of the SPA, provide further justification for applying a 2km buffer for vessels outside the SPA as requested in [REP4-193].</p> <p>Applicant: To comment.</p>
2MO4.	Applicant	<p>Offshore surveys</p> <p>At DL2, the applicant (table 2.3, G2 [REP2-014]) stated that there would be regular monitoring surveys along the installed cable route which may be carried out using ASVs or autonomous underwater vehicles. At DL4, the applicant (1MO7 [REP4-083] and AP23 [REP4-087]) stated that there would not be a requirement for offshore vessel to undertake regular monitoring, with a focus on the reliance of land based Digital Temperature and Acoustic Sensing (DTAS) monitoring.</p> <p>The outline cable specification and installation plan [REP4-090] refers to DTAS monitoring. However, it also refers to 'surveys' of unspecified nature. In the absence of commitments to no offshore vessel monitoring during the overwintering period, how can no AEol be assured?</p>
2MO5.	Applicant NE KWT	<p>Disturbance to bird species foraging within Pegwell Bay</p> <p>Applicant: Explain whether the estimates of the areas disturbed by construction activities within Pegwell Bay in the Maximum Design Scenario take into account disturbance due to noise and lighting effects in table 5.16 of Marine Chapter 5 [REP2-003]. Confirm whether table 5.16 accounts for use of bog matting within the intertidal area? Provide a comparison of the total area and percentage of foraging habitat that would be temporarily lost in Pegwell Bay during construction activities compared with the extent available. The ExA notes that the HRA still refers to 0.02km² disturbance when assessing effects on Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar, in contrast to [REP2-003] and [REP4-029] which use 0.072km². Taking into account any adjustments required by this question, provide an updated HRA [REP4-057] that reports consistent areas.</p> <p>Other parties: The MDS for temporary disturbance at Kent landfall, appears consistent with details in the Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229], and concludes a minor and not significant effect. Are you satisfied that the correct area of intertidal seabed disturbance has been used as the basis for assessment of indirect effects to prey in the HRA? Also explain whether any additional mitigation is required to offset this effect.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2MO6.	Applicant	<p>Pegwell Bay – key roost locations</p> <p>Provide a plan indicating the ‘key roost locations’ and their offset distances from the works areas (for example for golden plover), as referred to in paragraph 7.3.48 of the HRA [REP4-057]. The applicant may wish to draw on information from the Nemo LinkES.</p>
19. Marine archaeology		
No further questions at this time.		
20. Shipping and navigation		
2SN1.	Applicant	<p>Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan</p> <p>In relation to UXO in section 3.3 of the oCSIP [REP4-090] it is stated that a detailed UXO survey is planned to be carried out in 2025. Provide clarification as to whether that has now been carried out and update [REP4-090] as required.</p>
2SN2.	Applicant	<p>Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (oNIP)</p> <p>Section 3.12 of the oNIP [REP4-075] refers to freespan clearance and its remediation. There is no reference to freespan clearance in the Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA) [REP4-047] or ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [REP4-035]. Clarify whether this is an additional risk that has not previously been assessed. If so, provide updated documents such as the NRA and Shipping and Navigation chapter. Has freespan clearance and its remediation also been considered in relation to other topics such as commercial fisheries, benthic ecology or marine physical environment?</p>
2SN3.	Applicant	<p>Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) and oCSIP</p> <p>Does the CBRA need to be updated following the production of the oCSIP and [REP4-093] for consistency in terms of the additional depth of lowering needed? Furthermore, the MMO has indicated in its DL4 submission [REP4-126] that deeper cable burial may need to be considered between KP 96.343 and KP 113.83. Is this a matter that is already under consideration?</p>
2SN4.	Applicant, Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), Port of London	<p>Vessel management plan (VMP)</p> <p>Following the submission of the updated oNIP [REP4-075], provide an update as to whether a VMP is still required and if not explain why not.</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
	Authority, London Gateway Port Ltd, HHA, and other relevant stakeholders	
2SN5.	MCA, United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO)	Force majeure Considering Trinity House comments on the dDCO [REP4-205] in relation to 'force majeure', MCA and UKHO to provide comments on whether they consider that they should be within scope of condition 9(1) of the dDCO.
2SN6.	Applicant	Errata Correct the plate numbers and submit an amended version of Water Depth Baseline Study – Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093] as the plate numbers are incorrect.
21. Commercial fisheries		
2CF1.	Applicant	Fishing over cables Clarify whether there would be post-construction restrictions on fishing over cables, if so provide details of the extent and consider the implications for inter-project cumulative effects in [REP1A-009].
2CF2.	Applicant	Post installation surveys Section 8.9 of [REP1-007] refers to potentially significant effects on access to fishing grounds, particularly for bottom drift netters due to cable protection and the potential snag risk. It is stated that in order to further mitigate against this occurrence, regularly scheduled surveys will be undertaken at areas of mobile substrate along the cable route to monitor the continuing levels of protection to the cable provided by burial in the seabed. It is stated that depth of burial surveys will be conducted at 12 and 24 months to monitor the integrity of the cable and subsequently schedule future surveys, maintenance works and inform mitigation planning moving forward. Explain how this mitigation would be secured in the DCO/DML. While REAC CF05 refers to post installation surveys it does not secure the mitigation.
2CF3.	Applicant	Mitigation Provide a response to Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority's (EIFCA) suggestion that a seasonal pattern of construction activity could mitigate effects on the fishing industry [RR-1422]

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2CF4.	Relevant stakeholders including National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), Felixstowe Ferry Fishermen's Association, Thanet Fishermen's Association (TFA), Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (KEIFCA), Whitstable Fishermen's Association (WFA), EIFCA, Southwold Fishermen's Group (SWG)	<p>Updated comments</p> <p>Provide comments on the updated version of ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 8 Commercial Fisheries [REP1A-009] and ES Appendix Commercial Fisheries Technical Report [REP1-007] and the applicant's responses to selected representations in [REP2-022] table 6.14.</p> <p>Include in your comments consideration of the adequacy of the baseline data gathering and forecast methods, adequacy of the assessment of potential effects and adequacy of the proposed mitigation or compensation measures.</p>
2CF5.	Relevant stakeholders including NFFO, FFA, TFA,	<p>Outline Fisheries Co-Existence and Liaison Plan (FCLP)</p> <p>Provide comments on the oFCLP [REP4-081].</p>

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
	KEIFCA, WFA, EIFCA, SWG	
2CF6.	Applicant	<p>oFCLP</p> <p>ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 8 Commercial Fisheries [REP1A-009] relies on mitigation in the FCLP [REP4-081] to mitigate likely significant effects in relation to static gear. The ExA expects all necessary mitigations to be outlined in the FCLP unless they are secured elsewhere. Clarify how all the mitigations referred to in [REP1A-009] are secured.</p> <p>Explain whether provision will be made in the oFCLP [REP4-081] for removal of static gears present within any areas of proposed surveys and construction or maintenance activities. If so, how much notice will be given to fishers prior to removal.</p> <p>Explain how much notice will be given between the dissemination of information regarding routes and timing of works so that fishers will have time to plan their routes and minimise any potential impact to their fuel costs.</p> <p>Explain how the oFCLP [REP4-081] makes provision for removed, relocated or damaged gear claims.</p>
2CF7.	Relevant stakeholders including NFFO, FFA, TFA, KEIFCA, WFA, EIFCA, SWG	<p>Cumulative effects</p> <p>Consider whether the applicant’s assessment of cumulative effects with other developments on commercial fisheries is adequate in table 11.24 [REP1A-011]. If you consider that it is not adequate, explain what additional information or assessment is required. Do you consider that additional mitigation is required, if so what mitigation measures are sought?</p>
2CF8.	Relevant stakeholders including KEIFCA	<p>Cockle harvesting</p> <p>Explain if you consider that the potential effects in relation cockle harvesting in Pegwell Bay have been adequately assessed and mitigated in terms of disturbance of cockles and the impact on the fishery and potting and netting activities. If not, specify what additional information is required.</p>

ExQ2: 25 February 2026

Responses due by deadline 5: Tuesday 10 March 2026

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
2CF9.	Applicant	Baseline data Explain the approach taken in [REP1A-009] to baseline data on vessels less than 15 metres in length, and the reason for no site-specific marine traffic survey data.
2CF10.	Applicant	Effects on under 10 metre fleet Provide a detailed response to the comments from Southwold Fishermens Group [RR-5068] as to whether effects on prime fishing grounds and their subsequent period of recovery and the particular circumstances affecting the under 10 metre fleet in terms of adaptation have been adequately considered in [REP1A-009] . If necessary provide an updated assessment in [REP1A-009] .
2CF11.	Applicant	oFCLP Include the oFCLP [REP4-081] in Schedule 19 of the dDCO as a certified document or explain why it is not appropriate to include it.
2CF12.	Applicant	Indirect effects Provide a response to the concern raised by Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (EIFCA) [REP1-150] that compensation for lost access to fishing grounds may result in increased fishing effort elsewhere with potential effects on fish and shellfish populations, on features of Marine Protection Areas and on fishers operating in those areas.
2CF13.	Applicant	Displacement Clarify whether consideration has been given to the effects of additional steaming that may result from displacement of commercial fishing activities. If not, provide an updated version of [REP1A-009] .
2CF14.	Applicant	Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order (TECFO) In section 8.4 of [REP1A-009] under the heading assumptions and limitations, it is noted that the current TECFO ran until 28 September 2024 at which point a new TECFO took effect. Provide an update as to whether the new TECFO has any implications for the assessment, and if so provide amended assessment in [REP1A-009] .
22. Other sea users		
No further questions at this time		

ExQ2	Question to:	Question:
23. Marine intra-project cumulative effects		
No further questions at this time		
24. Marine inter-project cumulative effects		
No further questions at this time.		
25. Climate change		
No further questions at this time.		
26. Project-wide (combined) effects		
No further questions at this time.		
27. Other		
No further questions at this time.		