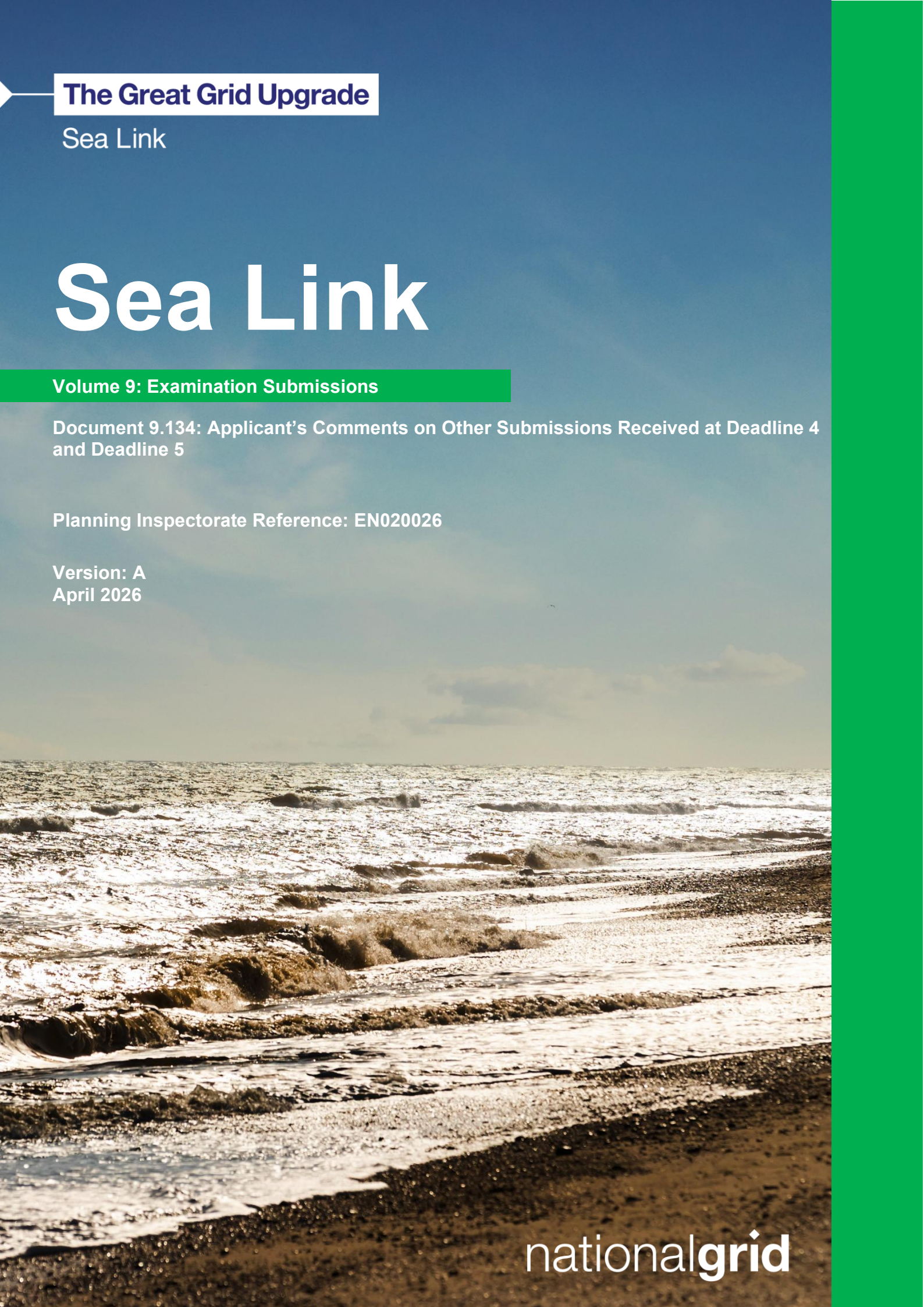




The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Sea Link

Volume 9: Examination Submissions

Document 9.134: Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 4 and Deadline 5

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020026

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1. About this Document

1.1 Purpose of this Document

- 1.1.1 This document provides National Grid Electricity Transmission plc’s (the Applicant’s) comments on other submissions made by Interested Parties at Deadline 4 and 5, in response to the application for development consent for the Sea Link Project (the Project).
- 1.1.2 Interested Parties responses received at Deadline 4 and 5 have been reviewed and considered in full. The purpose of this document is to provide the Applicant’s comments on new matters or matters which have been expanded upon within Interested Parties submissions at Deadline 4 and 5.

1.2 Submissions already responded to

- 1.2.1 The Applicant previously responded at Deadline 5 to selected Interested Party representations received at Deadline 4 in **Application Document 9.121 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 4 [REP5-132]**. To avoid duplication these representations have not been responded to again.

1.3 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions

- 1.3.1 Responses received at Deadline 5 regarding the Examiner’s Second Written Questions are provided in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**. Table 1.1 below lists the representations responded to in this document.

Table 1.1 Representations in Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions

Interested Party	Content
Dover District Council	REP5-187
East Anglia Three Limited	REP5-188
East Suffolk Council	REP5-189
East Suffolk Water Management Board	REP5-190
Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA)	REP5-191
Environment Agency	REP5-192

Historic England	REP5-193
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	REP5-194
Kent County Council	REP5-195
Kent Wildlife Trust	REP5-196
London Gateway Port Limited	REP5-197
Natural England	REP5-199
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	REP5-200
Port of London Authority	REP5-201
RiverOak Strategic Partners	REP5-202
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	REP5-203
Suffolk County Council	REP5-204
Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS)	REP5-205
Thanet District Council	REP5-207
The Maritime and Coastguard Agency	REP5-209
William Notcutt Estates Limited	REP5-210
Stuart Ian Robson	REP5-211
Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES)	REP5-212
Struan Robertson	REP5-223

1.4 Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statements

- 1.4.1 East Suffolk Council [**REP5-184**] Suffolk County Council [**REP5-185**] and Thanet District Council [**REP5-186**] have submitted principal areas of disagreement summary statements at Deadline. The Applicant has reviewed these documents and the relevant Statement of Common Ground will be updated at Deadline 7 through continued engagement with the Interested Parties.

1.5 SEAS

- 1.5.1 The Applicant also responded to **SEAS** Submissions **[REP4-156]** and **[REP4-238]** at Deadline 5 **[REP5-142]** so this is not repeated here. Similarly the Applicant responded to SEAS REP4-240 at Deadline 5 in **[REP5-141]**.

1.6 Structure of the Report

- 1.6.1 Table 1.2 below outlines the structure of this document. The Applicant's comments are provided in response to paragraph numbers used in the original submissions, with paragraphs grouped where appropriate for clarity.

Table 1.2 Structure of the document

Chapter	Chapter Heading	Content
2	Aldeburgh Town Council	REP4-104
3	Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council	REP4-106, and REP5-170
4	Cliffsend Parish council	REP4-107
5	CPRE Kent	REP4-108
6	Dover District Council	REP4-109, REP4-110, and REP4-111
7	East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP)	REP4-115, REP4-116, REP4-182, and REP4-183
8	East Suffolk Council	REP4-117, REP4-118, REP4-119, REP4-120, REP4-184 and REP5-172.
9	Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES)	REP4-121 and REP4-148, and REP5-213
10	Kent County Council	REP4-123
11	London Gateway Port Limited	REP4-125, REP5-174
12	Nemo Link Limited	REP4-127 to REP4-137
13	Marlesford Parish Council	REP4-138
14	Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	REP4-139
15	Port of London Authority	REP4-140, REP5-177
16	Save Minster Marshes	REP4-143, REP4-144, REP4-145, REP4-146, REP4-215, REP5-167
17	Saxmundham Town Council	REP4-147

18	Suffolk County Council	REP4-149, REP4-150, REP4-201, REP5-178, REP5-179, REP5-180, REP5-181
19	Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS)	REP4-152, REP4-153, REP4-154, REP4-155, REP4-157, REP4-158, REP4-159, REP4-203, REP5-145, REP5-146, REP5-147, REP5-148, REP5-149, REP5-150, and REP5-151
20	Thanet District Council	REP4-160, REP4-161, REP4-162
21	The Maritime and Coastguard Agency	REP4-163
22	Adrian Smith	REP4-166
23	Andrew McDonald	REP4-167
24	Anthony Fincham	REP4-168
25	Cllr T-J Haworth-Culf	REP4-169
26	Cllr Tricia Austin	REP4-170
27	Fiona Cramb	REP4-173
28	Fiona Gilmore	REP4-174
29	Iain Brown	REP4-175
30	Marianne Fellowes	REP4-176
31	Paul Atkinson	REP4-177
32	Walberswick Parish Council	REP4-179
33	Canterbury and District Angling Association	REP4-180
34	Environment Agency	REP4-185, REP4-214 and REP5-173
35	Natural England	REP5-214, REP5-215, REP5-216, REP5-217, REP5-218, REP5-219, REP5-220, REP5-221
36	Southern Gas Networks Plc	REP4-199
37	Angela Stevens	REP4-206
38	David Stevens	REP4-207, REP4-208, REP4-209, and REP5-154
39	Stephen Byrne	REP4-210, REP4-211, and REP5-168
40	Elaine Parkin	REP4-212
41	Wendy King	REP4-213
42	Susan Bridges	REP4-239
43	Antonia Rowena Jane Mayo	REP5-152

44	Christopher Paul Nicholson	REP5-153
45	Janet Arthur	REP5-155
46	John Axtell	REP5-156
47	Liz Stephen	REP5-157
48	Malcolm Shawn Kirkaldie	REP5-158
49	Marion Walker	REP5-159
50	Mrs P Dorcey	REP5-160
51	National Trust	REP5-161 and REP5-176 (which are identical submissions)
52	Peter Smith	REP5-162
53	Rebecca Graves	REP5-163
54	Richard Blight	REP5-164
55	Saira Gregory	REP5-165
56	Samantha Caley	REP5-166, and REP5-183
57	Sydney Jury	REP5-169
58	East Anglia ONE North Limited, East Anglia TWO Limited, ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited	REP5-171
59	Marine Management Organisation	REP5-175
60	Olivia Jeannette Brown	REP5-182
61	National Highways	AS-165
62	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm	No document reference provided in Examination Library

2. Applicant’s Comments on the Submission from Aldeburgh Town Council

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Table 2.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Aldeburgh Town Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-104]

Table 2.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Aldeburgh Town Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-104]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1	Interests of council overlooked	Aldeburgh is alarmed that, even though its Council (‘ATC’) is a statutory consultee (and non-political), its interests, are being overlooked in this Inquiry despite it being the largest and most economically and culturally significant community affected ¹	The Applicant addressed this comment in their response to Aldeburgh Town Council Deadline 3 and TJ Haworth-Culf Deadline 3 submissions within Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241]. The Applicant has engaged with both residents and elected representatives of Aldeburgh, including Aldeburgh Town Council. As set out in Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report [APP-301] residents and representatives were directly invited to respond to the non-statutory, statutory, and targeted consultations undertaken in 2022, 2023 and 2024 respectively. Three public exhibitions were held in Aldeburgh across the non-statutory and statutory consultations (which were attended by approximately 2,000 people), in addition to separate meetings with Aldeburgh Town Council during the statutory and targeted consultations. The Applicant has set out the topics/codes raised by Aldeburgh Town Council in Table 8.3 and Table 9.8 of Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report [APP-301], whilst Table 8.4 and Table 9.10 of this report sets out the Applicant’s response to these topics (along with all other issues raised by those who submitted consultation feedback). Since the end of the March Hearings, the Applicant has met with and held a further discussion Aldeburgh Town Council.
2	Tourism and the economy Traffic	In its Application and subsequent submissions, the Applicant omits discussion of Aldeburgh as a resort when addressing tourism and the economy, ignores the town’s needs over traffic, and instead of responding to the town’s arguments, simply reiterates its starting position.	The Applicant responded to comments on tourism, the economy and traffic in detail within Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241]. The Applicant submitted Application Document 9.40 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065], which reviewed observed outcomes from Sizewell B and Hinkley Point which supported the conclusion in Application Document
3	Limited tourism and the economy research	The Applicant’s research on the effect of the Scheme on tourism and the economy is limited and of lamentable quality ² . The Inspectors are therefore invited to accept the considered	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		assessment of ATC and the more than 50 businesses and local organisations supporting it, supplemented by the Applicant being required by you to engage with the DMO as proposed by SEAS. ATC supports SEAS' request.	6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 [REP1A-005] that no significant adverse effects on tourism are anticipated. At Deadline 6 the Applicant has submitted its Responses to ExA's Actions Points from the March hearings that responds to a number of points about tourism and the economy as well as a Detailed Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan detailed the economic and training opportunities that the Proposed Project will bring to the area.
4	Stakeholder Engagement	Unlike other energy applicants, the Applicant has failed to engage with ATC and the town ³ despite its publicly declared support of Government policy to the contrary. ⁴ The Inspectors are invited to require the Applicant to change its approach or to report on the basis that this developer, unlike the others in this region, will not consider mitigation, compensation or other cooperation with affected communities.	For the reasons set out in the response to point 1 above, the Applicant does not accept that this is accurate.
5	Proposed Landfall	The Inspectors are asked to require the Applicant to describe the proposed landfall as being in Aldeburgh, not being 'between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness'. That is like saying that the Excel Centre is 'between London and Paris'. The Applicant still persists with this error ⁵ (except when it is compelled to be accurate ⁶) despite it having being pointed out at the outset. ⁷	Whilst the Comment is noted and accepted, as a practical matter the Applicant's view is that the location of the proposed landfall is a well known and well established part of the Proposed Project and has been the subject of proper discussion as part of the Examination.
6	ATC differing interests	ATC's position as a statutory consultee is particularly significant in this case. No one knows, because of imminent reorganisation ⁸ what County or other sort of Councils would be in place should the Scheme go ahead. Further the positions and interests of ATC and the County and District councils sometimes differ about the energy projects.	The comment is noted. The Applicant's view is that Aldeburgh Town Council has been fully represented throughout the Examination process and able to express its views about the Proposed Project.
7	Sea Erosion	ATC agrees with the suggestion at the ISH that there be careful evaluation now of the potential effects on the Scheme of the recent accelerated sea erosion around Thorpeness.	The Applicant has committed that further analysis will be undertaken to consider the potential for coastal erosion over the lifetime of the project in line with the Final Offshore Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
8	Other matters	ATC's position on the numerous matters on which the Applicant is yet to respond is reserved. On Day 2 the Inspectors said as regards our initial remarks '00:30:10:17 - 00:30:33:25 ...we do expect the applicant to respond on all those as well. So even if there's not a specific question that we've, that we've submitted or even talking about it today because of restrictions on time, it's still things that we are considering.' That response is awaited.	The Applicant responded to Aldeburgh Town Council Deadline 3 and TJ Haworth-Culf Deadline 3 submissions within Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241] .
9		The inspectors are therefore respectfully requested to pay particular regard to the written submissions of ATC and of its Mayor and County Councillor, T J Haworth-Cuff to be found at EN020026-002030-Aldeburgh Town Council.pdf and EN020026-002028-Cllr Haworth-Culf SCC Cllr 9th January 2026.pdf .	

1 As a light hearted example, consider the written questions and requests for information (ExQ1) Issued on 17 December 2025, 78 pages of penetrating and relevant interrogation. The dormice received 6 references, Aldeburgh not one

2 See submissions in Para 9 below and note the afternoon of Day 2 when the Applicant admitted that its research into the availability of accommodation for workers had failed to take into account the cost of rooms. It was relying on the numbers of rooms in Aldeburgh's luxury hotels, (vital anyway for the survival of the town's businesses) to accommodate workers.

3 See for example the approach by EDF to the Jubilee Hall, many months before the Sizewell C application, mentioned on Day 2

4 We welcome the Government's guidance on community benefits, which supports our view that communities should be rewarded for hosting new transmission infrastructure' Frequently asked questions | National Grid. 'We believe communities are playing a fundamental role in the energy transition and that those that host infrastructure should receive fair and enduring benefits for doing so

5 EN020026-002396-National Trust response to Statement of Common Ground.pdf

6 EN020026-000242-6.2.2.10 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism.pdf-10.9.94 and Table 10.19

7 aldeburgh-definitive-map Relevant Representations | Representation by Cllr T-J Haworth-Culf. And Relevant Representations | Representation by David Lindsay Mackie

8 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk - Suffolk County Council

3. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1
- Table 3.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-106].
- 3.1.2
- Table 3.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-170].

Table 3.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-106]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1	Preamble	Following the escalation of Sea Link to National Priority status in response to what most people feel is a completely unrealistic ambition to decarbonise the grid by 2030, the Sea Link DCO is now being driven through with such great urgency that consideration of the extreme adverse impacts of imposing such major infrastructure right next to the local population has plummeted to a minimal level of importance. This is very concerning for the local community which is already experiencing significant Human Impacts associated with the beginning of construction at SZC and is fearing the very real Human Cost of the cumulative impacts that will inevitably ensue if all the multiple infrastructure developments in East Suffolk are allowed to progress. Formulating long-term strategic plans to deliver the best infrastructure possible at the lowest cost and with the fewest adverse impacts is surely preferable to delivering electrical infrastructure as quickly as possible and regardless of environmental and socioeconomic adverse impact, but the latter approach has been adopted in order to achieve the immediate delivery of Sea Link. This short-sighted approach to delivery needs to be considered alongside the evolutionary process that has led to Sea Link’s meteoric rise to critical infrastructure from its original position of ‘only-just consented third-party transmission infrastructure’ because the new position seems to have been arrived at by stealth rather than by transparent long term planning based on need and deserves examination: • The entire output from all Scottish Power’s (SPR) North Sea offshore windfarms was originally due to be transmitted to a preexisting National Grid (NG) connection hub at Bramford, but a cost-cutting decision to downgrade the onshore cable route meant that only the electricity from two of the windfarms (EA1 and EA3) could be transmitted to Bramford after all.	The Applicant acknowledges this representation but observes that its points are for the most part high-level concerns about the proposed project, and indeed the wider development in the area, which makes it difficult to provide a granular and focussed response. As a matter of national policy there is a Critical National Priority for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure, including projects to reinforce the network like the Proposed Project. The National Policy Statements for Energy have been designated by Parliament and provide the appropriate policy tests for assessing the impacts of NSIPs. As to the discrete points raised, the Applicant makes the following high-level comments: • The cumulative impacts of the proposed project in concert with other relevant projects in the vicinity has been robustly assessed under a comprehensive and rigorous EIA; • The Applicant does not accept that the Sea Link proposal will open the floodgates to future development. While generators can apply for connections at National Grid substations, the Secretary of State or local planning authority (LPA) (depending on who the relevant decision maker is) will determine applications for consent or planning permission on their own merits and in light of their cumulative impacts; • The Applicant does not accept that it has not adequately presented or analysed the cumulative impacts of the proposed project. These have been documented in detail and have been the subject of considerable commentary, which the Applicant has responded to; • The Applicant addresses the points relating to the Benhall Bridge below.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• In order to serve the other windfarms (EA1N and EA2), SPR submitted proposals to develop two substations at Friston and plans for a brand-new NG connection hub – specifically to connect SPR's electricity to the grid – were incorporated within this application. • Substantial adverse impacts were identified with the SPR project and since it was deemed by the ExA that it was only just possible to mitigate for these, caution was advised were further projects to be connected at Friston in the future. (NB This caution was advised long before anyone had realised just how impactful construction of SZC was going to be). • Towards the end of 2024 it was revealed at an ESC planning meeting that SPR might not proceed with development of its substations at Friston after all. Having been awarded consent specifically to connect SPR's electricity to the grid and only on the back of the renewable nature of the SPR projects, this revelation cast doubt on the validity of the NG connection hub's consent because it didn't look like it stood up without the SPR substations. • SPR may indeed not be proceeding with development of its substations and yet NG is proposing to develop the connection hub at Friston as part of the Sea Link DCO. • Furthermore, since Sea Link will provide a sea link capable of transmitting electricity out of East Suffolk to Kent, it has the potential to open the floodgates to more and more electrical infrastructure projects being connected at the NG connection hub in the future. • Thus, despite the fact that the requirement for the NG connection hub at Friston arose out of a need to correct a poor, short-term planning decision (some might say mistake) and despite the ExA's warnings that care should be taken when connecting further projects at Friston in the future, one small geographical area is now being faced with overwhelming cumulative impacts from an unreasonable and disproportionate imposition of major infrastructure that threatens to, amongst other things, severely impact local people's health and wellbeing. During the CAH and ISH 2, it was evident on multiple occasions that the Applicant was presenting the adverse impacts of Sea Link in isolation rather than putting them in the context of all the other major infrastructure projects currently being developed or proposed for development in East Suffolk. This resulted in information being provided that gave the unrealistic impression that Sea Link will only have minimal impacts whereas it is of course self evident to the local population that the extreme cumulative impacts arising out of East Suffolk's infrastructure developments over the next ten to fifteen years of construction will be incredibly severe. There are particular concerns that significant problems with local people's Health and Wellbeing might develop in the face of such infrastructure duress and the Applicant cannot afford to ignore this, especially since the stress of the situation	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		could potentially progress to an eventual reduction in local life expectancy. During the short ISH discussion about Traffic and Transport, it was made abundantly clear by Suffolk Highways that there are many serious concerns with cumulative impacts on the local road network, but these claims were repeatedly played down or even dismissed by the Applicant and a SCC proposal during the CAH to explore a less harmful Northern approach to the Saxmundham converter stations site was immediately ruled out on the grounds that it would add extra hours to the project. It is essential that a fair balance is achieved between delivery of Sea Link and the extreme adverse impacts predicted from road closures related to transporting AILs over Benhall Railway Bridge, disruption to local residents who use the B1121 through Benhall and harm to Saxmundham's heritage assets and landscape setting from construction of the bridge over the River Fromus: The Applicant will never achieve an adequate level of planning balance if it does not actively engage with meaningful mitigation or carefully considered alternative solutions that SCC, ESC and other Interested Parties are suggesting.	
		At one point during the ISH, the ExA asked SCC and ESC whether any veteran trees had been felled during the SZC "de-vegging" process. The local population knew the answer to this question: in excess of 23,000 trees were felled in a matter of weeks and this tally of course included many veteran trees. (Seeing the local landscape so dramatically raised to the ground was truly shocking and elicited a visceral response in many people). Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council is very disappointed by the mitigation planting proposed to the south side of the converter station and considers it to be inadequate. A 26m high converter station sitting on top of the hill above the village will clearly dominate the horizon from miles around. The Applicant should of course be aiming to deliver the maximum in terms of mitigation planting and it is felt that this is an area in which a small detail of the project could easily be improved. The effects of overwhelming cumulative impacts on the local population of so many major infrastructure projects being developed in one small area cannot and should not be underestimated. If Sea Link is developed, the Applicant must attempt to minimise, mitigate and compensate for adverse impacts – especially relating to problems with Human Health and Public Safety – and if this is not possible, it is imperative that a less harmful alternative site for development of the project be identified.	Comments were submitted at Deadline 4 relating to the mitigation planting to the south side of the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station, refer to 'Suffolk Viewpoint 5' within Table 6.1 contained in Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] and AP39 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project have been fully and robustly assessed throughout the Examination and the Applicant has submitted an Intra Project Cumulative Effect Significance - Technical Note at Deadline 6.

Table 3.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-170]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council (the PC) is very concerned that, since the challenges presented by accessing the Saxmundham converter stations site over Benhall Railway Bridge were not disclosed at the statutory consultation, the community was misled and was therefore unable to provide a meaningful evidence-based response to the consultation. Had the problems with transporting super-heavy Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs) over the weight restricted Benhall Railway Bridge been raised at the statutory consultation, more timely discussion regarding alternative routes could have been carried out and the true inaccessibility of the Saxmundham site could have been properly evaluated when there was still time.	The solutions required to either repair or temporarily overbridge the Benhall Railway Bridge are ‘business as usual’ activities for developments of this type. While it was previously anticipated that these works would be undertaken using other DCO powers, when of the works to the Benhall Rail Bridge were introduced in to the Proposed Project (following discussion with the highways authority around the consenting/permitting process), this was subject to a full public consultation exercise which is detailed in the Change Request Consultation Report [CR1-069] and has been discussed at length as part of the Examination. As set out in REP4-101, the Applicant remains confident in its proposals for the construction access to the Suffolk converter station site, and that the remediation to the Benhall Railway Bridge remains its preferred option, as discussed with the local highway authority. Additional options for moving AILS have been retained as they provide surety to the Applicant of the validity of construction access for all necessary construction traffic for the project.
		Suffolk County Council (SCC) has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the harm, adverse impacts and environmental consequences of National Grid’s proposed “Western” access route over the Benhall Railway Bridge and the River Fromus. These concerns are so considerable that they may render the route undeliverable and include the following issues: • National Grid has not provided sufficiently detailed engineering reports regarding Benhall railway bridge or the new bridge due to be built over the River Fromus. • National Grid has not justified the environmental, heritage, or landscape and visual implications of building the new bridge over the River Fromus in a sensitive, historic valley landscape. • National Grid has not definitively explained how the Benhall railway bridge could be made suitable for AIL movements without significant disruption to local residents in the area around Benhall, Sternfield and Saxmundham. • National Grid has not identified the true challenges presented by using the totally inappropriate and potentially unsafe route through Benhall and the impacts of that on the wider community of East Suffolk.	This representation primarily concerns a proposed northern access route to the Saxmundham convertor station which, it is said, would avoid the need for use of the Fromus Bridge and would have less impact on the local community and the environment. The Applicant is satisfied that the analysis in the Document 9.112: Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4-101] is robust. It presents three options so that alternative approaches can be taken if an option is deemed infeasible. The Applicant also notes that it does not accept that the approach taken to the Fromus bridge has resulted in a flawed consultation. Statutory consultees were able to address the bridge and their feedback was considered (see 9.6 of the Consultation Report [APP-301]). The Applicant does not accept that there is any lack of information over the Fromus Bridge.
		In view of these concerns, SCC has proposed an alternative Northern access route to the Saxmundham Converter Stations site that uses the Sizewell Link Road and then connects to the B1119 via a new connection over the former Leiston airfield. This proposed Northern route would significantly reduce community, environmental and heritage harm and would provide a more sustainable and proportionate method for accessing the site. When	The Applicant directly responded to SCC’s proposal for the northern route to be used and it relies on its explanation set out in [REP5-125]. Without revisiting the conclusions of that document, the Applicant remains firmly of the view that the northern access route was

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		compared to NG's proposed Western route, the proposed Northern route would be advantageous because: • It would avoid all the multiple problems associated with the Benhall railway bridge entirely. • It would avoid the many problems created by construction traffic passing along the B1121 through Benhall. • It would avoid the major traffic disruption that would occur with traffic diverting through Saxmundham during closure of the B1121 for positioning of the mini-bridge or work to strengthen Benhall Railway Bridge. • It would avoid disruption to rail travel and Sizewell C's construction logistics during closure of the East Suffolk Railway Line for work on Benhall Railway Bridge. • it would avoid the need for a new bridge over the River Fromus, thereby preventing significant and permanent harm to the Fromus Valley and setting of heritage assets including the Grade II listed Hurts Hall. • It would utilise the Sizewell Link Road which has been specifically designed to accommodate heavy construction traffic, including AILs. • It would require upgrades to the B1119 which would be a legacy benefit. • It would encourage project coordination by promoting shared use of the Sizewell Link Road. • It would provide a more resilient long-term access solution for future energy projects. Shared use of the Sizewell Link Road to access the Saxmundham converter stations site also addresses the wider issue of East Suffolk's cumulative impact burden because it aligns with the principle being called for by Jenny Riddell Carpenter MP, Suffolk's Councils and the wider community that energy developers should coordinate their construction programmes rather than each project imposing its own separate avoidable burdens on local communities. This coordinated approach also extends to construction of Scottish Power Renewable's (SPR's) EA1N and EA2 substations and the NG connection hub at Friston as well because as there has not yet been any formal assessment of weaknesses along the SPR AIL route via the B1122 through Leiston – particularly regarding whether the Victorian sewer system under the B1122 will be able to withstand the weight of transformers – the certainty of this route cannot be guaranteed. Thus, in the name of minimising adverse impacts and maximising project coordination, SCC's Northern route – which coordinates with construction of SZC by sharing the Sizewell Link Road – offers a definitive access route for the SPR projects, Sea Link, Lion Link and any future electrical infrastructure projects. The route also greatly reduces or even completely avoids the disruption that construction of the Western access route would cause and	properly considered at the pre application stage and was objectively assessed to be a materially worse option than the 'western route' proposed by the Applicant.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		therefore deserves full, transparent and evidence-based consideration. From a community point of view - the down side of the Northern route is that adding converter station traffic to the Sizewell Link Road will of course increase the overall number of construction vehicles passing along this route which in turn will inevitably add to the impact of the SLR on the communities situated alongside it. When compared with the huge volumes of SZC traffic that will be passing along the SLR though, this increase will only be by a fairly small amount and any increase would be outweighed by the reduction in adverse impacts if the Western access route were not to be developed. The PC would like to point out here though that discussions about how adverse impacts of one route compare with those of another route is very divisive for the communities involved and instead of one community having to make comments that potentially throw other communities under the bus, we should be looking at how the Developers have thrown us all under the bus by trying to shoehorn such major infrastructure into such a wholly unsuitable, inappropriate, inaccessible location so close to a community already struggling with infrastructure duress and that a more appropriate brownfield site close to demand should be identified that doesn't carry the same problems of inaccessibility. SCC's proposed Northern route lightens construction requirements, avoids unnecessary engineering interventions, protects the landscape and heritage setting of Saxmundham, greatly reduces community disruption, lowers environmental harm and is more aligned with increased infrastructure coordination. It therefore appears to present a credible, technically feasible, lower-impact, more deliverable and environmentally preferable alternative to NG's Western access route, but despite all these advantages, NG has rejected SCC's proposals primarily on increased journey time and distance. The PC sees this as a woeful lack of acknowledgment of the major adverse impacts associated with using the Western access route and would therefore urge that, in the context of the huge infrastructure burden currently being faced by the local community, NG acts according to the principles of avoiding and minimising adverse impacts wherever possible by giving SCC's proposals for a Northern access route proper consideration. It is of course incumbent upon NGET to work constructively and cooperatively with Suffolk's Councils, Suffolk Highways, Network Rail, other Developers and the local community in order to ensure that access to the converter stations site can be safely and reliably achieved with 2 the fewest adverse impacts and that projects are not delivered at the expense of the local community and that if this is not possible, then another site will have to be identified.	

4. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Cliffsend Parish Council

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Table 4.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Cliffsend Parish Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-107]

Table 4.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Cliffsend Parish Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-107]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1.1	Local Community Benefit	We note that, while there has been some communication between National Grid (NG) and Thanet District Council regarding an employment and skills plan, there has been no discussion whatsoever of a local community benefit fund. This is a significant omission for a project of this scale and impact.	As set out in Application Document 9.73 Applicant’s Response to First Written Questions, response 1GEN1 , the Applicant will follow government guidance which sets expectations for how community benefit funds should be delivered for transmission infrastructure projects.
1.2		Cliffsend Parish Council therefore requests direct engagement with National Grid to establish such a fund, with a view to securing appropriate commitments as conditions of consent. Items requiring consideration include: • Conversion of public toilets in Cliffsend to full disabled accessibility, specifically: the existing toilets at the Village Hall, Foads Lane, and the existing toilets at the rear of the Viking Ship Café, Hugins Green • Funding for essential maintenance and restoration of the Viking Ship on Hugins Green, which is a site of major historical and cultural importance. The ship is a full-scale replica of the vessel used by the Vikings when they landed at this location in 449 AD, and its preservation is a matter of heritage significance for the parish and wider district.	National Grid supports the delivery of community benefits associated with transmission infrastructure and welcomes suggestions for delivering community benefits. Separate to, and outside of the planning process, the Applicant will undertake engagement with local communities and stakeholders in 2026 to understand what is important to them. This engagement will inform the development of the community benefit programme for the Proposed Project. Cliffsend Parish Council will be invited to partake in this engagement, which the applicant will be undertaking soon. The Applicant would be happy to discuss the feasibility of the ideas presented by Cliffsend Parish Council as part of that engagement. Government guidance sets out principles for delivering community benefits, from the point of construction, providing flexibility over the types of investment that can be delivered through the funding (e.g. access to community grants, direct investment in local projects or outreach and educational training opportunities).
1.3		These are modest, targeted, and locally impactful improvements that align with the principle of proportional community benefit for nationally significant infrastructure.	In line with the guidance, our approach will be informed through consultation with communities and stakeholders, including Parish and Town Councils, and we will aim to develop initiatives that respond to the needs identified through that consultation. This will be legally secured through a modification of the Applicant’s Electricity Transmission Licence with Ofgem. For information a Detailed Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan is submitted at Deadline 6.
2.1	Cumulative Impact on the Ramsgate Tunnel	National Grid propose transporting substantial volumes of heavy construction materials via Ramsgate Port and the A299 Royal Harbour Approach Tunnel. This tunnel is owned and managed by Kent County Council Highways (KCC).	The Applicant disagrees and does not consider that there will be substantial volumes of HGVs on this part of the highway network as a result of the Proposed Project.
		KCC has confirmed that the tunnel, in its current condition, is not suitable for large numbers of HGVs. Safety inspections and	There will be a maximum of 11 peak daily HGVs (resulting in 22 daily HGV movements) travelling along the A299 east of the

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		postfire repair assessments (following the 2025 incident) have identified structural and systems fragility. Based on KCC's investigations, the tunnel would require at least £6 million of works to safely accommodate the freight volumes proposed.	Sevenscore roundabout as a result of the Proposed Project. This level of activity is negligible and represents a minimal (less than 2%) increase when compared to the 1,240 daily HGV movements that are expected on this part of the network in the 2030 future baseline without the Proposed Project, as outlined in Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067]. The assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] does not identify the potential for significant effects to arise during the construction phase based on peak construction traffic levels following the measures outlined in Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338]. The increase in HGVs on this part of the highway network as a result of the Proposed Project is expected to be negligible.
2.2		KCC has confirmed that the tunnel, in its current condition, is not suitable for large numbers of HGVs. Safety inspections and post-fire repair assessments (following the 2025 incident) have identified structural and systems fragility. Based on KCC's investigations, the tunnel would require at least £6 million of works to safely accommodate the freight volumes proposed.	This is acknowledged, however, see response above. The increase in HGVs on this part of the highway network as a result of the Proposed Project is expected to be negligible.
2.3		Cliffsend Parish Council maintains that the absence of a safety assessment by NG is a serious and unacceptable omission. Furthermore, any assessment and any proposed mitigation measures must be to the satisfaction of Kent County Council, as the statutory highway authority. Without this, the proposal fails to demonstrate safe and deliverable logistics.	The A299 tunnel is owned and managed by Kent County Council Highways (KCC), who undertake general and principal inspections on the structure to confirm the suitability of the structure for ongoing use. Including assessment of the structure following the car fire in 2025 and the subsequent reopening of the tunnel. The Applicant has and will continue to liaise with Kent County Council Highways team on the traffic and transport strategy for the project including any proposed future use of the tunnel. Should additional inspections or surveys be required at the request of Kent County Council Highways these will be considered by the Applicant.
3.1	No Safe Road(s) for Transport of Materials and Equipment	Taking into account: - the limitations and fragility of the Ramsgate Tunnel (as above); and - the constraints and safety concerns relating to the A299 Thanet Way and Sandwich Road, Cliffsend (as detailed in the Appendix to this submission) It is clear that there are currently no safe or suitable road routes for transporting the large and heavy quantities of materials and equipment required for the proposed converter station. NG has not demonstrated any safe transport route. This is a fundamental prerequisite for approval of the project. Until NG provides a fully evidenced, highway authority approved logistics plan, the proposal cannot be considered compliant with safety, deliverability, or statutory duty of care.	The construction vehicle routing has been designed to minimise impacts across the highway network, as set out within Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338], which was agreed with KCC highways. This includes multiple routes including the A299 to/ from the west, the A299 to/ from the east and the A256 to/ from the south. The assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] does not identify the potential for significant effects to arise during the construction phase based on peak construction traffic levels following the measures outlined in Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338]. Therefore, it is considered that construction traffic will be able to utilise suitable road routes when travelling to/ from the Kent Onshore Scheme. Further review with the asset owners, including KCC, will be required at the next stage of the design to determine whether these structures are suitable for the required Proposed Project AIL

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			loading, and whether further assessment or strengthening is required.
3.2		NG has not demonstrated any safe transport route. This is a fundamental prerequisite for approval of the project. Until NG provides a fully evidenced, highway authority approved logistics plan, the proposal cannot be considered compliant with safety, deliverability, or statutory duty of care.	See response above.
Appendix			
1.1	Cumulative Impact of Sea Link Construction Traffic on the A299 (Thanet Way)	I wish to register concerns regarding the impact of construction-related traffic from the proposed Sea Link project on the A299 (Thanet Way), which is the primary strategic highway serving Thanet.	The assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] is based on the forecast increases in HGVs across the highway network during the peak construction phase, which demonstrates that the additional construction traffic to be generated by the proposals is not expected to result in any significant effects on the surrounding highway network (including the A299), following the measures identified within Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] . This includes a requirement for road condition surveys to be carried out pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction, to identify any defects that arise to highways assets/verges during the construction phase of the Proposed Project for re-instatement. Further discussions will be held with KCC Highways to identify whether further road condition surveys (such as on the A299) may be required.
1.2		The A299 is already subject to significant structural and operational constraints, including long-standing surface deformation caused by underlying London Clay, repeated failures requiring ongoing repairs, and an extended 50 mph speed restriction for safety reasons. These conditions demonstrate that the road currently operates with limited resilience and is vulnerable to additional stress.	The assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] is based on the forecast increases in HGVs across the highway network during the peak construction phase, which demonstrates that the additional construction traffic to be generated by the proposals is not expected to result in any significant effects on the surrounding highway network (including the A299), following the measures identified within Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] . This includes a requirement for road condition surveys to be carried out pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction, to identify any defects that arise to highways assets/verges during the construction phase of the Proposed Project for re-instatement. Further discussions will be held with KCC Highways to identify whether further road condition surveys (such as on the A299) may be required.
1.3		The Sea Link project is expected to generate substantial movements of heavy goods vehicles, abnormal loads, construction plant, and daily commuting by a large workforce. Introducing this level of traffic onto an already compromised route is likely to accelerate structural deterioration, increase the frequency of	The Applicant disagrees and does not consider that the Proposed Project will result in substantial volumes of construction traffic. The assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] does not identify the potential for significant effects to arise during the construction phase

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		emergency repairs, and heighten the risk of unplanned lane closures. This would have direct consequences for network reliability, journey times, and the safe operation of the highway	based on peak construction traffic levels following the measures outlined in Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338]. As above, this includes a requirement for road condition surveys to be carried out pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction, to identify any defects that arise to highways assets/verges during the construction phase of the Proposed Project for re-instatement. It should also be acknowledged that as summarised by KCC within their Relevant Representations, as the Local Highway Authority for Kent, KCC has collaborated with the Applicant on Highways and Transportation matters and following positive engagement, all of the issues raised by KCC during the Pre-Examination stage of the DCO have been addressed by the Applicant.
1.4		National policy (NPS EN-1 and EN-5) requires cumulative impacts to be assessed. The A299 already carries a high baseline load, and the addition of Sea Link construction traffic would create a significant cumulative burden on a route that is demonstrably fragile. On this basis, the applicant must provide a robust, evidence-based transport assessment and identify credible mitigation measures or infrastructure reinforcement	In accordance with national policy, a Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment has been carried out within Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-073] which includes highway network within the Kent study area including the A299. This concludes that there is not expected to be the potential for significant cumulative effects when traffic volumes associated with the peak construction phase of the Kent Onshore Scheme were reviewed against the traffic flows of each of the cumulative projects individually.
2.1	Cumulative Impact of Sea Link Construction Traffic on Sandwich Road, Cliffsend	Sandwich Road runs directly through the village of Cliffsend and serves as a key residential route. National Grid proposes locating its operational and maintenance (O&M) compound at the northern end of Sandwich Road. In addition, all access to and from the Pegwell Bay waterfront - formerly the hovercraft base - also relies on this same road. National Grid's current proposals indicate that all heavy construction traffic, including HGVs associated with the Sea Link project, will be routed along the length of Sandwich Road for the duration of the project.	This statement is not correct. As reported within both Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] and Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] , only around 6% of construction vehicles associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme will be expected to use Sandwich Road during the construction phase. These vehicles will be associated with access K-BM01 on Ebbsfleet Lane which will be used for approximately 10 months, and access K-BM07 on Sandwich Road which will be used for approximately six months, not the entire duration of the construction phase.
2.2		Residents living on or near Sandwich Road would therefore be exposed to excessive and persistent nuisance, noise, disturbance, congestion, and vibration over a period of several years. These impacts would occur throughout National Grid's proposed core working hours (7am–7pm on weekdays and 7am–5pm on weekends and bank holidays). However, National Grid also reserves the right to work outside these hours “if necessary”, and vehicle movements for site set-up and close-down would take place before and after the stated times. In practice, this means residents face the prospect of disturbance from early morning until late evening, seven days a week.	In view of the above, the assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] does not identify the potential for significant effects to arise during the construction phase based on peak construction traffic levels, including on Sandwich Road, on this basis.
2.3		No mitigation or compensation has been offered to residents for this prolonged and unavoidable disruption. This omission is	In view of the above, no additional mitigation is expected to be necessary to that already set out within Application Document

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		significant and must be addressed as part of any responsible assessment of community impact.	7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338].
2.4		A further and critical concern is the structural capacity of Sandwich Road itself. The road is not engineered to accommodate prolonged volumes of heavy goods traffic. Only recently, a sinkhole appeared on the section of Sandwich Road opposite the Viking Ship at Hugins Green, resulting in a full road closure. This incident exposed the underlying fragility of the sub-surface infrastructure and demonstrated that the road's foundations are already vulnerable and under strain. Subjecting this route to years of intensive HGV movements associated with Sea Link construction poses a clear risk of further subsidence, accelerated deterioration, and potential safety hazards for all road users.	As set out above, only around 6% of construction vehicles associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme will be expected to use Sandwich Road during the construction phase. The majority of this limited traffic will only use a short section of Sandwich Road to access the landfall works at either end resulting in very few movements along Sandwich Road past the Viking Ship. Works in this area will be limited to the trenchless landfall installation and HVDC cabling under the A256 which are estimated to last approximately 12 months. Nonetheless, Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] includes a requirement for road condition surveys to be carried out pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction, to identify any defects that arise to highways assets/verges during the construction phase of the Proposed Project for re-instatement. This includes a requirement to carry out such surveys on Sandwich Road.
2.5		There is no evidence that National Grid has assessed the cumulative impact of routing all construction traffic along a road with known structural weaknesses. This represents a serious gap in the project's impact assessment and undermines the credibility of the proposed traffic management strategy.	As set out above, a traffic and transport cumulative assessment has been carried out within Application Document 6.2.3.13 Part 3 Kent Chapter 13 Kent Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-073] which includes highway network within the Kent study area including Sandwich Road. This concludes that there is not expected to be the potential for significant cumulative effects when traffic volumes associated with the peak construction phase of the Kent Onshore Scheme were reviewed against the traffic flows of each of the cumulative projects individually. Engagement with the Highways Authority (Kent County Council) has identified no concerns regarding the structural integrity of the road network.
2.6		Given the recent sinkhole, the residential nature of the route, and the scale and duration of the proposed construction traffic, Sandwich Road is not a suitable or safe corridor for Sea Link HGV movements. A full reassessment, including alternative routing, mitigation measures, and compensation provisions, is essential.	As set out above, only around 6% of construction vehicles associated with the Kent Onshore Scheme will be expected to use Sandwich Road during the construction phase. The majority of this limited traffic will only use a short section of Sandwich Road to access the landfall works at either end resulting in very few movements along Sandwich Road past the Viking Ship. Works in this area will be limited to the trenchless landfall installation and HVDC cabling under the A256 which are estimated to last approximately 12 months. Nonetheless, Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] includes a requirement for road condition surveys to be carried out pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction, to identify any defects that arise to highways assets/verges during the construction phase of the Proposed Project for re-instatement. This includes a requirement to carry out such surveys on Sandwich Road.

5. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from CPRE Kent

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Table 5.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on CPRE Kent Deadline 4 Response [REP4-108]

Table 5.1 Applicant’s Comments on the CPRE Kent Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-108]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
3.1(b)	<i>Kent landfall – impacts on the intertidal area</i>	As has been made clear by many commentators, the scars and the physical damage to Pegwell Bay and the Saltmarsh caused by the NEMO link are all too clear to be seen for those who visit the area and rightly continue to cause real dismay to the local community and those who care for these unique habitats. In this respect, we note with concern the comments of KWT that restoration matters arising from the NEMO Link landfall remain unresolved with conditions outstanding and that mitigation relied upon at the time has not delivered full ecological recovery. It is therefore hardly surprising that there is such resistance from the local community to the Sea Link project, given the very real fear of such destruction being repeated. To CPRE Kent and against this context, it is frankly outrageous that the applicant is showing no willingness to positively engage with the suggestions of KWT with respect to necessary mitigation and ongoing monitoring measures with respect to the Saltmarsh and Pegwell Bay generally. In particular, we agree there should a Saltmarsh recovery working group set up to support the development of a suitable restoration and ongoing monitoring strategy for the Saltmarsh. We would suggest that this should be seen as a no-brainer for the applicant and that it is entirely within the gift of this process to secure. As suggested by the ExA, it is clearly conceivable that this could be secured in part within the wider Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offer. One consequential advantage of such an arrangement would be that this provides a robust legal mechanism to secure it. However, we absolutely share the concerns previously raised by KWT that any habitat restoration or remediation associated with the Nemo Link landfall must not be counted as BNG for the Sea Link project. An alternative, therefore, is that this be set up and funded as part of the wider community benefits that this project should be offering the local community. As set out within our response to ExQ 1GEN4, there is now a clear expectation of Government that applicants should absolutely be providing community funding and tangible benefits on applications such as this, as a matter of course.	As highlighted in relation to Item 3.1 of Application Document 9.89 (A): Applicant’s Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085], mitigation for the Proposed Project is a separate matter from that for Nemo Link. Further, the residual impacts associated with Nemo Link have not resulted in any changed conclusions to the impact assessment for the Proposed Project. Whilst there is no link between the Applicant and NEMO Link, which is an entirely separate project, attention is drawn to the Deadline 4 submissions of Nemo Link Limited [REP4-127 – REP4-137] and in particular REP4-127 as confirming the status of the restoration works for that project. Given the Applicant has already committed to measures in the REAC to both avoid and mitigate impacts on the saltmarsh, it does not consider the saltmarsh recovery working group suggested to be necessary and proportionate mitigation. As set out in Application Document 9.73 Applicant’s Response to First Written Questions, response 1GEN1, the Applicant will follow government guidance which sets expectations for how community benefit funds should be delivered for transmission infrastructure projects. Community benefit funding for the Proposed Project will be legally secured through a modification of the Applicant’s Electricity Transmission Licence with Ofgem. It should be highlighted however that the community benefit fund will not be used to deliver BNG. This is in line with Government guidance, which states that “<i>Community funds are not a means of mitigating environmental or social impacts of infrastructure projects, which the project developer should address through the planning process.</i>” BNG will be secured elsewhere in the Application.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
3.1(c)	<i>Kent landfall – access via the hoverport</i>	At the hearing the applicant asserted that no reptile survey is required. He stated that, in part, this was because the route to be taken by vehicles was not vegetated (meaning that reptiles would not be present). This is notwithstanding KWT's clear evidence that the Hoverport is a potential reptile habitat (including use of cracks and margins) and that reptiles cannot be ruled out without survey. He also stated that, should it be the case that reptiles were in fact present, should any vehicle approach "they will move quickly out of the way, probably before anybody's ever seen or noticed that they're there". Our primary concern, however, is how can the applicant be so certain that the route that it is going to take would not be vegetated while simultaneously seeking an expanded Order Limits to provide greater flexibility on the basis it cannot be certain of the access route in practice? In CPRE Kent's view, it is irreconcilable that the applicant can be both certain there will be no reptiles present while is so uncertain as to final access routes to need to amend the order limits. In this respect, this uncertainty alone demands robust baseline surveys are undertaken now as the minimum starting point.	The Applicant has submitted photographs into the Examination in response to the ExA first written questions, which clearly show open unvegetated hardstanding routes. Having walked the site, the Applicant is confident that sufficiently open and unvegetated routes exist. The Applicant does not intend to traverse habitat within which reptiles may be found (restricting access to open unvegetated hardstanding). Therefore, a reptile survey of the adjacent habitats, even if it confirmed the presence of reptiles, would not affect the approach to using the site for access. As discussed in ISH2 reptiles may spend short periods of time basking on hardstanding but because they are exposed to predators will spend little time there and will depart quickly as soon as vehicles approach. The Applicant will also put measures in place to ensure existing areas of hardstanding are not collapsed by vehicle movements (as this would be a health and safety concern aside from environmental considerations). The Applicant therefore does not see a necessity for reptile surveys.
3.1(c)	<i>Kent landfall – access via the hoverport</i>	CPRE Kent absolutely support Natural England's response to REAC b65 that tree height reduction works must be restricted for the entirety of the breeding bird season (March-September inclusive). We were therefore very surprised to learn at the hearings that the applicant had not yet accepted this.	Noted. This is being considered and discussed with Natural England
3.6	<i>Ecology and biodiversity - Securing biodiversity net gain (BNG)</i>	We note that the applicant's preferred method of securing its BNG commitment is by way of a Unilateral Undertaking, a draft of which is shortly to be shared within the relevant LPAs. It is, however, not clear to CPRE Kent as to why this cannot be secured by way of a full Section 106 agreement between all parties/landowners to ensure it is as robustly enforceable going forward. More significantly, we would consider that this draft should become an examination document as soon as possible to allow for scrutiny during the examination process. Without such scrutiny, we do not believe positive planning weight should be ascribed to the applicant's BNG offer. In that respect, and more generally, we would now question whether positive planning weight could continue to be ascribed to BNG NSIP offers given the Government has now set out the clear timeline to this becoming mandatory for NSIPs, at which point it becomes neutral in the balance.	As the Applicant explained at ISH2 and summarised at Item 3.6 of Application Document 9.89 (A) : Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085] , the unilateral undertaking will have the same enforceability as a bilateral section 106 agreement.
4	<i>Ornithology - Impacts and mitigation for functionally linked land</i>	CPRE Kent remain concerned that the FLL assessment and proposed farmland bird mitigation is being driven by unduly narrow assumptions, including that there is only one breeding pair of Skylarks at the Minster site. While the applicant suggests its mitigation could accommodate up to two pairs, there is little "wiggle room" should additional pairs be identified. In this respect, we note the evidence of Save Minister Marshes that suggests the local Skylark population is being significantly under-recorded by the applicant.	This is a slight misunderstanding of what was said at the Hearing, as the Applicant did not state in ISH2 that the mitigation site could support up to two pairs of skylarks, but rather that a commonly used mitigation metric is two plots per skylark territory lost. Using this metric the mitigation land can support up to 10 pairs of skylarks which is far more than the 1 skylark territory (based on 2 seasons of breeding bird survey) that has been identified to be permanently lost.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Further, CPRE Kent also strongly reiterate our previous concerns as to the adequacy and likely effectiveness of the proposed mitigation site. We are, however, concerned that these concerns are seemingly not being engaged with by the applicant. Correct application of the precautionary principle demands that we have certainty that the proposed mitigation will be effective.	The effectiveness of the mitigation for skylark is being discussed with Kent County Council and its effectiveness for golden plovers (the main driver) has been agreed with Natural England as appropriate.
8.1	<i>Marine physical environment - Pegwell Bay morphological change and depth of cable burial</i>	We note the comments of the Environment Agency and in particular the comments of Mr Charman setting out the clear reasons that necessitate the burial of the cables to a minimum of 3 metres within Pegwell Bay. While it seems clear to CPRE Kent that the advice of the Environment Agency should be heeded by the applicant, our real concern is that this detail has not already been agreed and designed into the project. Significantly, this would include a full understanding of the environmental impacts of this, including the necessary remediation measures. More generally, and as set out in our previous representations, CPRE Kent remains seriously concerned that the application does not properly grapple with the implications of HDD failure, and that the potentially disastrous fall-back scenarios are currently not being given appropriate due considerationn.	Issue of potential future geomorphology of Pegwell Bay and migration of the River Stour channel that could lead to exposure of the buried cable: There is no analysis, modelling or survey that could be undertaken in the present day to reliably predict the future course of the River Stour channel in the intertidal beach area, particularly in response to climate change effects which are also subject to significant uncertainty. Although considered unlikely, it is acknowledged there is uncertainty regarding potential future migration of the low water channel. To reliably avoid cable exposure in any eventuality, a large depth of burial (order of metres below the base level of a future river channel, itself potentially several metres deep) would be required. This has been assessed as likely to cause unacceptable issues in terms of thermal performance of the buried cable, and would require a disproportionate scale of excavation works to achieve that burial depth below the present day beach level. Following agreement with the Environment Agency during a call 19th March and 24th March, REAC commitment MPE09 will be updated at Deadline 6 to state that: <i>The River Stour Channel will be</i> monitored throughout the operational life of the asset. Monitoring will be undertaken annually for the first five years following installation, after which the frequency and scope of monitoring will be reviewed in consultation with the Environment Agency. <i>If monitoring</i> demonstrates that the River Stour channel is migrating and is likely to interact with the installed cable, the Applicant will consult with and agree appropriate mitigation measures with the Environment Agency. The Applicant will also consult the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB's) and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate. Where required to implement any mitigation, the Applicant will apply for and obtain any necessary separate Marine Licence and undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to implementation. <i>Monitoring of the River Stour channel within</i> Pegwell Bay will be undertaken using a proportionate, risk-based approach and may include aerial and drone surveys, geomorphological assessments, marine bathymetric surveys, comparison of LiDAR datasets, and review of available satellite imagery to identify any material change in channel position, morphology, or migration over time.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			<i>A trigger for consultation with the Environment Agency will be if monitoring demonstrates that the River Stour channel has migrated to within 50 metres of the as-built cable location.</i> <i>Following consultation, any required mitigation measures will be agreed with and approved by the Environment Agency prior to the undertaking of any remedial works.</i> <i>The principles for post-installation monitoring and asset maintenance, including remediation of an exposed cable, are set out in the latest version of the Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP), as updated at Deadline 5.</i> The Applicant has previously provided detail addressing the issue of HDD failure in Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069] (Ref 1ECOL04).
11.5	<i>Ebbsfleet Peninsular Multi-Period Complex archaeology impacts</i>	CPRE Kent agree that a map that clearly identifies the Ebbsfleet Peninsular Multi-Period Complex needs to be produced as a matter of urgency as, without such, clearly the potential archaeology impact of the project at this location cannot be assessed.	The Applicant, in consultation with KCC, has produced two figures which were submitted in Appendix B3 of 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The first shows the extent of the Ebbsfleet Peninsula Complex including the large enclosure possibly associated with Caesar's landings at the southern end of the peninsula (Figure 1 Appendix B). The second figure shows the Ebbsfleet Peninsula complex and large southern enclosure, as well as two areas of Bronze Age barrows and enclosures also considered to be of importance, as well as components of the Kent Onshore Scheme (Figure 2 in Appendix B).
11.6	<i>Cultural Heritage - Richborough Roman Fort impacts</i>	CPRE Kent strongly agree with Historic England that the level of harm (including to the setting of nationally important assets such as Richborough Roman Fort) will be dictated by the final design of the Minster converter station and substation. For that reason, this cannot be left to a loose, post-consent exercise. Instead, we strongly feel that the final design should be secured via this consenting process. In this respect, we note and agree with the comments of Mr Bridges (of SEAS) regarding design generally in that it would take a lot of the fear out of the process if the applicant was able to agree to a design at the consent stage. We therefore agree that an unfortunate consequence of application of the Rochdale envelope is that this allows the applicant to go for the worse design that it can get away with rather than encouraging and facilitating the best design possible for the location.	As stated in 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069], the Applicant has agreed with Historic England being added to the list of stakeholders to be consulted regarding converter station design and has updated the wording of Requirement 3 within Application Document 3.1 (F) draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 3. Historic England also confirmed in Comments on any further information/ submissions received by deadline 3 [REP4-187] that they are '<i>broadly satisfied that the Draft DCO (REP3-006) wording now secures Historic England's engagement in securing an appropriate final design for the Kent converter station (Schedule 3 Requirements; Section 3 - Converter Station Design)</i>'.
Health and Wellbeing			
16	<i>Core working hours, in relation to effects on traffic, health and wellbeing, and noise</i>	While CPRE Kent will not repeat the comments that we have already made regarding working outside of the core-working hours, it is abundantly clear from the applicant's responses given	The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		at the ISHs that it will be its intention to maximise working on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The applicant's working programme appears to be predicated on this assumption, which seems to be why it is resistant to the very reasonable suggestion that working outside of core hours may be allowed, though must be subject to LPA approval on a case-by-case basis first. Were the applicant genuine in its argument that it really would only be for exceptional circumstances such as allowing work near Network Rail assets on Bank Holidays, then clearly it would not have issue with such being agreed on a case-by case basis. Given this little bit of respite will be essential for the local community, we again absolutely urge the ExA to not allow any further flexibility to the core-working hours.	There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures to demonstrate recognition of the LPA and community's concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions in response to 3HW3.
20. Cumulative effects		CPRE Kent agree with KWT that the purported Aberdeenshire-Richborough HVDC link is capable of constituting a "reasonably foreseeable" project for cumulative assessment purposes and	The Applicant's approach to identifying 'Other Development' for inclusion in the inter-project cumulative effects assessment is explained at sections 1.5.1 to 1.5.28 of Application Document

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
20.1 Intra and inter-project cumulative effects		should therefore be explicitly addressed as such within the applicant's Cumulative Effects Assessment. In this respect, we note that that the applicant's position is effectively that the scheme is not sufficiently advanced so as to warrant inclusion within the assessment. CPRE Kent do not, however, agree that this can simply be asserted. Rather, it is for the applicant to evidence and justify that position. In any event, the very fact that Richborough/Pegwell Bay is now repeatedly being advanced as a landing point for major infrastructure only heightens CPRE Kent's call (set out elsewhere) for the applicant to go above and beyond by securing, through the DCO, a properly funded Saltmarsh recovery and long-term monitoring working group as a legacy measure	6.3.1.5.A ES Appendix 1.5.A Cumulative Effects Assessment Methodologies [APP-091]. In respect of the link project referenced by CPRE Kent, contrary to what is suggested, the Applicant does not consider it meets the test of “<i>development...reasonably likely to come forward</i>” under the guidance provided by Planning Inspectorate's 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment' (Planning Inspectorate, 2024). For this reason it was not included in Application Document 6.3.1.5.B ES Appendix 1.5.B Inter-Project Cumulative Effects Long List [APP-092]. As per Item 20 of Application Document 9.89 (A) : Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085], the Applicant confirms that there are currently no National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) plans for further cables at Pegwell Bay. In these circumstances, there can be no question that sufficiently reliable information to undertake a satisfactory cumulative assessment does not exist. It is difficult to see what else the Applicant can do to “<i>evidence and justify</i>” the position as to the lack of information as suggested by CPRE Kent. As the organisation that would be tasked with developing such a link, one might expect the Applicant to be in receipt of such information were the proposals to be at a stage for there to be a reasonable prospect of it coming forward. As to the comments about a Saltmarsh recovery and long-term monitoring working group, see the Applicant's response above to Ref 3.1(b) from [REP4-108].
20.2 Mitigation of cumulative effects			

6. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Dover District Council

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1
- Table 6.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Dover District Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-109].
- 6.1.2
- Table 6.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Dover District Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-110].
- 6.1.3
- Table 6.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Dover District Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-111].
- 6.1.4
- The Applicant’s has responded to Dover District Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-187] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.**

Table 6.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Dover District Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-109]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Written post hearing submissions – Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)			
1	Agenda Item 3.6	The ExA asked the applicant how biodiversity net gain (BNG) would be secured and the weight that should be given if it were not secured in any DCO granted. The Applicant advised BNG would be secured via a S106 or unilateral undertaking (UU) legal agreement. Further information would be provided by the Applicant in relation to a question raised by the ExA on which of the proposed habitat creation measures would fall within the legal agreement or be part of the net gain proposals. East Suffolk District Council (ESDC) advised they had a preference for this to be secured via S106 for BNG monitoring; the local authority would need to see and comment on the s106 as to whether it secures BNG. This was echoed by Suffolk County Council (SCC), who also noted the BNG feasibility report (paragraph 5.2.10) commits to a 30 year period for the management of BNG, however varying time periods were referenced in other documents. The Applicant advised the intention was to secure BNG via a UU, which they considered has the same enforcement powers as a S106 and they would submit draft heads of terms to the local authorities and a draft agreement to the ExA (although could not commit to a specific deadline for this). DDC notes the commitment made to securing BNG and would seek to ensure any legal agreement (either S106 or UU) also secures the provision of monitoring fees to the authority responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of delivering a net gain in biodiversity to ensure the availability of resources and that this can be achieved for the lifetime of the development. The Council will work positively with the Applicant to progress this matter during the examination.	The Applicant shared a draft heads of terms with the LPA on 20 February 2026 and comments were received. These comments were taken into account and the drafts106 Unilateral Undertaking (UU) was shared on 10 April 2026. The Applicant believes that a UU can effectively meet the projects requirements while allowing for a streamlined approach to securing the necessary commitments. In paragraph 5.2.12 of the BNG Feasibility Report, it is stated that "Long-term management, monitoring, and reporting will be undertaken for a minimum of 30 years." This commitment is further supported by paragraphs 1.5.26, 1.6.62, 3.3.43, and 3.4.55. The Applicant wishes to clarify that the language used in the OLEMP, which indicates that landscaping will be managed for the lifetime of the asset, also encompasses areas of habitat creation that are included in the BNG assessment. This is in line with paragraph 5.4.45 of EN-1 which states “<i>biodiversity net gain should generally be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, if longer.</i>” The Applicant recognises that monitoring and reporting mechanisms are crucial for ensuring the successful delivery of BNG. Therefore, the UU includes provisions for financial contributions to be paid by the Applicant to cover the costs associated with monitoring and enforcement. This will ensure that all relevant local authorities have the resources to oversee compliance and address and potential shortfall in habitat delivery.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Item 4	The ExA asked the Applicant about impacts and mitigation for functionally linked land (FLL) and how Operation Turtledove had been taken into account in developing its proposals for mitigating effects on FLL at the proposed Minster converter station site. The Applicant advised Operation Turtledove had not been explicitly taken into account as it was unrelated to the proposals for mitigating FLL for golden plovers; the mitigation of FLL was largely driven by the special protection areas (SPA) and its golden plover populations. They advised that turtledoves would broadly use the kind of woodland planting and woodland edge habitats that were proposed to be planted around the converter station so these would be beneficial to turtledoves. There was then further discussion on the quantity of land required to mitigate for skylarks. In DDC's statement of common ground (7.4.6 (C)) submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 3, items 3.2.3 and 3.5.21 note ongoing discussions with the Applicant on the mitigation land proposed to the west of the Sandwich Bypass/ A256. The Applicant has advised DDC that the latest land plans show this area is proposed for permanent acquisition, meaning National Grid would have absolute control of the parcel of land to ensure mitigation is delivered (such that the reference to step in rights in paragraph 6.2.2. of the Kent outline landscape and ecological management plan (oLEMP) would be removed and the updated document submitted at Deadline 4). It is also understood the oLEMP would be updated to be more explicit regarding frequency of monitoring of the golden plover mitigation land and remedial actions if the monitoring indicates it is not being used (by golden plover/skylarks). Further discussion is expected between DDC and the Applicant on whether DDC would be expected to monitor compliance with the approved LEMP and any funding to do so and DDC expects to provide an update on progress at the next deadline.	Noted. The Applicant is still discussing matters with Dover District Council and will update the Statement of Common Ground [REP5-048] at Deadline 7.
	Wording of dDCO	In respect of the wording of Article 10, DDC met with the applicant, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk District Council on 3rd February 2026 to discuss the wording of this section of the dDCO. It is understood Suffolk County Council will be submitting suggested wording at Deadline 4 and if required, DDC will provide comments on this at the following deadline.	The Applicant has submitted a response on this this matter in 3GEN17 of Application Document 9.136: Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions.

Table 6.2 Applicant's Comments on the Dover District Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-110]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Response to Supplementary agenda additional questions – Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) (Issued 16th January 2026)			
		This document comprised Dover District Council's responses to the Inspector supplementary agenda additional questions relating to ISH2.	As ISH2 is now complete the Applicant does not intend to reply to any of the points raised in REP4-110 but includes it here for completeness.

Table 6.3 Applicant’s Comments on the Dover District Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-111]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Action Points – Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)			
1	Action 52	Heritage assets listed by the applicant [REP3-070] which are scoped out of the ES include those which are described as experiencing an adverse impact, though less than substantial at the lower end of this scale. For example, asset ID 1215749 - Buxlow Manor in Suffolk. For this example and the others like it, provide additional information as to the potential impact to the significance of each asset and further justification as to why it was scoped out. For all relevant Councils and Historic England, is it appropriate to scope out from the ES assessment heritage assets which are considered to have (lower end of) less than substantial impact on their significance? <i>Thematic Meetings on heritage were held between the Applicant, KCC Archaeology and Historic England, who agreed the methodology and scope. The Council agrees with this approach and has advised in the SoCG that it would defer matters relating to archaeology to KCC and in relation to Richborough Roman Fort, to Historic England.</i>	Noted. No response required
2	Action 102	District and County Councils to provide details as to what tourist accommodation may be available for tourists, taking into account Sea Link and other development workers who may be staying in such accommodation within the construction phases. <i>At ISH2, the Applicant’s Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism ES (Part 3, Chapter 10) was discussed and it is understood further information will be submitted by the Applicant at deadline 4 to consider the impact on existing accommodation, amongst other matters. Table 10.16 fails to identify a Starbucks (at Discovery Park, Sandwich) approximately 100m from the Kent Onshore Scheme Order Limits. Paragraph 10.7.31 refers to Dover Local Plan 2015, however the correct document is Dover District Local Plan to 2040 (adopted 2024). Notwithstanding this, there are no housing allocations within the Study Area, however as raised in relation to cumulative impacts, there are several planning applications for residential development pending consideration at Discovery Park, Sandwich (envisaged to provide circa 500 homes amongst other development - (Outline planning permission DOV/14/00058 - Outline application for the redevelopment of site to include: demolition of some existing buildings (and associated infrastructure); change of use of some existing buildings (from B1 to use classes: B2, B8, Sui Generis (Energy) and D1 uses); the provision of new commercial (use classes: A3/4, B1, B2, B8, C1, D1 and Sui Generis) and residential (use class: C3) development; associated site preparation/enabling, infrastructure, and</i>	The Applicant welcomes the additional information provided by DDC and draws attention to the cumulative analysis provided in response to 2SERT2 Application Document 9.123: Applicant’s Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] , which sets out, amongst other things, residual capacity of tourist accommodation assuming worst case peak construction worker cumulative demand for accommodation.

		landscaping works; and provision of car parking (with some matters reserved) (Granted); and subsequent residential reserved matters submissions including DOV/25/00460 – Reserved matters application for 32 dwellings (pending consideration); DOV/25/00459 – Reserved matters application for 356 dwellings (pending consideration); and DOV/23/01351 – Reserved matters application for 112 dwellings (granted), amongst other applications at the Discovery Park site). In respect of accommodation available for Tourists, within the Dover District, information is available to the Applicant at the following website: https://www.whitecliffscountry.org.uk/stay/allaccommodation . As raised in previous representations, it is not known if/when The Golf Open may be held in the District (Royal St George’s Golf Club hosted the 149th Open in 2021), however if this is within the construction period for the development then accommodation within Sandwich and the surrounding area would be particularly in demand. Large scale tourist accommodation is limited in this area, with Travelodge Sandwich containing 75 rooms. Other large scale accommodation is focussed in Dover (including Premier Inn Dover East (40 beds); Premier Inn Dover Central (126 beds); Travelodge Dover (108 beds); and Premier Inn Dover A20 (64 beds), however it should be noted this is also used by tourists to Dover Castle (and other local attractions), as well as visitors to the Port of Dover. Aside from this, smaller tourist accommodation, including hotels, B&B’s, boutique accommodation, holiday cottages etc is available across the District, focussed in the Towns of Sandwich, Deal and Dover (as well as in the surrounding villages and hamlets).	
3	Action 115	All parties (applicant and councils) to meet/liase to agree suitable wording of article 10 which all parties are content with, with an update on progress and any agreement submitted. <i>DDC met with representatives of the Applicant, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk District Council on 3rd February 2026 to discuss the wording of Article 10. It is understood that Suffolk County Council will submit suggested wording in line with the discussion had. If required, DDC will provide comments on this at deadline 5.</i>	Refer to Applicant’s response to 3GEN17 of Application Document 9.136: Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions .
4	Action 120	Councils and consultees to provide comments on the table setting out the relevant planning authorities and consultees. <i>A comment from DDC will be submitted at Deadline 5 as requested.</i>	See response to AP120 under the Applicant’s comments to DDC’s Responses to ExQ2 [REP5-187] above.
5	Action 131	Suggest alternative wording for requirement 3 including which above ground elements of the proposed development should be included. <i>Schedule 3, Requirements, 3 (Converter Station Design) requires the submission of details of the layout, scale and external appearance of the Kent Converter Station (to Thanet District Council), with consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England (given the views towards the site from Richborough</i>	Refer to Applicant’s response to 2GEN5 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant’s Response to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] and 3GEN10 of Application Document 9.136: Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions .

Roman Fort, shown in image 1 below). There is no provision for consultation with Dover District Council. The converter station would be visible in wider landscape views from the District (including from Richborough Roman Amphitheatre, to the southwest of Richborough Roman Fort) and given the position of the site in proximity to the railway line and River Stour, as well as the location of the proposed pylons, there is limited opportunity for landscaping/screening to be planted to soften views of the development. As such, DDC considers the design and appearance of the development will be important in reducing the visual impact from the southwest and would appreciate the opportunity to also be consulted on this.

Whilst this element of the proposals would fall within Thanet District Council's boundary, in line with their comments at ISH2, we would suggest Requirement 3 should also include provision for approval of the external appearance of the substations.



Image 1 – View from Richborough Roman Amphitheatre, looking north (the walls of Richborough Roman Fort are visible on the right-hand side of the image; the white building centrally located on the ridge line is the converter station at Richborough Energy Park) (image taken 5th October 2025 by R. Morgan (DDC)).

7. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP)

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Table 7.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Response [REP4-115].
- 7.1.2 Table 7.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Response [REP4-116].
- 7.1.3 Table 7.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Response [REP4-182].
- 7.1.4 Table 7.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Response [REP4-183].

Table 7.1 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-115]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Deadline 4 Written Representation of oral statement at ISH2 Cumulative Impact			
1	Cumulative Impact	A variety of different cumulative impacts have been discussed, and it has been briefly mentioned by one particular town about the potential cumulative impact on that town. East Suffolk has a number of market towns, and the market towns are very dependent upon their hinterland communities to survive. That hinterland is served by a lot of minor roads and by one main artery the A12. The A12 increasingly gets congested or blocked, and this is expected to happen more often, as each of the major energy projects start whilst others continuing to progress. For much of its length north of Wickham Market it is a single-track road. Any incident causes disruption and displacement of traffic and the latter has a massive impact upon the local road network within the hinterland of the market towns. The market towns are a fragile economy of local shops and small businesses. They have managed to maintain themselves as centres for shopping and social interaction, as well as centres for other basic activities such as pharmacies and doctors despite the current trend to online shopping. The towns are concerned that, particularly with the A12 now having to be improved at the same time as Sea Link commencing, their economic stability will be impacted as more traffic will lead to locals in the hinterland deciding to make fewer discretionary trips into the market towns. With Sea Link commencing in 2027, the extra traffic it generates on the A12 and the major roadworks from the A14 to A1152 from 2027 to 2029, there is a substantially increasing likelihood of traffic diverting off the A12 when disruption occur and the volume will be greater.	The Applicant has previously responded to points raised on the potential cumulative effects along the A12 within Table 9.1 of Application Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026].

	The market towns consider this to be a possible tipping point leading to them being seriously impacted. The impact most feared is the loss of the facilities that currently exist in these towns due to reduced local footfall and the interaction that occurs between the populace there, and the immediate hinterland. The towns are concerned this will be either an irreversible change or will take years for them to recover. When market towns lose shops, replacement is difficult when footfall is impacted by external factors and the original shops do not come back until footfall can be demonstrated to have improved. Other businesses in the towns are also impacted and start to fail due to reduced footfall, leading to a downward decline in attractiveness of them as centres to visit.

Table 7.2 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-116]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Deadline 4 Written Representation Cumulative Impact AIL routing over Benhall Bridge			
1	Cumulative Impact AIL routing over Benhall Bridge	ESCEP wishes to make a further written representation in additional oral presentation on cumulative impact. This written representation on cumulative impact is in relation to the transport of AIL’s along the B 1121 over the weight restricted Benhall bridge to allow entry to the proposed new access road and bridge over the River Fromus. The Applicant at ISH 2 confirmed that, if it proceeds with the temporary overbridge option, to span the Benhall bridge for all loads over 46 tonnes the temporary overbridge, or its component parts, will be transported, before and after, each placement to the compound it is proposing to the right of its access road across the Fromus valley to the north of the junction of the B1119 and B1121. The recent consultation on LionLink has revealed that the Applicant’s sister company, National Grid Ventures, also proposes to use the same route. If Sealink uses a temporary overbridge for AILs LionLink will do so and will also require the use of the same compound for storage of the temporary bridge with its construction planned to commence in 2028 and finishing in 2032, overlapping with the Sea Link construction period. Further in operation ESCEP understand that both projects will require access for further AIL loads post 2032 to maintain the operations at both the Sea Link and LionLink facilities. The Benhall Bridge and B1121 will thus be subject to considerably more AILs passages over the construction period for the two projects, 2027 to 2032, than that required and set out for the Sea Link project construction and also during the operation of the two facilities. In ESCEP’s view this imposes a substantially greater overall adverse impact, physically and medically, on the local community	The Applicant has previously provided responses to these considerations relating to Change 4 – Benhall Rail Bridge within Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 of Application Document 9.91 (A) Applicant’s Comments on Change Request (CR1) Relevant and Written Representations [REP4-089].

	of Benhall Green and Sternfield than hitherto indicated by Sea Link. It would also adversely impact essential services such as shops, medical/social facilities, access by road and rail to schools including the new Special Educational Needs (SEND) school in Saxmundham and those using Saxmundham station to travel towards, Ipswich London and Lowestoft. Many in the local community use the B1121 on a daily basis for access to essential services such as shops, medical/social facilities and schools in Saxmundham. Further many residents and some businesses of Benhall Green have their only vehicular, wheeling or pedestrian access along the B1121. They will endure numerous and prolonged road closures for AIL passage and transporting the temporary overbridge to and from storage area to the railway bridge and this will frequently cause severally restricted access to their properties, for any deliveries, home care and emergency services.	
	In addition, the greater and prolonged use of the B1121 with associated road closures with a temporary overbridge will force frequent and prolonged HGV and other traffic for both Sea Link and LionLink sites, as well as all other A12 traffic wishing to access Saxmundham, to divert either via the B1119 or the northern B1121/A12 junction and through the A1121/A1119 traffic light junction which is already operating with delays East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Written Representation Cumulative Impact AIL routing over Benhall Bridge 2 due to inadequate capacity for current traffic levels as mentioned in Suffolk County Council’s LIR (REP1-130 §11.121 and 11.122). The B1119 is along roads through residential areas with severe restrictions in width, street parking and narrow footways, cf Suffolk County Council’s LIR (REP1-130 §11.125c) bullet point 4). and it, and the B1121, through Kelsale, are along wheeling and pedestrian routes to schools cf Suffolk County Council’s LIR (REP1-130 §11.125c) bullet point 5).	The Applicant has previously provided responses to these considerations relating to Change 4 – Benhall Rail Bridge within Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 of Application Document 9.91 (A) Applicant's Comments on Change Request (CR1) Relevant and Written Representations [REP4-089].
	Network Rail (NR) in its response to ExQ1 (REP3-095) stated in relation to the railway that <i>‘Any such closure would be essential to ensure safe access for investigations of the bridge, installation of a mini-bridge (if it oversails the railway) and any required bridge strengthening works. Further, any activities within 10 meters of the NR boundary fence and over the railway corridor would necessitate possession of the railway lines, thus leading to their closure during the works. These closures would pose a clear detriment to safe and efficient running of the railway, as well as potential service impacts.’</i> In ESCEP’s opinion this statement would indicate that for each placement and installation of the temporary overbridge (referred to as a minibridge) closure/possession of the line would be essential during the period the temporary overbridge is in place over the current Benhall bridge as it is, in essence, oversailing the railway and activity over the railway corridor, and	The Applicant has and continues to liaise with Network Rail on the works at Benhall Rail Bridge. The Applicant understands that should the mini-bridge need to be lifted directly over the railway then a closure of that railway during installation would be required. However, if the mini-bridge is installed within the confines of the highway bridge, eliminating the risk of falling objects landing on the rail infrastructure, then a closure would not be required. Any method statement for undertaking the works to install, use and remove the bridge would be developed in full consultation with Network Rail to alleviate any concerns they may have. Any closures or track access required to inspect, survey or repair the bridge shall be agreed with Network Rail and shall be programmed to limit disruption to their customers.

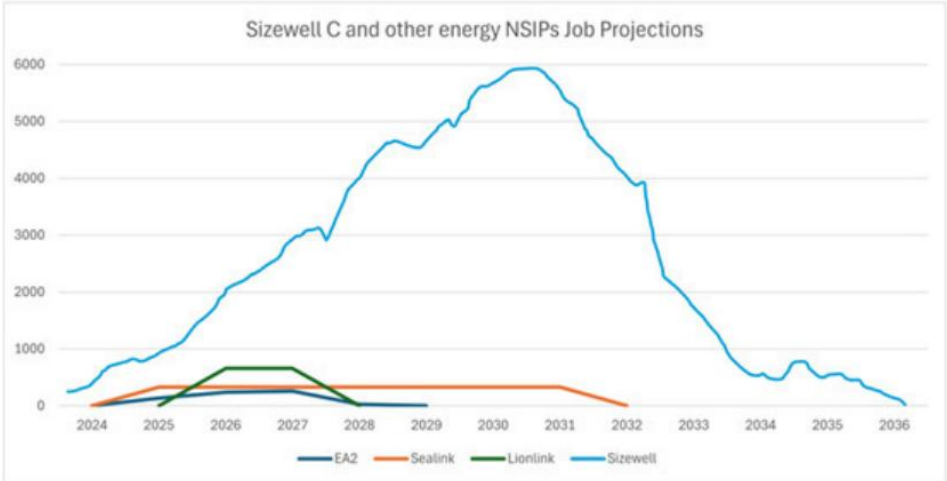
	the period of lifting and/or assembling/dismantling of the temporary bridge or its component parts and mounting such on a vehicle to transport to the storage compound as that is activity over the railway corridor or within 10m of the NR railway fence. It is clear NR has concerns about the impact of closures and possessions on rail services, be they passenger or freight services.	
Alternative rail route	Whilst the repair of the current bridge would almost inevitably require a longer period of closure than a single temporary overbridge use, frequent repeated overbridge operations would have a considerably greater impact on services, as well as the local population. There is no alternative rail route for passenger traffic south of Oulton Broad and lengthy bus replacement is the alternative currently used for closures. Access by freight traffic from north of Saxmundham would be complex with reversal of travel at Saxmundham and Lowestoft/Oulton Broad. Additionally, that line, its crossings and structures have not been upgraded to meet the requirements of Sizewell C freight traffic. ESCEP considers the Applicant should thus be required to either agree to undertake any, and all, work required to upgrade the Benhall Bridge to allow passage of all AIL loads over it without a temporary bridge or to seek an alternative route for AIL loads into the Sea Link and LionLink sites, for both construction and operation, avoiding passage over the Benhall Bridge. ESCEP acknowledges the latter is likely to result in a longer route into the site but it considers the ExA and Applicant must provide a solution that make all reasonable efforts to minimise substantive and prolonged adverse impact on the local community and those using key services in Saxmundham	The vast majority of construction traffic can use the Benhall Rail Bridge and the proposed construction access with no mitigation required at the bridge, as the vast majority of construction vehicles will be less than 46T. A limited number of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs) are required to access the Converter Station construction site and should these vehicles be routed over the Benhall Rail Bridge mitigation would be required for these limited movements. The Applicant has produced the Application Document 9.112 (A) Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4-101], that outlines the options under consideration and identifies that remedial works to the bridge is the preferred option.

Table 7.3 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-182]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Deadline 4 Representation Accommodation, footfall and the tourist economy			
n/a	Accommodation, footfall and the tourist economy	ESCEP is a partnership of over 30 East Suffolk parish and town councils lead by a Steering Group. ESCEP seeks share knowledge and understanding to assist its members in preparing responses to NSIP applications. Sea Link and the other East Suffolk NSIPs (consented and planned) will impact upon housing supply, the housing rental market, the holiday letting business and the tourist economy. Sea Link anticipates more than 300 workers to undertake the project. These are in addition to the 8,000 or more anticipated for the consented Sizewell C (SZC). LionLink anticipates another 650.	The Applicant has provided a construction workforce profile for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme and cumulative schemes, mapping the peaks and troughs of workforce requirements across the construction period in response to the Examining Authority’s Second Written Question (2SERT3). The Applicant has undertaken a cumulative construction workforce assessment drawing on available information for relevant projects including Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm, LionLink Interconnector and Norwich to Tilbury Transmission Project. In the absence of detailed phasing information for all schemes, a precautionary approach has been adopted which assumes that the

This projected accommodation need is so great that East Suffolk District Council (ESDC) is currently seeking comment on a Draft Major Energy Projects Workers' Accommodation Planning Position Statement (DMEPWAPPS). Draft Major Energy Projects Workers' Accommodation Planning Position Statement - East Suffolk Council, Strategic Planning Consultations. The paper was published in January 2026 and has been drafted to manage and minimise anticipated impacts to communities and the tourism sector which are being created by the need to house this large number of workers in East Suffolk.

Since its publication LionLink has indicated that its proposed construction period is 2028 – 2032 which is coincident with Sea Link from 2028 onwards. The graph of accommodation with time in §1.5 of the ESDC document reproduced below, on which we presume ESDC has performed its assessment, does not reflect this. It suggests, due to apparent erroneous input on project dates for both Sealink and LionLink, that there will not be a sudden rise in need for accommodation when Sealink and LionLink commence as they are shown as already at peak demand.



If the graph is corrected then the overall need for additional worker accommodation from mid 2027 to mid 2028 is a rise from 3000 to c.5600 due to both Sea link/LionLink and Sizewell C demand rather than 4000 to 5000 due wholly to Sizewell C.

We believe the document thus does not adequately consider the severe near-term issues, particularly in the local private sector market for local workers and tourists, that will develop through 2027 and 2028. It primarily looks at options possible over the 4 years to the peak need for Sizewell C in 2030 when there is time for substantial increase in caravan sites and some local private housing in terms of HMOs which it suggests may possibly fulfil demand. Notwithstanding the above however we note the DMEPWAPPS makes the following statements:

East Suffolk – and especially the area around Sizewell – is largely rural, with tourism a major part of the economy. Finding appropriate accommodation for the thousands of workers with suitable amenities to meet their needs is a major issue. Planning matters associated with provision for the increased workforce include the risk of:

peak construction workforce for each project occurs concurrently. On this basis, October 2028 represents the theoretical point of peak cumulative demand.

Under this worst-case scenario, the cumulative peak construction workforce across all schemes is estimated at 12,292 workers, of which approximately 8,728 are assumed to be non-home-based (NHB). Of these, around 3,915 workers are estimated to require accommodation within the private rented sector (PRS) or serviced visitor accommodation. The contribution of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme to this cumulative demand is relatively small: its peak workforce is estimated at 327 workers, with 229 assumed to be NHB workers requiring accommodation. Importantly, the peak requirement lasts for only a single day, with the average daily requirement across 2028 estimated to be approximately 115 workers. The concerns raised by ESCEP regarding potential pressures on accommodation, tourism and local communities are acknowledged. However, the Applicant's assessment indicates that the scale of demand associated with the Suffolk Onshore Scheme is relatively modest and is unlikely to lead to material adverse impacts in isolation.

The accommodation supply assessment considers both serviced visitor accommodation and the PRS within a 60-minute drive-time catchment. According to CoStar data, within this area there are approximately 7,071 rooms in serviced visitor accommodation establishments. Adopting a precautionary approach to include only "economy" category hotels reduces this to 2,206 rooms, and after accounting for seasonal occupancy (assuming only 20% availability during October) the effective supply is estimated at 441 rooms. In addition, based on Data from the Census 2021 there are approximately 9,742 private rented properties that could potentially be available to construction workers after accounting for vacancy rates. This results in a total accommodation inventory of approximately 10,183 units across the PRS and serviced visitor accommodation sectors. When compared against the worst-case cumulative demand of 3,915 workers, this leaves an estimated residual capacity of 6,268 units, equating to approximately 61.6% of total capacity remaining within the study area.

It is also important to note that the assessment does not account for several additional accommodation sources that may be utilised by construction workers, including serviced apartments, short-term rental platforms, caravan parks, or spare rooms within owner-occupied homes. Experience from comparable projects such as Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station indicates that such "latent accommodation" can represent a meaningful proportion of worker housing (for example, approximately 10% of NHB workers at Hinkley Point C have used spare rooms within existing homes). The existence of these additional accommodation sources suggests that the cumulative assessment may underestimate the overall accommodation stock available to construction workers.

- Damage to the tourist sector, both directly (from the loss of tourism accommodation stock given over to energy sector workers) and indirectly (through increased traffic levels, reduction in tranquillity, potentially reduced availability of cafés and restaurants etc).
- A reduction in the availability of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation for local residents or other workers, and increased prices for such accommodation.
- Unauthorised accommodation, such as conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) without planning permission and/or a licence (if either or both are required).

The paper goes on to note that the SZC accommodation strategy includes: 800 workers finding accommodation within the tourist sector; 1,200 in the private rented sector; and 880 workers buying homes. It goes on to note that if the level of skew towards the private rental sector that occurred at Bridgwater [Hinckley Point C] occurred in Leiston, it is clear extreme pressures would be placed on the existing community and housing market. There is some early evidence of pressures occurring in East Suffolk, with some locals expressing that they are being ‘priced out’ of the Leiston market and the Council’s Housing team facing increased difficulties in finding suitable accommodation for those needing social housing...The DMEPWAPPS acknowledges that ...As the majority of the accommodation is therefore considered out of the affordability range of most of the construction workforce, there is (and will be) increased pressures on the more affordable types of tourist accommodation ...and...The Council therefore recognises that there are tensions. In some cases, however, the harms caused by inadequate caravan etc. provision may be more significant than the impacts of provision of accommodation. These harms could include workers driving longer distances, adding to congestion, causing further pressure on permanent accommodation in the area, through outcompeting locals (on price) for houses/rooms and potentially more unauthorised caravan etc. sites appearing.

One of these points is confirmed by a brief search of planning applications including the word “HMO” which has found 14 applications for Change of Use to HMO since July 2024 (excluding withdrawn applications), with around 100 units resulting. These are mainly in Leiston and Lowestoft, and do not include any caravan sites etc. This demonstrates a rise in the number of HMOs in East Suffolk and it is of note that conversions result in the loss of residential/social use (one was a care home) and are the cause of additional pressure on inspection and regulation resources for the councils.

We make reference to these ESDC statements because they highlight that the accommodation environment into which a Sea Link and Lionlink workforce is to be introduced is already stressed. Hence:

The Applicant therefore considers that while pressures on the tourism sector and housing market are recognised as important considerations, the analysis provided in response to 2SERT3 indicates that the contribution of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme to cumulative accommodation demand is limited relative to other major projects, particularly Sizewell C, and that substantial overall accommodation capacity remains within the 60 minute drive time catchment. Nevertheless, in recognition of stakeholder concerns and to reduce potential visitor accommodation constraints in the East Suffolk coastal areas, the Applicant is committed to a proportionate and responsive approach.

Through commitments SE04 and SE05 of the REAC submitted at Deadline 6 the Applicant will maintain ongoing engagement with tourism stakeholders and monitor worker accommodation patterns.

• Any Sea Link and LionLink workers using the private rental sector will place even more pressures on pricing as they reduce supply for local people.

• Accommodation for construction workers will often house multiple tenants who will usually have their own car – and so place pressure on parking spaces for local residents and cause traffic congestion.

• Any use of tourist accommodation will reduce the numbers of visitors to the East Suffolk coast whose economic viability is in large part dependent upon a thriving tourism sector.

As ESDC notes, there is already evidence of locals being “priced-out” of the area. Data on tourism accommodation being used by NSIP workers is to date hard to source, but ESDC town footfall data¹ has already tracked a decline in visitors to the two key tourist destinations on the East Suffolk Coast during the height of the summer:

• Aldeburgh August footfall figures: 2023: 135,974; 2024: 92,169; 2025: 76,880.

• Southwold August footfall figures: 2023: 174,345; 2024: 106,099; 2025: 98,776.

This corresponds to information already provided in ESCEP’s Deadline 3 submission that anecdotal feedback from a sample of High Street retailers and businesses local to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme Boundary, is that takings this year are as much as 30% down (there have been a number of shop closures) with holiday bookings also down by 24%. ESCEP also previously noted that research produced by Destination Research Ltd, using the Cambridge Model for East Suffolk’s visitor economy, showed that the tourist economy in 2024 was valued at £743m and that it supported 15,500 jobs. Even a modest decline would translate into significant economic and employment losses concentrated in frontline sectors. A 5% decline would result in £37.1m lost value and 775 job losses - and so would far outstrip any economic benefits from the Sea Link project.

The above concerns run parallel to the expectation that the attraction of East Suffolk as a tourist destination will decline because what should be a rural coastal area, which is a Heritage Coast and is one of the country’s 46 Natural Landscapes, is being industrialised by the construction of a series of NSIPs whose economic benefits will not replicate the tourism industry it will supplant. Heavy traffic, large industrial sites and reduced availability of visitor accommodation will not only jeopardise tourist sector but will impose further stresses on the well-being of residents and business-owners across the region (see section on Health and Well-being).

Table 7.4 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership (ESCEP) Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-183]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments

		Despite the questionable Needs Case for Sea Link, the headlong scramble to hit a completely arbitrary target date by which to decarbonise the grid seems inexplicably to have resulted in escalation of the project to National Priority status. The consequent critical urgency to rush the project through the DCO process – come what may and at any cost – means that the importance of reducing environmental and socioeconomic cumulative adverse impacts and securing the best mitigation and project design seems to have fallen by the wayside. This disregard cannot however be extended to how East Suffolk’s overwhelming infrastructure burden is currently impacting the local community’s Human Health and Public Safety because these impacts are protected by Planning Policy: From revised NPS EN-1 4.1.7 Where this NPS or the relevant technology specific NPSs require an applicant to mitigate a particular impact as far as possible, but the Secretary of State considers that there would still be residual adverse effects after the implementation of such mitigation measures, the Secretary of State should weigh those residual effects against the benefits of the proposed development. For projects which qualify as CNP Infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy, in all but the most exceptional cases. This presumption, however, does not apply to residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, or irreplaceable habitats. Further, the same exception applies to this presumption for residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference offshore to navigation, or onshore to flood and coastal erosion risk.	Please refer to Applicant’s response to ExQ3 3GEN1 and 3GEN2 within Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6 on the Proposed Project meets the policy test with regards to mitigation hierarchy and Critical National Priority.
n/a	Health & Wellbeing	The following text has been adapted from comments delivered on behalf of ESCEP by Dr Charlotte Fox, MA (Oxon), MBBS, MRCP, FRCA, MA (KCL), during Part 4 of Day 2 of Issue Specific Hearing 2 when addressing the Human Impact of East Suffolk’s infrastructure duress: <i>“We’ve talked a lot over the last couple of days about planning implications with regard to environmental and animal populations, but we’re missing the elephant in the room here in relation to what is happening to the human population in East Suffolk.</i> <i>Health and Wellbeing cannot be viewed exclusively through a planning lens or reduced to a simple discussion about working hours, noise and light pollution or traffic disruption. Indeed, Mental Health and Wellbeing is a highly complex issue that relates to where people sit on the Mental health continuum and it is well recognised that the overriding factor pushing people towards the “wrong” end of the Mental Health Continuum is stress. Worse than that, stress not only impacts people’s mental health and wellbeing, but also impacts their physical health and ability to “thrive” as well</i>	The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B, as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No

and it is clearly evident that the stress being caused by concurrent development of so much major infrastructure in East Suffolk is already impacting both the physical and mental health of the local community.

It is of course very difficult to quantify Health and Wellbeing, but that does not mean that it can be ignored. Since the Applicant has only carried out an extremely narrow assessment, a specialised mental health and wellbeing assessment that properly addresses what is happening to the local community in the face of such unprecedented cumulative impacts also needs to be urgently carried out.

The Applicant has consistently played down the predicted impacts of Sea Link on Health and Wellbeing and appears to be looking at all the impacts of the project in isolation rather than looking at them in the context of East Suffolk's extreme cumulative impacts. The Applicant has cited health and wellbeing document APP-058 as rebuttal of relevant representation challenges to that very same document – as if to say the Applicant is right now because it was right in the first place....

At what point does the human impact of East Suffolk's infrastructure burden progress to health issues that reduce life expectancy? Anecdotally, several local people have suffered strokes recently that might possibly be related to infrastructure strain and there have already been a couple of suicides that have been attributed in part to infrastructure imposition: how do we stop more events like this from happening?

Working hours, local disruption and noise and light pollution obviously need to be fully addressed, but the only thing that will really help reduce stress levels and protect people's mental and physical health is to address the cumulative impacts of the disproportionate and unreasonable infrastructure burden being faced by the local community at the moment. Infrastructure development should not be allowed to proceed at the expense of the health and wellbeing of the local community and if more and more major infrastructure continues to be imposed right next to the local population, we risk paying too high a human price tag.

Can the Applicant reassure us that it will address this important issue in the context of all the other NSIPs being proposed for development in this tiny area and acknowledge that more needs to be done to reduce the effects of adverse impacts on local people and that if a tolerable balance cannot be achieved, then a less harmful site for development of Sea Link will have to be identified?"

1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see **Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order** submitted at Deadline 6).

Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in **Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]**. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment.

The Applicant recognises the cumulative infrastructure context in East Suffolk and the concerns raised about stress, mental health and wellbeing. Health and wellbeing has not been approached narrowly or solely. **Application Document 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing [APP-058]** of the Environmental Statement includes an assessment which considers construction-related stressors such as noise, vibration, traffic, visual effects and community disruption, both alone and cumulatively where required by the EIA Regulations.

Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within **Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures in recognition of the LPA and community's concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in **Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions** in response to 3HW3.

The extreme impacts of all the major infrastructure imposition on the local community's Health and Wellbeing in East Suffolk should not be – and indeed cannot afford to be – underestimated or ignored and ESCEP would like to see the situation properly and urgently addressed.

8. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from East Suffolk Council

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1
- Table 8.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Response – ISH2 Post Hearing Submission [REP4-117].
- 8.1.2
- Table 8.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Response – CAH1 Post Hearing Submission [REP4-118].
- 8.1.3
- Table 8.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Response – Response to ISH2 Action Points [REP4-119].
- 8.1.4
- Table 8.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Response – Response to ISH2 Supplementary Agenda Additional Questions [REP4-120].
- 8.1.5
- Table 8.5 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 – Comments on the Applicant’s Deadline 3 Submissions [REP4-184]
- 8.1.6
- Table 8.6 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Suffolk Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-172].
- 8.1.7
- The Applicant’s has responded to East Suffolk Council Deadline 5 Response [**REP5-189**] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 8.1 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-117]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
East Suffolk Council’s Post-Hearing Submission in relation to Issue Specific Hearing 2 dealing with environmental matters, 28-30 January 2026			
3. Ecology and Biodiversity			
3.1	<i>Kent landfall, including: • Implications of previous cable works for impact assessment and mitigation • Impacts on the intertidal area • Access via the hoverport</i>	No comment.	No response required.
3.2	<i>Suffolk landfall, including:</i> Disturbance effects, emissions and mitigation and Unexploded ordnance	Disturbance effects, emissions and mitigation No comment. Unexploded ordnance ESC notes the detailed UXO information provided by the Applicant in its response to ExQ1 at Deadline 3 ([REP3-070] Appendix K Detailed Unexploded Ordnance Risk Assessments – Friston 1, Chapter 12 (Proposed Risk Mitigation Strategy)), which includes recommendations for pre-construction investigations for UXO. REAC Commitment GG39 [REP3-078] secures the implementation of mitigation measures in accordance with these recommendations. As noted by the ExA during ISH2, these risk assessments do not make any reference to designated sites and, as such, ESC queries how the protocols for undertaking pre-construction investigations and dealing with any UXO in ecologically sensitive areas (including designated sites) will be secured. This includes:	They will be secured through SSSI Assent as the areas for UXO survey in Suffolk are within or adjacent to Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI. UXO surveys will not be undertaken using ‘machinery’ but will either be by drone or by manual non-invasive walkover. Disturbance will be avoided by timing works to less sensitive periods through agreement with Natural England (through SSSI Assent) and RSPB (as landowner). This has been done previously, and autumn has been agreed as being a suitable period. If UXO clearance is necessary, the activity would be undertaken in accordance with approved industry practices for removal and disposal/waste management of ordnance, particularly the use of low deflagration methods during clearance. These considerations will also be included in any consents/permits (e.g. SSSI Assent / HRA) and associated impact assessments, which would include disposal locations and methods.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• how damage to these sites from machinery access during UXO surveys will be avoided or mitigated; • how disturbance of species for which the sites are designated during UXO surveys will be avoided or mitigated; and • how UXO which are found during surveys and require removal will be dealt with, including in principle protocols for onsite disposal and removal for disposal offsite. ESC considers that the above points must be acknowledged in the REAC and Outline Code of Construction Practice, including overarching controls on the timing of the works to avoid the most sensitive times of year, with the details for addressing them approved and controlled as part of the Code of Construction Practice for the project. Failure to adequately do this could result in damage or disturbance impacts on the Sandlings SPA and the LeistonAldeburgh SSSI either during UXO surveys or disposal/removal of UXO prior to construction, which would be a significant impact contrary to NPS EN-1 paragraphs 5.4.43 and 5.4.44 and Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP10.1. For reference, Appendix A to this submission contains the policy text and supporting information. ESC understands from the Applicant's oral response in respect of this matter at ISH2 that it intends to review the REAC in light of the concerns raised. ESC will review any such amendments to the REAC and Outline Code of Construction Practice once submitted into the Examination and will provide comment as necessary.	
3.3	<i>Update on intrusive ground investigations</i>	No comment.	No response required
3.4	<i>Effects on protected species such as bats, dormice and reptiles</i>	Hazel dormice ESC noted that the current versions of the REAC [REP3-078] and Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('OLEMP') [CR1-045] do not include adequate measures to mitigate habitat fragmentation impacts on dormice, should pre-construction surveys confirm the presence of this species. ESC does not consider that the mitigation measures already identified to address habitat fragmentation for bats are likely to be completely successful for dormice as they involve non-vegetated structures. ESC notes the Applicant's commitment to identify and include further appropriate measures, such as temporary dormouse bridges, and will provide further comment on this matter once updated submissions have been submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 4. ESC reiterated its disagreement with the Applicant's assertion in Paragraph 2.9.192 of Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP1-047] that there would be a moderate beneficial long-term	The oLEMP was updated for Deadline 4 to include further measures for dormice and a commitment to update dormouse surveys pre-construction.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		(significant) impact on dormice due to habitat creation. ESC considers that the proposed landscape planting cannot be claimed to act as a benefit to a species which is claimed by the Applicant to be absent. ESC also highlighted that the bulk of the proposed new planting is at the converter station location, which is not the same location as where the potential dormouse nest was found during surveys for the project. The actual location was in fact located further east along the proposed cable route. This proposed new planting will therefore have no discernible benefit for any dormouse population further east along the cable route and, as a consequence, the Applicant's assertion is rather difficult to understand. ESC also wishes to note that the Applicant used the term 'hypothetical dormouse' in the discussion on this agenda item at ISH2. ESC considers that the use of the term 'hypothetical' emphasised and underlined the inadequacy of the survey effort that has been undertaken for this species by the Applicant. As set out in Section 7.2.2 of ESC's LIR [REP1-128], the finding of the potential dormouse nest which has triggered the more detailed consideration of this matter came at the end of the survey season at a location where insufficient survey work had been employed for this species. Had the Applicant undertaken the survey in accordance with the published best practice guidance which was in place at the time, it may have been able to properly and correctly establish the presence (or otherwise) of this European protected species within the Order Limits and therefore have identified appropriate mitigation measures before the DCO application was submitted for examination. ESC maintains its position that there has been insufficient survey coverage in relation to Hazel Dormice, which in turn affects the subsequent assessment of impacts and design of mitigation measures. ESC notes the Applicant's commitment to updating the OLEMP at Deadline 4 to include a commitment to conducting pre-construction surveys for this species. ESC looks forward to reviewing the updated document and commenting on it as necessary.	
		Bats ESC maintains its position as set out in Paragraph 7.2.5.6 of its LIR [REP1-128] and Ref 8.03 of its PADSS [REP3-080] regarding its concerns as to the practicality and technical feasibility of mitigating every hedgerow crossing as though the hedgerow was important for bats, as secured by REAC Action B36 [REP3-078]. ESC disagrees with the Applicant's assertion, as set out in the Applicant's comments on ESC's LIR [REP2-027] references 7.2.5.5 and 7.2.5.6, that there is sufficient confidence that the necessary mitigation measures can be achieved as currently suggested. ESC questions the Applicant's ability to implement the mitigation that the Applicant is suggesting could be provided across the entire length of the cable route during the construction phase. As explained, from ESC's experience with other projects in the locality, trying to close temporarily even some gaps created in	ESC's objection is predicated on an assumption that the Applicant will not comply with its mitigation commitments, which the Applicant does not consider to be a reasonable assumption. As noted in the oLEMP submitted at Deadline 4 (and by SEAS in their Relevant Representations) Anglian Water have successfully used Heras fencing covered in camouflage netting infilled completely across gaps to maintain bat flight through gaps in hedges. The most suitable method may vary by location and width of the gap to be closed but given the relative ease of placement and movement, herras fencing with camouflage netting or other shade mesh will be the default method. Since this is relatively easy to introduce and herras fencing and camouflage netting are easy to source, there is no reason to conclude that closing hedgerow gaps to a maximum 10 m (to allow the haul road to remain open) could not be achieved. It should be noted that where the haul road is left

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		hedgerows along a cable route using hazel hurdles/temporary fencing every night creates significant complications and issues for the implementation of the mitigation measures, including: • safely securing temporary fencing in position given that its temporary nature across the cable corridor makes using permanent fixing points not possible; • safely removing and reinstating it in place repeatedly during construction (every morning and evening); • transporting (a greater number of machinery movements are required to do this) and storing the temporary fencing during the day when it is not in use (greater use of space in construction compounds is required to accommodate it); • Contractors and sub-contractors remembering to reinstate the temporary closure at the end of the day; and • Daily Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) checks to ensure that fencing has been reinstated (and get it reinstated if it hasn't been) adding a significant burden to ECoW workload. As a result, ESC has concerns as to the ability of the Applicant to actually deliver the temporary mitigation. In addition, without sufficient survey information (for the reasons set out in Ref. 8.03 of ESC's PADSS [REP3-080]), it is impossible for ESC as the responsible local planning authority ('LPA') to know which hedgerows are actually important for bats and therefore be able to determine whether any future variations in mitigation for specific crossing points may be appropriate. Whilst the Applicant's survey methodology did not target every hedgerow for bat activity surveys, the deficiencies identified mean that there are whole sections of the cable route that have been subject to insufficient bat survey effort. ESC also disagrees with the Applicant's claim that adequate consideration has been given to avoiding important hedgerow removal through the use of trenchless construction techniques to avoid the need for hedgerow loss, as set out in the Applicant's Comments on ESC's LIR [REP2-027] reference 7.2.5.4. Paragraph 2.9.56 of Chapter 2 of the Environmental Statement ('ES') on Ecology and Biodiversity [REP1-047] states that measures other than open cut trenching would be "impractical due to the need for large construction compounds at either side of any ditch or hedge to send and receive the drill, and the fact that such crossing methods would take significantly longer (given the number of hedges to be traversed) than the open cut trenching method and therefore extend the overall construction programme and duration of disruption." It logically follows from this, therefore, that ecological considerations do not appear to have formed part of the decision not to use other hedgerow crossing methods, the	open the fencing will only require movement when the trenching operation is actually taking place through the hedgerow, which is likely to be accomplished in days. Herras fencing can be secured temporarily with concrete footings and is routinely used for temporary fencing. With regard to ecological considerations not having formed part of the decision not to use other hedgerow crossing methods, and the Applicant thinking only of matters of land use and project programme, the Applicant's reference to 'duration of disruption' was a reference to ecological disturbance and disruption i.e. extending the duration of works around hedgerows. Therefore, ecological considerations were a factor.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Applicant thinking only of matters of land use and project programme. Failure to properly consider measures which would avoid direct impacts on hedgerows is contrary to Paragraph 5.4.43 of NPS EN-1 which requires that, as a general principle, developments should apply the mitigation hierarchy, of which avoidance is the first step.	
3.5	<i>Impacts on trees, including: Development Consent Order controls on tree felling Implications of the proposed attenuation ponds shown on sheet 1 of 7 of the Indicative General Arrangement Plans [CR1-024] to the south side of the access and the River Fromus bridge proposal, on trees T875S and G874S, Seasonality in cutting of trees</i>	Development Consent Order controls on tree felling ESC provided anecdotal evidence during ISH2 in response to a query raised by the ExA regarding whether equivalent powers to Article 51 ('Feeling or lopping') of the dDCO [REP3- 006] have been used to fell veteran or ancient trees as part of the Sizewell C or Bramford to Twinstead DCO projects. ESC noted and reported that veteran trees were felled as part of the Sizewell C project to facilitate construction of the Two Village Bypass. The key difference in this case is that it was known at Examination stage that those veteran trees would need to be felled, and so this formed part of the assessment of effects in the Environmental Statement and was considered as part of, and understood in, the Secretary of State decision-making process. Alternatives were considered, including an alternative route for the bypass which would have passed through an ancient woodland, and so it was decided that felling a smaller number of veteran trees was the preferable option to felling the area of ancient woodland. The distinction in Sea Link's case is that the Applicant's intention is to retain all veteran or ancient trees, and hence any such felling has not been considered in the EIA. As currently worded, Article 51 of the dDCO is not prescribed in any way so as to prevent it from being used for felling or lopping veteran or ancient trees and provides no additional protections over and above any other trees. As such, ESC is concerned that Article 51, as currently worded, could be used to fell veteran or ancient trees which has not been subject to EIA assessment in the project. ESC would welcome amendments to Article 51 such that it does not apply to such veteran trees that have been identified and understood to be preserved in situ for the project. Implications of the proposed attenuation ponds shown on sheet 1 of 7 of the Indicative General Arrangement Plans (page 4 of the PDF) [CR1-024] to the south side of the access and the River Fromus bridge proposal, on trees T875S and G874S ESC is satisfied that the attenuation basin shown in vicinity of T875S (veteran Oak), T874S (understorey scrub), and T871S (veteran Horse Chestnut) lies outside the root protection areas (RPAs) of these trees. Therefore, provided all described tree protection measures are maintained in place, the basin should not cause undue harm to the trees. ESC does, however, wish to highlight that any interconnecting pipes will need to be installed using no-dig installation methods as prescribed in BS5837:2012 where they need to cross RPAs of retained trees, and suggests	Development Consent Order controls on tree felling The Applicant has (as confirmed in its response to 2ExQ 2GEN14) updated commitments A02 and A05 within the latest version of Application Document 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-235] to account for any safety works proposed to veteran and ancient trees. Implications of the proposed attenuation ponds shown on sheet 1 of 7 of the Indicative General Arrangement Plans (page 4 of the PDF) [CR1-024] to the south side of the access and the River Fromus bridge proposal, on trees T875S and G874S The Applicant does not believe that an additional commitment relating to the final alignment and installation method of the outfall pipe is necessary as the final location and installation method will be detailed within an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) required pursuant to Requirement 8, Schedule 3 and this document will require approval by the relevant planning authority prior to the commencement of any part of the authorised development. This gives control to the planning authorities over the final alignment and installation methodology for the outfall pipe. In addition commitment A07 within Application Document 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-235] commits the final alignment of the outfall pipe to avoid the RPA of T876S*. Seasonality in cutting of trees No response required.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		that this is secured as a commitment in the Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP') [AS-127]. Seasonality in cutting of trees No comment.	
3.6	<i>Securing biodiversity net gain</i>	ESC maintains its view, as set out in Ref. 8.07 of its PADSS [REP3-080], that more information is needed on how the project is going to achieve its minimum 10% BNG commitment in Suffolk. ESC has serious concerns as to how it is proposed to be secured and monitored in line with National Grid's commitment to manage and maintain BNG for at least 30 years. ESC understands from the Applicant's oral representation at ISH2 that it intends to secure 10% BNG through a Section 106 unilateral undertaking. ESC noted that its preference is for an agreement as opposed to a unilateral undertaking, particularly due to the need for it to establish monitoring provision of the BNG as part of any obligation. It is surprising, however, that this was the first mention by the Applicant of a legal agreement to secure BNG. The Applicant almost seems to be working on a "do nothing" basis unless asked a question by the ExA. The Applicant should be required to prepare a draft of the agreement at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that ESC is afforded the opportunity and sufficient time to review and comment upon the draft and inform the Applicant and Examining Authority of its views regarding the adequacy of the draft in securing BNG. It is essential that this is progressed expediently to ensure the obligation put forward is adequate, and to avoid undue delays in the delivery of BNG for this development.	The Applicant acknowledges ESCs concerns regarding the use of a UU to secure BNG delivery. While the Applicant understands ESCs preference for a bilateral s106 agreement, the Applicant believes that it is not necessary to enter into a bilateral s106 agreement as BNG is being voluntarily offered to the LPAs. A UU can effectively meet the project's requirements while allowing for a streamlined approach to securing the necessary commitments. A S106 UU is enforceable by the local planning authorities in the same way as a bilateral agreement. The draft UU has been shared with LPAs on 10 April 2026 and explicitly outlines the obligations related to BNG including, but not limited to, habitat units to be delivered, location of these habitats and management and monitoring provisions. The Applicant is committed to ensuring that the UU includes clear and enforceable terms that address ESCs concerns about monitoring and long-term management and once again highlight the Applicants commitment to delivering voluntary BNG as part of the Proposed Project. The Applicant recognises that monitoring and reporting mechanisms are crucial for ensuring the successful delivery of BNG. Therefore, the UU has provided provisions for financial contributions to cover the costs associated with monitoring and enforcement. This will ensure that all relevant local authorities have the resources to oversee compliance and address and potential shortfall in habitat delivery. Furthermore, the Applicant understands that the timing of the UU submission is critical for ESC, and other local authorities, so has been shared to enable time for review and for feedback to be received Ahead of Deadline 7
4. Ornithology			
4.1	<i>Construction impacts, including:</i> • <i>Works affecting designated sites in the breeding season</i> • <i>Works in Pegwell Bay</i> • <i>Impacts and mitigation for functionally linked land</i> • <i>Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on Red-Throated Diver of the Outer</i>	Works affecting designated sites in the breeding season No comment. Works in Pegwell Bay No comment. Impacts and mitigation for functionally linked land No comment. Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on Red-Throated Diver of the Outer Thames Estuary and implications for habitats regulations assessment No comment.	No response required

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	<i>Thames Estuary and implications for habitats regulations assessment</i>		
4.2	<i>Operation and maintenance impacts, including: • Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on Red Throated Diver of the Outer Thames Estuary and implications for habitats regulations assessment</i>	No comment.	No response required
4.3	<i>Collision risk and mitigation</i>	No comment.	No response required
4.4	<i>Questions for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature regarding The East Atlantic Flyway</i>	No comment.	No response required
5. Benthic Ecology (with questions included for Natural England)		No comment	No response required
6. Fish and shellfish		No comment	No response required
7. Marine mammals		No comment	No response required
8 Marine physical environment			
8.1	<i>Coastal erosion, including: • National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping (NCERM2) • Coralline Crag, Suffolk Horizontal Directional Drilling exit location and Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments provisions Pegwell Bay morphological change and depth of cable burial</i>	National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping (NCERM2) ESC understands from the Applicant's oral representation at ISH2 that NCERM2 data has been used to inform the Environmental Statement for the project – this clarification is welcomed by ESC. ESC noted that it considers that Figure 6.4.4.1.13 – Suffolk Estimated Future Erosion [REP3-024] (Chapter 1 Physical Environment - Figures) is unclear, providing no detail as to the data that has been used to establish the 'estimated average erosion'. The figure is also not presented at an appropriate scale to be a helpful depiction of future coastal erosion. Furthermore, the figure gives no indication of the rate of vertical erosion, which is a key factor which must be understood to provide reassurance that the proposed cable burial Page 11 of 34 • Pegwell Bay morphological change and depth of cable burial depth would be sufficient to prevent cable exposure for the duration of the lifetime of the project. ESC notes the Applicant's intention to submit a technical note at Deadline 4 to provide further clarity on concerns raised on this matter by Interested Parties, and ESC will review and comment, as necessary, on this note once submitted. Coralline Crag, Suffolk Horizontal Directional Drilling exit location and Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments provisions	Figure 6.4.4.1.13 was prepared using the NCERM2 data and shows an envelope of the area at risk of erosion for 2105 based on the RCP 8.5 high emissions climate change scenario (95th percentile) assuming no active intervention. This therefore represents a worst-case scenario. The NCERM2 dataset has been prepared by the Environment Agency to assist with planning issues but does not provide complete coverage of coastline. The NCERM2 data has therefore been extrapolated from the nearest section of coastline where data is available, approximately 1.7 km to the north of landfall site, a more rapidly eroding section of coastline which therefore provides a higher estimated rate of erosion. The NCERM2 dataset does not provide a rate of vertical erosion which would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to estimate and would be subject to significant uncertainty relating to the physical processes and future management practices. It is likely that future coastal erosion has not been assessed by NCERM2 at the precise location of the cable landfall due to the presence of the Coralline Crag outcrops which are known to provide a sheltering effect by reducing wave activity at the coast thus reducing the rate of erosion relative to adjacent sections of

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		No comment. Pegwell Bay morphological change and depth of cable burial No comment.	coastline. This interaction with natural coastal processes makes it very difficult to provide reliable estimates of future erosion. Due to the recognised uncertainties associated with providing reliable estimates of future coastal erosion, the Applicant has adopted a pragmatic approach involving a commitment (MPE08) to monitor intertidal and subtidal sections of the cable route over the operational life of the Proposed Project. MPE08 commits the Applicant “to consider the potential for coastal erosion over the lifetime of the project in line with the Final Offshore Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).” Results from analysis of the data will therefore be used to identify any changes in burial depths due to actual, observed erosion.
8.2	<i>Pegwell Bay contamination risk</i>	No comment.	No response required
8.3	<i>Discharges to the marine environment (including dredge and liquid discharges)</i>	No comment.	No response required
Landscape and visual			
9.1	<i>Ambition for landscape vision and legacy</i>	ESC refers to the detailed comments on the Applicant's landscape vision provided in its response to ExQ1 Question 1LVIA1. [REP3-085].	Response acknowledged.
9.2	<i>Assessment of effects on landscape character in Kent and Suffolk</i>	ESC is not in dispute with the Applicant as to the assessment of effects on landscape character in Suffolk.	Response acknowledged.
9.3	<i>Cumulative landscape and visual impact assessments including on the National Landscape</i>	ESC accepts the Applicant's assessment that significant cumulative effects are only likely to arise for a short period when the Sea Link construction phase overlaps with the Sizewell C project construction period. This overlap should be temporary, being only for the duration of the Sea Link construction period when it transitions from sea to land and crosses the width of the National Landscape. Effects will remain but decline in magnitude post-construction, and would be fully mitigated following removal of construction equipment and once landscape restoration becomes fully established.	Response acknowledged.
9.4	<i>Assessment of effects on Heritage Coast</i>	ESC does not dispute the Applicant's assessment of effects on the Heritage Coast. The conclusions are noted.	Response acknowledged.
9.5	<i>Landscape mitigation in Kent and Suffolk, including: the securing of advance planting Landscape mitigation for Kiln Lane substation Potential for additional landscape planting in the vicinity of the proposed converter station at Saxmundham within the order limits – with reference to Figure 1 of the Suffolk outline landscape and ecological management plan and</i>	The securing of advance planting ESC will expect the Applicant to undertake early planting around the converter station site at Saxmundham ahead of construction commencing. ESC previously advised in its PADSS (Ref. 3.04, [REP3-080]) that it was satisfied with the commitment at Paragraph 5.8.1 of the OLEMP [CR1-045] to undertaking advanced planting in the first available planting season prior to construction commencing where planting areas do not conflict with construction compounds and activities, noting that further detail could be dealt with in the detailed LEMP to be submitted to ESC for approval for a discharge of Requirement 6 of the dDCO, should	Refer to the Applicant's response to 3LVIA1 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6. Response acknowledged with regard to landscape mitigation for Kiln Lane substation.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	<i>representative viewpoints Implications of the statutory consultation documents for LionLink. With reference to figure 49 of the Converter Station - Background to Potential Design Approaches, Landscape mitigation for Minster converter station and substation , Adequacy of National Landscape mitigation</i>	the project be granted development consent. However, ESC understands from ISH2 supplementary agenda additional question ISH2.022 [EV-003], and the terms of the draft DCO itself, that as Requirement 6 as drafted only prevents the authorised development from commencing until the detailed LEMP is approved, it could not be enforced for advanced planting. The practical implications of this are entirely unacceptable both for ESC as the relevant LPA and the local community. ESC strongly supports the ExA's suggestion for advance mitigation planting to be added to pre-commencement operations in Article 2 of the dDCO, with a requirement that pre-commencement operations cannot be carried out until details of advance planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation. ESC has confirmed its position in this respect in its response to the ISH2 supplementary agenda additional questions. Landscape mitigation for Kiln Lane substation No comment.	
		Potential for additional landscape planting in the vicinity of the proposed converter station at Saxmundham within the order limits – with reference to Figure 1 of the Suffolk outline landscape and ecological management plan and representative viewpoints ESC agreed with the Applicant's conclusions that the converter station will give rise to major adverse (significant) visual effects from Viewpoint 1, Viewpoint 4, and Viewpoint 21 at Year 1. The Applicant has claimed that these effects would reduce to moderate adverse at Year 15 as a result of the proposed mitigation planting. However, ESC advised that the likelihood of the major adverse effect reducing to moderate at Year 15 depends on the success of establishing the proposed planting. In particular, ESC considers that this moderation of effects for Viewpoint 21 is optimistic, and there is a high risk that major adverse effects on this viewpoint may well persist at Year 15. Erratic rainfall patterns and prolonged, very dry periods have made it exceptionally difficult to establish new planting in East Suffolk. ESC notes the Applicant's commitment to an adaptive management programme for new planting. ESC anticipates that, as part of this programme, where trees must be replaced due to failed establishment, the clock will reset and the committed maintenance period will also apply to the new planting. ESC will expect the Applicant to adopt a collaborative approach to developing the best possible planting specification, and will also expect measures such as mulching and artificial watering to be incorporated into the final LEMP for approval through discharge of Requirement 6. For Viewpoint 1, in order to counter the challenges of planting establishment to some extent, ESC has suggested, both in its oral representation at ISH2 and in written submissions throughout the Examination, that additional planting along the existing Public Right of Way (PRoW), closer to the receptor, would make it more effective at screening views of the converter station from PRoW	Response acknowledged. The Applicant's position on additional landscape planting was provided within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] in Table 6.1 and with regard to AP39 in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The Applicant has provided a further response with respect to 3LVIA4 (Landscape mitigation for Saxmundham converter station) in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6. With respect to adaptive management, the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk submitted at Deadline 6) has been updated to provide additional detail.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		users and also make it effective sooner post-construction. This suggested planting is shown as Area B in Figure 2 of ESC's LIR [REP1 -128]. ESC considers that the Applicant has missed very real opportunities to provide additional landscape planting areas which would have achieved enhanced screening at Viewpoint 1 and redressed some of the landscape character that has been lost as a result of modern commercial farming practice since the mid-20th Century which has stripped the landscape of most key features. Such an approach does little to persuade ESC that the Applicant is actually adopting a genuinely collaborative approach to this project. The Applicant stated at ISH2 (and in response to Section 6.3.8.6 of ESC's LIR [REP2-027]) that additional planting along this PRow would enclose views along the existing PRow and restrict views to the wider landscape. ESC acknowledged this but noted its view that enclosed views would be preferable for a PRow user than a wide view of the landscape in which the converter station would be the focus. Additionally, whilst this planting would result in a change in character for this specific PRow, ESC noted that it is not unusual for PRows in the locality to be enclosed by vegetation. The Applicant also stated at ISH2 that such planting would channel views along the PRow towards the converter station site. ESC explained that it does not accept this suggestion and considers that Viewpoint 1 [APP-208] indicates such planting would screen, rather than channel, views towards the converter station site. For Viewpoints 4, 5 and 21, ESC considers that further mitigation planting could have achieved enhanced screening, but acknowledges that the unfortunately constrained Order Limits in this area due to the Applicant's chosen red line boundary mean that there are now limited opportunities to provide any additional planting. The Applicant suggested that additional compulsory acquisition powers that would need to be sought to deliver additional mitigation would not have been justifiable in this case. Whilst ESC acknowledges that there are several competing considerations that would have informed the Applicant's selection of its Order Limits, major adverse residual effects at Year 15 are now anticipated which could have been moderated by further mitigation planting. ESC queries whether it would have been possible for the Applicant to promote a compelling case in the public interest to justify the additional compulsory acquisition of land to deliver enhanced visual screening. In the circumstances, ESC rejects the Applicant's justification for not pursuing this. For Viewpoint 20, ESC agrees with the Applicant's position that additional woodland planting would result in adverse heritage effects on Hurts Hall. ESC notes the Applicant's indication at ISH2 that it intends to provide additional planting along the B1119, as has been repeatedly requested by ESC (Area C in Figure 2 of ESC's LIR [REP1 -128]). ESC will review and comment on these proposals,	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		as necessary, once further detail is submitted by the Applicant into the Examination. Implications of the statutory consultation documents for LionLink. With reference to figure 49 of the Converter Station - Background to Potential Design Approaches No comment. Landscape mitigation for Minster converter station and substation No comment. Adequacy of National Landscape mitigation No comment.	
Design			
10.1	<i>Adequacy of design controls including in relation to converter stations, substations, pylons, lighting</i>	ESC noted that its principal concern is not the level of detail provided with regards to the design of the onshore infrastructure in East Suffolk, but it is instead focused on securing a robust discharge of requirement process to allow the detailed designs to be approved post-consent. The Applicant stated that it would not want to commit in its DCO to the detailed design of the Kiln Lane (Friston) substation before these details have been discharged under the SPR Consents. It did, however, acknowledge that it is considering committing to details that have already been discharged. In light of these points, ESC advised the ExA that an application to discharge Requirement 12 (Detailed design parameters onshore) of SPR's EA2 DCO, which addresses the detailed design of the substation, is currently under consideration by ESC, in respect of which the 56-day decision period expires on 19 February 2026. ESC's detailed comments on this matter have been provided in its response to ExQ1 Question 1GEN47. [REP3-085]. ESC has reviewed the Applicant's response to Question 1GEN47. of ExQ1 [REP3-069] and notes that the Applicant considers that affording planning authorities the ability to control the layout, scale and design of the converter station would not be 'appropriate or productive' due to the limited ability of the authority to influence these elements. ESC noted that it was evident from the discussion at ISH2 that there are different potential designs for the converter station, for example reference was made to six options. ESC considers the Applicant's position surprising given the role of relevant planning authorities in the framework of the Planning Act 2008, their established role in discharging requirements, and their obvious skill and knowledge in planning matters more widely. As ESC noted in discussions on the draft Development Consent Order which preceded discussion of design, DCO requirements are a key mechanism for securing specific detail in order to control the development. The importance of such detail is only heightened in situations such as this where the level of detail provided at the Examination and Decision stages is limited.	The Applicant notes that alternate wording for requirement 3 has been provided to the ExA by ESC. The Applicant has altered the wording of Requirement 3 in Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order (submitted at Deadline 6) such that it now provides for the relevant planning authorities to approve the design of converter station and substation buildings without restricting this approval to certain elements of the design, and requires that the design of the Fromus bridge is to be submitted and approved by the relevant planning authority. For information a document setting out details of operational lighting, 9.147 Outline Operational Lighting Management Plan, is submitted at Deadline 6. Regarding the SPR requirements, the Proposed Project Requirement 3(2) does secure certain design details that mirror those secured under the SPR consents.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		ESC reiterated its stance that the Applicant should adopt the usual approach under the Planning Act 2008 under which details of the layout, scale and external appearance of the onshore infrastructure is required to be submitted to the relevant planning authority for approval. This approach is well-precedented, including in the DCO consents for EA1, EA1N, EA2, EA3, and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm DCOs. There is no justification for moving away from the ordinary approach of proper scrutiny at the detailed design stage. Any arguments to the contrary made by the Applicant are simply untenable. ESC also noted that the Design Principles – Suffolk document [APP-366], although referring to critical design principles, repeatedly refers to ‘flexibility’. ESC accepts a level of flexibility in design is always required – that is precisely why Government has always given the relevant local planning authority the ability to exercise its expert planning judgment – or put another way, the extent of any flexibility to be applied is for the planning authority to determine – not the Applicant. ESC stated that it also requires express approval mechanisms for the substation and River Fromus Bridge. ESC understands from the Applicant’s oral representation at ISH2 that it will be providing a Requirement securing approval of the River Fromus Bridge design. ESC will review, and comment as necessary, on the wording of this requirement once it has been submitted into the Examination. In summary ESC explained that it is simply advocating what is the normal and accepted approach to be adopted in this case, particularly because very limited details as to design are being provided by the Applicant in the Examination (in particular, in relation to the Saxmundham Converter Station) as evidenced by the less than final design options shown on screen to the Examination. The provision of express approval mechanisms for the Substation and the River Fromus Bridge crossing is, in the view of ESC, absolutely essential, and any refusal by the Applicant to provide the necessary mechanisms would be susceptible to serious consideration. Following a request from the ExA for local authorities to discuss revised wording of Requirement 3 of the dDCO, ESC met with SCC, Thanet District Council and Kent County Council. ESC understood that it was agreed at ISH2 for the Applicant to be provided with the relevant planning authorities’ suggested revised wording outside of the Examination. However, the ExA’s Action Points arising from ISH2 [EV6-003] includes Action Point 131, which requests that relevant planning authorities ‘suggest alternative wording for requirement 3 including which above ground elements of the proposed development should be included’. ESC has therefore provided the ExA with its suggested Requirement 3 wording in its response to the Action Points arising from ISH2, submitted at Deadline 4.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Lighting was not discussed at ISH2, but ESC notes that its position in relation to the need for operational lighting details to be approved (for example through approval of a lighting management plan) by the relevant planning authority is set out in detail in its response to ExQ1 Question 1LVIA4. [REP3-085]. ESC has also provided a response to the Applicant's response to this question in its Deadline 4 submission titled 'East Suffolk Council's comments on the Applicant's Deadline 3 submissions'.	
10.2	<i>Embedding of good design in decision making process</i>	No comment.	Response acknowledged.
11 Cultural heritage			
11.1	<i>Suffolk bronze age enclosure update</i>	No comment.	No response required
11.2	<i>Remaining archaeological on-site assessment work and reporting</i>	No comment.	No response required
11.3	<i>Scoped out heritage assets</i>	ESC is satisfied with the scope of the Applicant's built heritage impact assessment for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme.	Response acknowledged
11.4	<i>Effects on setting of listed buildings, including Hurts Hall and Hill Farmhouse</i>	ESC notes that effects on Hurts Hall were not discussed at ISH2. ESC has noted its disagreement with the Applicant's assessment of effects on Hurts Hall at Ref. 3.02 of ESC's PADSS [REP3-080] and Section 6.3.6 of ESC's LIR [REP1-128]. For Hill Farmhouse, ESC advised that it does not accept the Applicant's position that there would be no impact, and instead considers that there would be a moderate adverse (significant) effect on Hill Farmhouse. ESC disagrees with the Applicant's assertion at Section 6.3.6.9 of its comments on ESC's LIR [REP2-027] that "views of the asset [Hill Farmhouse] in the surrounding landscape are not a feature of its setting that contributes to significance". As a historic farmhouse, the rural agricultural setting of the listed building is the setting in which it has historically been experienced, and therefore contributes to the historic interest of the building, and the development would detract from this setting. Additionally, as can be seen in Plate A.1 in Appendix 1 to the Applicant's comments on ESC's LIR [REP2-027] (this is a wider view of Landscape Viewpoint 5 [APP-209]), the trees to the north of Hill Farmhouse are not a dense woodland that would fully screen any views of the development, especially in winter. The harm identified is 'less than substantial' in the terms of NPS EN-1 but the Applicant seems unable to accept that the NPS is designed to provide a policy basis – but is always going to be subject to actual effects on the ground. The harm that will be caused is in conflict with Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP11.4, which states that development affecting the setting of a listed building will only be supported where it "is of an appropriate design, scale, form, height, massing and position which	The disagreement on the degree of impact at Hurts Hall at Year 15 of operation and at Hill Farmhouse is a disagreement in professional judgment and it was acknowledged in ISH3 that an agreement is unlikely to be reached between the Applicant and ESC on these matters. Hurts Hall A representative view towards the Grade II listed Hurts Hall from the B1121 to the southwest of the asset was subject to summer and winter photography and photomontages were created to demonstrate the appearance of the view at different stages of the site development and to demonstrate different options under consideration for the bridge design. These are provided in Application Document 6.4.2.1 ES Figures Suffolk Landscape and Visual Part 1 of 7 [APP-208] and Application Document 6.4.2.1 ES Figures Suffolk Landscape and Visual Part 2 of 7 [APP-209]. These detail the summer and winter baseline situation, the situation following removal of vegetation and introduction of the Fromus Crossing bridge (two options), and the situation at Year 15 of operation when screening planting has matured. These photomontages demonstrate that the proposed screening planting for the bridge, access and Saxmundham Converter Station does not obscure this view of the asset. Further visualisations have been provided during DCO Examination [REP1-298; REP1-299; REP1-300] that demonstrate different viewpoints in the vicinity of Hurts Hall and illustrative viewpoints of a design option for the Fromus bridge design and Saxmundham Converter Station design that show how with sensitive design and mitigation planting the impact of both features can be reduced. Cumulative visualisations towards Hurts Hall from the B1121 showing maximum extents and illustrative extents for Saxmundham Converter Station and LionLink

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		complement the existing building”. For reference, Appendix A to this submission contains the policy text and supporting information. As per paragraphs. 5.9.32 and 5.9.36 of NPS EN-1, the harm that has been identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, and the Secretary of State should give great weight to these negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application.	Converter Station in combination have also been submitted at Deadline 4 in Appendix A to Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Actions Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [PRE4-086]. The reduction in the residual significance of effect reported in Section 3.11 of Application Document 6.2.2.3 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage [APP-050] in relation to Hurts Hall as a result of the maturation of screening vegetation at Year 15 of Operation is mainly related to the success of mitigation screening of the Fromus crossing and permanent access which soften the visual impact of these features within the asset’s setting. The continued visibility of the Converter Station, albeit improved by screening planting, is acknowledged in the residual minor adverse significance of effect assessed at Hurts Hall. Hill Farmhouse The assessment of Hill Farmhouse presented in Paragraph 3.9.117 of Application Document 6.3.2.3.A ES Appendix 2.3.A Cultural Heritage Baseline Report [APP-109] and the baseline significance and setting assessment presented in Paragraphs 6.1.35-6.1.38 of Application Document 6.3.2.3.A ES Appendix 2.3.A Cultural Heritage Baseline Report [APP-109] include robust consideration of the degree to which the surrounding agricultural landscape contributes to the significance of the asset and the degree to which it is sensitive to visual intrusion resulting from the Proposed Project. It highlights the enclosed nature of the asset’s setting, being largely screened from view due to the boundary planting in its immediate curtilage. Views of the asset in the surrounding landscape are not a feature of its setting that contributes to significance. Viewpoint CH3 in Application Document 6.4.2.3 ES Figures Suffolk Cultural Heritage Part 2 of 2 [APP-230] is taken from the south of the asset looking north towards the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station. This demonstrates both the asset’s lack of visibly and the lack of visibility of the Proposed Project which would sit behind it in the view. With reference to Landscape Viewpoint 5 in Application Document 6.4.2.1 ES Figures Suffolk Landscape and Visual Part 2 of 7 [APP-209], it is the Applicant’s assessment that this viewpoint further demonstrates the lack of contribution that is currently made by visual setting to this asset, however, since Hill Farmhouse is located off the far left of the view an image with slightly adjusted extents has been provided as Appendix A of the Applicant’s response to the LIR. This shows the building largely screened by trees and demonstrates that the view does not provide understanding of its heritage value as a 17th century L-plan farmhouse with later alterations. Therefore, although the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station will feature prominently in this view, it is not a key view, or otherwise important view towards the asset where its heritage interests are conveyed and / or understood. The

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			Applicant therefore reiterates the assessment that the Proposed Project will not result in any impact to the heritage value of this asset through change to its setting and no effect and no harm is identified. Cumulative illustrative visualisations at Viewpoint 5 have been produced in Appendix A of the Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Actions Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. These illustrate the maximum parameters of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme and LionLink in the vicinity of Hill Farmhouse. 'Viewpoint 5 Heritage' also extends the view in the formal visualisation west to include the farmhouse. The visualisations also show reasonable illustrative models of both schemes in the same view, which are significantly smaller than the maximum parameters. This demonstrates how the Saxmundham Converter Station, shown illustratively in dark green, can integrate into the view, appearing as further agricultural buildings of the same form as the existing modern units. LionLink Converter Station would be barely perceptible in the view and any visible elements would appear as though part of Saxmundham Converter Station. The summer and winter photography provided also demonstrates how the farmhouse is entirely screened by vegetation in the view in the summer. In email correspondence regarding these additional viewpoints ESC noted that whilst there is a lot of potential for the buildings to be placed and designed in ways that minimise impact through change to setting, since the visualisations are illustrative the worst-case Rochdale envelope approach must be applied to assessment.
11.5	<i>Ebbsfleet Peninsular Multi-Period Complex archaeology impacts</i>	No comment.	No response required
11.6	<i>Richborough Roman Fort impacts</i>	No comment.	No response required
12. Public rights of way			
		No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.	No response required
13 Traffic and transport			
13.1	<i>Benhall bridge proposed works, with potential diversions and rail line effects</i>	No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.	No response required
13.2	<i>Construction traffic and abnormal indivisible loads – suitability of routes proposed</i>	No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.	No response required
13.3	<i>Junction modelling and traffic flows on construction routes</i>	No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.	No response required

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
13.4	<i>Cumulative impact of traffic and the coordination with other projects</i>	No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.	No response required
13.5	<i>Controls on construction traffic</i>	No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.	No response required
14 Noise and vibration			
14.1	<i>Construction noise assessment (including assessment assumptions, noise contour figures, s61 consents, mitigation and monitoring)</i>	Assessment assumptions No comment. Noise contour figures ESC notes that this matter was not discussed at ISH2. However, ESC wishes to highlight that Figure 2 of the Operational Noise Contour Plan for Saxmundham Converter Station [REP3- 075] shows the night-time ambient noise level change. Whilst this may indicate that the ambient noise levels at nearby noise sensitive receptors would not change significantly based on the Applicant's assessment, the source of the noise will be changing, and this is an important consideration. For example, if the source of the noise is currently rural in in nature (e.g. birds, animals, a bit of traffic) but becomes industrial (e.g. transformer hum), then more than just the noise level change requires consideration. Section 61 consents The Applicant states at Paragraph 4.4.2 of the Outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) – Suffolk [AS-131]: <i>“Where the results of the contractor’s assessment indicates the potential for significant effects at NSR, or for working outside of core hours, a Section 61 application may be required.”</i> ESC has previously raised, in its response to ExQ1 Question 1NV8. [REP3-085], that this statement should be clear and state that Section 61 ‘will’ be required, rather than ‘may’ be required, and ESC reiterated this point at ISH2. ESC noted that its preference is for Section 61 consents to be sought for all works, as is the approach taken by SPR for its EA1N and EA2 projects. ESC considers this approach to be operating effectively, and it also provides an opportunity for ongoing dialogue between the developer and local authority, helping to identify and take opportunities to regularly reduce noise impact. ESC considers Section 61 consents essential, providing an opportunity to both reassess the significance of impacts, and to consider Best Practicable Means. This is particularly crucial as the Applicant is not proposing routine monitoring, and has instead advised that the need for monitoring would be identified through Section 61 applications (Paragraph 4.6.1 of the Outline CNVMP – Suffolk [AS-131]). ESC considers this to be inadequate as without routine monitoring, and if Section 61 consents are only sought for works predicted to give rise to significant effects, instances of non-compliance with agreed noise limits for works that were not assessed to result in significant effects will not be identified. In	Noise contour figures The noise change figure was produced to answer a specific query regarding level change. Other aspects of context are addressed in the operational noise assessment presented in Application Document 6.3.2.9.D Appendix 2.9.D Suffolk Operational Noise Assessment [AS-119] Section 61 consents The Applicant has agreed that some works will be undertaken through Section 61 applications.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		addition to ESC's requirement Therefore, notwithstanding ESC's preference for Section 61 consents to be sought for all works, the Applicant must be able to adequately monitor for compliance with the relevant 'ABC' threshold. For that reason, routine monitoring must be undertaken, or the Section 61 process must be used for all works. ESC is not currently satisfied that the use of Section 61 as proposed will provide adequate protection to Noise Sensitive Receptors. The Applicant must commit to either routine monitoring (to be defined) for compliance with the relevant 'ABC' threshold, or commit to using the S.61 process for all works, as is the case for SPR's EA1N and EA2 projects.	
14.2	<i>The need for operational noise limits at all operational sites</i>	Saxmundham Converter Station ESC is of the view that appropriate noise rating levels must be proposed at representative noise sensitive receptors (NSRs), to form the basis of an operational noise limit requirement in the DCO. At least 5dB below background should be the target, if this is not possible then the Applicant needs to propose an operational noise rating level that is the lowest that can reasonably be achieved with full justification as to why that is the case. Even with rating levels agreed, ESC will expect a commitment to go lower, if possible, in the final detailed design. This is particularly important given the predominantly rural, residential sound climate in the locality, meaning that any increase on background introduced by industrial noise is to be minimised as far as possible. The Applicant has previously suggested that a 34 dB rating level at nearby noise sensitive receptors may be appropriate. At ISH2, the ExA noted that this level would be within the BS8233 35dB internal noise threshold. ESC has since reflected on this point, and notes that BS8233 is out of scope for this scenario. BS8233 states: <i>"This British Standard provides guidance for the control of noise in and around buildings. It is applicable to the design of new buildings, or refurbished buildings undergoing a change of use, but does not provide guidance on assessing the effects of changes in the external noise levels to occupants of an existing building."</i> Therefore, BS8233 is specifically designed to consider noise within the framework of sensitive building design located near to a noise source, rather than situations where a Page 23 of 34 sensitive receptor already exists and a noise source is being introduced. ESC's position is that BS4142 is the correct British Standard to use, and so this should be used to determine operational noise limits in respect of the development. Under BS4142 (taking into account context), a below background rating level is indicative of a low impact, 5 dB above is indicative of an adverse impact, and 10 dB above is indicative of a significant adverse effect. If the Applicant can demonstrate that 34 dB is the lowest it can reasonably achieve, ESC is obviously prepared to discuss this. However, ESC first requires the Applicant to confirm its proposed operational noise rating level, along with justification for why this is	Regarding the use of BS 8233, this standard is specifically referenced in BS 4142 in terms of providing context. BS 8233 has not been used to assess the "effects of changes in the external noise levels to occupants of an existing building". It has been used to provide context to the resulting noise level. Regarding <i>"If the Applicant can demonstrate that 34 dB is the lowest it can reasonably achieve, ESC is obviously prepared to discuss this. However, ESC first requires the Applicant to confirm its proposed operational noise rating level, along with justification for why this is the lowest that can reasonably be achieved. This detail has not yet been provided, which at this stage in the examination is simply not acceptable."</i>: It is common for limited design detail to be available at this stage of the planning process. The Applicant has committed to designing substation and converter stations such that operational noise levels are as low as reasonably possible (ALARP) through commitments NV07 and NV09 of Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235], subject to an upper threshold of 34 dB LA,r,T,r which represented the lowest observed adverse effect level (LOAEL). The commitment to aim to achieve operational noise levels below the LOAEL is therefore above and beyond the requirements of planning policy. However, a definitive rating level cannot be provided at this stage as this would be subject to detailed design. With regards to LionLink, their PEIR has been reviewed and likely cumulative impacts are as described in Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. Regarding <i>"ESC highlighted that operational noise limits must be expressed as the Significant Observable Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) so that they must be avoided in line with policy. The Applicant indicates in its comments on Section 6.3.7.6 of ESC's LIR [REP2-027] that the noise rating level would be expressed as a Lowest Observable Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL). This would not</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		the lowest that can reasonably be achieved. This detail has not yet been provided, which at this stage in the examination is simply not acceptable. ESC also noted that the co-location of the Saxmundham Converter Station site with LionLink and a possible third project makes it even more important that the lowest possible operational noise rating level is committed to by the Applicant for Sea Link. This will help to prevent unacceptable noise creep, ensuring that noise levels are not sequentially and cumulatively increased significantly whilst being accepted under policy due to the individually less significant increase, thus helping to protect the residents and acoustic character of the area. ESC highlighted that operational noise limits must be expressed as the Significant Observable Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) so that they must be avoided in line with policy. The Applicant indicates in its comments on Section 6.3.7.6 of ESC's LIR [REP2-027] that the noise rating level would be expressed as a Lowest Observable Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL). This would not provide adequate protection as it would only require projects to mitigate and minimise impact, which is unacceptable.	<i>provide adequate protection as it would only require projects to mitigate and minimise impact, which is unacceptable."</i>: This approach was used by the Applicant in the noise assessment presented in the PEIR and rejected by East Suffolk Council. Hence, as noted above, applicant has committed to designing substation and converter stations such that operational noise levels are as low as reasonably possible (ALARP) through commitments NV07 and NV09 of Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235], subject to an upper threshold of 34 dB LA,r,T,r which represented the lowest observed adverse effect level (LOAEL). The commitment to aim to achieve operational noise levels below the LOAEL is therefore above and beyond the requirements of planning policy, but equivalent to the action required by Planning Practice Guidance for Noise for above LOAEL impact (i.e. mitigate and minimise). The outcome is therefore the same with either approach.
		Kiln Lane (Friston) substation ESC has previously raised concerns regarding the Applicant's scoping out of the operational noise of the proposed Friston Substation from assessment in the ES (Ref. 6.03 of ESC PADSS [REP3-085]). The Applicant states in Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration (Version B) (Paragraph 9.3.10, [AS-109]) that 'although potential operational noise from the Friston substation was originally proposed to be included in the scope of the ES...it has since transpired that there are no other potential sources of noise proposed during normal operation (i.e. there are no proposed transformers or similar plant)'. ESC does not agree with this statement as this substation is subject to a site rating level imposed by SPR's EA1N and EA2 DCOs. The Applicant needs to be very confident that the introduction of further or different equipment will not impact that constraint – and little evidence in that respect has been provided to date. ESC has asked that the Applicant provide evidence demonstrating that the additional infrastructure required to connect into the Friston substation will not result in the site rating level at the site being exceeded. ESC understands from the discussion at ISH2 that the Applicant intends to provide further detail regarding an operational noise limit at Kiln Lane (Friston) substation at Deadline 4. ESC will review this information, and comment as necessary, once this detail has been submitted.	Appropriate noise control measures are included in commitments NV07 and NV09 of Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235].
14.3	Operational noise impacts including low frequency noise	No comment.	No response required
Socio-economics and tourism			

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
15.1	<i>Effects and potential reputational impact on the tourism industry of Suffolk and Kent as a result of the proposed development</i>	ESC has reviewed the Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note - Suffolk [REP3-065] submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 3, which addresses the potential reputational risk to the visitor economy in East Suffolk, and has provided detailed comments in its Deadline 4 submission titled 'East Suffolk Council's comments on the Applicant's Deadline 3 submissions'. ESC recognises that the number of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) facing the East Suffolk District is unprecedented. For that reason, ESC considers it necessary for the Applicant to commit to ongoing monitoring and adaptive management throughout construction of the Sea Link project – should it be consented - thereby, enabling changes to be recognised and responded to appropriately. ESC reiterated that the Applicant's view that there will be no residual significant effects is not supported by ESC, nor the local communities it represents. ESC also noted that it has commissioned a programme of longitudinal visitor perception studies in order to understand how visitor attitudes and perceptions of East Suffolk are changing over time, in the context of the NSIPs facing the District. ESC advised that baseline data is available now, and is provided in Appendices E and F to its Deadline 4 submission titled 'East Suffolk Council's comments on the Applicant's Deadline 3 submissions'. This exercise will be repeated regularly over the next 14 years, allowing an understanding of visitors' perceptions and expectations, and whether the District has met these expectations, to be established, and for measures and strategies to be developed to combat identified issues.	The Applicant has provided a response on the monitoring of impacts on tourism and the visitor economy within Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions .
15.2	<i>Tourism accommodation capacity</i>	ESC has reviewed the Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note - Suffolk [REP3-065] submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 3 and has provided detailed comments in its Deadline 4 submission titled 'East Suffolk Council's comments on the Applicant's Deadline 3 submissions'. ESC stated that it is not persuaded that there is sufficient accommodation capacity in the locality for both non-home-based (NHB) workers and visitors. ESC explained that it has commissioned a study into the available room space within a 60-minute drivetime of the Sizewell C construction site (which is broadly similar to the 60-minute drivetime study area for Sea Link given the similar locations of Sizewell C and the Sea Link Suffolk landfall). The findings of this study suggest that there are 249 serviced establishments with 4,221 rooms in the 60-minute travel zone, whereas the Applicant reports at Paragraph 10.7.32 of ES Chapter 10 Socio-economic, Recreation and Tourism that 'approximately 7,038 inventory rooms in local hotels, bed and breakfast and inns accommodation within the 60 Minute Drive Time Catchment Area'. ESC advised during the hearing that the full study would be available for submission into the Examination at Deadline 4. It has since transpired that this is not possible, but ESC has provided the interim results and a summary of some of the key initial findings from the study in its Deadline 4 submission	The Applicant has provided a response on this matter within Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions . Please refer to 2SERT1 and 2SERT3.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		titled 'East Suffolk Council's comments on the Applicant's Deadline 3 submissions', and in Appendix C to that submission.	
15.3	<i>Skills and Employment Plan and labour market effects</i>	ESC has expressed in detail its view that the Applicant must prepare a Skills and Employment Plan in its response to ExQ1 Question 1SERT7. [REP3-085]. ESC understands that the Applicant will be submitting an update on its position regarding the preparation of a Skills and Employment Plan at Deadline 4. ESC will review this and provide comments, as necessary, at Deadline 5.	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6.
15.4	<i>Socio-economic positive effect potential</i>	No comment.	No response required.
Health and Wellbeing			
16.1	<i>Core working hours, in relation to effects on traffic, health and wellbeing, and noise</i>	ESC has set out its position on the project's core working hours in detail throughout its LIR, including at Sections 7.4.2 and 7.5.1 and Appendix A [REP1-128], and in Sections 5.01-5.02 of its PADSS [REP3-080]. ESC does not, therefore, intend to repeat its position exhaustively here. In summary, the proposed 7 days a week working is considered entirely unacceptable by ESC. This is due to a number of significant concerns, including the impact of a lack of respite on local residents' mental health and wellbeing (particularly given the number of NSIPs under construction within the District), and noise and vibration impacts in a noise sensitive area. The ExA will have taken note of the concerns expressed by the local community in this respect, which the Applicant has apparently deigned to ignore. If the application is approved, ESC notes that there is a balance to be struck, considering implications of excessive core working hours on project programme, consumer costs, and the local community. In assessing this balance, however, the Applicant has failed to take any account of local disruption. Critically, and seemingly ignored by the Applicant, the existing consented NSIPs in the District have struck a more appropriate balance than is sought by the Applicant. For example, the working hours for SPR's EA1N and EA2 projects do not include working on Saturday afternoons, Sundays, or Bank Holidays, thus providing some respite for the local community. Importantly, these projects share aspects of the Sea Link infrastructure at Friston and have additional overlap in geospatial terms, together with a similar landfall area. Saturday afternoon, Sunday, and Bank Holiday working, which is Page 27 of 34 currently sought by the Applicant, would therefore upset the existing balance in an area where residents are already living alongside several major construction projects. ESC requires the Applicant to remove Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays from the core working hours in the dDCO, to align with the working hours previously examined,	The Applicant has provided its latest position regarding core working hours within Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4 (please refer to Action Point AP106). The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6). Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		agreed and incorporated into SPR's EA1N and EA2 consents. A failure so to do would render any grant of consent susceptible to further consideration. In this context, ESC rejects entirely the Applicant's repeated fall-back defence whenever it is tested on issues that it is unable to answer (for example in its comments on ESC's LIR [REP2- 027] (Section 7.4.2.2)) that the identification of Sea Link as critical for the achievement of the Clean Power 2030 target justifies the unacceptable disruption and lack of respite for East Suffolk's communities and residents that would be caused by the proposed working hours. ESC considers that the Applicant's reliance on its ostensible and as yet untested need case to justify the unacceptable proposed working hours is wholly unacceptable and actually has no rational justification. ESC noted that Paragraph 5.12.17 of NPS EN-1 makes clear that 'the Secretary of State should not grant development consent unless they are satisfied that the proposals will...through the effective management and control of noise... mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise'. ESC considers that the Applicant's core working hours, as currently proposed, fail to adequately 'mitigate and minimise' the adverse health and wellbeing effects of project construction in line with national policy (NSP EN-1). ESC explained its view that reduced core working hours, which would provide some respite and align with other NSIPs in the area, are an exceptionally important mitigation measure in helping to satisfy Paragraph 5.12.17 of NPS EN-1. ESC also wishes to build upon points raised by SCC at ISH2. ESC has reviewed the Applicant's response to ExQ1 Question 1GEN49. [REP3-069], which states that restricting core working hours to exclude Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays 'would result in a delay of between 21 and 33 weeks' and 'an additional cost would be borne by British energy bill payers of between £443m and £886m'. It is quite extraordinary for a promoter of a development to effectively, as far as ESC is aware, pull figures "out of a hat" to justify its position. No justification or evidence has been provided to explain how these Page 28 of 34 figures were reached. Certainly, as far as ESC is concerned, little, or in reality no, weight can be afforded to them. In this context, ESC notes that from its calculations, a 33-week delay would suggest that the Applicant intends to work almost every weekend. This is in direct conflict with the Applicant's suggestion, both in ISH2 and in its written submissions (including its response to ExQ1 Question 1GEN49. [REP3-069]), that construction would not take place every weekend, and the 7 day a week core working hours are instead required only to provide the Applicant with programme flexibility. Furthermore, the Applicant has proposed 'temporal restrictions', such as alternate weekend	approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment. For the reasons set out throughout the DCO Submission but most recently set out in REP5-142, the Applicant considers that there is an urgent need for the Proposed Project consistent with the need identified in NPS EN-1. The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		working, as a means to avoid predicted adverse and significant adverse effects. Again, this suggests that construction would not take place every weekend. ESC therefore has serious concerns, and queries how the Applicant has concluded that the exclusion of Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays would result in a 21-33 week delay and additional costs of between £443m and £886m. The Applicant's untested cost implications are, in ESC's opinion, questionable in the extreme and no worth can be afforded to them. On that basis alone, the Applicant's proposed working hours cannot be accepted and the dDCO should be amended accordingly. In this context, ESC should also highlight that the Applicant suggests in its comments in response to Section 7.4.4.10 of ESC's LIR [REP2-027] that the application of the lower 'ABC' weekend thresholds will increase the likelihood of exceedances and therefore the potential for significant effects. The Applicant then proposes to mitigate these significant adverse effects through temporal restrictions. As noted in Ref. 9.02 of ESC's PADSS [REP3-080], this effectively means that the requested longer working hours will trigger the need for temporal restriction to avoid significant impact. It appears that the Applicant wants to be able to work for the maximum amount of time, but to then restrict working time as their primary source of mitigation to avoid significant adverse effects. ESC considers that these two positions are in direct conflict with one another. ESC is bound to query whether the Applicant actually understands what it is proposing and whether this is just another example of defensive hind sight when out to the test – all issues that could have been resolved before the application had been submitted if the Applicant had been prepared to co-ordinate and genuinely collaborate and discuss its application with the interested parties.	
16.2	<i>Light pollution</i>	No comment.	The Applicant has no comments on this matter
17 Climate change			
17.1	Matters relating to R (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) v Surrey County Council judgment	No comment. ESC provided comments on this matter in response to ExQ1 Question 1CC1. [REP3-085].	No response required
18 Water environment		No comment. ESC defers to Suffolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, and the Environment Agency.	No response required
19 Shipping and navigation		No comment.	No response required
20.Cumulative Effects			
20.1	Intra and inter-project cumulative effects	Intra-project cumulative effects	Please see the Applicants position set out in Application Document 9.141 Intra Project Cumulative Effect Significance - Technical Note.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		ESC provided detailed comments on the Applicant's approach to assessing intra-project cumulative effects in its response to ExQ1 Question 1CEIntra2. [REP3-085]. ESC explained that it considers that a precautionary approach should be applied in the assessment of intra-project cumulative effects, as is appropriate when dealing with environmental impact assessments. This is particularly relevant in East Suffolk where there are multiple NSIPs being proposed, consented, or already under construction. Irrespective of whether or not the Applicant feels able to further particularise the level of significance of the intra-project cumulative effects it has identified, this does not prevent the Secretary of State applying significant weight to these effects, particularly given the local context and precautionary approach. ESC acknowledges commitments in the CEMP REAC [REP3-078] and in the Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan [CR1-041] to provide local communities and businesses, road users, and PRoW users with means to communicate with construction contractors, including via the Transport Coordinator, Environmental Manager and Environmental Clerk of Works. Whilst these commitments may provide opportunities for any specific significant intra-project/combined effects that do materialise to be considered on an individual basis and for enhanced mitigation measures to be implemented to address them, ESC explained its request for the Applicant to commit to a more proactive and less reactive approach to addressing intra-project cumulative effects. For instance, ESC requested that a commitment is added to the REAC for the Applicant to review what specific mitigation measures are practicable and could mitigate the identified intra-project cumulative effects for which 'no mitigation has been confirmed at this stage' (ES Chapter 3 'Summary of Likely Significant Effects' [REP1A-013]), once this detail can be obtained from the Main Works Contractor. Detailed mitigation measures for addressing intra-project cumulative effects can then be secured via the relevant management plans to be approved through a discharge of Requirement 6 of the dDCO. ESC understands that the Applicant took an action away from ISH2 to consider ESC's request for an additional REAC commitment, and will provide a response at Deadline 4. ESC will review this response and comment, as necessary, at Deadline 5.	
		Inter-project cumulative effects ESC maintains its view, as set out in Section 4 of its LIR [REP1-128], that Sea Link project prematurity restricts opportunities for meaningful co-ordination with other projects looking to Page 31 of 34 connect at Friston, such as LionLink, which only accentuates local concerns regarding cumulative impacts.	The Proposed Project is not premature. It is in fact urgent and critical, as reflected in the many submissions on need provided at previous examination deadlines and in the application itself. Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment.
20.2	Mitigation of cumulative effects	No comment.	No Comment
21.The draft Development Consent Order			
21.1	Article 10 – The effect that article 10 would have with respect to the interface with existing consents, such as the Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) East Anglia 1 and East Anglia 2 DCOs and future consents, such as LionLink. How the relevant planning authorities would see articles 10 and 56 operating in practice including, for example, the discharge of requirements.	ESC noted that it is comfortable with the principle of seeking to draft wording to avoid ‘Hillside’ issues (arising from the authority in Hillside Parks Ltd v Snowdonia National Park Authority [2022]). ESC is, however, concerned about the possibility of changes to the Sea Link project being facilitated by Article 10(1) of the dDCO as currently drafted. The Planning Act 2008 is a holistic statutory regime and includes a DCO change process. The extensive suite of mitigation measures agreed through the granting of a Development Consent Order should not be able to be circumvented through the use of Article 10(1) – it should not be a means to implement changes ‘through the back door’. Furthermore, Article 60 of the dDCO [REP3-006] states that the documents identified in Schedule 19 (certified documents) of the DCO must be made ‘available in electronic form for inspection by members of the public’. Therefore, should changes effectively be made to the project using the provisions of Article 10, this raises issues of transparency and public participation, as the certified documents may no longer reflect the project as ‘built out’ on the ground. ESC therefore considers that further work is needed to establish appropriate wording for Article 10, and ESC would be happy to engage in discussions to assist in finding a satisfactory solution. In this respect, ESC met with the Applicant, Suffolk County Council, and Dover District Council on 3 February 2026.	The Applicant met with East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Dover District Council to discuss their concerns around Article 10, as outlined within Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) . The Applicant will review the further drafting proposed by Suffolk County Council when it is available.
21.2	Article 11(2), article 14(4), article 15(2) and (5)(b), article 17(1)(b), article 20(3) and (4), article 22(5), article 50(2) and article 55(1) with respect to the words “unreasonably	ESC’s position with regard to the deeming provisions in the dDCO [REP3-006], and the proposed 25-day decision period, is provided in ESC’s response to ExQ1 Question 1GEN28. [REP3-085]. Notwithstanding ESC’s objections to the deeming provisions in the dDCO [REP3-006], ESC supported SCC’s views that such provisions address any instances of decisions being ‘unreasonably	The Applicant notes these points but remains of the view that the drafting is appropriate, as set out within Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] and Document 9.89 Applicant’s

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	withheld or delayed” and the 35 day decision period.	delayed’. ESC also noted that it considers that the wording ‘unreasonably withheld’ is unnecessary and would not provide the Applicant with any additional protections, as an arbiter would be needed to determine whether a decision has indeed been ‘unreasonably withheld’, and such provisions are already made in Article 62 (Arbitration), and in the case of requirements, via the appeals process in Article 54(4). ESC therefore considers that the wording ‘unreasonably withheld or delayed’ is unnecessary, and should therefore be removed. ESC also reiterated its view that a 35-day decision period fails to account for wider context for the discharging authorities, including the large number of other consented NSIPs for which ESC and other local authorities, including SCC, are discharging requirements. By way of example, just before Christmas, ESC received approximately 30 applications to discharge DCO requirements for a single project (EA2). The majority of these applications have been dealt with, with some outstanding, but all decisions for these have thus far been made within the 56-day decision period prescribed in the EA2 DCO. This work is being completed at the same time as ESC is receiving applications to discharge the requirements of other DCOs, including the Sizewell C DCO. Therefore, from ESC’s extensive practical experience, a 35- day decision period can create problems, despite officers’ best efforts to discharge their statutory duties, given that multiple discharge applications, on more than one project may be submitted at any given time. ESC also noted that the details to be approved through discharging DCO requirements are not ‘frivolous’ details, but a vital part of the DCO process. This Examination deals with the fundamental principles of the project, but much of the detail is being left to be approved later though the discharge of requirements process. Local residents will be experiencing the effects of these details for years to come, and so DCO requirements are a key mechanism for controlling the development, ensuring that the appropriate mitigation is secured and implemented. ESC is therefore of the view that the Applicant’s suggestion that the critical need for the project means that little time can be afforded to allow finer details to be properly scrutinised does not achieve a fair balance between delivering the project in a timely, costeffective manner, and minimising local impacts. It is therefore essential that the discharge of requirement process provides discharging authorities with to ability to undergo a careful and robust determination process. ESC therefore urges the Applicant to reconsider the proposed 35-day decision period in favour of 56-day decision period following the approach taken in the EA1N and EA2 consents.	Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085].
21.3	Schedule 3 Requirement 6, the submission and approval of plans.	ESC refers to its response to ExQ1 Question 1GEN14. ([REP3-085]). ESC noted that it is content with the principle of outline plans to be provided at this stage, and for final detailed versions of plans listed	Noted and acknowledged.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		in Schedule 3, Requirement 6 to be approved by through discharge of Requirement 6 ESC has provided comments on specific outline plans in writing throughout the Examination. ESC also noted at ISH2 that it endorsed comments from SCC that the plans listed in Requirement 6(1)(n)-(q) are proposed to be approved in detailed form without preparation of outline plans, but ESC is concerned that it has yet to see any detail of the contents of these plans. Following discussion about the wording of Requirement 6(2) appearing only to apply the requirement to the construction phase, ESC noted that it welcomes the Applicant's confirmation that Requirement 6 is intended to secure operational and maintenance measures. ESC will review any amended wording once it is submitted into the Examination, and comment as necessary. ESC understands from the Applicant's response to ExQ1 Question 1GEN14. [REP3-069] that it is producing a table listing the relevant planning authorities by name, but intends to continue to use the term "relevant planning authority" due to the DCO covering multiple geographies. ESC looks forward to reviewing this in due course and will provide a further update on its position as appropriate.	
21.4"	Schedule 3 Requirement 9(2) "reinstatement schemes	ESC acknowledges the changes made to Requirement 9(2) in the latest draft DCO [REP3- 006]. ESC is satisfied that the revised wording addresses its concerns that the previous wording could enable large gaps to be left in hedgerows, causing habitat fragmentation. However, ESC acknowledges that the disapplication of Requirement 9 to land above or within 10m of a buried cable could give rise to other impacts, including for agricultural land and soils. ESC therefore welcomes the Applicant's indication that it will reconsider the wording of Requirement 9 in order to address these concerns. ESC will review, and comment as necessary, on any revised wording once it has been submitted into the Examination.	Noted and acknowledged.
22.Any other business		ESC is aware of local concerns regarding the soundness of the Applicant's Need Case for the Sea Link project. The ExA will be aware that ESC has previously raised the topic of Need Case in its Relevant Representation [RR-1420] and in Section 4 of its Local Impact Report [REP1-128]. The ExA will have heard at ISH2 that Interested Parties are requesting further exploration and scrutiny of this matter orally at future Issue Specific Hearings. Whilst ESC understands the ExA's views that the issue of Need Case may be more efficiently considered in writing due to its technical complexities, ESC's Cabinet Member for Energy and Climate Change, together with ESC officers, is sympathetic to the local community's desires to be afforded the opportunity to explore the matter orally. ESC would therefore request that the ExA considers the merits of a discussion on Need Case at a future Issue Specific Hearing and gives due consideration to any requests to this effect received at Deadline 4.	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
23. Close of Hearing		No comment.	Noted.

Table 8.2 Applicant's Comments on the East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-118]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Acquisition Hearing 1, 27 January 2026 East Suffolk Council's Post-Hearing Submission			
2. Section 122 and 123 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)			
2.1	The applicant to briefly outline the case for compulsory acquisition (CA) and temporary possession (TP) and whether it meets the tests of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) including whether all reasonable alternatives have been considered; whether the rights to be acquired are reasonably necessary and proportionate and whether there is a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be acquired.	No Comment	Noted.
2.2	Specific questions regarding, but not limited to; - unregistered land - Suffolk plot: 1/9 - Suffolk plot 1/11, 2/58 and 2/72 - Suffolk plot 1/12 - Suffolk plot 4/7 - Kent plots 2/123 and 2/133	No comment.	Noted.
2.3	The applicant to provide a brief update on the progress of negotiations and deadlines for their conclusion for those parties with outstanding objections.	No comment.	Noted.
2.4	Affected persons to briefly set out any outstanding concerns that have not already been discussed.	ESC reported that it is in active negotiations with the Applicant, which are being conducted by the respective parties' land agents. Issues have been narrowed since the first issue of the Heads of Terms to ESC. There are, however, a number of issues that remain unresolved. ESC is concerned about and queries the extent of the rights sought as compared to the area of Page 3 of 4 land actually required for the development proposed across the plots in question (6/1, 6/2, 6/3, 6/5, 6/6). For instance, ESC considers that the rights sought reflect the land that would be required for a cut and fill approach to laying the cables, where in fact Horizontal Directional Drilling is instead proposed.	The Applicant's Agent issued revised Heads of Terms to the landowner's agent on 17th March 2026 to address the landowner's concerns in relation to restrictions over the easement at surface level. On 26th March 2026, the Applicant's Agent had a Teams meeting with the landowner's agent to discuss the amendments to the Heads of Terms, at this meeting it was agreed further amendments were required. Following this meeting, further revisions to the Heads of Terms were made in relation to restrictions over the easement at surface level and issued to the landowners agent on the same day.

	Subject to resolving all outstanding issues, ESC considers that agreement ought to be reached with the Applicant in respect of the necessary rights within the Examination timetable.	The interest here is Aldeburgh beach and as such The Applicant does not percieve the restrictions imposed by the easement to be limiting in the Council's use and control of the land as beach. The Applicant believes that the terms are agreed in principle with the landowner's agent, subject to feedback from the landowner's agent in relation to the commercial proposals. It is anticipated that an agreement can be reached prior to the close of Examination
3. Sections 130, 132 and 135 of the PA2008 – Special category and Crown land		
No comment.		Noted
4. Sections 127 and 138 of the PA2008 and Schedule 15 of the dDCO – Protective Provisions		
No comment.		Noted
5. Funding		
No comment.		Noted
6. The Equality Act 2010		
No comment.		Noted
7. Any other business		
No comment		Noted
8. Close of Hearing		
No comment.		Noted

Table 8.3 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-119]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
East Suffolk Council’s response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) on environmental issues held on Wednesday 28 January to Friday 30 January 2026 [EV6-033]			
Landscape and Visual			
46.	Heritage Coast – Notwithstanding the applicant’s response to the written question, define the natural beauty and special character of the Heritage Coast.	In defining the natural beauty and special character of the Heritage Coast, ESC refers the ExA to the ‘Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - Natural Beauty and Special Qualities Indicators’ report produced by LDA Design dated 21st November 2016 (attached at Appendix A to this submission) which accurately reflects the natural beauty and character of the National Landscape (formerly AONB) and the Heritage Coast. (For context that report was developed by EDF Energy, as part of their preparatory work for what was then the proposed Sizewell project ‘in consultation and agreement with the AONB Partnership, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council’. ESC also refers the ExA to Suffolk County Council’s ‘Nearshore Waters Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment’ (Appendix B) and the ‘Seascape Character Assessment for Suffolk, South Norfolk and	The Applicant’s position with regard to AP46 is contained within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] .

		North Essex – Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment' (Appendix C).	
47.	Having regard to paragraph 5.10.11 of National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1, can you explain whether you consider the development is compatible with the special character of the Heritage Coast? Applicant, SCC, ESC DL4	ESC considers the main aspect of the development which affects the Heritage Coast to be the HVDC cable transition from seabed to landfall. There will be temporary impacts during the construction phase, however ESC hopes that these can be mitigated by the removal of construction equipment and landscape restoration, plus additional acid grassland creation in the interests of furthering the purposes of National Landscape designation.	The Applicant's position with regard to AP47 is contained within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] .
48	If you consider the development is not compatible with the special character of the Heritage Coast, explain why not and suggest whether this could be overcome by mitigation and if so, provide details of suggested mitigation. SCC, ESC DL4	Based on the information provided by the Applicant, ESC understands that the development is only temporarily incompatible during the construction phase, provided any such incompatibility can be and is mitigated as set out above (see Action Point 47 response).	Response acknowledged.
49	Having regard to paragraph 5.10.32 of the NPS EN-1 which sets out the exceptional circumstances in which the SoS may grant development consent in the AONB, can the relevant local authorities explain whether they think the circumstances are exceptional, and if not, why not? SCC, ESC DL4	As noted above, ESC understands that any detrimental effects will only be temporarily experienced for the duration of construction for the seabed to land transition phase of the construction period. This is provided, however, that any impacts that do arise are fully mitigated (see Action Point 47 response). Should the Secretary of State be minded to approve the project, it may be considered that exceptional circumstances exist but this is subject to ESC's objection to the Sea Link project on the grounds of urgent need – a concern that has not yet been satisfactorily answered by the Applicant.	Response acknowledged. Regarding the need case, Application Document 9.129 Applicants Response to ExQ2 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of Need submitted at Deadline 5 should be referred to.
Cultural Heritage			
52	Heritage assets listed by the applicant [REP3-070] which are scoped out of the ES include those which are described as experiencing an adverse impact, though less than substantial at the lower end of this scale. For example, asset ID 1215749 - Buxlow Manor in Suffolk. For this example and the others like it, provide additional information as to the potential impact to the significance of each asset and further justification as to why it was scoped out. For all relevant Councils and Historic England, is it appropriate to scope out from the ES assessment heritage assets which are considered to have (lower end of)	If any harm is identified to a heritage asset, it is expected that the asset would be scoped into the ES assessment. This is even if there is likely to be a low level of less than substantial harm, as this is still harm. The assets that are assessed as having a low level of less than substantial harm are the Church of St Mary Magdalene (GII*) and its former rectory Sternfield House (GII) in Sternfield and Buxlow Manor (GII*) in Knodishall. ESC does not consider that there would be any harm caused to these assets through impacts on their setting, however if the Applicant considers that there would be, then they should be included in the ES.	The Applicant has provided an updated Cultural Heritage ES Chapter at Deadline 6 which will include assessment of these assets, as provided during Examination in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] .

	less than substantial impact on their significance? Historic England, All relevant Councils, Applicant DL4	

Socio-economics and tourism

102	District and County Councils to provide details as to what tourist accommodation may be available for tourists, taking into account Sea Link and other development workers who may be staying in such accommodation within the construction phases. All relevant Councils DL4	In 2025, ESC commissioned its own review of serviced and non-serviced visitor accommodation. The findings of which indicated that there is significantly less serviced visitor accommodation available within a 60-minute drive time of the construction zone than the Applicant has stated within its Environment Statement. These findings were concerning and in January 2026, ESC were prompted to invite an expert independent consultant to review the Applicants accommodation submission within the Sea Link Environmental Statement. The full review is provided as Appendix A to ESC’s comments on the Applicant’s Deadline 3 submissions, submitted at Deadline 4. Their findings are as follows: <i>‘The Environmental Statement refers to an accommodation inventory within the 60-minute drive time catchment area; however, there is insufficient explanation of the source data, compilation methodology, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and whether the inventory includes only serviced accommodation or also non-serviced/holiday accommodation. This naturally limits auditability and confidence in the conclusions drawn.</i> <i>Our findings, using the latest available data (2024/5) from industry sources, at the time of our study we showed that there are 249 serviced establishments with 4,221 rooms in the 60-minute travel zone. This contrasts sharply with the 7,038 tourist accommodation “inventory rooms” in local hotels, bed & breakfasts and Inns as reported in the ES, seemingly in 2023.’</i> The difference in total serviced accommodation count by ESC and the Applicant means that that accommodation analysis provided by the Applicant needs to be reviewed. Additionally, further research is required to understand exactly how the ESC data will translate into the availability of accommodation for non-home-based workers and consequent impact on the accommodation available to visitors during the construction period.	The Applicant has provided a response to this in Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Response to Second Written Questions (please refer to 2SERT1 in [REP5-135]).

Draft development consent order

114.	Consider and provide a response to the position that SPR do not have an equivalent to article 10 in their DCOs Applicant Scottish Power Renewables ESC, SCC DL4	ESC understands that the UK Supreme Court case ‘Hillside Parks Ltd v Snowdonia National Park Authority’ judgement (given on 2nd November 2022) post-dated the SPR EA1N and EA2 DCOs (issued 22nd March 2022), hence no need was identified at that time for an equivalent to Article 10 in the SPR DCOs. That said, as noted at ISH 2, ESC reserves its position as to both the need for Article 10 and whether it is acceptable in law.	The Applicant notes this response.
115.	All parties (applicant and councils) to meet/liaise to agree suitable wording of article 10 which all	A virtual meeting between parties and legal representatives was held on 3 rd February 2026 to discuss the matter. Discussions between the parties remain ongoing at Deadline 4. An update as to	The Applicant notes this response.

	parties are content with, with an update on progress and any agreement submitted. Applicant, all local councils	the position will be provided to the ExA as soon as may be practicable.	
116	All parties (including NGV, SPR and Manston airport) from onshore of offshore existing or potential future consent to comment on article 10. All parties DL4	As above – see response to Action Point to 115.	The Applicant notes this response.
120	Councils and consultees to provide comments on the table setting out the relevant planning authorities and consultees. All local councils and consultees identified DL5	To follow at Deadline 5. ESC confirms that it will review the Applicant's table within the explanatory memorandum – to be submitted at Deadline 4, in response to Action Point 119 – which confirms which documents that are to be submitted in outline and sets out details of the relevant planning authorities and consultees and will respond at Deadline 5	The Applicant notes this response.
Design			
131	Suggest alternative wording for requirement 3 including which above ground elements of the proposed development should be included. Relevant planning authorities DL4	Following a request from the ExA for local authorities to discuss revised wording of Requirement 3 of the dDCO, ESC met with SCC, Thanet District Council (TDC) and Kent County Council (KCC). ESC understood that it was agreed at ISH2 for the Applicant to be provided with the relevant planning authorities' suggested revised wording outside of the Examination. However, this Action Point requests that relevant planning authorities 'suggest alternative wording for requirement 3 including which above ground elements of the proposed development should be included'. ESC has therefore provided the ExA with its suggested Requirement 3 wording below. Whilst a discussion on the general approach was agreed between ESC, SCC, TDC, and KCC in this meeting, the ExA should note that, the below wording has subsequently been agreed between SCC, TDC and ESC only. SCC's Deadline 4 submissions provide further context and explanation of the rationale for this proposed wording. The following text is proposed: 3. Detailed design parameters onshore — (1) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 3B (Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (2) No stage of Work No. 3A (Access road to the Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and	Refer to Applicant's response to 2GEN5 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Response to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] and 3GEN10 of Application Document 9.136: Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions .

external appearance of the River Fromus Bridge have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the River Fromus Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3A must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

(3) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 1B (new Substation at Grove Wood, Friston) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 1B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

(4) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 9B (Kent Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 9B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

5) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 11 (new Kent substation) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 11 must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (6) In this requirement, “the design details” means the Critical Design Constraints, Overarching Design Principles, and the Project Level Design Principles.

Table 8.4 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-120]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
East Suffolk Council’s response to The Examining Authority’s Supplementary agenda additional questions for Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [EV6-003]			
ISH2.01.	<u>Planning and Infrastructure Act</u> The Government’s Planning and Infrastructure Act received Royal Assent on Thursday 18 December 2025. The applicant, local authorities and all IPs are invited to submit comments on the new Act in relation to any implications for the examination of this application.	ESC has no specific comments to make regarding the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 at this time but reserves its right to comment at a later stage as may be necessary/appropriate during the examination.	The Applicant has no comments on this matter.
ISH2.02	National Policy Statements Applicant, local authorities and IPs The following National Policy Statements (NPS) were designated on 6 January 2026: EN-1, EN-3, EN-5. Considering paragraph 1.6.3 of EN-1 (2026) whilst the revised NPS’s will only have effect in relation to those applications for development consent accepted for examination after 6 January 2026 they are capable of being important and relevant considerations in the decisionmaking process for this application. Applicant: Review the application documents (in particular but not limited to ES part 1, chapter 2 Regulatory and Planning Context [APP-043]) in light of the newly designated NPSs and provide any updates and amendments as necessary. Local authorities and interested parties: Submit any comments in relation to any implications of the newly designated NPSs for the examination of this application.	ESC has no specific comments to make at this time other than to comment that the recently designated NPSs, although of course being capable of being important and relevant considerations in the decision-making process for this Application, do not have effect in respect of the Sea Link Project due to the transitional provisions in paragraphs 1.6.2 and 1.6.3 of EN-1 which provides that they ‘will therefore have effect only in relation to those applications for development consent accepted for examination after the final publication of those amendments’ (i.e. only in respect of applications accepted after 6 January 2026). The January 2024 versions of the NPSs therefore have effect for the Sea Link Project. As such ESC, is not proposing to revise/update its Local Impact Report [REP1-128] as submitted to this examination, following designation of the NPSs. ESC, however, reserves its right to comment at a later stage on this matter as may be necessary/appropriate during the examination,	The Applicant acknowledges ESC’s position.
Landscape and visual			
SH2.022.	Advance mitigation planting Applicant/relevant planning authorities. Requirement 6 of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP3-006] does not secure advanced planting, as it only	ESC recommends that the wording of ‘pre-commencement operations’ within Article 2 [REP3-006] is amended as follows (additions/deletions shown underlined and in bold): ‘pre-commencement operations” means— (a) operations consisting of engineering investigations and surveys; (b) environmental (including archaeological) investigations and monitoring; (c) surveys and monitoring investigations for the	The Applicant will address the substance of this point in its response to ExQ3 3LVIA1.

	prevents the authorised development from commencing, so could not be enforced for advanced planting. It therefore needs to be secured separately in the dDCO. Could advance mitigation planting be added to precommencement operations in article 2, with a requirement that pre-commencement operations cannot be carried out until details of advance planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation? Suggest some wording	purpose of assessing ground conditions; (d) diversion and laying of services; (e) demolition of existing buildings; (f) site clearance; (g) environmental mitigation measures; (h) remediation in respect of any contamination or other adverse ground conditions; (i) set up works associated with the establishment of construction compounds; (j) temporary accesses; (k) erection of any temporary means of enclosure or temporary demarcation fencing marking out site boundaries; and (l) the temporary display of site notices or advertisements; and (m) early planting of landscaping works’. ESC supports the ExA’s suggestion that a requirement be included exclusively stating that ‘pre-commencement operations’ cannot be carried out until details of advance planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation. ESC awaits and will consider the Applicant’s submitted draft wording in response to this ISH2.022 and will provide comments as necessary in response.	
Design			
ISH2.028	Limit to deviation for Fromus Bridge Applicant/relevant planning authorities Provide suggested wording for adding this to article 5 of the dDCO.	ESC recommends that the wording of Article 5 [REP3-006] is amended to provide for the addition of the following wording within the ‘Table of Parameters’ at Paragraph (3)(b) – - Work: ‘3A (a)’ - Type of structure: ‘Access bridge over River Fromus’ - Height: ‘[X]m above finished ground level’ ESC, as advised by its Senior Design and Heritage Officer, is of the view that the lowest feasible option should be adopted which, it is understood, is a 4 meter soffit height above the Q95 flow level. ESC understands from the Environment Agency’s response to ExQ1 Question 1WE6. [REP3-104] that it is ‘willing to accept a 4m soffit height [above the Q95 flow level], subject to the inclusion of a monitoring and contingency plan’. Therefore, subject to the inclusion of a monitoring and contingency plan being agreed between the Environment Agency and the Applicant, ESC hopes that a 4 metre soffit height above the Q95 flow level can be agreed. ESC’s above proposed drafting for Article 5 of the dDCO refers to the height measured from ‘finished ground level’ (for consistency), rather than existing ground level at this part of the site. This is required in order to account for any change in ground level heights during site preparation works. A height measured from the Q95 flow level would also not be enforceable, as the river flow level at the point of measurement is unlikely to be exactly the Q95 flow level, which is a calculated value. In addition, the proposed drafting for Article 5 of the dDCO will of course provide the maximum height for the bridge and as such must also take into account the height between the soffit and parapet (including guard railing and any mounted equipment). Section 7.3 of the Design Approach Document – Suffolk [REP1A-029] includes a ‘Sketch Long Section across the bridge through the River Fromus’ for the ‘Compromise Option’ (i.e. the option with a 5 metre soffit height above the Q95 flow level). If a reduction in soffit height to 4 metres above the Q95 level is agreed with the Environment Agency, ESC requests that a scaled cross-sectional diagram illustrating all measurements for this option is prepared by the Applicant and submitted into the	The Applicant will address the design details of the Fromus bridge in its responses to several questions posed by the ExA on this point, including ExQ3 3GEN5, 3GEN8 and 3CH3.

	Examination, and added to the documents to be certified listed in Schedule 19 to the dDCO. This can then inform the height above finished ground level prescribed in the Table of Parameters at Article 5(3)(b) for Work. No. 3A(a). This additional wording in Article 5 is required in order to provide ESC with certainty that the maximum height of the bridge crossing will represent the solution that results in the least heritage harm as discussed and considered during this Examination.

Table 8.5 Applicant’s Comments on the East Suffolk Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-184]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
2. ESC’s comments on ‘Document 9.73: Applicant’s Responses to First Written Questions’ (Version A) [REP3-069]			
2.1 to 2.5	Question 1LVIA4 Lighting design parameters	ESC noted in its response to Question 1LVIA4. of ExQ1 that the lighting design parameters are not expressly to be approved. There is, for example, no outline lighting management plan to be certified nor detailed plan to be approved under Requirement 6 that includes details of the operational lighting. ESC considers that this is clearly necessary. ESC has reviewed the Applicant’s response to Question 1LVIA4. of ExQ1. The Applicant states that ‘details of operational lighting would be submitted to the relevant planning authority (with relevant county authorities required to be consulted) to allow them to confirm the details are in general accordance with Table 3.1 design principle N.4’ as part of a discharge of Requirement 3 (Converter Station Design). This Design Principle (ID N.4, [APP-366]) requires the management of light spillage by minimising the provision of lighting in order to comply with the dark skies strategy. It is stated that a technical statement could be provided for the external lighting designs, including a strategy for the site, how lighting provision has been minimised, and details of fittings and lighting profiles, controls, and energy efficiency ratings. Whilst ESC welcomes this in principle, it is concerned that the suggestion of producing a technical statement as a ‘potential associated activity’ is not a strong enough control, particularly given that the wording of Requirement 3 of the dDCO [REP3-006] as currently drafted only requires the submitted details to be in general accordance with the Key Design Principles. ESC therefore continues to request that the Applicant adopts a similar approach to that taken by ScottishPower Renewables in its East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO DCOs and prepares an outline lighting management plan to be certified, with a more detailed Lighting Management Plan to be prepared post-consent for approval under Requirement 6. Furthermore, the Applicant acknowledges itself that ‘design principle N.4 does not include operational lighting design for substations’ in response to 1LVIA4. There is, therefore, currently no mechanism for approval of the operational lighting for Friston Substation, should a Scenario 2 connection be pursued. Preparation of an Outline Lighting Management Plan, and a requirement for a more detailed Lighting Management Plan to be	A nighttime assessment is provided within Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137]. The Applicant has provided an Outline Lighting Strategy at Deadline 6 (Application Document 9.147 Outline Operational Lighting Management Plan). Refer to Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] at AP129 for updated details on lighting controls.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		approved post-consent, would therefore also ensure that operational lighting at the substation is minimised in line with the dark skies strategy	
Applicant's Response to Question 1AQ1. of ExQ1			
2.6	REAC	The Applicant states that measure CC03 in the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments ('REAC') [REP3-078] has been revised to remove the commitment to using only SF6-free switchgear. Measure CC03 of the updated REAC now reads: ' <i>The Applicant is proposing to use both SF6-insulated and SF6-free equipment for the project. This is primarily driven by the availability of SF6-free circuit breakers. However, GIS manufacturers now produce switchgear that have no or minimal leakage.</i> '	Measure CC03 of the REAC was updated at Deadline 5 (Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]). The updated measure now secures a design-stage review of SF₆-free alternatives, requires the Applicant to provide justification where SF₆-reliant assets are unavoidable, and commits to the preparation and implementation of an SF₆ emissions monitoring and control plan compliant with the Fluorinated Gas Regulation and any successor legislation. The measure also confirms that any SF₆-reliant assets installed will be subject to low-leakage specifications and that, where such equipment is required, the design will, wherever practicable, accommodate the potential for future replacement with SF₆-free alternatives. The measure has been further updated at Deadline 6 to include a commitment to re-use SF₆ recovered from decommissioned equipment wherever practicable, should SF₆-insulated switchgear be required.
2.7	Health Impacts	ESC does not have the necessary expertise to comment in depth on the health impacts of this change.	SF₆ insulated switchgear is widely used across the electricity industry and is considered safe when operated and maintained in accordance with standard procedures. SF₆ itself is chemically inert, nontoxic, and non-flammable. The primary concern associated with SF₆ is climate rather than health related, due to its high global warming potential. This is why the Applicant has committed to using SF₆ free equipment where available and to selecting modern switchgear with minimal leakage rates where SF₆ free alternatives are not yet commercially viable.
2.8-2.17	Climate change and air quality	However, with regard to impacts on climate change, SF6 is one of the most potent greenhouse gases and even small leakages can have a significantly higher impact than CO₂. As a result, ESC understands that the EU has begun to phase out SF6-insulated switchgear, and alternative solutions are being developed. The Applicant states that SF6 is not considered to be a local air quality pollutant, and its effects on local air quality are likely to be minimal and shortterm. The Applicant would be grateful if the ExA would test this statement. In addition, the Applicant does not appear to have commented on the climate change effects of this change. This is an unacceptable omission and ESC asks that the Applicant provides further detail in this regard The Applicant has stated that its move away from committing to the use of SF6-free switchgear has been 'primarily driven by the availability of SF6-free circuit breakers'. Whilst ESC cannot comment on the validity of	The Applicant has provided a full explanation of how the use of SF₆ has been addressed in the design, procurement and mitigation strategy for the Proposed Project (see the response to question 2AQ1 in Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135]). SF₆ is not a local air quality pollutant, and its presence does not give rise to adverse effects on local air quality receptors. This position reflects established air quality guidance, which does not identify SF₆ as a pollutant of concern for local air quality objectives. Accordingly, any effects would be limited in spatial extent and duration, and would not result in adverse local air quality impacts. The Applicant fully recognises that SF₆ is a potent greenhouse gas and has therefore adopted a precautionary

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		this claim, ESC strongly objects to the use of SF6-insulated switchgear, owing to their significant environmental impacts. ESC requests that the Applicant provides evidence to support its claims of equipment shortage. ESC would also query how the Applicant can be confident that equipment availability at the point of construction will be the same as at the present time. ESC considers it would be appropriate for the REAC commitment to commit to SF6-free switchgear, unless the Applicant can demonstrate to stakeholders’ satisfaction that equipment shortages mean this is not feasible. The Applicant should be required to demonstrate that this is the position at the time of procurement – should consent for the Project be given. Furthermore, ESC notes that the National Grid website states: ‘Where we do still need to use SF6 (such as for maintenance), we re-use SF6 from decommissioned equipment wherever possible.’ ESC therefore requests that the Applicant includes a commitment to the use of SF6 from decommissioned equipment in the event that the use of SF6- insulated switchgear is required. The Applicant also claims that switchgear with ‘no or minimal leakage’ is now available. National Grid’s website states: <i>‘Electrical switchgear using SF6 is designed to avoid the release of the gas into the atmosphere, but small quantities are released during the lifecycle of the equipment: manufacture, installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning. Larger leaks can also occur during its lifecycle, for example due to equipment malfunction.’</i> ESC is therefore extremely concerned that the Applicant has downplayed the potential for leakage. In summary, ESC is not satisfied that the Applicant has adequately justified its decision to go back on its commitment to using SF6-free switchgear. If sufficient justification can be provided, ESC considers that measure CC03 in the REAC requires amendments to ensure that the Applicant is committed to using SF6-free switchgear where feasible.	and mitigation-led approach to its use. SF₆ has been avoided wherever technically feasible, and a significant proportion of the Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) equipment associated with the Proposed Project will be SF₆-free. In particular, Friston Substation will utilise SF₆-free General Electric switchgear. Where SF₆-reliant equipment remains necessary, this reflects the current availability, technical maturity and deliverability of suitable alternatives for specific switchgear components. As set out in the detailed response (see the response to question 2AQ1 in Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135]), alternatives for certain applications are not yet technically proven or available within programme constraints. The Applicant considers it appropriate that final decisions on equipment selection are informed by market availability at the point of detailed design and procurement, rather than fixed at application stage. Modern GIS equipment is designed to achieve very low leakage rates, and any SF₆-reliant assets will be subject to strict monitoring, handling and maintenance requirements in full compliance with the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gas (F-gas) Regulation and any successor legislation. The Applicant does not underestimate the potential for leakage and has committed to robust control measures throughout the equipment lifecycle. The updated Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Application Document 9.84 (C) [REP5-115]) secures these controls through Measure CC03, which now: • requires a design-stage review of SF₆-free alternatives; • requires documented justification where SF₆-reliant assets are unavoidable; • commits to the preparation and implementation of an SF₆ emissions monitoring and control plan compliant with the F-gas Regulation; • requires low-leakage specifications for any SF₆-reliant equipment; and • requires the design, wherever practicable, to accommodate future replacement with SF₆-free alternatives. In direct response to ESC’s request, the measure has been further strengthened at Deadline 6 to include a commitment that, where SF₆-insulated switchgear is required, SF₆ recovered from decommissioned equipment will be re-used wherever practicable.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
2.18-2.21	Suffolk Onshore Scheme and tourism	ESC does not accept the Applicant’s conclusion that the Suffolk Onshore element of the Sea Link project (‘the Suffolk Onshore Scheme’) will not have an impact on the East Suffolk tourism industry. It is patently clear that the detrimental impact during construction and the visual impact once the scheme is operational will have a serious impact on local tourism and it is disappointing – to say the least - that the Applicant is making such untenable claims. ESC recently commissioned Visitor Perceptions Research that identified a group of 4,000 past or future East Suffolk visitors and divided them into seven segments or category of visitor. Within this group are the Relaxation Seekers; a significant portion of visitors who associate the area specifically with "peacefulness," "nature," and "beauty". This group are at risk of being displaced by the cumulative effect of multiple NSIP projects in East Suffolk. A perception of ‘industrialisation’ conflicts with the primary driver for visitation in both the ‘Relaxation Seekers’ and another segment, the ‘Self-Caterers’.	The Applicant acknowledges ESC’s comments and the need to consider potential effects on East Suffolk’s tourism industry, particularly in a cumulative context. A response to this matter in provided in Application Document 9.40 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065]. The findings confirm that while perception surveys may indicate concern prior to construction, there is limited robust evidence to demonstrate that this leads to material adverse effects on visitor numbers, spending, or the wider tourism economy. This supports the conclusion in Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 [REP1A-005] that no significant adverse effects on tourism are anticipated.
Applicant’s Response to Question 1SERT2. of ExQ1			
2.22-2.24	construction workers and tourists	The Applicant states that construction workers and tourists can be considered to have broadly similar spending habits. ESC has not identified any evidence to support this claim in fact, and has conveyed its position on this matter in its response to Question 1SERT2. of ExQ1 [REP3-085]. The spending habits of visitors and tourists are well understood and measured by the tourism industry on an annual basis. The impact of non-home-based (NHB) workers on available visitor accommodation stock and how they spend their money within the local economy is less clear. The Applicant assumes that both visitors and workers spend money primarily on accommodation, food and drink, supporting the same local hospitality businesses. These high-level assumptions may be logical but provide no insight into the types of accommodation or food and drink providers used. This is important because, for example, food and drink establishments which cater to the needs of visitors may not be so attractive to workers who are in East Suffolk for employment purposes.	The Applicant’s EIA is comprehensive and robust. ESC does not provide any evidence to support its suggestion that construction workers and local residents will eat and drink at different establishments, nor is it explained why such differences could give rise to effects of significance.
Applicant’s Response to Questions 1SERT3. and 1SERT4. of ExQ1			
2.25-2.26	construction workers and tourists	If constructed purely in isolation, it could be that elements of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme would not, during the construction period, have a detrimental impact on visitor numbers in East Suffolk, although clearly certain elements will be seriously detrimental and in reality, of course, Sea Link will not be constructed in isolation. ESC would draw attention to the number and scope of the multiple NSIP developments under construction in East Suffolk which is without precedent, and to its knowledge, without compare. This unique circumstance means that reference to the methodologies and findings of other NSIP application documents, whilst possibly of occasional interest, should not and cannot be applied or transferred to East Suffolk. No two	The Applicant acknowledges ESC’s comments and the need to consider potential effects on the visitor economy, particularly in a cumulative context. A response to this matter in provided in Application Document 9.40 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065]. The findings confirm that while perceptions may indicate concern prior to construction, there is limited robust evidence to demonstrate that this leads to material adverse effects on visitor numbers, spending, or the wider tourism economy. This supports the conclusion in Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		projects are the same and for the Applicant to claim otherwise is irrational.	Chapter 10 [REP1A-005] that no significant adverse effects on tourism are anticipated.
2.27-2.28	Sizewell C	The Sizewell C Project Environmental Statement, Chapter 9 Socioeconomics (provided as Appendix A to this submission) argued that ‘there is limited empirical evidence that the Sizewell C project would lead to a quantifiable reduction in visitor numbers or a change in visitor behaviour.’ However, that said, Sizewell C recognised and accepted that there would still be the potential for the tourist economy to be adversely affected as a result of the Sizewell C Project and made available a Tourism Fund to ‘develop mitigation measures to reduce this risk and promote the area in order to reduce the risk of perceived changes in visitor behaviour from materialising.’	The Applicant acknowledges ESC’s comments and the need to consider potential effects on the visitor economy, particularly in a cumulative context. A response to this matter is provided in Application Document 9.40 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065]. The findings confirm that while perceptions may indicate concern prior to construction, there is limited robust evidence to demonstrate that this leads to material adverse effects on visitor numbers, spending, or the wider tourism economy. This supports the conclusion in Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 [REP1A-005] that no significant adverse effects on tourism are anticipated.
2.29	Construction impacts	The Local Government Association New Nuclear Local Authorities Group (‘NNLAG’) has commissioned studies into the impacts of the construction of Hinkley Point C (‘HPC’). One aim of the second study (‘Hinkley Point C Peak Construction: Impacts Monitoring and Auditing Study (2023-24)’), submitted into the Sea Link Examination as Appendix B to this submission) was to revisit and refresh a series of key performance indicators (‘KPIs’) used in the 2019 HPC Study 1. These KPIs relate to six key sectors used in the study: economic development, transport, social and community, accommodation, environmental health, and biophysical environment	Noted.
2.30		Tourism business confidence was one measure within the economic development sector group. The findings of the 2023-2024 study recorded that business confidence was above a baseline of 35% and stood at 46% in 2018 but lacked any recent confidence data after that date. Another measure, tourist perception data (Survey of impact of HPC on Somerset tourism, Qa Research, 2023) suggested that over 90% of tourists are not affected by HPC construction activity. ESC has not been able to undertake a review of the survey data but notes that the measure is one of perception and not a measure of the number of visitors to the Hinkley Point C area. Drawing on the above data, and bearing in mind, as noted, that no two projects are the same, ESC remains extremely concerned regarding the potential impact of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme and other NSIPs on visitor numbers to East Suffolk.	The Applicant notes ESC’s comments.

Applicant’s Response to Question 1SERT5. of ExQ1

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
2.34-2.36	Cumulative effect	The Applicant considers that there is unlikely to be any notable decline in tourism numbers and tourism industry revenue as a result of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme. ESC has noted the Applicant's review of other NSIP developments and its analysis of potential effects on tourism and visitor activity. This is not, however, a comparison of like with like and, ESC is less than convinced by the Applicant's predictions which it does not believe will be the case for the reasons outlined below. s previously stated, ESC considers that the number and scope of multiple NSIP developments in East Suffolk is without precedent, and to its knowledge, without compare. This unique circumstance means that reference to the methodologies and findings of other NSIP application documents, whilst useful, should not and cannot be simply applied and transferred to East Suffolk. On the contrary, ESC considers that the Applicant's untested assumption and predictions should be treated with extreme caution.	The Applicant notes ESC's comments.
Applicant's Response to Question 1SERT6. of ExQ1			
2.37-2.38	Tourism asset	ESC wishes to emphasise the importance of Snape Maltings as a local and indeed national tourism and economic asset to the visitor economy. In addition, ESC will work with its partners, including Snape Maltings, to monitor any unforeseen adverse impacts during the construction phase of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme	This is noted.
Applicant's Response to Question 1SERT7. of ExQ1			
2.1	Skills and employment Plan	ESC has previously expressed in detail its view that the Applicant must prepare a Skills and Employment Plan in its response to ExQ1 Question 1SERT7 [REP3-085]. ESC fails to understand why the Applicant would not consider an Employment and Skills Plan for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme to be an essential element of its application. The project presents a significant opportunity to engage with the wider community including young people and job seekers to raise awareness of the work and career opportunities within the energy sector. ESC understands that the Applicant will be submitting an update on its position regarding the preparation of a Skills and Employment Plan at Deadline 4. ESC will review this and provide comments, as necessary, at Deadline 5. ESC notes the Applicant's ongoing involvement with regional programmes in support of employment, skills and education, providing that these activities support local priorities and are connected into local skills and education provision.	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6.
ESC's comments on 'Document 9.36: Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2' (Version A) [REP1A-029]			
3.1-3.3	design of the project,	ESC acknowledges that a new measure (MPE08) has been added to the REAC [REP3-078] which commits the Applicant to undertaking further analysis to consider the potential for coastal erosion over the lifetime of the project in line with the final Offshore Construction and Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP'). This information must be used to inform the	MPE08 commits the Applicant "to consider the potential for coastal erosion over the lifetime of the project in line with the Final Offshore Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)."

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		detailed design of the project, to ensure that the very real risk of future exposure of the offshore burial cables is as reduced as far as practicable. The Applicant states, in its comments on Section 7.8 of ESC's Deadline 2 submission [REP3-064], that 'as a follow-up action to this analysis, the monitoring approach can be developed to focus on the beach profile and erosion processes and rates, with an appropriate monitoring schedule for the lifetime of the Proposed Project'. Whilst ESC welcomes this proposal, it queries where this commitment to adapting the monitoring approach following this further analysis, and establishing an appropriate monitoring schedule, is secured. ESC suggests that REAC measure MPE08 could be amended to include this additional detail.	
ESC's comments on 'Document 9.40: Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk' (Version A) [REP3-065]			
4.1-4.8	Introduction	ESC welcomes the opportunity to review the Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065] submitted by the Applicant in response to concerns raised by ESC regarding the potentially adverse impacts of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme on the visitor economy. ESC notes that within the document, the Applicant maintains its overarching conclusion that the Suffolk Onshore Scheme is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on visitors or tourism. ESC does not accept this conclusion and provides further information below, and within the Appendices to this submission, that support ESC's position. ESC is of the view that the Applicant has totally failed to recognise and accept that the in-combination and cumulative impacts of multiple NSIP developments in East Suffolk have the potential to adversely affect the visitor economy. Such impacts should be – and should have been – addressed by the Applicant, and to refuse so to do is unacceptable. ESC maintains that within a complex and evolving economic environment, conclusions cannot be drawn in absolute terms or with complete certainty. ESC has previously stated that the number and scope of multiple NSIP developments in East Suffolk is without precedent, and to its knowledge, without compare. This unique circumstance means that reference to the methodologies and findings of other NSIP application documents, whilst useful, cannot be viewed as being applicable or transferable to East Suffolk. ESC considers that the continued absence of any identified intention to establish long-term, continuous monitoring and assessment of potential socioeconomic impacts of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme on the visitor economy constitutes a fundamental failure of the Applicant's assessment. Neither the Applicant nor ESC can predict the future with certainty, and the absence of any proposed monitoring means that it is impossible to identify any of the inevitable negative changes in the visitor economy, and to plan appropriate interventions. Accordingly, ESC urges the Applicant to commit to long-term, continuous monitoring and assessment. ESC's comments below consider the three key areas addressed by the Applicant within the Technical Note in turn: Tourist and Visitor Attractions, Tourist Accommodation Impacts, and Visitor Perception Impacts.	The Applicant maintains the view that the cumulative impacts will not have a significant effect on tourism. In addition, a response to this matter regarding monitoring of tourism impacts is provided in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions against 3SERT2.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		ESC presents its own commissioned report that challenges the findings and conclusions of the Applicant's review of visitor accommodation (Appendix C). Appendices E and F include the findings of ESC's recently commissioned Visitor Perception Research, which is helping ESC understand who visits East Suffolk and why. This research also provides an insight into visitor perceptions and behaviours following the commencement of construction of the Sizewell C project.	
4.9-4.11	Tourist and Visitor Attractions	ESC maintains that it is insufficient to consider impacts of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme on individual tourism assets solely in terms of any temporary or permanent land take impacts and severance of access. ESC also cannot accept the Applicant's conclusion that there will be no significant inter-project cumulative effects on visitor and tourism receptors. For reasons previously outlined by ESC, including in Section 7.8.7 of its Local Impact Report [REP1-128], the Applicant's assessment methodology fails to consider the complexities and interdependency of tourism receptors and their collective contribution towards a successful visitor economy. The impacts of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme on individual receptors should not be measured in isolation, and not without consideration of the wider effects on the visitor economy.	This is addressed above. ESC's view that a more nuanced analysis is required is noted but the Applicant maintains that its EIA is robust and comprehensive.
4.12-4.17		ESC is not alone in recognising the visitor economy as a complex system. In 2021, the then government invited Nick de Bois, Chair of the Visit England Advisory Board, to review and make recommendations regarding the structure, management, and funding of destination management in England. The de Bois Review: an independent review of destination management organisations in England, which is provided as Appendix D to this submission, supports the claims made by ESC. Paragraph 8 of the Executive Summary recognises that the tourism industry 'fundamentally [understands] that tourism is an ecosystem' and the success of one business is 'intrinsically linked to the success of the destination as a whole'. The report later goes on to illustrate this: 'Tourists do not just visit a hotel – they stay in one while doing other things in the local area, so for the hotel to be successful, it needs a strong set of local attractions, safe and clean streets, places for its guests to eat and drink, excellent public amenities and effective transport connectivity – to name a few.' This means that construction impacts of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme on individual receptors can create wider, seemingly unconnected, impacts on the visitor economy as a whole and should therefore be recognised and addressed within the assessment. Visit England were subsequently tasked with implementing the far-reaching recommendations of the de Bois Review; restructuring England's destination management structures into a portfolio of tiered organisations that determine tourism strategy, manage and coordinate activities, and market destinations in support of the growth and development of the visitor economy.	The Applicant's position is addressed above. The Applicant is of the view that the cumulative impacts will not have a significant effect on tourism.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Destination Management Plans or Tourism Strategies reflect a systems approach to supporting and developing visitor economies through a developed understanding of all components within the system. These can include tangible assets such as local infrastructure, attractions, accommodation, and amenities; as well as intangible assets such as the perception and reputation of a destination; all of which contribute to the overall visitor experience and success of the destination.	
4.18-4.20	Tourist Accommodation Impacts	ESC has reviewed Section 3.3 of the Technical Note and Paragraphs 10.7.31- 10.7.32 and 10.9.18-10.9.25 of 'Document 6.2.2.10 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socioeconomics, Recreation and Tourism' (Version B) [REP1A-005]. Following this review, ESC remains seriously concerned that there is insufficient evidence for the Applicant to state, with any confidence or certainty, that the available visitor accommodation within a 60-minute drive of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme can accommodate the non-home-based workforce without causing potential harm to the visitor economy. It is ESC's view that non-home-based workers could compete with visitors for accommodation, and in a worst-case scenario, there is a very strong potential for the in-combination cumulative demand effects of multiple NSIP developments to exceed the supply of visitor accommodation.	The Applicant has considered this point in detail in Application Document 9.117 Applicant's Response to AP104 from Issue Specific Hearing 2 , and subsequently within Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Response to Second Written Questions (please refer to 2SERT3). Additionally, through REAC commitments SE04 and SE05 , the Applicant will maintain ongoing engagement with tourism stakeholders and monitor worker accommodation patterns.
4.24-4.26		It has to be pointed out, however, that ESC's own view is uncertain for the simple reason that the Applicant's explanation of the source data, compilation methodology, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and whether the inventory includes only serviced accommodation or also non-serviced/holiday accommodation is worryingly inadequate and thereby fails to supply the information required nor meet acceptable standards. This inevitably limits auditability and confidence in the conclusions drawn. In 2025, ESC commissioned Hotel Solutions and Forward Land to conduct an East Suffolk Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Study. The study will contribute towards a Tourist Accommodation Plan to mitigate the impacts of Sizewell C worker demand set in context of a wider East Suffolk Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study. The Final Report is due to be published in Quarter 1, 2026. ESC does have sight of the Interim Results of the study and the headline serviced and non-serviced accommodation count is presented in Figure 1 below. Figure 1 shows that there are 249 serviced establishments (Hotels, Venues, Pubs & Inns and Bed & Breakfasts) with 4,221 rooms in the 60-minute travel zone. This contrasts sharply with the 7,038 tourist accommodation "inventory rooms" in local hotels, bed & breakfasts and inns as reported by the Applicant at Paragraph 10.7.32 of Chapter 10 (Socioeconomics, Recreation and Tourism) of the ES [REP1A-005]. Clearly the conflicting results are a cause for concern. That conflict alone suggests that the Applicant's conclusion that the construction workforce could be accommodated within the local accommodation sector must be called into question.	See the above response.
4.27-4.28		To address this concern, ESC invited Forward Land and Hotel Solutions to provide an independent assessment of the Applicant's submission	See the above response.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments																																																																						
		documents. The Review of Tourist Accommodation Assessment (Sea Link NSIP) can be found in Appendix C to this submission. Within this review, Forward Land and Hotel Solutions concluded that: <i>‘Whilst the applicant has sought to demonstrate that accommodation capacity is sufficient, the evidence base is undermined by a lack of transparency, reliance on generalised assumptions, and limited local market grounding. Given East Suffolk’s tourism sensitivity and the potential for cumulative construction demand, we do not consider the submitted accommodation assessment sufficiently robust to support a conclusion of no adverse effects without further clarification and evidence. We would recommend that any decisions be deferring pending the presentation of more detailed information to allow more thorough appraisals.’</i>																																																																							
4.29		ESC does not accept the findings of the Applicant’s analysis of Tourism Accommodation Impacts and cannot do so until the Applicant provides the clarifications and further evidence identified within the Forward Land and Hotel Solutions review document. TOTAL 60 MINUTE ACCOMMODATION SUPPLY <table><tr><th>SIZEWELL C: 60 MINUTE TRAVEL ZONE</th><th>ESTABLISHMENTS</th><th>ROOMS / UNITS / PITCHES</th><th>BEDSPACES</th><th>BEDSPACES % OF STUDY AREA</th></tr><tr><td>Hotels</td><td>78</td><td>3,275</td><td>6,550</td><td>12%</td></tr><tr><td>Wedding Venues</td><td>4</td><td>71</td><td>142</td><td>0.3%</td></tr><tr><td>Pubs & Inns</td><td>50</td><td>325</td><td>650</td><td>1%</td></tr><tr><td>Guest Houses/ B&Bs</td><td>117</td><td>550</td><td>1,100</td><td>2%</td></tr><tr><td>Total Serviced</td><td>249</td><td>4,221</td><td>8,442</td><td>16%</td></tr><tr><td>% of Study Area</td><td>4%</td><td>17%</td><td>15%</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Self-Catering & Glamping</td><td>5,172</td><td>11,882</td><td>24,931</td><td>44%</td></tr><tr><td>Camping - Caravan Sites</td><td>136</td><td>4,433</td><td>9,463</td><td>17%</td></tr><tr><td>Holiday Parks</td><td>24</td><td>3,630</td><td>13,438</td><td>24%</td></tr><tr><td>Hostels and Retreats</td><td>4</td><td>71</td><td>205</td><td>0.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Total Non-Serviced</td><td>5,336</td><td>20,016</td><td>48,037</td><td>85%</td></tr><tr><td>% of Study Area</td><td>96%</td><td>83%</td><td>85%</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Total Accommodation</td><td>5,585</td><td>24,237</td><td>56,479</td><td></td></tr></table>	SIZEWELL C: 60 MINUTE TRAVEL ZONE	ESTABLISHMENTS	ROOMS / UNITS / PITCHES	BEDSPACES	BEDSPACES % OF STUDY AREA	Hotels	78	3,275	6,550	12%	Wedding Venues	4	71	142	0.3%	Pubs & Inns	50	325	650	1%	Guest Houses/ B&Bs	117	550	1,100	2%	Total Serviced	249	4,221	8,442	16%	% of Study Area	4%	17%	15%		Self-Catering & Glamping	5,172	11,882	24,931	44%	Camping - Caravan Sites	136	4,433	9,463	17%	Holiday Parks	24	3,630	13,438	24%	Hostels and Retreats	4	71	205	0.4%	Total Non-Serviced	5,336	20,016	48,037	85%	% of Study Area	96%	83%	85%		Total Accommodation	5,585	24,237	56,479		See the above response.
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4.30-4.33	Visitor Perception Impacts	Critical to the success of any business or economic sector is the importance of identifying its existing and potential customers, and then developing a thorough understanding of their needs, wants, and experiences of the products and services on offer. Without this understanding, a sector such as the visitor economy cannot adapt and evolve to meet the prevailing economic conditions and realise the business opportunities available, risking the loss of its customers, the visitors, and tourists to East Suffolk, to other visitor destinations within the UK or abroad. ESC is committed to supporting the long-term success and prosperity of the visitor economy in East Suffolk. To achieve this, ESC works with a comprehensive network of public and private sector stakeholders and partner organisations to understand the factors that contribute towards a successful visitor economy, to identify and set strategic objectives, and to develop appropriate action plans that deliver beneficial outcomes.	The Applicant has addressed comments about visitor perceptions above.																																																																						

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Unfortunately, ESC considers that the Applicant's assessment of visitor perception impacts falls seriously short in its understanding of the importance and value of visitor perception as a measure, or barometer, of the wider potentially adverse impacts of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme on the visitor economy	
4.34-4.39		Whilst ESC acknowledges the Applicant's desk-based review of other energy NSIPs in East Anglia and Somerset, ESC is concerned that in conducting its review, the Applicant has strayed from an assessment of visitor perception to a broader assessment of potentially negative socio-economic impacts including mitigation by project design, broader environmental impacts, and visitor accommodation assessments, all of which may affect visitor perception but on their own do not provide a quantitative or qualitative measure of visitor perception nor any changes in perception and consequent effects on visitor behaviour. Sizewell C, within paragraphs 9.7.63 to 9.7.93 of its Socio-economics ES chapter (Appendix A) refers to survey work at Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C. The surveys were developed to help understand whether visitor perceptions would translate into realised changes in visitor behaviour. Sizewell C concluded at Paragraph 9.7.90 that 'there is limited empirical evidence that the Sizewell C project would lead to a quantifiable reduction in visitor numbers [or] a change in visitor behaviour'. However, they admit at Paragraph 9.7.69 that 'it is very difficult to draw quantified conclusions from surveys where people are asked to estimate how they would react to a hypothetical situation'. Despite these conclusions, Sizewell C recognised that there may still be the potential for the tourist economy to be adversely affected as a result of the Sizewell C Project, and made available a Tourism Fund to 'develop mitigation measures to reduce this risk and promote the area in order to reduce the risk of perceived changes in visitor behaviour from materialising' (Paragraph 9.8.12). ESC acknowledges that the Suffolk Onshore Scheme is a much smaller project than Sizewell C. However, the potential impacts on visitor perception and subsequent behaviour remain the same. Additionally, the ExA should note that East Suffolk is not in a hypothetical situation based on untested assumptions and unproven predictions and is likely to experience the construction of multiple energy related NSIP developments over the course of the next decade. The resulting incombination and cumulative impacts, and their resulting effects on the visitor economy need to be monitored and assessed during the construction period and beyond.	The Applicant has addressed this point above.
4.40-4.48	Visitor Perception Research	Visitor Perception or Attitudinal Studies are industry accepted tools that provide insight and understanding into how visitors view, experience, and choose destinations. In 2025, ESC commissioned research that examined how current and potential visitors to East Suffolk feel about holidays and trips and the impact of Sizewell C development.	The Applicant has addressed comments about visitor perceptions above.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The East Suffolk Visitor Perceptions Research (Appendix E) is important because it is one of the largest and most in-depth studies of this type to have been conducted in East Suffolk and provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence of visitor perceptions which had previously been unavailable to NSIP examinations. Uniquely, the research is ongoing and will be repeated over the course of the next decade, providing a prospective, longitudinal record and evaluation of trends in visitor perception over time. 12,564 members of the UK population completed an online survey which allowed researchers to identify an East Suffolk Group of 4,000 individuals who are past or future visitors to East Suffolk. These individuals were then engaged in further, more detailed, questioning that allowed the East Suffolk Group to be sub-divided into seven 'distinct and revealing' segments (Appendix F). These segments were then invited to participate in qualitative research interviews. Whilst the purposes of the research are much broader than a focussed examination of the impacts of NSIP development in East Suffolk, the East Suffolk Group were asked specific questions about Sizewell C, the intention being to inform ESC's understanding of the current and potential impact of the Sizewell C development on an individual's intention to visit East Suffolk. Initial findings from the wider questioning show that 39% of the "East Suffolk Group" (past and future visitors) are more likely to visit other areas of the UK during construction. Additionally, concerns over the impact of construction on the local area also emerged, with traffic (56%), the impact on the local character of the region (56%), and the impact on wildlife (67%), featuring most prominently. This initial research provides an effective baseline from which ESC can measure visitor perception, intent, and realised behaviours. Any changes in the baseline will be identified through future iterations of the research. The information gathered will then inform ESC and its partners on the most appropriate approach to supporting the East Suffolk visitor economy, guiding marketing and promotional campaigns, and shaping future investment decisions.	
4.49	Conclusion	ESC does not accept the conclusions drawn by the Applicant in the Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065]. To support this claim, ESC has provided additional data, insight, and examples of tourism industry consensus thinking in its assessment: • In terms of the broader impacts on Tourist and Visitor Attractions, the Applicant's assessment methodology fails to consider the complexities and interdependency of tourism receptors and their collective contribution towards a successful visitor economy. ESC is not alone in recognising the visitor economy as a complex system and has presented evidence that this view is shared by the tourism industry. • The Applicant has failed totally to provide the essential evidence required to be able to state, with any confidence or certainty, that the available visitor accommodation within a 60-minute drive of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme can accommodate the non-home-based workforce	The matters raised within ESC's concluding remarks are responded to above.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		without causing serious harm to the visitor economy. ESC invited Forward Land and Hotel Solutions to provide an independent assessment of the Applicant's submission documents, the recommendations of which support ESC's own concerns. • Visitor Perception or Attitudinal Studies are industry accepted tools that provide insight and understanding into how visitors view, experience, and choose destinations. East Suffolk is likely to experience (and is already experiencing) the construction of multiple energy related NSIP developments over the course of the next decade and the resulting in combination and cumulative impacts on the visitor economy need to be genuinely and comprehensively monitored and assessed in order to be understood. ESC has presented Visitor Perception data which demonstrates that the effects of NSIP development on visitor perception and behaviour can be measured and has provided cautionary insights into the effects of NSIP development in East Suffolk.	

Table 8.6 Applicant's Comments on the East Suffolk Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-172]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
2.1 to 2.2	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	ESC has been requesting enhanced planting along the B1119 (Area C in Figure 2 of [REP1-128], page 38), specifically a multi-species tree belt. ESC welcomes the Applicant amending its proposed mitigation planting in this area in light of these requests, and understands from Figure 2 Saxmundham Converter Station Illustrative Cross Sections (Sheet 3 of 3) of the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP) [REP4-065] that 8.5m-wide tree belts are now proposed. ESC previously advised in Paragraph 6.3.8.9 of its Local Impact Report (LIR) [REP1-128] that such tree belts need to be at least 15m, if not 20m, wide to be fully effective. ESC therefore considers that the Applicant's proposed 8.5m wide tree belts are too narrow to be fully effective. Whilst welcoming these improved proposals, ESC remains of the view that the Applicant has missed an opportunity to increase the Order Limits south of the B1119 via Change 5 of its Change Request 1 to accommodate a wider tree belt.	The reasoning for altering the Order Limits as part of Change Request 1 was for an entirely separate reason. The Applicant maintains the position that the planting along the B1119 is not necessary for essential mitigation as it is unlikely, in addition to the proposed landscape planting, to reduce the magnitude and significance of effects on landscape and visual receptors. The widening of the Order Limits associated with Change Request 1 provided the opportunity to incorporate additional planting within the Order Limits along part of the B1119 following stakeholder requests. The 8.5 m depth of woodland planting is considered to represent an addition to the layered vegetation network of the surrounding landscape and is comparable in width to other belts of planting in the local landscape. The outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk) is being updated at Deadline 6 to reflect the B1119 planting amongst other updates following stakeholder consultation.
2.3	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	ESC welcomes the additional text that has been added to Section 7.1 of the OLEMP to provide further clarity on the pre-commencement surveys to which the project is committing. However, ESC requests that the Applicant includes the scope of the pre-commencement surveys to be undertaken in Suffolk so that the local planning authority (LPA) can see and agree these prior to the surveys being undertaken. The Applicant must also commit to using the results of these surveys to inform the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and LEMP which will be submitted to the LPA for approval under draft Development Consent Order (DCO) Requirement 6.	This has been added to outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk) at Deadline 6 as requested by the ExA.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
2.4 to 2.6	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	ESC has previously raised concerns with what it considers to be a lack of survey coverage in relation to Hazel Dormice, and the subsequent impacts. ESC is therefore pleased to see that the Applicant is now committing, in Sections 3.4 and 7.1 of the OLEMP, to undertaking pre-construction surveys for hazel dormouse, and its requests in Paragraph 2.3 above apply equally to Hazel Dormice as they do to all other species. Paragraph 3.4.5 of the OLEMP states that if dormice are recorded during pre commencement surveys, ‘either instant hedges or an Animex bridge would be utilised during construction on the relevant hedgerow sections’. ESC considers that this is a matter that would need to be agreed through discharge of the CEMP and/or LEMP under Requirement 6 of the draft DCO to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are satisfied that the correct mitigation measures are being utilised.	ESC’s understanding of Requirement 6 is noted.
2.7 to 2.10	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	ESC has previously requested that the detail of the necessary mitigation for reptiles (which ESC considers to be trapping and translocation, combined with displacement) should be secured as part of the OLEMP for discharge as part of the LEMP. Whilst ESC considers that the Applicant’s proposal for the precise method for reptile exclusion to be agreed via approval of the detailed LEMP through a discharge of Requirement 6 of the draft DCO post-consent ([REP2-027] Paragraph 7.2.6.1) may be acceptable, ESC requested that the OLEMP be updated to reflect this (Ref. 8.04 of its Deadline 3 Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) [REP3-080]). ESC notes that Paragraph 3.3.4 of the OLEMP now includes additional description of vegetation clearance mitigation measures and states that ‘the precise approach to dealing with reptiles will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to vegetation clearance’. Whilst this is welcomed, it is noted that there is no reference to the potential use of trapping and translocation as a mitigation technique (which ESC maintains may be required where larger areas of suitable habitat require clearance), nor is there clarity on what the mechanism will be for agreeing the precise approach. It should be clarified whether this agreement will be part of the approval of the final LEMP (under Requirement 6 of the draft DCO) or whether a separate mechanism (such as a new DCO Requirement covering this matter) is required. Furthermore, ESC notes that the latest version of the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] does not include reference to agreement of the precise mitigation approach with the Local Planning Authority as part of Action B05. This must be added to the REAC Action.	Whilst the Applicant has not yet specifically provided for translocation and trapping as a means of mitigation for reptiles, the Applicant’s position remains that the precise method for reptile exclusion could be a matter for agreement in the detailed LEMP secured under requirement 6 of the draft DCO.
2.11 to 2.12	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	ESC has previously requested that measures to protect hedgehogs during construction vegetation clearance be included in the REAC and OLEMP, with final details discharged as part of the LEMP. ESC notes that Paragraph 3.3.4 of the OLEMP states that <i>‘to protect hedgehogs during construction vegetation clearance, inspection of all suitable habitat will be undertaken by an Ecological Clerk of Works prior to any mechanical clearance, and hibernacula will be avoided during the</i>	The Applicant acknowledges the request to add a provision to this effect to the REAC. In any case, it is noted that REAC GG04 requires an ECoW to generally “monitor that the works proceed in accordance with relevant environmental DCO requirements and adhere to the required good practice and mitigation measures”. Measure B72 has been added to the REAC. It states that <i>“Prior to mechanical woody vegetation clearance to ground level, habitats including hedgerow bases will be inspected by an Ecological Clerk of Works.</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		<i>hibernation period</i> '. ESC welcomes the inclusion of this measure, and requests that a corresponding action is added to the REAC to cover it.	<i>Any hedgehog hibernacula identified within the vegetation clearance footprint prior to the hibernation season (November to March) would be dismantled to ensure hibernating hedgehogs are not encountered in the path of vegetation clearance. Any occupied hedgehog hibernacula that are found in the works footprint during the hibernation period would not be disturbed</i> ".
2.13	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	ESC also notes that Section 7.1 of the OLEMP does not include reference to updated tree surveys for roosting bats. These must be included so that tree removal mitigation plans and the need for any mitigation licence from Natural England are known at the time that the works are undertaken.	The Applicant will consider whether more specificity is required in the oLEMP and the LEMP as to this point. The oLEMP does refer to updating surveys relating to bats at §7.1.2 and that “a similar set of surveys [are] to be undertaken as those undertaken to inform the baseline where relevant ecological receptors have been identified”
2.14	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk (Version C)	Finally, as a more general point, ESC notes that the lists of REAC Actions referred to in Paragraphs 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 of the OLEMP include several actions which do not exactly match the wording in the latest REAC [REP4 235]. This includes actions GG08 and B35. It must be ensured that all REAC Actions in both documents match to avoid creating confusion when the final CEMP and LEMP are being approved under Requirement 6 of the draft DCO. Furthermore, ESC notes that Paragraph 3.3.3 of the OLEMP still includes document references to the Outline Code of Construction Practice and REAC as appendices to the Outline Onshore CEMP, but these have since been superseded by standalone documents. These references should therefore be updated.	The Applicant acknowledges the slight variances in wording and has updated the oLEMP at Deadline 6 to reflect the updated REAC commitments and document references.
3.1 to 3.3	Document 9.87: Applicant's Comments on Responses to First Written Questions	ESC notes that the Applicant has stated on numerous occasions, including in its comments on ESC's response to Question 1GEN28. of ExQ1 [REP4-083], that <i>'the deemed approvals provisions will only have effect where the application for consent, agreement and/or approval includes a clear statement that consent etc. must be provided within 35 days or else the consenting authority is deemed to have granted consent'</i>. The draft DCO [REP4-217], as currently worded, does not allow for this implied 'waiving' of the deemed provisions at the Applicant's discretion. Schedule 4, paragraph 1 clearly applies deemed approval provisions to 'any consent, agreement or approval required by a Requirement' (subject to sub paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 4), with no requirement or indeed provision for this to only apply in the event that the application identifies itself as being subject to it. Notwithstanding the fact that ESC rejects the Applicant's assertion that this provides any reassurance, noting that there is nothing to stop the Applicant applying deemed approval provisions to all applications for consents, agreements or approvals required by a Requirement, ESC does not consider that the draft DCO in its current form provides for such a procedure as the Applicant intends.	The Applicant's position was set out in oral submissions at p.72 of [REP4-085] and considered in its response to AP117 and AP119. The Applicant has responded to the Councils' DL3 submissions regarding the 35 day decision making period in its response to ExQ 1GEN28.
4.1 to 4.2	Document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments' (Version B)	ESC welcomes additional REAC Action GG40 in response to ESC's request for the Applicant to commit to reviewing what specific mitigation measures are practicable and could mitigate the identified intra-project cumulative effects for which <i>"no mitigation has been confirmed at this stage"</i>. ESC also requests that REAC Action GG40 is amended to commit to providing compensation where, upon review at the detailed design stage, residual impacts remain due to no/insufficient mitigation being identified.	The Applicant has adhered to the mitigation hierarchy. It sets out its position on compensation at §2.4.16 of the Draft Statement of Common Ground East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council [APP-329].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
5.1 to 5.5	Document 9.97: Applicant's Responses to Supplementary Agenda Additional Questions for Issue Specific Hearing 2' (Version A)	The Applicant states in response to ISH2 supplementary agenda additional question ISH2.022 that 'advance mitigation planting would be undertaken in advance of the operational phase of the Proposed Project and not commencement'. It then goes on to state that 'undertaking early planting in the pre-commencement phase of the Proposed Project would not be appropriate as this could prevent essential surveys or activity that the contractor will need to carry out prior to construction'. ESC notes that the Applicant has accordingly amended the OLEMP so that it no longer commits to advance planting prior to construction where planting areas do not conflict with construction compounds and activities, and instead only commits to this planting in advance of operation (Para 5.8.1 of [REP4 066]). ESC is extremely concerned by this as it appears to be a significant watering down by the Applicant of its previous commitments to advance planting. The Applicant's proposed approach is no longer in line with other projects in the District, and it fails to commit to the widely-accepted standard practice of pre commencement planting where at all possible. ESC considers that the caveat - '<i>where planting areas do not conflict with construction compounds and activities</i>' within paragraph 5.8.1 - should in fact provide adequate safeguards against any instances of pre-commencement planting interfering with works. ESC therefore requires the Applicant to: • revert Paragraph 5.8.1 of the OLEMP to its previous wording; • add advance mitigation planting to the list of 'pre-commencement operations' in Article 2 of the draft DCO; and • add a requirement that pre-commencement operations cannot be carried out until details of advanced planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation. ESC suggests the following wording of this additional Requirement: Advance Planting 1) No pre-commencement operations may commence until details of advanced planting have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority, including a timetable for their implementation.	The Applicant has provided a full response to this for 3LVIA1 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6.
6.1 to 6.2	Document 9.90: Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) – Deadline 4' (Version A) [REP4-086]	ESC welcomes the Applicant's commitment, in response to Action Point AP105 of ISH2, to submitting Outline Skills and Employment Plans at Deadline 6. ESC notes the Applicant's comment that it 'will arrange meetings to progress and discuss suitable opportunities that will form the outline plans with the local authorities', and notes that ESC was provided with a plan for this engagement on 6th March 2026. ESC looks forward to engaging with the Applicant in this regard.	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan that is submitted at Deadline 6.
7.1	Document 3.2: Explanatory	In response to Action Point 120 arising out of Issue Specific Hearing 2, ESC has provided comments below on Appendix B (Table of Discharging	Noted and acknowledged.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Memorandum' (Version F) [REP4-219]	Authorities) to the Explanatory Memorandum submitted at Deadline 4 [REP4 219] in Annex 1 to this submission.	
8.1 to 8.3	Document 3.1: Draft Development Consent Order' (Version G) [REP4-217]	ESC was intending to provide a more comprehensive set of comments on the draft DCO at Deadline 5 as part of the updated draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). ESC reviewed the Applicant's updated draft SoCG and was set to meet the two-week deadline set by the Applicant of 6 March 2026. ESC was informed, however, by the Applicant on 6 March that it would no longer be submitting an updated draft SoCG at Deadline 5 due to time constraints. ESC has therefore instead provided its comments on the draft DCO in Annex 1 to this submission.	Noted and acknowledged.
A1.01	Schedule 1	ESC is of the view that wording is required in the dDCO to remove National Grid's right to carry out works, "without the prior approval of the relevant planning authority", where SPR has already carried out the works.	The Applicant notes that Requirement 15 already imposes a restriction on carrying out works to Work 1B where the works are completed pursuant to another DCO. Therefore, additional wording is not necessary.
A1.02	Article 1 definitions	The current definition of maintain is unnecessarily broad and if it is to remain, the given activities must be further defined otherwise the Applicant will effectively have been given carte blanche. In addition, ESC requires wording to be inserted in the dDCO so as to require the Applicant to serve written notice on the relevant planning authority prior to the commencement any "material" maintenance works (i.e. those that are likely to cause disturbance etc.).	The definition includes the ability to inspect, repair, adjust, alter, dismantle, remove, clear, refurbish, paint, surface treat, decommission, improve, reconstruct or replace any part of the authorised project but does not allow for the removal, reconstruction or replacement of the whole of the authorised project. The Applicant requires the flexibility to maintain the assets and all the activities listed within the definition are conventional and have been assessed within the Environmental Statement. The definition is well-precedented across other nationally significant infrastructure projects and takes into account the range of works that the Applicant may reasonably need to carry out over the lifetime of the authorised development to ensure a safe and efficient connection. The Order restricts this definition such that the ability to maintain does not vary the scheme beyond the definition of the authorised development. In terms of whether written notice should be served on the planning authority prior to the commencement of any 'material maintenance works', the Applicant does not consider that this is necessary. The context in which the Applicant can (or is required to) maintain is set out in the relevant article and would already be authorised by the powers under the Order.
A1.03	Art.2(1) "pre-commencement operations"	ESC notes that 'pre-commencement operations' are described in the Explanatory Memorandum as operations that are "either de minimis or [having] minimal potential for adverse impacts". The current list in the DCO is substantial and includes activities that may have more than minimal effects and do not appear to be de minimis. Further clarification is required and ESC is certainly not prepared to rely, going forward, on the general wording offered in the Explanatory Memorandum. Additionally, ESC queries whether demolition of buildings should be included as a pre-commencement activity. ESC also raises the question if this should include the erection of temporary buildings and structures. ESC questions what is meant by 'site clearance' and if this means the removal of trees, hedgerows and scrubs, or ground works and should this also include site preparation works.	The Applicant notes that the pre-commencement operations will be controlled by the outline management plans which are listed within Requirement 6. The Applicant recognises that there is a natural tension between discharging the requirements to 'commence' under the Order and the programme constraints which require pre-commencement. The Applicant has reviewed the list of pre-commencement operations and considers that the right balance has been struck.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		ESC questions what ‘set up works associated with the establishment of construction compounds’ includes. ESC requests that ‘environmental mitigation measures’ should be defined within article 2. ESC raises concern over the construction of compounds without any LPA involvement as a pre-commencement condition, as construction compounds can be significant and potentially requiring elements like drainage. ESC requests that further discussion on temporary accesses is needed. A new temporary construction access can be significant and can require associated elements like drainage. ESC requests that ‘early planting of landscaping works’ is added to the list of pre-commencement operations and that a requirement be added to Schedule 3 that requires that ‘pre-commencement operations’ cannot be carried out until details of advance planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation.	
A1.04	Art 2	ESC notes that “temporary construction works” is defined as meaning “any of the temporary construction works described in Schedule 1 (authorised development) to the Order”. However, Schedule 1 does not appear to identify clearly which works are in fact only “temporary”. ESC suggests that the definition of “temporary construction works” in Art 2(1) of the dDCO is amended as follows (changes shown in bold): “temporary construction works” means any of the temporary construction works described as “temporary” in Schedule 1 (authorised development) to the Order”. Schedule 1 should be reviewed to ensure that it sufficiently identifies all such “temporary” works. ESC notes that, as currently drafted, Schedule 1 identifies the following works (in East Suffolk only) as temporary: • Work No 4 – Suffolk temporary work compounds; - - - - • ‘temporary work areas and laydown areas’ - in Work Nos. 1B (c), 2(b), 3A(c), 3B(b), 5(b), 6(a); • ‘utility service connections for electricity, telecommunications and potable water and/or connection of power supply made from temporary generators’ in Work Nos. 1B (y), 2(l), 3B(u); • ‘trenchless crossing(s) including an entry/exit pit and associated temporary construction compounds’ - in Work Nos. 5(g), 6(c) and (d); and ‘temporary work areas for vessels to carry out intrusive and non-intrusive activities’ - in Work Nos. 6(e).	The definition of ‘temporary construction works’ is used in the Order in the context of Article 8 only which refers to the application of the 1990 Act. An amendment to a definition is only relevant to the extent that it is used operationally within the Order. On that basis, an amendment to the definition is not necessary.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
A1.05	Art 5	ESC queries the acceptability of a 6 m limit of deviation for pylons, and requests that clarification should be made and justification for this figure provided, and this deviation reduced. ESC recommends that the wording of Article 5 is amended to provide for the addition of the following wording within the 'Table of Parameters' at Paragraph (3)(b) – • Work: '3A (a)' • Type of structure: 'Access bridge over River Fromus' • Height: '[X]m above finished ground level'	The Applicant notes that the 6m limit of deviation relates to the standard 3m panel typically used to construct a tower. The Applicant does not agree that this deviation should be reduced as the flexibility to use either one or two panels is intended to provide a necessary but proportionate degree of flexibility in the construction of the authorised development and to reduce risk. In relation to the River Fromus bridge, the Applicant notes that this is subject to a separate and specific requirement, which is requirement 3.
A1.06	Art 7	ESC requests a requirement for the relevant planning authority to be given 28 days to make representations in relation to any transfer or grant made under Article 7 (Consent to transfer benefit of order).	Article 7 requires the undertaker to seek the consent of the Secretary of State to transfer the benefit of the Order. Therefore, this is a matter for the Secretary of State to determine and it will be for the Secretary of State to consult the relevant planning authority if felt appropriate.
A1.07	Art 10	ESC notes that discussions are ongoing with the Applicant regarding the wording of Article 10. ESC reserves its position as to both the need for Article 10 and whether it is acceptable in law.	The Applicant notes this comment.
A1.08	Art 21	ESC questions in relation to protective works if 14 days is considered a short period of time for this to be done, it is reasonable to assume a longer period of 28 days could be accommodated. Justification for the need for a period of 14 days instead should be provided.	Article 21 sets out the circumstances in which protective works can be carried out to land, buildings, structures, apparatus or equipment, within the Order limits or which may be affected by the authorised project. If there is a need to prevent damage to a building, there will be a clear need to carry out the works relatively quickly. The Applicant considers that 14 days is an appropriate timescale and is proportionate in the context of preventing damage or remedying damage. In any event, the Applicant would typically seek to carry out works by voluntary agreement. The article provides that the undertaker must compensate the owners and occupiers of any land, building, structure, apparatus or equipment, in relation to which rights under the article have been exercised, for any loss or damage arising to them by reason of the exercise of those rights.
A1.09	Art 27	ESC questions why Article 27(2) prescribes a 14-day notice period for the temporary use of land for carrying out the authorised project, whilst Article 28(3) prescribes a 28-day notice period for the temporary use of land for maintaining the authorised project. These should be made consistent by increasing the 14-day notice period for Article 27(2) to a more appropriate 28-day notice period. The fact that the provision may have been precededented elsewhere is of no relevance to the current projects and the issues that ESC face. Comments on Article 27 are also provided in Row A1.27 below.	Article 27 (Temporary use of land for carrying out the authorised project) allows the land set out in Schedule 11 to be occupied temporarily by the undertaker in connection with the carrying out of the authorised project. Article 27(2) requires 14 days' notice to be given before entering on and taking temporary possession of land under this article, the undertaker must serve notice of the intended entry on the owners and occupiers of the land. Article 28(3) (Temporary use of land for maintaining authorised project) requires that no less than 28 days before entering upon and taking temporary possession of land under this article the undertaker must serve notice of the intended entry on the owners and occupiers of the land and that notice must explain the purpose for which entry is taken, except as provided in paragraph (11). The time periods are necessarily different. Article 28 relates to the maintenance period and at this stage, the Applicant should have secured the ability to carry out maintenance by virtue of land rights using its compulsory acquisition powers, outside of the DCO powers. Therefore, the Order power is intended as a fall-back position to carry out any maintenance within the

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			first 5 years. In the context of maintenance, 28 days in an appropriate timescale. However, Article 27 is a crucial power that will be exercised in the construction of the authorised project. It operates within an entirely different context to article 28 and the 14-day timeframe is considered to be necessary, appropriate and proportionate given the need for the Applicant to construct the authorised project to meet the needs case. In reality, the Applicant will be liable for compensation under this Article where compensation would be payable and so landowners will be given as much notice as is possible. However, it is essential that the programme can be adhered to. Whilst clearly every project is different and turns on its own issues and local context, there is considerable value in understanding the approach taken by the Secretary of State on nationally significant infrastructure projects and critical national priority projects, particularly around established standard order drafting points which stem from the model provisions.
A1.10	Art 49	ESC requests that Art 49(1)(a)(iii), 49(1)(a)(iv) and 49(1)(b)(ii) are amended to provide that the demonstration that the nuisance cannot 'reasonably be avoided' be demonstrated to 'the relevant planning authority's reasonable satisfaction'. There is precedent for this in the Sizewell C DCO, which provides that the no enforcement action may be taken in relation to statutory nuisance where this 'is a consequence of the construction, maintenance or operation of the authorised development and that it cannot, to the reasonable satisfaction of East Suffolk Council reasonably be avoided'. This is particularly important in light of ESC's concerns regarding the broad scope of the definition of "maintenance" in the draft DCO. ESC also queries the inclusion of Art 49(1)(a)(iv) and considers that it may provide the undertaker with great scope for the application of Article 49. ESC requests that the Applicant provides justification for this inclusion, including examples of instances where this provision would apply. ESC has also provided comments on Article 49(1)(b) in its response to ExQ2 Question 2GEN13. submitted at Deadline 5, but will not repeat these points here.	Article 49 relates to civil claims for statutory nuisance claims under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which can be brought against the undertaker in respect of noise or light effects. The Applicant does not consider that the suggested wording for inclusion is appropriate. The suggested wording would require that in a case brought for statutory nuisance by a third party, any defence in front of any tribunal or court would have to seek input from East Suffolk Council for some kind of approval that it cannot be reasonably be avoided. This is entirely inappropriate in this case and is not well-precedented beyond Sizewell C, which is a very different project.
A1.11	Art 51	In regard to felling and lopping, ESC has stated that clarification on the definition of 'near' is necessary. ESC considers it appropriate for a consent mechanism to be included here for felling trees outside the order limits. The response provided to date is insufficient. The word "<i>near</i>" should be defined in Article 51 – "<i>near</i>" means within X metres of the authorised development". ESC requests amendments to Article 51 such that it does not apply to veteran trees that have been identified and understood to be preserved in situ for the project.	The Applicant has re-considered this point and still does not consider that it would be appropriate to include a distance which would be an arbitrary number. Whilst there is no precise definition of 'near' in the draft Order, the power in Article 51 (1) (felling or lopping) is limited and may only be exercised for the specific statutory purpose(s) set out, namely to prevent an obstruction or interference with the construction, maintenance or operation of the 'authorised development' (as defined) or any apparatus used in connection with it, or to remove or prevent a danger to persons constructing, operating or maintaining the same. The current drafting is based on established wording with considerable precedent at Article 47 of the The Applicant (Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement) Order 2024, Article 81 (1) of the Sizewell C (Nuclear Generating Station) Order 2022, Article 35 (1) of the Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm Order 2021, and Article 32 (1) of the Cleve Hill Solar Park Order 2022. None of these Orders included a definition of 'near'.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			The Applicant remains of the view that the commitments in the REAC provides sufficient protection for ancient and veteran trees and no change to article 51 is necessary.
A1.12	Art 55	Notwithstanding and subject to ESC's outstanding objections to the deeming provisions in the dDCO, ESC considers that such provisions address any instances of decisions being 'unreasonably delayed'. ESC also considers that the wording 'unreasonably withheld' is inappropriate and unnecessary and would not provide the Applicant with any additional protections, as an arbiter would be needed to determine whether a decision has indeed been 'unreasonably withheld', and such provisions are already made in Article 62 (Arbitration), and in the case of requirements, via the appeals process in Article 54(4). ESC therefore considers that the wording 'unreasonably withheld or delayed' should be deleted.	The Applicant recognises these concerns and has discussed these with ESC. However, the Applicant maintains that the drafting is necessary and appropriate for the reasons previously set out within Application Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085] .
A1.13	Art 56 Part 6	Safeguarding: ESC considers that the appropriate mechanism is for the Applicant to set up notifications for planning applications using the Council's Public Access planning service, freely available. ESC does not provide a "private" service for any other developer and is not prepared to create an administrative precedent in so doing. Notwithstanding this, the ESC requires the wording "sent the notice to the undertaker by first class post" be deleted as notice is sent via email, and not by post. National Grid should also supply details of who the notice should be sent to. ESC requires clarification on what is meant by 'alteration' in 56(8)(a)(i) and what constitutes an alteration. ESC queries Article 56(6), which states that 'the requirement to consult under this article is a local land charge'.	The Applicant considers that the safeguarding provision is an important one in the context of a project for which there is a critical national priority. Article 56(3)(b) states that the notification may be provided "by such other means of service as may be agreed with the relevant planning authority". This makes clear that details can be dealt with by agreeing to use email. Paragraph (6) makes the requirement to consult a local land charge. The result is that in the ordinary course of the early stages of handling an application for planning permission the existence of this provision will become readily apparent to all concerned. It is standard practice for Safeguarding Directions to be revealed in response to Optional Enquiries sent with requisitions for searches of the local land charges register; the approach taken in this Order takes advantage of the Order's status as a statutory provision for the purpose of section 1(1)(e) of the Local Land Charges Act 1975 (see the definition in section 14(1)). This should avoid any undue administrative burden.
A1.14	Schedule 3: Requirements - General	ESC is content to be the discharging authority for all discharge of requirements for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, save for Requirement 7(3), and Requirement 12, for which SCC as the relevant highway authority is the discharging authority. Appendix B to the Explanatory Memorandum provides clarity in relation to who the discharging authority will be for the approval of the management plans listed in Requirement 6. This states that ESC would be the discharging authority for all Suffolk plans, other than the Construction Traffic Management Plan – Suffolk, the Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Suffolk, the Drainage Management Plan – Suffolk, and the Flood Management Plan, for which SCC would be the discharging authority. ESC considers that SCC should also be the discharging authority for the Materials and Waste Management Plan, noting that SCC requested this itself in Paragraph 15.45 of its LIR [REP1-130]. ESC considers that further clarification as to the relevant discharging authorities should also be provided in the wording of Requirement 6 of the draft DCO itself. ESC would also welcome the provision of further clarification regarding who the discharging authorities would be for all other Requirements of the draft	The definition of 'discharging authority' is deliberately drafted to not name specific authorities or bodies given the different geographies and authorities involved in the Proposed Project. It is not the usual approach to name specific bodies in the draft DCO and such an approach is well-precedented by other development consent orders and should remain as drafted. However, the Applicant recognises that certainty is required by all parties over which bodies are defined as a discharging authority. The Applicant will work with local authorities to consider further how responsibility for discharge of requirements between different bodies can be clarified.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		DCO. Additionally, ESC queries how the discharge of Requirement 6 process will operate where there are multiple discharging authorities for a single plan (for example, the Onshore CEMP, Code of Construction Practice, and Material and Waste Management Plan, for which ESC is one of three discharging authorities), and would welcome clarification from the Applicant.	
A1.15	Schedule 3: Requirements General	ESC notes there is no requirement in the DCO as drafted to secure Biodiversity Net Gain (including long term management and monitoring) as a requirement. The Bramford to Twinstead includes Requirement 13 to secure written evidence of the ten per cent minimum BNG to be delivered to be submitted to the relevant planning authority for discharge. A similar provision is considered appropriate for the Sea Link DCO.	The Applicant notes that a requirement was included on the Bramford-Twinstead as that Project sought compulsory acquisition powers for the BNG. In the context of this Project, the Applicant's view is that it is not appropriate to include BNG as a requirement, and a different approach is being taken. Heads of Terms have been circulated and comments now received and incorporated in the draft S106 Unilateral Undertaking shared on 10 April 2026.
A1.16	Schedule 3: Requirements - General	Management Plans to be Approved This list of management plans does not include a lighting management plan. ESC considers it necessary for an outline lighting management plan to be prepared, and for a detailed Lighting Management Plan to be approved by the relevant planning authority through a discharge of Requirement 6 that includes details of the operational lighting. This would ensure that the operational lighting is able to respond to any site-specific technical requirements and reflect the most up-to-date best practice. Such requirements are commonplace. For example, Requirement 25 ('Control of artificial light emissions during operational phase') of The East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 and The East Anglia TWO Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 allows the relevant planning authority to approve details of artificial light emissions, including measures to minimise lighting pollution and the hours of lighting.	The Applicant has prepared an Outline Lighting Strategy submitted at Deadline 6 (Application Document 9.147 Outline Operational Lighting Management Plan).
A1.17	Schedule 3: Req 1 definitions	ESC is of the view that sub-para. (f) – " <i>general site maintenance</i> " is unhelpfully broad and could as a consequence include a range of activities that would create a disturbance before the working hours. This definition needs revision and further discussion. Whilst ESC maintains its concerns regarding the inclusion of 'general site maintenance' in the definition of 'start-up and close down activities', ESC considers that SCC's request in Paragraph 15.55 of its LIR [REP1-130] for a noise limit during start-up and close-down activities could alleviate ESC's concerns to some extent regarding disturbance outside of core working hours. ESC would therefore request that the Applicant proposes operational noise level requirements for the start up and shut-down shoulder hours, based on the relevant 'ABC' category. There is precedent for this in Requirement 7 of the Bramford to Twinstead DCO, which the Applicant has frequently used as a precedent for other provisions as well as this one.	The Applicant acknowledges that the National Grid (Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement) Development Consent Order 2024 contains additional details. The Applicant refers again to the justification for the construction hours contained in the Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014] at Table 2.27. The Applicant's position is that Best Practicable Means will be used by the contractors to control construction noise (see p.369 of [REP2-014] and p.64 of [REP2-027])
A1.18	Schedule 3: Req 3	Detailed Design ESC requested, in coordination with Suffolk County Council and Thanet District Council, that Requirement 3 be amended as detailed in the following paragraphs. The wording originally proposed was as follows: 3. Detailed design parameters onshore — (1) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 3B (Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external	Requirement 3's drafting will be addressed in the Applicant's response to ExQ3 3GEN9.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (2) No stage of Work No. 3A (Access road to the Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of the River Fromus Bridge have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the River Fromus Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3A must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (3) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 1B (new Substation at Grove Wood, Friston) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 1B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (4) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 9B (Kent Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 9B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (5) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 11 (new Kent substation) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 11 must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (6) In this requirement, “the design details” means the Critical Design Constraints, Overarching Design Principles, and the Project Level Design Principles. ESC notes that Requirement 3 has been amended and has provided detailed comments on these amendments in its response to ExQ2	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Question 2GEN6, submitted at Deadline 5. ESC acknowledges that Article 5 (Limits of Deviation) includes maximum height parameters, and the Works Plans show non-linear limits of deviation. However, ESC considers that other aspects, such as maximum footprints, must be controlled under the DCO; the requirement in Article 5(3)(a) for works 'to be carried out within any applicable non-linear limits of deviation shown on the Works Plans' is not sufficient.	
A1.19	Schedule 3: Req 4	Stages of the Authorised Development Part (4) of Sub-paragraph 4 of Requirement 4 states that notification of completion of construction of each stage of the authorised development must be provided within 28 days of the event completing. ESC considers that a 28-day notice period should also be required for the service on ESC of written notice setting out the anticipated programme for the carrying out of pre-commencement operations. The 7-day notice period prescribed in paragraph 1 of Requirement 4 is not adequate.	This will be addressed in the Applicant's response to ExQ3 3GEN22.
A1.20	Schedule 3: Req 4	Stages of the Authorised Development ESC asks that sub-paragraphs (3) and (4) be amended so as to require the Applicant to secure the prior written approval by the relevant planning authority of all written schemes, and any revisions to these. There is precedent for this in the EA1N and EA2 DCOs.	The scheme setting out the stages of the authorised development is informed by the Contractor and construction programme. The Applicant does not consider that it is appropriate for such a document to be approved by the local planning authority.
A1.21	Schedule 3: Req 5 and 6 management plans	It is understood that the management plans etc. secured by Requirement 5 of the draft DCO will bite on the pre commencement operations, given there is no reference to commencement in the wording in Requirement 5. This should be clarified. If not, the mechanism for securing appropriate management plans for the pre-commencement works should be specified. ESC welcomes the Applicant's attempt to amend the wording of Requirements 5 and 6 to confirm that they cover not only the construction phase, but also the operational and maintenance periods. However, ESC is not convinced that the amended wording achieves this, as it is ESC's understanding that the operation of the authorised development would not fall under 'all works forming part of the authorised development'. ESC therefore considers that further clarity is required.	Requirement 5(3) confirms that for the avoidance of doubt, the pre-commencement operations must be carried out in accordance with the plans in listed in Requirement 5 and the outline plans within Requirement 6. The Applicant will consider the drafting at Requirement 5 and 6 to clarify how the management plans apply in the context of operation of the Project.
A1.22	Schedule 3: Req 5 and 6 management plans	There is no requirement relevant to fencing and other means of enclosure, ESC considers it appropriate for one to be included. For reference see Requirement 17 of the ScottishPower Renewables East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two DCOs. ESC has provided its suggested wording for a fencing requirement in response to ExQ2 Question 2LVIA8.	This will be addressed in the response to ExQ3 3ECOL9.
A1.23	Schedule 3: Req 5 and 6 management plans	There is no requirement for emergency planning arrangements (other DCOs have secured this – Requirement 6 of the Sizewell C DCO, Requirement 33 of the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two DCOs).	The Applicant is continuing to liaise with SCC's Emergency Planning team to discuss the emergency planning document in respect to the Proposed Project's interaction with the Suffolk Radiation Emergency Plan (see [REP2-026] at §15.66).
A1.24	Schedule 3: Req 5 and 6 management plans	There is no requirement controlling operational noise. Requirement 27 of the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two DCOs secures this, and these limits and controls should be replicated by the Proposed Project's DCO for the Friston substation. ESC has provided its suggested wording for an operational noise DCO requirement for both the Friston substation and	This point was raised by the ExA in AP69. The Applicant's response to AP69 is at [REP4-086] and is consistent with the position it expressed in oral submissions at ISH2 [REP4-085] at section 14.2

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Saxmundham converter station sites in response to ExQ2 Question 2NV1., submitted at Deadline 5.	
A1.25	Schedule 3: Req 6	ESC acknowledges the additional paragraphs (3) and (4) of Requirement 6 concerning landscaping works. ESC welcomes these additions, noting that the wording is comparable to Requirement 15 of the East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO DCOs. However, ESC requests that additional wording is included to in paragraph <i>(4) to confirm that any replacement planting will also be subject to the same monitoring and maintenance period as the original planting. As the OLEMP is currently worded, there is no explicit commitment to this as part of the adaptive management programme. ESC suggests that the following amendments to paragraph (4) of Requirement 6 are adopted (amendments shown in bold): ‘(4) Any tree or shrub planted as part of an approved Landscape and Ecological Management Plans that, within a period of five years after planting, is removed, dies or becomes, in the opinion of the relevant planning authority, seriously damaged or diseased, must be replaced in the first available planting season with a specimen of the same species and size as that originally planted unless alternative timing or a different specimen is otherwise approved by the relevant planning authority. Any replacement planting will be subject to the same management and monitoring arrangements (including management periods) as agreed for original planting through the approval of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plans under sub-paragraph (1).’</i>	This will be addressed in the response to ExQ3 3GEN24
A1.26	Schedule 3: Req 7	Construction Hours Detailed comments on the proposed working hours are included in ESC’s Local Impact Report and other Examination submissions and so are not repeated here. Furthermore, the items listed in sub-paragraph (4) are too wide in scope and effectively allow the applicant to continue working outside core hours in most situations, with the exception of emergency works where risk to life or property exist and a few other exceptions, such as security operations, that may be discussed with the applicant in due course, works must be restricted to the core hours unless approved by the RPA. Following this the Applicant has included 1 hour start up and close down either side of core hours, this does not appear to have been factored into assessments or mitigation and is not accepted, it is effectively extending core hours by 2 hours a day and with the current inclusion of Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays is unacceptable. As noted in Row A1.17 above, ESC requests that the Applicant proposes operational noise level requirements for the start-up and shut down shoulder hours, based on the relevant ‘ABC’ category. There is precedent for this in Requirement 7 of the Bramford to Twinstead DCO. Any work undertaken outside core hours without approval should be zero impact in terms of noise and vibration, dust, light and other environmental impacts. ESC advises the Applicant to consider Requirements 23 and 24 of the EA1N and 2 Development Consent Orders, as comparable consented local projects as examples of this requirement that have been discussed, accepted, and tested through examination. The Bramford to Twinstead DCO contained a list of properties that had been identified as excluded from the working hours. This needs further discussion. Whilst ESC acknowledges that the Applicant has now excluded Bank Holidays from its core working hours for the Suffolk converter station (Work No. 3B). This simply does not	The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6).. The startup and shut down hours were always included in the project description (Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project) which was assessed as part of the EIA and reported in the ES. Paragraph 4.6.7 states: <i>“The core working hours exclude start up and close down activities up to one hour either side of the core working hours. These activities include staff arrival, briefings, checking plant, loading equipment, compound general</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		go far enough. ESC requires Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays to be removed from the core working hours for all works other than those listed in Paragraph (4) of Requirement 7 (notwithstanding ESC's view that the scope of this paragraph is too wide). This is of critical importance to ESC and the communities it represents. The local community will only benefit from the respite afforded to it by other consented projects in the District (including EA1N and EA2) if all future projects also include these periods of respite.	<i>maintenance activities, debriefing, storing equipment and plant, and staff leaving site."</i>
A1.27	Schedule 3: Requirement 9, and Article 27 (Temporary use of land for carrying out the authorised project)	ESC notes that the Applicant has amended Requirement 9(2) so that it no longer refers to the exclusion of the requirement to reinstate land for land 'above or within 10 metres of underground cables installed as part of the authorised development'. Article 27 now includes this exclusion for reinstatement of land where the undertaker would otherwise need to replant 'trees, shrubs, shrubberies or any other deep-rooted organism' above or within 10 metres of underground cables. ESC considers that this does not alleviate its concerns regarding habitat fragmentation due to leave large gaps being left in hedgerows where in proximity to buried cables, as 'shrubs' and 'shrubberies' are essentially hedgerows. If there is no certainty that hedgerows will be reinstated - and indeed the drafting of Article 27 provides a clear indication that they will not be in full - then ESC considers that the Environmental Statement's conclusions of no significant residual effects on species such as foraging/commuting bats cannot be relied upon. ESC suggests that Article 27 should only refer to 'trees' in this respect, unless the Applicant can also justify what 'deep-rooted organism' other than trees they may otherwise need to replant.	The Applicant amended the wording in Article 27 at Deadline 5 to remove reference to 'shrubs' and 'shrubberies'. Therefore, the Applicant considers that this amendment should deal with the outstanding concern raised by ESC but welcomes further discussion with ESC to resolve this issue.
A1.28	Schedule 3: Requirement 11	ESC requests that the Applicant provides justification for the 18-month timescale placed on the removal of any temporary bridge or culvert, from that part of the development being first brought into operational use.	The 18 month timescale is to ensure that the works can be undertaken within any environmental or landowner constraints that may apply. For example on a recent ground investigation project the Applicant installed a temporary bridge which birds nested in (during use), the bridge therefore needed to be retained until the the birds left the nest. This combined with an agreement with the landowner on access during harvest periods delayed the removal of the temporary bridge by over 12 months.
A1.29	Schedule 3: Requirement 13	ESC considers that the dDCO must include a substation decommissioning requirement to cover a scenario in which the Friston/Kiln Lane substation (Work No. 1B) is delivered under the Sea Link DCO, and to cover decommissioning of the Kent substation (Work No. 11). If the Friston/Kiln Lane substation is delivered under the Sea Link DCO, its decommissioning must be correspondingly authorised under the Sea Link DCO. This requirement should have a 'bite' at cessation of operation which it currently does not. Wording should be introduced here to require notification be made to the local planning authority of cessation of operation, within 6 (or otherwise agreed) months of cessation occurring. ESC notes that it is necessary for the Proposed Project's DCO to make provision for decommissioning of landfall and subsequent monitoring. Similar provision is made in the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two DCOs. Requirement 37 of those DCOs requires 25 years of monitoring following decommissioning of relevant landfall works. Further discussion with ESC and the coastal management team is required. ESC understands that the Environment Agency are proposing a specific landfall decommissioning	The Applicant has outlined previously that substations are anticipated to remain part of the network where appropriate. For example, the current drafting remains the appropriate approach to decommissioning and validly differs from other assets.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		requirement. ESC is supports the EA's concerns and will shortly be providing the EA with feedback on its proposed wording submitted at Deadline 4 [REP4-185].	
A1.30	Schedule 3: Additional requirement	ESC requests that a requirement comparable to Requirement 44 (Control of development during operational phase) of the EA1N and EA2 DCOs be added to the Sea Link draft DCO. This would ensure that Permitted Development rights are not used by the Applicant in a way that would undermine consented landscape and drainage mitigation. ESC proposes the following wording: <i>“Control of development during operational phase 16.-(1) During the operation of and within operational land related to Work Nos. 1B, 2, and 3B in the District of East Suffolk and Work Nos. 9A, 9B,10 and 11 in the District of Thanet and Dover, any development in addition to that authorised in this Order that is permitted under Schedule 2 Part 15 Class B (d), (e), or (f) of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (“electricity undertakings permitted development) or any equivalent successor provision is subject to the following conditions - (2) In respect of operational drainage – (a) No electricity undertakings permitted development may commence until an amendment to the Drainage Management Plan approved pursuant to requirement 6 (o) in relation to Suffolk and requirement 6 (p) in relation to Kent that includes provision for the replacement of any existing drainage measures to be removed and maintenance of any new drainage measures to be provided as part of the permitted development, has been submitted to and approved by the relevant lead local flood authority, in consultation with the relevant planning authority and the Environment Agency; (b) The measures in the amendment to the operational drainage management plan in respect of the permitted development must be implemented as approved. (3) In respect of the provision, implementation and maintenance of landscaping – a) No electricity undertakings permitted development may commence until an amendment to the written Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and associated work programme approved pursuant to requirement 6 (f) in relation to Suffolk and requirement 6 (g) in relation to Kent that includes provision for the replacement of any existing landscape measures to be removed and maintenance of any landscape measures to be provided as part of the permitted development, has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority; and (b) The measures in the amendment to the written landscape management plan and associated work programme plan in respect of the permitted development must be implemented as approved.”</i>	The Applicant will address this in response to ExQ3 3GEN32 submitted at Deadline 6.
A1.31	Schedule 4, para 1(1)	ESC strongly objects to the proposed 35-day determination period for the discharge of requirements and requests that Paragraph 1(1) is amended to prescribe a period of 56 days. ESC has given its detailed reasoning in several of its Examination submissions so will not repeat this exhaustively here. In summary, the EA1N and EA2 DCOs prescribe a 56 day determination period, and for the Sizewell C DCO prescribes a 56-day determination period where the discharging authority must consult with any other body (excluding SCC/ESC), and a 42-day determination period where there is no such requirement to consult. 35 days is therefore an unacceptably short determination period for ESC (as the discharging authority for the majority of the DCO requirements for the Suffolk Onshore	The Applicant recognises these concerns and has discussed these with ESC. However, the Applicant maintains that the timescales set out within the DCO are necessary and appropriate for the reasons previously set out within Application Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2[REP4-085] .

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Scheme) to rigorously scrutinise any discharge of requirement applications, many of which may be received by ESC simultaneously or in quick succession.	
A1.32	Schedule 4, 1 (2)	ESC strongly objects to the deeming provisions in Paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 4, particularly given the short timescale of 28 days for determination. ESC has given its detailed reasoning in several of its Examination submissions so will not repeat this exhaustively here. DCO Requirements are a key mechanism for controlling the development, and deeming provisions for the discharge of requirements are not included in other DCOs within the East Suffolk District, with an appeals process prescribed instead for instances of non-determination within the decision period. ESC considers that the provision of an appeals mechanism would be more suitable. ESC notes that the Applicant has stated on numerous occasions, including in its comments on ESC's response to Question 1GEN28. of ExQ1 [REP4-083], that 'the deemed approvals provisions will only have effect where the application for consent, agreement and/or approval includes a clear statement that consent etc. must be provided within 35 days or else the consenting authority is deemed to have granted consent'. ESC cannot see how the draft DCO, as currently worded, allows for this implied 'waiving' of the deeming provisions at the Applicant's discretion. Schedule 4(1) clearly applies deemed approval provisions to all consents, agreements or approvals required by a Requirement (subject to sub paragraph (3) of Schedule 4(1)), with no requirement for this to be identified in the application itself. ESC rejects the Applicant's assertion that this provides any reassurance, noting that there is nothing to stop the Applicant applying deemed approval provisions to all applications for consents, agreements or approvals required by a Requirement, ESC does not consider that the draft DCO in its current form provides for such a procedure.	The Applicant recognises these concerns and has discussed these with ESC. However, the Applicant maintains that the timescales set out within the DCO are necessary and appropriate for the reasons previously set out within Application Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2[REP4-085].
A1.33	Schedule 4: Paragraph 2	ESC considers that Paragraph 2(2) provides an unreasonably short timeframe (7 days) for requesting further information. In order to allow ESC to thoroughly scrutinise any discharge of requirement application it receives and ensure a robust determination process is conducted, ESC consults internal technical specialist officers on these applications. They are afforded the same 21-day consultation period as an external consultee, and this is essential to allow them sufficient time to scrutinise the proposals. This is particularly important given the number of NSIPs for which ESC is likely to be discharging requirements at the same time as Sea Link. ESC therefore suggests that Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 should not differentiate between applications for which there is a requirement for external bodies to be consulted and those for which there is not. In either case, the relevant authority should be able to request further information up to 5 working days after the close of the 21-day consultation period. Paragraph 2(3) requires that the relevant authority notifies the undertaker where further information requested by a Requirement consultee 'within 5 days of receipt of such a request and in any event within 21 days of receipt of the application'. Standard consultations are 21 days, and so if a consultee requests further information on the 21st day of consultations, for example, the discharging authority should be able to notify the undertaker of this request later than 21 days after receipt of the application (noting also that it is not practicable for	The Applicant recognises these concerns and has discussed these with ESC. However, the Applicant maintains that the timescales set out within the DCO are necessary and appropriate for the reasons previously set out within Application Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2[REP4-085].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		consultations to be sent out on the day of receipt of an application in all cases). Sub-paragraph (5) should be deleted. ESC does not consider it acceptable that where further information is requested in relation to part only of an application that it should be treated as separate from the remainder of the application. This is not practicable nor feasible. ESC therefore suggests that Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 is amended as follows: 2.—(1) Where an application has been made under paragraph 1 the relevant authority may request such reasonable further information from the undertaker as it considers is necessary to enable it to consider the application. (2) If the Requirement specifies that consultation with a Requirement consultee is required, the relevant authority must issue the consultation to the Requirement consultee within 5 days of receipt of the application (3) If the relevant authority, or a Requirement consultee, considers further information is necessary, the relevant authority must, within 26 days of consultation being issued where applicable, notify the undertaker in writing specifying the further information required. (4) If the relevant authority does not give the notification mentioned in sub-paragraph (3) it is deemed to have sufficient information to consider the application and is not thereafter entitled to request further information without the prior agreement of the undertaker.	
A1.34	Schedule 4	Provision should be made for the discharging authority to consult SCC/ESC as appropriate – where ESC is discharging body, there should be a requirement to consult SCC, when SCC is not named in a specific requirement. This should apply in the reverse when SCC is the discharging body. In the case of requirements in respect of which East Suffolk Council is the discharging authority under Schedule 3 of this Order, ESCI must consult SCC. In the case of requirements in respect of which SCC is the discharging authority under Schedule 3 of this Order, SCC must consult with ESC.	Requirement 6 states that the management plans must be submitted to and approved by the relevant plan, scheme or strategy in consultation with the relevant district or county council. Therefore, the Applicant considers that the drafting within the DCO already deals with this concern.
A1.35	Schedule 4 (3) - Fees	ESC considers that further discussion on the fee for discharge of requirements is necessary. One option is to have a charging schedule to set out clear fees for each discharge of requirement. Part (2) is not accepted by ESC. It is not appropriate for a refund to be provided under (a) or (b).	The Applicant notes that Schedule 4 does not provide for any refund to be given under (a) or (b). The Applicant is discussing a PPA to contribute further towards costs.
A1.36	Schedule 4 (para 4(2)(e))	ESC considers 14 days too short a period and suggests 28 days would be more appropriate.	The Applicant considers that the 14-day period for counter-submissions in an appeal process is appropriate and proportionate. 14 days aligns with the 14 days set out within Paragraph 4(2)(d). Given that if the appeals process has started there will have already likely been delays to the Proposed Project as a result of the requirements discharge process, it is imperative that appeals are settled efficiently, and this timescale is considered to be reasonable in this context.

9. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES)

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Table 9.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES) Deadline 4 Response [REP4-121 and REP4-148].
- 9.1.2 Table 9.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES) Deadline 4 Response [REP5-213].
- 9.1.3 The Applicant’s responded to Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES) Deadline 4 Response Comments on National Grids Responses to ExQ1 [REP4-186 and REP4-200] at Deadline 5 in **Application Document 9.119 Applicant's Comments on Late Responses to ExA First Written Questions [REP5-131]**.
- 9.1.4 The Applicant’s has responded to Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES) Deadline 5 Response [REP5-212] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 9.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES) Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-121 and REP4-148]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Landscape and Visual			
5		We noted the comments from East Suffolk Council’s Arboriculturist. Planting is very difficult to establish in East Suffolk due to lack of rainfall but also where there is a clay soil waterlogged ground which can rot roots in winter. Also it is just not a question of survival but growth rates. FPC is concerned that although National Grid is committing to lifetime maintenance, the word “maintenance” or “adaptive maintenance” is not sufficiently precise and there need to be very specific requirements to define what this means. This was the reason why requirement 15(2) was included on the face of the EA2 DCO.	The oLEMP has been updated at Deadline 6 (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk) and provides additional detail on the adaptive management controls which along with the other monitoring requirements set out in the oLEMP provide robust controls to ensure the successful establishment of all plant material.
6		We support ESC’s concern in relation to the major adverse effect on landscape in respect of Viewpoint 5 (APP 209). Not only will the landscape mitigation do very little for many years it will never completely screen what is a huge piece of industrial infrastructure. This infrastructure will be particularly visible on the B1121 going west from the junction with Kiln Lane. The land here is higher than the viewpoint and will provide an exceptionally good view for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and car drivers of the convertor station which will be completely out of scale with and dominate the once rural landscape.	The Applicant has provided a further detailed response to 3LVIA4 (which includes viewpoint 5) at Deadline 6 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions . The Applicant’s position on additional landscape planting, including with respect to Suffolk Viewpoint 5, was provided within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant’s Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] in Table 6.1 and with regard to AP39 in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] .
7		The Landscape Management Plan for the substations site which is required under the EA2 DCO is due for discharge by ESC on 5th February 2026 (DC/25/4821/DRR). Therefore National Grid should use this plan for the substations site rather than seeking to reinvent the wheel and in doing so waste the time of local authorities and FPC which has engaged in the discharge process. Colin Innes of	The Applicant at Deadline 4 provided an updated Figure 5 of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) which demonstrates that the Proposed Project landscaping largely reflects the consented detailed landscape design approved pursuant to

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Shepherd and Wedderburn representing SPR clearly set out the detailed process in the EA2 DCO noting it was heavily secured. FPC reminds the ExA that this plan and the associated requirements is part of the “ <i>only just sufficient</i> ” mitigation.	Requirement 14(1) of the East Anglia TWO DCO by East Suffolk Council in February 2026. The difference relates largely to where the Sea Link cables will pass through the area north of Kiln Lane substation. The Proposed Project landscaping shows that same planting areas, but shows a different species mix in discrete areas of the SPR planting design (from deep rooted to shallower rooted species). The SPR design will also need to be updated to effectively coordinate with the Proposed Project. This is set out further in the Applicant's responses to 3LVIA6 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions, submitted at Deadline 6.
Design			
8-9		Michael Mahony for FPC was not available in the afternoon of Friday 30 January. Accordingly Mr Burton helpfully raised the particular issues which FPC has in relation to design. First whilst the design of the Converter Station is clearly secured on the face of the DCO this is not the case with the National Grid substation. Furthermore the design process is not as robust as it is in the EA2 DCO. The design for the EA2 and National Grid substations which is required under the EA2 DCO is due for Discharge by ESC on 6th February (DC/25/4827/DRR) There was an extended process of engagement with the local community in relation to this design including community workshops in which National Grid participated. Therefore National Grid should use this plan for the substations site rather than seeking to reinvent the wheel and in doing so waste the time of local authorities and FPC which has engaged in the Discharge process.	See the Applicant's response to 3GEN29 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's responses to Third Written Questions for a response. However please also note that the Proposed Project Requirement 3(2) does secure certain design details that mirror those secured under the SPR consents.
10		Second given the dark skies at Friston the EA2 DCO contains requirements both in relation to construction lighting and operational lighting on the face of the DCO - see requirement 22(2)(j) and 25 in respect of operational lighting. These requirements should be replicated in the draft DCO.	The Applicant addresses the night impacts of lighting in response to ExQ3 at 3LVIA2. Requirement 3(1)(b) in Schedule 3 of the draft DCO requires the Local Planning Authority to confirm that they are satisfied that the “operational lighting of the permanent buildings” is in accord with the design principles. Commitments relating to lighting are imposed by the REAC [REP5-115] at GG38 and B39. A nighttime assessment is provided within Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137]. Furthermore, Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order (submitted at Deadline 6) has been updated to require the submission of an Operational Lighting Management Plan for Work No. 1B, should this be constructed under the Proposed Project DCO.
Cultural Heritage			
11		The substation site is ringed by Listed Buildings including the Grade II* Parish Church. In the EA2 examination it was found that the damage to cultural heritage including the setting of heritage assets was at the upper end of “less than substantial harm”. Therefore any expansion of the National Grid substation for future	Regarding heritage, the impact assessment of all designated and non-designated heritage assets with the potential to be affected by the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, within and outside of the Order Limits, is provided in Application Document 6.2.2.3 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage [APP-050]. This includes a worst-case

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		projects, LionLink, Helios Solar Farm and the other projects on the NESO TEC register can only worsen that harm.	assessment of the impact of the Proposed Project, including the Fromus River crossing, on the Grade II Listed Hurts Hall and Saxmundham Conservation Area (which includes the Grade II* Listed Church of St John the Baptist). See §10.13 of [REP2-014]. Other future application will be assessed on their own merits by the appropriate decision making authority.
Traffic and Transport			
12-13		Steve Merry the highways expert (Transport Policy and Development Manager) at Suffolk County Council mentioned the potential cumulative impacts of the Helios project. National Grid confirmed that they would be meeting Helios in three weeks' time. The purpose of those meetings can only be to discuss the cumulative impact of Sea Link with Helios. Both of the options to make Benhall Bridge fit for AILs will result in many days of road closures. The outline Construction Traffic Management Plan states “in the case of exceptional circumstances where the proposed routing to the site is compromised due to an incident or road closure then it is considered acceptable for HGVs to be redirected via an alternative route.” The B1121 through Friston (for access to S-RL9 and S-BM11) is designated by Sea Link as an HGV route despite its unsuitability. National Grid has said this to be solely for the purposes of the pylon works just to the west of Friston which are very limited in terms of construction time and requiring 2 HGV vehicle movements a day. The Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan needs to clearly state that the B1121 cannot be used in exceptional circumstances and in other circumstances can only be used for 2 HGV movements a day.	This is acknowledged and the Applicant has reviewed other schemes including Helios and the Essex and Suffolk Water pipeline, although there is currently insufficient information available (e.g. traffic forecasts) for these schemes to inform the traffic and transport cumulative assessment. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened in and assessed within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060], which includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Applicant stands by the previous responses relating to the proposed usage of the B1121 Aldeburgh Road, which will be limited to minor works to existing overhead line towers, as set out in Table 8.1 of Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241]. It is also clarified that while Benhall Rail Bridge is closed, construction traffic relating to the Proposed Project will not be re-routed to other roads such as the B1121 Aldeburgh Road through Friston. The measures and commitments within Application Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk [REP4-061] are continually being reviewed in consultation with SCC Highways and this document continues to be updated during Examination as necessary. This will therefore be updated to state that construction traffic along the B1121 Saxmundham Road will be limited to the pylon works and will not otherwise be used, including in exceptional circumstances.
Noise and Vibration			
14		The subject was extensively discussed in the EA2 Examination and was addressed in a number of issue specific hearings. Part of the issues discussed was the exceptionally quiet baseline noise levels at Friston. This is what led to the stringent noise requirements in the EA2 DCO not just in relation to noise levels but also in relation to testing. Requirement 27 applies to and references the National Grid substation in respect of its “standard operation”. This was included on the basis that in “standard operation” the National Grid substation would not emit any noise although there were concerns about the noise from the operation of switchgear in non-standard operation. For reasons which were not clear, the ExA did not address this issue. Rupert Thornely Taylor, the noise expert for SEAS in this Examination	Noted

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		was also SASES expert in the EA2 Examination and you will note the reference to “tonal penalties” in requirement 27(2) in respect of the EA2 and EA1N substations. The Friston community should not lose the benefit of a noise requirement in respect of the operation of the National Grid substation. Furthermore given the expansion of the National Grid substation for LionLink and other projects with the accompanying increase in switchgear and the corresponding increase in noise from the switchgear in non-standard operation, National Grid’s assessment of noise from the substation should be secured in the DCO.	
Health and Wellbeing			
15 – 17	Core working hours	The working hours permitted under the EA2 DCO are already very extensive, being 7am to 7pm on weekdays and 7am till 1 pm on Saturdays. The local community strongly resisted any Saturday working but was refused. The ongoing works at the substation site since 2025 have already caused significant disruption given the large amount of heavy plant and machinery. What was particularly intrusive were reversing alarms and recorded messages which could be very clearly heard over significant distances. Furthermore given the need to constantly de-water the site, diesel pumps were operating seven days a week which has caused significant disruption to residents who live near the site. The thought of no respite from what will remain significant construction noise 12 hours a day every day will further depress many residents. Whilst National Grid has returned to the EA2 working hours for the substation and the pylon works it has not appreciated the effect of the EA2 working hours, which extend to the entirety of the order limits at the substations site. Therefore in order for Friston residents to have the benefit of the working hours which they currently have, no works should take place within the substations site order limits except in accordance with the EA2 working hours Through effective workforce management and given the existing extensive working hours National Grid should be able to meet its construction timetable. There are after all a number of exceptions to the EA2 working hours. Furthermore by not having Sunday and Bank Holiday working National Grid will be able to make significant savings through the avoidance of premium rates for employees.	The Applicant has provided its latest position regarding core working hours within Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4 (please refer to Action Point AP106). The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6). Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC). A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures in recognition of the LPA and community's concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions in response to 3HW3.
18	Light pollution effects	The impact of light pollution was recognised in the EA2 examination hence the design requirements in the EA2 DCO. Light pollution should be addressed in the Sea Link DCO.	This comment is noted by the Applicant. A nighttime assessment is provided within Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137] .
Cumulative Effects			
19-22	Helios Solar Farm	National Grid admitted that it is holding regular meetings with other developers including with Helios Solar Farm. The location of this farm is known, therefore the AC cable route is known. This AC cable route will have an impact on landscape mitigation in the way that Sea Link and LionLink will have impact on the landscape mitigation at the substation site at Friston. Further it is known that the National Grid substation will need to be expanded in the same way as it is for LionLink. Details of that expansion are shown in the LionLink Statutory Consultation document, General Arrangement Plans and Drawings, Section Number 02-01 and attached to this submission at Appendix 1. Therefore, some of the cumulative effects of Helios can be assessed. National Grid refer to information relating to Helios being confidential. In doing so National Grid implicitly admitted that information exists which would enable some cumulative effects to be assessed. Whilst National Grid denied they could assess cumulative effects of the AC cable route referring to the lack of publicly available information, they made no such comment in relation to the expansion of the National Grid substation. It is self-evident that expansion of the National Grid substation will have further significant landscape impacts given the potential height of the substation at 16m. In terms of confidentiality it is submitted that the information which exists which is allegedly confidential may not in fact have the nature of confidence. Rather it is information which Helios does not want to disclose which is something quite different. There is a strong public interest in as much information as possible about the Helios project being made available so that cumulative effects can be assessed Not considering the cumulative impacts of Helios in this Examination results in a lopsided and asymmetric situation. Developers discuss cumulative impacts privately so they can assess the cumulative impacts on their projects, and yet cumulative effects which impact the environment are not addressed in an Examination process which is meant to consider cumulative impacts.	The Applicant has made clear it has an ongoing dialogue with Helios as to the interaction of the two projects (see p.10 of [REP2-020]). Helios has also taken steps including attending quarterly Strategic Energy Projects Meetings since May 2024, as chaired and co-ordinated by East Suffolk Council, which include Scottish Power, NGET, and National Grid Ventures amongst its attendees (see §5.1.6 of that document). The Applicant has explained that it does not have sufficient information about the Helios scheme to assess the cumulative impacts of the projects (see §7.34.19 of [REP2-024]), and see comments above. The Applicant has continued to engage with Helios (see p.36 of [REP4-085])

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
23-24	Single AC Cable Route for Sealink and Lionlink	LionLink is proposing two options for the AC cable route from the converter stations site to the substations site. One is the same route as Sea Link and the other, is further east to the other side of High House Farm. If LionLink selects the eastern route this will significantly increase the cumulative environmental impacts including from extended construction (noise, traffic, dust) and disruption of landscape mitigation. To reduce the cumulative impacts of LionLink and Sea Link, AC cable ducts for LionLink should be installed alongside the AC cables for Sea Link. The benefits of installing cable ducts for a future energy project to reduce cumulative impacts are well understood and appreciated. This approach was adopted for the EA1 and EA3 projects which connect at Bramford, as well as the EA2 and EA1N projects which connect at Friston. No doubt National Grid will state that NGET and NGV are two separate companies. However that is no bar to cable ducts for a future project being installed alongside a current project. All that is required under Government Guidance on associated development is for the Developers to be “related”. Rather than recite the arguments here FPC would point to article 41 of the National Infrastructure Planning Handbook – Fourth Edition. In the EA2 DCO this approach was secured in Requirement 42 in Part 3 of Schedule 1. National Grid referred to “coordination” being a key design principle but that is inadequate to secure the installation of AC cable ducts for Lionlink.	The rationale for this is presented in Application Document 7.11 Coordination Document [APP-363] which addresses the reasons why the Proposed Project cannot consent or commit to delivering elements of the proposed LionLink project. The Applicant further addresses the coordination of cabling ducts in response to ExQ3 at 3GEN31 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions (submitted at Deadline 6), as well as in other previous submissions including p.47 of [REP2-022] and p.65 of [REP2-016].
The draft Development Consent Order			
25		FPC has made extensive comments on the draft DCO in its comments on National Grid's responses to EXQ1 which have also been submitted at Deadline 4	Noted.
26-28	Article 10	As previously submitted National Grid has created a confused position in terms of mitigation at Friston by proposing a draft DCO, which in circumstances which are not entirely clear, will apply to the substations site. At the heart of the problem is that the draft DCO reduces the requirements and mitigation at the substations site which is secured in the EA2 DCO, mitigation which the examining authorities for EA2 and EA1N deemed to be only “just sufficient”. In this context and as the ExA recognises, the effect of article 10 and in particular article 10(3) needs to be carefully considered. It is understood in complex planning consents that a consent for one development might inadvertently conflict with a consent for another development. However the situation at the substations site at Friston is quite different and possibly unique. National Grid is seeking consent for the same site excluding areas specifically reserved for the footprint of the EA2 and EA1N substations. The requirements and mitigation in the EA2 and EA1N DCOs have been established for the site as a whole. This is one reason why the DCOs for EA2 and EA1N are identical. National Grid by seeking a separate consent for the same site but with reduced requirements and mitigation has very substantially increased the possibility of a conflict between the draft DCO and the EA2 and EA1N DCOs. In such circumstances the onus should be on National Grid (particularly given all its resources) to avoid any conflict between the 6 extant EA2 and EA1N DCOs, and the draft DCO. Therefore to the extent there is a conflict then the EA2 and EA1N orders should take precedence. The wording “and will not prevent the authorised project being carried out or used or any other power or right under this Order being exercised” in 10(3) should be removed. Article 10(3) should be re-drafted so that in the event of any conflict the EA2 and EA1N DCOs take priority.	The Applicant addresses the landscape mitigations of these other projects in response to ExQ3 at 3LVIA6. The Applicant has addressed this at Table 1.2 of [REP5-131]. The Applicant does not accept that the DCOs for the East Anglia One and Two projects should take priority as a matter of law. The Applicant is satisfied that the wording in Article 10(3) of the draft DCO addresses any potential conflicts. The Applicant has set out its explanation for requiring a separate consenting procedure for this project at Table 2.19 of [REP2-014].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		As noted in ISH2, the EA2 and EA1N DCOs do not have an equivalent provision to Article 101 .Therefore the position in the case of conflict under those DCOs is unclear. Accordingly by the EA2 and EA1N DCOs taking priority the issue regarding conflict should not arise in respect of the coexistence of those projects with Sea Link.	
29-30	Use of the words “substantially” and “generally”	The use of these words in qualifying National Grid’s commitment to comply with various outline and other documents was raised in the hearing. If there is need for any “discretion” that should lie with the approving authority alone and not with National Grid	This is standard language in a DCO and provides a degree of flexibility where that is practically necessary.

Table 9.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Friston Parish Council and Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES) Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-213]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		REP4-061 & 062 – Outline Construction Traffic And Travel Plan	
		FPC made specific comments concerning the content of this plan and the use of the B1121 through Friston (S-RL9) as set out in paragraph 13 of its written post ISH2 submission (REP4 121). These comments have not been adequately reflected in the Outline Construction Traffic And Travel Plan submitted at Deadline 4. Whilst paragraph 7.4.15 has been added, the issue is that the B1121 through Friston is designated as an HGV route to enable access for the pylon upgrading works at S-AP-10. FPC’s request is that the B1121 (S-RL9) is not to be used as an HGV route for any other purpose, including in the circumstances of road closures.	The Applicant explains at §7.14.14-15 of the Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP 5-064] that the “the B1121 Aldeburgh Road and B1121 Saxmundham Road through Friston will only be used for access to existing overhead line towers/ pylon works, and will not otherwise be used by construction vehicles, including in exceptional circumstances.”
		FPC’s understanding from NG is that in fact in order to carry out the pylon upgrading works HGVs will not need to use the B1121 at all, since loads will be transported by a tractor and trailer. Accordingly a better approach is for the B1121 through Friston (S-RL9) not to be designated as an HGV route at all and further, such use as there will be for construction traffic should be strictly limited to the pylon upgrading works.	The Applicant has sought to limit the use of the B1121 through Friston per §6.2.4: “Fewer than 30 peak daily construction vehicles are expected along the B1121 Aldeburgh Road and B1121 Saxmundham Road through Friston as a result of S-BM11, which will be limited to access to existing overhead line towers and pylon works. This route will otherwise not be used by HGVs associated with the Proposed Project.”
		REP4-217 & 218 - Draft Development Consent Order Version G Clause 5	
		Amendments have been made to paragraph 3 (Detailed Design) of Schedule 3 of the draft DCO submitted at deadline 4 (REP 4–217 & 218) so that the design approved under the EA2 DCO in respect of the National Grid substation is carried forward into the draft Sealink DCO.	The Applicant addresses the importing of the East Anglia scheme controls in response to ExQ3 at 3GEN29 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions (submitted at Deadline 6).
		Similar amendments should be included in relation to all of the EA2 discharge documents, not just in relation to design, which have been and will have been approved as part of the discharge of requirements process	Requirement 3 obliges the Applicant to seek the confirmation of the Local Planning Authority that, inter alia, the “scale” of the substation is in accordance with the design principles. Roof mounted equipment such as lightning protection, fall arrest systems or ventilation outlets is excluded from the 18.5m limits of deviation imposed by section 5(3) of the draft DCO but the development is still controlled by Requirement 3.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		under the EA2 DCO. Of course such amendments should only come into play if EA2 does not go ahead. However these amendments to paragraph 3 (Detailed Design) of Schedule 3 are defective in a number of respects relative to the design requirements for the National Grid substation in the EA2 DCO. Details of the defects are set out in FPCs response to 2GEN5&6 of EXQ2.	
		REP 4-241 – Table 8.1 Applicant's Comments on the Submissions from Friston Parish Council And Substation Action Save East Suffolk Ltd <u>Cumulative Impact Page 96 – TEC Register</u> On page 102 the National Grid comments that: “The South Anglia Connection Node referred to in the TEC registers is a holding position used to get applicants into their system in advance of the relevant system studies and other exercises being undertaken which will influence which specific connection point is offered. This may be Friston (Kiln Lane), or another substation in East Anglia.” This is misleading. The entry in the TEC register, attached at Appendix 1 (entry 1758), is for a project at Red House Farm which lies between Friston and Sternfield. The entry in the first column states: “Red House Farm – Friston 400 kV 249 MW connection” This is then referred to in the third column as: “South Anglia Connection Node E 400 KV Substation.” Is National Grid seriously suggesting that the connection point for a project at Red House Farm could be anywhere in East Anglia when there is a connection point at Friston, particularly when the entry refers to a Friston connection? Please note that National Grid has not denied that it works in close collaboration with NESO. 2 Accordingly FPC reiterates its request that NESO gives evidence in the examination, and in particular the extent to which a future projects in this area will connect at the National Grid substation/Friston 400 kV 249MW connection/South Anglia Connection Node 400 kV substation which are one and the same connection point.	The Applicant reiterates that it has no control over NESO and it is a matter for NESO to determine which connection points are offered. As previously stated, NESO is a separate government-owned entity, and the Applicant cannot speculate or comment on whether they may be intending to appear at the Examination or what their position would be if they did.
		Cumulative Impact – Pages 102-104 – Helios Project National Grid makes several references to the lack of information and refers to the Helios website. Just because a developer chooses not to	The Applicant is not deliberately withholding information about the Helios project. The Applicant has assessed the cumulative impacts in relation to other developments where it has sufficient information to do so. See also point 21 of [REP4-236], and the Applicant's response below.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		disclose information on its website does not mean that information does not exist or is necessarily of a confidential nature, simply that the developer does not want to disclose it publicly. FPC has commented previously on this subject. It is clearly in the public interest that information in relation to the Helios project is disclosed by the developer to the examining authority. Helios is an existing project, it appears on the TEC register and the developer is having regular meetings with local authorities and National Grid. If there is not any information relating to this project then what do they talk about in their meetings? There may well be reliable information it is just that the developer is choosing not to disclose it (perhaps in an attempt to prevent it being considered in a cumulative impact assessment). Therefore the comments of Lang J do not apply.	
		<u>Development Consent Order – Page 105</u> Why should a community have to spend so much time and effort to retain the benefit of the mitigation and requirements it already has under existing DCOs? National Grid states that: <i>“Where appropriate and relevant, mitigation for the National Grid substation at Friston being proposed as part of the Proposed Project will reflect that being designed by SPR.”</i> The appropriateness and relevance of the mitigation and requirements at the substations site at Friston has been determined and recommended by the examining authorities for EA2 and EA1N and then given effect in DCOs granted by the Secretary of State. Consent orders which National Grid did not object to despite being involved in the examination process is for both projects. The use of the word "reflect" only causes uncertainty and could provide National Grid with discretion to resile from the existing mitigation and requirements, something which it clearly has the intention of doing given its approach to the draft Sealink DCO. The solution has always been straightforward. National Grid simply has to incorporate in the draft Sealink DCO a separate part which relates to the substations site, not just to the National Grid substation, as it wishes to take over the entirety of the substations site) which replicates the requirements of the EA2 and EA1N DCOs. In relation to the transfer of “the relevant benefits of the EA1N or EA to order powers”, FPC’s understanding, given the recent decisions of the Secretary of State relation to the EA2 DCO, is those relevant benefits can be transferred. It is a straightforward mechanical legal exercise to effect such a transfer. It would seem to be to everyone’s benefit if this transfer could be effected prior to the end of the examination.	The Applicant’s position on this issue is set out at p.105 of [REP4-241] as the comment notes. The Applicant has addressed the wider point about the interplay between the DCOs at p.43 of [REP2-022].
		<u>Traffic - Pages 106 -107</u>	The Applicant has responded in detail to these points on pp.106-107 of [REP4-241]. The Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk deals with

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		FPC notes National Grid's comments but does not believe they are adequately reflected in the current outline traffic management plan (REP4- 061 & 062) as set out above.	the interaction between Grove Road and the access points at §6.2.2 of [REP5-064].
		3 Safety - Page 107 FPC notes the assurances given by National Grid but ultimately they are self-serving. For a small rural community, now being forced to live next to a major piece of infrastructure, the independent view of the Suffolk Fire Service, which is the organisation which would have to deal with a fire, would be welcome. The apparent reluctance of the SFS to engage in the examination process is heightening FPC's concern. If SFS does not engage in the examination process, it would not be unreasonable for National Grid provide an independent fire risk assessment of the substations site and whether a fire might spread to the surrounding fields, vegetation and residential dwellings, particularly during the very dry summer months.	The Suffolk Fire Service is a separate government entity and the Applicant cannot speculate or comment on whether they may be intending to appear at the Examination or what their position would be if they did. The Applicant has already addressed its approach to fire risk (see, for example, p.107 of [REP4-241], p.4 of [REP5-131], and p.67 of [REP2-018].

10. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Kent County Council

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1
- Table 10.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Kent County Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-123].
- 10.1.2
- The Applicant’s has responded to Kent County Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-195] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.**

Table 10.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Kent County Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-123]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Ecology and Biodiversity			
Action 3	The applicant’s comments in response to Matthew Denny that reptile surveys are unnecessary at the former hoverport site as reptiles would not generally be present on the hardstanding area and would be unlikely to be affected if present in cracks in the hardstanding due to the proposed track reinforcement.	Reptiles are not found in areas that are fully hard standing. But if the area is mixture of hard standing (with cracks) and areas of vegetation the presence of reptiles can’t be ruled out.	The Applicant has submitted photographs into the Examination in response to the ExA first written questions [REP3-070], which clearly show open unvegetated hardstanding routes. Having walked the site, the Applicant is confident that sufficiently open and unvegetated routes exist. The Applicant does not intend to traverse habitat within which reptiles may be found (restricting access to open unvegetated hardstanding). As discussed in ISH2 reptiles may spend short periods of time basking on hardstanding but because they are exposed to predators will spend little time there and will depart quickly as soon as vehicles approach. The Applicant will also put measures in place to ensure existing areas of hardstanding are not collapsed by vehicle movements (as this would be a health and safety concern aside from environmental considerations).
	The applicant’s comments that wider invasive non-native species control measures are not required to be undertaken by the applicant at the hoverport to offset the wider effects of the works.	We do not have enough information to respond to this comment.	Noted
	Provide comment on the approach to non-significant enhancements as outlined in item 3.5.17 of the applicant’s DL3 statement of common ground (SoCG) with Dover District Council.	We defer to Dover District Council on this issue.	Noted
	The applicant’s comments that there are no industry standard metrics relating to the quantity of land required to mitigate for impacts on skylark.	To inform an Outline Mitigation and Compensation Strategy, a map should be provided to show as a minimum where there is possible mitigation land. There should be an explanation of the type of fields to be targeted (size, shape, field boundaries) and how it has been assessed that the compensation measures proposed are capable of supporting the additional birds.	This is under discussion with Kent County Council. The Applicant stated in ISH2 that a commonly used mitigation metric is two plots per skylark territory lost, delivered at 2 plots per hectare of mitigation land. This is the metric that has been advocated by Kent County Council in discussions (notwithstanding the Applicant’s intention to provide 4 plots per hectare). Using the 2 plots per metric the mitigation land (which is 10ha in size thus being large enough to

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The number of skylark territories proposed within any plot of land should be determined based on the minimum field sizes recommended in guidance (5ha bounded by open field boundaries or short hedges, 10ha if bounded by tall hedges or woodland) and scientific evidence/ monitoring data for other similar projects should support the proposed approach with regards to any enhancement measures to increase territory numbers within existing areas of land. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) advice contained within 'A management guide to birds of lowland farmland' (Winspear and Davies, 2005) suggests that 'skylarks generally avoid small fields. The best fields to use are ones of at least 5 ha if bounded by open field boundaries or short hedges, or fields of at least 10 ha if bounded by tall hedges or woodland.' Other sources corroborate this. Research by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) indicates that tall structures such as hedgerows and woodland edge reduce the area of a field that skylark will use. There is available scientific research to inform the amount of land required to compensate for impacts to skylark. The ecologist will need to consider the number of territories/pairs that need to be compensated for and the quality of the habitat to provide that compensation in order to determine the area of land required. The ecologist will also need to consider whether the land proposed to provide the compensation already contains nesting skylarks. Skylark territory size varies greatly, but most territories cover 0.25 – 2 ha. Research indicates that fields with two skylark plots per ha can accommodate more nesting skylarks compared with conventional winter-sown wheat management (0.3 territories per ha compared between 0.1 to 0.2 territories per ha). If skylark plots are combined with arable field margins, 0.4 territories per ha could be supported. Available literature indicates that habitat changes within farmland might achieve between 0.2-0.5 territories per ha (five-year set aside land) and 1 territory per ha (fallow land). Natural England has previously indicated that a ratio of three skylark plots for every territory lost would be acceptable as compensation for development[1]. However, a more recent CIEEM In Practice Article (InPractice117_Sep2022.pdf) provides a better metric for skylark compensation and we would encourage its use. We would encourage the application of the precautionary principle when designing the compensation. The proposed compensation measures should be fully and clearly justified with clear scientific reasoning and backing.	be suitable for skylarks) can support up to 10 pairs of skylarks. This is far more than the 1 skylark territory (based on 2 seasons of breeding bird survey) that has been identified to be permanently lost due to the Proposed Project. Whichever metric is used, the mitigation land is sufficient to support more skylark territories than will be permanently lost.
Cultural Heritage			
Action 52	Heritage assets listed by the applicant [REP3-070] which are scoped out of the ES include those which are described as experiencing an adverse impact,	Heritage Assets scoped out but assessed as impacts with lower end of less than substantial - the list/table provided doesn't appear to include any assessed as such in Kent. Most non-designated assets are scoped out as 'Asset is non-designated so does not meet criteria for assessment of effects through change to setting	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	though less than substantial at the lower end of this scale. For example, asset ID 1215749 - Buxlow Manor in Suffolk. For this example and the others like it, provide additional information as to the potential impact to the significance of each asset and further justification as to why it was scoped out. For all relevant Councils and Historic England, is it appropriate to scope out from the ES assessment heritage assets which are considered to have (lower end of) less than substantial impact on their significance?	and there would be no physical impact to the asset'. For archaeological assets, we identified the need to assess the setting of the non-designated Ebbsfleet enclosure which has been done. We are satisfied that the impacts on the setting of other non-designated archaeological assets did not require more detailed assessment and scoping in.	
Action 56.	Agree on a plan to submit showing the extent of the Ebbsfleet Peninsular Multi Period Complex with the proposed order limits, proposed compounds and haul roads overlaid.	The applicant's archaeologist and KCC have agreed two figures which the applicant has agreed to submit to the ExA for deadline 4.	The Applicant can confirm that these figures were submitted to the Examination at Deadline 4 as Appendix B to [REP4-086].
Traffic and Transport			
Action 59.	Updates provided for junction modelling for both Kent and Suffolk (to include cumulative traffic), if the modelling is not fully submitted at DL4.	This action lies with the applicant to provide, with KCC to review once submitted.	This is acknowledged and the Applicant has provided a response to ISH2 Action Point 59 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] . The results of the junction capacity modelling have been shared with KCC
Action 62	Consider and discuss between County Councils and applicant whether information regarding predicted journey time analysis is required to be part of a robust traffic and transport assessment, including cumulative assessments.	A need for this type of assessment has not yet been determined, contingent on the junction modelling, but we would expect that it is probably not required. Construction traffic will already be using Kent's major road network for the majority of trips and total journey delay along the A299 and A256 is not likely to be significant in severity.	This is acknowledged and the Applicant has provided a response to ISH2 Action Point 62 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] . The Applicant agrees that predicted journey time analysis is not required, beyond the junction capacity modelling outputs which provide details of forecast junction capacity and journey time delays for localised parts of the highway network (at key junctions), namely the Minster, Sevenscore and Ebbsfleet roundabouts. The Applicant agrees that construction traffic associated with the Proposed Project is not expected to have significant impacts on the A299 and A256, as reported in Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] .
Action 67.	On proposed new accesses, the applicant has stated that road safety audits have been carried out to show that the proposed new accesses are feasible and can be	KCC Highways have seen and given feedback as the Overseeing Organisation on the Stage 1 RSAs submitted, and we are currently satisfied that these adequately address initial safety matters, prior to detailed design.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	safe. Provide comments on this and whether it is considered that further information on road safety audits or other forms of information and evidence is necessary for the proposed new accesses during the Examination stage?		
Climate Change			
Action 80.	KCC to provide response to ExQ1 1CC1 [PD-017] regarding climate change and the Finch judgement.	KCC has no comment on this issue.	Noted.
Water Environment			
Action 83.	Set out position with respect to the Minster Converter Station and Substation footprint and any impacts on land drains are present which address surface water in the associated fields and these could be affected in a manner which increases the risk of flooding including having regards to the applicant's position as set out in the response to Kent County Council's Local Impact Report [REP2-028].	This site falls within the jurisdiction of the River Stour Internal Drainage Board and so Land Drainage Matters rest with themselves. If an ordinary watercourse is culverted it remains a watercourse and requires consent to culvert, even if the culvert is temporary. This would be subject to the usual consent process with the Authority of the area, including the associated documentation. That said we noted that within the provided Flood Risk Assessment Table 1.1. it is stated "W11 - Severance of existing land drainage routes, including agricultural field drainage systems, would be managed during construction through provision of temporary alternative drainage routes, and these drainage systems would be permanently reinstated or rerouted ensuring their existing function is maintained" and that "AS05 - Consultation with affected landowners will be carried out to investigate the current extent of land drainage which will be taken into account in the development of the Drainage Management Plan (see W14) prior to construction, with the intent of maintaining the efficiency of the existing land drainage system." These proposals would seem appropriate.	The Applicant has engaged with the River Stour Internal Drainage Board and would secure all relevant permits for works to ordinary watercourses. The Applicant welcomes KCCs position that the measures proposed to manage land drainage systems are <i>'appropriate'</i>.
Action 88	Confirm any outstanding concerns with respect to meeting the objectives of the WFD.	With regards to the management of surface water any proposals will be required to demonstrate compliance with DEFRA's SuDS Technical Standards, para 1.9. of which requires that "The surface water drainage design shall not contribute to the depletion of surface waters or groundwater beyond safe environmental levels. For example, as set out in the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations 2017 (WFD) or measured by the hydrological regime element" and so by 'default' the impacts will be considered and it will be required for the applicant to demonstrate that any proposals comply with DEFRA's standards and thus the WFD. It should be noted that the site proposals are already in a failing catchment and it is unlikely that as a result of the mitigation measures proposed that the classification will be affected negatively.	The Kent Drainage Strategy (Document 9.17.2, which was resubmitted with minor updates at deadline 5) has been prepared to demonstrate compliance with DEFRA's SuDS Technical Standards and in accordance with the National Standard for SuDS. The Applicant welcomes KCCs agreement that the classification of relevant WFD waterbody catchments would not be affected negatively by the Project.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Cumulative Effects			
Action 113	KCC's comments responding to ExQ 1CEIntra2 [REP3-091] relate entirely to traffic. Confirm if there are any other concerns regarding the mitigations of other environmental effects.	KCC has no further concerns beyond those already outlined above.	Noted.
Draft Development Consent Order			
Action 118.	KCC to consider ExQ1 question 1GEN28 [PD-017] and the applicant's response [REP3- 069] regarding the inclusion of the words "which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed" and the applicant's proposed 35 day decision period.	KCC has no comment on this issue	Noted.
Additional Comments			
	The applicant only has temporary rights to move PRow. Is this correct?	Yes- Within the Document 7.5.9.2 'Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Kent (PRowMP) — Our interpretation is that they propose to only temporarily close PRow where necessary. The document is perhaps misleading in that it refers to permanent diversions as being an option (e.g. at 2.5.3), but also goes onto say that "No PRow will be permanently diverted as a result of the Kent Onshore Scheme" (2.5.7 & 5.9.1). We note that the Draft Development Consent Order refers to the permanent "stopping up of Street and Public Rights of Way (para 16), however no PRow are specified within Schedule 7 and therefore no PRow are proposed to be permanently stopped up or diverted.	The dDCO authorises the Applicant the power to permanently stop up and divert PRows described in Schedule 7 [REP5-005]. The two PRows designated to be stopped up fall within Suffolk County Council. The Applicant confirms that no PRows within Kent County Council will be permanently diverted as a result of the Kent Onshore Scheme, as per section 2.5.7 of Application Document 7.5.9.2: Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Kent [APP-353].
	Mitigation measures proposed adequately mitigate against impact of development on the PRow network. Is this correct in your view?	We agree that sufficient mitigation measures are provide as detailed within the PRow MP during construction. For example through the principle of seeking the minimum impact on users with a hierarchy of action (5.4); keeping routes open as far as possible (with marshalling and/or controlled crossings), any temporary diversion routes kept to the minimum distance and shortest duration, the provision of signage and information and the reinstatement of any directly affected PRow to the same standard as recorded prior to the commencement of construction.	Noted.
	The applicant cannot do any more in terms of mitigation. Do you agree with this?	No, we do not agree with this. Following the completion of the works the applicant will reinstate any impacted PRow to the same condition as it was prior to the works. To mitigate against the inconvenience caused to the public during construction and post construction, such as the visual impact and any loss of views and the impact of any change in ground conditions (e.g. following disturbance the ground may not drain as it did or be as firm to walk on), the inspector may consider if they felt it appropriate that some or all the PRow should be reinstated to a higher standard, for	KCC identify the need to mitigate against the inconvenience caused to the public (i) during construction and (ii) post-construction. As to the former, the Applicant notes KCC's agreement that sufficient mitigation measures have been provided to minimise the impacts on users <u>during</u> construction (see KCC comment above).

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		example through the laying down of an unbound surface and/or a financial obligation to fund improvements to the wider surrounding network. If we may also bring to the inspector's attention that it has long been a desire to secure a new pedestrian bridge link across the River Stour in the vicinity. The Public Footpaths which run along both the North and South side of the River Stour have no connectivity beyond the road crossing at Plucks Gutter to the West and Sandwich to the East, a distance of approximately 7 miles. Such a crossing would be a very valuable enhancement of the network, linking an otherwise very rural and remote part of the network and providing a unique opportunity for recreational access and to engage with nature.	As to the latter, <u>this does not arise</u>. As per section 5.13.1 of Application Document 7.5.9.2: Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Kent [APP-353], the Applicant will reinstate any directly affected PRoW “<i>to the same standard as recorded prior to the commencement of construction</i>”. Further, any such remediation will be discussed with landowners and PRoW officers before handover. In light of this, the Applicant disagrees that there would be any adverse impact, such as the suggested change in ground conditions, that justify reinstatement to a higher standard. As set out in Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Response to First Written Questions, response 1GEN1, the Applicant will follow government guidance which sets expectations for how community benefit funds should be delivered for transmission infrastructure projects. The Applicant welcomes suggestions for the potential delivery of community benefits. and would be happy to discuss the feasibility of these ideas during community engagement, which the Applicant will be undertaking soon. KCC will be directly invited to partake in this engagement.

11. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from London Gateway Port Limited

11.1 Introduction

- 11.1.1
- Table 11.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on London Gateway Port Limited Deadline 4 Response [REP4-125].
- 11.1.2
- Table 11.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on London Gateway Port Limited Deadline 5 Response [REP5-174].
- 11.1.3
- The Applicant’s has responded to London Gateway Port Limited Deadline 5 Response [REP5-197] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions** submitted at Deadline 6.

Table 11.1 Applicant’s Comments on the London Gateway Port Limited Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-125]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	DEADLINE 4: WRITTEN SUMMARY OF ORAL SUBMISSIONS MADE ON BEHALF OF LONDON GATEWAY PORT LIMITED	AT ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 2	The Applicant has no comments on this matter.

Table 11.2 Applicant’s Comments on the London Gateway Port Limited Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-174]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
2.1	DCO Requirement to Secure Water Depths	LGPL understands from a meeting held on 19 February 2026 between the Applicant and the Ports with an interest in the Application that the Applicant is, in principle, committed to securing the depths requested by LGPL and the PLA. However, the position of the Applicant as to how that should be done remains unclear or uncertain - the information submitted by the Applicant is inconsistent with regards its approach to securing water depths in the Areas of Interest (see details of this inconsistency below).	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.
2.2	DCO Requirement to Secure Water Depths	LGPL has maintained throughout the Examination that the depths within the Areas of Interest should be secured by way of a DCO Requirement rather than pursuant to a condition of the deemed marine licence (DML) or under Protective Provisions. This is because the requirement not to preclude the specified dredge depth is a fundamental parameter to, or restriction on, the carrying out of the authorised development – it is in a sense akin to an upwards limit of deviation. It is for the Order itself to specify such a restriction – this is in accordance with the <i>Guidance on the content of a Development Consent Order required for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project</i> [Paragraph 003, Reference ID 04-003-20240430 and Paragraph 008, Reference ID 04-008-20240430] and would follow accepted practice across other	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.

		development consent orders and harbour orders under the Harbours Act 1964. It is also consistent with the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Order 2025 (Requirement 2(3) of Schedule 2 to that Order).	
2.3	DCO Requirement to Secure Water Depths	LGPL reiterated this position to the Applicant during the meeting on 19 February 2026 and, for the Applicant's assistance, provided the Applicant's solicitors with a paper on 17 February 2026 containing a suggested draft DCO Requirement (also included at Appendix 1 of this submission). However, no response on that approach or drafting has been received to date.	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
2.4	DCO Requirement to Secure Water Depths	As the Examination has now reached Deadline 5, LGPL is disappointed that this issue remains unresolved, particularly given LGPL's understanding that the need to secure the depths is agreed in principle. LGPL considers it is incurring unnecessary costs attempting to resolve a matter that should not be in dispute. With limited time remaining in the Examination, LGPL is increasingly concerned that the issue may not be resolved before the Examination closes and hopes this is not intentional on the part of the Applicant.	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
2.5	DCO Requirement to Secure Water Depths	The Applicant appears to raise a concern about the use of a Requirement - we refer to Table 10.1 of Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Clean) [REP4-241] where the Applicant purports to analyse the operation of a DCO Requirement: "[...] <i>Such a DCO Requirement would need a discharging authority and clear mechanisms to discharge the Requirement (or confirm compliance). Given the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth are located offshore, there is no relevant planning authority with an existing regulatory scheme so the Requirement would need to be tailored to set out these elements in full. The discharging authority could be one of several parties with overlapping interests (including the PLA, MCA or LGPL) but because only one party can be the discharging authority (with others potentially as 'Requirement Consultees'), the Applicant would expect this Authority to be the MMO.</i> [...]" (our emphasis)	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
2.6	DCO Requirement to Secure Water Depths	From this, we note that the Applicant appears to have misunderstood the operation of the proposed DCO Requirement. There would be no need for any application to discharge the Requirement, and therefore no discharging authority to which such an application could be made. Instead, the Applicant would be under a continuing obligation to comply with the Requirement. Failure to maintain the necessary depths (including the over-dredge tolerance) in the Areas of Interest would constitute a	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5.

		breach of the DCO. The proposed Requirement is analogous to a compliance or ongoing planning condition meaning it imposes a continuing obligation with which the Applicant must comply, without the need for any application, but it remains enforceable if breached. For example, one would not expect to seek confirmation from a local planning authority that a building had not been build in excess of a height restriction set by planning condition. Any such concern about the Requirement in this relation is misconceived.	A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
3.1	Inconsistency of Information	As noted above, there are inconsistencies in the information submitted by the Applicant to the Examination. As a result, despite the Applicant's stated commitment to LGPL at the meeting which took place on 19 February 2026 with regards securing the necessary depths at the Sunk, Long Sand Head, and North East Spit, it remains unclear from the documents provided: (i) whether the Applicant is in fact committed to securing the specific depths requested by LGPL and the Port of London Authority within the Areas of Interest; and (ii) what method the Applicant proposes to use to secure these depths (i.e. DCO Requirement or under the DML or pursuant to Protective Provisions).	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. The Applicant confirms that all relevant outline plans and chapters have been updated for Deadline 6 to mirror the new Requirement 17.
3.2	Inconsistency of Information	We have set out below some examples of those inconsistencies: <i>Extent of the Commitment to securing depths</i> (a) Paragraph 7.9.85 of 6.2.4.7 (C) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation (Tracked) [REP4-036] where the Applicant advises it <i>"agrees in principle to safeguarding the specified water depths in the majority of these three areas."</i> (our emphasis) (b) This is repeated at paragraph 5.3.7 of 9.94 (A) Planning Statement Addendum [REP4-092]. (c) Paragraph 7.9.89 of Chapter 7 of the ES [REP4-036] where the Applicant acknowledges the PLA has identified areas where depths are to be preserved, but then goes on to recommend <i>"London Gateway Port and the Port of London Authority are kept informed of seabed hazards, any reductions in under-keel clearance in key areas, and changes as they develop."</i> (our emphasis) (d) Paragraph 7.9.89 of Chapter 7 is repeated at paragraph 7.6.83 of 6.3.4.7.A (C) Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment (Tracked) [REP4-048]. (e) Paragraph 5.3.11 of 9.94 (A) Planning Statement Addendum [REP4-092] where it is stated: "To address the concerns of port authorities, an engineering review is being undertaken to inform	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6. Updates to other documents where inconsistencies have been identified are also being updated for Deadline 6.

		the Project’s intention to agree Areas of Safeguarded Depth and ensure that such a commitment is practicable.” (our emphasis) (f) LGPL considers these inconsistencies (and indeed, inconsistencies across all documents submitted to the Examination) should be corrected and submitted to the Examining Authority to make it clear the Applicant is committed to securing the requested depths at the Areas of Interest. Method of securing depths (g) The Applicant’s proposed approach to securing depths is inconsistent across the information it has submitted to the Examination. (h) Paragraph 7.8.91 of 6.2.4.7 (C) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation (Tracked) [REP4-036] the Applicant states: <i>“The Applicant agrees with the PLA’s Areas of Safeguarded Depth, and is working to secure this via a Requirement in the DCO in order to preserve the specific dredge depths in the three key areas and meet the port stakeholders’ requirement that future ports expansion is therefore not impacted”</i> (our emphasis). (i) Paragraph 7.6.81 and 7.6.82 of 6.3.4.7.A (C) Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment (Tracked) [REP4-048] the Applicant indicates it is working to secure the safeguarded areas in the DCO and/or the DML.	
3.3	Inconsistency of Information	LGPL considers that these inconsistencies regarding the method of securing the water depths should be addressed by the Applicant. LGPL requests that the Applicant updates the submitted information to confirm unequivocally that the depths will be secured by way of a Requirement in the DCO.	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
Other Matters			
4.1	Approval Rights	The level of detail provided in the following plans is currently either insufficient or permits deviation from specified requirements. For example, the CSIP, which the Applicant confirms in its Comments on other submissions received at Deadline 3 and 3A [REP4-241], will only be prepared in “general accordance” with the oCSIP. Given this very vague level of commitment, LGPL needs to protect its interests by requiring rights to approve these plans, to be secured by way of a condition in the deemed marine licence (DML), prior to their submission to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO):	The Applicant confirms that the level of detail presented in the plans mirrors that presented for other DCO projects including North Falls and Five Estuaries. The Applicant confirms that the dML has been updated at Deadline 5 to ‘<i>in substantial accordance</i>’ for all Outline Plans listed within Condition 4.

		(a) oCSIP [REP4-090]; (b) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (oNIP) [REP4-075] (and the Vessel Management Plan should it not form part of the oNIP); and (c) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-223].	The Applicant confirms that at Deadline 5, Requirement 17 has been included which secures the LGPL's interests with regards to the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth, alongside a bespoke update to DML Condition 1 with regards to these Areas. The Applicant therefore considers that LGPLs interests are appropriately secured.
4.2	Cable Crossings and Cable Joints	The DML should include a condition that there will be no cable joints or wet storage areas in the Areas of Interest. A condition should also be included providing will be no cable crossings at the Sunk or Long Sand Head and any crossing at North East Spit will be at the deepest part possible and so as not to preclude depths of 12.5 metres below chart datum plus 0.5 metres over dredge tolerance. This is all subject to / without prejudice to the overall Requirement ensuring the dredge depth in the Areas of Interest.	Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6. An update to the Certified Plan will also be submitted at Deadline 6 to clarify the Gridlink crossing.
4.3 and 4.4	Recommended Restricted Zones	We refer to paragraph 3.10 of the oNIP where the Applicant explains the proposed project will use a rolling 500 metre Recommended Restricted Zone (RRZ) around construction vessels which is consistent with the COLREGs. The Applicant advises it will liaise with the Interested Parties to establish communication protocols regarding these Safety Zones, which "may" include pre-commencement meetings, a 2-weeks advance notice before arrival within a NIP AOI, and daily updates during these activities of interest in the NIP AOI. The Applicant explains this will be discussed further with Interested Parties, and the NIP updated accordingly. In LGPL's view, the measures described by the Applicant are insufficient, and we note that the Applicant remains non-committal regarding the specific protocols/processes to be adopted. We refer to LGPL's response to ExQ1 1SN17 [REP3-093], which sets out LGPL's requirements for communication and liaison in relation to RRZs. These are proportionate measures to mitigate impact and must be incorporated into the NIP. Given the Applicant's failure or unwillingness to commit to specific protocols, it is essential that LGPL is afforded approval rights over the NIP pursuant to a condition of the DML.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.12 Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (oNIP) has been revised and updated at Deadline 6, this includes the Planned Protocols, Mitigation and Management section taking into account both LGPLs comments on Section 3.10 and PLA and the MCAs feedback at Deadline 5.
4.5 and 4.6	Inadequacy of socioeconomic assessment	We note that the Applicant has provided an updated version of document 6.2.4.7 (C) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation (Clean) [REP4-035]. However, notwithstanding LGPL's previous submissions to the Examination - including, most recently, LGPL's comments on further information and submissions received by Deadline 3 [REP4-188] - LGPL does not consider that the updated chapter adequately assesses the socioeconomic impact of vessels being, now or in the future, prevented from using navigation channels into the Thames Estuary Ports as a result of inadequate dredge depths.	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.

		LGPL therefore requests that the Applicant further updates Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement to provide a substantive assessment of the potential socioeconomic impacts arising from disruption to the Ports caused by the proposals, should the protections LGPL seeks not be included in the draft Order and related plans.	The Applicant acknowledges these comments and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.2.4.7 Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [REP5-025] with additional assessment of socio-economic impacts, for Deadline 6.
4.7 and 4.8	Register of Environmental Commitments	We refer to paragraphs 7.8.3 and 7.10.1 of 6.2.4.7 (C) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation (Tracked) [REP4-036], where the Applicant continues to reference commitments and mitigation measures set out in the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC). Similar references are made at paragraph 3.12.2 of the oNIP [REP4-075] and at paragraph 7.22.4 of the Applicant's Comments on submissions from London Gateway Port Limited, as contained in Document 9.86 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241]. As explained at ISH2, the REAC itself does not secure restrictions, it summarises commitments and indicates where those commitments are secured elsewhere. LGPL therefore requests that the Applicant updates all such references to specify the appropriate mechanism by which each commitment will be secured.	This comment is noted by the Applicant. The REAC provides a full list of commitments and mitigations and provides further detail on where these commitments are secured. The Applicant will update Application Document 6.2.4.7 (C) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation (Tracked) [REP4-036] and the oNIP [REP4-075] to provide greater reference in these documents to where each commitment is secured.
5.1	Summary	In the absence of a DCO Requirement and the other protections sought by LGPL, and given the lack of an adequate socioeconomic assessment of the proposed scheme's impact on the Ports, LGPL does not consider that the Secretary of State could conclude that the proposed scheme satisfies Policy PS1 or PS3 of the East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plan. LGPL will, however, continue to engage with the Applicant in an effort to ensure that its proposals are brought into compliance with the relevant policy requirements.	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
Appendix 1	DCO Required Amendments (in addition to the Protective Provisions)	New requirement to be included in Schedule 3 to the Order: "[X]. Any part of Work No.6, including any associated development or ancillary works, located within the Areas of Interest must be designed, installed, operated and maintained at a level which would not preclude or impede the dredging of those parts of the Areas of Interest to the following depths: (a) "Sunk Pilot Boarding area", to a level of 22 metres below Chart Datum; and (b) "Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing", to a level of 12.5 metres below Chart Datum; and (c) " North East Spit area" to a level of 12.5 metres below Chart Datum, and in where all cases (a) to (c) makes allowance for an 'over-dredge' tolerance of 0.5 metres in addition to the stated depths attributable to standard dredging methodology."	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.

Appendix 1	DCO Required Amendments (in addition to the Protective Provisions)	Definition of Areas of Interest to be inserted in art 2(1) of the Order: ““Areas of Interest” means the areas, or any part thereof, shown on the Areas of Safeguarded Depth plan which comprises three areas labelled: Sunk Pilot Boarding area, Long Sand Head Two-Way Route crossing area, and North East Spit area and any reference to any individual one of those areas means the area as shown on the Areas of Safeguarded Depth plan.”	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.
Appendix 1	DCO Required Amendments (in addition to the Protective Provisions)	Amendments to the deemed marine licence – in Part 2, Condition 1 add: “(3) In the Areas of Interest: (a) no wet storage activities are to be carried out by the undertaker as part of the licensed activities; (b) no exclusion zones will be implemented as part of the licenced activities (this does not prevent any Recommended Restricted Zones required by and within the meaning of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 as implemented by the Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996 (S.I.1996/75)); (c) there are to be no cable joints as part of the construction or maintenance of Work No. 6; and (d) there are to be no cable crossings except for one cable crossing in the deepest part of the North East Spit area where: (i) that it is reasonably necessary due to the proposed GridLink Interconnector scheme (electricity interconnector project designated as a European Union Project of Common Interest, project number No. 2018/540); and (ii) the required depth of 12.5m below Chart Datum with an allowance for an ‘over-dredge’ tolerance of an additional 0.5 metres within Requirement [X] is in any event not precluded or impeded.”	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Feedback has been sought from all Port Authorities in a call on the 19th March with regards to the new Requirement and bespoke DML conditions submitted at Deadline 5. A further update to the DCO/DML is being submitted at Deadline 6.

12. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Nemo Link Limited

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 Table 12.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Nemo Link Ltd Deadline 4 Responses REP4-127 to REP4-137 of the response outlines the purpose of the submission.

Table 12.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Nemo Link Limited Deadline 4 Submissions [REP4-127 to REP4-137]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		At the request of the ExA [Action Point 1 of EV6-033] NEMO Link Ltd made a series of submissions in relation to the decision was taken to switch from a trenchless landfall solution to an open cut solution at the detailed design stage.	The Applicant has no comments to add, beyond noting that the submissions from NEMO Link indicate that an open cut solution was clearly always a possibility for that project, contrary to any suggestions to the contrary.

13. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Marlesford Parish Council

13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 Table 13.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Marlesford Parish Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-138].

Table 13.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Marlesford Parish Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-138]

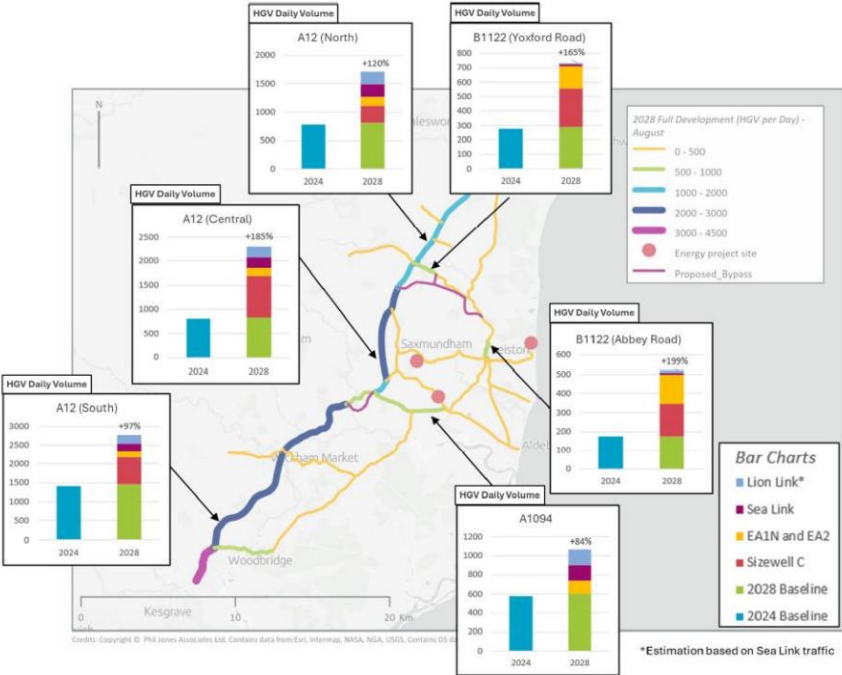
Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Marlesford to Wickham Market Footway			
2	PRoW	We are pleased to see that Suffolk County Council (SCC) recognises the dangerous state of the footway running between Marlesford Road, Marlesford and the Fiveways roundabout (junction of B1116 and B1078). The footway for part of its length is approximately 1.1m in width and frequently gets overgrown, requiring users to step into the A12 carriageway to avoid overhanging vegetation. At §11.125 of REP2-026 SCC refers to “A narrow footway between Marlesford to Wickham Market bypass, causing pedestrian anxiety.” MPC already has grave concerns about the adequacy of this footway and with the Applicant’s additional 300 plus HGV movements per day we believe that its project and other future projects will contribute to a fall in use of this footway and a reduction in sustainable travel by our residents. MPC is progressing discussions with various stakeholders to create a new footpath that will take pedestrians away from the existing highly dangerous footway which runs adjacent to the A12 for part of its length. When trying to walk to Wickham Market, our residents are literally taking their life in their hands. Those that have done it with a buggy report the buggy being sucked towards the carriageway as an HGV passes. With increasing HGV movements, Marlesford residents are experiencing increased levels of fear and intimidation not only on the part of the A12 that passes through the village, but also on this dangerous footway leading out of the village to Wickham Market. The Parish Council’s proposal is to divert the existing Marlesford Footpath 8 (FP8) which currently crosses a field and is not suitable for those wishing to walk into Wickham Market to use the facilities. The replacement for FP8 would run parallel with the A12 but importantly, it would be separated from the carriageway by an existing hedgeline. This new footpath will more easily connect with the footways through the village that will be delivered as part of the SZC/SPR A12 mitigation works. MPC believes that such an improvement to the footpath infrastructure between Marlesford and Wickham Market will support the policies of both SCC and East Suffolk	The Applicant acknowledges that a daily maximum of 151 HGVs (resulting in 302 HGV movements) will use the A12 to the southwest of the Order Limits. However, this represents the forecast level of activity for the single busiest day of the programme. This peak level of activity on the A12 to the southwest of the Order Limits reduces to 98 HGVs (196 HGV movements) when excluding the busiest month of the programme. Furthermore, there is expected to be an average of 45 HGVs (90 HGV movements) on the A12 to the southwest of the Order Limits across the entire construction programme, which represents less than 30% of peak assessed levels. The assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] is therefore based on a very much worst-case short-term impact and does not identify the potential for any significant effects based on peak construction traffic forecasts, including on the A12 to the southwest. The junctions referred to are some 9km distance from the south-western edge of the Order Limits. It is not expected that HGVs will turn to or from the junctions mentioned, rather they would just continue north-south along the A12. Therefore, whilst the concerns raised are acknowledged, no mitigation is expected to be required as a result of the Proposed Project given the above. It is also understood that these concerns will be resolved by a new footpath that will be delivered as part of the SZC/SPR A12 mitigation works.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Council (ESC) which are designed to encourage active and sustainable travel.	
	mitigation	We are asking that the Applicant makes a substantive financial contribution to the proposed new footpath. We justify this on the basis of the comments set out above and particularly the fact that it would reduce fear and intimidation for pedestrians walking from Marlesford to Wickham Market and it would leave a lasting legacy from the energy project developments in this part of Suffolk	As above, construction traffic associated with the Proposed Project is not expected to result in the potential for significant effects on the A12 to the southwest of the Order Limits and as such, no additional mitigation to that already identified within Application Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk [REP4-061] is expected to be required.
3	Bell Lane Junction with A12 in Marlesford	MPC has grave concerns that the Bell Lane junction with the A12 in Marlesford has not been properly assessed by the Applicant and we agree with SCC when they say at §11.171 in the SCC LIR that “The Applicant’s cumulative effects assessment only refers to a select number of locations and not the cumulative impact on the A12 between Seven Hills and Lowestoft. The LHA has concerns regarding the additional construction traffic in combination with other NSIPs creating delay and safety issues specifically at junctions such as Bell Lane, Marlesford and Bredfield Road, Bredfield where frustrated drivers may take chances joining the A12 in smaller gaps in the traffic.” SCC goes on to say at §11.202” The impacts on junction capacity and delay on the A12 in particular, have not been considered in Table 7.6 of 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport. By placing emphasis on delays on 2 or more arms of a junction this automatically dismisses impact on through junctions where [there are] only one or two arms that give way to free-flowing major roads.” This is exactly the situation that applies to the Bell Lane/A12 junction, and we believe that further modelling should take place in order to understand the capacity of the junction; Steve Merry of SCC Highways referred to this general issue in his comments at ISH2 on 29th January and it is referred to in REP3-101 (SCC’s Responses to ExQ1). Anecdotally, there has been a steadily increasing volume of traffic (both cars and HGVs) using the Bell Lane junction in recent years. In their response to SCC’s points, the Applicant, in Volume 9: Examination Submissions Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council (REP2-026), concludes that “the peak construction phases for each scheme are planned to be staggered (between 2026 and 2030) and are therefore highly unlikely to all fully overlap. The duration of any potential effects of overlapping peak construction activity (third party scheme and the Proposed Project) will be limited to a few consecutive months and due to short-term temporary duration of any potential adverse impacts, the residual effect cannot therefore be considered as significant.” This is a “catch-all” response from the Applicant and effectively tries to minimise cumulative impacts on the basis that the peaks of the projects will not coincide and by inference, it downplays the	The traffic and transport assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] does not identify the potential for any significant effects on the A12 to the south of the A1094, as a result of the Proposed Project with the mitigation identified within Application Document 7.5.1.1 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk in place. Nonetheless, and as identified within Application Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026] , the Applicant has considered requests to include additional commitments within Application Document 7.5.1.1 Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk following further consultation with SCC Highways where appropriate. This document was for example updated at Deadline 4 to include additional measures and commitments following the meeting with SCC Highways on 22 January 2026, and again at Deadlines 5 and 6 following further consultation with SCC Highways in February and March 2026.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		already dangerous nature of junctions like the Bell Lane/ A12 junction in Marlesford. We agree with SCC that frustrated drivers may take chances in joining the traffic flow, particularly when turning right (i.e. crossing north bound traffic to join the southbound carriageway). Visibility is limited to the north for vehicles on Bell Lane approaching the A12. We believe that a serious accident is only a moment of frustration away.	
	Mitigation	The Applicant should be under an obligation to (as far as is possible within the highways constraints) rebuild the Bell Lane junction with the A12 in Marlesford in order to deliver improved visibility. There should also be a requirement to improve the road signage and road markings at the other Marlesford junctions with the A12 (including accesses to businesses) as well as other junctions along the A12 that will be affected by the Applicant's proposals.	The traffic and transport assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] does not identify the potential for any significant effects on the A12 to the south of the A1094, as a result of the Proposed Project with the mitigation identified within Application Document 7.5.1.1 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk in place. Therefore, the Applicant does not consider these requests to be necessary mitigation for the Proposed Project. Nonetheless, the Applicant has included additional commitments within Application Document 7.5.1.1 Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk following further consultation with SCC Highways during Examination (see response above for further details).
Health and Wellbeing			
4	The Impact on Health and Wellbeing of Successive Energy Projects	Marlesford has 23 dwellings that are within 20m of the A12 carriageway (some are less than 10m away). The lived experience of the Marlesford residents that occupy these properties is that they already experience noise and vibration when HGVs pass. This Council is very concerned that the volume of traffic currently being experienced is already causing anxiety and depression and that is before SZC reaches peak construction and before the commencement of any additional projects such as Sea Link and LionLink. This is all likely to severely impact the quiet enjoyment of their properties that our residents have a right to expect. At 11.202 of the SCC LIR, SCC recognises Successive Interproject Cumulative Impact as being a consideration. MPC agrees and argues that a smoothing of peaks between the various projects is as bad for local residents as the convergence of peaks. SCC states, “Whilst at least some of the east coast NSIPs will be delivered at the same time with overlapping cumulative transport impacts, there will also be a cumulative impact through repeated successive projects impacting on specific geographical areas.” And SCC cites as an example, the prolonged environmental impacts from construction traffic noise and vibration from successive 7-day week worked projects. We believe that residents of Marlesford who live adjacent to the A12 will experience just such prolonged impacts. It is not impossible (depending on phasing of the projects) for there to be an HGV passing the A12 properties at the rate of roughly one per minute.	In terms of cumulative construction traffic impacts, the Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.105 Supplement to the Preliminary Cumulative Highway Impact Assessment in Suffolk submitted at Deadline 4, to provide clarification and a revised set of total cumulative traffic tables including worst-case construction traffic from the Proposed Project as requested. This is based on the worst-case assumption that the construction peaks of all cumulative projects fully overlap, which is a scenario that is not expected to arise. This is illustrated by the graph held within Application Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions to Issue Specific Hearing 2 submitted at Deadline 4 which the Applicant has prepared to indicatively show the varying construction peaks of different cumulative schemes in Suffolk, based on the current understanding of when these are expected to occur. This graph and supporting description are also held in Appendix F. The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures,

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		SCC refers to impacts on mental health in its SCC Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) (REP3-081). At 7.1 SCC states that it is “deeply concerned regarding the apparent lack of meaningful discussion between Sea Link and other NSIP projects in the same locality, to find opportunities to coordinate activities to reduce the impact of construction (e.g. on the highway network) of multiple projects on host communities on the East Suffolk Coast”. They go on to say, “the mental health and wellbeing impacts are cumulatively increasing with each new project. Promoters must consider the impacts of their scheme in association with the timelines of the construction of other NSIP projects in geographic proximity and have meaningful discussions to develop strategies to minimise the impacts of multiple, successive NSIPs not known at this stage”. The Applicant seeks to minimise the situation and as stated in 3. Above, they have said that “the peak construction phases for each scheme are planned to be staggered (between 2026 and 2030) and are therefore highly unlikely to all fully overlap. The duration of any potential effects of overlapping peak construction activity (third party scheme and the Proposed Project) will be limited to a few consecutive months and due to short-term, temporary duration of any potential adverse impacts, the residual effect cannot therefore be considered as significant”. This Council can assure the ExA that this is not how our residents will experience “Successive Interproject Cumulative Impact”. The Applicant states that the projects are “highly unlikely to all fully overlap”. This suggests that there is a degree of uncertainty around this matter and we would therefore advocate that in 6 looking at matters to do with mitigation of cumulative impacts, the precautionary principle should apply. MPC calls on the ExA to demand more and better sensitivity testing of the effects of the Applicant’s proposals on Marlesford and Little Glemham residents. We also call on the ExA to make recommendations to government that where NSIPs are planned in close proximity to existing NSIPs or other large-scale developments, the planned and consented projects should be under a positive obligation to properly coordinate their activities in order to limit the impact on surrounding communities. Mitigation: For properties within 20m of the A12 carriageway in Marlesford and Little Glemham, the Applicant should be	combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6). Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) submitted at Deadline 6 to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures to demonstrate recognition of the LPA and community’s concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions in response to3HW3.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		required to fund the necessary insulation to the properties to ensure that noise (and the effects of vibration) are reduced to acceptable levels.	
Cumulative impacts			
5	Construction Negative Impacts - Successive Interproject Cumulative Impact	MPC is concerned that the Applicant has not properly modelled the true cumulative impact of the Sea Link project on the main roads north of Woodbridge (primarily the A12) and the feeder roads connecting it to the Applicant's site. In addition to the Applicant's own project, other projects include SZC, SPR (EA1N and EA2), with LionLink emerging as a project through consultation. In addition, there are various solar farm projects up and down the East Suffolk stretch of the A12 and significant residential development planned for Saxmundham. This will all contribute to the cumulative impact of the Sea Link project. At §11.200 in Volume 9: Examination Submissions Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council (REP2-026), SCC states, "The proposed project, in combination with Sizewell C, EA1N and EA2, will: i. result in a significant increase in HGV movements on the A12, potentially both to the north and south of Saxmundham. ii. exacerbate pre-existing issues along the A12 route. iii. result in SPR traffic from the south travelling through the four villages (Marlesford, Little Glemham, Stratford St Andrew and Farnham, with negative impacts on air quality, noise, severance, road safety, and congestion.....". The Applicant gives a broad and non-specific response to this and suggests that they have already addressed it – we believe that they have not addressed the matter in a sufficiently detailed way. The ExA will be aware that Stratford St Andrew and Farnham will be bypassed as part of the SZC mitigation works. Not so Marlesford and Little Glemham, whose communities will be exposed to all the negative impacts of the Applicant's project (plus all the other existing projects and those that follow) that SCC refers to above.	Extensive work has been carried out on reviewing potential cumulative traffic and transport effects within Suffolk including within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] and Application Document 9.26 Traffic & Transport Cumulative Assessment (Suffolk) [REP1-110]. The traffic and transport cumulative assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] concluded that no significant cumulative effects were likely on traffic and transport receptors when the Proposed Project is considered alongside other developments. Further discussions have since been held with SCC Highways in January and February 2026, and further information has been provided as part of Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. Extensive work has been carried out on reviewing potential cumulative traffic and transport effects within Suffolk including within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] and Application Document 9.26 Traffic & Transport Cumulative Assessment (Suffolk) [REP1-110]. The traffic and transport cumulative assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] concluded that no significant cumulative effects were likely on traffic and transport receptors when the Proposed Project is considered alongside other developments. The Applicant reaffirms the responses on the traffic baseline data as previously provided within Application Document Applicant's
		Figure 1. HGV Daily Volumes by Project on Selected Road Network Points	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		 In Figure 1 above, for the area labelled as A12 (South) the indication is that there will be at least 1,000 daily HGV movements through Marlesford if all projects (including an estimate for LionLink) are taken together. This represents a near doubling of the number of HGVs currently passing through the village. The Applicant's project is likely to contribute at least 300 of these additional movements. It is inconceivable that this level of increase will not adversely impact the 23 dwellings in Marlesford that are within 20m of the A12 carriageway. We contend that the Applicant's project will increase levels of anxiety and will add to the feelings of fear and intimidation already experienced by our residents – particularly when walking beside the A12 or when crossing it. We argue that the Applicant has failed to properly carry out its surveys by not using data from non-neutral months. It appears that the Applicant's surveys were carried out in January and February of 2024. It is estimated that total traffic volumes in these months are between 5-10% lower than in typical neutral months. In addition, the Applicant appears not to have allowed for the considerable increase in summer months' traffic which can be up to 25% greater than a typical neutral month, nor does it appear to take into account the considerable and slow-moving agricultural traffic at certain times of the year. We would urge the ExA to require the Applicant to re-do their traffic surveys in neutral months, or re-base their data for neutral months using currently available SCC data.	response to the ExA's s89(3) letter of 5 September 2025 - 9.18 s89 (3) 16 September Covering Letter [AS-106] and in relation to the SEAS Traffic/Transport Relevant Representation within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014].
		In addition to the comments above At §11.181 in the SCC LIR the County Council correctly identifies that “significant pressure is being put on the capacity of laybys and rest areas for HGVs leading to complaints from both local residents and hauliers. There is a shortage of welfare facilities for HGV drivers, and the Applicant is strongly recommended to provide such facilities and parking for	The Applicant has provided a response to this point as part of their response to the Examining Authority's First Written Question 1TT7 within Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		legal breaks at all large site compounds”. MPC agrees with this view and cites its own experience with the abuse of access to residential properties around Hill House in Marlesford by HGVs parking inappropriately.	
	Mitigation	In view of the significant seasonal peaks in traffic on the A12 and its feeder roads, we ask that the ExA put the Applicant under an obligation to contribute to the existing biannual traffic monitoring being carried out by SZC and, in addition, to fund traffic monitoring in the peak summer holiday period around August Bank Holiday. Residents in East Suffolk are currently experiencing high levels of HGV traffic serving the already consented energy NSIPs and other solar farm projects. It is difficult to report the bad behaviour of some HGV drivers unless the vehicle can be positively linked to a project. MPC asks the ExA to require the Applicant's HGVs to carry a notice on the rear of the vehicle and in the windscreen to identify the project on which the vehicle is working. On roads identified as being most susceptible to rat-running, the Applicant should (subject to agreement by the relevant communities) be required to fund signage and/or other measures to discourage use of unsuitable lanes by rat-running traffic, including funding for the introduction of “Quiet Lanes” and 20mph zones. The Applicant should be under an obligation to limit the number of workers travelling to its construction sites. Appropriate use should be made of existing park and ride facilities and where possible access should be given to SZC facilities for the Applicant's workers. Further and better mitigation should be dependent on outcome of revised traffic surveys.	The Applicant considers the mitigation identified within Application Document 7.5.1.1 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk to be sufficient for avoiding the potential for significant traffic and transport effects as a result of the Proposed Project. Therefore, the Applicant does not consider these requests to be necessary mitigation for the Proposed Project. Nonetheless, the Applicant has included additional commitments within Application Document 7.5.1.1 Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk following further consultation with SCC Highways throughout Examination.
Conclusion			
6		We face a huge imbalance of power between the corporations and their highly paid consultancy teams who are pressing for development and the small communities trying to make their voices heard through unpaid volunteers with very limited resources. Villages and towns in this part of Suffolk are being heavily impacted by all the current and proposed energy projects, and we feel that we are bearing a disproportionate burden in order to benefit the rest of the country. There must therefore be tangible benefits and positive legacies arising from the totality of the energy projects, in order to convince our residents that the price they are paying in terms of the disruption to their lives is actually worth it – disruption that is likely to go on for the next 10-12 years. The timescale involved means that some elderly residents of Marlesford are likely to see no end to the East Suffolk upheaval in their lifetimes, and they are very likely to die before relative calm can be restored. We, as a parish council, owe it to all our residents to push as hard as we can for any measures that will lessen the impact of works	The Applicant notes these comments and acknowledges the efforts of the Parish Council. The Applicant has proposed an extensive mitigation programme to minimise the impacts of the Proposed Project and will continue to work with stakeholders in this regard, as set out above.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		whilst they are happening and ensure that legacy benefits are put in place in recognition of the negative impacts on our lives over so many years. We are relying on the ExA to plead our case, and we look to you to require the Applicant to provide the reasonable mitigation that we are asking for and we ask that the ExA urges government to require projects to coordinate in a better way than we have seen in East Suffolk up to now	

14. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Network Rail Infrastructure Limited

14.1 Introduction

- 14.1.1
- Table 14.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Network Rail Infrastructure Limited Deadline 4 Response [REP4-139].
- 14.1.2
- The Applicant’s has responded to Network Rail Infrastructure Limited Deadline 5 Response [REP5-200] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.**

Table 14.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Network Rail Infrastructure Limited Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-139]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
REP4-139	Q.63. Please clarify whether it is likely that the rail line under Benhall Rail Bridge would need to be closed if either of the applicant’s proposed options (bridge strengthening works or use of a mini bridge) were undertaken to facilitate abnormal load crossings. If so, what would be the implications of such a closure?	A railway closure of the line beneath Benhall Bridge would be necessary, if either of the Applicant’s proposed options (bridge strengthening works or use of a mini bridge) were undertaken to facilitate abnormal load crossings. Both options involve substantial works to be carried out either above or immediately adjacent to an operational railway line, which, to ensure the safety of passengers and the railway, would necessitate a closure of the line during the works. At present, it is not possible to comment on the specific duration and timing of any railway closure, as this would depend on several factors including, the operational timetable for the line, the scope and method of the works, and the availability of pre-booked possessions.	<i>The Applicant agrees that inspection of and remedial works to the bridge would require the closure of the railway line to passenger and freight trains. Liaison with Network Rail to date has indicated that ‘Rules of the Route’ access may be possible for the proposed inspection works. This would enable access to the track overnight between the last and first trains. The availability for Rules of the Route access would depend on the usage of the railway at the time of survey and would need to be agreed with Network Rail once the scope of the survey has been confirmed by SCC and the Applicant is able to move forward with planning the inspection works with their contractors and Network Rail.</i> <i>With respect to any remedial works the Applicant agrees that possessions of the railway would be required for some or all of the proposed works. It is considered that a weekend or series of weekend closures may be necessary to undertake the remedial works, or alternative periods as may be beneficial for Network Rail, such as alignment of the remedial works with other planned works on the network.</i> <i>With respect to the mini bridge installation the Applicant had understood from Network Rail’s response to Examiners Question dated 17 December 2025, Response to ExQ1 [REP3-095], that a closure of the railway would only be required if the mini bridge installation required lifting elements in over the railway. Extract from Network Rail’s response from Deadline 3: ‘Any such closure would be essential to ensure safe access for investigations of the bridge, installation of a mini-bridge (if it oversails the railway) and any required bridge strengthening works.’</i> <i>The Applicant will continue to liaise with Network Rail to agree the timings and durations of any closures to minimise disruption to the railway network.</i>

15. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Port of London Authority

15.1 Introduction

- 15.1.1
- Table 15.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Port of London Authority Deadline 4 Response [REP4-140].
- 15.1.2
- Table 15.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Port of London Authority Deadline 5 Response [REP5-177].
- 15.1.3
- The Applicant’s has responded to Port of London Authority Deadline 5 Response [REP5-201] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.**

Table 15.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Port of London Authority Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-140]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	Oral Submission	This is a written submission made on behalf of the Port of London Authority (“PLA”) in respect of oral submissions made at Issue Specific Hearing 2 on Thursday 29 and Friday 30 January 2026.	The Applicant submitted it’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] and has no comments on this matter.

Table 15.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Port of London Authority Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-177]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
2.1	Draft Development Consent Order (“dDCO”) [REP4-218].	Limited updates have been made to the dDCO at deadline 4. The updates of relevance to the PLA are: · Article 3 – Development consent etc. granted by the Order. The Applicant has struck through the reference to Schedule 3 (Requirements). · Schedule 3, Requirement 5 – Amendments have been made to the wording of requirement 5 so that all works must be carried out in accordance with the documents listed in 5(2). This now includes The Register of Environmental Actions and 2 Commitments (“REAC”) Section 1 (contained within Chapter 2 of the REAC). The PLA supports this update. · 2.2 Schedule 3, Requirement 6 – The REAC as a whole has been removed from Requirement 6. The PLA supports this update. · Schedule 16 – Deemed Marine Licence (“DML”) minor amendments have been made to the DML including numbering and updating the address for the Marine Management Organisation. The PLA has no comments on these minor amendments.	This is noted by the Applicant.
2.2	Draft Development Consent Order (“dDCO”) [REP4-218].	The PLA is concerned that there is still no Design Requirement within the dDCO and that despite the Ports collective position regarding the need for a Design Requirement, the Applicant has continued to try to advance alternative options such as reliance on	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.

		the CSIP or a condition in the DML. Neither of these options are appropriate as the CSIP and conditions of the DML are capable of variation or waiver by the MMO. Moreover, it would also be open to the Applicant to seek a separate or new Marine Licence without the design condition. A Design Requirement has been included in the made DCO for Five Estuaries and is proposed in the dDCO for North Falls. Whilst the Applicant has started to indicate that the Areas of Safeguarded Depth will be secured via a Requirement see for example, para 7.9.91 of the Shipping and Navigation Chapter of the Environmental Statement [REP4-036] and the Statement of Common Ground between the Applicant and the PLA, which the PLA understands is being submitted at deadline 5, the PLA has not been provided with proposed drafting so cannot at this time comment on its acceptability.	The Applicant held a call with the ports and the MCA on 19 March 2026 with opportunity for the stakeholders to feedback on the DCO wording. Feedback has been received with regards to the Area of Safeguarded Water Depth Certified Plan which has been updated at Deadline 6.
3.1	Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment [REP4-028] and Figures [REP4-050].	Whilst updates have been made to Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment, Table 1.18 (page 80) still advises that “<i>At present, no expected boulder removal is anticipated to be required along the route. However, should boulders be identified that are considered an impediment to the construction during the pre-installation survey, these would be removed by either a subsea grab or a displacement plough.</i>” The PLA set out in its deadline 2 response [REP2-060] and then in its deadline 4 response [REP4-198] that it was disappointing that the Applicant had not taken the opportunity to commit to no relocation of boulder to or within the Areas of Interest. Table 1.18 should be updated to include this commitment. The PLA also expected this matter to be addressed in the outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (“oCSIP”) which was submitted at deadline 4 [REP4-090] but unfortunately this has not been the case (see section 10 below).	The Applicant confirms that references to the Outline CSIP have been included within Table 1.19 of this Chapter for completeness.
3.2	Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment [REP4-028] and Figures [REP4-050].	Table 1.18 (page 82) provides information on the volume of pre-sweeping and still states that “<i>there is no designated disposal area, the sand will be deposited within the Order Limits for the area of pre-sweeping.</i>” Again, given the comments that the PLA has previously made on this point it is disappointing that the Applicant has not updated table 1.18 in line with the oCSIP that was submitted at deadline 4 [REP4-090] where the Applicant proposes that “<i>all disposal material that is created from planned construction activities will not be disposed of within the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth</i>”. Table 1.18 should be updated to be consistent with the oCSIP.	The Applicant confirms that references to the Outline CSIP have been included within Table 1.19 of this Chapter for completeness.
3.3	Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment [REP4-028] and Figures [REP4-050].	Unfortunately the tracked change version of the Marine Physical Environment Figures [REP4-050] does not identify where changes have been made. The version history also provides no explanation simply stating, ‘For Deadline 4.’ This makes review of the document extremely time consuming and challenging and it would assist if the Applicant provided an overview of what the changes are and on what pages to help the reader. The PLA notes that on page 10 the ‘proposed marine HVDC cable alignment’ would not cross Gridlink to the East in the deeper water. This emphasises the importance of a robust securing mechanism	The Applicant has not been able to locate this text within this document. However, the Applicant confirms that 9.104 (A) Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth Plan [REP4-098] has been updated at Deadline 6 to further clarify the GridLink crossing.

		to ensure that any crossing does in fact occur to the East in the deeper water to enable both projects to be delivered.	
4.1	Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology [REP4-034]	The PLA welcomes the updates that have been made on pages 54, 63 and 65 in relation to wet storage areas, which now makes it clear that the planned location of wet storage will be confirmed in advance to prevent impact to archaeological remains and will also not occur within the Areas of Safeguarded Depth. The PLA notes that commitments relating to wet storage have not been included in the REAC but have been included in the oCSIP [REP4-090] at paragraph 4.2.4 and the outline Navigation and Installation Plan (“oNIP”) [REP-076] at paragraph 2.2.6. The PLA considers that as a commitment relating to wet storage is now included in the oCSIP that the wet storage commitment should be included in Section 2 (Chapter 3) of the REAC.	This is noted by the Applicant. Applicant will update the REAC on its commitments to Wet Storage at Deadline 6.
5.1	Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [REP4-036]	Various changes have been made to the Shipping and Navigation Chapter of the Environmental Statement. The main changes include: □ References to London Gateway Port, Port of Tilbury and Medway Port (para 7.7.4) as well as the dredging powers of London Gateway Port (para 7.7.5). These changes are welcomed. □ A new para 7.7.55 which includes details in relation to the expansion of Ports to serve deeper draughted vessels. It is questioned why the Applicant has been so broad in terms of the future baseline when the specific details are well known and have been agreed in both the Five Estuaries and North Falls Development Consent Order applications: draught of vessel (20m) dredge depth (22m below CD + 0.5m over dredge). □ Para 7.9.78 highlights that water depth may be reduced by more than 5% in certain locations – see comments on Water Depth Baseline Study – Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093] in section 11 below. □ Table 7.10 has been amended and new text included at paras 7.9.82-7.9.85 to include more information in relation to reductions in under-keel. There is reference that the Depth of Lowering (“DoL”) ‘may’ need to be increased to safeguard specific dredge depths. The Applicant should have greater certainty on this point given the comments at para 2.3.9 of the Shipping and Navigation Under Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note [REP1A-038] indicates that DoL may increase from 2.5m to approximately 4.5m in the shallowest sections of the route. □ The PLA notes the additional text at para 7.9.17 and 7.9.19 regarding rolling safety zones. Reference is made to communication with stakeholders and liaison and advance notice to the key ports – how is this secured and what procedures are in place if timings change (e.g due to bad weather). A vessel may	The Applicant acknowledges these comments and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.2.4.7 Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [REP5-025] for Deadline 6. The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. The Applicant confirms that the MCA’s requirement to not exceed water depth reduction of more than 5% applies to the whole cable route.

		have planned their passage into or out of the Port of London based on the advance notice to avoid works and potential safety zones only to find that when they get to the Sunk that the timings of the Applicant's works have changed due to bad weather and works are being undertaken with safety zones in place. □ New text has been added at paragraphs 7.9.82 – 7.9.85 setting out the PLA's requirements in relation to safeguarded depth. This is welcomed. However, the PLA is concerned to see at para 7.9.85 that <i>"National Grid is working to agree these water depth requirements. National Grid agrees in principle to safeguarding the specified water depths in the majority of these three areas and is undertaking further analysis to ensure that the engineering design can achieve sufficient depths in sections where the current water depth is shallower than the threshold requested to be preserved. National Grid is working to secure this commitment in the appropriate place"</i> (emphasis added). Given that we are at deadline 5 it is concerning that the water depth requirements still do not appear to be agreed by the Applicant and that there may be areas where the Applicant does not agree to safeguard depths. It is also concerning that work remains ongoing to establish whether the Ports requirements can be met. It cannot be right that the Examining Authority and Secretary of State may make a decision on a project without certainty that one of the key requirements can be complied with. Noting that if the areas of safeguarded depth cannot be met then EN-1's exemption to the presumption of consent would be engaged due to the unacceptable interference to offshore navigation. □ The PLA previously raised concerns regarding the text at para 7.9.85 (now 7.9.89) about the Ports being 'kept informed' of seabed hazards as they develop. The updated text now recommends that Ports are kept informed of seabed hazards, any reductions in under-keel clearance in key areas, and changes as they develop (emphasis added). This still does not address the PLA's concerns and it is concerning that the Applicant considers that there might be reductions in under keel clearance in key areas as well as seabed hazards as a result of their project. □ Finally, given that the Applicant does not agree in principle to safeguarded water depths in all the three areas (see bullet 5 above) and is still undertaking engineering design to establish whether the required water depths can be met, it is difficult to agree with the conclusion that the impact on deep draughted vessels is moderate (medium) (para 7.9.91).	
6.1	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	Additional text has been added to paragraph 7.5.10 to provide details on London Gateway Port, the Port of Tilbury and Medway Port. Whilst this additional text is welcomed, the bullets now contain two references to the Port of Medway (see bullet 1 and bullet 6).	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6.

6.2	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	Additional text has also been included regarding the future baseline (para 7.5.80). As set out in para 5.1 above, it is questioned why the Applicant has been so broad with its summary and why the specific details of the future baseline have not been included: draught of vessel (20m) dredge depth (22m below CD + 0.5m over dredge).	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6.
6.3	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	Paras 7.6.26 and 7.6.29 refer to 500m radius rolling safety zones being established with communication to stakeholders and liaison and advance notice to the key ports (see comments at bullet 4 in section 5 above and in section 7 below).	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6.
6.4	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	Additional text has been added at paragraph 7.6.78 – 7.6.81 and the three Areas of Interest and the required depths to be preserved are correctly set out alongside the over dredge requirement. Whilst the Applicant states restricting port activity would have a commercial impact, the impact is wider than this as it would mean that goods would either have to be brought in a different way (e.g. by air) or the goods would need to be transported into different ports and then transported by HGV for the remainder of their journey with the associated impacts to sustainable transport.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6.
6.5	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	Concerningly it is stated at para 7.6.81 that National Grid is working to agree these water depth requirements. The PLA had considered the water depths requirements to be agreed and that it was only the mechanism to secure the commitments that still need to be agreed (also see PLA comments at 5.1 bullet 6 above).	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6. The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.
6.6	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	Para 7.6.83 makes reference to keeping ports informed of seabed changes, any reductions in under keel clearance in key areas and changes as they develop – see PLA comments at 5.1 bullet 7 above).	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6.
6.7	Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP4-048]	The Recommendations for Additional Mitigation Measures (section 7.7) will need to be updated as other documents are updated. See for example the PLA's Deadline 4 response [REP4-141] where the PLA commented on the mitigation measures in relation to RAM operations.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 6.3.4.7.A Environmental Statement Appendix 4.7.A Navigational Risk Assessment [REP5-030] for Deadline 6.
7.1	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	Various updates have been made to the oNIP at deadline 4 including that at 1.1.1 the scope of the oNIP has been widened to include construction and operation. This change is welcomed. However, it is still unclear exactly what phases of the Project that the oNIP covers as para 1.1.2 refers to the need to manage vessels and maintain communication with stakeholders during construction, operational and maintenance phases. Para 1.1.3 also refers to operation and maintenance. Consistency is needed throughout the document to make it clear when the oNIP applies.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6.

7.2	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	It needs to be ensured that the temporal scope of the oNIP and the conditions in the DML relating to the oNIP are aligned. Para 1.2.18 states that the oNIP applies to the construction phase of the Sea Link project and comes into force once Sea Link construction begins. Table 1.6 includes within its list of construction activities a number of ‘pre-installation’ activities for example, UXO surveys/clearance, pre-sweeping, crossing preparation and cable route clearance. UXO works are outside the scope of the DML and offshore preparation works or pre-construction surveys are not included within the definition of commence. Therefore it is not clear to the PLA that the NIP which is required to be submitted for approval under condition 4 of the DML would need to be submitted and approved before the pre-installation activities are carried out.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6.
7.3	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	It is noted that the list of interested parties has been updated but it still does not include reference to the Port of Tilbury.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6.
7.4	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	Section 1.3 has been updated and now includes reference to the NIP during operation and maintenance phases however the wording (see for example para 1.3.1) needs to be strengthened with it stating the NIP ‘may’ also be utilised and updated ‘as required’. This gives the impression that reliance on the NIP and updates to the NIP during operation and maintenance are optional. The role of Interested Parties (“IPs”) in reviewing and agreeing changes to the oNIP is also not clear with it simply being stated that the NIP will be promulgated to IPs at regular intervals. Para 1.3.3 has been expanded and now includes a requirement for the applicant to consult with IPs on the final version of the NIP before construction to agree communication requirements. The PLA would expect to see wording more along the lines of the Five Estuaries oNIP, where IPs are invited to review and agree any changes to the section on project vessel activities.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6.
7.5	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	Section 2.2.6 on wet storage has been added and it is confirmed that this activity will not take place in the areas of Safeguarded Depth. Whilst this clarification is welcomed it is questioned whether it needs to be included in the oNIP when it is already covered in the oCSIP. It should also be included in the REAC.	This is noted by the Applicant. The Applicant will update the REAC on its commitments to Wet Storage at Deadline 6.
7.6	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	The PLA welcomes the updates to section 3.3.6 so that simultaneous RAM activities are not permitted to occur within the concurrent RAM activity area. However, it is concerning that the Project still expects them to happen with para 3.3.11 stating “ <i>Where concurrent RAM operations between these offshore projects do nonetheless occur.</i> ” Concurrent RAM Operations should also not be permitted to occur in the IMO Routeing Measures AOI and the Princes Channel Approaches AOI and the oNIP should include an optional requirement to carry a local pilot, which would apply to all RAM	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6 to update the wording in para 3.3.11 regarding concurrent RAM operations. The Applicant would like to clarify that concurrent RAM operations between offshore developments would not occur within the “IMO Routeing Measures AOI” or the “Princes Channel Approaches AOI”, as the Five Estuaries and North Falls cable routes do not route

		activities within the Three Developments AOI, Princes Channel Approaches AOI and Princes Channel AOI.	within the “IMO Routing Measures AOI” or the “Princes Channel Approaches AOI”.
			Text for the optional requirement to carry a local pilot has been added to the oNIP with relation to the “Three Developments AOI” and “Princes Channel Approaches AOI” as requested. However, the Applicant is unclear on the name of the third AOI listed by the PLA and seeks further clarity on this aspect.
7.7	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	A new paragraph 3.10.1 on Recommended Restricted Zones (“RRZs”) has been added. The PLA notes that these zones will be discussed further with IPs. This further discussion is welcomed, as the size of the RRZs may need to be reduced in order for port operations not to be significantly disrupted at certain times, in areas such as the Sunk Boarding and landing area.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6.
7.8	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	It is noted that a section 3.12 on freespan clearance has been added. It would be appropriate to include this in section 2 - project vessel activities.	The Applicant acknowledges this comment and will provide an updated version of Application Document 9.12 (B) Outline Navigation and Installation Plan (Clean) [REP4-075] at Deadline 6.
7.9	Outline Navigation and Installation Plan [REP4-076]	Finally, the document that has been produced and submitted is titled Navigation and Installation Plan but condition 4 of the DML refers at (g) to a navigation installation plan. It should be ensured that the document title and the DML reference align.	The Applicant confirms that Condition 4 of the dML has been updated and submitted at Deadline 6.
8.1	Applicant’s Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 3 and 3A. [REP4-242]	The PLA notes that the Applicant’s comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 3 and 3A has been updated since deadline 4 and re-submitted at Deadline 4A. The Applicant’s Comments on the PLA’s Deadline 3 Response [REP3-121] is set out in table 10.1. No new / additional information or clarification is provided by the Applicant with the Applicant either noting the PLAs comments; advising that documents (e.g. the REAC) are being reviewed or setting out how they are still considering how to secure the Ports requirements. The PLA has set out above (see para 2.2) why the CSIP and a condition in the DML are not appropriate securing mechanisms and how a DCO Requirement is the appropriate way forward.	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.
9.1	Applicant’s Comments on Responses to First Written Questions [REP4-083]	The Applicant sets out their responses to the PLA’s comments at various points throughout the document: □ ISN3 - The PLA and the Applicant remain in disagreement about how the Applicant’s commitments in relation to Areas of Safeguarded Depth should be secured. The PLA does not consider that the CSIP or the DML is the appropriate mechanism (see para 2.2 above) neither does it consider that there needs to be a discharging authority as a Design Requirement is akin to a limit of deviation, it does not need to be discharged. Comments on the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth Plan [REP4-098] are set out in section 12 below. Comments on the oCSIP [REP4-090] including how it does not secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth are set out in section 10 below. It is unclear how the PLA’s comments regarding the CBRA have been addressed and in	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. The Applicant confirms that 9.104 (A) Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth Plan has been updated and submitted at Deadline 6 to incorporate further clarity on the GridLink crossing location. The Applicant confirms that comments from PLA on the oCSIP have been received from the PLA and incorporated into the revised submission of this document at Deadline 6.

		particular where the Applicant has provided confidence that the DoL is realistic and can be achieved. □ ISN7 - It is unclear as to how the Applicant has answered the PLA's particular question. □ ISN14 - The Applicant simply notes the PLA's support of a commitment to no exclusion zone being included within the REAC. □ ISN17 - The Applicant acknowledges the PLA's comment and asks for "<i>clarity on the matter of the potential for a local pilot to be on board project vessels. Would this apply to a specific area e.g. within a specific AOI established in the Sea Link NIP? Or at a specific phase or during specific project activities? The Applicant would welcome some further detail from the PLA here on this suggestion. In the Five Estuaries NIP, this is included as an optional requirement which would apply during all Restricted in Ability to Manoeuvre (RAM) vessel activities.</i>" This would be an optional requirement which would apply during all RAM activities within the Three Developments AOI and Princes Channel Approaches AOI. □ IOSU1 – Advises that the Applicant is committed to securing the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth and signposts to the oCSIP which it states secures them. See section 10 below and the PLA's comments on the oCSIP which does not secure the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.	The Applicant confirms that comments from PLA on the oNIP have been received from the PLA and incorporated into the revised submission of this document at Deadline 6. The Applicant confirms that an update to the REAC will also be submitted at Deadline 6.
10.1	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	The PLA welcomes the production of the oCSIP and that it includes a section regarding the approach to sediment disposal. The oCSIP advises at para 1.1.7 that it sets out the principles with which the final CSIP must accord. The PLA notes (and has made representations about) the current drafting of the DML which only requires the CSIP to be in general accordance with the principles of the oCSIP. The PLA remains concerned about this wording which is very weak and could result in final plans being substantially different from the outline plans.	The Applicant confirms that comments from PLA on the oCSIP have been received from the PLA and incorporated into the revised submission of this document at Deadline 6. The DML has been updated at Deadline 5 to 'in substantial accordance'.
10.2	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	The PLA notes and has no in principle objection to a phased approval of the final CSIP however there must be robust consultation mechanisms in place given the potential for significant changes to be introduced into the document over time. At para 1.1.10 it is stated that "<i>the condition for a CSIP will not be fully discharged until the CSIP for post-lay cable protection is approved by the Marine Management Organisation.</i>" This statement requires clarification because condition 13 of the DML permits cable protection to be placed up to 10 years after the works are placed.	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
10.3	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	It is stated at para 1.1.13 that any 'material' updates to the CSIP will be communicated to the MMO, and 'if required' the CSIP will	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.

		be re-submitted for approval. This could result in changes that the Ports consider to be material taking place to the CSIP without their knowledge because the Applicant is able to decide whether a change is material or not. It also gives the impression that not all changes to the CSIP will require the MMO's approval which is concerning given the importance that the Applicant and the Ports place on this document.	
10.4	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	The PLA was concerned to read at para 1.4 that it is only the cables that will be designed, installed, maintained or operated so as not to preclude or impede dredging. The PLA had thought that there was collective agreement that any part of Work 6 including any associated development or ancillary works would be designed, installed, maintained or operated so as not to preclude or impede dredging. This is a significant change of approach by the Applicant because the use of the word cables means that any cable protection or cable crossings or boulders, archaeological finds etc could impact the dredge depth.	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6 to include any part of Work 6 including any associated development or ancillary works.
10.5	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	Boulder clearance – there is no reference to not relocating boulders in areas where water depths need to be safeguarded	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
10.6	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	Pre-sweeping (250,000m3) would either take place by trailer suction of mass flow excavation. In both cases there is no detail provided of disposal location or ensuring that material is not directed into the Areas of Safeguarded Depth.	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
10.7	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	Wet Storage – the PLA welcomes the confirmation at para 4.2.4 that planned wet storage will not occur within the three Areas of Safeguarded Depth. Reference is then made to the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth Plan which is also welcomed. However it is questioned why the Areas of Safeguarded Depths are only defined in para 4.2.4 and reference is only made to the Plan in relation to wet storage. The same references should be made in relation to archaeological finds (para 3.3.1 and 3.3.12) and boulder clearance (para 3.3.1).	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
10.8	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	CBRA – the depth of lowering may require updating given that the Shipping and Navigation Under Keel Clearance Marine Engineering Technical Note [REP1A-038] indicates that DoL may increase from 2.5m to approximately 4.5m in the shallowest sections of the route.	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
10.9	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	Cable jointing – The PLA welcomes the confirmation that there are no planned cable joints within the three Areas of Safeguarded Depth presented within Plate 1.2, excluding the need for any unforeseen repairs during installation and/or the operational lifetime. If unforeseen repairs during installation and/or the operational lifetime occur within the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth, the Applicant advises that they would 'consult with the relevant Port Authorities'. It is unclear how this consultation is secured. As currently drafted this wording presents more like a statement rather than a commitment and it should therefore be strengthened.	The Applicant confirms that the PLA suggested text on Remediation has been included within Protective Provisions and referenced within the oCSIP at Deadline 6. These PPs have been re-issued back to PLA on 09/04/2026 and further comments were received on 10/04/2026. A bespoke condition on Cable Jointing has been included within the dML under Condition 1(3).

10.10	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	Remediation – The PLA is concerned that there is nothing in the remediation section of the oCSIP which emphasises that the required water depths within the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth would continue to be protected during remediation works. The Applicant instead advises that where there is insufficient backfill the Project would either re-survey or instruct remedial works and that remedial works may include rock placement. It is essential that the remediation clause that the PLA has been seeking in its protective provisions is complied with and is reflected in the oCSIP.	The Applicant confirms that the PLA suggested text on Remediation has been included within Protective Provisions and referenced within the oCSIP at Deadline 6. These PPs have been re-issued back to PLA on 09/04/2026 and further comments were received on 10/04/2026.
10.11	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	Cable Crossings – Whilst the PLA welcomes reference to Gridlink and that the <i>“agreed mitigation with the asset owner is to cross further east in deeper water within the order limits”</i> it is still unclear how this will be secured. A commitment could be made by the Applicant to exclude laying the cable in the western/shallow part of the corridor and reflected in the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth Plan.	The Applicant confirms that this text in the oCSIP has been updated for clarification and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
10.12	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP4-090]	The PLA welcomes the inclusion of a chapter in the oCSIP concerning the management of Sediment. At para 7.2.3 it is stated that the <i>“Proposed Project proposes that all disposal material that is created from planned construction activities will not be disposed of within the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth as identified within Plate 1.2 and Application Document 9.104.”</i>	This is noted by the Applicant.
11.1	Water Depth Baseline Study – Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093]	The production of this report is helpful in visually depicting the depth issues the ports and MCA are concerned about and the importance of the need to safeguard depths, either by absolute values or relative percentage change.	This is noted by the Applicant.
11.2	Water Depth Baseline Study – Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093]	The PLA would suggest that the maximum 5% limit on water depth reduction as proposed by the MCA, is extended to include the NE Spit Area of Safeguarded Depth to approximately KP105. This would be consistent with the approach taken at the other two areas of absolute safeguarded depth to ensure areas currently deeper than the safeguarded depths are also not subject to significant reductions.	The Applicant confirms that the MCA’s requirement to not exceed water depth reduction of more than 5% applies to the whole cable route. The Applicant has updated the Water Depth Baseline Study Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093] and re-submitted at Deadline 6.
11.3	Water Depth Baseline Study – Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093]	The data presented in the various plates show that vessels in excess of 12.5m draught do navigate in the NE Spit area to access the Tongue Deep Water Anchorage or to board/land pilots in adverse weather to access the ports by other routes. In addition to the risk of cable burial not being achieved, there are a number of cable crossings (Britned, Nautilus, Mercator etc) which will inevitably reduce water depths and adherence to the 5% maximum reduction would be appropriate in addition to the absolute 12.5m requirement to mitigate these impacts.	The Applicant has updated the Water Depth Baseline Study Shipping and Navigation Technical Note [REP4-093] and re-submitted at Deadline 6. The updates included a check of vessels with reported large draughts to ensure accuracy of the AIS data presented in the plates.
12.1	Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth Plan [REP4-098]	The PLA welcomes the production of this plan. While the plan shows the areas in which depth is to be safeguarded, it is not specific on the depths and is reliant on the reader to know what the relevant depths are. The PLA would therefore recommend that similar to Five Estuaries, the Depths are included on the Plan.	The Applicant confirms that the text describing the details of the depths is secured as a Requirement in the DCO.

13.1	Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224]	The outline offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (“ ooCEMP ”) should specify the overarching principles and detailed measures to minimise as far as reasonably practicable and mitigate the effects of the construction activities associated with the proposed Project on the surrounding environment. Additional sections have been included in the document at deadline 4 including offshore Environmental Commitments and Maintenance Measures.	This is noted by the Applicant.
13.2	Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224]	The addition of oNIP and oCSIP in table 1-4 (other relevant plans) is welcomed.	This is noted by the Applicant.
13.3	Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224]	At para 1.6.4 there is a reference to notifications to port authorities it would appear from para 1.6.7 that if more than notification is required i.e. the contractor wants to liaise with the Ports then this will require the consent of National Grid. It should be made clear that this does not apply where otherwise agreed, for example in the oNIP. During vessel operations contractors will need to communicate directly with stakeholders, such as the ports and Sunk VTS.	The Applicant confirms that para 1.6.7 of the Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan has been updated at Deadline 6 following this comment and makes reference to the other documents secured within Condition 4 of the dML.
13.4	Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224]	The reference at 1.10.5 to avoiding navigational features including known anchorages, maintained channel depths and prohibited regions being avoided where possible should be explained. Along with the reference at 1.10.7 to reduction in charted water depth to lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will be limited to less than 5% where possible.	The Applicant confirms that this Section has been re-structured at Deadline 6.
13.5	Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224]	The Mitigations will need updating as other documents are updated for example, the reference to provision of as built (GM02) still only references the UKHO, the Crown Estate and Kingfisher but they are also going to be provided to the PLA and other Ports. There are also references to stakeholder consultations (see for example GM05) but how is this secured? There is no commitment to maintaining water depths within the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depths. As the commitments and mitigations relate back to the REAC the PLA has provided comments against the REAC (see section 15 below) rather than raising each point here and then again in section 15.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
14.1	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-233]	Whilst a number of updates have been made to the outline Code of Construction Practice (“ oCOCP ”) these relate primarily to the control and management measures. To reduce duplication the PLA therefore does not set out its comments on the control and management measures here but does so under the comments on the REAC (see section 15 below). The oCOCP will require further updates as the REAC is updated to ensure consistency between the two documents.	This is noted by the Applicant.
15.1	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234]	The REAC has been updated at deadline 4 and now includes within Section 1 the commitments to be secured by Requirement 5. Section 2 provides details on where commitments are secured in other documents.	No response required

15.2	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234]	Commitments relating to the Offshore Scheme start on page 14. Comments on the commitments are set out below:	No response required
15.2	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN11	As set out in the PLA's deadline 4 response 'Comments on Submissions Received at Deadline 3' the PLA recommends that SN11 is amended so that there is a clear commitment and so that the commitment applies to all three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth rather than just the Sunk. The amended wording whilst an improvement in terms of a clear commitment still does not apply to all three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.2	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN12	As set out in the PLA's deadline 4 response 'Comments on Submissions Received at Deadline 3' the PLA recommends that SN12 is amended to remove the wording 'where practical' and so that it applies to all three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. It is all questioned why this commitment would only apply to construction. It should apply for all Project phases.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.2	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN19	The measure proposed does not go far enough, it should be possible to commit through SN19 to no planned cable joints in the Sunk and in the other two Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.2	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN20	As set out in the PLA's deadline 4 response 'Comments on Submissions Received at Deadline 3' SN20 needs a re-write to reflect the commitments made by the Applicant in terms of safeguarded depths and it must apply to all three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. The reference to the location of cable joints must also be explicit that there will be no planned cable joints in the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.2	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN22	This commitment needs to carve out the areas where there can be no reduction in water depth and where depths need to be safeguarded.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234]	Commitments relating to the Offshore Scheme start on page 97. Comments on the commitments are set out below but as a general point the usual suite of mitigations for cable schemes are not identified. As these are starting to be developed and included in documents such as the oCSIP it is unclear why they are not being referenced in the REAC.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure GM02	The proposed measure needs updating because it still only references the UKHO, the Crown Estate and Kingfisher but as-built locations of the cable and external protection are also going to be provided to the PLA and other Ports.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure GM05	Refers to early and continued stakeholder engagement. It is stated that this is secured through the outline offshore construction environmental management plan. The outline plan refers to external notifications and it would appear from para 1.6.7 that authorisation is required from National Grid for stakeholder liaison with statutory authorities and other stakeholders.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.

15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN01	Sets out minimum and target DoL – this may require an update once the Applicant has completed assessing the engineering implications of the additional cable depth of lowering that may be required in areas of the Sunk Pilot Boarding areas (which may result in the DoL increasing from 2.5m to approximately 4.5m in the shallowest sections of the route). In addition, SN01 needs so be clear what happens when cable burial is unsuccessful (either to full depth or to minimum DoL) in the Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth and link back to the remediation clause in the PLA’s draft protective provisions.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN08	The Measure Proposed refers to the NIP and it being secured within the DML. Given that the NIP applies to more than the construction phase of the project, column 6 should be updated to read ‘all’. SN08 refers to special attention being given to the routing through the Sunk TSS and when in proximity to the Sunk Deep Water anchorage area and Sunk pilot station, as well as when routeing in proximity to the Tongue anchorages and pilot station. The PLA has set out the three areas which it requires special attention to be given to. The reference to ‘any expected change in under keel clearance or anticipated introduction of seabed hazards’ is concerning.	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN32	This will need to reflect any clear commitments in relation to no concurrent RAM vessels	This is noted by the Applicant and an update to the REAC has been submitted at Deadline 6.
15.3	Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-234], Section 1, Measure SN35	The commitment to not putting in place permanent exclusions zones is welcomed.	This is noted by the Applicant.
16.1	Planning Statement Addendum [REP4-092]	The Planning Statement Addendum includes a response to the Examining Authority’s question 1SN4 regarding the National Policy Statement for Ports and at para 5.2.5 it is stated “<i>The Applicant is working to agree with these water depth requirements. It can be agreed in principle to safeguard the specified water depths in the majority of these three areas. However further analysis is being undertaken to ensure that the engineering design can achieve sufficient depths in sections where the current water depth is shallower than the threshold requested to be preserved. The Applicant is working to secure this commitment in the appropriate place, with a Requirement in the DCO.</i>” The PLA welcomes the reference to a Requirement in the DCO but is concerned that the water depth requirements still do not appear to be agreed by the Applicant and that there may be areas where the Applicant does not agree to safeguard depths. It is also concerning that work remains ongoing to establish whether the Ports requirements can be met. As previously stated, it cannot be right that the Examining Authority and Secretary of State may make a decision on a project without certainty that one of the key requirements can be complied with. Noting that if the areas of safeguarded depth cannot be met then EN-1’s exemption to the presumption of consent would be	The Applicant can confirm that it has added a Requirement in the DCO at Deadline 5 in order to secure the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth.

engaged due to the unacceptable interference to offshore navigation. Given the above, the PLA is unable to agree with the Applicant's conclusion that the Proposed Project will not adversely impact future ports development.

17.1Concluding Remarks

The PLA remain in discussion with the Applicant as to how mitigations to a number of technical issues are secured. Other projects such as Five Estuaries and North Falls have already set precedents as to how these standard mitigations are secured. The PLA believes these outstanding issues, based on the detailed feedback presented here, can be resolved by the close of the examination, provided the Applicant does not attempt to progress novel alternatives.

This noted by the Applicant and we are working with the aim of getting agreement on the outstanding matters at Deadline 6.

17.2Concluding Remars

At deadline 1 the PLA included a table at paragraph 13.5 of its Written Representation [REP1-156] setting out how the PLA's concerns regarding the Sea Link application needed to be addressed. With two deadlines remaining, the PLA has updated the table to show progress in relation to the various activities.

This noted by the Applicant and we are working with the aim of getting agreement on the outstanding matters at Deadline 6.

Activity	Summary of PLA's Position	Securing Mechanism	Status
Cable installation, maintenance, operation and decommissioning	Safeguarding of current and future depths: 22m Sunk Pilot Boarding Area 12.5m Long Sand Head 12.5m North East Spit Safeguarding of current and future depths: 22m Sunk Pilot Boarding Area 12.5m Long Sand Head	Design Requirement	Not agreed
		DML	
		Protective Provisions for the PLA	In discussion
		Certified Plan	First version provided by applicant
Cable installation and maintenance	12.5m North East Spit The proposed method of cable laying in terms of speed and ability to achieve the required cable burial depth must be used	oNIP	Updated version provided by applicant
Cable Crossings	Safeguarding of current and future depths: 22m Sunk Pilot Boarding Area 12.5m Long Sand Head 12.5m North East Spit And in all cases making allowance for an over-dredge tolerance of 0.5m	Design Requirement	Not agreed
		DML	
		Protective Provisions for the PLA	In discussion
		Certified Plan	First version provided by applicant

	Further information and controls required in relation to the Sea Link - GridLink crossing point to ensure that if Sea Link is installed first, Grid Link can still be brought forward and water depths safeguarded	Amendment to Order Limits so that Sea Link and GridLink can only cross in the area of deepest water	Not Agreed
Use of cable protection	Safeguarding of current and future depths: 22m Sunk Pilot Boarding Area 12.5m Long Sand Head 12.5m North East Spit And in all cases making allowance for an over-dredge tolerance of 0.5m	Design Requirement DML Protective Provisions for the PLA Certified Plan	Not agreed In discussion First version provided by applicant
Surveys and Monitoring	Consultation with the PLA prior to any surveys or monitoring taking place	Protective Provisions for the PLA DML oNIP	In discussion Updated version provided by applicant
Boulder relocation	Boulders / Debris cannot be displaced within or to the Areas of Interest and must be removed	oCSIP DML	Not agreed - commitment required
Archaeology relocation	Archaeological relocation cannot occur within or to the Areas of Interest and must be removed	oCSIP DML	Agreed but documents need to be consistent
UXO relocation	The PLA must be consulted on any application for marine licensing for the clearance of UXO within or which may affect the Areas of Interest before such applications are submitted to the MMO. With regard being had to any request made by the PLA for reasonable amendment to the proposed application.	oCSIP oNIP DML	Outside scope of DCO

	The PLA must be notified of the final programme for any clearance of UXO within the Areas of Interest		
Dredging / Disposal of sediment	Dredging cannot lead to a reduction in navigable depth within the Areas of Interest as a result of dredged material being placed directly into these areas of migrating into these areas from disposal sites	oSDMP	First version provided by applicant – agreed on this point
Wet storage	Wet Storage of materials and/or equipment cannot occur within the Areas of Interest	oCSIP DML	First version provided by applicant – agreed on this point
Field joints	Planned field joints should not be located in the Areas of Interest	oCSIP	First version provided by applicant – commitment needs strengthening
Freespan Clearance	There must be a clear commitment to no freespan over the Areas of Interest	oCSIP and/or Design Requirement	Included in oNIP In discussion
Remediation	It needs to be clear what will happen if cable burial depths are not achieved during installation or maintenance.	Protective Provisions for the PLA DML	In discussion

16. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Save Minster Marshes

16.1 Introduction

- 16.1.1 Table 16.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Response [REP4-143].
- 16.1.2 Table 16.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Response [REP4-144].
- 16.1.3 Table 16.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Response [REP4-145].
- 16.1.4 Table 16.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Response [REP4-146].
- 16.1.5 Table 16.5 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Response [REP4-215].
- 16.1.6 Table 16.6 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Save Minster Marshes Deadline 5 Response [REP5-167].

Table 16.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-143]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Despite trying very hard to read all the documents in respect of land rights, we are still confused about Category 1 and Category 2 on the Land Rights Tracker and how this relates to Class5 land for Work No 14, which includes a bigger land grab of Open Space at Pegwell Bay.	Category 1 Interests – Owners and Occupiers Category 2 Interests – A legal or equitable interest in the land such as an easement or the rights to sell or convey land. Category 3 Interest - Persons with claims under Section 10 Compulsory Purchase Act 1965 and Pt 1 Land Compensation Act 1973.
		We are concerned with plots 3/111, 3/112 , 3/99 and 3/97a concerning the Hoverport and open space access to it. Please note: The LATEST land rights tracker REP3-059 was only delivered in January 26 after the closure of the consultation on CR1, and this was following two previous changes to the document - this has made it impossible for us to make sense of attending the CAH to make our case, representing users of the Hoverport Open Space land. REP3-059 shows the Hoverport land at 3/111 and 3/112 as Category 2 land and in the change sheet shows it as Category 1 - so either the category is wrong or the applicant is seeking to make this Category 2. Can you ask the applicant to clarify please and explain the difference as we cannot find it in any of the documentation supplied? Thankyou. REP3-059 shows 3/111 and 3/112 as owned by Thanet OFT Ltd and mentions a restrictive covenant concerning cabling underneath the plot owned by Thanet OFT Ltd. We believe these plots are owned by Thanet District Council and were not subject to intrusive underground cabling for the Windfarm or for NEMO. Can you please ask the applicant to clarify ownership for negotiation and why the covenant appears to mention cabling that is not there? REP3-016 appears to show ownership at TDC so this is inconsistent. The applicant has not mentioned Hoverport, but Hovercraft Port in the land rights tracker. We think this is deliberate obfuscation and they should put this right. Members of the public	The applicant is seeking rights from the Category 1 interest. The Land rights tracker shoes the status of negotiation of the voluntary agreement with the Category 1 owner of the land. This is separate to its status as Open Space land which is set out in the Special Category and Crown Land Plans, The Statement of Reasons and Appendix C of the Statement of Reasons and the Draft DCO at Section 43. The Book of Reference, in the relevant Part shows the Category 1,2 and 3 interest applicable to each individual plot. Part 1 – interest, right or power to be acquired in respect of each parcel of land. This includes the names and addresses of the owners, lessees, tenants and occupiers of and others with an interest in, or the power to sell and convey, or release, each parcel of Order land. Part 2 – The names and addresses of any persons who would or might be entitled to make a claim as a result of the order land at Part 1 being implemented.

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		looking for Hoverport detail will not find it. REP3-016 does not appear to include 3/97a, which is shown as one of the new plots. We may be wrong of course but would welcome clarification. Although we understand the sensitivities surrounding DH Clifton's farm and the difference between ownership and tenant concerns, we would like to advise you that plots 2/123 and 2/133 (owned by Struan Robertson (AP494) (as shown by yourselves on the work plans today), were the plots that were extensively underwater in the video that we sent you. We would have like an opportunity for you to show this to the Applicant so that we can hear what they say. If that opportunity is tomorrow please let us know	Part 3 – Names and addresses of any persons who have private rights which may be extinguished, suspended or interfered with under the Order. Part 4 – Crown Land Part 5 – Special Category Land including Open Space Details negotiations on each plot with reference to the plot number which can be obtained from the Land Plans and Book of Reference.

Table 16.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-144]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	<i>Executive Summary</i>	<i>We have significant concerns regarding the Sea Link project's proposed converter station and substation at Minster Marshes. These concerns arise from evidence presented at the CAH and ISH2, observations from site visits, and analysis of recently issued documentation. The central conclusions are that (1) the Minster Marshes site is fundamentally unsuitable for development, (2) the Applicant's assessments do not reflect real-world environmental conditions, and (3) late or incomplete information has prevented meaningful scrutiny.</i>	The Applicant has responded to the separate headings of SMM’s submissions below.
n/a	Flood Risk, Hydrology and Site Suitability	Evidence shows the proposed site experiences extensive, predictable winter flooding, confirmed through video and photographs submitted to the ExA. Despite this, the Applicant has scoped out flood-related impacts on the basis that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) would mitigate all risks. The Applicant’s own Indicative Plans show very large attenuation ponds that would convert significant areas of marsh into permanent water bodies, altering habitat and increasing pollution risk via a proposed outfall into Minster Stream. Nearby planning history shows SuDS were previously ruled out for the adjacent BESS site due to shallow groundwater, forcing discharge into the River Stour instead. This strongly indicates that SuDS are equally unfeasible at the Sea Link site.	A response to address the submitted video of current site conditions has been prepared by the Applicant and will be submitted at Deadline 5 in document 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site. Drainage solutions for the operational converter station and substation at Minster have been developed through engaging with Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board, agreeing key design parameters with these authorities, as detailed in Document 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy, an update of this document has been submitted at Deadline 5.
n/a	Environmental and Biodiversity Impacts	The site lies within and adjacent to nationally and internationally important habitats with extensive protections under the UK and international law and which support seals, migratory birds, reptiles, raptors, European Eels, beavers and threatened species of bird such as Turtle Doves and Skylarks. Many of the Applicant’s ecological statements conflict with established evidence or local data. For example, their assertion that seals are habituated to noise disregards the years of diligent conservation measures that have deliberately reduced disturbance.	Refer to all previous documents submitted into the Examination where these matters have been addressed

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Key species of bird such as Curlew, Little Tern, Golden Plover, and Turnstone have been insufficiently assessed despite being in unfavourable conservation status, with significant sensitivity to human disturbance. Skylark numbers reported by the Applicant contradict field counts and bird ringing data which show extensive use of Minster Marshes and cause doubt on their other species counts. The arrangement of pylons is likely to create a bird-strike funnel effect, contradicted by Applicant statements but supported by their own visualisations.	
n/a	Incomplete and Late Documentation	Key documents referenced by the Applicant, including the Preliminary Ground Investigation report, were not supplied as part of the submission, hindering scrutiny and transparency. Reptile surveys at the Hoverport have not been done and have not been committed to. Major technical information is being released too late for Interested Parties to assess before deadlines.	The Application Documents as submitted by the Applicant in March 2025 included Application Document 6.3.3.5.C ES Appendix 3.5.C Ground Investigation Report – Kent [APP-171]. As summarised at section 3.4, the purpose of the preliminary de-risking ground investigation undertaken in 2023 was to allow pricing of the construction contract by the main contractor without incurring a significant risk contingency sum. At the time it had been recognised that a further phase of ground investigation would be undertaken later in the project. Notably the location and cross-sections of the exploratory holes from the preliminary ground investigation are shown at Appendix B and Figure 3.1 of Application Document 6.3.3.5.C ES Appendix 3.5.C Ground Investigation Report – Kent [APP-171]. In light of the above, and in light of the fact that a fuller ground investigation report has now been made available to the Examination, the Applicant does not consider it to be necessary for the preliminary report to be included in the Examination Library as well. In relation to reptile surveys, as explained at Item 3.1 in Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085], the Applicant does not consider reptile surveys to be necessary because the proposed routes do not cross vegetated or ruderal areas. The Applicant notes SMM's concerns but maintains that technical information has been made available in accordance with the Examination Timetable to permit scrutiny by Interested Parties.
n/a	Contamination, Traffic, and Construction Concerns	The very real risk of colliery spoil leaching heavy metals from the hoverport as a result of regular vehicular access have not been assessed. Contamination risks from historic orimulsion pollution at Richborough Power Station and colliery spoil at the Hoverport have been downplayed despite evidence of its presence in local ground material. Traffic assessments have not been updated since the dDCO process opened, despite major changes on the A299 and known structural issues with Ramsgate Tunnel, which cannot support AILs in its current condition. We also find the Applicant's	The Applicant has already provided responses relating to the colliery spoil and confirmed that there is no risk as a result of the proposed access across the hoverport. As previously set out within Application Document 9.79 Applicant's Comments on Written Representations [REP2-034], the Baseline traffic flows which have informed Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] are based on an agreed survey methodology with KCC

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		traffic surveys and impact on tourism and the economy severely lacking.	Highways and are considered to be appropriate for the purposes of the assessment work.
	Conclusion	The cumulative evidence demonstrates that the Minster Marshes site is hydrologically unsuitable, ecologically sensitive, and insufficiently assessed. Significant documentation gaps, late submissions, and reliance on desk-based assumptions prevent a fair and informed examination process. The ExA is therefore requested to require full modelling evidence, allow additional time for Interested Parties to review, and seriously consider whether the Kent onshore scheme should proceed given its flawed premise and significant environmental and technical constraints.	Please refer to the Applicant's responses to the separate headings above.
Comments Arising from CAH			
	Waterlogged fields video	We provided the ExA with a video following the CAH to show the waterlogged fields on which the Minster Converter and sub-station is proposed to be constructed. As this could not be publicly shown to the Applicant, we would be grateful if you would review the following concerns in light of our video evidence about flooding and SuDS provision. At APP-064 6.2.3.4. part 3 Kent, Water Environment, Chapter 4, para 4.4.2. shows ExA comment "[Flood risk] is proposed to be scoped out on the basis of no impact pathway given attenuation of runoff through SuDS provision. The Inspectorate agrees that, provided the operational control measures in the form of SuDS are clearly described in the ES and secured through the DCO, this would ensure no pathway of effect to result in increased flood risk from operational discharges and runoff from AGI or loss of floodplain storage. " and also .. At APP-064 6.2.3.4. part 3, para 4.4.5. shows ExA comment [Runoff] This matter is scoped out on the basis of no impact pathway given attenuation of runoff through SuDS provision. The Inspectorate agrees that SuDS provision would remove/reduce the likelihood of surface water runoff from the converter site during operation and thus ensure any such effects would be fully mitigated. The Inspectorate therefore agrees this matter can be scoped out of the assessment." Both paragraphs indicate that SuDS will be provided to attenuate increased flood risk and run off and will presumably need no further consideration by the ExA.	A response to address the submitted video of current site conditions has been prepared by the Applicant and has been submitted at Deadline 5 in document 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site. Further information regarding water management during construction of the operational infrastructure at Minster is also provided in another Deadline 5 submission – Document 9.32 Assessment of Minster Converter Station Ground Improvements. Drainage solutions for the operational converter station and substation at Minster have been developed through engaging with Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board, agreeing key design parameters with these authorities, as detailed in Document 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy, an update of this document has been submitted at Deadline 5. The strategy outlines how both water quantities would be managed as well as water quality, with treatment and containment being provided to prevent pollution of the receiving water environment.
		This document continues:- At APP-064 6.2.3.4. part 3, para 4.8.3 Embedded Measures • "Minster Converter Station and Substation would be served with drainage systems that embed SuDS for attenuation of runoff to green field runoff rates in line with the requirements of the receiving watercourse authorities (Internal Drainage Board,	A response to address the submitted video of current site conditions has been prepared by the Applicant and has been submitted at Deadline 5 in document 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site. Further information regarding water management during construction of the operational infrastructure at Minster is also

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority and provide treatment of runoff. And ● Balancing ponds will be provided around the Minster Converter Station and Substation and close to the proposed access road to create a new riparian perimeter of 1.38 km (W25). The final habitat creation proposals will be developed through the final Landscape and Ecological Management Plan so may deviate from areas/habitats presented here. We referred to the documents submitted by the Applicant to see how and where attenuation ponds can be delivered in this site, since it is mostly underwater during the winter. We examined CR1-025 2.14.2 Indicative General Arrangements Plans - Kent (Version 2, change request) to find this at page 5. The water catchment areas are far bigger than those proposed routinely for a development of this nature in order to make this work in a waterlogged site. So that now, on top of the footprint of the converter and substation itself, we see further acres of the fields that will be covered – not this time in concrete – but in permanent deep water bodies. These are not scrapes. For overwintering birds that require access to flooded fields as a food source, this extensive habitat will now be further damaged by the attenuation ponds, which appear to cover the same area as the sub-station when taken together. We note also that a permanent outfall to the Minster Stream has been added from the most northerly attenuation pond and we are concerned about the effects of pollution from runoff into this pond from the Converter and Substation that will run directly into this stream – which is important for European Eels, water voles and other riparian mammals, including beaver. We comment further on the viability of the Applicant's proposal to use SuDS later in this document. And at APP-064 6.2.3.4. Part 3 para 4.4.9 ● Data from the Environment Agency has been used to define the current condition and standards of protection provided by existing flood defences, no baseline condition surveys have been undertaken. ● Due to the limited interactions of the operational above ground elements of the Kent Onshore Scheme with fluvial floodplains, Application Document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment has been informed by data collected from the Environment Agency, LLFAs and Kent Stour IDB, no new flood risk models have been developed. As you are aware, we have provided video detail of flooding on the proposed converter site and have provided further evidence below that this is a yearly occurrence, together with additional video footage taken over the last few days while National Grid are on site. This flooding is not new and not aberrant. We are mystified	provided in another Deadline 5 submission – Document 9.32 Assessment of Minster Converter Station Ground Improvements. Drainage solutions for the operational converter station and substation at Minster have been developed through engaging with Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board, agreeing key design parameters with these authorities, as detailed in Document 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy, an update of this document has been submitted at Deadline 5. The strategy outlines how both water quantities would be managed as well as water quality, with treatment and containment being provided to prevent pollution of the receiving water environment.

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		how there will be 'limited operational above ground elements'. We suggest this is clearly incorrect.	
	Bore-hole investigation	For further clarification, we also provide the following photograph that shows the Applicant's bore-hole investigations on the same site (photograph taken 28 Jan 2026). This shows not only the state of the fields – but the additional damage that the bore-holing investigation is doing to the areas that do not have matting, but where vehicles have previously been driven. We are also aware that the ExA Panel visited this location on 12 November (EV1-018) and thank you for your consideration in this, but you may be surprised to see the extent of the flooded fields on 28 January 2026. This site is clearly unsuitable for building and breaches the Applicant's own guidance about avoiding areas for building that are prone to flooding. 	The Applicant has addressed these matters in Application Document 9.99: Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site [REP5-122].
		The Applicant's compound on 6 February 2026 when they were forced to down tools. 	The Applicant has addressed these matters in Application Document 9.99: Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site [REP5-122]. It is confirmed that any damage to the silt fence was quickly repaired and there was no risk to the watercourse.
		There is further damage to the bank next to the track way, where the netting to prevent access by reptiles to the work area is clearly	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		not adequate for the job and has already been extensively damaged by the Applicant.  And further evidence that more mud will be discharged straight into the Minster Stream because of this Pre-Consent work. And this is Pre-Consent. How can we have any confidence in anything the Applicant says about mitigation of damage to the environment? This is how they behave in practice. 	

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Looking towards the converter site from near the Railway line shows the extent of the flooding near the pylon route (photos taken 4th February 2026).



Below are 4 images from 2023. This is not a new occurrence. These fields flood every year. It is why it's called a marsh. The ability of this land to act as a sponge to prevent widespread flooding is vital. Removing that from the area needs to be properly modelled, not scoped out.

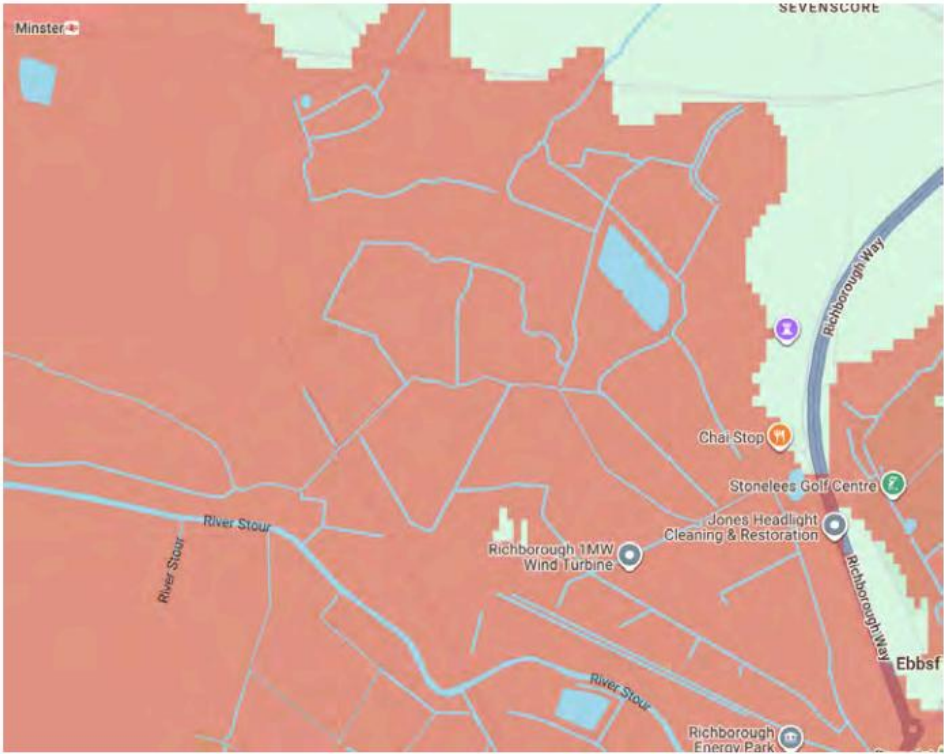


Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		 We have also provided modelled data mapping from Climate Central and would therefore urge you to challenge the data on which the Kent onshore location is pushing ahead in this location despite the clearly unsuitable conditions and the risks of further flooding.	
	Roll back on SuDS provision for adjacent site	This matter relates not only to Cumulative Impact, but also to SuDS plans that were made for the adjacent site and then reneged upon because of the geology/hydrology. Please refer to Thanet District Council applications for the adjacent BESS plant site as follows:- <i>Application F/TH/20/1467 Application for approval of Condition 6 (Verification Report) attached to Planning Permission F/TH/20/1467 for the development of an electrical battery storage facility with 49.9MW capacity including the installation of 23 batteries, electrical plant and equipment, alterations to land levels, landscaping and associated works:</i> <i>Flood Risk Assessment Document in F/TH/20/1467 4.4 SUDs were ruled out due to shallow ground water 4.5 Therefore propose to discharge surface water into the River Stour to the SW of the site 4.9 Run off from road collected in channel drains and conveyed to existing outflow. An attenuation tank will provide sufficient storage to prevent flooding 4.10 Construct inspection chambers as catchpits to trap and retain suspended solids.</i> The upshot of this is that SuDS were promised and cannot be delivered in this location. This site is already proposing to discharge straight into the River Stour! In addition, the fire risk from the BESS plant is particularly high and fire risk management is on record as a concern for Kent Fire and Rescue. Fire retardant pollution will be washed straight into the River Stour in the event of a fire. This will be true also for the Converter and SubStation site.	The Applicant clarifies that there are a wide range of available SuDS techniques, some of which rely on infiltration drainage and others that provide for the collection, storage and attenuation of rainfall runoff in above ground features such as ponds and basins, to facilitate an attenuated discharge into a watercourse. Infiltration based SuDS are not proposed to serve the Kent Onshore Scheme, as these would be unviable due to prevailing ground conditions. Instead, provision for above ground SuDS features is included, which provide sufficient volumes of storage for rainfall runoff from the proposed development area to attenuate storm flows from the 1% annual chance event, inclusive of an allowance for climate change. Discharges from these features would be restricted to rates agreed with the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board. Penstock valves will be installed to isolate the outfalls of the drainage systems serving the operational substations and converter stations to prevent a pollution incident in the unplanned event of a fire. The valves will be designed to close automatically, with a manual override available in the event of automation failure and the systems would be suitably maintained over the operational lifetime of the Project.
	Horlock Rules and Design Guidelines implemented for North Falls & Five Estuaries NSIP1	We note the site selection guidance for this NSIP which is currently proceeding through Examination. The Design Guidance for the project clearly states on page 4:- <i>“The identification of potential onshore substation options will also adhere to the principles identified below where possible: • [] • Avoid direct significant impacts to internationally, nationally and locally designated areas (e.g. SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, NNRs</i>	The Applicant notes SMM's reference to a Design Guidelines document applicable to a different NSIP project. So far as this Proposed Project is concerned, site selection has been the subject of extensive consideration. SMM is referred to Application Document 8.2: Options Selection and Design Evolution Report (October 2023) [APP-369].

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		<i>SSSIs, Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites); • Minimise significant impacts to the special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks or other designated landscapes; • [] • [] • Avoid historic or active landfill sites; • Avoid areas that fall within Flood Zone 3; • Avoid siting infrastructure within inner (SPZ1) and outer (SPZ2) source protection zones (SPZ), where possible; • Areas of local amenity value, important existing habitats and landscape features including ancient woodland, historic hedgerows, surface and ground water sources and nature conservation areas should be protected as far as reasonably practicable (specific wording from Horlock Rules);”</i> This is impressive. If this was being fairly applied to Sea Link, the Applicant would be getting a “full house” for how many of these are being totally ignored at the Kent landfill. Horlock Rules are designed for Substations we know. The Converter station design and choice of site should logically follow the same guidelines. Anything else is simply semantics and disingenuous. We still have no details about the method of construction on the site for the converter station itself. We understand that this will be supplied as a Technical Note at Deadline 4 and would request that we are given a 4 week extension to review this document as it is the first time we will have seen any detail whatsoever about how they plan to drain and build on the marsh.	The approach to the design of the Minster Converter Station and Substation is explained in Application Document 7.11.2 (B) Design Approach Document – Kent [REP1A-031]. As explained at section 3.2.10 of Application Document 6.2.1.3: Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044], the Horlock Rules were considered during the identification of the proposed Minster Converter Station and Substation. Further detail is set out in Application Document 7.1 (C) Planning Statement [AS-057]. Further information regarding the Minster Converter Station site are provided at deadline 6 in Application Document 9.32
Comments Arising from ISH2			
	Surveys at the Hoverport	It still appears that no reptile surveys are planned to be undertaken at the Hoverport until shortly before work commences. From our experience, developers pay their surveyors not to find problematic species. Bearing in mind the timeline of this DCO Examination, we cannot see how surveys for reptiles can be accommodated before it ends. We would urge the ExA therefore to insist on legally binding requirements for independent surveys for reptiles and other listed species at the Hoverport that will contain clear legal conditions for avoiding what is found on site. In addition, the Applicant has said that they will avoid areas of vegetation to avoid disturbing species and habitats. Given the lack of respect being shown to the reptile netting on Minster Marshes in the current pre-consent operations, we have no faith whatsoever that this will be adhered to.	The Applicant has submitted photographs into the Examination in response to the ExA first written questions, which clearly show open unvegetated hardstanding routes. Having walked the site, the Applicant is confident that sufficiently open and unvegetated routes exist. The Applicant does not intend to traverse habitat within which reptiles may be found (restricting access to open unvegetated hardstanding). Therefore, a reptile survey of the adjacent habitats, even if it confirmed the presence of reptiles, would not affect the approach to using the site for access. As discussed in ISH2 reptiles may spend short periods of time basking on hardstanding but because they are exposed to predators will spend little time there and will depart quickly as soon as vehicles approach. The Applicant will also put measures in place to ensure existing areas of hardstanding are not collapsed by vehicle movements (as this would be a health and safety concern aside from environmental considerations). The Applicant therefore does not see a necessity for reptile surveys. As is clear from the ground-level photographs that have been submitted into the Examination, there would be no requirement for tracking over ruderal habitats. The Applicant has already committed

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			in the REAC (measure B66) to pre-construction botanical survey. This will identify areas of habitat suitable for larval foodplants or other ecological receptors to be avoided. With regard to the mention of reptile netting, the image shows silt fencing which was used to prevent any silt run off into the watercourses. This silt fencing was maintained for the duration of the ground investigations. On one occasion the fence was damaged but was quickly repaired.
	Contamination	We refer to REP3-061, 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy (submitted by the Applicant on 13 January 2026 giving us just 20 working days to review). We note at para 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 that there is mention of contamination risks from Richborough Power Station land; land we know to be contaminated with orimulsion (see BBC Programme First Sight and Deal & Walmer newspaper article attached at Appendix 1). Orimulsion combustion caused a toxic dust to settle over the surrounding area causing crop blight and damage to paint on the Volkswagen compound at Richborough Port, in addition to health problems for people living nearby breathing it in. Compensation was eventually paid to affected people. We believe that Powergen have used the rubble from the demolition of the cooling towers (contaminated with Orimulsion dust) in the platform for the NEMO converter and possibly for the base of the nearby BESS plant. Orimulsion pollution risk should be considered in the strategy. Para 5.3.2 states “Risks to controlled waters (groundwater and surface water) were assessed as moderate/low to moderate due to their proximity to the site and shallow groundwater likely to be in hydraulic continuity with the surrounding water bodies; copper, nickel and zinc were identified in one of the groundwater samples. It is recommended that groundwater will be monitored during works of the proposed scheme.” We would suggest that the clearly high water table makes any disturbance of contaminated ground a serious health risk which is not low to moderate. Historic landfill is referred to but there is no mention of the colliery spoil that was used to make up the Hoverport base. David Stevens clearly made this point at ISH2. The Applicant originally stated that this was ‘anecdotal’ and had prepared no answers even though they have been working on this project for 4 years! This is just not acceptable at this late stage. The Applicant is not ready to start work.	Kent Onshore Chapter 5 Geology and Hydrogeology fAPP-065) for the Sea Link project acknowledges that the hoverport represents a potential source of contamination but in the context that the hoverport site is only proposed for access and that there will be no ground disturbance from the project, has concluded (in the change application documents) that it does not represent a likely significant effect. This is based on the presence of hardstanding across the hoverport, which overlies any made ground and potential sources of contamination. The Project is seeking to prevent any interactions with potential contamination – and is committed to undertaking a Structural Integrity Assessment of the hardstanding at the hoverport to ensure it is suitable for the limited construction and maintenance access proposed. Further mitigation such as the deployment of track matting will be used as appropriate. Maintaining the structural integrity of the hardstanding will prevent exposure of any potential sources of contamination (as well as protect vehicles) and therefore significant effects on the environment from contamination at the hoverport, as a result of the Project are considered unlikely.
	Drainage and SuDS plans	At para 5.4.2.of REP3-061, 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy, the Applicant refers to “Factual Report on Preliminary Ground Investigation (Structural Soils Ltd, 2024 Report No.: 563835-01 (03))”. This document is not supplied as part of the submission. Are we supposed to hunt for this on the Internet? At para 5.4.3. Ibid, the Applicant states “The development design will need to account for fully saturated ground, and the need to dewater groundwater from the installation of any infrastructure	Section 8.3.2 of document 6.3.3.5.C ES Appendix 3.5.C Ground Investigation Report – Kent discusses the drainage specific conclusions reached as a result of the information in the Factual Report produced by surveyor. A summary of the Factual Report is provided in the same document, Section 3.4.

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		required to be built in dry conditions”. Even now, we are still waiting for evidence of how the Applicant will proceed to drain the marsh in readiness for building. We are supposed to reply to the ExA by 10 February, but the Applicant does not intend to provide detailed construction information until the same date. This is not fair and transparent and does not give Interested Parties (let alone the ExA) an opportunity to examine the plans and comment. Throughout the document, the Applicant refers to the Kent Drainage and Planning Policy Statement 2019, but this document has to be found via an online search to request a copy from KCC’s website. Why has the Applicant not provided a link? This is contrary to principles of transparency. If the Applicant is using this as evidence they should make it easy to find the documents they are relying on. We are amused to read para 6.2.7 referring to 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 year rainfall events and their design guidelines, when their current investigation compound is under water (see photographic evidence). We read at para 6.2.14 that the Stour IDB does not require the Applicant to use a Climate Change Allowance but that they have incorporated a 20% Climate Change Allowance. We refer you to page 8 of Appendix A and the data for the Converter Station plot, which shows that water seepage occurred at PC-09-ATPN and PC-09-ATPN at a depth of 0.85m. This is a high water table even in a dry period and the photos, once again, show the common state of the site.	It is not possible for the Applicant to provide a link to the Kent Drainage and Planning Policy Statement 2019 as the document has to be requested from Kent County Council. The Applicant uses this document to demonstrate compliance with Kent County Council’s requirements. Drainage solutions for the operational converter station and substation at Minster have been developed through engaging with Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board, agreeing key design parameters with these authorities, as detailed in Document 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy, an update of this document has been submitted at Deadline 5. The strategy outlines how both water quantities would be managed as well as water quality, with treatment and containment being provided to prevent pollution of the receiving water environment.
		We would expect to have seen the Applicant use the measures recommended by Government2 viz. the advice to: ○ use H++ climate change allowances for sea level rise [this is 1.9m] ○ use the upper end allowance for peak river flow ○ Employ the sensitivity test allowances for offshore wind speed and extreme wave height ○ add an additional 2mm for each year on top of sea level rise allowances from 2017 for storm surge ○ treat this as a ‘sensitivity test’. It will help you assess how sensitive your proposal is to changes in the climate for different future scenarios. This will help to ensure your development can be adapted to large-scale climate change over its lifetime. We refer you again to the Climate Change data provided by climatecentral.org modelling a 1.9m rise in sea level. The fishing lakes can clearly be identified and the rest of the marsh is under water except for Weatherlees Hill.	The Flood Risk Assessment and drainage designs for the Project have applied all relevant and current Environment Agency guidance with regard to climate change allowances (Environment Agency, 2022) in terms of rainfall, river flows and sea level rise.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		 We would suggest that the Applicant is clearly ignoring what is obvious on the ground and using desk data that provides the answers they are looking for.	
	Noise Disturbance on Seals	Turning to questions and answers at ISH2, [REDACTED] for the Applicant appeared to not know about the Thanet Coast SAC and we found this quite shocking. We were also concerned when [REDACTED] for the Applicant dismissed the impact of disturbance on the seal colony, by stating that they are “Habituated to noise”. This is true to some extent in the river channel itself, but the seal colony has grown to the levels that the ExA saw for themselves on the site visit (80 seals on 12th November 2025). This growth in the colony is a result of a concerted effort by TDC and Kent Wildlife Trust working together to impose tighter restrictions on the use of Pegwell Bay. Kite surfers, jet skiers, windsurfers and swimmers are now completely banned from Pegwell Bay and there are much lower speed restrictions imposed on entering and leaving the river mouth. These measures, combined with engaging with commercial boat operators, have had a substantial impact on the seal colony by effectively reducing noise and vibration disturbance, meaning this is now the largest seal colony in Kent. The seals have not habituated to noise, the noise and vibration disturbance has been considerably reduced. The Applicant’s operations in Pegwell Bay will undo years of diligent conservation efforts.	The Applicant is fully aware of the Thanet Coast SAC, which is designated for reefs and seacaves, not seals, and was therefore not relevant to discussions regarding the impact of disturbance on seals hauled out in the River Stour and in the waters around Pegwell Bay. The impact of airborne sound from the construction operations at Pegwell Bay have been fully assessed, including undertaking detailed air-borne sound propagation modelling. The modelling shows that, even for the absolute worst-case scenario of works at the HDD exit pits, the attenuation of sound over distance means there are only low levels of sound at the seal’s haul out location in the River Stour and that any significant disturbance is highly unlikely. During multiple project specific seal surveys in the River Stour (Application Document 6.3.4.4.A (B) Environmental Statement Appendix 4.4.A Pegwell Bay Seal Survey Report [REP1-003]) the seals were evidently habituated to vessel noise and to the visual presence of vessels even when vessels were in very close proximity to the seals. There is considerable scientific evidence to show that habituation is an important factor in the response of hauled-out seals to the noise and the presence of vessels, which is pertinent to an assessment of the likelihood of seals responding to distant noise from the construction works.
	Prey impact for Marine Mammals and Seabirds	[REDACTED] for the Applicant stated during ISH2 that there would be no impact for seals as they would forage elsewhere. However, REP3-029, 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked), submitted 13 January 2026, states:	The Applicant notes that the key points in relation to disturbance to marine mammal prey species are covered in paragraphs 4.3.36 and 4.3.37 of Application Document 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked) [REP3-029]. This reports that the Offshore Scheme is not within an important area for the key

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		para 4.3.33 “Disturbance of the seabed during construction of the Proposed Project has the potential to affect prey availability. This may lead to indirect effects on species that forage within their range, including seabirds and marine mammals.” Furthermore 4.3.7 states “... the potential for indirect effects through impacts to prey species for features of the Southern North Sea SAC, the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, the Humber Estuary SAC, and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC have not been taken forward to appropriate assessment.” We want to know why the Thanet Coast SAC was not taken forward for appropriate assessment as this site is also RAMSAR and is host to Little Terns (breeding), Golden Plover and Ruddy Turnstone (see Natural England’s qualifying features for the SPA³). The NE guidance for Little Tern, states “100% Unfavourable Declining” and “Little terns arrive at Sandwich Bay, amongst other areas in Europe, to breed during the summer after spending the winter in the coastal areas of west Africa. Successful breeding is largely dependent on relatively little disturbance and limited predation (Forrest, 2000). Little terns feed in the shallow coastal waters in and around the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay areas and in the lower reaches of the river Stour, foraging on small fish (including sandeel, pipefish and gobies) and crustacea (shrimps, prawns, crabs). It has been observed that numbers of little terns have decreased in recent years and this is thought to be largely as a result of increased human disturbance (Rendell-Read, 2017).”	demersal prey species which are herring and sandeel and so disturbance to prey is limited. In addition, seals, and other marine mammals, have very wide foraging ranges and no key foraging grounds were identified. Thus, where small areas of seabed may be disturbed by construction, there is ample foraging opportunity and availability of prey in other areas, such that there are no significant impacts to prey availability. On this basis this pathway was not taken forward to AA for any SAC designated for marine mammals. Both Cefas and the MMO have responded to previous queries raised regarding potential impacts in relation to fish as prey species for marine mammals. The MMO agrees with the Applicant’s assertion that the works associated with the cable installation are not likely to have far-reaching impacts on fish receptors beyond the project location. Areas of seabed affected by the works will be largely confined to a narrow margin either side of the cable installation route and impact to fish receptors for cable installation works are likely to be temporary. It is expected that during immediate cable installation works, fish receptors might move away from the work area to escape cable laying machinery, but this response would likely be temporary, and it would be expected that fish receptors might move away from the works to escape cable laying machinery, but this response would likely be temporary and fish receptors could return to the disturbed area once the disturbance has passed, though no areas were found that represented specific and important foraging grounds. Thus, this potential impact pathway was considered in Section 4.3.35 – 4.3.39 of Application Document 6.6 (G) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [REP5-036] which outlines the LSE screening of potential indirect effects to prey species as a result of the project construction. The Thanet Coast and Pegwell Bay Ramsar site has been taken forward to Appropriate Assessment. The table in Appendix A of the HRA summarises the impacts pathways and the relevant European sites and their associated qualifying features considered at each stage of the HRA. Little Tern do not currently breed within the Thanet Coast and Pegwell Bay SPA/Ramsar site and concentrations of Turnstone are more frequently associated with the rocky coastline/beaches of the SPA/Ramsar site. Therefore, there are no or limited interactions between these species and the proposed development.
		The NE guidance for Golden Plover, states⁴ “100% Unfavourable/Declining” and “Within the SPA, golden plover favour the areas around Pegwell Bay and Long Rock. Areas outside of the SPA boundary are heavily used. High numbers have been recorded on low lying farmland north west of Sandwich including the eastern part of Ash Levels [this is Minster Marshes] and the Goshall Valley (Griffiths, 2003) (Henderson and Sutherland, 2017). Grassland is the most important feeding habitat, with earthworm-rich permanent pastures preferred over leys and arable. The	The Applicant notes the guidance cited in relation to golden plover. Application Document 6.6 (G) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [REP5-036] recognises that the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA is designated for its non-breeding golden plover and turnstone, and for its breeding little terns.

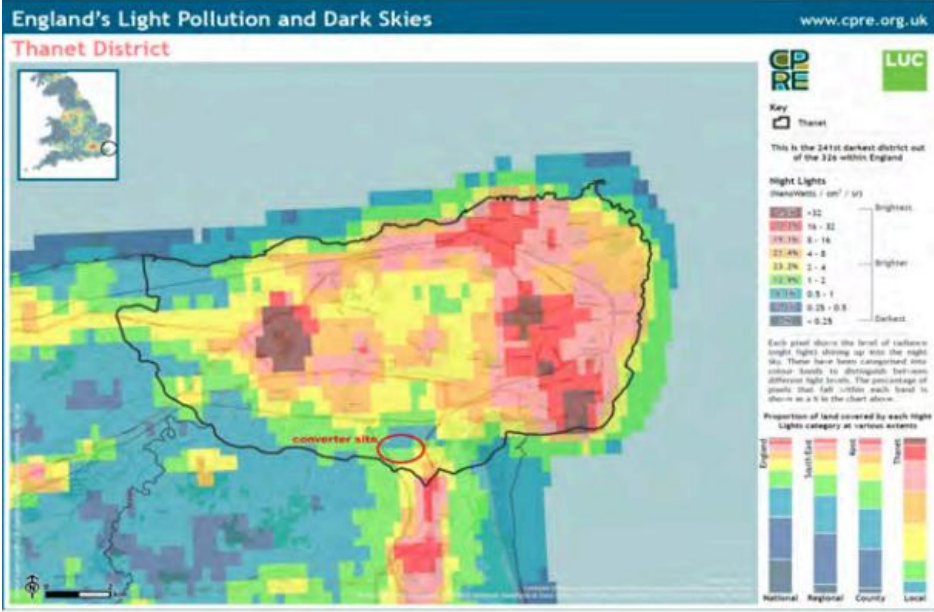
Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		intertidal zone is also an important feeding habitat. Birds roost on arable land, damp grassland and intertidal areas (Stroud et al., 2001). Golden plover use the mud and sandflats at Pegwell and Sandwich Bays to roost, moving inland to arable fields and grazing marsh at high tide to roost and feed.” We are somewhat at a loss to understand how the Golden Plover are given extra consideration by the Applicant, whilst Turnstone and Little Tern are equally important for the world, declining and apparently not worthy of special consideration..	However, as per Application Document 6.3.3.2.B (C): ES Appendix 3.2.B Wintering Bird Survey Report 2022-2023 [REP1A-015] and Application Document 6.3.3.2.C (B) ES Appendix 3.2.C Wintering Bird Survey Report 2023-2024 [REP1A-017], no turnstones were recorded during the surveys with regard to the inland Survey Area. Similarly, as per Application Document 6.3.3.2.D (B): ES Appendix 3.2.D Breeding Bird Survey Report 2023 [REP1A-019] and Application Document 6.3.3.2.E (B): ES Appendix 3.2.E Breeding Bird Survey Report 2024 [REP1A-021], no evidence of the presence of breeding little tern was recorded during the surveys in the Survey Area. As per section 2.7 of Application Document 6.2.3.2 (F): Environmental Statement Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Clean) [REP5-017], the Applicant's consideration in relation to golden plover is based on its findings that several fields were found to support golden plover, and its conclusion that this area is likely to constitute functionally linked land associated principally with the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA.
	Impact on Eels	We did not comment or ask questions during the brief section on Fisheries about the impact on critically endangered European Eels which make their way through Pegwell Bay to the River Stour. It is unfortunate that we do not have access to funding for expertise to represent the eels, but we did note that the impact on them did not figure in the discussion in noise and vibration or disturbed sedimentation in Pegwell Bay. We would urge you to address this please, as these are creatures of international importance.	The Applicant refers the respondent to Application Document 6.2.4.3 Part 4 Marine Chapter 3 Fish and Shellfish Ecology [APP-076] where a detailed baseline for European eel is provided in paragraphs 3.7.6 to 3.7.12, including the presence of this species in the River Stour in Kent, and specific reference to the high conservation status of this species can be found in Table 3.8. In the assessment of impacts European eel were assessed as having high sensitivity/value and were assessed in the following impact pathways: Temporary physical disturbance; increased suspended sediment, underwater sound, EMF and thermal effects. There were no SACs designated for European Eel within the fish study area and so were not identified as an HRA matter. However, this internationally important species was fully considered in the application.
	Fragmentation of Habitat especially for Dormice	When discussing possible fragmentation of habitat, we were surprised that [REDACTED] appeared to have records of Dormice crossing motorways. We would request that he please share this with us, and yourselves, to inform our own knowledge of this species and its behaviour as we were not aware of this.	This was not a reference to personal experience but the speaker's recollection of this website: Dormouse bridges - People's Trust for Endangered Species. It can be clarified that the reference should have been to a dual carriageway rather than a motorway.
	Habitat for Turtle Doves	[REDACTED] also said that mitigation planting around the proposed converter station site would be beneficial for Turtle Doves. We were surprised that he was not aware of the habitat required for Turtle Doves. They require low plants and patches of open ground where they can find seeds. Farming practices in Minster Marsh and supplementary feeding on the Converter site provide this. Where they nest and breed is in tall, dense scrub or	In discussions with RSPB, they have requested that woody planting such as hedges be maintained at a height of 3 m or more and allowed to grow at least 4 m wide with brambles and other thorny climbers encouraged/retained, to benefit turtle doves. This has been included in the Kent oLEMP for Deadline 6. Figure 3 of the Kent oLEMP shows approximately 1 ha of woody habitat creation immediately north-east of the railway line which can be planted

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		hedgerow (over 3 m tall and 4m wide). Thorn hedges are generally preferred, especially if there are native climbing plants present. This is a perfect description of the two 3 metre high 312m long hedgerows that have been planted across the converter station site to connect the SSSI to the Minster Stream. We would therefore draw your attention again to page 5 of CR1-025 2.14.2 Indicative General Arrangements Plans - Kent (Version 2, change request) that shows the suitable hedgerows (growing for over 20 years) cutting across the site that will be utterly destroyed, and the complete destruction of these suitable habitat fields abutting the SSSI. We also note that the plan shown on page 5 does not indicate the location of mitigation planting. Please also bear in mind that a 3m tall hedgerow takes time to grow and by this time we will see turtle doves go extinct from Thanet.	early in the construction programme (as it will not be required for construction). This will provide the low plants and patches of open ground and scrub planting that will be beneficial for turtle doves and is larger than the area being lost. In the longer-term further planting will be undertaken, and the Proposed Development will result in a considerable net increase in suitable habitat for turtle doves and other woodland edge birds.
	Skylarks and other important birds on the marsh	[REDACTED]also stated that the converter site location was only used by one Skylark pair. This contradicts our own finding of a peak count of 76 birds in 2025 and ringing data from 2024 included ALL the Skylark ringed in Kent that year. The ringing data continues to show the value of the habitat including a total of 21 Jack Snipe in 2025 (refer to Appendix 2). Please, please do not allow NG to rip out the hedgerow through this important site and cover it in concrete. This area is so important for birds. A few walkover surveys cannot capture the data. [REDACTED]also commented that there are no industry standard metrics relating to the quantity of land required to mitigate for impacts on Skylark. There are, however, a number of studies that the Applicant could reference in relation to ground nesting birds like Skylark. For example, Barnsley Council commissioned a Skylark Mitigation Plan for a planned development in August 2025 in which the ecologist states “Buffer zones for these species should be about 15-20m minimum, as ground nesting birds have a greater disturbance range due to exposure. If the birds show signs of distress and risks nest abandonment, this should be increased.” In addition, in a study reported in Bird Study Volume 66, 2019 on ‘Occurrence of Eurasian Skylark (Alauda arvensis) territories in relation to urban area and heterogeneous farmland’ found that “Skylarks clearly avoided the proximity of structures related to urbanization: paved roads, built-up areas and even unpaved tracks showed a negative effect on Skylark presence.” We found this information through a brief internet search. If we can find it, there is no reason why the Applicant, with their vastly greater resources, cannot also do the research. Our expert bird ringer has provided a separate report which we have attached. While we are aware that the ExA does not usually accept data that challenges the Environmental data provided by the Applicant, this is continuous expertise providing you with valuable missing information. We urge you to please pay attention to this. See Appendix 2.	The Applicant believes this is a misunderstanding of the data. The Converter Station field could not support 76 pairs of skylarks, as this would mean a nesting density of 5 territories per hectare. Skylarks do not nest at such high densities, typically nesting at densities of between 0.05 and 0.3 territories per hectare. See paragraph 2.3 of this document: 8. Skylark Mitigation Strategy vf Mar 24 Redacted.pdf The Applicant did not state no guidance, or advice, was available regarding quantities of nesting habitat for skylark (and has indeed referenced such guidance in the Kent Ecology and Biodiversity ES Chapter). The Applicant stated that there was no industry standard, which is correct.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	IUCN East Atlantic Flyway	We would welcome an opportunity to hear your questions and the Applicant's responses about the IUCN East Atlantic Flyway that were not covered through lack of time.	The Applicant will await and respond to the IUCN's response in relation to the East Atlantic Flyway under AP5 of Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) on environmental issues held on Wednesday 28 January to Friday 30 January 2026 [EV6-033] . To date the Applicant believes the IUCN has not responded.
	Bird Strikes	We were further concerned by the response from [REDACTED]for the Applicant who appeared to be unaware of the arrangement of the pylons from the proposed converter station. He stated that there was no funnel effect and no pylons would cross the River Stour - although it is clear that pylons do and will cross straight across the River Stour to connect with the Richborough Canterbury pylons south of the river. The Applicant has provided their own visualisation of how the pylons would appear see page 7 of AS-155 and we have zoomed in to show you the full effect more clearly.  	As depicted by the images there is already a large number of pylons and associated wires within the landscape, as well as existing OHLs crossing the River Stour east and west of the proposed new section of OHL. Birds are continuing to use the landscape here irrespective of this complex arrangement of OHLs. The Applicant maintains there will be no sudden funnelling of birds as a result of a new section of OHL.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		 The images clearly show that this is a significant funnel effect made much worse by pylons of varying heights. ● In the Infrastructure & Ecology Network Europe's (IENE) 'Biodiversity & Infrastructure Handbook', para 5.10.2 states "... birds are the most vulnerable group to electrocution and collision with powerlines. Bird mortality caused by powerlines and other electric utility structures has been reported for over 380 species including endangered and threatened species. Bats can be also negatively affected by the presence of powerlines, especially due to the lack of vegetation around poles supporting the powerline. Different studies highlight the importance of hedgerows and trees to bats for foraging and navigation during their flight. In many cases, because trees and hedgerows are cleared along the route of powerlines, a decline in bat populations is created by negative effects on bat habitat, feeding and navigation."⁵ ● Turning to Neil Gates' response for the Applicant on 28 Nov in ISH2, we remain unconvinced that the 1000s of birds that use these fields will be able to "see the wires and go over the top" of this maze of wires and especially at night. Safe paths will only be found following strikes and will take years for birds to learn as a related flock (if ever). ● We were also unconvinced by his explanation that fluorescent deflectors would be sufficient to keep birds away from the wires at night. We request the ExA ask the Applicant for much more detail about the design and deployment of fluorescent markers and how they can mitigate strikes at night. We would also expect them to retrospectively fit these to the pylons installed as part of the Applicant's Nemo Link.	
	Noise and vibration from HDD and coffer dam construction	We were unconvinced by the comment from the Applicant that working on HDD drilling will have no significant noise and vibration impact on cetaceans, pinnipeds and avian receptors.	The noise modelling shown on Figures 6.4.4.5.7 and 6.4.4.5.8 is not skewed but takes into account topography when modelling noise attenuation.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		We have reviewed REP2-008 6.4.4.5 (C) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Ornithology (Tracked) page 9 and can see that the noise impact profile of the cofferdam construction has been skewed so that impacts on the lagoon to the west of the HDD working area, which is regularly used by birds at both high and low tide, is artificially reduced. We would argue that the dB of 60 and above would, in fact, reach the lagoon. We draw your attention to evidence that Curlews (Numenius Arquata) will take flight at 160m (Flight Initiation Distance) in response to provocation (visual or noise)⁶. Additionally please review the list of seabirds in Nature Scot's analysis for developers at nature.scot/doc/disturbance-distances-selected-scottish-bird-species-naturescot-guidance in which Curlew are classified as High Sensitivity to disturbance and where flight initiation in non breeding season is between 200 and 650m. There is no reason to believe that Curlew in Scotland would behave any differently to Curlew in Kent. We draw your attention to the many Curlew who use the intertidal mudflats for foraging at low tide and would suggest that it would be impossible to work on the Cofferdams in this area without significant disturbance. Terns and Plovers and many other birds found in Pegwell Bay also have their disturbance distances usefully listed for your consideration.	The reference to Curlew, as well as other species, is specifically made in Section 5.9.34 of Part 4 Marine Chapter 5 Marine Ornithology [REP2-003].
	EMF	We note at REP3-0286.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Clean) submitted 13 Jan 2026, ● Para 4.3.54 "EMF emissions from the cables have the potential to disturb foraging grounds for cetaceans. Species such as harbour porpoise forage on gadoids, and flatfish, and other sandy demersal species (Stone & Tasker, 2006), thus the effects of EMF may indirectly impact on these cetaceans. As the Offshore Scheme passes through the Southern North Sea SAC, there is potential for an indirect likely significant effect on the harbour porpoise feature as a result of EMF; therefore, the Southern North Sea has been taken forward to appropriate assessment." ● We would respectfully draw your attention to what this does not say, which is the effect on pinnipeds (which are of great significance to Pegwell Bay). Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and excluding pinnipeds from assessment is a significant oversight in our opinion. ● We would also draw your attention to the effect of EMF on other receptors. The DCO for Manston International Airport has been granted. When fully operational, the Airport guidance systems will be sensitive to EMF. We understand that this has not been considered and would request that the Applicant does consider this even if only to rule it out.	The Applicant refers the respondent to the assessment of EMF effects in seals in Application Document 6.2.4.4 Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [APP-077]. The absence of a discussion in the HRA reflects the absence of any sites designated for harbour seals within the potential zone of influence for EMF.
	Light Pollution	We were pleased to see that the ExA Panel had visited a site at night to view light pollution EV1-01A and requested a more detailed night time assessment in ISH2.	A nighttime assessment is provided within Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Mitigation site: The most recent visualisations provided by the Applicant - REP2-013 9.28 Winter Bird Use of Golden Plover Enhancement Area (submitted 11 December) photo at 4.6.2. - appears deliberately misleading as it is angled away from the main sources of light pollution for the mitigation area. Converter Site: Thanet District Council's local plan describes the converter site as "intrinsically dark" (ref Map below showing converter site in blue/green light pollution band - the lowest in Thanet). It states "Thanet's open landscapes and vast skies, outdoor lighting can have a substantial adverse effect on the character of the area well beyond the site on which the lighting is located." "Lighting is only permitted when there is no adverse impact on sites of nature conservation interest and/or protected and other vulnerable species and heritage assets". We reference EIA Regulations 2017 and NPPF para 185(c) (protecting dark landscapes from light pollution), which states that a comprehensive assessment requires worst case night time scenarios. We refer you also to CPRE's Light Blight map below.  CPRE Night Blight Map for Thanet 2016	
	Traffic and Transport	We are aware that time constraints prevented the ExA from discussing this matter at the ISH. We note that the Applicant has not updated APP-338 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan - Kent since they first issued it in March 2025. In para 2.2.2, the Applicant states 'Within the study area, the A299 is a dual carriageway with two lanes in each direction and is subject to the national speed limit.' As the ExA and the Applicant are aware, this is no longer the case and there has been a 50mph speed restriction over 9 miles of this road's length since September 2025 due the deteriorating condition of the road. In para 6.3.3, the Applicant states they intend to use Ramsgate Tunnel and that "Further review with the asset owners, including	These points are acknowledged. Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] informed the DCO submission in March 2025 and was based on conditions at the time of writing. Whilst the speed limit of the A299 has since reduced, this is not considered to affect the findings within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] or require any additional mitigation as a result of the Proposed Project to be included within Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338]. There has been no request from KCC Highways to update either of these documents during Examination.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		KCC, will be required at the next stage of the design to determine whether these structures are suitable for the required Proposed Project AIL loading, and whether further assessment or strengthening is required.” As they have since been made aware by Save Minster Marshes and multiple other respondents, Ramsgate Tunnel requires at least £6million to make it structurally sound even for HGV traffic, regardless of AILs. In para 7.3.3, the Applicant states that ‘The King Charles III England Coast Path, NCN Route 15/Cantii Way, the Contra Trail and Viking Coastal Trail will all be managed during trenchless works.’ Access to the Hoverport for construction traffic access onto Pegwell Bay will not be trenchless. Why has the Applicant not updated their documentation to address these points? We are keen to understand how the Applicant proposes to remedy the inevitable damage to the A299 caused by thousands of HGVs and how they are proposing to address the issue of their inability to use Ramsgate Tunnel given its current constraints. There is no need to ‘determine whether these structures are suitable’ when there is ample evidence that they are not. It is simply negligent of the Applicant not to have addressed these issues and updated their documentation to reflect the impact on their plans.	In terms of the Ramsgate Tunnel, there is anticipated to be a maximum of 11 peak daily HGVs (resulting in 22 daily HGV movements) travelling along the A299 to the east of the Sevenscore roundabout, and therefore potentially travelling via the Ramsgate Tunnel. This level of activity is negligible and represents a minimal (less than 2%) increase when compared to the 1,240 daily HGV movements that are expected on this part of the network in the 2030 future baseline without the Proposed Project. Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] states that no significant effects are anticipated on the highway network as a result of the peak construction traffic flows, with the proposed mitigation identified Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] in place. With respect to Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs), the Applicant stands by its original response that further review with the asset owners, including KCC, will be required at the next stage of the design to determine whether these structures are suitable for the required Proposed Project AIL loading, and whether further assessment or strengthening is required. Paragraph 7.3.3 of Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Kent [APP-338] is correct. The Applicant acknowledges that construction vehicles will also access the Hoverport onto Pegwell Bay and an assessment of Sandwich Road which will ultimately be used to access the Hoverport is included within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] on this basis. Measures are also included within Application Document 7.5.9.2 Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Kent [APP-353] with respect to managing the Public Rights of Way and the King Charles III England Coast Path which cross the access route to/ from the Hoverport. The A299 tunnel is owned and managed by Kent County Council Highways (KCC), who undertake general and principal inspections on the structure to confirm the suitability of the structure for ongoing use. Including assessment of the structure following the car fire in 2025 and the subsequent reopening of the tunnel. The Applicant has and will continue to liaise with Kent County Council Highways team on the traffic and transport strategy for the project including any proposed future use of the tunnel. Should additional inspections or surveys be required at the request of Kent County Council Highways these will be considered by the Applicant.
	National Security Risk	We would like to draw the ExA’s attention to this Government’s recently published report Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security A national security assessment (Government report published 20th January 2026)⁷ which is highly relevant to this application. It clearly states that ‘If current rates of biodiversity loss continue, every critical ecosystem is on a pathway to collapse.’ Not only will this proposal lead to extreme biodiversity	The Applicant notes SMM’s concerns for the UK’s national security risk. Ecology and biodiversity have been extensively addressed: • The impacts on ecology and biodiversity of the Kent Onshore Scheme are addressed in Application Document 6.2.3.2 (F): Environmental Statement Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP5-017]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		loss in this area, it will also mean a further loss of arable land and extreme risks of pollution to a water system that is already under huge strain. The report states that ‘Critical ecosystems that support major global food production areas and impact global climate, water and weather cycles are the most important for UK national security.’ ● We feel that our national security should be an area for consideration by the ExA. ● This report was not available to us before now so we respectfully request the ExA consider it in relation to this proposal.	● The impacts on ecology and biodiversity of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme are addressed in Application Document 6.2.2.2 (D) Environmental Statement Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP4-025] ● The impacts on ecology and biodiversity of the Offshore Scheme are addressed in Application Document 6.2.4.2 (E): Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology [REP5-021], Application Document 6.2.4.3 (B): Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 3 Fish and Shellfish [AS-022], Application Document 6.2.4.4 (B): Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [AS-024] and Application Document 6.2.4.5 (C): Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 5 Marine Ornithology [REP2-004].
	Socio-Economics	We still do not feel the Applicant has given adequate consideration of the socio-economic impacts of Sea Link in Kent. In particular, their inadequate traffic analysis means there has been limited assessment of the impact of vehicle movements on tourism. ● In REP3-066 Document: 9.41 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note - Kent para 3.2.1 issued 13th January 2026, the Applicant refers back to their APP-067 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport document which has not been updated since the dDCO process opened. In this document, the Applicant has ‘concluded there are no significant effects in terms of severance on the roads to be used as construction routes during construction’ on the basis that ‘there are no tourist and visitor attractions that would be affected by land take required for the Kent Onshore Scheme or to which access would be required’. We contest this assertion. ● Firstly, while we appreciate that the 500m radius is a standard metric, it does not take into account that, as a peninsula, there is only one major artery, the A299, into Thanet. The cumulative impact on traffic will have a direct impact on tourism. Without an assessment of the impact of 108 HGVs a day on peak tourism traffic during the summer months (rather than the January analysis the Applicant carried out), their data is meaningless.	As previously set out within Application Document 9.79 Applicant's Comments on Written Representations [REP2-034], the Baseline traffic flows which have informed Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] are based on an agreed survey methodology with KCC Highways and are considered to be appropriate for the purposes of the assessment work. Had higher Baseline traffic flows been adopted to consider seasonal fluctuations during the summer for example, then the percentage increases as a result of forecast construction traffic associated with the Proposed Project would have been lower than what was reported and assessed for the majority of the assessment criteria in Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067], resulting in fewer potential impacts being identified. The assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] adopts worst-case assumptions for construction traffic volumes, which provides a robust basis for impact evaluation by considering the busiest day of the construction programme. Therefore, whilst seasonal fluctuations in Baseline traffic levels are acknowledged, the methodology adopted for the assessment work is considered to be sound by adopting peak construction traffic levels, rather than average or seasonal construction traffic levels which would be lower. It should also be acknowledged that as summarised by KCC within their Relevant Representations, as the Local Highway Authority for Kent, KCC has collaborated with the Applicant on Highways and Transportation matters and following positive engagement, all of the issues raised by KCC during the Pre-Examination stage of the DCO have been addressed by the Applicant. Therefore, there has not been a requirement for the original assessment work to be updated during Examination.
		Secondly, the Viking Ship Hugin at Pegwell Bay is a tourist destination, as is St Augustine's Cross (a significant historic and religious monument on an important pilgrimage route). These are	The Applicant notes SMM's concerns in relation to the Viking Ship Hugin and St Augustine's Cross.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		directly adjacent to the Hoverport and the site of the converter station respectively, both of which are‘affected by land take’. The only access to the Viking Ship Hugin is via PRowWs or Sandwich Road, both of which will be hugely impacted by the construction. A sinkhole opened up on Sandwich Road directly opposite the Viking Ship in 2025. There has been no assessment of how extensive use of a road which currently has a 7.5T limit will be impacted.	Application Document 6.2.3.7: Environmental Statement Part 3 Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] assesses the effects of the Proposed Project on Sandwich Road, which is planned to be secondary access. As per section 7.9.6, Sandwich Road has been considered as part of the assessment of abnormal loads. As for PRowWs that will be temporarily restricted or diverted, management and mitigation measures are considered in Applicaiton Document 7.5.9.2: Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Kent [APP-353].
		Finally, we contest that using a range of infrastructure projects (some of which have not yet been built) as evidence to demonstrate that Thanet’s tourism and economy will not be devastated by the Sea Link project. The Applicant refers to a number of different coast projects where the geography is simply not comparable - all coastal areas are not the same.	The reference in Application Document 9.41 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Kent [REP3-066] to findings from comparable NSIPs are in the context of visitor perception impacts. The methodology and rationale are explained at section 3.4. In particular. The differing geographic contexts are expressly acknowledged at section 3.4.2. Nonetheless, it is considered the evidence is transferable and relevant as it reflects consistent approaches to assessment, examination and decision-making for NSIPs in different geographic contexts. In any event, the assessment of the likely significant socio-economic, recreation and tourism effects that could result from the Proposed Project is addressed fully in Application Document 6.2.3.10 (B) Part 3 Kent Chapter 10 Socio-economics Recreation and Tourism [REP1A-007].
		Further, the Applicant largely quotes their own studies as evidence of lack of impact. This is quite simply marking their own homework. As we have seen throughout this dDCO process, (and during our community’s experience of the Nemo Link project), the Applicant consistently downplays the impact of any of their projects on ecology, biodiversity, economy, wellbeing and local communities.	It is unclear which studies SMM refers to. In respect of the visitor perception impacts from Application Document 9.41 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Kent [REP3-066], the Socio-economic Advisory Group Reports referenced there in relation to Hinkley Point C are published by EDF Energy, not the Applicant. The impacts of the Proposed Project in respect of ecology, biodiversity, economy, wellbeing and local communities have been fully assessed in the Environmental Statement.
		The cumulative evidence demonstrates that the Applicant still has failed to show that their chosen site for Sea Link to be environmentally, technically, or procedurally viable. Key assessments are incomplete, inconsistent with observed conditions, or based on assumptions that do not withstand scrutiny. The environmental and hydrological constraints of the site are profound and long-established, and the likely impacts on protected species, habitat integrity, drainage systems, and local communities are severe. We understand that it is difficult for a Project Manager to halt a project when it is not going according to plan – but would respectfully suggest that now is the time to call a halt on the Kent end of the scheme and explore viable alternatives more fully.	Please see above responses. Drainage solutions for the operational converter station and substation at Minster have been developed through engaging with Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board, agreeing key design parameters with these authorities, as detailed in Document 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy, an update of this document has been submitted at Deadline 5.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Given the scale of outstanding concerns, the late submission of crucial information, and the fundamental unsuitability of the Minster Marshes location, SMM respectfully requests that the ExA: • Requires the Applicant to provide the missing documentation and full modelling evidence • Grants additional time for Interested Parties to review documentation submitted at Deadline 4 • Reassesses the hydrological, biodiversity, and transport risks using site-specific data • Consider whether the Kent landfall and converter station location should be recommended for consent, given the serious deficiencies in the project.	

Table 16.3 Applicant’s Comments on the Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-145]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
n/a	Cover letter to video	Video submitted as further evidence of the extent of the flooding on Minster Marshes on the area of the Converter Station build. This footage was taken on 26 January 26.	A response to address the submitted video of current site conditions has been prepared by the Applicant and has been submitted at Deadline 5 in document 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site [REP5-122].

Table 16.4 Applicant’s Comments on the Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-146]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Video		A response to address the submitted video of current site conditions has been prepared by the Applicant and has been submitted at Deadline 5 in document 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site[REP5-122].

Table 16.5 Applicant’s Comments on the Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-215]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments

n/a	new flood alert	Today, 13 February 2026, the Government has issued a new flood alert for the area of the Minster Converter and Substation and we thought it would be important for you to see this. The flood water may be north of the railway line and, as we described in ISH2, the flooding can be anyway up to the north Thanet coast as well. The unsuitability of the site surely cannot be ignored any longer. Please urgently review https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/target-area/064FAG99Eastkent and the photos attached.  Flood alert	The Applicant has responded to this matter is the deadline 5 submission: 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at the Minster Converter Station Site [REP5-122].

Table 16.6 Applicant’s Comments on the Save Minster Marshes Deadline 4 Submission [REP5-167]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
3	The Habitats Regulations	As the ExA will be familiar, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the Habitats Regulations”) implemented Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (“the Habitats Directive”) in domestic law. The Habitats Regulations remain in effect despite the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.	It is agreed that the Habitats Regulations remain in effect.
4		Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states (emphasis added): “3. Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, <u>shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in</u>	It is agreed that this is an accurate citation of paragraph 3 of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

	<i>view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project <u>only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.</u></i>	
5	It is well recognised in European and in domestic law that article 6(3) requires a strict “precautionary approach” (re-confirmed recently by the Supreme Court in <i>CG Fry v SSHCLG</i> [2025] UKSC 35 at para. 26). The precautionary principle “requires a high standard of investigation” (<i>Waddenzee</i> (Case C-127/02); [2005] All ER (EC) 353). If an appropriate assessment is to comply with article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, it “cannot have lacunae and must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects of the works proposed on the protected site concerned” (<i>Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála</i> (Case C-258/11); [2014] PTSR 1092 at para. 44).	The legal propositions set out here are agreed.
6	In <i>Holohan v An Bord Pleanála</i> (Case C-461/17); [2019] PTSR 1054 at para. 33, the Court of Justice of the European Union (“CJEU”) emphasised the rigour required for an “appropriate assessment” as follows: “Under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for the site concerned implies that, before the plan or project is approved, all the aspects of the plan or project which can, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, affect the conservation objectives of that site must be identified, in the light of the best scientific knowledge in the field. The competent national authorities are to authorise an activity on the protected site only if they have made certain that it will not adversely affect the integrity of that site. That is so when there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of such effects.”	The citation from <i>Holohan</i> is agreed.
7	To that end, the CJEU held that an appropriate assessment must catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected: “37. ... all aspects which might affect those objectives must be identified and since the assessment carried out must contain complete, precise and definitive findings in that regard, it must be held that all the habitats and species for which the site is protected must be catalogued. A failure, in that assessment, to identify the entirety of the habitats and species for which the site has been listed would be to disregard the abovementioned requirements and, therefore, [...] would not be sufficient to dispel all reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of the protected site.”	The citation from <i>Holohan</i> is agreed.
8	Further, an appropriate assessment must also identify and examine the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site as well as the implications for habitat types and species outside the boundaries of that site: “40. ... Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that an ‘appropriate assessment’ must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.”	The citation from <i>Holohan</i> is agreed.
9	The proposed location of the Kent element of Sea Link is in close proximity to the national and internationally protected marine environments of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site; the Sandwich Bay and Hacklinge Marshes SSSI; and the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve. It is also in close proximity to the Minster Marshes SSSI, a strip of protected	The proximity of the Kent Onshore Scheme to the listed European and nationally-designated sites is noted. However, the certainty of impacts resulting from the Proposed Project is not accepted. The Proposed Project has been designed, as far as possible, following the mitigation hierarchy in order to, in the first instance, avoid or

		land which supports an extensive variety of wildlife. While the main converter and substation buildings will not be situated on these sites directly, their close proximity and the associated infrastructure will mean that these protected sites and their wildlife will be impacted both during and following the construction phases.	reduce ecology and biodiversity impacts and effects through the process of design development, and by embedding measures into the design of the Proposed Project such as sensitive routing and siting of infrastructure and temporary works. Any likely impacts on ecology and biodiversity, including those on protected sites, have been fully assessed under Application Document 6.6 (G) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [REP5-037] and Application Document 6.2.3.2: ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP5-017] .
10		Although Ramsar sites are not protected by the Habitats Regulations, it is a matter of national planning policy that they should be given the same level of protection, as explained in para. 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	It is agreed that, as a matter of national planning policy, Ramsar sites are given the same protection as sites protected by the Habitats Sites.
11		SMM has reviewed the Applicant’s updated Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (REP3-029, 6.6, submitted 13 January 2026) and other ecological statements, and has identified a number of deficiencies which raise considerable doubt that the requirements for a legally compliant appropriate assessment have been met. These are set out in our previous Deadline 4 submission. They include a failure to identify and examine the implications of the proposed project on the following species and habitats: seals, seabirds, eels, skylarks and dormice (see pages 11-14 of previous Deadline 4 submission).	There are no sites designated for seals in the vicinity of Pegwell Bay. Thus, potential impacts of the Sea Link Offshore Scheme to seals hauled out in the River Stour, and the wider Pegwell Bay area is not an HRA issue. Instead, impact pathways to seals have been fully considered in the marine mammal chapter Application Document 6.2.4.4 (H) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Clean). [REP5-023] There are however, some SACs designated for seals, within the wider marine mammal study area that were screened in for Appropriate Assessment, despite the distance from the Sea Link Offshore Scheme. These sites are the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, designated for harbour seal, 110 km from the Sea Link RLB; the Humber Estuary SAC and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC, both designated for grey seal, 160 km and 412 km from the Sea Link RLB respectively. The assessments found no significant impacts to these sites, either alone or in combination with other projects, from Sea Link.
12	The Revised NPS	SMM has compared the previous NPSs to the revised NPSs, the latter of which are material considerations in this examination. The following sections in the revised NPSs are particularly relevant to the application: a. Revised EN-1 emphasises that “<i>The Planning Act 2008 system is designed to be frontloaded and applications should not enter the statutory system if they are not ready to be consented. Examining Authorities, and indeed Secretaries of State, should be focused on considering the planning merits of an application, and not using time during the examination and decisionmaking stages seeking to address deficiencies in an application</i>” (para. 4.2.12). This is highly relevant considering the number of revisions which the Applicant has made since the application was first submitted for examination, and the deficiencies which SMM have already identified (including in relation to species and habitats). It is clear that the application as submitted was deficient and it should be refused on that basis alone. b. Irrespective of the presumption in favour of granting consent, EN-1 still directs that “<i>the Secretary of State should give substantial weight to any such harm to the detriment of biodiversity features of national or regional importance</i>” (para. 5.4.57). This is consistent with para. 5.4.55 of EN-1 2024 (which continues to apply in respect of the Sea Link application). c. EN-1 states that “<i>The Secretary of State should ensure that species and habitats identified as being of importance for the conservation of biodiversity are protected from</i>	(a) The Applicant proposed a number of small changes to the application during the Examination process. These were largely made, amongst other things, to reduce the impacts and improve the operation of the Proposed Project following ongoing technical work and engagement with stakeholders. The majority of the Proposed Project remained unchanged. The ExA agreed with this and stated in its Rule 9 – Notification of Procedural Decision [PD-011] that it was satisfied that the changes did not amount to a materially different project. This provides no basis for suggesting that the application as submitted was deficient. The Applicant also notes that this application has been deemed acceptable by the Planning Inspectorate in accordance with the requirements of Section 55 of the Planning Act 2008. These requirements include a provision that the Applicant has complied with the pre-application procedures set out in of the Planning Act 2008 as well as the application being of a ‘satisfactory’ standard to the Secretary of State. The fact that the DCO application for the Proposed Project is in accordance with these statutory requirements is confirmed in the Notification of Decision to Accept Application [PD-001] issued on behalf of the Secretary of State on 23 April 2025. For the reasons explained below in response to [REP4-144],

		<i>the adverse effects of development by using requirements, planning obligations, or licence conditions where appropriate</i>” (para. 5.4.56). Again, this is consistent with para. 5.4.54 of EN-1 2024. The Applicant has not provided sufficient comfort that the issues identified by SMM can be addressed by planning obligations or licence conditions. d. Pages 14-16 of SMM’s initial Deadline 4 submission addressed the risk of bird deaths from electricity pylons. Revised EN-5 provides the following in respect of risks to birdlife: “2.9.3 Electricity networks infrastructure pose a particular potential risk to birdlife including large birds, such as swans and geese, and perching birds. These may collide with overhead lines and risk being electrocuted. Large birds may also be electrocuted when landing or taking off by completing an electric circuit between live and ground wires. Even perching birds can be killed as soon as their wings touch energised parts of the infrastructure. 2.9.4 Applicants should consider measures to make lines more visible such as bird flappers and diverters which are covered in more detail in Sections 2.10.2 - 2.10.4. 2.9.5 The applicant will need to consider whether the proposed line will cause such problems at any point along its length and take this into consideration in the preparation of the ES (see Section 4.3 of EN-1) [...] 2.11.1 Where biodiversity impacts are identified, including those associated with bird collision with overhead lines, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that all feasible options for mitigation have been considered and evaluated appropriately”. In SMM’s view, the Applicant has not fully addressed this important issue	the HRA was properly conducted and does not give rise to the ‘deficiencies’ as suggested by SMM. (b) It is agreed that paragraph 5.4.55 of EN-1 (2024) contains exactly the same wording as paragraph 5.4.57 of the revised EN-1 (2026). It is unclear what significance the revised policy adds here. (c) It is agreed that paragraph 5.4.54 EN-1 (2024) contains exactly the same wording as paragraph 5.4.56 of the revised EN-1 (2026). It is unclear what significance the revised policy adds here. The Applicant notes SMM’s concerns, but remains of the view that species and habitats issues are addressed by, amongst other things, the approval process under Requirement 6 and the conditions under the DML. (d) The Applicant notes SMM’s concern but remains of the view that collision risk has been consistently and fully addressed during the course of the Examination. SMM is referred to: • Appendix C: Collision Risk Assessment of Application Document 6.6 (G): Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [REP5-036]; • The Applicant’s response to 1ECOL09 in Application Document 9.73: Applicant’s Responses to First Written Questions [REP3-069]; • The Applicant’s response to AP25 in Application Document 9.90 (A): Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]; • The Applicant’s response to 2ECOL49 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant’s Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135]; and • The Applicant’s response to AP25 in Application Document 9.135 Applicant’s Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.
13	Water Framework Directive	The Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (“the WFD”) established a strategic framework for protecting and improving the water environment in the European Union. It came into force in December 2000. Specific environmental objectives and measures for individual bodies of water are identified through a 6-yearly river basin planning process. This is underpinned by the use of environmental standards to help assess risks to the ecological quality of the water environment and to identify the scale of improvements that would be needed to bring waters under pressure back into a good condition.	Noted.
14		The key European case on the WFD is Case C-461/13 <u>Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. v Bundesrepublik Deutschland</u> (“Bund”), which concerned a number of engineering projects that included dredging of the riverbed of the River Wise. A challenge was brought to the approval of the projects on the basis of their impact upon the water body and its associated habitats. The key passages in that judgment are at [29]-[33] and [45]-[51]	The propositions set out from <i>Bund</i> are agreed.

		(as well as the opinion of Advocate General Jääskine). The following points taken from that case are pertinent: e. There are two conceptually separate duties under the WFD: the duty to achieve good water status and the related duty to prevent deterioration (which applies even if the deterioration does not reduce in a loss of good water status). f. Unless a derogation is granted, any deterioration of the status of a body of water must be prevented, irrespective of the longer term planning provided for by management plans and programmes of measures. g. The WFD imposes binding obligations on states, requiring proactive measures that go beyond merely producing a plan. h. States are required, unless a derogation is granted, to refuse authorisation for an individual project where it may cause a deterioration of the status of a body of surface water or where it jeopardises the attainment of good surface water status or of good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status.	
15		<u>Bund</u> has been endorsed in subsequent cases, for example in Case C-535/18 <u>Land Nordrhein-Westfalen</u>, where the Court said: <i>“75. [...] when a project is liable to have adverse effects on water, consent may be given to it only if the conditions set out in Article 4(7)(a) to (d) of that directive are satisfied. Without prejudice to the possibility of judicial review, the national authorities which are competent to authorise a project are required to review whether those conditions are satisfied before the grant of such an authorisation (see, to that effect, judgment of 1 June 2017, Folk, C-529/15, EU:C:2017:419, paragraphs 36 and 39).</i> <i>76. It follows from the foregoing that, during the procedure for approval of a project, and therefore before the decision is taken, the competent authorities are required, under Article 4 of Directive 2000/60, to check whether that project may have adverse effects on water which would be contrary to the requirements to prevent deterioration and to improve the status of bodies of surface water and groundwater. That provision therefore precludes such a check from taking place only after that time.”</i>	The citation from <i>Land Nordrhein-Westfalen</i> is agreed.
16		In other words, prior to granting consent, the Secretary of State is required to check for compliance with the WFD.	This is agreed.
17	The WFD Regulations	The WFD was transposed domestically in England and Wales by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (“the WFD Regulations”). ¹ As well as the WFD, the WFD Regulations also transposed aspects of Directive 2006/118/EEC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration (“GWD”), ² and of Directive 2008/105/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy (“EQSD”). ³	Noted.
18		In short, the WFD Regulations require a strategic planning process to be established for the purposes of managing, protecting and improving the quality of water resources. The WFD protects surface waters including rivers, lakes, transitional waters (i.e. estuarine waters), coastal waters and groundwater.	This is agreed.
19		Regulation 3 of the WFD Regulations imposes duties on the Secretary of State, Welsh Ministers, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales to carry out “relevant	The Applicant has prepared document 6.9 Water Framework Directive Assessment [APP-293] engaging closely with relevant

¹ The WFD was originally transposed in England and Wales via the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 (“the 2003 Regulations”). The 2003 Regulations were amended several times, and following a Reasoned Opinion of the European Commission relating to transposition, a new set of Regulations was introduced

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2006/118/oj/eng>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/105/oj/eng>

		functions” so as to ensure compliance with the WFD, GWD and EQSD. Relevant functions are defined in regulation 3. Guidance from the Planning Inspectorate on the requirements of the WFD Regulations in relation to NSIPs, however, notes that “ <i>Functions under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (PA2008) are not ‘relevant functions’ for this purpose</i> ”. ⁴	technical officers from the Environment Agency. At the outset of the assessment, key parameters were agreed between the parties, for example, the adopted Zone of Influence and the screening of WFD waterbodies and Project activities for inclusion within the assessment. Discussions have also shaped the scope of ecological surveys that have been undertaken to inform the assessment, the data gathered from which has been subject to robust scrutiny. The assessment presents an assessment of the potential for the Project to have effects on the environmental objectives and measures set for relevant waterbodies within the Anglian and South East River Basin Management Plans and the ability of the Project to comply with the requirements of the WFD legislation.
20	The application of the WFD and WFD Regulations to Sea Link	For the purposes of NSIP applications, the Guidance states that the WFD applies as follows: “<i>When deciding NSIP applications, the Secretary of State will need to consider the potential effects of any proposed development on:</i> • <i>the environmental objectives and measures within River Basin Management Plan and any supplementary plans and</i> • <i>the ability of the UK to comply with the WFD, including (if applicable) the derogation provisions of Article 4.7</i> <i>The Examining Authority for an NSIP application must also report on these effects and ensure the Secretary of State has enough information to decide whether the development has implications for the UK’s obligations under the WFD. This includes information in support of any derogation that may be sought.”</i>	
21		In this respect, EN-1 provides that an applicant’s environmental statement should contain information on impacts arising from the proposed development on water bodies or protected areas under the WFD (para. 5.6.17).⁵ Moreover, regulation 5(2)(l)(iii) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 requires applicants to provide a plan and information identifying water bodies in a river basin management plan, together with an assessment of any effects on such bodies likely to be caused by the proposed development.	Application documents 6.2.3.4 Part 3 Kent Chapter 4 Water Environment [APP-064] and 6.2.2.4 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 4 Water Environment [APP-051] contains information on impacts arising from the proposed development on water bodies or protected areas under the WFD. The relevant plan referred to is provided as Application document 2.11 Water Bodies in the River Basin Management Plans [CR1-022].
22		The Applicant has submitted document ‘6.9 Water Framework Directive Assessment’ (March 2025) which states that a screening assessment was undertaken in relation to the Sea Link project.⁶ The initial assessment undertaken in Stages 1 to 3 concluded that there was potential for negative effects linked to specific construction activities and some operational activities (paras Ex.1.3.1 and 5.1.3). The Stage 4 assessment, however, concluded that the residual effects “<i>would be negligible following the implementation of the embedded and good practice measures</i>” (paras Ex.1.3.1 and 5.1.6). Overall, the Applicant’s assessment concludes (para. 5.1.7): <i>“... that the project is compliant with the objectives of the WFD, including preventing any deterioration in the status of a waterbody, and when considering the potential for cumulative effects. On this basis, no further assessment is proposed.”</i>	No response required.
23		Although the Applicant has submitted that the project is compliant with the WFD, the ExA will of course need to be satisfied that the Secretary of State has sufficient information to decide whether the project has implications of the United Kingdom’s obligations under the WFD. In SMM’s view, insufficient information has been provided to satisfactorily show that there will be no significant WFD implications. In particular, the measures set out at Appendix A of Document: 6.9 Water Framework Directive Assessment are generic in nature, vague and often unenforceable e.g. “<i>Land used temporarily will be reinstated where practicable</i>”, “<i>Where</i>	Document: 6.9 Water Framework Directive Assessment [APP-293] has been subject to review by the Environment Agency, who are the regulatory authority for this legislation in England. The Applicant has worked closely with the Environment Agency to address their comments on the assessment and consequently has revised several commitments that deliver the prevention of waterbody deterioration. Final amendments will be submitted at Deadline 6, and agreement has been reached that with these measures in place, in addition specific DCO Requirements

⁴ Guidance: ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Water Framework Directive’ (updated 25 March 2025). See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructureprojects-advice-on-the-water-framework-directive>

⁵ Both the 2024 and revised versions

⁶ WFD waterbodies that were screened in were limited to: Hundred River (GB105035046260), Fromus (GB105035045980), Suffolk Waterbody (GB650503520002), Alde & Ore Waterbody (GB520503503800), Monkton and Minster Marshes (GB107040019621), Kent North Waterbody (GB650704510000), Stour (Kent) Waterbody (GB520704004700).

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	<i>practicable, [fuels, oils and chemicals] will be stored >15 m from watercourses,”</i> etc. These measures do not sufficiently demonstrate that deterioration will be prevented.	governing the design of the proposed Fromus bridge, and the cable burial depth of the mouth of the River Stour, all issues linked to the WFD Assessment will be resolved, demonstrating evidence that the Environment Agency are satisfied that deterioration will be prevented.
Appendix 1		
Hydrogeological assessment pertaining to Water Framework Directive requirement	The Applicant's WFD Assessment (6.9, March 2025) concludes compliance on the basis that residual effects would be negligible following embedded and good practice measures (paras Ex.1.3.1, 5.1.6–5.1.7). However, site-specific evidence submitted by Save Minster Marshes at Deadline 1 (REP1-248, Hydrogeological Assessment) demonstrates that these generic measures are inadequate to prevent deterioration in the status of relevant surface water bodies, particularly for the Kent converter station site on Minster Marshes. The assessment identifies foreseeable risks of irreversible soil compaction (to 0.6–1.2 m depth via Boussinesq pressure bulbs from repeated vehicle trafficking on soft clays/silts), leading to reduced void content (5–10%), low permeability, saturation, and rapid development of methanogenic/anaerobic conditions (methane and hydrogen sulphide production) when combined with high winter water tables and surface ponding. Such conditions would alter hydromorphological and physico-chemical quality elements, potentially causing a one-class decline in biological quality (e.g., death of roots, invertebrates, and biota) even without overall status downgrade, precisely the type of deterioration that must be prevented under Article 4(1)(a)(i) of the WFD, as interpreted in Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. v Bundesrepublik Deutschland (C-461/13) at paras [29]–[33] and [45]–[51]. Further, the hydrogeological assessment highlights severe risks of sediment and pollutant runoff to the River Stour and Pegwell Bay transitional waters during construction (suspended sediment up to 30,000 ppm against typical discharge limits of ~20 ppm; nitrates, phosphates, pesticides, and herbicides adhering to charged clay/humic particles with slow settling velocities in cold winter conditions). This echoes the historical damage from CTRL embankment silt to 5 km of the River Stour. Dewatering and treatment challenges on a flooded site (requiring 7+ days storage impossible due to ponding) exacerbate pathways to Stour (Kent) (GB520704004700) and Monkton & Minster Marshes (GB107040019621) water bodies, risking biological and physico-chemical deterioration. The Applicant's response in Comments on Written Representations (9.79) relies on unproven "slow incremental drainage" via ditches/stone layers and CEMP measures (silt fences, settling tanks), but provides no quantitative rebuttal to the specific settling calculations, CTRL precedent, or irreversible methanogenic risks identified in REP1- 248. In light of Bund (paras [45]–[51]), the Secretary of State may not authorise the project where it may cause deterioration unless a valid Article 4(7) derogation is justified (all practicable mitigation taken; overriding public interest; no better alternatives; integrated into River Basin Management Plan).	The Applicant confirms that control measures to prevent deterioration of WFD surface waterbodies in Kent would be bespoke to the prevailing site characteristics and informed by the recent Ground Investigation that the Project is undertaking. The Ground Investigation data has recorded a range of data to characterise environmental water quality, as well as surface and groundwater levels and flows in the development area and its surrounds. In addition to the mitigations secured through inclusion within Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115], construction activities would be governed by the conditions of a bespoke environmental permit from the Environment Agency. Further information is provided in section 9 of Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and in Application Document 9.32 Minster Converter Station Ground Conditions and Water Management – Technical Note submitted at Deadline 6. Derogation information is not included in the application as the Applicants assessment concludes that deterioration will not occur and therefore Article 4(7) would not be invoked.

No such derogation information appears in the application documents, and the generic measures in 6.9 Appendix A fail to remove reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of these water bodies.

Consistent with Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 18 (updated March 2025), the Examining Authority must report whether sufficient information exists for the Secretary of State to decide on UK WFD obligations. The unresolved discrepancies between REP1-248 and the Applicant's assessments (APP-250, 6.8, 6.9) indicate that this threshold has not been met for the Kent arm.

17. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Saxmundham Town Council

17.1 Introduction

17.1.1 Table 17.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Saxmundham Town Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-147].

Table 17.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Saxmundham Town Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-147]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Landscape and Visual			
ISH2	in respect of planting to the right of the track that leads from the B1119 to Wood Farm.	Geraldine Barker from Saxmundham Town Council: The proposed Sea Link Converter on the landscape will be a blight on the landscape at this point. I asked why we couldn't have additional planting, and I believe this is intrinsically linked with the next proposed converter station, which is Lion Link, which I know it's outside the scope of this hearing. However, it is, it is very apparent from Lion Link’s The document, which I refer to, is Lion Link’s potential design approaches. Lion Link appears to be taking on the majority of landscaping to both areas (Sea Link and the proposed Lion Link draft order areas) which will include extensive planting. Also Lion Link appears to propose to reinstate the Great Wood. Finally, we would like to see planting around the B1119. Mitigation is not only required for PRoW users as consideration should be given to the visual implications for people entering Saxmundham by vehicle to negate the impression s of an industrialized landscape.	The Applicant’s position regarding co-ordination with National Grid Ventures Projects is set out within section 7.6 of Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]. This details how the detailed LEMP will ensure the function of the outline landscape mitigation for the Saxmundham Converter Station is delivered and that a cohesive overall landscape design for the wider site is established. The outline Lion Link mitigation has been designed for a Converter Station proposed in a differing location and therefore context to the Saxmundham Converter Station. The Applicant’s position on additional landscape planting was provided within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant’s Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] in Table 6.1 and with regard to AP39 in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. Additional planting has been included within the Order Limits along the B1119, as shown on Figure 1 contained within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065].
Traffic and Transport			
		In respect of cumulative projects in the area and the A12/ B1119 Rendham Road junction. May I add for consideration to the list of projects, one which is not a nationally significant infrastructure project, but the 800 houses adjacent to the A12 and also the commercial area, which is on the opposite side of the A12, (which would lead to having a new A12 roundabout installed)? We understand that application for outline planning will be submitted in the near future. Perhaps you could refer to East Suffolk Council on that. This will increase traffic on the A12 between the B1119, (southern junction). We are also very,	The Applicant has considered this additional cumulative scheme and conclude there is insufficient information on the scheme to inform the traffic and transport cumulative assessment, particularly in relation to traffic flows, as an application has not yet been submitted. This scheme was previously screened out from the traffic and transport cumulative assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened

		very concerned about the B1119. This is the Rendham Road junction. Saxmundham Town Council has already expressed our concerns, but would reiterate that it is a very dangerous junction and we have just had a fatality. As this junction is considered as a diversionary route for closures relating to the B1121 Benhall Bridge the junction requires remodelling. (The fatality occurred in December 2025).	in and assessed within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060], which includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Applicant has previously provided responses to considerations relating to Change 4 – Benhall Rail Bridge within Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 of Application Document 9.91 (A) Applicant's Comments on Change Request (CR1) Relevant and Written Representations [REP4-089]. Following this, Application Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan - Suffolk [REP4-061] was updated at Deadline 4 to include additional measures relating to the Benhall Rail Bridge works. This confirmed that Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) proposals for diversion routes will be developed at detailed design. These will be agreed with SCC and shall include any speed restriction or traffic calming measures required to mitigate any safety concerns associated with the use of the proposed diversion. For example, speed restrictions could be implemented on the A12 near the A12/B1119 junction during the planned closure of the B1121.

Health and Wellbeing			
n/a	Health and Wellbeing – Working Hours	Regarding the quantitative value that the Applicant puts on the costs that would be incurred by not working on Saturdays and Sundays: The Applicant stated that the sum would ultimately be paid for consumers via their energy bills. We would like to know exactly how much per head (or per energy bill) that would be. Are we talking about a pound a year, Are we talking about a hundred pounds per year? The Applicants costings need to be put in perspective. In respect of construction on Sundays, it is not solely construction activities, but construction traffic that will create disturbance. In Saxmundham, residents who live along the major routes, which are the B1119 and B1121 (that have already been the subject of earlier discussion); suffer from traffic congestion and noise. There has been a 20 percent increase in traffic coming though the town, some of it attributable to early morning worker journeys heading towards Leiston, and as such likely Sizewell C workers. Thereby construction will not only affect residents who live adjacent to construction sites and compounds. It will affect everybody. Sunday mornings are the only days when town centre residents might be able to have peaceful sleep without being disturbed early in the morning. Finally to proposed working hours, daily from 07.00 to 19.00, it is important to remember that there is an hour each side of the core	The Applicant has provided its latest position regarding core working hours within Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4 (please refer to Action Point AP106). The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6). Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set

	hours for worker arrival/leaving and start up and finishing activities. Start-up activities could for example, include rigging a crane – a noisy activity. Weekend working and long working hours are unacceptable due to the very close proximity of the project to Friston, Benhall, Sternfield and Saxmundham. Therefore, we call for Sunday working to be removed.	out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) submitted at Deadline 6 to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures to demonstrate recognition of the LPA and community’s concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions in response to 3HW3.

Cumulative Impacts

	I've listened to everything stated thus far and totally concur with all the comments (from Suffolk representatives) in relation to cumulative impacts. I would like to add in respect to Saxmundham that the Inter project cumulative impacts on our on small market town will be horrendous. We have already heard about the visual, traffic, noise and loss of business impacts. Saxmundham will also lose business due traffic congestion and the poor visual perception (created by the converter stations). The cumulative impacts to Saxmundham should be noted, to the north, we will have Essex and Suffolk Water with their water pipeline and NGV Lion Link cables. To the East, (in addition to Sizewell C) there are Sea Link and Lion Link converter stations. To the west, 800 houses plus an associated commercial area. And to the south we have the Sea Link access road, Friston substation and the Helios Solar Park. In the centre of Saxmundham we will potentially have pipeline work in the Memorial field. It will be Saxmundham under siege. I concur that the cumulative impact assessments submitted by the Applicant require review.	The Applicant has carefully assessed the impacts of the proposed development on tourism, in itself and with regards to cumulative impacts arising from other relevant projects. The Applicant recognises that the potential for future environmental changes associated with the Proposed Project during construction, operation and decommissioning are currently a source of concern for local tourism. To address this concern, the Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive and robust EIA, through which no residual significant effects have been identified for Socio-economics, Leisure and Tourism following the application of appropriate mitigation [REP2-014] at Table 2.30. See also [REP1A-005]. As to traffic impacts, a complete traffic and transport assessment for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme has been undertaken in Application Document 6.2.2.7: ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054]. This does not identify any significant impacts on the highway network during the construction phase with the proposed embedded mitigation and control and measurements in place as set out within Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D): Outline

Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk, which is secured through Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of the dDCO		
Design	Lion Link’s visualizations for the visual impact mitigation are superior to Sea Link. Moreover, they have proposed various different concepts for the exterior of the building. I am wondering what is occurring, because the concepts that we have seen, albeit they are only concepts at the present time from Lion Link, seem to be far superior that Sea Link’s designs. I'm very concerned, echoing Mr. Atkinson's views, that we have not been advised on the final converter design. This is very important for Saxmundham, for the villages, Sternfied and Benhall, that we get the best possible exterior design.	LionLink is at a much earlier stage in its development, as the Applicant has previously noted. As the representation notes, they are essentially conceptual. It is not unusual for conceptual visualisations to be more attractive.

18. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Suffolk County Council

18.1 Introduction

- 18.1.1
- Table 18.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-149].
- 18.1.2
- Table 18.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-150].
- 18.1.3
- Table 18.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-201].
- 18.1.4
- Table 18.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-178].
- 18.1.5
- Table 18.5 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-179].
- 18.1.6
- Table 18.6 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-180].
- 18.1.7
- Table 18.7 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-181].
- 18.1.8
- The Applicant’s has responded to Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Response [**REP5-204**] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 18.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-149]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Written Summary of Representations made at Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1)			
2.1	Issues relating to the lack of consideration of an alternative access route to Saxmundham Converter Station	To give a background, the Council stated that, as Local Highways Authority, it was not persuaded that there had adequate investigation of alternative access routes to the Saxmundham Converter Station. The Council noted that this issue had been addressed in the Local Impact Report paras. 11.225-11.227 [REP1-130] and its Relevant Representation [RR-5209] specifically in relation to the proposed Fromus crossing, which is in the southern access corridor to the converter station. In relation to the access routes to the Saxmundham Converter Station and, in particular, the issue of the use of the Benhall Rail Bridge and the use of the B1121, the position of the applicant and SCC has been maintained as an outstanding area of disagreement in the latest Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) Item 1.1-1.3 [REP3-081]. The acquisition of land or rights to provide an access route to the development, whether as a construction access route or as an operational access route for the future operation and maintenance of Sea Link would be capable of being the acquisition of land and rights required to facilitate the development. Also to meet the test of Section 122 Subsection 2 of the Planning Act 2008, the issue as to whether there is a compelling case in the public interest to meet the test of Section 122 Subsection 3 would depend on a range of matters, including whether there are reasonable alternatives to what has	The Applicant has responded to REP4-149 in REP5-125 building on the details previously shared in the justification document previously submitted. Robust and thorough consideration has been given to alternative access routes to the Saxmundham Converter Station throughout the development of the Proposed Project, and this has included a route that would incorporate the Sizewell Link Road. The identification of the proposed access route (from the west off the B1121) is a result of a balanced and reasoned judgement taking account of relevant factors. With respect to the specific point raised on Benhall Rail Bridge: The Applicant acknowledges that there is currently a 46 tonne (STGO 1) weight limit on the Benhall Railway Bridge, which therefore makes the bridge suitable for the vast majority of the Applicants proposed construction traffic. The benefit of using this access for the majority of construction traffic is that it limits the impact of that traffic due to it representing the shortest distance to the primary highway network, reducing overall journey times. Only a limited number of vehicles over 46 tonnes will be required, with the contractors aware of the weight limit and able to plan the works with that access constraint in mind. There are a limited number of vehicles including piling rigs, cranes and transformer

		been proposed by the Applicant. If the Examining Authority was to conclude that what is currently being proposed by the Applicant would either cause undue harm, in respect of the proposed Fromus Crossing or is demonstrably not deliverable, in respect of the proposed use of the Benhall Rail Bridge, then it would be legitimate for consideration to be made for alternative access arrangements for the Saxmundham Converter Station. As have been set out in the Council’s Local Impact Report and subsequent representations, the Council believes that the Applicant has not given adequate consideration to a northern access route to the converter station site as a means of resolving the shortcomings and issues related to the Applicant’s preferred access route. If the ExA concluded that the proposed route was not deliverable, then the Applicant would be required to address those concerns by considering how an alternative access route could be delivered, which would likely require the consideration of the acquisition of additional land and/or rights, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, in order to undertake works to provide an alternative access route. This scenario would result in timescale implications, but the Council does not believe this is an issue which could be left until the ExA’s final report, as, by that point, it would be too late for those concerns to be addressed by the Applicant and therefore would create practical difficulties in terms of the ExA’s final recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Council requests that the ExA considers whether they share the Council’s concerns regarding the deliverability of the preferred access route to the Saxmundham Converter Station, and if that is the case to seek a response from the Applicant to address these concerns by proposing measures that could provide an alternative access route. This would mean the Applicant would need to consider the compulsory acquisition or rights implications of an alternative route.	delivery vehicles that would be greater than 46 tonnes and would need either mitigation at the Benhall Railway Bridge or use of an alternative access route. The Applicant agrees with SCC that the preferred option for access of the limited number of vehicles over 46 tonnes is to undertake remedial works to the bridge where those works are determined to be proportionate and practicable, considering the project programme and any requirements of SCC and Network Rail that may emerge. To progress this preferred option the Applicant is working with SCC and Network Rail to undertake a structural survey of the bridge to inform the scope of the remediation works required. The survey works will now not be undertaken until post examination. An Approval In Principle (AIP) for the survey was submitted to SCC in November 2025 and we welcome comments from SCC on the AIP received in March 2026. The above mentioned survey will also inform the mini bridge design which would be agreed with SCC should the preferred remedial option not be required. A working area plan of the mini bridge option has been provided at Deadline 6 in response to ExA question 3TT11 to provide further details on this option. The Applicant has confirmed that should the mini bridge option be adopted, then a maximum of 15 separate installations over the construction period would be required. The Applicants Traffic Co-ordinator will liaise with SCC, other developers and Suffolk Constabulary on the timing of these installations and the associated B1121 road closures to minimise impacts. The Applicant has also included an access route for vehicles over 46 tonnes that would leave the A12 at the Yoxford roundabout, and use the B1122 through Leiston to access the Applicants proposed haul road from BM04. This route is part of the confirmed AIL access route to be used by SPR under the DCO consent for EA1N and EA2 windfarms. SCC have raised concerns over structures on the A12 and along the SPR proposed AIL route that require assessment. It is noted that SPR and SZC are undertaking structural surveys along their AIL routes post consent which is normal practice for NSIP projects. The Applicant plans to undertake these assessments post consent as well, when the loadings have been determined following detailed design and closer to the time of proposed use to allow for any changes in the structural condition of the structures which SCC have highlighted can change at any point.
2.2	Issues relating to Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	SCC have raised issues regarding the impacts to the PRoW network, in particular, but not exclusively, in the vicinity of Saxmundham. The Applicant has stated in its response to ExQ1 (1TT16 [REP3-069]) that it would not be offering enhancements to the PRoW network, which the Applicant felt it was not able to do as it was not essential to deliver the project, and therefore could no exercise compulsory acquisition powers in relation to this work. In respect of this, the Council does not believe the	The Applicant has set out its current position regarding the provision of footpath enhancements in Application Document 9.136.1 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions - Appendices.

		Applicant has correctly interpreted the limiting of powers of compulsory acquisition in regards of it not being used to acquire land which does not deliver essential mitigation for a significant effect. The Council believes that the guidance in para. 4.1.8 or in para. 2.6.6 of EN-5, both of which, in the Council’s view, take a wider view of the scope of matters that can be the subject of compulsory acquisition. It in the Council’s opinion, that the guidance, when using the term mitigation, is intending its use to cover all elements of the mitigation hierarchy. This would not just cover items which mitigate an impact, but also those which offset or compensate for an impact, which the Council believes would also constitute a legitimate role for compulsory acquisition. If the ExA finds offsetting and compensation to be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, the Council would suggest that can include offsetting and compensation enhancement to the PRow. Considering if there are impacts on one part of the PRow network due to the construction works, which cannot be avoided, then the Council would suggest that a form of offsetting or compensation could be the enhancement of other parts of the PRow network, within a reasonable geographic proximity. If the ExA was minded to agree with the Council’s viewpoint regarding compulsory acquisition and the scope to include potential enhancements to the PRow network, then this would have implications if the Applicant were to consider such works, then there would be rights issues and possible land issues which would need to be addressed if these were to be done via compulsory acquisition. The Council requests that if the ExA, having considered the concerns put forward, puts these points to the Applicant to respond to, the Council suggests this would need to be no later than the second round of written questions, otherwise there will not be enough time left within the Examination for the Applicant to address these points.

Table 18.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-150]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
3 Ecology and Biodiversity			
3.1	Kent landfall	SCC has no comments to make on this item.	Noted
3.2.1	Suffolk landfall including: Disturbance effects, emissions and mitigation	SCC did not comment on this item during ISH 2. SCC offers the following comments in writing. Any works that have the potential to cause noise/visual disturbance should not be undertaken during winter months to avoid potential disturbance to bird species that are a qualifying feature of the nearby SPAs that may be using North Warren RSPB reserve. Noise fencing should be installed where appropriate to minimise noise emissions that could potentially disturb species on the nearby North Warren reserve. SCC would also like to add a comment on access S-BM13 which was discussed in the hearing. The current condition of S-BM13 is not suitable as a formal access for vehicles onto the beach and so must be included as a designated access. SCC would like clarity on what	SCC’s comment appears to relate to the Suffolk landfall specifically. The Applicant has committed to avoiding noisy works (those which would result in noise levels exceeding 60 dB LAm _{ax}) during the woodlark <u>nesting</u> season (February to August) as agreed with Natural England. A prohibition on noisy works during winter as well would effectively render the Suffolk landfall location unusable. Moreover, it is not necessary because as documented in the Suffolk Ecology Chapter [REP4-025] and Habitats Regulations Assessment

		types of vehicles would use the access in the event of a frac out and whether the access would need to be in place before any potential frac out or post incident. In any case, if vehicles are accessing the beach, this needs to be assessed in terms of impacts on vegetated shingle. No HGV access onto the vegetated shingle should be permitted. Vegetated shingle is a sensitive priority habitat for both Suffolk and the UK. Should access to the beach front be required, an assessment of the impacts resulting from the beach access is required and appropriate mitigation measures drawn up. Reinstatement of any damage caused to this sensitive habitat should be carried out. If construction vehicles won't use S-BM13, para 6.2.2 of the CTMTP [CR1-041] must be amended accordingly.	[REP4-057] the 60dB LAmax contour during winter will only extend to a small extent into those parts of Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI of importance to non-breeding birds. The Applicant would therefore object to any restriction on noisy works during the winter at Suffolk landfall as this would affect the ability to construct the Project.
3.2.2	Unexploded Ordinance	SCC has no comments to make on this particular item.	Noted
3.3	Update on intrusive ground investigations	SCC has no comments to make on this particular item.	Noted
3.4	Effects on protected species such as bats, dormice, and reptiles	Robust surveys for these species should be undertaken and the results of these surveys sent to Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS). Appropriate mitigation measures/licencing requirements should be drawn up where these species are/have been recorded. Bat and dormouse presence/likely absence surveys are strongly recommended along the railway corridor either side of Benhall Bridge.	Noted.
3.5.1	Impacts on trees, including: - Development Consent Order (DCO) controls on tree felling	SCC did not comment on this item during ISH2. SCC would like to note that the potential for Article 51 to be used to fell veteran or ancient trees was discussed during the hearing. The Applicant stated that it is confident that its assessments will not require use of this article to fell such trees. However, the Applicant also stated that it may be necessary to use this article should ancient/veteran trees interfere with the proposed development or pose a safety hazard. SCC considers that any interference with or felling of ancient/veteran trees should be avoided as far as possible in line with what has been assessed, with this article used as a last resort only. As such, SCC considers that such a use of this article should require approval from the local planning authority to ensure loss of ancient/veteran trees is avoided as far as possible and only where necessary. SCC would appreciate clarity over whether this article can be used in relation to vegetation outside that which has been assessed to be removed in the ES and, if so, whether this would require approval under Schedule 3 of the DCO.	The Applicant has updated (see the Applicant's response to 2ExQ 2GEN14) commitments A02 and A05 within the latest version of Application Document 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments [REP4-235] to account for any safety works proposed to veteran and ancient trees.
3.5.2	Implications of the proposed attenuation ponds shown on sheet 1 of 7 of the Indicative General Arrangement Plans [CR1-024] to the south side of the access and the River Fromus bridge proposal, on trees T875S and G874S	SCC concern on this matter was just to ensure that there was adequate consideration at the detailed stage when that pond is sited, to ensure connectivity in terms of wider habitat matters. However, regarding the impact on trees, the position is the same as ESC	Noted.
3.5.3	Seasonality in cutting of trees	SCC did not comment on this matter orally but would like to note the following point. SCC would ideally like to see any required tree cutting to take place between the months of	Noted

		September and February, to avoid the risk of disturbing nesting birds, though it is appreciated that this is not always possible.	
3.6	Securing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	SCC echoed ESC concerns regarding how BNG uplift can be secured, the preference would be for this to be secured via legal agreement. Monitoring would need to be established in any obligation. However, this is proposed the local authorities would need to review draft agreement and be afforded the opportunity to comment before informing ExA of position. Greater clarification is required regarding the mechanism being proposed in relation to BNG, as there appears to be some confusion from SCC's reading of the BNG feasibility report ([REP1A-025], paragraph 5.2.1)s it appears to commit to a 30-year period for the management of the BNG which is to be delivered, but SCC has read in other documents of different time periods for maintenance of things which may count towards BNG. SCC would like clarification that it is definitely the case that the commitment in 5.2.1 of the feasibility report is the intention for BNG. That is what SCC would expect to see in the draft Unilateral Undertaking or other agreement which comes forward. SCC considers that any provision of BNG should be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years as stated in para 5.4.44 of EN-1 with appropriate monitoring and reporting measures.	The Applicant shared draft heads of terms for a S106 unilateral undertaking with the LPAs on 20 February 2026 and comments were received. These comments were taken into account and the draft s106 Unilateral Undertaking (UU) was shared on 10 April 2026. In paragraph 5.2.12 of the BNG Feasibility Report, it is stated that "Long-term management, monitoring, and reporting will be undertaken for a minimum of 30 years." This commitment is further supported by paragraphs 1.5.26, 1.6.62, 3.3.43, and 3.4.55. The Applicant wishes to clarify that the language used in the OLEMP, which indicates that landscaping will be managed for the lifetime of the asset, also encompasses areas of habitat creation that are included in the BNG assessment. This is in line with paragraph 5.4.45 of EN-1 which states "<i>biodiversity net gain should generally be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, if longer.</i>" The Applicant is committed to ensuring that the UU includes clear and enforceable terms that address concerns about monitoring and long-term management and once again highlight the Applicant's commitment to delivering voluntary BNG as part of the Proposed Project. The Applicant recognises that monitoring and reporting mechanisms are crucial for ensuring the successful delivery of BNG. Therefore, the UU includes provisions for financial contributions to be paid by the Applicant to cover the costs associated with monitoring and enforcement. This will ensure that all relevant local authorities have the resources to oversee compliance and address and potential shortfall in habitat delivery.

4 Ornithology

4.1.1	Construction Impacts including: - Works affecting designated sites in the breeding season	SCC did not comment on this item orally but would recommend a pre-works check for qualifying bird species should be made before works that could potentially cause disturbance to breeding/overwintering birds commences onsite. Appropriate mitigation strategies should be drawn up to avoid disturbing species such as Woodlark, Cetti's Warbler and Nightjar, which may potentially nest within the DCO boundary.	Noted. This is already covered by several REAC measures.
4.1.2	Works in Pegwell Bay	SCC has no comments to make on this item	Noted
4.1.3	Impacts and mitigation for functionally linked land	SCC did not comment on this item orally but would like to note that works will have the potential to cause noise and visual disturbance to species using land outside the DCO boundary and outside the boundaries of the Special Protection Area (SPA). Mitigation strategies should be put in place where disturbance to species is likely.	Noted. This has been considered in Application Document 6.2.2.2 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity and Application Document 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report.

4.1.4	Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on the Red Throated Diver of the Outer Thames Estuary and implication for habitats regulations assessment	SCC has no comments to make on this item	Noted.
4.2.1	Operation and Maintenance Impacts including: - Impacts and mitigation for the effect of vessel movements on Red Throated Diver of the Outer Thames Estuary and implications for habitats regulations assessment	SCC has no comments to make on this item.	Noted.
4.3	Collision Risk and Mitigation	SCC Ecology has no comments to make on this item.	Noted.
4.4	Questions for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature regarding The East Atlantic Flyway	SCC has no comments to make on this item.	Noted
9 Landscape and Visual			
9.1	Ambition for landscape vision and legacy	As set out in its answers to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions (ExQ1) [REP3-101], SCC considers that the proposals for landscape and visual amenity mitigation and compensation fall short of the Applicant's vision of aiming to be responsive and respectful to the character of the local setting [APP-366] and of the recommendations of the Design Review Panel as presented in [REP1A-029] . The Applicant does not propose to secure the Overarching Design Principles in Table 2.1 and the Project Level Design Principles in Table 2.2 [APP-366] into the DCO. SCC further considers that even if they were, they would, in their current form, contain too many caveats and be overall too vague to be meaningful. SCC considers that a design code with clear commitments and design parameters should be developed and secured in the DCO. Alternatively, the wording of design principles should be unambiguous and secured in the DCO with a clear plan of activities for the design process, integrated into the delivery programme, set out.	The Applicant's position on the response to comments made around the ambition for landscape vision and legacy are set out within Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069] and Application Document 9.87 (A) Applicant's Comments on Responses to First Written Questions [REP4-083]. Comments made on additional planting for specific viewpoints discussed during Issue Specific Hearing 2 are contained within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] and relating to AP39 and AP40 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086].

		The combination of a site currently devoid of significant landscape features, and linear elements, could have led to a design that delivers landscape integration, landscape restoration and improved public access and connectivity towards the coast. It currently seems that, while delivering a viable energy project, the opportunities for a positive legacy in terms of the hosting landscape and the access to it are being missed and not pursued by the Applicant. <i>Fromus Crossing</i> The Applicant pursues a permanent crossing through the highly sensitive historic landscape of the Fromus Valley resulting in significant adverse landscape and visual effects, without securing any benefits for the host community of Saxmundham. connect to the PRoW east of the Fromus are no longer considered necessary by the Applicant. <i>Converter Station site</i> SCC considers that in the pursuit of minimising the land take for the scheme, the Applicant has not retained sufficient land to provide mitigation planting commensurate with the scale of the project and magnitude of change to views and landscape character east of Saxmundham. This has also been pointed out by the Design Review Panel. SCC has commented previously on the proposed tree belts around the converter station site in response to ExQ1 [REP3-101]. The cross-sections in relation to the proposed planting along the B1119 provided by the Applicant in their response to ExQ1 [p. 55-56, REP3-069] demonstrate that the proposals as they currently stand are inadequate and (suggesting only 2m width for the hedgerow corridor) do not allow for the hedge and trees to mature into a landscape feature that would be able to contribute to the integration of the converter station into the landscape. SCC considers that a planting strip of at least 10m width should be provided along the B1119 and that to the south of that strip a right of way should be provided, coinciding with the southern maintenance strip. <i>Friston Substation</i> Scenario 1: SCC considers that Sea Link needs to be mindful to accommodate the emerging finalised mitigative planting proposals by SPR and queries whether there can be a mechanism that would allow laying the cables at a depth which would allow tree/woodland planting above using an open trench method and implementing this element of the mitigation after this work has been carried out. Scenario 2: SCC considers that the mitigation planting to the north of Friston substation, as presented in Figure 5 of the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP) [CR1-045] would not provide sufficient screening for visual receptors. Further comments are included in SCC's Comments on submissions received by Deadline 3.	The Applicant has provided further detail about landscape mitigation for Saxmundham converter station in response to 3LVIA4 at Deadline 6 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions. Regarding the landscape proposals at Friston, refer to reference Appendix A in the Applicant's Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP-178] . Requirement 3 was updated at Deadline 4 to reflect Design Principles relating to the Suffolk Substation (Friston) and Bridge over the River Fromus (Application Document 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (Clean) [REP4-217]). The Applicant responded to Deadline 3 submissions within Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241].
9.2	Assessment of effects on landscape character in Kent and Suffolk	As set out in previous submissions – LIR [REP1-130]	The Applicant's position on the response to the Suffolk County Council Local Impact Report is set out within Application Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026] .
9.3	Cumulative landscape and visual impact assessments including on the National Landscape	SCC stands by its previous submissions on the inadequacy of the Applicant's assessment of effects on the NL as made in response to ExQ1 [REP3-101], LIR [REP1-130] and response to Deadline 1 submissions [REP2-062]. SCC has also commented on Appendix A of [REP3-070] at Deadline 4. In addition, it is unclear to SCC why no magnitude of effect is given for cumulative effects.	The magnitude of cumulative effects on the subfactors of the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape (SECHNL) Natural Beauty and Special Quality Indicators is contained at Appendix A of Application Document 9.123.1 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions – Appendices [REP5-136] .
9.4	Assessment of effects on Heritage Coast	While SCC accepts in principle the Applicant's approach of only assessing effects on the Suffolk Heritage Coast, where they would be different from those on the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (SECHAONB), i.e. in near-shore waters, the relevant Coastal Character Area, Thorpeness to Aldeburgh Coast (Touching the	The baseline for the relevant Coastal Character Areas (CCAs) is set out within Application Document 6.3.2.1.B ES Appendix 2.1.B Landscape Baseline [APP-096] . As noted in APP-096 within paragraph 2.1.9, these CCAs

		Tide Landscape Character Assessment (TTLCA) (Touching the Tide Partnership, 2012), could have been identified and its characteristics referenced within the wider assessment. Further comments are provided in SCC's Comments on submissions received by Deadline 3.	largely duplicate the relevant LCAs set out within the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (SCLCA). Therefore, these CCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme but have been used to inform landscape baseline and the assessment on landscape character. The Applicant responded to Deadline 3 submissions within Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241].
9.5.1	Landscape mitigation in Kent and Suffolk including: - The securing of advance planting	SCC considers that the response provided by the Applicant to EXQ1 1LVIA5 [REP3-069] does not provide any further reassurance regarding the securement of advance planting. The commitment remains caveated. Firstly, with regards to where such advance planting may happen (where it does not conflict with construction activities and compounds). SCC considers that these areas and the phasing for their implementation should be more clearly defined within the outline LEMP and CEMP. The wording 'advanced planting will be undertaken in the first available planting season prior to construction' is confusing and not very helpful. SCC would ask the Applicant to determine, when, in the sequence of events, advanced planting should occur. SCC suggests that this could be during pre-commencement works, after necessary site clearance and invasive surveys and prior to implementation of tree and hedgerow protection. SCC anticipates that the window between the Discharge of Relevant Requirements and works being carried out on site is likely to be marginal, and there may not be a planting season in between. This should be considered in the wording to avoid undue delays to the project. Secondly, advance planting would be subject to discussions with the contractor. SCC considers that only, if it can be demonstrated by the contractor that advance planting in a particular area would result in an undue burden, should a postponement be considered. <u>Adaptive Aftercare</u> SCC considers the currently proposed prescriptions for aftercare as presented in Document 7.5.7.1 (B) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk (Version 2, change request) (Clean) [CR1- 045] insufficient, as potential measures set out in Section 7.3 do not reference the possibility of an extension of time to the aftercare period of 5 years (which SCC do not consider long enough for the establishment of trees and woodlands), should this be required to achieve successful establishment equivalent to five years' growth. LV03/LV04 of the REAC [REP3-078] solely refer to a five-year aftercare period, except for those areas that will be maintained for the lifetime of the asset (all planting associated with the Fromus Bridge, permanent access track, Friston substation (under Scenario 2) and Saxmundham converter station). Temporal adaptation of the aftercare regime is not envisaged. SCC considers that this needs to be amended in both the oLEMP and the REAC.	The Applicant's position regarding advance planting and adaptive aftercare should be referred to within the Applicant's Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP-178] submitted at Deadline 6. The outline areas of potential early planting are shown on Figure 3 within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk [REP4-065]. The comments regarding avoiding undue delays to the Proposed Project are welcomed.
9.5.2			
	Landscape mitigation for Kiln Lane substation SCC planning:	Sea Link's proposals should ensure no worse mitigation than that consented for the SPR projects under Scenario 2. Plans should be produced to align the Applicant's approach with SPR's now that SPR's detailed plan has been submitted to discharge the requirement (application ref: DC/25/4826/DRR). Under scenario 1, the Applicant must ensure SPR's mitigation is not undermined by Sea Link's cabling works. SCC follows ESC's request for HDD to be undertaken here. Sea Link's approach risks undermining the decision by the SoS to consent the EA1N and EA2 DCOs. Now that SPR has submitted an application to discharge Requirement 14 (1) (Landscape Management Plan), the Applicant ought to produce plans for a coordinated approach to these.	Regarding the landscape proposals at Friston, refer to reference Appendix A in the Applicant's Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP-178] At Deadline 4 the Applicant updated Figure 5 of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) which reflects the currently consented detailed landscape design was approved pursuant to Requirement 14(1) of the East Anglia TWO DCO by ESC.

9.5.3	Potential for additional landscape planting in the vicinity of the proposed converter station at Saxmundham within the order limits – with reference to Figure 1 of the Suffolk outline landscape and ecological management plan [CR1-045] and representative viewpoints	Given the landform of the landscape and openness of the site, as well as the nature and scale of the proposed project, SCC considers that a multi-layered approach to mitigation planting is required to achieve minimisation of visual effects from as many locations surrounding the site as possible (not just from the worst affected representative viewpoints). Through re-instatement of boundary hedgerows in the wider landscape and the use of strategically placed woodland blocks/tree groups, as well as scattered trees, in varying distances from the visual receptors, would make mitigative planting more effective in screening the development (viewing angle) and/or provide a different focus in the middle ground. SCC considers that there is scope within the order limits for additional landscape planting, but that the order limits as currently proposed are drawn in such a way that they preclude sufficient mitigation planting in the wider landscape. In some areas Compulsory Acquisition (CA) of additional land may be required to enable visual mitigation for the worst affected areas, for example from the south, as demonstrated by VP4 [APP209]. Alternatively, it may be possible to secure the land required through a long-term lease or other landowner agreement. In reference to Figure 1 of the Suffolk outline landscape and ecological management plan [CR1-045] and Figure 2 under 6.8.9.5 of ESC’s LIR [REP1-128], SCC agrees that woodland planting in Area A may not be appropriate within the historic landscape pattern, but considers that every effort must be made to strengthen the planting between Bloomfield Covert and Wood Farm. This would help to reduce visual effects on VP2 [App-209] and VP20 [APP213]. With regards to Area B, there could be planting along the PRoW leading south from the B1119, which would not completely block views to the wider landscape, such as a line of trees or intermittent shrub planting. In addition, strategic block planting could be used to the north of the converter station (for example, to the north-east of where the three PROW meet in their proposed location). Such intermittent planting would improve screening/filtering of views from VP1 [APP-208] (and other parts of the PRoW). The current proposals are not expected to be able to fully screen the converter station, even long-term, given the height of the proposed buildings and the location of the proposed mitigation planting, close to the proposed structures. Area C is fully supported by SCC and considered essential, especially in the northern section. Cross sections of works along B1119 show that only 2m width is allowed for the hedgerow. This is considered entirely insufficient to develop into a landscape feature capable of mitigating the views of the converter station from the north (see VP16, [APP-211]. The minimum width for a hedge corridor should be 5m. However, in this location SCC agrees with ESC that a tree belt (of no less than 10m width) is necessary, as not even a substantial hedgerow would be able to effectively screen or filter the extent of views towards the converter station. South of this planting, sufficient distance would need to be allowed (no less than 2 m) to a maintenance track that would also allow for public access. This would likely require use of land currently excluded from the Order Limits along the southern side of the B1119. SCC notes the advice given by the DRP as shown in Design Approach document [REP1A-029] which recommended that the Applicant removed too much land from the Order Limits to achieve sufficient essential mitigation planting. Further comments on specific representative viewpoints: VP1 [APP-208]: SCC agrees with the Applicant’s assessment of visual effects and considers that there are significant visual effects and changes to the landscape in the area, which would be long term, if not permanent. Considering the openness of the landscape, SCC notes that it is a denuded landscape, and this is not necessarily a characteristic that needs to be aimed for or maintained. SCC is of the view that the proposed mitigation planting is not sufficient in this area and that additional planting as outlined above is required and deliverable (albeit not entirely within the current DCO boundary), especially when considering the site is in an area which has been denuded in the latter half of the 20th century and is now devoid of most landscape features.	Refer to 3LVIA4 in Application Document 9.136 the Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6.

		As a result, SCC sees an opportunity for improvements to the landscape character in this area to form part of the legacy of this project, but so far this has not materialised. The indication by the Applicant that revised proposals for this area will be submitted at Deadline 4 is welcome, and SCC will comment on these in due course. VP4 [APP-209] and VP5 [APP-209]: SCC agrees with the Applicant's assessment of visual effects and considers that wider landscape restoration and a layered approach to mitigation planting, including some foreground planting (field boundary hedge) is required in this area. Additional land may need to be secured for the long-term in this area, by CA or landowner agreement. SCC would welcome further information in this matter, equivalent to information regarding the area north of the converter station. VP21 [APP-213]: SCC considers that this viewpoint underlines that a single feature approach to mitigative planting is insufficient. Even with a tree belt along the B1119 there would likely be long-term major adverse visual effects. If a hedgerow along the PRoW could be secured, this would increase the chances of providing a filter/screen towards the converter station site within the medium term (5-10 years).	
9.5.4	Implications of the statutory consultation documents for LionLink. With reference to figure 49 of the Converter Station - Background to Potential Design Approaches	SCC considers Lion Link's proposed landscape mitigation for the converter station, such as figure 49, to be more aligned with SCC's views on necessary mitigation than Sea Link's proposals. SCC considers that the Applicant should have regard to Lion Link's proposals, in particular at the interface of the two proposed converter stations at Saxmundham and the Kiln Lane substations to enable seamless PRoW and planting connections and a coherent landscape setting. Figure 49 appears to show a more comprehensive approach to landscape mitigation in terms of greater areas of planting. This includes not only more planting in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Lion Link converter station, but also to the west of the site by Fristonmoor Lane. There also appears to be provision for amenity benefits including a community orchard and community allotments. This would not be proposed by that applicant unless it had good reason to consider such measures as essential mitigation/offsetting. SCC considers that the Applicant should consider how it could take a similar approach of including amenity benefits which could be achieved through similar measures or others as have been suggested by SCC. SCC considers that there is a need for greater coordination between the projects in terms of their approach to the converter station site. Certain aspects of Lion Link's proposal including the aforementioned orchard and allotments appear to overlap with parts of the Applicant's proposal along the B1119 such as the maintenance road. Advanced planning for the scenario where Lion Link is also consented is crucial to ensure the two projects are complimentary by avoiding duplication and discordance. This also applies to other enhancements proposed by Lion Link such as additional stretches of PRoW including from the B1121 along the haul road. Therefore, the Applicant should ensure outline details are secured in the DCO both for the scenario where only Sea Link or both schemes are brought forward. Whilst it is likely that less detail can be provided for the latter scenario at this stage, stronger coordination commitments could be made to provide the SoS with greater certainty over the final outcome of the site. This could take the form of a commitment to some kind of joint plan once Lion Link is consented as suggested by Advice Note 17.	The Applicant's position regarding co-ordination with National Grid Ventures Projects is set out within section 7.6 of Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]. This details how the detailed LEMP will ensure the function of the outline landscape mitigation for the Saxmundham Converter Station is delivered and that a cohesive overall landscape design for the wider site is established. The outline landscape mitigation for the Saxmundham Converter Station site has been designed collaboratively and in response to landscape, visual, heritage and ecological effects. It has also importantly been designed to enable co-location with LionLink which has necessitated consideration of this in the extent of landscape framework proposed and associated land take. LionLink is positioned in an entirely different part of the site to the Proposed Project and therefore a comparison is not possible nor appropriate. LionLink is in a much more visually prominent part of the site, closer to sensitive receptors and therefore necessitates a different approach to the level of landscape and visual mitigation which is reflected in Figure 49 of LionLink's outline landscape mitigation plan.
9.5.5	Landscape mitigation for Minster converter station and substation	SCC has no comments to make on this item.	Noted.

9.5.6	Adequacy of National Landscape mitigation	SCC stands by its previous submissions on the inadequacy of the Applicant’s proposal to meet the section 85 (A1) CROWA 2000 duty as made in response to 1LVIA7 of ExQ1 [REP3-101], LIR [REP1-130] and response to Deadline 1 and 1A submissions [REP2-062]. SCC also notes that locating the temporary construction compound outside the NL would contribute to avoiding/reducing adverse effects. It is not clear to SCC that it has been demonstrated that it is necessary to be located there. In ISH2, SCC noted that further information regarding the National Landscape had been submitted at Deadline 3. SCC has now reviewed and responded to the relevant submissions in its Comments on Deadline 3 Submissions.	An updated position on the section 85 duty is provided in response to 3LVIA5 within Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6. The only compound within the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape (SECHNL) is for the landfall trenchless crossing which must be at the launch pit location of the trenchless crossing so cannot be moved. The Applicant responded to Deadline 3 submissions within Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant’s Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241].
Design			
10.1	Adequacy of design controls including in relation to converter stations, substations, pylons, lighting	SCC would want to see coordination on the design up front, not only on the built elements, but also as far as the landscape treatment is concerned for the project locations, particularly in the vicinity of the Saxmundham converter station. Currently SCC do not see this as unachievable, and it is capable of being expressed through design principles. SCC do not currently think that the documentation is sufficient in this regard, and on the wording of the DCO SCC do not believe that it has been properly secured. SCC believes regarding landscape works that the design principles do not currently work particularly well in Saxmundham or Friston and the design principles for Friston substation are insufficient and do not cover landscape very well. Regarding plans seen for scenario two, the planting seems inferior to that consented by SPR. Going forward it would be important that when there are clauses like a substantially in accordance with outline plans, for example, the location of new PRoW and other planting elements, is not prohibited because something else has approved in that area. SCC is concerned that the Applicant’s approach to design is disregarding the experience of discharging authorities particularly in Suffolk with regards to dealing with energy Infrastructure, so the suggestion that local authorities would want to interfere with something which in engineering terms is not practical is not going to happen as they understand how energy infrastructure works. Even if this was a concern, it is capable of being addressed through the design principles work. There is already a suggestion in the design principles that that there are critical design constraints, and therefore is not beyond the ability of drafting to ensure that any withholding of consent for the discharge of the requirement cannot transgress a critical design consent. For example, if a building needs to be six metres high, it would not be a good ground of objection that that it is six metres high, so that can be dealt with. There is a response to ExA question 1GEN47 where the Applicant made the point which draws attention to Bramford to Twinstead where there were no controls in that DCO and therefore it sets a precedent. SCC believes there is a considerable difference between Sea Link and Bramford to Twinstead as at Bramford additional infrastructure is being added, whereas at Saxmundham, where so far as the converter station is concerned is a large greenfield site without any energy infrastructure. Therefore, SCC believes the Bramford to Twinstead example is not really an appropriate precedent for the circumstances here. SCC believes, in agreement with Thanet DC, that if the requirement required approval, the in “general” accordance provision should certainly be removed, because that is a massive loophole in the degree of any control.	At Deadline 4 the Applicant updated Figure 5 of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) which reflects the currently consented detailed landscape design was approved pursuant to Requirement 14(1) of the East Anglia TWO DCO by ESC.

		SCC highlighted the importance of bringing in the substation and Fromus Crossing into these controls and the design principles, as currently as they are worded, they fall a long way short of equivalent principles in the approved documents for EA1N and EA2. Therefore, SCC believes there is a need for much tighter controls. SCC notes that requiring details of the layout, scale and design of utilitarian infrastructure, such as substations to be approved by the relevant planning authority is not a consistently applied requirement in energy DCOs, whilst recognising that this is required by EA1N and EA2 DCOs. However, SCC considers that the context of the sites for the Fromus crossing, Kiln Lane substation and converter station, notably the (at present) rural setting and residual significant effects, entails that a robust approval process for their designs is required as was recognised by the SoS for the Kiln Lane substation under the EA1N and EA2 DCOs. SCC agreed to work with ESC, Thanet DC, and Kent CC in suggesting wording to Requirement 3 which might make it more workable. Lighting: Construction lighting should be minimised, not used when not needed and directed away from sensitive receptors, i.e. wildlife as well as residential properties; operational lighting needs to be minimised, use lowest lux and Kelvin levels, and needs to be agreed with relevant planning authority.	
10.2	Embedding of good design in decision making process	SCC considers that secured design principles should include principles for landscape design and mitigative planting for the entire project area, and in greater detail for the Fromus Crossing, The Saxmundham Converter Station site, and Friston/Kiln Lane Substation. The landscape proposals offered by Sea Link as a standalone project must be considered inferior to the landscape proposals submitted by SPR for Friston/Kiln Lane substation and presented by Lion Link for Saxmundham Converter Station in their Statutory Consultation. Project Level Design principle PE.2 [APP-366]; while feedback established that green/blue roofs would be the preferred option with regards to the six presented design approach options, PE.2 remains vague as to whether this is deliverable. It has to be asked, why options have been presented, if there are serious doubts regarding their deliverability. SCC has commented further on the Overarching and Project Level design principles in chapter 5 of [REP1-130]. SCC considers that it would be helpful, if design and layout/spatial arrangement of the converter station at Saxmundham could be further developed, so that more realistic visualisations could be prepared. This may not only reassure the interested parties by demonstrating that adverse visual effects would be reduced from those shown when assuming the worst-case scenario (this could apply to VP2 [APP-209]) but also help the Applicant to demonstrate the effectiveness of their embedded mitigation.	At Deadline 4 the Applicant updated Figure 5 of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) which reflects the currently consented detailed landscape design was approved pursuant to Requirement 14(1) of the East Anglia TWO DCO by ESC. Illustrative visualisations have been prepared in Suffolk (and Kent), including from Viewpoint 2, and are contained within Application Document 9.14 Suffolk and Kent Illustrative Visualisations Part 1 of 2 [REP1-296].
Cultural Heritage			
11.1	Suffolk bronze age enclosure update	SCC offers the following written comments on this item: Additional archaeological survey work (geophysical survey and trial trenched evaluation) has been completed, with SCC Archaeological Service (SCCAS) approval, to investigate the site at Friston, which was originally thought to be a Neolithic Hengiform monument of national significance. SCCAS are now satisfied that based upon the form and finds evidence from the additional evaluation, that this site is in fact a later Bronze Age D-shaped enclosure. Although still a significant monument, following advice from Historic England, it is no longer believed that this would meet the criteria for scheduling and therefore SCCAS would not continue to advise the need to avoid this monument entirely to achieve preservation in situ and therefore mitigation through excavation would now be acceptable.	Noted. See the Applicant's response at p.41 of 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026].

		However, given the potential to contain settlement evidence and other remains, SCCAS would advise that a partial excavation of just the central portion of this feature would not be appropriate or in line with best practice, and this monument would therefore need to be subject to a programme of enhanced mitigation to enable it to be mitigated in full if it is not going to be completely avoided by the scheme. SCCAS are satisfied that the expansion of the Order Limits around this monument as proposed in the Changes Consultation is sufficient to facilitate full excavation of the enclosure and any associated internal and external remains. If the Applicant decides that they wish to avoid this monument entirely and not undertake any works involving ground disturbance within or immediately adjacent to the enclosure, this will remove the need for excavation. SCCAS would strongly support this approach given the opportunity available to achieve preservation in situ for this site and as this would represent the optimum management of this heritage asset. The results of the additional archaeological survey work have shown that although some further archaeological remains have been defined in this new area to the east of the D-shaped enclosure and mitigation through excavation will be required in this section of the cable corridor, there is a suitable alternative route available which would avoid the enclosure entirely and not impact upon any archaeological remains of national significance. Provision for suitable archaeological mitigation within this part of the scheme, including the additional area added as part of the Changes Consultation, should be included in the revised OWSI, which the Applicant has advised will be submitted in due course.	
11.2	Remaining archaeological on-site assessment work and reporting	SCC offers the following written comments on this item: SCCAS are satisfied that the large majority of the red line boundary has been subject to sufficient archaeological assessment, through desk-based assessment, non-intrusive works such as geophysical survey and intrusive techniques such as trial trenched evaluation. The areas of the scheme where evaluation remains outstanding are fairly limited but include new areas which have been added to the scheme as part of the Changes Consultation (e.g. Benhall bridge), and small areas along the cable corridor where constraints, such as trees or ecological buffer zones, are present that prevent evaluation works at this stage. As these are relatively small areas which are not currently known to contain, or are immediately adjacent to, designated heritage assets or recorded undesignated heritage assets of high sensitivity, SCCAS do not object to this work being undertaken post- consent and secured through suitably worded Requirements and the updated OWSI (which the Applicant has advised will be submitted in due course), although it should be completed at the earliest opportunity in order to allow mitigation requirements to be established in a timely manner. The OWSI must also make provision for appropriate mitigation for all archaeological remains of significance defined within the order limits during archaeological evaluation, prior to the commencement of any pre-commencement or construction works involving ground disturbance. Geophysical survey reports (for both the original scheme area in Suffolk and the additional expansion of the route at Friston) have been submitted and SCCAS are happy to approve these documents. The Phase 1, 2a and 2b trial trenched evaluation reports for Suffolk have been submitted and SCCAS are happy to approve these documents. The Phase 3 trial trenching report for the additional trial trenched evaluation work undertaken at Friston is pending, however, SCCAS monitored the results of this work in person in the field are satisfied with the work which has been undertaken. The Aerial Photography and LiDAR report (APP-113) is currently in draft form and SCCAS have requested some minor amendments to enable its approval. SCCAS have not yet been provided with a copy of the GI archaeological monitoring report for the scheme and would request that a copy is submitted for review.	Noted. Section 8.5 of OWSI provides that “No works (either pre-commencement or construction) involving ground disturbance may commence within defined archaeological mitigation areas until they have been formally signed off by the Archaeological Advisor to the LPA from SCCAS.” As the works to Benhall Bridge are now within the Order Limits any mitigation covered in the OWSI will also apply to Benhall Bridge.

11.3	Scoped out heritage assets	SCC defer to Historic England and ESC on this matter	Noted.
11.4	Effects on setting of Listed Buildings, including Hurts Hall and Hill Farmhouse	SCC defer to Historic England and ESC on this matter	Noted.
11.5	Ebbsfleet Peninsular Multi-Period Complex archaeology impacts	SCC has no comments to make on this item.	Noted.
11.6	Richborough Roman Fort Impacts	SCC has no comments to make on this item.	Noted.
12 Public Rights Of Way			
12.1	Public rights of way impacts and proposed mitigation and coordination	SCC did not make oral submissions under this agenda item. However, SCC has made relevant comments on this matter in response to the Applicant's answer to 1TT17 of ExQ1. In short, SCC considers the Applicant's commitments to coordination to be an unreliable mitigation measure for potentially significant cumulative effects if relied on as the only measure to mitigate such effects. SCC has also detailed other necessary mitigation measures, such as in Chapter 11 of [REP1-130] and Table B4 of [REP2-062], which should be implemented.	The Applicant has considered the measures set out in SCC's previous representations, and explained during ISH2 that two of the measures were now being taken forward; these being • Permissive access within new landscape planting at the Saxmundham Converter Station; and • Permissive access along the permanent access from the B1121 to the Saxmundham Converter site, including access across the Fromus Bridge.
12.2	Possible enhancements to the rights of way network	SCC noted that the discussion regarding the space allowed for PRoW and maintenance along the B1119, being supplied within the Order Limits came up in the CAH1 earlier in the week, regarding the Applicant's approach to whether or not it is proposing to acquire land rights to enable it to deliver such matters. SCC have concerns regarding the Applicant's approach to which suggests that if impacts are considered not significant then there is no obligation or requirement on them to address those effects, although there have been instances where the Applicant, as a matter of discretionary choice has put forward measures even when they are addressing effects which have been identified as non-significant. SCC does not see the obligations on the Applicant to be that limited because the Council do not see it as a matter of policy or as a matter of the legal tests, In s104 of the 2008 Planning Act, the remit of the Examination and the remit of the decision making process should be confined to – considering only the adverse effects or impacts, which are significant in EIA terms, and SCC considers that there can be nonsignificant adverse effects which still need to be addresses, whether by mitigation or by offsetting or another form of compensation. SCC considers that when you look at the PRoW impacts in the vicinity of Leiston and the B1119, the residual adverse impacts are such that some form of enhancements to PRoW in the locality do need to be delivered. SCC considers that the enhancement is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and therefore provides an adequate justification for the compulsory acquisition	The Applicant has put forward measures to address minor effects, but only where it is economic and efficient to do so, including instances where the applicant is already seeking land rights for another purpose, which happens to also allow for the non-significant mitigation to be delivered. The Applicant explained during ISH2 that there were two instances in which this approach is now being implemented, as set out above. The applicant does not consider these measures to be essential compensation; however, the outcome is the same irrespective. Regarding SCC's proposal that the surfacing of E-103/006/0 from Sluice cottage at the beach to the old railway line, although this route is within the Order Limits of the Proposed Project, the Applicant is not seeking rights that would also allow for this work to be undertaken. This PRoW would be unaffected by the proposed works in this location, which comprise the trenchless installation of cables. The PRoW is also located within the North Warren RSPB Reserve and the Leiston – Aldeburgh SSSI, meaning SSSI assent would be required to undertake any works above ground. However,

		and therefore would be for the Applicant how it will secure land rights to deliver such a measure. SCC is seeking enhancement in other areas including Sluice Cottage, Thorpe Road, between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness. There is an existing PRow in this location, but the Council is seeking, in way of enhancement, an upgrading of that route, as opposed to creating a new route. There is potential for significant intra project cumulative effects on PRow in construction and decommissioning, including a bridleway which has impacts on the user experience and local travel patterns, however no mitigation measures were proposed at that stage considering the mitigation hierarchy. SCC questions whether the Applicant has investigated potential compensation enhancement measures to the PRow network subject to potential significant adverse effects. SCC does not accept the principle that just because there is a temporal distinction between where there is an impact and when there could be a means of addressing it, nor does the Council accept that there may be a geographic difference that necessarily removes the enhancements. SCC believes there is a legitimate case for offsetting the residual adverse effects on the PRow network both to those which are identified as being significant effects but also those which are considered a lower level than significant. This is a discussion SCC wishes to have with the Applicant to find ways in which those matters can be offset and therefore include enhancements to other parts of the network. Key enhancement proposals from SCC's submissions include: PRow along B1119: There appears to be a maintenance track on the south side of the B1119 as shown in the cross section in the appendices to the Applicant's response to ExQ1. It is not clear why this could not also function as a PRow when not in use by the Applicant's vehicles both during the operational phase and in the future. It is not uncommon for PRow to co-exist with other activities (such as along a farm track also subject to occasional use by agricultural vehicles/machinery). If Fromus bridge is permanent, a PRow along there from the B1121 to link East Saxmundham to the Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and to link to the existing PRow network. Other suggestions can be found in SCC's previous submissions especially LIR [REP1-130] – see paras 11.231 to 11.249. These include: “upgrading the permanent diversion of E-354/006/0 and E-460/023/0 to bridleway and creating a footpath link (PROW) alongside the Fromus crossing to link to the existing PROW network.” (11.247) (11.248) “The Council considers that the surfacing of E-103/006/0 from Sluice cottage at the beach to the old railway line should be considered for mitigation” SCC has given a detailed response to the Applicant's answer to 1TT16 of ExQ1 which gives more detail on SCC's position in relation to matters discussed under this agenda item.	the Applicant is happy to work with RSPB to see if there are other ways this enhancement can be delivered.

Traffic and Transport			
13.1	Benhall bridge proposed works, with potential diversions and rail line effects	During the hearing, SCC expanded upon several points made in its representation on Change Request 1 [REP3A-031]. A summary of oral submissions are given here along with further written comments. A meeting was held with Sealink on the 22nd Jan 2026 during which the two options were discussed in outline. In December 2025 SCC received an Approval in Principle relating to investigations required for option 2. SCC are in the process of commissioning one of our consultants to review and comment on this document. Once this comes back then the plan is to move forward with the inspection. SCC happy to assist and work collaboratively with the Applicant and Network Rail on this matter. However, it should be noted that, by their nature,	The Applicant is happy to work collaboratively with SCC and Network Rail on the Benhall Rail Bridge crossing works and looks forward to receiving feedback on the investigations works AIP to allow this work to progress. The Applicant has provided Application Document 9.112 (A) Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4-101] to clarify the options under consideration for the movement of AILs. However, the Applicant notes that detailed design of the mini-bridge option would not be

there is always a risk that further investigation or works reveal additional defects that can lead to a reduction in the structural capacity.

SCC finds it difficult to comment on the feasibility of option 1 (temporary bridge) until sufficient detail such as constriction drawings and traffic management are provided. SCCs preference, if an alternative northern route to the Saxmundham Converter Station has been properly assessed and discounted (as to which see SCC's separate response to CAH Action Point 2), is for option 2, permanent repairs as this would support other energy projects and be a long term solution that could include the operational and decommissioning phase of Sea Link and Lion Link.

Regarding timescales of potential repairs, SCC cannot commit to repairs being done within a 28-day period until SCC has seen the details of the investigation. SCC notes that the Applicants concerns are particularly around water proofing and water ingress. SCC is aware that the initial report highlighted potential corrosion of the deck beams, which is an important issue to come out of the investigation and could lengthen the closure time for Option 2.

The requested details should be supplied either now (for option 1) or prior to end of examination. If works for Option 2 not yet known by end of the examination, the maximum envelope of works for which consent is being sought should be provided. These details would ensure the decision maker and ExA knows the works are feasible within the highway boundary, as sought by the Applicant, which is essential as they are necessary enabling works to make the project deliverable. Moreover, these details are essential for SCC as the LHA to give meaningful representation during the examination as SCC would be required to give consent to these works at a later date. This point also applies to allow other IPs in Suffolk to have an acceptable level of information when making representations during the examination.

SCC mentioned its concerns regarding the traffic data given for the assessment of traffic redistribution during closures of the Benhall Bridge. SCC expands on this comment here. SCC does not see how assessment of closures of the Benhall Bridge is robust. Receptors along the diversion route are shown as incurring lower levels of traffic and SCC does not see how this could accurately capture a reasonable worst-case scenario. It is unclear how the Applicant has derived the traffic numbers of redistributed traffic for that assessment including whether redistributed traffic of road users not associated with the proposed project are included which is necessary for the assessment to be robust.

During the hearing, SCC noted that it appears that what has been assessed is only closure of Benhall Railway Bridge. SCC notes that the applicant is proposing that the temporary bridge is to be stored at the Fromus Bridge compound. It is unclear if deployment of this bridge will require closure of the B1121 from the A12 to the new access to the Fromus Bridge and if so whether this is reflected in the assessment in CR1-068. If so, then the B1121 would need to be closed either side of the T- junction in Benhall. SCC requests that this is reflected in the modelling that has been provided for review.

AILs SCC also questioned the number of AIL movements requiring closure of the bridge under Option 1. Currently, the Applicant's suggests there would be 15 movements; however, SCC's experience from other NSIPs suggests a lot of smaller AIL movements may also need to use that route, including cranes and haulage of earth moving equipment which is necessary to get to the west side of the proposed bridge. These movements exceed the weight limits for the bridge. At a 46 tonnes restriction, this would include many haulage for plant or machinery, piling rigs and cranes. Therefore, SCC requires assurance that it will be 15 movements.

The Applicant also needs to consider Special Order Movements moving with Police escort along the A12. These would likely need to be moved singly due to the lack of availability of suitable trailers in the country. SCC would also need reassurance from Suffolk Police that they are happy to move multiple Special-Order Movements.

Diversion route

provided during examination as it would be dependent on the detailed design of the project, including the transformer and selection of the haulage delivery vehicle.

The applicant notes that SCC is unable to comment on the 28 day closure for remedial works at this time.

The submission includes a temporary road closure from S/RO/0090/a to S/RO/0090/b as shown within **Application Document 2.7 Access, Rights of Way and Public Rights of Navigation Plans [CR1-011]**.

The Applicant confirms that the number of closures for the mini-bridge option is 15 and that the Applicant is liaising with Suffolk Constabulary on their support to the project in terms of escorting AIL movements.

As stated within **Application Document 7.5.1.1 (E) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan - Suffolk**, Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) proposals for diversion routes will be developed at detailed design. These will be agreed with SCC and shall include any speed restriction or traffic calming measures required to mitigate any safety concerns associated with the use of the proposed diversion. For example, speed restrictions could be implemented on the A12 near the A12/B1119 junction during the planned closure of the B1121.

		SCC stated its concerns with the proposed diversion route during closures of the Benhall bridge which are covered in what follows along with additional written comments. Of particular concern for is the A12/B1119 junction for safety and the Saxmundham crossroads which is already experiencing congestion problems. In meetings the applicant has given verbal assurances that temporary closure of Benhall Bridge or repairs to it will be at times that its construction traffic is low, but this has yet to be secured in writing. Nor is this understood to be included in any assessment of impact along the diversion route, noting that Appendix M [CR1-068] Additional Assessment of Proposed Temporary Road Closure only considers road links not junctions. SCC also relayed concerns regarding the proposed diversion route which goes through the centre of Saxmundham via the traffic signalised junction. As stated in SCC's LIR [REP1-130], based on previous junction assessment, this junction is already over capacity in the peak and shoulder hours. SCC also has concerns that that the junction is close to capacity during the off-peak hours between the two afternoon peaks, so pushing all of the traffic from the B1121 in this direction is a concern given the diversion route. Additionally, the diversion route for closure of the Benhall Rail Bridge proposed in [CR1-011] does not assess the links between junctions in [CR1-067] and [CR1-068]. This diversion has not been agreed with SCC as it is usual to use like for like diversions so for a closure of the B1121 substitution the route would follow the B1119. Either route has issues, the former crossing a level crossing and a steep hill start at a junction and the latter bends, narrow streets, on street parking and a low bridge on the B1121. If the developer is to follow through on the proposal to prohibit or at worst restrict construction vehicle movements when the B1121 is closed SCC would expect this to be included as a commitment to avoid confusion or misunderstanding during the construction phase.	
13.2	Construction traffic and abnormal indivisible loads – suitability of routes proposed	As stated during CAH1 and in response to action point 2 of CAH1, the alternative of Sizewell link road should be further explored, noting that impacts on the B1119 should be minimised and mitigated to reduce risk of disturbance to the SZB emergency access route. In [REP3-069] 1TT5 SCC notes that multiple concurrent AIL deliveries are considered an option. Whilst there is experience of this for SZC, notably piles for the aggregate jetty the practicality of this for the special-order movements should be checked with hauliers and the police. Weight restrictions for AILs have been placed on several structures on the A12 between the A14 and Lowestoft. SZC have undertaken a review of most structures and assessed these for their anticipated AIL movements up to and including STGO movements albeit some structures to the north of Yoxford remain to be completed and the assessments have resulted in restrictions being place on some structures. Structures on the A1094 and B1069 are not within the SZC scope and have not been reviewed or assessed by any NSIP. Whilst generally the geometry of the A12 between the A14 and Lowestoft is suitable for HGV movements increase volumes of movements related to NSIPs are causing concerns to SCC in terms of capacity, structural conditions and general highway maintenance. Other routes particularly B roads are less suitable for significant numbers of HGVs as described in our LIR. The detail included in this application can be contrasted with that for Norwich to Tilbury which includes full routes for AILs as shown in: https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020027-000188-7.3%20Outline%20Construction%20Traffic%20Management%20Plan%20Appendix%20A%20-%20AIL%20Access%20Strategy.pdf SCC has relayed its issues on construction traffic routes in its LIR {REP1-130} such as in paragraph 11.125.	The Applicant welcomes the information provided by SCC on current known structures with restrictions and on the assessment process SCC would like the Applicant to follow. The Applicant is liaising with SCC and other developers in the region to align assessment works and undertake the necessary assessments and mitigations to enable the movement of AILs for the project. The Applicant notes SCCs concerns over the use of the B1119 and B roads in general and confirms that this has been part of the consideration in developing the traffic strategy for the project which looks to split traffic for the project across A roads and use the minimal length of B roads such as the B1121 Main Road which provides the shortest route to the A12 for the Converter construction traffic.

13.3	Junction modelling and traffic flows on construction routes	SCC met with the Applicant on 22/01/25 concerning matters which included junction modelling. SCC considers further modelling is needed on junctions such as the A12/B1119 which is a particular safety concern. SCC agreed with the Applicant to discuss the matter further in a future meeting. SCC expressed concerns regarding the cumulative impacts of NSIPs on a particular route on the A12 where HGVs congregate which is also the main through route for workers. Also, A1094 specifically with the interaction with SPR and Sizewell C traffic but also Sea Link traffic and the future LionLink traffic and the B1121 in relation to Sea Link and the following LionLink. SCC also provided a summary of traffic modelling information that was available to SCC. SCC provided a summary of junctions that it considers warrants further assessment in Appendix A of its response to the ExAs first round of questions [REP3-101]. Of particular concern is the cumulative impact of NSIPs including Sea Link on the local highway network. Recognising that there are a number of interventions at junctions being undertaken by other NSIPs, these have been screened out. The layout of the document is intended to highlight junctions of specific concern together with a rationale. As noted below, more traffic data and programmes are becoming available which the authority considers warrant inclusion in the assessment of cumulative transport impacts. SCC believes, regarding junction modelling, the Applicant’s previous input data that it’s relied on for the other project have been taken from the relevant transport information provided with the ES for those other projects. This is not an unreasonable position as a starting point, but Sizewell C and EA2 are progressing so more information is coming forward from those promoters of those projects which is which is updating some of their traffic information. Whilst the full detail is a matter for a technical discussion outside of the hearing, SCC would be anxious to ensure that the most appropriate, up to date information is being used in the further modelling work which is to be undertaken so the Applicant has the best picture of the current position. For example, the Construction Transport Management Plan for EA1N and 2 to provide new information on their construction, traffic numbers etc and that’s what SCC would expect to see being considered.	The Applicant acknowledges these comments and a further meeting was held with SCC Highways on 24 February 2026 to further review these considerations. Junction modelling is currently being carried out for three junctions within Suffolk, namely the A12/ B1121 Main Road (south of Saxmundham), A1094/ B1121 Aldeburgh Road and the A1094/ B1069 Snape Road junctions, which includes the cumulative traffic associated with peak construction traffic of cumulative schemes including Sizewell C, EA1N, EA2 and LionLink. Application Document 6.3.2.7.A ES Appendix 2.7.A Transport Assessment Note [APP-122] will be updated to present the findings of this junction modelling, with the results to be submitted at Deadline 6. The Applicant acknowledges that SCC has identified some additional junctions for consideration as part of the junction modelling exercise. However, the Applicant does not consider these to be critical junctions which could potentially be impacted by the Proposed Project and is currently focussing on the key junctions which will be used by construction traffic in order to provide the results within the timescales of Examination. Further to the above, the Applicant has reviewed the latest construction traffic forecasts available for East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm within their Construction Traffic Management Plan (dated November 2025) and for LionLink Offshore Interconnector within their PEI Report (dated January 2026). This latest information has not resulted in any changes to the previous worst-case traffic parameters/ assumptions that were adopted for the cumulative assessment of these schemes. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened in and assessed within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. This includes peak construction trips for five schemes in combination with operational trips for three schemes, with the assumption that the peak construction phases of the schemes under construction would all directly overlap with the peak construction phase of the Proposed Project. The cumulative assessment includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment therefore remains to be robust and has informed the junction capacity modelling submitted at Deadline 6.
13.4	Cumulative impact of traffic and the coordination with other projects	SCC stated which cumulative developments should be included in traffic assessments. These should include SPR, Sea Link, Sizewell C, LionLink and Solar such as Helios, where, albeit, there is a lack of information currently. Essex and Suffolk Water pipeline from the north held a non-stat consultation in December so if any information is available for that SCC would like to see this because this is likely to overlap with the end of Sea Link construction. SCC confirmed	SCC’s comments are acknowledged and extensive work has been carried out on reviewing potential cumulative traffic and transport effects within Suffolk including within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-

that journey time information would be very useful as it relates back to cumulative impacts. One issue raised by SCC and others is not just the traffic up and down the A12 and A1094 but also the disruption of routes across the A12. This has been raised through the Sizewell Transport Review Group.

SCC stated that while the council is comfortable with the Applicant assessing the peaks with the traffic distribution associated with each of the projects, there is not just a single peak. There is a highest peak, but there are several peaks, for example SPR which has a peak at the beginning of the substation where the road has been constructed, there is also another peak towards the end when the road is removed. Therefore, the Applicant's is not a secure profile. In terms of key dates, 2028 - 2029 is key because this is likely when SZC will move from early years to their peak years which will increase HGVs and redistribute its traffic on the network.

Not only do projects have multiple peaks, they also may have prolonged periods of elevated traffic not captured within the Applicant's assessment approach. The HGV numbers for Sizewell C, for instance, will likely remain at or near the permitted cap for most of the project's lifetime. A similar point goes for the project's worker number which is permitted to increase once the park and ride facilities are open which occurred recently.

In REP3-070 1TT1 the Applicant referred to the probability of peaks in various projects coinciding. SCCs main interest is in the peak cumulative impact not just the coincident of individual peaks. Additional data is becoming available for this area of Suffolk in relation to NSIPs and baseline traffic.

These are: SPR EA2 CTMP for the substation which includes the revised program, HGV movements and workforce for that project Quarterly Transport Reports and Traffic Surveys relating to SZC Greater details on program, HGV movements and workforce from the Sealink project Information within the Lionlink statutory consultation.

In SCCs view this should allow the programs for each project to be compared over time and identify the maximum cumulative impact. Obviously, there is an element of change that can affect these forecasts but would provide a realistic worst-case scenario against which actual data can be compared.

Plate 5.1 of the CTMP indicates a construction period from early 2027 to 2032 which overlaps with:

SPR EA2 completing end 2028 (from CTMP) SZC LionLink commencing 2028 and operational by 2032 (Statutory Consultation Jan 2026) A12 MRN scheme commencing 2027 and completing late 2028

060] and **Application Document 9.26 Traffic & Transport Cumulative Assessment (Suffolk) [REP1-110]**. Further discussions have since been held with SCC Highways in January and February 2026, and further information has been provided as part of **Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]**.

Further to the above, the Applicant has thoroughly reviewed the latest construction traffic forecasts available for East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm (EA2) within their Construction Traffic Management Plan (dated November 2025) and for LionLink Offshore Interconnector within their PEI Report (dated January 2026). This latest information has not resulted in any changes to the previous worst-case traffic parameters/ assumptions that were adopted for the cumulative assessment of these schemes as the EA2 forecasts are within parameters previously assessed and no quantitative traffic and transport information has been provided within the PEI Report for LionLink. The Applicant has also reviewed other schemes including Helios and the Essex and Suffolk Water pipeline, although there is insufficient information available (e.g. traffic forecasts) for these schemes to inform the traffic and transport cumulative assessment. The Applicant has also reviewed construction traffic forecasts for the A12 Major Road Network (MRN) scheme based on their Transport Assessment (dated November 2025) which shows that the construction peak (early 2027) would not overlap with the construction peak of the Proposed Project, that there would be no additional vehicle trips on the network during the assessed shoulder or network peak hours and that there would be fewer than 30 vehicles per hour along the A12 (through the study area) during the other hours.

No updates are therefore required and the Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened in and assessed within **Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]**. This includes peak construction trips for five schemes in combination with operational trips for three schemes, with the assumption that the peak construction phases of the schemes under construction would all directly overlap with the peak construction phase of the Proposed Project. The cumulative assessment includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment therefore remains to be robust and has informed the junction capacity modelling submitted at Deadline 6.

13.5	Controls on construction traffic	SCC was not requested to make oral representations on this item. SCC wishes to make the following written comments which are intended to be read in conjunction with its previous representations on construction traffic controls such as in chapter 11 of the LIR [REP1-130]: Securing HGV route beyond the current scope of assessment, for example restrictions within the CTMP to ensure all HGVs use the A12 between the A12/A14 Seven Hills junction and the A12 Bloodmoor Road Roundabout (Lowestoft) to avoid use of lower category local roads. Table 7.1 (APP-122) only refers to the forecast peak total construction movements (68 HGV deliveries / 136 HGV movements) table 7.25 of the Transport Assessment not the peak daily HGV movements (173 HGV deliveries / 346 HGV movements) in table 7.26. With the higher proportion of HGVs, and that they are not concentrated outside peak hours through shift pattern working they are likely to have a greater impact on the performance of a junction throughout the day. Note also comments about the lack of HGV movements before 0800 compared to other NSIPs and the potential for worker shift movements to create a new network peak. Controls on HGV movements (as caps), for • Daily HGV movements on key routes • Maximum HGVs at peak hours and shoulders, again on key routes • Compliance with agreed routes and timing (CTMP 7.7.2) but unclear strength of ‘additional measures’ and strength of enforcement (8.6.1). • Emission controls Use of the B1119 east of Saxmundham: SCC seeks clarification of the quantum and necessity of use of the B1119 east of Saxmundham for pre-commencement and construction activities., specifically the number and duration of movements associated with construction of the eastern abutment of the Fromus Bridge and associated activities. Due to the sensitivity of this route, SCC would seek to have caps agreed in terms of vehicle number and duration. All of the above should aim to secure the volumes assessed in the application so that the impacts are no greater than assessed. In terms of workers, monitoring of and commitments regarding: • Workforce numbers and either car share ratios or worker vehicles arriving and departing from site • Conformance with the assumptions in the Transport Assessment specifically journey times on the network • Management of antisocial activities such as fly parking, use of inappropriate access routes	The Applicant refers back to the previous responses set out within Application Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026] on matters relating to construction traffic controls. Further clarification on the use of the B1119 east of Saxmundham was provided during the meetings held with SCC Highways on 22 January 2026 and 24 February 2026. Notwithstanding the above, SCC’s comments are acknowledged and Application Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk [REP4-061] was updated at Deadline 4 to include further measures and commitments following the meeting with SCC Highways on 22 January 2026. The Suffolk CTMTP will also be updated further at Deadline 5 following the meeting with SCC Highways on 24 February 2026.

Socioeconomics and Tourism

15.1	Effects and potential reputational impact on the tourism industry of Suffolk and Kent as a result of the proposed development	Word of mouth and perception problems resulting from potential construction traffic, diversions etc which, along with Sizewell C and other NSIPs proposed or underway, could add to false perception of Suffolk as a building site/car park. Whilst there will undoubtedly be short-medium term benefits for visitor economy sector arising from construction accommodation etc, we need to ensure that we still have a thriving long-term visitor offer. Road closures and traffic delays pose problems for business. Visitor economy could be acutely affected by e.g. delays to food deliveries etc.	The Applicant acknowledges SCC’s comments and the need to consider potential effects on the visitor economy, particularly in a cumulative context. A response to this matter is provided in Application Document 9.40 Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note – Suffolk [REP3-065]. The findings confirm that while perceptions may indicate concern prior to construction, there is limited robust evidence to demonstrate that this leads to material adverse effects on visitor numbers, spending, or the wider tourism economy. This supports the conclusion in Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 [REP1A-005] that no significant adverse effects on tourism are anticipated.

15.2	Tourism accommodation capacity –	The Applicant has assessed that under a worse case scenario for Sea Link there would be spare capacity for both workers and tourism at peak times for accommodation. SCC are still reviewing information provided by the Applicant at Deadline 3, but the Council is so far not persuaded that there is sufficient surplus that would mean there is not accommodation pressures, and therefore SCC would see accommodation for construction workers potentially competing with and therefore displacing accommodation which would otherwise be available for the tourism sector. SCC is concerned that the assessment of accommodation which the Applicant has undertaken has not included, as a measure, the cost of accommodation across different types or indeed the knock-on costs in terms of private rented sector accommodation which is being drawn on. If there was an influx of demand for that sector, within that, what the consequences are on that sector, which not only serves the needs of the tourism sector but also the needs of the construction workers. The accommodation also serves some of the local populus, so there is a wider community impact. Further discussion is required with the Applicant but there needs to be some movement, as currently from the Applicant’s assessment no significant impacts have been found and therefore there is nothing to mitigate, which is a stance the Council believes needs to change. Peak construction phase will have an impact on tourism accommodation, especially when cross-over with other large-scale NSIPs occurs. It is important that all parties recognise the cumulative impact of multiple large-scale construction projects and plans accordingly. Suffolk has a year-round tourism economy and is a popular location for weekend and off-season breaks. Whilst there would clearly be some business generated as a result of this work, it is important that the accommodation sector is not completely overwhelmed, to the extent that the tourism sector is adversely affected.	A response regarding accommodation capacity is provided within Application Document 9.123 Applicant’s Response to Second Written Questions. Please refer to 2SERT3. A response to the ExA’s request to incorporate affordability into the assessment of accommodation capacity is provided in Application Document 9.117 Applicant’s Response to AP104 from Issue Specific Hearing 2. Additionally, as in all areas of the development, the Applicant has considered whether further mitigation or enhancement would nonetheless be beneficial and can be incorporated and it is on this basis that a commitment to monitor effects on accommodation capacity within Suffolk coastal areas has been offered to provide reassurance that the perceived level of impact will not occur. This commitment (SE05) was updated following a meeting with East Suffolk Council (ESC), Suffolk County Council (SCC), Local Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) on Wednesday 1st April with up-to-date wording included in the REAC as part of the Applicant’s Deadline 6 submission.
15.3	Skills and Employment Plan and labour market effects	Suffolk County Council’s position remains that the Applicant’s approach to labour-market assessment and skills is inadequate, lacks evidential robustness, and fails to reflect the cumulative NSIP context in Suffolk. Key assumptions (such as the uniform 60-minute labour catchment, the notional 30% local labour estimate, and the high leakage attributed to specialist roles) are untested, unsupported, and incompatible with both SCC’s evidence base and the wider regional picture. As set out in the Local Impact Report (LIR) [REP1-130], the Applicant has not provided a meaningful workforce baseline, nor any assessment of local skills supply, training capacity, or realistic levels of local employment (SCC LIR, Socio-economic Impacts Section). SCC’s ExQ1 responses [REP3-101] also highlight the absence of detailed labour modelling and the failure to demonstrate how Sea Link’s labour demand interacts with other NSIPs, including Sizewell C and the East Anglia offshore wind projects, all of which draw from the same constrained workforce (SCC ExQ1, Workforce and Skills Questions). SCC rejects the Applicant’s conclusion that the local labour market is of “low sensitivity.” In reality, labour-market sensitivity is medium to high, reflected in already-observable shortages across construction, civils, and electrical trades. The CITB Workforce Outlook and the Clean Energy Jobs Plan confirm this, and both identify significant labour shortages, long lead-in times for specialist skills, and peak overlaps between major infrastructure programmes. The Applicant’s continued reliance on a 60-minute travel-to-work area is neither evidence-based nor reflective of actual labour behaviour in Suffolk; this approach excludes 10% of the available workforce and therefore underrepresents the true catchment. Further, the Applicant has acknowledged that it cannot produce a worst-case workforce scenario because it does not have full information on the skills required for each construction phase. As noted in SCC’s Relevant Representations (May 2025) [RR5209], this omission undermines the credibility of the labour-market assessment as it precludes any evaluation of peak labour requirements, displacement risk, wage competition, or pressures on local services.	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6. In addition to this, the Applicant has provided detailed response and further commentary regarding SCC’s suggestions in relation to the SSCEP within Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions (please refer to 3SERT1). In regard to the rationale for selecting a 60-minute drive time study area, Section 10.6 and Table 10.13 of Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism [REP1A-005] sets out the study areas for the assessment and the rationale for selecting this impact area. The 60-minute travel area has been used in line with appropriate research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) which found that a significant majority (90%) of national employees commuted for 60 minutes or less each way. This approach is consistent with other DCO applications and provides a robust basis for assessing potential effects on the labour market. The proportion (30%) of the construction workforce which would be sourced from within the 60-minute drive time is considered appropriate and consistent with comparable energy infrastructure schemes and linear infrastructure schemes, reflecting the mobile nature of the construction workforce, competition for labour from other NSIPs and the

		The absence of a structured Skills and Employment Plan is therefore a fundamental gap. Without this, there are no mechanisms to secure apprenticeships, local training pathways, workforce targets, or SME participation. Equally concerning is the Applicant’s failure to engage substantively with SCC’s Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), the established mechanism for coordinating skills interventions across NSIPs. As emphasised in SCC’s Deadline 2 Comments, engagement with the RSCF is essential to prevent duplication, avoid competition for training resources, and develop a coherent skills pipeline across promoters. The lack of such engagement increases the risk of unmanaged cumulative impacts and undermines confidence in the Applicant’s conclusions. SCC therefore maintains that a DCO Requirement securing a robust Skills, Employment and Supply Chain Plan, aligned with, and governed through, the RSCF, is essential to avoid significant adverse labour-market impacts and to secure a meaningful local legacy. SCC recognises that the Applicant has been requested to produce skills and employment plan. SCC would be supportive of such a plan for the scheme at a scale which would make it a worthwhile endeavour, considering the specialist skills shortages and the requirements for this and other NSIPs that are planned for the area. NSIPs are heavily concentrated and there is a sensitive labour market in Suffolk, so skills and employment plan would be a positive way forward to support this issue. SCC has detailed what it expects to be included in this plan.	niche skills required to construct these developments. While detailed information on the specific skills required at each construction or operational phase is not available, the ES has applied a worst-case assessment approach. This ensures that any potential effects on the local labour market, including displacement and churn, are appropriately considered. With an average of 65 net additional jobs required during construction (20 to be located within 60-minute drive-time area) and approximately six personnel on-site during operation, impacts on the supply chain, workforce displacement and churn are expected to be negligible, due to the limited scale of labour demand. The Applicant has reviewed the content of the documents cited by SCC. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Clean Energy Jobs Plan identifies growing demand for clean energy skills, training capacity constraints, and shortages in certain occupations. However, this evidence is national in scope and reflects broad transition pressures across the UK, rather than location-specific constraints within the relevant local labour market. Similarly, the CITB UK Workforce Outlook 2025-2029 notes recruitment challenges and elevated vacancies but forecasts additional recruitment needs equivalent to 1.8% of the UK construction workforce and 2.0% in the East of England. These are relatively small proportions of the baseline workforce and are consistent with labour market churn and growth rather than constraints. The Applicant believes the cited documents support a conclusion that while skills pressures exist nationally, the additional demand represents a small increment relative to the overall workforce, within a sector characterised by mobility. On that basis, a low labour market sensitivity classification can be justified.
15.4	Socioeconomic positive effect potential	SCC did not make oral representations on this matter. SCC wishes to make the following relevant written comments: Suffolk County Council acknowledges that the Sea Link project has the potential to deliver socio-economic benefits to the region; however, the current application fails to secure them and does not reflect the cumulative realities facing Suffolk. The Applicant continues to rely on theoretical indirect multipliers and high-level statements of potential benefit, while offering no structured, enforceable mechanism to ensure delivery. As noted in SCC’s Local Impact Report, the Applicant has not produced evidence-based estimates of local employment, supply-chain engagement, or training outcomes, nor has it proposed governance arrangements to monitor and adapt its approach (SCC LIR, Economic Impacts Section) [REP1-130]. The Applicant’s conclusions on socio-economic potential are further weakened by cumulative assessments that are inconsistent with the available regional evidence. Assertions that cumulative effects would be “not significant” or “unlikely to arise” are contradicted by: • the CITB Workforce Outlook, forecasting substantial shortages across construction, electrical installation and civil engineering;	The Applicant has reviewed the content of the documents cited by SCC. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Clean Energy Jobs Plan identifies growing demand for clean energy skills, training capacity constraints, and shortages in certain occupations. However, this evidence is national in scope and reflects broad transition pressures across the UK, rather than location-specific constraints within the relevant local labour market. Similarly, the CITB UK Workforce Outlook 2025-2029 notes recruitment challenges and elevated vacancies but forecasts additional recruitment needs equivalent to 1.8% of the UK construction workforce and 2.0% in the East of England. These are relatively small proportions of the baseline workforce and are consistent with labour market churn and growth rather than constraints.

		• the Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which identifies escalating competition for skilled labour across the East due to the concentration of infrastructure projects; • and SCC’s Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy, which highlights growing pressure on labour, supply chains, accommodation, and local services as NSIP activity intensifies. These documents present a coherent picture of a labour market under strain, contrary to the Applicant’s conclusions. The continued reliance on a uniform 60-minute travel-to-work area, despite excluding a proportion of the available workforce, undermines the Applicant’s assessment of labour availability. This incomplete catchment area feeds directly into misestimation of labour supply, procurement trajectories, and local service demands. Further, the Applicant has been unable to provide a meaningful worst-case scenario due to a lack of phase-specific workforce detail. As set out in SCC’s ExQ1 responses [REP3-101], this prevents the modelling of peak workforce periods, procurement capacity, and cumulative interactions with other NSIPs. Without such detail, the benefits claimed by the Applicant remain speculative and unsupported. Finally, the Applicant has not meaningfully engaged with the Regional Skills Coordination Function, despite this being the established mechanism for coordinating skills, education, and labour planning across NSIPs. The failure to use this function exacerbates risks around workforce competition, and unequal distribution of socio-economic outcomes and undermines the likelihood that positive effects will be realised. Overall, SCC maintains that the socio-economic benefits cited by the Applicant will not materialise without secured interventions. A binding Skills and Employment Plan aligned with the RSCF, including a long-term legacy plan, is essential to ensuring benefits extend beyond construction. Without these measures, the project is likely to deliver limited local benefit while leaving Suffolk communities exposed to the cumulative burden of overlapping NSIPs	This national context aligns with SCC’s Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy, which frames renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure as a vehicle to strengthen the local economy, expand apprenticeships, and increase higher-skilled employment. The policy emphasises employer partnership, skills development, and inclusive growth, and expects promoters to deliver positive skills outcomes. From the Applicant’s review, the document does not identify or address an existing skills shortage within Suffolk as a constraint. The Applicant believes the cited documents support a conclusion that while skills pressures exist nationally, the additional demand represents a small increment relative to the overall workforce, within a sector characterised by mobility. The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6. In addition to this, the Applicant has provided detailed response and further commentary regarding SCC’s suggestions in relation to the SSCEP within Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions (please refer to 3SERT1).

Health and Wellbeing

16.1	<i>Core working hours, in relation to effects on traffic, health and wellbeing and noise</i>	Working hours, as currently proposed by the Applicant, provides no real respite to local communities, whereas restricted core hours that the local authorities wish to see will provide periods of opportunity for respite from construction related noise, vibration, traffic, air pollution, and disruption. SCC has made detailed submissions on these effects, including their inadequate reflection in the Applicant’s assessments [APP-058] and [APP-060]. In short, continuous exposure to these stressors, especially when compounded by overlapping NSIPs in the region, is likely to have a substantial impact on mental health and wellbeing. Vulnerable groups, including older people, disabled residents, and those without access to private vehicles, may be disproportionately affected, as they have fewer options for respite or alternative travel. The lack of quiet periods and predictability in daily life can exacerbate stress, anxiety, and feelings of powerlessness, and may contribute to health inequalities within the affected communities. SCC recognises that there will be some circumstances where there will be operational reasons why it is not appropriate to adhere to those restrictions. However, this is a massive project with a massive amount of project management going with it, and SCC does not think that it is beyond the power of competent project managers to anticipate when particular elements become critical elements, and therefore need to be potentially the subject of a departure from the norm.	The Applicant has provided its latest position regarding core working hours within Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4 (please refer to Action Point AP106). The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to

SCC notes that every restriction is in one sense a reduction in flexibility. But it's a question of why are you doing it? And therefore, is there a good justification for doing it? And SCC believes in the point of providing respite to the community, there is a good justification.

The Applicant gives a reason for the core working hours as they say there is a criticality to hitting the 2030 deadline, which means that they cannot afford to allow for any slippage in their timetable. Also, if they were to slip in their timetable, there is a question of constraint costs through the payments that are made to others who could otherwise use their system, but it is not available.

Considering what the applicant has provided at the moment in the project description, it still proceeds on the assumption that the development consent order will be made at the end of quarter two, 2026, at which is not correct. What is not clear is if you put in a more realistic date for the likely date of the development consent order, what impact that has on the project, because you have got a series of timelines and a series of bars, but it's not articulated as to what if you took a more realistic date, which presumably would be at the end of quarter four of 2026.

What effect would this slippage have on the other steps in the sequence. SCC thinks that it is likely that it means that effectively, the 2030 date for energisation of the scheme is not realistically achievable in any event. But SCC would welcome some clarification on that point.

Regarding the constraint costs as SCC understands it. That is a reference to some figures in the NESO report on achieving 2030, but obviously what the applicant has done, is present some figures SCC has not seen where the arithmetic that leads to those conclusions that whether it's 33 weeks, it equals so many million pounds, it would be very helpful if the applicant could provide a supplementary note, probably at deadline four, which just explains the working of how they have achieved those figures.

The Applicant has presented a global figure to all consumers. Obviously, it goes to individual consumers bills, and SCC understands that consumers would not like the idea of energy bill rises, but in terms of a point that we have sometimes made in these DCO contexts, there is a balance between national gain and local pain. It's a relevant factor that this burden is being imposed on the local communities of Suffolk. When considering potential constraint costs, these ought to be capitalised to per capita, rather than just the global figure that the Applicant has given.

construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see **Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order** submitted at Deadline 6). Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in **Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]**. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment.

Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within **Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures in recognition of the LPA and community's concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in **Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions** in response to 3HW3.

The constraints cost provided was sourced from the NESO material and was an annualised cost. NESO are responsible for managing constraints costs, including these costs materialising on bills.

Core working hours, in relation to effects on traffic, health and wellbeing and

In any case, the facilitation of any acceleration in programme cannot, in policy terms, come at the cost of mitigation. EN-1 is quite clear that, even for projects falling under CNP policy, the mitigation hierarchy must be followed. SCC has given extensive justifications for its position regarding the inadequacy of the Applicant's assessment of effects on health and wellbeing particularly when considering the extensive cumulative development context. Given the shortcomings of the Applicant's assessment, in addition to the uncertainties of how effects will

The Applicant has provided detailed response on this matter within **Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions**. Please refer to 3HW3.

noise - additional comments

actualise from this project in combination with multiple other major infrastructure projects in the vicinity, SCC considers that a precautionary approach must be taken whereby available mitigation measures are implemented. This position is supported by what is said in paragraphs 4.1.7 and 4.2.15 of EN-1 in terms of the presumption in favour of CNP infrastructure not outweighing “unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health”. Without robust evidence demonstrating otherwise, SCC considers that its representations have motivated the notion that the risk to human health is unacceptable without change to the application. Therefore, the Applicant’s claim that extended working hours are necessary to accelerate delivery of the project is untenable in policy terms given the risk to human health. SCC also considers that, following this precautionary approach, further mitigation measures, including commitments to monitoring and adaptive management, are necessary to meet these policy requirements.

Given the importance, including in policy terms, of human health in light of SCC’s representations on the inadequacy of the Applicant’s assessment (see Chapter 14 of [REP1-130] and Table 3.10 of SCC’s SoCG [REP3-052]), SCC considers further exploration of the potential effects and mitigation of health and wellbeing impacts is essential. This is particularly relevant in East Suffolk’s context of intense cumulative NSIP development which creates substantial uncertainty over what effects will actualise given the magnitude of the development, the uniqueness of the context and the multitude of ways in which people’s wellbeing can be impacted by such development.

To be clear, this issue goes beyond the matter of core working hours as restricted hours will not fully mitigate potential adverse effects on health and wellbeing. People will be affected, to greater and lesser extents, throughout the project’s construction and operational periods whether on account of cumulative traffic, restricted PRow access, temporary and permanent changes to the landscape, noise, or by works both inside and outside the core working hours, to name a few. Existing evidence simply cannot allow us to make robust conclusions about how these various factors will likely impact people’s perception, experience and lives when such drastic and rapid industrial activity is introduced to a previously predominantly rural area for such a prolonged period and to an intensity not yet close to peaking.

In short, when considering both the uniqueness of the characteristics and demographics of the local population and region, in addition to the uniqueness of the cumulative context, existing evidence of observed effects from other projects is limited in its relevance and application. These factors also mean predictions of likely effects on people’s health and wellbeing are difficult to make with confidence, particularly concerning how people’s mental health and wellbeing will be affected.

Therefore, SCC urges further exploration of these matters, particularly in relation to mitigation, whether by further ExQs or ISHs. SCC considers that the opportunity presented by an ISH for those who will be affected to make representations, along with the value of such evidence to the ExA when making conclusions on how people will be affected, mean that an ISH on these matters would likely be the most effective route.

The Applicant has provided its latest position regarding core working hours within **Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4** (please refer to Action Point AP106). The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure.

There are robust controls in management documents including in **Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068]** and **Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]** that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified.

The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see **Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order** submitted at Deadline 6).

Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in **Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]**. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment.

Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within **Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)**. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures in recognition of the LPA and community’s concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in **Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions** in response to 3HW3.

16.2	<i>Light Pollution Effects on Health and Wellbeing</i>	SCC Public Health have not previously commented on light pollution in relation to the Sea Link application and do not have the technical expertise to be able to provide a view on the specifics of light pollution and whether proposed levels are appropriate. East Suffolk Council are responsible for the monitoring and management of artificial light and so Suffolk County Council will defer to them on this matter. However, as it has come up as an agenda item, we welcome the opportunity to highlight the health impacts associated with light pollution, particularly artificial light at night (ALAN). Evidenced negative impacts of light pollution include suppression of melatonin and disruption of the circadian rhythm, which can contribute to: sleep disorders, mood and mental health disorders, obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and difficulties with fertility and reproduction (https://www.cape.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Dated-POST-light-pollution-review-RREAL-2.pdf). Some types of air pollution, such as smoke, can also worsen light pollution by causing light to scatter and brighten the night sky further (https://www.cape.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Dated-POST-light-pollution-review-RREAL-2.pdf). SCC notes that there are several actions within the Outline CoCP, REAC which relate to the management of light pollution: • [REP3-076] GG10 “Any activity carried out or equipment located within a construction compound that may produce a noticeable nuisance, including but not limited to dust, noise, vibration and lighting, will be located away from sensitive receptors such as residential properties...” • [REP3-076] GG21“Construction lighting will be of the lowest levels necessary to safely perform each task. It will be designed, positioned and directed to reduce the intrusion into adjacent properties, protected species and habitats (e.g. watercourses) and designated conservation sites.” • [REP3-078] GG38: “The operational external lighting systems at the proposed converter stations and substations in Kent and Suffolk will meet the following minimum exterior lighting requirements (which are in accordance with NGET standards): Maintained average illuminance: 6.0 lux; Maintained minimum point Illuminance: 2.5 lux.”

A nighttime assessment is provided within **Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137]**

		SCC expects that these will be monitored accordingly with any light pollution related complaints or exceedances in illuminance to be dealt with swiftly to protect the health and well-being of local communities. SCC would support any position made by local planning authorities which considers further controls to be necessary to adequately mitigate effects of light pollution.	
Climate Change			
17.1	<i>Matters relating to R (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) v Surrey County Council judgment</i>	SCC noted that there is still considerable uncertainty within all environmental disciplines as to how to consider the Finch Supreme Court judgement, and matters are still evolving. SCC has reviewed the Applicant's response and are content that there are good reasons in this instance for its position given the uncertainties as to who the end user might be of generated electricity and the transmission of energy to effectively anonymous, indeterminate users. SCC are prepared to accept that this is one of those instances where if you apply the Finch ruling, it is not possible to do an assessment, and you would reasonably conclude in this case that it would not be possible to further assess the downstream implications. So, SCC are content with the Applicant's explanation.	This is acknowledged and welcomed.
Water Environment			
18.1	<i>Matters relating to flooding and the adequacy of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)</i>	SCC reviewed the drainage strategy submitted at Deadline 3, which had a supplementary amendment which was requested by the EA. SCC has reviewed the strategy and is generally content, although notes that, with regards to surface water maps, the climate change allowance has not been adhered to which is required with regard to the sequential and exception tests. Regarding the drainage strategy, national standards for sustainable drainage come in during the latter part of 2025. Whilst the Applicant has suggested they are adhering to this, the Council does not consider that the runoff destination has not been adequately reviewed. The updated national standards make priority one destination for runoff to be the collection of non-potable water which is not reflected in the Applicant's documentation. So, regarding water reuse, SCC would like clarity from the Applicant on how they are going to reuse water both during the operational phase of construction and also decommissioning. Regarding the operational phases, SCC has received an outline strategy in two parts, one in the FRA and also volume in the Examination submission document 9.17.1, the Suffolk Drainage Strategy. SCC still feels that is lacking in detail for SCC to take forward. SCC happy to have further discussions with the Applicant outside of the Examination. SCC has detailed these outstanding issues, including with regards to how drainage matters are secured in the DCO, in response to Action Point 81. SCC's guidance which lists out the document requirements for the drainage strategy, including hydraulic assessment of the runoff rates, typical cross sections of SuDs features which are being proposed, assessment of runoff destinations as per the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage, impermeable flood plan, flood exceedance, flow paths. So, there is information SCC would ask for which would give SCC a good indication that the strategy has been considered in full and can be implemented. SCC notes that with Kiln Lane Substation, which is being delivered by SPR, an infiltration basin is included as part of the development. Regarding if the substation was delivered by the Sea Link DCO, the Applicant would need to satisfy that an infiltration basin could be used on the site. SCC would also require the detail relating to the Saxmundham converter station and how the surface water will be managed with regard to the attenuation basins and they would provide biodiversity and amenity value. SCC would look for information in advance of the REAC including SuDs details to ensure it meets with the SCC guidance with regards to design of the side slopes, exceedance etc.	The Applicant and SCC LLFA met on the 12 February to discuss the Suffolk Drainage Strategy and flood risk matters. In response to the matters discussed and the points raised, the Drainage Strategy has been updated to include further detail and information and was submitted at Deadline 5. In addition, the Applicant has prepared Document 9.122 Surface Water Flood Risk and Climate Change. This presents pluvial flood mapping inclusive of climate change allowances and was provided at Deadline 5. The Applicant also clarifies, as secured under Requirement 6 within the Development Consent Order, the appointed contractor will develop Drainage Management Plans post consent, which must be substantially in accordance with the Drainage Strategies for Suffolk (document 9.17.1) and Kent (document 9.17.2). The Drainage Management Plans will include a construction phase element and an operational phase element that may be discharged separately.

		SCC would like to see construction surface water drainage management included of the DCO submission which would cover construction and decommissioning of the site if it is consented. SCC highlighted outstanding concerns regarding the adequacy of the outline management plans in relation to minimising the residual risk for surface water flooding. SCC would like to clarify that its concerns regarding the lack of an outline plan relate to the operational drainage management plan listed in Requirement 6 which has no reference to an outline plan. SCC recognises that, as an appendix to the FRA, an outline surface water drainage management plan was produced, in addition to the supplementary Suffolk Drainage Strategy. SCC's comments regarding lack of detail relate to these documents. As for the DCO, SCC understands that these documents, nor any others, are secured as outline plans for operational drainage in Requirement 6.	
18.2	<i>The application of the sequential and exception tests</i>	SCC is concerned that it has not been adequately demonstrated that where there are temporary construction works, whether it is for the storage of materials and or temporary accesses to enable construction, which are located within flood zones, that these can be justified by reference of a sequential test. SCC is not currently persuaded that there has been enough information submitted to show that there are not lower risk locations for a number of these facilities. Regarding the exception tests, it broadens out into a wider issue in terms of whether or not there are wider sustainability benefits which bring into account the need for the project and the extent to which the overall package of measures put forward by the Applicant has sufficient local community benefits to feature in that application of the exception test that you could reach judgement. SCC does not feel that it can come to a conclusion at this stage as elements of the project and the associated benefits that go with it are still unfolding. SCC has detailed its position in response to Action Point 86.	In the Application Document Responses to ExQ1 [REP3-101], Suffolk County Council (SCC) noted that the linear nature of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, along with the multitude of social and environmental constraints, means that it is inevitable that not all parts of the Proposed Project can reasonably be located within areas at the lowest risk of surface water flooding. The Council noted that the most vulnerable parts of the Proposed Project have been sited to avoid areas at high risk of surface water flooding and made no comments specific to the Exception Test, deferring to the Environment Agency and supporting their view. The Applicant re-iterates high risk flood zones have also been avoided for the most vulnerable temporary works e.g site compounds and most of the temporary drainage basins and has provided justification for the situation of a small number of basins in areas at higher risk. Supplementary details regarding these Planning tests are also provided in Document 7.2 Planning Statement [AS-057], which includes commentary on the first part of the exception test linked to wider sustainability benefits. The Applicant notes that it will deliver community benefit in line with Government guidance, which clearly states “community funds outlined within this guidance document are separate from and not a material consideration for planning authorities in England, Wales and Scotland”.
18.3	<i>Effects on the achievement of the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive</i>	SCC did not comment on this item.	No response required.
20 Cumulative Effects			
20.1	<i>Intra and inter-project cumulative effects</i>	it is not acceptable for significant effects to go unmitigated without offsetting unless it has been demonstrated that offsetting is not possible. SCC considers effects on PRoW, for instance, can be successfully offset and that there may be potential for additional landscape planting mitigation around the converter station site in line with ESC's suggestion supported by SCC in	The Applicant has followed the mitigation hierarchy and sought to limit environmental effects in accordance with that.

		[REP2-062]. There may be potential for landscape offsetting measures which should be explored by the Applicant. SCC suggested that using a precautionary approach would be appropriate in considering the level of uncertainty, and do not see what this could not be applied to provide a magnitude to the degree of significance that the Applicant has found from their intra project cumulative effects. SCC is concerned regarding some deficiencies in some of the existing REAC commitments which were listed in the Council's response to EXQ1 [REP3-101]. SCC notes it would be helpful for the Applicant to respond to these issues raised.	The Applicant's position on additional landscape planting was provided within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] in Table 6.1 and with regard to AP39 in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086].
20.2	<i>Mitigation of cumulative effects</i>	SCC believes there is a shortcoming in the degree of coordination by the Applicant with other NSIPs in the area. More needs to be done, particularly in relation to coordination with landscaping, especially in the vicinity of Friston, more coordination on the converter station and LionLink, and more in relation to AIL routes. The Applicant should explore measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate and if possible, offset significant cumulative effects as per EN-1. SCC does not consider this to be sufficiently demonstrated for residual significant cumulative effects (as per previous submissions) PINS Advice Note 17 states: "As a minimum, applicants are expected to include the mitigation necessary to address impacts associated with their proposed NSIP. Apportionment of effect and mitigation between projects may be acceptable subject to justification and agreement with relevant consultation bodies. This would need to be evidenced in the Environmental Statement. Where possible, applicants should consider opportunities to develop holistic mitigation strategies in collaboration with other relevant bodies identified in the CEA, including developers. For example, the National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3) at paragraph 2.8.48 encourages applicants to work collaboratively on shared mitigation for offshore infrastructure and activities and to evidence agreement through statements of common ground. The method to secure such mitigation should be agreed between the applicant, its legal advisors and other relevant bodies." SCC does not consider the latter paragraph to have been sufficiently explored. Whilst commitments to coordination are appreciated, they fall short of collaborative mitigation strategies.	It is assumed the list of REAC criticisms are those at p.46 of SCC's REP3-101. SCC's criticisms are that the REAC commitments should guarantee the avoidance of any impacts rather than promote measures to reduce impacts, which is impractical. Addressing them in turn: GG27 – This provides for the recording of noise and enables the raising of issues which is necessary to enable and encourage noise control. This measure has been updated to specifically cover intra-project cumulative effects GG03 and GG05 – GG03 requires measures to control various environmental effects. And by ensuring the contractors and workers are properly versed in their environmental responsibilities this promotes compliance with environmental practices and reduces the likelihood of environmental harms thereby. This measure has been updated to specifically cover intra-project cumulative effects TT03 – SCC's position on this is noted. NV03 – This helps ensure that noise issues are addressed dynamically in the construction process. This measure has been updated to specifically cover intra-project cumulative effects
21.1	<i>Article 10 – The effect that article 10 would have with respect to the interface with existing consents, such as the Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) East Anglia 1 and East Anglia 2 DCOs and future consents, such as LionLink. How the relevant planning authorities would</i>	Summary of SCC's oral submissions: SCC requested clarity from the Applicant regarding the wording of paragraph 10, in terms of subclause (a) regarding the Applicant is planning to include which would be otherwise covered by Art 10 (1). If a planning permission is issued pursuant to the TCPA 1990 for development, any part of it which falls within the Order Limits following the publication of this order, that is not itself an NSIP under the 2008 Planning Act or part of such a project, and therefore be required to complete or enable construction or operation of any part of the development authorised by this order. Sea Link has come into the 2008 Act regime by means of a s35 Direction and therefore, as SCC reads it, the project would not fall into the scope of Art 10 (1a) but could fall into (1b). SCC stated its wishes to seek clarification from the Applicant that that is how they understand the working of Art. 10 (1) because various issues follow on from this. SCC stated that the wording of Art 10 (1) does not currently work regarding s35 issues. Through article ten, to have the flexibility to then bring forward a Town and Country Planning Act application for some part of this project, which may be the same as what is proposed in the development consent order, or maybe a variation or adjustment of that, might differ from something which is already approved, is probably more	The Applicant met with East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Dover District Council to discuss their concerns around Article 10, as outlined within Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2). The Applicant will review the further drafting proposed by Suffolk County Council when it is available.

	<i>see articles 10 and 56 operating in practice including, for example, the discharge of requirements</i>	straightforward than bringing a change application forward under the 2008 act regime SCC would be anxious, having gone through this examination and secured whatever package of mitigations are put in place, that there isn't then a kind of bypass route around that. Another point relates particularly to the overlap with the East Anglia one North and East Anglia two development consent orders. SCC made reference during ISH 1 to not wanting to allow for any resigning from the mitigations of EA1N or EA2. Where the projects overlap, SCC want to be assured that this clause simply to deal with Hillside and does not enable derogation from the mitigations which have already been endorsed. SCC noted that they would need to liaise with Sharpe Pritchard the drafting legal advisors regarding the wording of Art 10 (1). SCC sets out its understanding of how article 10 functions: By article 10(1), if planning permission is issued under the Town and Country Act 1990 ("TCPA") for development which falls within the Order limits following publication of the Order, and which is required to complete or enable the construction, use or operation of any part of the development authorised by the Order, then the carrying out, use or operation of that development in accordance with the planning permission will not constitute a breach of the Order. In Suffolk, any subsequent planning application would be determined by East Suffolk Council who would be able to attach conditions to a planning permission in the usual way. The planning permission would not affect the requirements contained in the Order. They would still need to be discharged, in accordance with Schedule 3. By article 10(2), any other planning permissions or development consent orders (issued under the TCPA or Planning Act, respectively) which conflict with the authorised development can proceed without the risk of enforcement action being taken notwithstanding any incompatibility between the authorised development and the development authorised under the planning permission or other development consent. The planning permission or development consent order referred to in article 10(2) would be determined in accordance with the TCPA or Planning Act regime, respectively. SCC would have the opportunity to comment on any such application. While the planning permission should not affect any requirement, it is possible that the development consent order could seek to amend a requirement under the instant Order. (Section 120(5)(a) of the Planning Act states that a DCO may modify or exclude a "statutory provision" – which by section 120(6) includes a provision of an instrument made under an Act, such as DCO – which relates to any matter for which provision may be made in the order. Clearly, provision for a requirement may be made in a DCO). SCC would be able to participate fully in the examination of that DCO (and, indeed, in the pre-and post-examination stages). By article 10(3), development within the Order limits which is constructed or used under a standalone planning permission or development consent order does not prevent the carrying out of any development authorised under the instant Order. This clarification is helpful in the light of the Supreme Court decision mentioned above. ii) The practical operation of article 56 (safeguarding) SCC stated that as far as Art. 56 is concerned and the safeguarding, noting SCC does not have an issue with Art 56 however it is conceivable that there might be some minerals and waste development which would be made to SCC which could fall within the remit of Art. 56. But generally, SCC are content with the approach taken by the Applicant.	
21.2	<i>Article 11(2), article 14(4), article 15(2) and (5)(b), article 17(1)(b), article 20(3) and (4), article 22(5), article 50(2) and article 55(1) with respect to the words</i>	(i) <u>"which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed"</u> Under the draft DCO [REP3-007], consents are authorised in the main body of the Order and in the requirements (Schedule 3). The words "which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed" apply to consents authorised in the main body of the Order (i.e. in those articles mentioned above). The words are not used in respect of the requirements. SCC explained its position on the inclusion of these words in paragraphs 15.12 to 15.14, 15.16 to 15.19 and related points in 15.71 to 15.74 of its LIR [REP1-130]. SCC maintains its position in respect of this wording.	The Applicant notes these points but remains of the view that the drafting is appropriate, as set out within Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] and Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085].

“unreasonably withheld or delayed” and the 35 day decision period

Owing to the inclusion of the deeming provision, the words mentioned above are superfluous, particularly “or delayed.” Since a decision must, in any event, be made within 35 days, SCC does not understand how it could be “unreasonably ... delayed”, not least since the applicant has proposed that time limit and must therefore consider it reasonable. SCC notes that Fenwick Solar Project Limited, the applicant for the Fenwick Solar Farm (a DCO application which is currently at determination stage) amended article 45(2) (procedure in relation to certain approvals) during the examination as follows –

“(2) Where paragraph (1) applies to any consent, agreement or approval, such consent, agreement or approval must not be unreasonably withheld ~~or delayed~~”.

The change was made at Deadline 1 of that examination on the basis “this drafting is superfluous given there is a deemed approval provision in this Article”. (See the applicant’s Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order [REP1-046]). SCC agrees with this reasoning.

Furthermore, it will be noted that the Infrastructure Planning (Model Provisions) (England and Wales) Order 2009 (SI 2009/2265) states in certain provisions – model provisions 14(3) and (4) (discharge of water), 16(4) (authority to survey and investigate land) and 34(3) (railway and navigation undertakings) – that consent (or approval) “shall not be unreasonably withheld” but it does not state consent must not be “unreasonably delayed”. While SCC considers all the text mentioned above should be omitted, at the very least, the words “or delayed” should be.

In any case, it is not defined what constitutes unreasonableness in terms of withholding or delaying consents in this context. Even if certain approvals constitute a relatively light piece of work, any number of factors can hinder a local authority’s ability to respond in an accelerated fashion including high volumes of other applications from the project, high volumes from the multitude of other NSIPs being delivered in the region, absences, public holidays and others. Therefore, what appears unreasonable to the Applicant is not a reliable guide to the reality of the situation. Since the wording REP1-046 SEALINK – EXAMINATION D4 Page 69 of 112 Agenda Item Title of Matter and SCC’s Written Summary of Representation References does not alter the statutory timelines in a defined quantitative way, it is going to be a challenge, and an unnecessary burden, for officers to determine how long is reasonable for the application to be determined outside of the defined statutory timelines which is counterproductive to efficient collaborative working with discharging authorities.

(ii) the 35-day decision period

The following text is based on that included in the LIR [REP1-130] at paragraphs 15.15 to 15.19 –

While SCC will ensure that any application for consent will be dealt with as quickly as possible – and it has a proven track-record of doing so – it will be remembered that SCC will be receiving, at the same time, a considerable number of requests for approval across several nationally significant infrastructure projects which have already been consented (i.e. East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 (SI 2022/432), East Anglia TWO Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 (SI 2022/433), Sizewell C (Nuclear Generating Station) Order 2022 (SI 2022/853), Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024 (SI 2024/802), and National Grid (Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement) Order 2024 (SI 2024 / 958). Forthcoming DCO applications for which SCC will be a host authority include National Grid Electricity Transmission’s Norwich to Tilbury application and National Grid Interconnector Holdings Limited’s LionLink Interconnector application). Officers responsible for the determination of consents under made Orders will also be working on the forthcoming DCO

The Applicant notes these points but remains of the view that the drafting is appropriate, as set out within **Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]** and **Document 9.89 Applicant’s Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085]**.

		applications, with two DCO examinations currently running concurrently. This places great pressure on SCC's DCO team. A 35-day decision-making period in this context is unrealistic and potentially detrimental to the effective consideration of applications. SCC considers 56 days would be a more realistic period for determining any application under the Order. Rather than a difficult-to-meet deadline, in SCC's (considerable) experience of determining applications for consent arising from DCOs, the key factor in determining an application expeditiously is the quality of the submission. It is often necessary for (say) SCC in its role as the highway authority to request revised submissions (sometimes several requests are needed) and applicants do not always provide the requested material in good time. There is no question of a local highway authority consenting a submission which is sub-standard because of the risk of compromising highway safety and so, owing to this, and given the deeming provision, SCC would have to refuse such an application within 35 days, unless an extension can be agreed. SCC considers it would be preferable for the parties to have the comfort of a 56-day determining period and changing references in the Order from "... within 35 days (or such other period as agreed by the street authority and the undertaker) beginning with the date on which the application was received ..." to from "... within 56 days (or such other period as agreed by the street authority and the undertaker) beginning with the date on which the application was received ..." would provide that comfort. In addition, SCC has detailed its position in paragraph 15.71 to 15.74 of its LIR [REP1-130] in respect of paragraph 1 (timescales) of Schedule 4 (discharge of requirements). SCC maintains its position and considers the references in the draft DCO [REP3-007] to "... 35 days" should be changed to "56 days".	
21.3	<i>Schedule 3 Requirement 6, the submission and approval of plans</i>	SCC endorses the approach of having Outline plans which are available at the Sea Link Examination, which are to be followed by detailed plans which will be submitted to a discharging authority, recognising that on some topics it would not be the relevant planning authority. It may be another discharging authority, such as the County Council, because the subject matter might be focussed on highways or on surface water drainage. So, regarding the wording of relevant planning authority, it might need to be 'relevant planning authority or other discharging authority' in accordance with what the relevant requirement states. Regarding Requirement 6, items N to Q there are a series of plans, including the minerals and waste management plan and operational drainage plan, which are not preceded by an outline plan. SCC does not consider that the documents which have been seen so far are satisfactory such that these outline plans are not needed. Therefore, SCC would want to see those also dealt with through the vehicle of outline plan followed by a detailed plan which is subject to discharge. SCC is also concerned regarding the wording of Requirement 6 (2) which seem to be limited and does not seek to actually secure REAC commitments which relate to the operational period; therefore, SCC believes this does need further consideration. SCC expressed concerns regarding Requirement 5 (3) which deals with pre-commencement matters. SCC believes there should be a number of pre-commencements matters which need to be subject to either REAC commitments or other controls but currently SCC are reading Requirement 5 (3) as currently drafted as only tying the pre-commencement activities in terms of further control where there is an outline plan listed in Requirement 6 which does not include the REAC. This point on controls for pre-commencement activities also applies to SCC's concern over the lack of outline plans for those listed in 6(n) to (q) of Schedule 3.	Following the deadline 4 updates, the Material and Waste Management Plan and the Drainage Management Plans now have outline versions. The REAC is secured by Requirement 5(2) and 5(3) clarifies that all pre-commencement operations must be carried out in accordance with the documents listed in 5(2), which includes the REAC. The Applicant has also amended the wording at Requirement 5 and 6 to further clarify that the management plans apply to the operational phase. The Applicant responded to the comments made on discharging authorities as set out within Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] and Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085].

SCC believes if the drafting of Requirement 6 (2) is improved SCC can see that there is a way in which the REAC commitments in relation to ancient and veteran trees can override the sweeping powers in Article 51. It is a drafting matter which needs to be dealt with.

SCC believes Requirement 6 (2) as currently drafted does not properly secure the commitments in the REAC and it should be a matter for the Applicant to present its intentions for local authorities to comment on.

SCC offers the following additional written comments on Requirement 6 which expands on certain points made in oral submissions:

Background: use of “discharging authority”

Paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 3 (requirements) defines “discharging authority” as “the body responsible for giving any consent, agreement or approval required by a requirement included in this Order ...”. The definition is circular and unhelpful.

For example, requirement 6 provides for control documents to be approved by “the relevant planning authority or other discharging authority as may be appropriate to the relevant [document]”. [Emphasis added].

Unfortunately, it is not clear, in respect of any control document, who the “appropriate discharging authority” is or, indeed, when the appropriate discharging authority would discharge the document instead of the relevant planning authority. A similar formulation is used in requirement 5 (construction management plans).

Requirements are the DCO equivalent of planning conditions and one of the six tests for conditions is precision. SCC consider the inclusion of the term “discharging authority”, as defined, in requirements 5 and 6, creates imprecision (because it is not clear who it refers to) and requests that the applicant recasts those requirements so that the body the applicant wants to discharge that requirement is named.

The use of “discharging authority” in this ambiguous way is consistent with that used in requirement 4 (management plans) of the National Grid (Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement) Development Consent Order 2024 (SI 2024/958) and it has already caused confusion post-consent for SCC. SCC is keen to avoid any confusion in respect of this Order.

The preceding text is similar to that included in paragraph 15.34 of SCC’s LIR [REP1-130] and the applicant responded to that paragraph in the Applicant’s comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026], (Table 13.1, at paragraph 15.34) which states –

“The definition of ‘discharging authority’ is deliberately drafted to not name specific authorities or bodies given the different geographies and authorities involved in the Proposed Project. It is not the usual approach to name specific bodies in the draft DCO, and such an approach is wellprecedented by other development consent orders and should remain as drafted.

However, the Applicant recognises that certainty is required by all parties over which bodies are defined as a discharging authority. The Applicant will work with local authorities to consider further how responsibility for discharge of requirements between different bodies can be clarified.

The Applicant will review the definitions to check whether any amendments can be made for clarity in the next iteration of Application Document 3.1(E) draft Development Consent Order [REP1- 036] which will be submitted at Deadline 3”.

The next iteration of the draft DCO [REP3-007] was submitted at Deadline 3 (9 January 2025), in which the applicant retained its original drafting.

The imprecision therefore remains. SCC considered precision should trump precedent (particularly since the precedent in Suffolk is unhelpful) and its proposed amendments to requirement 6 are set out at the end of this section.

Responsibility for discharging the management plans

SCC considers it should discharge the following management plans listed in requirement 6(1) of the draft DCO [REP3-007] because the subject of each plan falls within SCC's statutory responsibility: (b) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk, (j) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Management Plan – Suffolk, (n) Material and Waste Management Plan, (o) Construction Drainage Management Plan, and (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan.

In respect of the documents mentioned in sub-paragraphs (n), (o), (p) and (q), it is not clear why no outline document is being provided. No explanation is provided in the EM [AS-090] at paragraph 5.3.10 (which concerns requirement 6).

The preceding text is similar to that included in paragraphs 15.45 and 15.46 of SCC's LIR [REP1-130] and the applicant responded to those paragraphs in the Applicant's comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026], (Table 13.1, at paragraph 15.46) which states –

“The documents referred to are not submitted in outline as the final versions have already been prepared. The Applicant will consider adding additional detail to clarify this point in Application Document 3.2 (D) Explanatory Memorandum [REP1-038] which will be submitted at Deadline 3”.

No further detail appears to have been added to requirement 6 in the Explanatory Memorandum submitted at Deadline 3 [REP3-009]. If final versions have been prepared, SCC does not see why these have not been submitted into the examination, nor why a requirement for them to be approved postconsent is in the DCO if they are already prepared.

SCC's preferred position is that each control document is subject to a two-stage process: first, during the examination and second, post-consent when the application is seeking to discharge the relevant requirement. This results in a more robust document being produced once final delivery details are known utilising the local expertise of local authorities. Of particular interest to SCC to follow this twostage approach should be followed in respect of the documents mentioned in sub-paragraphs (n) and (q). SCC sets out its detailed position on this matter in response to the Applicant's answer to 101 of ExQ1 [REP3-069] in relation to (n) Material and Waste Management Plan in SCC's Comments on Deadline 3 submissions. SCC's respective position on this matter in relation to (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan is given in response to Action Point 81.

Suggested drafting amendments

In the light of the above, SCC considers requirement 6 should be amended as follows in terms of naming discharging authorities –

6. —(1) No stage of the authorised development may commence until, for that stage, the following plans, code or register as relevant to that stage have been submitted to ~~and approved by the relevant planning authority or other~~ the discharging authority mentioned next to it as may be appropriate to the relevant plan, scheme or strategy concerned—

...

(b) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk (which must be substantially in accordance with the Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk) by Suffolk County Council;

...

(j) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Management Plan – Suffolk (which must be substantially in accordance with the Outline PRoW - Suffolk) by Suffolk County Council;

...

(n) Material and Waste Management Plan (such approval to be given in Suffolk by Suffolk County Council and in Kent by [xxx] and, in any event, in consultation with the Environment Agency);

		(o) Construction Drainage Management Plan in Suffolk by Suffolk County Council and in Kent by [xxx]; (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan in Suffolk by Suffolk County Council and in Kent by [xxx];” (2) The construction works for each stage of the authorised development and mitigation works to minimise the impact of construction must be carried out in accordance with the relevant stage of the approved plans, ~~code and register schemes and strategies~~ referred to in sub-paragraph (1) or with any amended plans, ~~code or register schemes or strategies~~ that may subsequently be approved by the ~~relevant planning authority or other~~ discharging authority as may be appropriate to the relevant plan, ~~code or register scheme or strategy~~ concerned.” <u>Justification for the drafting amendments</u> In requirement 6(1), the references to the “plans, scheme or strategy” referred to in the subparagraphs (a) to (s) have been replaced with “plans, code or register” because while there are documents called “plans”, “code” and “register” in sub-paragraphs (a) to (s), no document is named a “scheme” or a “strategy”. For consistency with the names given to the documents which follow, these changes should be made. The same change has been made to Requirement 6(2). As mentioned above, SCC considers it should discharge certain documents. The amendments made to sub-paragraphs (b), (j), (n), (o), (p) and (q) of requirement 6(1) identify which documents. In the light of these amendments, SCC considers the existing definition of “discharging authority” can remain. The applicant could include which local authority it wishes to discharge the remaining documents. This change would do away with the imprecision mentioned above.	
21.4	21.4 Schedule 3 Requirement 9(2) “reinstatement schemes”	SCC did not comment orally on this agenda item. SCC would likely feel more comfortable with a blanket requirement to reinstate land suitable for its former use, exempting land within 10 m of the cables, and pointing to requirements that safeguard reinstatement for the exempted land, such as B13 and AS02 etc	Following the second Issue Specific Hearing on 30 January 2026, the Applicant amended Article 27 (Temporary use of land for carrying out the authorised project) and removed requirement 9(2) as described in Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points [REP4-086].
Any other Business			
22.1		Following ISH 2, SCC has received communications from Interested Parties in the local community raising concerns over the level of exploration of the Need Case of the Proposed Project up to this point and, in turn, requesting that an ISH be held on the matter. SCC also notes that similar representations have been submitted into the examination by local community groups and members. In light of this, SCC would ask the ExA to consider whether an ISH covering need may be appropriate, following a similar approach to the Norwich to Tilbury examination at ISH1.	Noted.
Post-Hearing Submission for Issue Specific Hearing 2 - Responses to ISH2 Supplementary Agenda Additional Questions			
ISH2.01.	<i>Applicant, local authorities and interested parties (IP)</i> The Government’s Planning and Infrastructure Act received Royal Assent on	Chapter 1 of the Planning Act 2008 (“the Act”) concerns nationally significant infrastructure projects. It includes sections 1 to 13 and SCC’s comments on any implications for the examination of this application arising from those sections are set out below. (In short, save for section 10 SCC (from 18 February 2026) does not consider there are any). Section 1 (national policy statements: review) establishes a new requirement for National Policy Statements (“NPSs”) to be subject to a full review and updated at least every five years. By section 118(1)(a) of the Act, section 1 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no	Noted.

Thursday 18
December 2025.
The applicant,
local authorities
and all IPs are
invited to submit
comments on the
new Act in relation
to any implications
for the examination
of this application

regulations had been made, and so section 1 is not yet in force. In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination.

Section 2 (national policy statements: parliamentary requirements) provides an additional parliamentary procedure for making material policy amendments to NPSs. By section 118(1)(a) of the Act, section 2 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint.

At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 2 is not yet in force. In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination.

Section 3 (projects relating to water) concerns NSIPs which fall within sections 27 (dams and reservoirs), 28 (transfer of water resources) and 28A (desalination plants) of the Act. By section 118(1)(b) of the Act, section 3 came into force on the day on which the Act was passed i.e. 18 December 2025; however, owing to the fact the instant application does not fall within sections 27, 28 or 28A, SCC does not consider section 3 will have any implications for the instant examination.

Section 4 (power to disapply requirement for development consent) provides a new power for the Secretary of State to give a direction disapplying the requirement for development consent for certain specified development falling within the meaning and description of an NSIP in the Act. By section 118(1)(c) of the Act, section 4 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 4 is not yet in force. In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination because an application for development consent has already been made.

Section 5 (applications for development consent: removal of certain pre-application requirements) provides that an applicant for development consent will no longer be required by statute to consult statutory consultees, landowners, local authorities and the community before submitting their application to the Secretary of State. By section 118(1)(c) of the Act, section 5 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 5 is not yet in force. In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination because the instant application has already been through the pre-application stage.

Section 6 (applications for development consent: changes related to section 5) makes changes to the Act based on section 5. Since section 5 is not in force, this section isn't either (see section 118(1)(c) of the Act). In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination because the instant application has already been through the pre-application stage.

Section 7 (applications for development consent: acceptance stage) makes several amendments to the application stage of the DCO process. By section 118(1)(c) of the Act, section 6 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 6 is not yet in force. In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination because the instant application has already been through the application stage.

Section 8 (applications for development consent: local impact reports and representations) adds a duty on local authorities who have been invited to submit a local impact report to have regard to guidance about the preparation of a local impact report ("LIR"). By section 118(1)(c) of the Act, section 8 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 8 is not yet in force and SCC is not aware of any guidance (or draft guidance)

having been prepared. In any event, SCC does not consider this provision would have had any implications for the instant examination, because SCC has already submitted its LIR.

Section 9 (examination of applications for development consent) requires ExAs to have regard to the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues when making procedural decisions about how a DCO application is to be examined. By section 118(1)(c) of the Act, section 9 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 9 is not yet in force and so the provision does not currently have any implication for the instant examination. If regulations are made and come into force during the examination, whether any implications arise will depend on what the regulations say about the application of section 9 to an application which is already ongoing.

Section 10 (applications for development consent: costs) enables the ExA to make an order for costs incurred by persons in relation to a DCO application. By section 118(1)(c) of the Act, section 10 comes into force at the end of the period of two months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed. While section 10 is not yet in force, it will come into force on 18 February 2026 and therefore could have an implication for the instant application because the ExA may, from that date, make an order for costs incurred by persons in relation to a DCO application.

Section 11 (Planning Act 2008: right to enter and survey land) makes changes to the way in which persons may be authorised to enter land in order to survey it or take levels in connection with an application, proposed application for development consent or the implementation of a DCO. By section 118(1)(e) of the Act, section 11 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 11 is not yet in force. While that remains the case, the provision will not have any implication for the instant application. If regulations are made and come into force during the examination, whether any implications arise will depend on what the regulations say about the application of section 11 to an application which is already ongoing.

Section 12 (changes to, and revocation of, development consent orders) amends the process set out in Schedule 6 to the Act for making changes to DCOs once granted for NSIPs. By section 118(1)(e) of the Act, section 12 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 12 is not yet in force. In any event, since this provision concerns post-examination matters, SCC does not consider it would have had any implication for the instant examination.

Section 13 (planning Act 2008: legal challenges) changes the process for judicial reviews of NPSs and development consent decisions made by the Secretary of State for NSIPs. By section 118(1)(e) of the Act, section 13 comes into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint. At the time of preparing this response, no regulations had been made, and so section 13 is not yet in force. In any event, since this provision concerns post-examination matters, SCC does not consider it would have had any implication for the instant examination.

ISH2.02

The following National Policy Statements (NPS) were designated on 6 January 2026: EN-1, EN-3, EN-5. Considering paragraph 1.6.3 of EN-1 (2026) whilst

SCC notes the updates to the cited NPS and will comment on responses provided by other IPs at Deadline 5.

Noted and acknowledged.

	the revised NPS’s will only have effect in relation to those applications for development consent accepted for examination after 6 January 2026 they are capable of being important and relevant considerations in the decision-making process for this application. Applicant: Review the application documents (in particular but not limited to ES part 1, chapter 2 Regulatory and Planning Context [APP-043]) in light of the newly designated NPSs and provide any updates and amendments as necessary. Local authorities and interested parties: Submit any comments in relation to any implications of the newly designated NPSs for the examination of this application.		
Landscape and Visual			
ISH2.022.	<i>Requirement 6 of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP3-006] does not secure advanced planting, as it only prevents the</i>	SCC welcomes this proposal and considers these changes should be made. Regarding article 2, the definition of “pre-commencement operations” could be amended to include a new sub-paragraph (m) “advanced planting”. Requirement 6 (construction management plans to be approved) could then be amended as follows, with the following provisions added after existing requirement 6(2) – (3) No stage of the authorised development may commence, including any pre-commencement operations, until, for that stage, a detailed scheme of advanced planting,	The Applicant’s position regarding advance planting has been provided in response to 3LVIA1 in Application Document 9.36 Applicant’s Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6. Regarding the request for a vegetation retention and removal plan, the Applicant is giving this further consideration and will respond at Deadline 7.

	<i>authorised development from commencing, so could not be enforced for advanced planting. It therefore needs to be secured separately in the dDCO. Could advance mitigation planting be added to precommencement operations in article 2, with a requirement that precommencement operations cannot be carried out until details of advance planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation? Suggest some wording.</i>	prepared in accordance with sub-paragraph (4), has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. (4) The scheme mentioned in sub-paragraph (3) must include – (a) a plan of the proposed advanced planting drawn to a scale suitable to convey the undertaker’s proposals for it, (b) details of provenance, soil preparation, cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment, (c) schedules of plants which detail species, plant sizes and proposed numbers and densities, (d) a timeline for implementation, (e) means of protection, including additional protection required during the construction phase, and (f) an aftercare programme, prepared in accordance with the Overarching Landscape and Ecology Management Plan. SCC also considers that Requirement 6 should prohibit commencement of the authorised development (including any pre-commencement operations), until a vegetation retention and removal plan, has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.	
Design			
ISH2.028.	<i>Provide suggested wording for adding this to article 5 of the dDCO.</i>	SCC intends to consider the Applicant’s suggested amendments to article 5 and will then comment on the same at Deadline 5. SCC will seek to liaise with other authorities before doing so.	Noted.
Responses to ExA Action Points from ISH2			
46	<i>Heritage Coast – Notwithstanding the applicant’s response to the written question, define the natural beauty and special character of the Heritage Coast.</i>	Heritage Coasts were defined by agreement between the relevant maritime local authorities and Natural England to conserve the best stretches of undeveloped coast in England. In Suffolk, the absence of a coastal road and widespread development imparts a rural character to the terrestrial hinterland of the Nearshore Waters SCT (Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment). Onshore, the natural beauty indicators of the Suffolk Heritage Coast align with those of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). Unlike the AONB, the Heritage Coast extends into near shore coast waters (which, in the case of the AONB, are considered part of the setting) and considers the marine environment and activities there. The Touching the Tide Landscape Character Assessment, Final Report, August 2012, identifies the Thorpeness to Aldeburgh Coast as the smallest coastal character area of the study. It is characterised as “<i>an expansive, open, windswept landscape and this sense of scale is strongly contrasted with the small-scale, sheltered character of the settlements.</i>” ... <i>‘Within the drained marshes...are areas of scrub vegetation which provide visual structure.’ ...</i> <i>‘From the beach and seafront there are open views across open water with boating activity</i>	The Applicant has taken the baseline of the Suffolk Heritage Coast, as described by SCC and with reference to published documents, into consideration within the assessment. This is evidenced within Application Document 6.3.2.1.B ES Appendix 2.1.B Landscape Baseline [APP-097].

		<i>focused around the fishing fleets and occasional views to distant container vessels in the North Sea.’ (page 25).</i>	
47	<i>Having regard to paragraph 5.10.11 of National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1, can you explain whether you consider the development is compatible with the special character of the Heritage Coast?</i>	Paragraph 191 of the 2025 NPPF states: <i>‘Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 189), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.’</i> Policy N5.2 of the 2026 consultation document for the NPPF states: <i>‘Development proposals in areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within a protected landscape), should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast should not be supported, unless it is compatible with its special character.’</i> Paragraph 5.10.11 of the NPS EN-1 states: ‘Development within a Heritage Coast (that is not also a National Park, The Broads or a National Landscape) is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with the natural beauty and special character of the area.’ SCC considers that during construction the proposed development would not be compatible with the natural beauty and special character of the area between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness. In its LIR [REP1-130] at para. 5.45, SCC stated that the construction activities were expected to be highly detracting the open coastal landscape.	The Applicant notes the policy context regarding the Heritage Coast and maintains the position that there would not be significant adverse effects arising from the Proposed Project on the Suffolk Heritage Coast due to reasoning set out within Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-097], the response to 1LVIA11 within Application Document 9.73 Applicant’s Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069] and with reference to AP47 contained in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086].
48	<i>If you consider the development is not compatible with the special character of the Heritage Coast, explain why not and suggest whether this could be overcome by mitigation and if so, provide details of suggested mitigation.</i>	Sea Link’s construction phase will introduce large construction vessels into Aldeburgh Bay, which are not congruent with the marine activities that usually can be observed from the coast and beach. SCC considers that this would affect the visual relationship with the coastline more than slightly (see paragraph 2.1.3, [APP-097]). Looking beyond the Thorpeness to Aldeburgh Character Area and at the wider Suffolk Heritage Coast, it is considered that Sea Link’s offshore construction activities further add to the adverse effects of the extensive offshore and marine construction activities of Sizewell C. ‘SCC does not consider that the adverse effects on the natural beauty and character of the Suffolk Heritage Coast can be directly mitigated (i.e. minimised or reduced) if the project is to proceed. However, the mitigation hierarchy also embraces compensatory/offsetting where appropriate. SCC considers that the adverse effects on the Heritage Coast could be potentially offset or compensated for by measures to enhance other aspects of the Heritage Coast. Because of the close nexus between the Heritage Coast and the SECHNL, SCC considers that it would be appropriate for dialogue between the Applicant, SCC, and the SECHNL Partnership to take place to discuss the type and extent of offsetting measures on the Heritage Coast that could be put in place. For instance, during construction, well-designed explanatory information boards could be provided in key locations, so that the public can understand what is happening and why. Further, off-setting measures that would contribute to enhancing the Heritage Coast in the local area for the longer term (for example contributing to addressing coastal erosion), should be considered.	Details regarding the construction vessels is contained within Application Document 6.2.1.4 (D) Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project [REP1A-003]. It is estimated that there would likely be a 3-4 vessel peak at any one time. Regarding the introduction of construction vessels, as noted in relation to the assessment on SCT 03 Nearshore Waters within Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-097], such effects would be in the context of occasional large-scale marine vessels out at sea and the presence of offshore wind farms, which reduces the degree of contrast and is temporary in nature. As highlighted with respect to Viewpoint 13 within Application Document 6.3.2.1.D ES Appendix 2.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment [APP-098], from the approved King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), views are limited towards the sea due to the rising shingle landform along the foreshore. The Applicant does not consider that there would be significant adverse effects on the Heritage Coast arising from the Proposed Project therefore further mitigation and compensation is not considered to be required. There would be temporary significant adverse cumulative effects within the construction phase only, as reported within Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-097], however there is no further

			cumulative mitigation that would be appropriate in further reducing the temporary cumulative effects. The enhancement and compensation measures being provided for the SECHNL are linked directly to the section 85 duty and further updates are detailed with reference to 3LVIA5 within Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6.
49	Having regard to paragraph 5.10.32 of the NPS EN-1 which sets out the exceptional circumstances in which the SoS may grant development consent in the AONB, can the relevant local authorities explain whether they think the circumstances are exceptional, and if not, why not?	SCC does not consider that, as currently formulated, the project has demonstrated the necessary exceptional circumstances. SCC accepts, in terms of siting, that the Order Limits of the proposed project must overlap with the designated boundary of the SECHNL. Alternatives routes, avoiding any landfall within the SECHNL would require onshore pylon routes which are likely to cause far greater environmental impacts to a disproportionate extent when compared to the subsea interconnector option. However, SCC does not consider that the proposed development, as currently formulated, adequately reflects the substantial weight which must be given by the SoS to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. SCC's previous submissions on the section 85 (A1) CROWA 2000 duty within paras 5.46 to 5.58 of its LIR [REP1-130], Table B3 of [REP2-062] and response to 1LVIA7 of ExQ1 [REP3-101] are applicable here in terms of the project's failure to conserve and enhance natural beauty despite measures being available. In that regard, SCC considers that there is an inevitable degree of overlap between the exceptional circumstances test in para 5.10.32 of EN-1 and the test in para 5.10.33 of showing that measures to further the statutory purposes of the designation (in this case the natural beauty of the SECHNL) are sufficient, appropriate, and proportionate. In short, if the proposed measures are insufficient to satisfy this test (and so the statutory duty) but it is realistic to expect more to be done, SCC considers it will be very difficult (or even impossible) to conclude that there are exceptional circumstances for allowing the development (in the form proposed and absent any further measures) in the SECHNL These representations also show that bullet three of para 5.10.32, which reads: 'any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.' has not been adequately considered. It is also noted that para 5.10.32 of EN-1 requires that 'such development should be demonstrated to be in the public interest'. This should be understood not only in terms of the public interest at the national level but also at the local level. The project has identified residual significant effects and is likely to negatively affect the local community in other relevant and important ways such as in terms of mental and physical health and wellbeing, local accommodation capacity, the prosperity of local businesses and the tourism industry, amongst others, within an intense cumulative context of the construction and operation of multiple other major infrastructure projects. At present, SCC considers, and has proposed, reasonable measures to better mitigate and, where not possible, offset, negative effects such as those identified here to better demonstrate that the proposed development is in the interest of the local community. Strong commitments around monitoring and adaptive management would ensure uncertainties of cumulative effects can be addressed once more is known during the construction phase, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing and socioeconomics and tourism effects due to limitations of current evidence regarding how these effects will actualise. There is also potential to look at expanded community benefits provision beyond the minimum set out in government guidance should the decision maker consider it appropriate. It should	Further updates regarding the section 85 duty are detailed with reference to 3LVIA5 within Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6.. The Applicant's position regarding adaptive management and monitoring are clearly set out in the updated oLEMP submitted at Deadline 6 (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk). With regard to community benefits, and the need for these to be secured within the DCO, as set out in Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Response to First Written Questions, response 1GEN1, the Applicant will follow government guidance which sets expectations for how community benefit funds should be delivered for transmission infrastructure projects. Furthermore, the guidance sets out the level of community fund that should be provided by the developer, based on the type of infrastructure being developed. As a regulated business, the Applicant's regulator will review its costs for delivering community funds in line with the levels set out in this guidance. Government guidance also states that community benefit funding is "<i>separate from and not a material planning consideration in England, Wales or Scotland</i>". As such, community funds are treated outside of planning and not as part of the DCO. Community benefit funding for the Proposed Project will be legally secured through a modification of the Applicant's Electricity Transmission Licence with Ofgem.

be noted that provision of community benefits would have to be written into the Order to be considered in this way.

Traffic and Transport

58	Updates provided for junction modelling for both Kent and Suffolk (to include cumulative traffic), if the modelling is not fully submitted at DL4.	A1094/B1069, B1119 junction, Saxmundham crossroads, Snape crossroads and Knodishall A1094/B1069 junction (check appendix A of [REP3-101]). SCC has requested further meetings with the Applicant on highways matters, including junction modelling. Whilst comments were made on a without prejudice basis during the January 2026 meeting, SCC is awaiting minutes before confirming its position in writing.	The Applicant has provided a response to ISH2 Action Point 58 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] . The minutes of the meeting with SCC on 22 January 2026 were shared with SCC on 12 February 2026.
62	Consider and discuss between County Councils and applicant whether information regarding predicted journey time analysis is required to be part of a robust traffic and transport assessment, including cumulative assessments.	SCC is open to discussions on highways matters with the Applicant. SCC considers that targeted predicted journey time analysis is required as part of a robust traffic and transport assessment to understand the cumulative impacts of the multiple NSIPs in the area on residents, the local economy and access to social infrastructure including local healthcare and emergency services.	The Applicant has provided a response to ISH2 Action Point 62 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] . With respect to predicted journey time analysis, the junction capacity modelling outputs (to be submitted at Deadline 6) will provide details of forecast junction capacity and journey time delays for localised parts of the highway network (at key junctions), namely the A12/ B1121 Main Road junction to the south of Saxmundham, the A1094/ B1121 Aldeburgh Road junction and the A1094/ B1069 Snape Road junction.
67	On proposed new accesses, the applicant has stated that road safety audits have been carried out to show that the proposed new accesses are feasible and can be safe. Provide comments on this and whether it is considered that further information on road safety audits or other forms of information and evidence is necessary for the proposed new accesses during	RSAs have been completed and recommendations made by the auditors on some accesses but not all and would welcome discussion with the applicant with this in the near future. On access S-BM12 there are residual areas of outstanding disagreement where the Applicant does not agree with the safety auditors, but SCC does. For additional details please see Appendix A to this document created by SCC which details the status of the RSAs.	All RSAs and Designers Responses have now been agreed between SCC and the Applicant.

	the Examination stage?		
Water Environment			
81	Set out all outstanding concerns regarding the adequacy of the DCO and outline management plans in relation to minimising the residual risk for surface water flooding and associated REAC commitments.	The list of Works in the draft DCO list “drainage” for some works elements of the proposed development. It should list surface water drainage and foul water drainage as separate entities, as these will be discharge by different bodies. No outline management plans have been produced or secured in the DCO in relation to the Construction and Operational Drainage Management Plans set out in Requirement 6. The LLFA understands most relevant details are not yet available for the Construction Drainage Management Plan until contractors have been appointed. However, there should be robust commitments to include the required detail in the final approved Plan. The detail for the construction surface water management plan includes: • construction surface water drainage system design • construction management, maintenance and remediation schedules • required consents, e.g. Land Drainage Act, Environmental Permit • flood risk controls • pollution, water quality and emergency control measures • phasing plan (if required) • construction site plan that includes compounds, material storage areas and temporary site parking Currently, the only control governing what is required to be in the Construction Drainage Management Plan is within commitment W17 of the REAC: “The plan shall demonstrate how the Contractor would manage surface water runoff across the worksite, including details of how offsite impacts would be managed and mitigated”. The LLFA considers this insufficient meaning it is necessary for this commitment to be updated to ensure the required detail will be provided in the final Plan in lieu of an outline plan secured in the DCO. Moreover, an outline version of this plan is necessary to ensure the final approved plan accords with what has been presented as evidence of the approach to operational drainage in the examination. The submitted, unsecured outline management plans for surface water drainage allude to using a SuDS solution, but the LLFA feels that draft plans should be submitted prior to determination. This draft plan shall include the following information. • Preliminary Layout Drawings (including landscaping details) Indicative drawings of layout, properties, open space and drainage infrastructure including: • Existing watercourses to be retained within or abutting the site, 3.5m wide maintenance strip must be provided. • All existing blue corridors must be retained/enhanced. • Cross section/plan views of basins; depicting area, side slopes, wet/dry benches, freeboard and volumes/depths (1:1, 1:30 and 1:100 + climate change allowance for all events). • Discharge location and invert of watercourse (outfall). • Form of SuDS and location on the site. • Main above ground conveyance network. • Maintenance strips/access points. • Legal easements/no planting zones. • Soakaway offsets. • Preliminary hydraulic calculations Greenfield discharge Rates (using suitable method i.e. FEH, IH124 (ICPSUDS), ReFH2. Long Term Storage (if using complex flow control). Source Control/Sketch Calculations (or similar). <u>Pre-commencement Operations – temporary construction compounds</u>	The Applicant addressed SCC’s concerns relating to drainage in its oral submissions – see item 18.1 of [REP4-085]. The Applicant has prepared the Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP5-083] which provides additional information to that provided in Appendix C of Application Document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292]. The strategy is unchanged from that document; however, the Strategy document provides site specific detail and demonstrates compliance with National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) first published in June 2025, and the National Policy Statement for Energy EN-1 published November 2023. As to construction compounds, the REAC already includes a commitment for the preparation of a Construction Drainage Management Plan to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to construction works for the Proposed Project commencing [W14]. As to surface water flood maps and climate change, the Applicant addresses this at §A5.6 of [REP4-241].

		The installation of temporary compounds may create areas of impermeable surfaces and thus will create surface water runoff which could lead to offsite flooding. It is therefore imperative that prior to the temporary compounds being permitted, a construction drainage management plan for these works shall be submitted for approval for the surface water drainage aspect to satisfy the LLFA on this matter. SCC acknowledges that the pre-commencement activities must be carried out in accordance with the outline management plans. However, this is not sufficient for temporary construction compounds as they will create surface water runoff. Therefore, the LLFA will need to see and approve a detailed drainage strategy for any temporary construction compounds undertaken as a pre-commencement activity to ensure that surface water flood risk is minimised through an effective drainage strategy. <u>Outstanding issues regarding the Flood Risk Assessment</u> SCC LLFA, still request that the Applicant reviews the FRA and supplies a supplementary document for climate change maps for surface water flood risk. SCC recognises that the differences within this requested map may be minor in areas but to the extent that there are any differences, SCC considers this should be supplied to ensure the ExA, and in turn the decision maker, has full information on this matter. This is SCC's only outstanding concern regarding the FRA.	
86	Set out all remaining areas of disagreement regarding the applicant's approach to applying the sequential and exception tests.	SCC would like to note that it is for the deciding authority to determine whether the application has met the Sequential and Exception tests. However, SCC sets out the remaining areas of disagreement regarding the Applicant's approach to applying the sequential and exception tests: For temporary works, however, it is not clear to SCC that the sequential test has been passed. This applies to the Applicant's comments on temporary storage of construction materials and temporary accesses. For the former, the Applicant states that it will 'seek to seek to avoid storage of construction materials within Flood Zone 3 and areas of high and medium risk of flooding from surface water' (para 3.2.13 of the FRA) as detailed in W06 of the CoCP. This fails to meet the sequential test as it has not been demonstrated that the location of these materials cannot be placed in areas of low surface water flood risk. The Applicant must commit to placing such materials in areas of low surface water flood risk in the absence of any demonstration that this is not feasible. Regarding temporary accesses, the Applicant says that "temporary access routes within Flood Zone 3 and areas of high and medium risk of flooding from surface water will be suitably designed for flood resilience in accordance with any conditions of a Flood Risk Activity Permit and removed at the end of the construction phase, with the land re-instated." For the exception test, whilst it is recognised that the "wider sustainability benefits" referenced in part a of para 5.8.11 of EN-1 include those fulfilled in the need case of the development, consideration should also be given to the benefits given to the local community who may experience increased flood risk. At present, SCC considers more could be done to fulfil this in line with its representations on the need for further mitigation and offsetting/compensatory measures. There is also potential to look at expanded community benefits provision beyond the minimum set out in government guidance should the decision maker consider it appropriate. No comments on part b of para 5.8.11.	The Applicant's position as to managing water and the risk of flooding in relation to construction works is set out at p.338 of [REP2-014]. In response to the point raised regarding temporary storage of construction material, the Applicant has revised commitment W06, which now commits that for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme all construction materials will be stored in Flood Zone 1 and areas at low risk of surface water flooding. The Applicant has also clarified via an update to commitment W06 that no land raising would take place where construction access routes are formed. For the Applicant's position regarding the sequential and exception tests please see the Applicants response to the ExAs second written questions. Action Point 4 from Issue Specific Hearing 3 provides the Applicant's response to the Project's compliance with Part a of paragraph 5.8.11 of EN-1. With regard to community benefits, Government guidance explicitly sets out expectations that community benefit funding is <i>"separate from and not a material planning consideration in England, Wales or Scotland"</i>, and that such funds <i>"are not a means of mitigating environmental or social impacts of infrastructure projects, which the project developer should address through the planning process"</i>. As such, community funds are treated outside of planning and not as part of the DCO. Furthermore, the guidance sets out the level of community fund that should be provided by the developer, based on the type of infrastructure being developed. As a regulated business, the Applicant's regulator will review its costs for

			delivering community funds in line with the levels set out in this guidance.
88	Confirm any outstanding concerns with respect to meeting the objectives of the WFD.	SCC has no comments to make on this matter	Noted.
102	District and County Councils to provide details as to what tourist accommodation may be available for tourists, taking into account Sea Link and other development workers who may be staying in such accommodation within the construction phases.	The accommodation sector in Suffolk obviously welcomes visitors all year round, but there is a high season in July/August where demand for accommodation is at its peak. Pontins in Pakefield has now closed to the public in order to accommodate the Sizewell C workforce, which will also be accommodated in purpose-built accommodation. It is important that the needs of the wider tourism economy are balanced against those of NSIP workforce who require accommodation. A breakdown of Suffolk accommodation spend can be found here: Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-Suffolk-Report-2024.pdf SCC understands that studies on this matter are to be published by ESC at Deadline 4 and/or later and considers that they will provide more robust evidence that that which SCC can currently provide.	The Applicant has addressed this point at p.54 of [REP2-014]. Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism [REP1A-005] concludes that there are no significant effects anticipated on local accommodation capacity arising from the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Interproject Cumulative Effects. [APP-060] also assesses the cumulative impact of the Proposed Project alongside other NSIPs, on local accommodation capacity. Under a worst-case scenario whereby the peak construction workforces of the cumulative schemes overlap, and all workers require accommodation, the chapter concludes that no significant effects are expected. As a result, no additional mitigation will be required. The Applicant has noted that East Suffolk Council (ESC) is commissioning its own studies. Once these are available, the Applicant will take them into account as part of its iterative approach to monitoring and mitigation (see p.60 of [REP4-085]).
Socioeconomics and Tourism		Whilst not directed at SCC, SCC offers the following comments on what should be provided in this plan. SCC expects the Skills and Employment Plan (SEP) to provide clear and detailed workforce requirements for all phases of the project, including workforce numbers, skills, role durations, and the anticipated level of both home-based and non-home-based employment. This information is essential to enable SCC, in its role operating the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), to undertake coordinated workforce planning across Suffolk's major projects and to manage cumulative pressures on the labour market. The SEP should set out how the Applicant will work with the RSCF to align training provision, address specific skills gaps, and contribute to a "right skills, right time" pipeline that maximises opportunities for local residents, supports project delivery, and contributes to long-term legacy skills development across the region.	Noted and addressed below.
105	Provide a skills and employment plan, which shall include a local education/training strategy, or provide a timetable for its submission	Whilst not directed at SCC, SCC offers the following comments on what should be provided in this plan. SCC expects the Skills and Employment Plan (SEP) to provide clear and detailed workforce requirements for all phases of the project, including workforce numbers, skills, role durations, and the anticipated level of both home-based and non-home-based employment. This information is essential to enable SCC, in its role operating the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), to undertake coordinated workforce planning across Suffolk's major projects and to manage cumulative pressures on the labour market. The SEP should set out how the Applicant will work with the RSCF to align training provision, address specific skills gaps, and contribute to a "right skills, right time" pipeline that maximises opportunities	This will be addressed by the Applicant in response to ExQ3 3SERT1.

for local residents, supports project delivery, and contributes to long-term legacy skills development across the region.

A local education and training strategy should be developed jointly with the RSCF, demonstrating how the Applicant will engage effectively with FE, HE and private providers. This should include support for coordinated curriculum and programme planning and the development of inclusive pathways such as apprenticeships, Bootcamps and modular or short-course training. The Applicant is expected to explain how it will assist RSCF-led engagement with providers, reduce duplication of provision, and help create clear, accessible progression routes for local residents into project-related employment.

The SEP should also describe how the Applicant will share information on supply-chain workforce requirements with the RSCF, enabling a coordinated approach to identifying skills gaps and strengthening local supply-chain capacity. This includes working with the RSCF and economic partners to ensure supply-chain businesses are aware of upcoming opportunities and can plan for training, recruitment and upskilling in a timely and efficient way.

To support effective regional alignment, the SEP must set out how the Applicant will contribute to coordinated workforce planning across Suffolk's NSIPs and other major developments, recognising that workforce demand and project timelines will evolve over time. This requires an adaptive management approach in which the Applicant commits to early, ongoing and iterative information-sharing on project timelines, workforce profiles and emerging skills needs. Such real-time cooperation enables the RSCF to maintain accurate county-wide labour market intelligence, respond to changing conditions and manage potential competition for labour as circumstances shift. Alongside workforce considerations, the SEP should also support the monitoring of wider socio-economic effects, enabling SCC and the RSCF to track potential impacts on local services, business activity, housing and accommodation, access to education and training, and community wellbeing. Monitoring arrangements should be flexible and evidence-led, with indicators reviewed and adapted as required to ensure mitigation measures remain proportionate, effective and responsive to emerging issues, including those arising cumulatively across multiple NSIPs. The Applicant should commit to participating in joint monitoring and governance arrangements through existing structures, with performance measures for employment, training, supply-chain outcomes and wider socio-economic factors reviewed and refined as necessary to support continuous learning and adaptive management.

Draft Development Consent Order			
114	Consider and provide a response to the position that SPR do not have an equivalent to article 10 in their DCOs.	SCC understands that (2) and (3) of article 10 within Sea Link's draft Order may be sufficient to prevent enforcement action being taken against SPR in relation to any inconsistencies between SPR's authorised development and Sea Link's. However, SCC is in conversation with the Applicant regarding the wording of article 10 to ensure it cannot be used as a vehicle to undermine the controls consented under the SPR Orders.	This will be addressed by the Applicant in response to ExQ3 3GEN17
115	All parties (applicant and councils) to meet/liase to agree suitable wording of article 10 which all parties are content with, with an update on progress and any	SCC met with the Applicant to discuss this matter and agreed to liaise further with a view to provide suitable wording by Deadline 5.	Noted and acknowledged.

	agreement submitted.		
Design			
131	Suggest alternative wording for requirement 3 including which above ground elements of the proposed development should be included.	SCC has liaised with the other host local authorities (Kent County Council, Thanet District Council and East Suffolk Council to produce the following alternative wording for Requirement 3 based on discussions held: (1) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 3B (Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (2) (2) No stage of Work No. 3A (Access road to the Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of the River Fromus Bridge have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the River Fromus Bridge Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3A must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (3) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 1B (new Substation at Grove Wood, Friston) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 1B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (4) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 9B (Kent Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 9B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (5) (5) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 11 (new Kent Substation) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 11 must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.	This will be addressed by the Applicant in response to ExQ3 3GEN10

(6) In this requirement, “the design details” means the Critical Design Constraints, Overarching Design Principles, and the Project Level Design Principles”.

Explanatory text:

It should be noted that this wording has been produced based on the current status of the application. As a result, the authorities propose for the Overarching and Project Level Design Principles to also serve as controls within the Requirement on account of the inadequacy of the current form of the Design Principles. As reflected in the proposed wording, the authorities do not take issue with the final designs being controlled by some form of Critical Design Constraints to ensure the functionality of the built infrastructure is not constrained by the design which the Applicant has cited as a key concern.

The proposed wording refers to Key Design Principles for the River Fromus crossing. Such principles are not included in [APP-366]; however, SCC and ESC consider robust controls on the design processes and outcomes for the crossing to be necessary beyond what is included in the application based on representations made regarding the magnitude of residual adverse effects making outstanding design necessary.

The proposed wording should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the current wording of the CDCs and design principles within [APP-366] and [APP-367]. The authorities have detailed outstanding problems with these documents both during ISH2 and in written submissions. Should the wording of the Design Principles in these documents change, the Councils’ view on appropriate wording for Requirement 3 may change. For instance, should the Key Design Principles become sufficiently robust, reference to the Overarching and Project Level Design Principles may become unnecessary. The authorities consider such an approach to be preferable to improve the precision of the requirement wording.

Therefore, whilst the proposed wording does not resolve all outstanding matters relating to the design of the onshore infrastructure, it does secure a robust approval process for these designs which is a necessary step towards demonstrating application of the mitigation hierarchy and making the application acceptable in planning terms.

In addition to rewording of the principles within [APP-366] and [APP-367], further work is needed to ensure a robust design process will be followed during the project’s delivery. The design processes for the onshore infrastructure referenced in the proposed requirement wording must be embedded into the project’s delivery programme to ensure optimal design outcomes are achieved as far as possible. The authorities consider that the Applicant should provide detail on how this will be carried out and secured at the next deadline.

Regarding the Kiln Lane substation (Work no. 1B), SCC and ESC consider that a rethink of the Applicant’s fundamental approach is appropriate in light of how the Applicant’s proposed Key Design Principles do not align with its justifications for them. During ISH2, the Applicant stated that much of the design process for this substation has been completed under the SPR DCOs rendering any further design process commitments unnecessary.

The Councils acknowledge that duplication of work is unnecessary. However, if the Applicant wishes to take this approach, then it is necessary for the final design to, in turn, duplicate the final design produced under the SPR consents. If this were used as a starting point, the control for this design could, instead, set out procedures for deviation from that design in proportion to the magnitude of deviation. For instance, extremely minor deviations could be approved in a more proportionate way than more sizeable deviations which should follow the same process as that required and undertaken by SPR under their consents.

At present, it is unacceptable for the Applicant to justify deviations from the SPR design principles for the substation on account of the work already completed by SPR without any

commitment to using the end product of those processes. If the final substation design is not approved prior to the end of this examination, then some commitment for the final design to be produced in accordance with the progress made by SPR would be necessary to justify any deviation from those consented design principles (excluding those not applicable to Sea Link; namely, those specifying cable sealing end compounds).

Table 18.3 Applicant's Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-201]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Table A1 – Document 9.73: Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions [REP3-069]			
1GEN28	<i>Article 11(2), article 15(2) and (5)(b), article 17(1)(b), article 20(3) and (4), article 22(5), article 50(2) and article 55(1) wording</i>	SCC maintains its position in respect of these provisions, the latest version of which is set out in its reply to 1GEN28 in its Deadline 3 submission Answers to Examining Authority Questions Round 1 [REP3-101]	SCC's unchanged position is acknowledged.
1GEN29	<i>Article 11, article 14, article 15 and article 17 consistency of wording: The Applicant will amend the wording in article 14(5), article 15(9) and article 17(2) to read 'beginning with the date on which the application was received' in order to ensure consistency across the draft Order. This reflects the position agreed in the National Grid (Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement) Order 2024.</i>	SCC welcomes this amendment.	Noted.
1GEN47	Requirement 3 converter station design Converter station design	SCC has put forth alternative wording for Requirement 3 in response to Action Point 131 of ISH 2. As stated in ISH 2, SCC, along with ESC, has extensive experience in discharging requirements of DCOs for NSIPs including those relating to design. The most relevant example of this experience lies in SCC's involvement in SPR's design process for its approved substations which SCC considers encapsulating several elements of best practice both in the wording of the DCO and control documents and how these have been actioned postconsent in relation to Requirement 12 of the EA1N and EA2 DCOs. It is due to experience such as this that SCC has been able to have an informed opinion allowing it to recognise the comparative inadequacy of the Applicant's respective DCO proposal in terms of the comparatively worse outcomes which will likely arise during delivery in terms of quality of design and engagement. SCC has no reason to seek to make the design of the relevant onshore infrastructure to be of such a kind that the functionality of the infrastructure is compromised as this would obviously be unacceptable to the Applicant.	Noted.

SCC understands that the Applicant does not want to be forced into a scenario post-consent whereby it is forced to design its onshore infrastructure in such a way which compromises their function. However, SCC does not see why the Applicant has not taken the option of ensuring such a scenario would be excluded by the wording of the DCO as opposed to rejecting any form of approval process. As directly referenced by the Applicant, its Design Principles documents [APP-366] and [APP-367] refer to a hierarchy of principles of which Critical Design Constraints (CDCs) are first and foremost which would have to be reflected in the approval process for the design of the onshore infrastructure, as indicated by SCC at ISH2, precluding a withholding of consent for reasons which are inconsistent with the CDCs would be a suitable mechanism to safeguard the Applicant's functional requirements. For these reasons, SCC considers that the Applicant's fears that an approval process would "create an unrealistic expectation around design flexibility (beyond what the Key Design Principles would already deliver) and create unnecessary delays to delivery as any areas of discussion were resolved" are unfounded. The Applicant has not provided any evidence to base its view upon and has not cited evidence to the contrary such as the approach taken by SPR for EA1N and EA2 where unrealistic expectations around design flexibility has not arisen as an issue on account of the proactive and collaborative approach SPR has taken with relevant stakeholders and local authorities to ensure mutual understanding of the limits of design flexibility.

As stated in SCC's comments on the Applicant's response to 1GEN49, concerns around delays to the project caused by an approval process for Requirement 3 can be alleviated through early proactive engagement with the relevant authorities. Based on the information available, SCC does not see how the implementation of best practice in relation to gaining design approval could not succeed in preventing delay as a result.

In the context of policy, there are significant residual landscape and visual effects identified as a result of these pieces of onshore infrastructure in relation to which the Applicant, at present, refuses to implement a measure that would provide greater certainty that the residual effect will be minimised to the extent that this can be achieved through design.

SCC has provided its detailed position on the necessity of an approval process for the River Fromus bridge, Saxmundham converter station and Kiln Lane substation in its previous representations, most notably in its own response to 1GEN47 in [REP3-101]. There, SCC also details the benefits from having an approval process for these designs.

For the Secretary of State's purposes, the heart of the matter is that an approval process provides the decision maker with greater confidence around the post-consent detailed design stage and that best design will be sought, in the face of the levels of residual effects and the large degree of flexibility sought by the Applicant at consenting stage.

1GEN49.	Requirement 7 construction hours	SCC recognises what is said in the Clean Power 2030 report including the need to accelerate Sea Link to energisation by 2030. SCC understands that in the Applicant's Transmission Licence, Special Conditions 3.41 and 4.9, together with their respective Appendix 1 specify a delivery date of December 2031 for the Sea Link project but also that there is a process open to the Applicant under s11A of the Electricity Act 1989 to seek modifications to any of its licence conditions. Any made DCO for the Sea Link project would have the force of secondary legislation as a statutory instrument and if the Requirements of that DCO, as determined by the Secretary of State, imposed timetable restrictions on the Applicant which meant that it could not achieve the delivery date in its transmission licence, it would be open to the Applicant to apply to modify the conditions and, if such modification was justified by the need to comply the terms of the DCO, it is hard to see why NESO would not approve such a modification. SCC would also like to note that Table 4.10 of the project's description [REP1A-003] appears to be based on an outdated scenario of DCO consent by Q2 2026 when current statutory timelines require the Secretary of State's decision to be made by November 2026. Given this discrepancy, in addition to the Applicant's reference to programme modelling and the fact that the Applicant has already tendered certain major contractors, the Applicant should provide a more accurate indicative construction programme which includes detail specifying the anticipated energisation date. Setting aside the question of the feasibility of energisation by 2030, SCC does not consider that the Applicant has adequately demonstrated the necessity of its proposed core working hours to achieve acceleration as this requires showing that all other avenues to accelerate the programme have been exhausted. The Applicant does not appear to have commented on such avenues which are likely to accelerate the Applicant's programme in SCC's view. For instance, the Applicant could pursue submissions of draft discharge of requirement documents to the relevant local authorities during the post-examination phase whilst awaiting a decision. SCC recognises that this would be at risk due to the potential for changes to the DCO to be made by the Secretary of State; however, such an approach would ensure any substantive issues the local authority has with the draft submissions are resolved in advance, meaning once the DCO is made, the discharge of requirement process can be as timely as feasible. Tendering of contractors and resourcing of the delivery team could be accelerated and increased respectively should there be barriers to such an approach. As stated in ISH2, SCC will work collaboratively in the Applicant to facilitate delivery of its project and so would be open to conversations about approving works outside of the core working hours, where the effects of such works would be minor or immaterial to accelerate the programme. Such requests may be in the interests of the relevant local authority and the community, should the timing of works outside of core working hours reduce	SCC's points about the transmission licence are noted. The Applicant acknowledges concerns regarding working hours but would seek to emphasise that the proposed hours are intended to provide flexibility to carry out works when and where needed. The Applicant requires the necessary flexibility to allow contractors to programme and phase their works, and to accommodate unforeseen construction phase issues without elements of the project being pushed onto the critical path. It is also important that construction activities that are less likely to affect communities, for example works within the superstructure of a converter station building, are not onerously restricted. The Applicant has significantly limited core hours in response to concerns raised by local authorities and in response to AP106 – see for example p.58 of [REP4-086]

		negative impacts by, say, reducing the overall duration of the works in question or by avoiding more impactful timings. Similarly, high-quality project management and phasing of the delivery programme can accelerate delivery which can be implemented through adequate resourcing of project management skills and capacity. Moreover, SCC’s experience of NSIP delivery is that recurring sources of delay come from substandard submissions to discharge requirements and internally from operating practices of promoters and their contractors, such as on account of adjustments to the phasing of works or other changes to delivery. Early tendering and engagement with contractors can mitigate the potential for these delays by allowing work on their final programme to begin as early as possible. To the extent that the avoidance of delays such as these will be in the Applicant’s control (which will be to a substantial extent aside from unforeseeable scenarios which could not have reasonably been prepared for), it should not fall on local communities to bear unnecessary adverse impacts of, amongst other things, extended working hours. If the same outcome of acceleration can be achieved through high quality best practice delivery by the Applicant without extended working hours, there is no reasonable case to be made that extended working hours are necessary. In any case, SCC considers that more detailed and up-to-date information regarding the Applicant’s anticipated construction programme should be submitted to the examination to better evaluate the feasibility of energisation by 2030. (SCC has also commented on this matter during day 3 of ISH2 with a written summary submitted at Deadline 4)	
1GEN50	Requirement 7 construction hours	SCC Public Health welcomes the clarification that piling works are precluded on Sundays (unless otherwise approved by the relevant planning authority) but maintains its position that the hours proposed (Monday to Friday and 0700 to 1700 on Saturdays and may not occur on Sundays or Bank Holidays), are not satisfactory, as regards Saturdays, where the Applicant intends to allow for both early morning piling (0700-0800) and afternoon piling (1300-1700) when local residents might reasonably expect respite from such intrusive activities in those parts of their weekends. Leaving only one day a week (Sundays) when residents might expect to enjoy a piling free ‘lie in’ or to enjoy afternoons in their homes, gardens or other amenity spaces in a piling free environment, is an unreasonable curtailment of their domestic amenities and basic quality of life. SCC would suggest that these hours should be precluded for piling activity on Saturdays (save for an express approval from the relevant planning authority, which would allow flexibility where there was a genuine need for such activity to take place during those hours	The Applicant provided the following response in 9.90 Applicants Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4 [REP4 – 086] The Applicant has considered programme implications and risk for the Proposed Project, and has concluded that it can accommodate the exclusion of bank holidays from the core working hours at the converter station site in Suffolk and the converter and substation site in Kent (except by agreement with the local planning authorities), without prejudicing its ability to accelerate the project in accordance with the NESO Clean Power 2030 objectives. Furthermore, and recognising the desirability of this outcome to stakeholders and communities, the Applicant is also able to agree that for the bank holiday Mondays that form part of a ‘bank holiday weekend’ (meaning Easter Monday, the early May bank holiday, the Spring bank holiday, and the summer bank holiday) the associated (preceding) Saturday and Sunday are also not worked. This is facilitated by the likely implications of the exclusion of the bank holiday Mondays on contractor shift patterns, and also reflects the fact that the Applicant does not anticipate working every weekend in all areas of the project at all times in any case. On this basis, the

			Applicant is comfortable reducing its flexibility in the manner proposed at the converter station sites, although further limitations would introduce unacceptable risks to the ability to programme and deliver the works in a sufficiently timely manner. This reduction in flexibility is proposed specifically at the converter station site in Suffolk and the converter and substation site in Kent, because it is acknowledged that these are large static construction sites where work will be being undertaken for 4-5 years (as opposed to smaller single site works such as individual substations, or works with shorter construction periods). Notwithstanding this, the reducing in flexibility on bank holidays and the bank holiday weekends set out above is not for the purpose of mitigating effects (the ES identifies no impacts that would require this mitigation) but is proposed following a project-specific review in the context of ongoing discussions with stakeholders. The possibility of working on bank holidays is retained for those works which are likely to be more transient, for example the cable sections, where construction activity will be undertaken at each location for shorter periods of time in any case. The possibility of working on bank holidays is also retained for any railway works, where possessions may be dictated by third parties and where bank holiday work may be a necessity. Wording reflecting the above has been added to Requirement 7 (see Appendix C ‘Revised dDCO Requirements’)
1GEN52	Requirement 9 reinstatement schemes	Please see agenda item 21.4 (Schedule 3 Requirement 9(2) “reinstatement schemes”) of SCC’s Deadline 4 response Post-Hearing Submission for Issue Specific Hearing 2 .	No response required.
1LVIA1	Landscape Vision	SCC has commented on the schemes landscape vision in [REP3-101] and provides further comments in its post hearing submission to ISH 2.	The Applicant’s position on the landscape vision is contained within the answer to 1LVIA1 within Application Document 9.73 Applicant’s Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069] and subsequently the response to SCC’s comments in REP3-101 contained within Application Document 9.87 (A) Applicant’s Comments on Responses to First Written Questions [REP4-083] . Furthermore, the Applicant’s position on the provision of additional mitigation planting is set out with respect to specific viewpoints discussed within ISH2 within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant’s Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] and relating to AP39 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] .
1LVIA6	Adaptive monitoring	SCC considers that adaptive management must also include a time extension element for the aftercare and establishment, management and monitoring period to achieve growth equivalent to five years and well established reinstatement planting prior to handover	The Applicant has updated the adaptive management and monitoring section of the oLEMP at Deadline 6 to incorporate reference to the time extension element (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk).
1LVIA9	Effects of construction on defined features of the NL	<u>Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives</u>	The Applicant’s position on how the sub-factors of the Natural Beauty Indicators have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Project is contained within Appendix A of Application Document

SCC considers that intactness refers to the whole landscape and not to elements that stay intact during construction.

Further, it is not only the ecological, but also the visual intactness that is affected by the proposals. SCC considers that, given the visual disruption during construction and the required time to achieve reinstatement of the acid grassland, the magnitude of the effect is medium, rather than small, as stated by the Applicant.

The condition of the landscape’s features and elements

As above, it is about the landscape as a whole. While SCC welcomes the additional acid grassland, the proposed duration of the enhancement of 10 years is considered too limited, given the time it takes to re-establish acid grassland.

The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether man-made or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area

Please see D3 comments [REP3-122].

A distinctive sense of place

SCC agrees that the distinctive sense of place would remain, however during construction it is likely to be disrupted.

Striking landform

SCC accepts the Applicant’s assessment.

Visual interest in patterns of land cover

SCC accepts the Applicant’s assessment.

Appeal to the senses

SCC disagrees with the Applicant and considers that the appeal to the senses would be temporarily disrupted, where construction activity is visible.

A sense of remoteness and A relative lack of human influence

SCC considers that during construction these aspects would be eroded/disrupted, where the construction activities are visible.

A sense of openness and exposure

SCC disagrees with the Applicant’s position and considers that the near-shore construction vessels would affect the expansive views offshore during construction, as these vessels are incongruent with the character of the Heritage Coast and the local setting of the National Landscape.

A sense of enclosure and isolation

9.73.1 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions – Appendices [REP3-070]. The Applicant’s comments on **REP3-122** are contained within **Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241]**. Comments are acknowledged that SCC accepts the Applicant’s assessment regarding certain sub-factors and the Applicant strongly disagrees with the claim from SCC that the assessment findings have been underplayed for certain sub-factors due to the reasoning detailed within **REP3-070**.

Regarding the more detailed comments concerning the intactness of the landscape, the sub-factor assessment contained within **REP3-070** considers the landscape as a whole by referring to features of the landscape that would be affected, as detailed within the ‘Suffolk Coast and Heaths Indicator’ section within the LDA Design Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Natural Beauty and Special Qualities Indicators V1.8 2016 document. The assessment then relates such features to the juxtaposition and intactness, which includes the visual, functional and ecological perspectives.

Regarding the more detailed comments concerning landscape condition, the sub-factor assessment contained within **REP3-070** refers explicitly to the landscape as a whole. As stated in **Application Document 9.47 National Landscape Section 85 Duty Technical Note [REP1-120]**, for approximately five to seven years there would be both the restored functional grassland and the enhanced grassland in parallel. The 10-year period for the management of the acid grassland is an agreed time period with the landowner and cannot be extended.

The Applicant disagrees with the broad comments from SCC referring to the influence of construction activities without referencing specific elements of the ‘Suffolk Coast and Heaths Indicator’ section within the LDA Design Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Natural Beauty and Special Qualities Indicators V1.8 2016 document. Appendix A of **Application Document 9.73.1 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions – Appendices [REP3-070]** seeks to provide a more detailed assessment relating to the sub-factors and this forms the basis of the Applicant’s assessment judgements.

Regarding hedgerow mapping, **Application Document 6.4.2.2.A.7 Important Hedgerows [AS-028]** shows the Important Hedgerows across the Order Limits and **Application Document 6.4.2.2.A.1 Suffolk Phase 1 Survey Results [AS-028]** in the same document shows all hedgerows (important or otherwise). **Application Document 2.12 Trees and Important Hedgerows to be Removed or Managed Plans (Version 2, change request) [CR1-023]** should also be referred to.

SCC considers that this sub-factor would be affected in localised areas where construction activities are seen (isolation) and where vegetation is permanently lost above cables (enclosure).

A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature

SCC considers that time-depth is lost, where construction activity is visible or otherwise perceived.

Contributors and detractors from tranquillity

SCC agrees with the Applicant that there is the context of human activity associated with residential areas, the golf club and the B1122. However, the nature of the human activity associated with the proposed construction works is different from the contextual activities and is expected to erode the relative tranquillity during construction. It should further be noted that the residential areas and the golf club are also receptors of relative tranquillity, which will be adversely affected during construction.

Geological and geo-morphological features

SCC accepts the Applicant's position.

Wildlife and habitats

SCC considers that the removal of hedgerows could result in (temporary) disruption to the connectivity of habitats. Not all affected hedgerows appear to have been mapped to date.

Cultural Heritage

SCC defers comments regarding Cultural Heritage to the district authority and the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape Partnership.

SCC's conclusion:

With regards to Landscape Quality, SCC considers that the Applicant underestimates the construction impacts and effects.

The same applies to the Scenic Quality, despite landform and patterns of landform remaining largely unharmed. SCC considers that the Appeal to the Senses will be affected during construction to a greater extent than assessed by the Applicant.

With regards to Relative Wildness and Relative Tranquillity, SCC agrees with the Applicant to an extent that the golf club, residential areas and the B1122 are not in themselves wild or remote. They are, however, set within an area that is perceived as relatively remote, wild and tranquil. SCC considers that this perception is being disrupted during construction, and that the magnitude is greater than that assessed.

The Applicant has taken steps to minimise the loss of mature, and especially veteran trees, which form an important element within Natural Heritage Features. The approach to hedges is less

Regarding hedgerow loss, there would be very minimal permanent hedgerow loss due to the reinstatement commitments following the construction phase of the Proposed Project (detailed within **Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]**). Any very minor permanent loss, such as along the B1121 (noting the majority will be reinstated behind the sight lines) and relating to Friston Scenario 2, is taken into account within the assessment detailed within **Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-097]** and **Application Document 6.3.2.1.D ES Appendix 2.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment [APP-098]**.

		convincing and SCC considers that all hedges need to be assessed and clearly presented on plans (distinguishing important from non-important hedgerows as per 1997 regulations) and ultimately reinstated.	
1LVIA12	Visualisations Winter Year 15 Visualisation for Viewpoint 8 (a) - Public Bridleway (Friston 260, route 2), East of Friston, Looking Northwest	SCC considers that this visualisation demonstrates the insufficiency of the mitigative planting proposals for Friston under Scenario 2, as there is no discernible difference between year 1 and year 15 (both are winter visualisations, and it is noted that the foreground hedge and its potential to mature has not been considered).	A worst-case approach has been adopted therefore the newly planted hedgerow is not shown to be mature at year 15. Further information on this visualisation and the mitigation planting should be referred to within the response to 1LVIA12 within Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069] . Appendix B within Application Document 9.108.1 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points (CAH1 and ISH2) - Deadline 5 – Appendices [REP5-127] should be referred to which shows an updated version of Viewpoint 8a reflecting the updated Kiln Lane substation footprint and tower positions which reflect the current detailed design (shown as a 3D model) and the updated Sea Link Friston Scenario 2 outline landscape mitigation.
1LVIA14	Landscape and visual effects of new access from the B1121	SCC considers that the potential urbanising effect of constructing a new bell mouth and access road from the B1121 across the River Fromus, south of Saxmundham, has not been fully assessed in Table 3.1 of [APP-097] or the viewpoint assessment pages for VP2 and VP20 in [APP-098].	The Applicant disagrees with the SCC comment for the reasons set out in response to 1LVIA14 within Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069] .
1LVIA15	Appendix D 1LVIA15 Coordination with Friston Substation Landscape	SPR are seeking to respond thoughtfully to opportunities to improve their scheme for the benefit of the community, and this approach is welcome as is the specific measure of the northern woodland planting.	At Deadline 4 the Applicant updated Figure 5 of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) which reflects the currently consented detailed landscape design approved pursuant to Requirement 14(1) of the East Anglia TWO DCO by East Suffolk Council in February 2026.
	Mitigation Technical Note [REP3-070]	Given National Grid's publicly stated cooperate commitments to both Biodiversity and Communities, the SCC considers it deeply disappointing that they are not able to welcome this additional planting scheme. The Sea Link proposals as the stand would result in rendering woodland planting impossible within their cable corrido, which would be considerable proportion of the proposed woodland, and would most likely undermine its effectiveness. SCC therefore considers that HDD would be beneficial as well as necessary in this area. It is disappointing that rather than exploring solutions, the option of HDD is dismissed without establishing whether it would be possible/feasible at the location. Even when considering the potential challenges of HDD of HVAC cables, as laid out within the Technical Note, SCC disagrees with the Applicant that the benefits of using HDD for HVDC cables are so limited they cannot be justified. Looking at the Masterplan as shown on Plate D-1, the areas of the SPR proposals affected by Sea Link could be greatly reduced. At location A the connectivity to the field boundary hedge would be maintained. At location B substantially more of the woodland belt	The comment is assumed to refer to Appendix D contained within Application Document 9.73.1 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions – Appendices [REP3-070]. At Deadline 4 the Applicant updated Figure 5 of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) which reflects the currently consented detailed landscape design approved pursuant to Requirement 14(1) of the East Anglia TWO DCO by East Suffolk Council in February 2026.

		could be planted and retained. At location C the integrity of the proposed field boundary tree line would not need to be compromised. Since the northern woodland is yet to be planted, it could also be explored, whether the cables in this location could be laid using open trench methods, but to a depth, and maybe with additional protection, that would enable woodland planting over the top. A combination of additional depth and raised landform could also be considered for both types of cable. SCC notes the following statement in the Technical Note at D.10.4: <i>‘This Technical Note also provides a proposed coordinated masterplan for the site that would deliver additional planting compared to the SPR OLEMS and a landscape masterplan that is very similar the recent SPR proposal with the Sea Link cables in place and installed using an open cut solution.’</i> This masterplan does not appear to show contribution from Sea Link beyond undermining SPR’s current proposals, without offering or exploring a suitable alternative or compromise.	
1TT1	Peak construction times	The Applicant refers to the probability of peaks in various projects coinciding. SCCs main interest is in the peak cumulative impact not just the coincident of individual peaks. Moreover, if the Applicant considers its peak overlapping with multiple projects unlikely and so not requiring mitigation, then it should decide on a more realistic worst case scenario to assess. The worst case scenario is intended to provide an envelope such that effects will be no worse than assessed. The Applicant’s approach relies on its proposed worst case scenario failing to actualise. The issue with this approach is that the envelope no longer ensures effects are at acceptable levels were the peaks of all projects to fully overlap. In turn, there is not an envelope ensuring effects are acceptable should substantial overlap of traffic occur outside the respective peaks of cumulative projects which is a much more likely scenario. In addition, consideration of substantial, yet below-peak, construction traffic overlap from multiple projects may surpass effects assessed for the coincident of individual peaks with Sea Link. Therefore, SCC considers the failure to secure the desired envelope may lead to residual significant effects where the potential for such effects have been dismissed by the Applicant on account of full overlap of peaks being unlikely, especially when considering increased duration of effect for high levels of traffic outside of absolute peak numbers as well as overlap of multiple projects outside of peak traffic numbers. SCC is also concerned with the duration of impact caused by prolonged overlap of various projects with Sea Link, particularly for Sizewell C which will also have substantial traffic outside of the peak numbers for a prolonged period. It is also essential for the most up to date data to be used in the Applicant’s assessment. Additional data is becoming available for this area of Suffolk in relation to NSIPs and baseline traffic.	SCC’s comments are acknowledged and extensive work has been carried out on reviewing potential cumulative traffic and transport effects within Suffolk including within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] and Application Document 9.26 Traffic & Transport Cumulative Assessment (Suffolk) [REP1-110]. Further discussions have since been held with SCC Highways in January and February 2026, and further information has been provided as part of Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. Further to the above, the Applicant has thoroughly reviewed the latest construction traffic forecasts available for East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm (EA2) within their Construction Traffic Management Plan (dated November 2025) and for LionLink Offshore Interconnector within their PEI Report (dated January 2026). This latest information has not resulted in any changes to the previous worst-case traffic parameters/ assumptions that were adopted for the cumulative assessment of these schemes as the EA2 forecasts are within parameters previously assessed and no quantitative traffic and transport information has been provided within the PEI Report for LionLink. The Applicant has also reviewed other schemes including Helios and the Essex and Suffolk Water pipeline, although there is insufficient information available (e.g. traffic forecasts) for these schemes to inform the traffic and transport cumulative assessment. The Applicant has also reviewed construction traffic forecasts for the A12 Major Road Network (MRN) scheme based on their Transport Assessment (dated November 2025) which shows that the construction peak (early 2027) would not overlap with the construction peak of the Proposed Project, that there would be no additional vehicle trips on the network during the assessed shoulder or network peak hours and

		These are: • SPR EA2 CTMP for the substation which includes the revised program, HGV movements and workforce for that project • Quarterly Transport Reports and Traffic Surveys relating to SZC • Greater details on program, HGV movements and workforce from the Sealink project • Information within the Lionlink statutory consultation. In SCCs view this should allow the programs for each project to compared over time and identify the maximum cumulative impact. Obviously, there is an element of change that can affect these forecasts but would provide a realistic worst-case scenario against which actual data can be compared. Plate 5.1 of the CTMTP indicates a construction period from early 2027 to 2032 which overlaps with: • SPR EA2 completing end 2028 (from its CTMP) • SZC completing 2036 (Implementation Plan Nov 2025) • LionLink commencing 2028 and operational by 2032 (Statutory Consultation Jan 2026) • Suffolk Water Pipeline commencing 2030 and completing 2032 (Consultation Dec 2025) • A12 MRN scheme commencing 2027 and completing late 2028	that there would be fewer than 30 vehicles per hour along the A12 (through the study area) during the other hours. No updates are therefore required and the Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened in and assessed within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. This includes peak construction trips for five schemes in combination with operational trips for three schemes, with the assumption that the peak construction phases of the schemes under construction would all directly overlap with the peak construction phase of the Proposed Project. The cumulative assessment includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment therefore remains to be robust and has informed the junction capacity modelling submitted at Deadline 6.
1TT2	Benhall railway bridge - minor work	SCC notes that the main concerns raised by the Applicant regarding the Benhall Rail Bridge here relate to failure of drainage or waterproofing together with concerns regarding corrosion of the deck beams SCC agrees further investigation is necessary and is working with the applicant to agree the parameters of this. However, by their nature there is always a risk that further investigation or works reveal additional defects that can lead to a reduction in the structural capacity.	Noted – some degree of uncertainty as to the works required is to be expected and the Applicant has grappled with that risk.
1TT7	Layby facilities	Layby facilities for welfare breaks, and for commercial drivers generally, are already beyond capacity with complaints being made over the lack of welfare facilities. This is both in SRN, MRN and local road network particularly in East Suffolk. SCC has had complaints from people about anti-social lorry parking due to the lack of availability of layby facilities which undermines the Applicant's position and warrants the inclusion of improved measures to prevent this resulting from its vehicles. Mere encouragement is not sufficient as this won't guarantee any measurable outcome difference.	The Applicant has previously provided a response to the Examining Authority's First Written Question 1TT7 within Application Document 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Question [REP3-069]. The Applicant has no further comments on this matter.
1TT16	Public right of way (PRoW) – mitigation/ compensation	The Applicant justifies no further mitigation/PRoW enhancement due to lack of justification for CA of land. SCC does not agree that the acquisition of land or rights for PRoW enhancements could not satisfy the CA tests in sections 122 PA 2008. First, the Applicant itself has identified that there are significant residual intra project effects on parts of the PRoW network for which the Applicant proposes no mitigation (see [APP-059]). Even if the Applicant were correct to suggest that only what it describes as 'essential mitigation' (by which it appears to mean mitigation	The Applicant stands by Application Document 9.45 Approach to Assessment of Public Rights of Way [REP1-119]. The Applicant also previously responded to the SCC LIR (REP1-130) within Application Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026]. The Applicant's latest position regarding footpath related matters and the need for and provision of offsetting is provided in Appendix D of Application document 9.136.1 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions – Appendices.

directed as addressing a likely significant effect, as suggested in paras 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of its Approach to Assessment of PRow [REP1-119]) could be the subject of CA (a suggestion not accepted by SCC as explained below), there would be a justification for providing mitigation (or offsetting) for that significant effect.

Second, SCC does not accept that the Applicant's categorisation of other effects on the PRow network as not significant is justified, for the reasons explained in its LIR (paras 11.207-11.212, paras 11.232-11.249). SCC considers that the Applicant has not adequately assessed the potential for significant effects because of the shortcomings in its 'compartmentalisation' approach to impacts on the PRow network.

Third, SCC does not consider that mitigation (or offsetting) is required, by either policy or law, to be limited only to addressing significant effects in EIA terms. SCC notes that para 4.1.5 of EN-1 expects that the Secretary of State will take into account all potential benefits and all potential adverse impacts, and in neither case is this limited to only 'significant' benefits or adverse impacts. Nor does EN-1 limit its reference in para 4.1.7 to mitigating impacts as far as possible only to 'significant' impacts. Where adverse impacts can be reduced by applying the mitigation hierarchy to a level that leaves the effects as not significant, those effects are still an impact, and if it is possible to minimise them further, there is no sound planning reason why such opportunities should not be taken before the residual effects (after mitigation) are then weighed against the benefits.

It can also be noted that the Applicant has not applied a 'significance' threshold to its identification of the benefits of the project in Planning Statement [AS-058] (section 5.3 and all of those benefits are then relied on in paras 9.2.22 to 9.2.31 of the Planning Statement). It would be a lop-sided exercise to weigh all of the benefits in a planning balance but only have regard to 'significant' adverse effects to set against those benefits. Whilst SCC would accept that policy in EN-1 does not require an applicant to mitigate nonsignificant effects (but nor does it preclude that course being undertaken by an applicant), if an applicant chooses not to address such effects, then it is incumbent on that applicant to include all such residual effects in a planning balance exercise. However, that is not the approach taken by the Applicant in this case as regards PRow, where only what the Applicant regards as significant effects on the PRow network have been brought into account (para 9.2.54 of the Planning Statement).

In addition, an approach which only brought into account 'significant' effects would leave out of account any other benefits or adverse impacts that are required to be considered in order to determine whether section 104(7) PA 2008 should be applied. The balancing required by section 104(7) PA 2008 is not limited only to a consideration of 'significant' effects. SCC considers that CA can be justified to secure any mitigation measure (including offsetting) which it is concluded is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms (having regard to the relevant NPS

As the Applicant explained in ISH3 paragraph 4.3.8 in NPS EN-1 (2023) states: "*In this NPS and the technology specific NPSs, when used in relation to environmental matters the terms 'effects', 'impacts' or 'benefits' should be understood to mean **likely significant** effects, likely significant impacts, or likely significant benefits*". As such it is only significant effects that require to be mitigated.

		and all other important and relevant considerations). It is a matter for the decision maker's planning judgment whether particular measures are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and there is no principle in either policy or law that only measures addressing 'significant' impacts are necessary to make a development acceptable. In the specific case of the residual impacts on the PRow network, SCC considers that the enhancement measures it has suggested are necessary to offset those impacts and that they would meet this test (but as noted below it would be content to discuss other enhancement measures with the Applicant that may achieve the same overall objective of offsetting the residual impacts of the project on the PRow network). If the decision maker shares that view there would be no impediment to the exercise of CA powers to secure the land and rights required to deliver those measures. Moreover, this point does not preclude the Applicant from seeking to gain voluntary agreements for the provision of such routes. SCC stands by the point that PRow enhancements are 'essential' mitigations. Particularly for the proposed NMU route along the B1119 to mitigate effects for PRow users in relation to the permanent diversion route caused by the converter station site. Residual effects mean it is required for offsetting measures to be sought. If the Applicant does not accept SCC's proposals, SCC would like to see what alternatives have been considered by the Applicant. SCC is willing to discuss its enhancement proposals, and whether there are more appropriate alternative offsetting measures, with the Applicant	
1TT17	Coordination of PRow closures and diversions	The wording of GG32 of the REAC goes further than merely imply that "The Applicant is committed to ongoing engagement with other projects including EA1N / EA2 to identify potential opportunities for co-ordination during project delivery and to minimise potential impacts on Public Rights of Way (PRow)". It implies that the Applicant will coordinate with SPR to reduce significant cumulative effects. The ExA has asked about the delivery of this commitment and the Applicant has now indicated that 'a firm commitment cannot be made' for any joint public rights of way management plan with the promoters of other projects. The Applicant is right to say that such coordination is not guaranteed as it relies on the agreement of another party and their associated interests in delivering their own projects. This is exactly the reason SCC considers GG32 unacceptable to secure either minimising the Applicant's contribution to significant effects or mitigating the effect to the level of non-significance, contrary to Advice Note 17. The Applicant has not proposed any revised wording for GG32. SCC considers that (as a minimum) the Applicant should commit to engaging with the promoter(s) of EA1N and EA2 and commit to using its best endeavours achieve co-ordination of PRow closures/diversions. Other mitigation measures should also be sought to minimise these effects. SCC has suggested ways in which this can be achieved in its comments on the Outline PRowWMP such as in Chapter 11 of the LIR [REP1- 130] and in [REP2-062], including a	These comments are acknowledged by the Applicant. The Applicant also has previously responded to REP1-130 and REP2-062 within Application Document 9.35.1 Applicant's Comments on Local Impact Report from Suffolk County Council [REP2-026] and Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064].

		commitment to keeping PRoWs open by implementing crossings where necessary. If no direct mitigation is feasible, offsetting measures must be explored as required by EN-1, including its reference to the mitigation hierarchy.	
1SERT7.	Employment and skills plans	SCC’s position remains as set out in our Comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 1 and Deadline 1A (REP2-062). The points we raised there continue to stand, and our concerns remain unresolved. We therefore have nothing further to add at this stage but would encourage the Applicant to reassess its position in line with SCC’s Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy – Supplementary Guidance and the evidence presented. SCC also notes the Applicant’s reference to the need for its proposals to be “economic and efficient” for consumers. SCC does not consider that the preparation of a Skills & Employment Plan conflicts with this requirement; indeed, SCC has already set out in the Supplementary Guidance that structured skills planning in the form of a SEP would support economic and efficient delivery by: • reducing labour-market uncertainty; • supporting a more resilient local and regional skills pipeline; • helping minimise displacement, wage inflation and recruitment delays; and • reducing reliance on non-home-based labour, thereby improving deliverability and lowering risk. These outcomes are all consistent with the Applicant’s statutory duties under the Electricity Act and Ofgem’s regulatory expectations. As such, SCC maintains that a proportionate, locally-aligned Skills & Employment Plan remains both necessary and reasonable.	A response to the ExA’s request to provide a Skills and Employment Plan (Reference AP105) has been provided in Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) .
1O1.	Material and Waste Management Plan	SCC has set out concerns Minerals and Waste concerns in its LIR [REP1-130] which is reflected in table 3.13 of its draft Statement of Common Ground [REP3-062]. SCC considers that an outline Materials and Waste Management Plan would ensure these concerns, particularly in relation to the reuse of minerals, can be addressed. Whilst SCC recognises that the Applicant has existing commitments relating to the waste hierarchy, an outline plan would enable SCC to see how the Applicant intends to implement this and how it would be controlled in more detail which is not provided by existing documents. This detail is required because the amount of the waste from construction and demolition could be substantial. Would for example their work on the Benhall Bridge involve removal of the disused asbestos water main? Where would the Waste Electrical Equipment in the form of cable offcuts go. Aggregate from temporary haul road for cabling works could amount to hundreds of thousands of tonnes and should be recycled. For this reason, SCC considers the Applicant’s justification given in this response, which says outline plans are only required where significant effects are identified, should be rejected.	The Applicant has addressed the request for an outline Materials and Waste Management Plan – see p.41 of [REP5-131] .

		Moreover, it would provide an opportunity for SCCand other IPs to comment on this during the examination which serves as the consultation period for this application. SCC notes that an outline Materials and Waste Management Plan was produced for the Bramford to Twinstead DCO.	
Table A2 – Document 9.17.1: Suffolk Drainage Strategy			
Run off Destination	National Standards for SuDS	The applicant has not clearly demonstrated to the LLFA satisfaction that they have followed the National Standards for SuDs relating to run off destinations – Standard 1: Run Off Destinations, water reuse. The LLFA will need a statement showing that they have considered water using for other the construction, operational and decommission element of the proposed development.	The Applicant has provided details on water reuse within the Application Document 9.17.1 (B) Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP5-083] paragraph 6.3.5
6.6 Proposed Drainage Features	Basin design	The applicant is proposing SuDs basins, but the proposed side slopes (1 in 3) are not to the LLFA SuDs Guidance. 1 Sides slopes should not exceed 1 in 4 unless specific site/safety/maintenance arrangements allow for steeper slopes (C753 p.490 & 651). Applicant should submit typical cross section of any proposed SuDS features to the LLFA SuDs Guidance for our approval as part of the examination process.	CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015 (CIRIA C753) states the following: <i>“Side slopes to the pond between the aquatic and safety bench should not usually exceed 1 in 3 for public safety reasons, and wherever mowing is required, slopes should preferably be no steeper than 1 in 4.” (page 490)</i> <i>“...even with smaller mowing machines, grass banks can only be cut by ride-on or wide hand operated mowers up to 1 in 4 slopes; the maximum slope for any form of hand-operated equipment is generally taken as 1 in 3, but this should be subject to risk assessment, which considers the capability of the particular cutting machine.” (page 651)</i> The typical basin cross sections represented within the Appendix to the Application Document 9.17.1 (B) Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP5-083] show maximum 1 in 3 slopes, however these are subject to detailed design and the associated maintenance risk assessment which will be dictated by the vegetation proposed on the slopes and the maintenance strategy and could be 1 in 4 or shallower. All ponds proposed by the Applicant will be under the control of the Applicant for the purposes of maintenance and those activities will be fully risk assessed as identified within CIRIA C753. Should the public have potential access to the ponds the safety guidance within CIRIA C753 is being met by the typical details shown.
7.3 Permanent Foul Water Discharge		If the applicant cannot connect to the public foul sewer and a package treatment work is required, any discharge to a watercourse must be controlled, so that any discharge, including surface water runoff, does not exceed Qbar combined, i.e. greenfield run off rate .	The Applicant understands and agrees with this statement, where a public foul sewer connection is not practicable then either a cesspit is required which will be periodically emptied with the waste being treated off site or a package treatment works shall be required which will require discharge to be controlled in terms of quality and flow rate.
Table A3 – Document 9.7 (D) Applicant’s Schedule of Changes to the Draft Development Consent Order [REP3-056] SCC Archaeological Service comments:			
34	Schedule 3 Requirement 14 Update to archaeology requirement 14	SCCAS are generally satisfied with the updates made to Requirement 14 (Archaeology) and the wording is now mostly in line with that suggested as appropriate in the SCC LIR.	The Applicant is pleased that this requirement is almost agreed. Requirement 5 states that: <i>‘For the avoidance of doubt, all pre-commencement operations must be carried out in accordance with... the outline written schemes of investigation listed in</i>

		SCCAS are however concerned that part 4 does not make clear that archaeological mitigation works must take place prior to any pre-commencement works as well as construction works, given the high potential for these activities (based upon the list of activities defined within the DCO as pre-commencement works) to cause below ground impacts which may damage or destroy archaeological remains before they are appropriately mitigated. Therefore, additional clarity is still needed in the wording of the requirement to appropriately safeguard archaeology and secure this work at an appropriate time in relation to other works. As such, SCCAS would continue to advise that Requirement 14 (4) should be worded as follows: ‘All archaeological works must be carried out in accordance with the approved site-specific written scheme of investigation for that stage, prior to the commencement of any pre-commencement or construction works in that stage’.	<i>paragraph 14(1)’. This means that pre-commencement works must be undertaken in line with Application Document 7.5.4.1 Outline Onshore Overarching Written Scheme of Investigation – Suffolk [APP-343], providing general protections for pre-commencement works. We agree that further wording may be beneficial in this document to ensure archaeology is protected within archaeological mitigation areas, so have added wording to section 8.5 in this document stating that ‘no works (either pre-commencement or construction) involving ground disturbance may commence within defined archaeological mitigation areas until they have been formally signed off by SCCAS’.</i> This amended document has been submitted at Deadline 5, and the Applicant hopes this will resolve the issue raised.
	Part 4 Supplemental Powers (23) Removal of human remains	No revisions have yet been made to the clause relating to human remains and in line with comments set out in the SCC LIR, to ensure that this clause does not cause issues in archaeological human remains being able to be appropriately dealt with, SCCAS would advise the need for part 12 to be updated to make clear that archaeological human remains believed to be over 100 years old should be treated in line with the Burial Act 1857 and the terms of any issued burial license, as well as the requirements of the relevant WSIs and best practice documents. This is to avoid human remains potentially being exposed for an extended period and at a risk from damage or harm.	The aim of Article 23 is to consolidate the applicable provisions for regulating the removal of human remains to provide an alternative procedure for managing the removal of any human remains which are disturbed. Paragraph (17) only disapplies section 25 of the Burial Act 1857 and therefore the Burial Act 1857 would apply to the extent limited parts of that act remain in force. Requirement 14 secures compliance with the relevant archaeological WSIs which are drafted in accordance with best practice guidance. The Applicant notes that the existing drafting reflects the approach deemed appropriate by the Secretary of States on other schemes with linear elements.
SCC’s Comments on the Applicant’s Schedule of Changes [REP3-057]			
6 Art.2 (interpretation)		While the amendment is welcome, the amended definition of “maintain” still includes the power to replace any part of the authorised project. Depending on the replacement undertaken, such development is still likely to be significant. Article 4(2) (maintenance of authorised project) provides the (wide) power to maintain conferred under article 4(1) does not relieve the undertaker of any requirement to obtain any further licence under Part 4 (marine licensing) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 for offshore works not covered by the deemed marine licence. Absent article 4(2), it is unclear what controls apply to the maintenance works. Owing to their potentially wide ranging nature, SCC requests that the Applicant directs SCC to the relevant document which deals with the control of maintenance works.	It is considered that maintenance work is likely to be of a much smaller scale than the works required during construction, and therefore the application of best site practice would be sufficient to manage any potential impacts.
25	Schedule 3, Requirement 3 (Converter Station Design)	Column 10.1 (Adequacy of design controls including in relation to converter stations, substations, pylons, lighting) of SCC’s Deadline 3 Post-Hearing Submission for Issue Specific Hearing 2 (which accompanies this submission) summarises its concerns with design controls and provides alternative wording.	Noted

Table A4 – Document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP3-078]

LV01	Landscape and Visual	The CTMP should also include measures to minimise vegetation loss, in particular for temporary works, such as temporary accesses, visibility splays, haul roads and works compounds. For example, through traffic management measures or reduced widths.	At paragraph 7.4.23 of Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064] , it states that “ <i>vegetation clearance will be carried out at the proposed site accesses, where required, to achieve appropriate levels of visibility, subject to agreement with the local highway authority</i> ”. It is considered that there is sufficient control that no vegetation works would be carried out without approval and is in combination with LV01 within the REAC (Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]) which states that “ <i>The contractor(s) will retain vegetation where practicable</i> ”. This document is secured by Requirement 6 of the draft DCO (Application Document 3.1 (H) draft Development Consent Order [REP5-005]).
LV13	Landscape and Visual Suffolk Onshore	Some of the measures listed here as principles, could restrict further development of the landscape proposals	It is requested that SCC is more specific on any concerns regarding LV13.
LV14	Landscape and Visual Suffolk Onshore	The recessive design commitment should not preclude innovative and artistic design of the parapets.	The recessive design commitment responds to feedback from the Design Review Panel, as set out within Application Document 7.11.1 (B) Design Approach Document – Suffolk [REP1A-029] and also SCC landscape and heritage officers during meetings.
A02	Arboriculture	The risk to life as well of property of all users of the site should be included here.	Measure A02 states “A pre-construction check will be undertaken of trees within the Order Limits and remedial works actioned where appropriate (e.g. where they pose an unacceptable risk to people or property). Trees will be monitored during the construction period, and during operation where they pose a risk to infrastructure constructed as part of the Proposed Project. All staff operating on the Site are to be made aware of the need to look out for obvious signs of tree defects and to report them to the Site Manager who will seek further advice as necessary. Where remedial works are required in respect of those trees which are subject of commitment A05, then details of such works will be agreed in advance with the relevant local planning authority, save where already addressed in the Arboricultural Method Statement as required by Requirement 8, Schedule 3 and save in the case of emergency.
B20	Ecology and Biodiversity	The habitat creation should be a ‘no less than’ commitment rather than an exact commitment.	The fact that measure B20 is in the outline CEMP means that approval will be required for the full CEMP from the appropriate authority. As such it is considered that there is an adequate mechanism for agreeing the final areas of habitat creation.
Table A5 – Document 9.40: Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note [REP3-065]			
3.1-3.4		As per previous submissions, there is still concern that the cumulative effect of Sealink, LionLink, Sizewell C, Norwich to Tilbury and other NSIPs will have a detrimental effect on aspects of the visitor economy There is already considerable pressure on the accommodation sector (self-catering and private rental) as a result of Sizewell C. At the time of writing, 2000 workers are already onsite for Sizewell alone. Whilst there are some short-term benefits to be made for	The Applicant notes concern from SCC regarding the impacts of the Proposed Project on the tourism economy locally. As set out in Application Document 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) , SE04 states that liaison will be undertaken with tourism related businesses, through proactive collaboration with the Local Destination Management Organisation (“DMO”) and the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (“LVEP”) prior to and during construction , not only to provide businesses with construction

the accommodation sector and wider visitor economy, we need to ensure that we have a viable tourism economy once all NSIPs are complete. The sector has expressed concerns and the need to ensure that Suffolk still has a tourism economy which is attractive and accessible to visitors.

Given the number of projects taking place over a relatively short period of time, it is inevitable that there will be some crossover, and it is important that the effects of all of them are taken into consideration. It would therefore be very difficult to consider them in isolation. One NSIP alone is likely to have some impact, to a greater to lesser degree. Multiple projects will definitely have a significant impact. We need to consider the practical aspects of how the construction phase would impact the visitor experience in a number of areas.

Perception- Is Suffolk likely to be viewed as a viable place for a short break or holiday? Word of mouth, particularly in an age of TripAdvisor and/or social media, can quickly lead to negative experiences and perceptions becoming widespread. Excess traffic and diversions create bad first impressions on arrival. Add to this excess noise, road closures, visual blight during construction phase and afterwards) etc and Suffolk could acquire an image which would be problematic. This in turn has the potential to lead to people holidaying elsewhere or at the very least not returning in the short to medium term.

Practical effect on tourism businesses- Roadworks, delays, road closures etc all pose issues for businesses. The visitor economy relies on shift workers as well as prompt deliveries of fresh food and other supplies. If these need to be accommodated, then they need to be planned for and mitigation measures need to be put in place to ensure that these can be overcome.

Timescale. Whilst Suffolk welcomes visitors all- year round and is a popular out of season weekend and short break location, there is clearly a traditional "high season" of July- early September where visitor numbers are at their peak. Whilst we strive to have good public transport links, we need to acknowledge that the bulk of visitors will travel by car and so traffic will be heavier during the peak period. There needs to be a balance struck between accommodating visitors, while acknowledging the practical benefits of a construction project taking place when the weather is good.

Marketing and publicity - If NSIPs are likely to happen, then there needs to be adequate notice given and the operators need to work with the sector to ensure that the messages convey the fact that Suffolk is still open for business and welcoming visitors. Sizewell C has a tourism mitigation fund, which is working with the sector to convey such messages. As part of this work, it is carrying out perception studies and collating baseline data on visitor numbers, spend etc across the district, in order to measure the effects on individual businesses, towns and the county as a whole.

Organisations such as the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and the Suffolk and Norfolk Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) will be useful sources of support and information.

updates but to seek their views on how tourism impacts can be minimised such, as through the phasing of works to avoid impacts on tourism receptors at peak times.

Additionally, GG27 sets out that members of the community and local businesses will be kept informed regularly of the works through active community liaison. This will include notification of noisy activities, heavy traffic periods and start and end dates of key phasing. A contact number will be provided which members of the public can use to raise any concerns or complaints about the Proposed Project. All construction-related complaints will be logged by the contractor(s) in a complaints register, together with a record of the responses given and actions taken. This will be made available to local authorities for review on request.

As set out in response to AP101, **Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)**, the Applicant is working closely with Sizewell C and SPR to explore ways that the impacts of construction workers traveling to site and staying in the local area could be minimised.

		On a wider economic point, we also need to consider where the workforce and materials will be drawn from for this and other NSIP initiatives. Again, coming back to the point about the cumulative effect, we need to be mindful of how SeaLink will work alongside the other projects. While we would obviously want to see the economic benefits for the Suffolk economy (and an appropriate sourcing tool might be something like the Suffolk Supply Chain) we need to ensure that we are able to provide the labour and materials when required. If done effectively, then it will be a welcome boost for Suffolk businesses and employment figures. If materials and workforce are to be transported into Suffolk, then we need to return to the point about additional traffic on the county's roads and pressure on bedspaces. Whilst we welcome the economic and practical benefits of the SeaLink scheme, we need to ensure that any potential disbenefits are considered and effectively mitigated against.

Table A9 –Document 9.36: Applicant’s Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 2 Submission [REP3-064]

Public Rights of Way (Item 2.10)			
A6.1	Public Rights of Way – Lack of Respite for PRow users RR 21-RR 99	The Applicant’s response doesn’t address the real issue of no respite for PRow users. HGV movements is only one part. It is also the operations noise and visual, especially to horse riders. A day off a week gives people the opportunity to use the PRow without noise and visual disturbance.	The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site pport the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No 1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6)..
A6.2	Cumulative Effects on PRowS RR 21, RR 30, RR 36, RR 92 and RR 93	Understood and noted but no backup plan or assessment if this cannot be implemented, which was SCC’s point.	The Applicant does not agree that the Application Document 7.5.9.1 Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Suffolk [CR1-047] developed alongside SCC cannot be implemented.
A6.4	Converter Station RR 100	Traffic and transport is only one part of PRow impact. Visual amenity and change of user experience should also be considered. SCC will welcome the Applicant’s review of the mitigation.	The Applicant will address the visual impacts of the Saxmundham converter station in response to ExQ3 3LVIA4.

Socioeconomics, Recreation and Tourism (Item 2.11)

A7.3	Labour market methodology	SCC’s position remains as set out in our Comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 1 and Deadline 1A (REP2-062). Our concerns regarding the Applicant’s labour market methodology are not resolved, particularly in relation to the reliance on a generic 60-minute travel-to-work area and the absence of robust scenario-based workforce modelling. SCC has nothing further to add at this stage but encourages the Applicant to reassess its approach in line with SCC’s Supplementary Guidance and the issues highlighted in this previous submission.	The Applicant acknowledges that SCC has nothing to add to its aforementioned points and notes its position. See the Applicant’s response at ref.108-109 of [REP2-014] .
A7.6; A7.9	Skills and employment plan	SCC’s comments as set out in REP2-062 continue to apply. The Applicant’s decision to refuse to prepare a project-specific Skills and Employment Plan does not address SCC’s outstanding concerns, as explained in this previous submission. In the absence of such a plan, SCC cannot be confident that labour-market risks will be mitigated or that socio-economic benefits can be secured. SCC has no further comments at this stage but strongly encourages the Applicant to reconsider its position.	The Applicant acknowledges that SCC has nothing to add to its aforementioned points and notes its position. See the Applicant’s response to ExA Action Point 105 in [REP4-086]
Approach to Assessment of Public Rights of Way – Document 9.45 [REP1-119]			
B4.2	Request for new PRow route north of converter station site	See SCC’s response to the Applicant’s answer to 1TT16 and 1TT17. Providing an alternative route for PRow they are permanently closing is not like-for-like mitigation, especially as the user experience is substantially and significantly altered, from open fields and views to being re-routed next to a converter station with built form, restricted views and change of experience. The planting of vegetation along the proposed PRow route is not envisaged to screen the converter station from the PRow, due to the location of the proposed PRow and the height of the converter station.	The Applicant has set out is current position regarding PRow mitigation and offsetting in Appendix D of Application Document 9.136.1 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions - Appendices
B4.3	Requested enhancement to the PRow network	Noted, but this site is not providing any mitigation for PRow users. Especially those impacted by the relocation of the route at the Saxmundham converter station. Views, amenity and experience will be impacted.	The Applicant has set out is current position regarding PRow mitigation and offsetting in Appendix D of Application Document 9.136.1 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions - Appendices
S.85 Technical Note			
B5.1	Acid grassland enhancement	The Applicant’s response does not address SCC’s concerns over the disproportionate nature of the Applicant’s claim that acid grassland enhancement constitutes the furthering of the conservation and enhancement of the SECHNL’s natural beauty given the fact that the impacts caused by the project go beyond just acid grassland removal. SCC notes the Five Estuaries decision letter but considers it imperative for the text cited by the Applicant to be read in the context of the preceding text stated by the SoS, which reads: “The ExA notes that a development of this scale, by its very nature, will struggle to conserve or enhance the special qualities of the Suffolk Coastal Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in terms of landscape and scenic qualities. However, the Secretary of State notes the Proposed Development’s distance from the shore, and the design measures the Applicant has applied to mitigate the	An updated position on the section 85 duty is provided in response to 3LVIA5 Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6.

effects whilst maintaining the operability of the Proposed Development. The Secretary of State notes that the refinements to the northern array boundary and the reduction in blade tip height has served to reduce the visual impacts and maintain a level of separation between the existing, consented and proposed offshore wind farms.”

It within this context the Secretary of State makes the statement that “the duty to conserve and enhance does not necessarily require all effects whatsoever, to be offset by enhancement measures” (emphasis in bold added).

When read like this, it is quite clear that the SoS considers that the nature of the particular project in question, i.e. an offshore wind farm, means it is not appropriate to the type and scale of development for all residual adverse effects whatsoever to necessarily be offset with enhancement measures for that project following paragraph 5.10.33 of EN-1. When it comes to Sea Link, what is “sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development” is certainly different to that of an offshore wind farm in SCC’s view. The starkest difference is in terms of parts of Sea Link’s works, and Order Limits, being within the designation of the SECHNL. One implication of this difference is that further enhancement measures could be explored within the Order Limits or through acquisition of adjacent parcels of land to conserve and enhance natural beauty beyond merely enhancing acid grassland.

As stated in Table B5 of [REP2-062] and SCC’s response to 1LVIA7 of ExQ1 [REP3-101], SCC considers further enhancement measures to not only be necessary to allow the duty to be discharged but also appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development. SCC reiterates that it urges the Applicant to seek engagement from the relevant local authorities and the National Landscape Partnership to discuss how this could be achieved. Appropriate enhancement measures could include contributions to coast & estuary project activity, contributions to enhancements to promoted routes, including National Trail to elevate experience for users and/or contributions to the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Sustainable Development Fund.

SCC’s Comments on the Applicant’s Schedule of Changes (REP1-107)

B11.11	Sch.3 Req.15	The Applicant’s response does not attempt to address the points made here by SCC, nor is this the case for the referenced answer to 1GEN11. SCC also does not consider that requirement 15 functions as intended by the Applicant in terms of preventing the substation from being constructed under one Order after construction has started under another. Firstly, the requirement only applies to a part of the substation, so if one part has been completed another part could still be constructed under a different Order. Secondly, the requirement’s restriction only applies when that part is completed, rather than commenced. This means that the substation could commence under SPR’s DCO and could be completed under Sea Link’s DCO. SCC does not see why this is necessary given that commencement means all requirements have been discharged by SPR and National Grid would be the entity constructing the Kiln Lane substation under that consent anyway. Instead, the requirement should prevent Work no. 1B from being constructed under the Sea Link DCO if it has been commenced under another consent.	The Applicant considers that Requirement 15 fulfils the purpose for which it is required. Any amendment to the requirement to prevent Work No. 1B from being constructed under the Sea Link DCO if it has been commenced under another consent presents an unacceptable risk to the delivery of the Proposed Project. The Applicant has a duty to be economic and efficient and must be able to deliver the Proposed Project to meet its licence obligations.

Table 18.4 Applicant’s Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-178]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
4.3.3	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	<i>The species mix will comprise species typically found in adjacent hedgerows and will likely comprise the following species:</i> • <i>field maple (Acer campestre); - common hazel (Corylus avellana);</i> • <i>common hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna); - blackthorn (Prunus spinosa); and</i> • <i>dog rose (Rosa canina).</i> SCC (Landscape) would ask that the word ‘comprise’ is replace with the word ‘include’.	The wording within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk submitted at Deadline 6 updates the wording from ‘comprise’ to ‘include’ with regard to hedgerow species.
5.2.6 and 6.6.1	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	<i>A section of native hedgerow and tree planting is proposed along the B1119 and the permanent access road (15,866 m²).</i> SCC (Landscape) considers that these paragraphs require updating to reflect the latest proposals for a tree belt/woodland along this section of the B1119.	Wording at 5.2.6 within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk submitted at Deadline 6 has been added to clarify that the proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting along part of the B1119 would be in combination with proposed woodland planting. Wording had already been added into the ‘Woodland planting’ section at 5.2.3 in the Deadline 4 update of the oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]) reflecting the addition of the woodland planting along a section to the south of the B1119. It is not considered that wording at 6.6.1 needs to be amended as the new woodland planting along part of the B1119 is not relevant to

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			the function of the adjacent new hedgerow and tree planting along the B1119.
Table 5.3	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	• <i>Field maple (Acer campestre)</i>, • <i>common hornbeam (Carpinus betulus)</i>, • <i>common hazel (Corylus avellana)</i>, • <i>common hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna)</i>, <i>common dogwood (Cornus sanguinea)</i>, • <i>common privet (Ligustrum vulgare)</i>, • <i>blackthorn (Prunus spinosa)</i> SCC (Landscape) queries why there are more species included for newly created hedges than for 'Important Hedgerows' (see comment for 4.3.3, above).	The species list for hedgerow reinstatement within the oLEMP reflect existing species found during surveys, which is set out at 4.3.3 of Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065] . The alteration of wording from 'comprise' to 'include' with regard to hedgerow species within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk submitted at Deadline 6 is considered to remove this issue as the full native hedgerow planting mix is set out in Table 5.3.
5.8.1	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	<i>Where planting areas do not conflict with construction compounds and activities, advanced planting (in advance of operation) will be undertaken in the first available planting season prior to or during the construction phase of work.</i> SCC (Landscape) queries, if planting in advance of operation can be considered to be advance planting.	The Applicant has provided a response to this in 3LVIA1 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6.
6.4.3-6.4.4	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	The Applicant considers deer fencing with badger gates, potentially taking a joint approach with Sizewell estate. SCC (Landscape) & SCC Ecology welcome the communications between Sea Link and Sizewell estate with regards to deer fencing. SCC (Landscape) considers that appropriate fencing for larger areas of planting has proven to be a successful method to protect young plants and yields good results and natural growth. SCC (Landscape) & SCC Ecology query however, whether this fencing should not also be made rabbit proof, as only this would, if well maintained, make individual tree and shrub guards superfluous. If rabbit fencing was added, the badger gates would need to be suitably weighted to avoid becoming rabbit gates.	The oLEMP has been updated at Deadline 6 (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk) to secure the consideration of rabbit proof mesh in deer fencing at the detailed design stage in collaboration with advice from other local projects.
7.1	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	SCC (Landscape) welcomes the ecological surveys that are being referred to, but considers that detailed pre- and post- construction surveys and monitoring will also be required for hedgerows and trees. SCC (Landscape) has pointed this out in it Local Impact Report) [REP1- 130], where it refers to further guidance being given in SCC's response to Statutory Consultation. This guidance is attached to this document as Appendix B. In short, SCC (Landscape) considers that all hedgerows and trees that would be affected by the scheme, are fully surveyed and documented, for 'Important Hedgerows, this included a written description and photographic evidence of the baseline condition needs to be provided.	Regarding hedgerow mapping, Application Document 6.4.2.2.A.7 Important Hedgerows [AS-028] shows the Important Hedgerows across the Order Limits and Application Document 6.4.2.2.A.1 Suffolk Phase 1 Survey Results [AS-028] in the same document shows all hedgerows (important or otherwise). Application Document 2.12 Trees and Important Hedgerows to be Removed or Managed Plans (Version 2, change request) [CR1-023] should also be referred to.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
7.3	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	While SCC (Landscape) welcomes and promotes adaptive/dynamic aftercare, based on close monitoring, SCC (Landscape) considers that adaptive management must include a temporal element. This means that for planting areas which experience a high failure rate, and require significant replacement, the aftercare programme is paused rather than progressed into the next year of the aftercare programme, until the planting has achieved the required milestones. The reason for asking this is to ensure that planting enters long-term management or is handed back to landowners well established, equivalent to five years' worth of growth. SCC (Landscape) considers that this principle needs to be anchored into the LEMP.	The oLEMP has been updated at Deadline 6 Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk with additional wording on the temporal element of adaptive management.
Appendix A	Document 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065]	Plans and cross sections. <i>Figure 1 Saxmundham Converter Station Outline Landscape Mitigation, Rev B, 05/02/2026 and FIGURE 2 SAXMUNDHAM CONVERTER STATION ILLUSTRATIVE CROSS SECTIONS (SHEET 3 OF 3), Rev 1, 13/02/2026</i> SCC (Landscape) welcomes the more robust planting along the B1119. SCC had previously asked for a 10m wide planting strip, proposed are now 8.5, and SCC would welcome further information with regards to the rationale for this. It is disappointing that no additional planting is proposed around the converter station site following the comments provided at ISH2. SCC disagrees with the Applicant that further planting would be inappropriate and that opportunities further minimise the effects, even within the DCO boundary are not taken, and that therefore the mitigation hierarchy is not being fully applied. <i>FIGURE 2 SAXMUNDHAM CONVERTERSTATION ILLUSTRATIVE CROSS SECTIONS (SHEET 1 OF 3), Rev A, 05/02/2026</i> Saxmundham Section D-D: SCC considers that clear measurements should be provided for all cross sections. Here, there are concerns that the 2m wide path sits in too narrow a grassland corridor, and that subsequently the depth of the woodland would need to be reduced to provide an appropriate PRow corridor. Such a reduction could undermine the screening and mitigative function of the woodland. Figure3 Saxmundham Converter Station Outline Landscape Mitigation-Timing of Planting, Rev B, 05/02/2026 It would further be helpful, if the cross section could show, at least indicatively the bunding around the converter station and its effects on landscape proposals, as referred to in the Applicant's response to Action Point 40 [REP4 086]. Landform has also not been considered in the sections. <i>FIGURE 2 SAXMUNDHAM CONVERTER STATION ILLUSTRATIVE CROSS SECTIONS (SHEET 2 OF 3), Rev A., 05/02/2026</i>	Regarding the proposed B1119 planting, the reasoning for altering the Order Limits as part of Change Request 1 was for an entirely separate reason. The widening of the Order Limits associated with Change Request 1 did however, provide the opportunity to incorporate additional planting within the Order Limits along part of the B1119 following stakeholder requests. The 8.5 m depth of woodland planting is considered to represent an additional strengthening of the layered vegetation network of the surrounding landscape and is comparable in width to other belts of planting in the local landscape. The Applicant's position on the provision of additional mitigation planting is set out with respect to specific viewpoints discussed within ISH2 within Application Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-085] and relating to AP39 and AP40 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The Applicant strongly refutes that the mitigation hierarchy has not been fully applied and this is evidenced in the Applicant's response to 3GEN1 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions. Regarding Saxmundham Section D-D, the section whilst being illustrative with the landscape planting proposals being outline in nature is drawn to scale with a scale bar and scale clearly identified on each sheet. Detailed landscape design plans will accompany the full LEMP which will ensure that the intended mitigation function of the proposed planting and amenity for recreational users is fully developed. The indicative bunding has been shown on Section E-E in the updated oLEMP at Deadline 6 (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk). A maximum height of the bund has been shown at 3 m which reflects the initial material balance calculations and aligns with what

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Section E-E: SCC queries why species-rich neutral grassland is proposed across the entire width of the HVDC corridor, including limits of deviation, when this could be an area for scrub planting in some areas. Section F-F: SCC considers the Converter station building should be shown in the section for reference of scale; measurements should be provided. <i>Figure 3 Saxmundham Converter Station Outline Landscape Mitigation-Timing of Planting, Rev B, 05/02/2026</i> SCC considers this a helpful drawing. It shows, however how little advance planting will be possible. This is also connected to the lack in wider restorative and mitigative planting. <i>Figure 5 Friston Substation Outline Landscape Mitigation, Rev C, 05/02/2026</i> SCC welcomes the Applicant's commitment to provide landscape planting as agreed with SPR, for the case that SPR's substations should not be built. SCC is however disappointed that HDD is not being considered to avoid and/or enable certain landscape features or consider a combination of open trench works and additional landform shaping to enable planting above cables.	has been used in the visualisations. The location and extent of the proposed bunding would be designed at the detailed design stage once the cut and fill balance is known. Scrub planting was not originally included in the proposed planting types in the oLEMP submitted initially however has been added as a planting type to reflect the updated proposals around Friston Substation as proposed within the EA1N and EA2 latest planting scheme. The oLEMP has been updated (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk submitted at Deadline 6) to secure the consideration at detailed design stage to review whether any of the proposed species rich neutral grassland above the HVDC and HVAC corridors on the approach to the Saxmundham Converter Station site could have pockets of scrub planting to further reinforce the surrounding layered vegetation network. The Converter Station building has been shown on Section E-E which is to the same scale as Section F-F. All Sections are drawn to scale and have a scale bar for reference. The timing of planting figure (Figure 3) within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065] is outline and would be developed further during detailed design and the development of the detailed LEMP. The Applicant is continuing the ongoing dialogue with SPR to produce a coordinated landscape masterplan which takes account of Sea Link, EA1N and EA2 and LionLink. A plan was submitted at Deadline 4 detailing NGET version of the Landscape Masterplan produced by SPR accommodating SeaLink and LionLink, refer to Appendix D within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086].
1.3.38	Document 6.3.2.2.B (C) Appendix 2.2.B Suffolk Wintering Bird Report [REP4-037]	<i>However, the data is believed to be valid, especially when used in conjunction with RSPB website and desk study data (Suffolk 2021 bird report).</i> SCC Ecology would like to know if a more up to date copy of this report has been referenced with regard to the most recent round of wintering bird surveys.	Since it would not change the impact assessment the desk study referenced in this report has not been updated.
7.4.22	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	Site Access Arrangements: <i>Vegetation clearance will be carried out at the proposed site accesses, where required, to achieve appropriate levels of visibility, subject to agreement with the local highway authority.</i> SCC considers that it needs to be anchored in the CTMP that temporary accesses will be micro-sited to avoid mature road side	Vegetation removal will be minimised wherever it is to be removed as a matter of principle across the project.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		trees and important hedgerows; that vegetation within visibility splays of temporary accesses will be retained, where possible, with appropriate traffic management measures (such as temporary traffic lights or supervised traffic flow) being the default option, and coppicing being considered an alternative, only if the first option is not feasible; full removal of vegetation from visibility splays of temporary accesses should be avoided as a matter of principle. The additional mitigation with regards to dormouse should also be cross-referenced here.	
5.4.4	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	<i>States S-BM12 will have 1 H PGV per day at peak construction.</i> SCC is of the understanding that this access is purely for mobilisation works for the eastern side of the Fromus Crossing, so there should be no vehicles should be using this access during the construction phase of the project. 6.1.4 defines mobilisation as 'temporary access routes for HGVs, or other construction vehicles/plant, to access the construction corridor to construct site access junctions, construct/remove the temporary haul road, and to access areas that are between watercourse crossings where advanced works may be required from both sides of a watercourse prior to installing a haul road crossing. These routes are also expected to provide access for light vehicles for the duration of the construction works'.	Noted.
5.5.4	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	SCC notes that this has been amended to refer to the A12 as an AIL route. As yet the applicant has made no commitment to assess the structures on this route for suitability to carry the anticipated loads. At present 2 structures on the A12 south of Yoxford have restrictions for AILs. Table 6.2 does not acknowledge any issue with structures on the routes.	Noted.
6.2.10	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	This is the same as the SPR AIL route. SPR do not have clearance to use this route yet as they have not assessed the structures. SCC disputes that there is certainty that this access road can be used as the structures on them have not been assessed for AIL Special Order movements and the following restrictions apply: B1122 • Middleton Culvert: STGO3 • Theberton Church Culvert: STGO3 B1069 • Coldfair Green: STGO2 B1121 • Friston Culvert: C&U A1094 • Snape Watering: STGO3	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		- Firs Farm (Friston): STGO2 B1119 - Church Road Saxmundham: STGO2 With delays to the SPR project, particularly delays in securing EA1(N) in recent bidding rounds, it is more likely that EA1(N)/ EA2 and Sealink will overlap in the delivery phase. If this is the case the Applicant is requested to consider how two temporary access close together on the B1069 (SPR AC4, also referred to as access 9 and 10, as shown on the works plans, corresponding to Sealink S-BM03 and 4) will operate or if there are opportunities for all projects to use the same access.	
7.2.16	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	States “<i>selected heavy plant deliveries</i>”. SCC require clarity on what this description means, is it referring to AILs? Greater clarity on numbers and types would be welcome. As noted in our response to Rep4 101 9.112 (A) Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study SCC does not consider that there is ‘certainty’ that this route is fit for purpose as a number of structures have not yet been assessed for special order movements by either National Grid or SPR.	Noted.
7.2.27	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	SCC notes that a topographic and utility survey has been undertaken but this information has not been shared with SCC. With regard to the utility survey it is unclear if this is a desk based one or if the location of services has been proven by investigation.	Noted.
7.2.37	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	SCC is encouraged that the applicant recognises that speed restrictions deployed in isolation cannot be relied on to reduce traffic speeds and some Form F calming or enforcement may be necessary to achieve the desired effect.	Noted.
7.2.38 and 7.4.13	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	SCC notes that light construction traffic would be diverted through Saxmundham. SCC would be interested in the likely quantity of such movements and presumes these movements will most likely be immediately before and after the network am and pm peaks and hence impact the Saxmundham town centre traffic signal junction.	Noted.
7.4.9	Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP4-061]	As a note of caution with respect to ANPR the experience of SCC when delivering NSIPs is that selection of the location should consider how power can be supplied as this has been a significant issue when equipment is place in rural locations. It remains unclear how the reporting process in 7.4.11 will operate and if this information will be made available to the public. Section 5.2 of the SPR EA2 Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan in SCC’s view sets out a suitable process with the content and method of publishing the report since agreed when finalising the CTMP.	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
	Document 9.105 Supplement to the Preliminary Cumulative Highway Impact Assessment in Suffolk [REP4-099]	SCC have undertaken a partial comparison of SZC and Sealink traffic forecast to use the A1094/B1069 corridor using published data. This indicates that whilst individual peaks (yellow) are not expected to coincide the cumulative peaks (orange) can occur at different times to any individual peak, in this case the cumulative HGV impact does not correspond with either project peak. Route 2 A1094 Snape Road - all 2 way movements <table><tr><th colspan="4">2024</th><th colspan="4">2025</th><th colspan="4">2026</th><th colspan="4">2027</th><th colspan="4">2028</th><th colspan="4">2029</th><th colspan="4">2030</th><th colspan="4">2031</th><th colspan="4">2032</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table> SPR (Sub station route) Source - CTMP submitted Dec 2025 Planning Application - SCC/0172/25/DoR/EA1N <table><tr><td>HGV</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>150</td><td>234</td><td>240</td><td>180</td><td>88</td><td>102</td><td>162</td><td>162</td><td>170</td><td>170</td><td>93</td><td>90</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>230</td><td>340</td><td>350</td><td>352</td><td>318</td><td>340</td><td>332</td><td>296</td><td>218</td><td>230</td><td>232</td><td>216</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> Sealink Source - Data supplied by Sealink 06/02/2026 <table><tr><td>HGV</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>10</td><td>140</td><td>180</td><td>14</td><td>8</td><td>90</td><td>164</td><td>69</td><td>84</td><td>81</td><td>61</td><td>58</td><td>50</td><td>83</td><td>86</td><td>86</td><td>8</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>93</td><td>93</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>62</td><td>343</td><td>369</td><td>368</td><td>30</td><td>156</td><td>210</td><td>205</td><td>390</td><td>416</td><td>209</td><td>202</td><td>126</td><td>211</td><td>210</td><td>136</td><td>62</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>143</td><td>143</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr></table> Total <table><tr><td>HGV</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>150</td><td>254</td><td>250</td><td>320</td><td>268</td><td>116</td><td>170</td><td>252</td><td>334</td><td>239</td><td>177</td><td>171</td><td>61</td><td>58</td><td>50</td><td>83</td><td>86</td><td>86</td><td>8</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>93</td><td>93</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>230</td><td>340</td><td>412</td><td>696</td><td>687</td><td>506</td><td>362</td><td>452</td><td>428</td><td>435</td><td>622</td><td>632</td><td>209</td><td>202</td><td>126</td><td>211</td><td>210</td><td>136</td><td>62</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>143</td><td>143</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr></table> SCC notes that the traffic data for Sealink is likely to move backwards in time but also that it may coincide with Lionlink traffic on some routes. SCC considers that further work is needed to understand the relationship between various projects including SZC and LionLink but is concerned that the resources are considerably stretched at this time being split between delivering consented projects, examination for Sealink and N2T and providing preapplication and statutory consultation responses. The information provided here shows specifically that the Sealink / EA2 interaction in terms of traffic is not just restricted to the coincident of peaks but that a higher cumulative impact can occur at other times. SPR EA1N has not been funded and delivery unknown, albeit the substation and ducts are to be delivered as part of EA2. There are 4 key dates in the SZC Consolidated Transport Assessment namely: • Baseline 2019 • Early years scenario 2023 prior to opening of the Sizewell Link Road (freight) and park and rides (workers), now likely early 2028. • Peak Years estimated around 2028, likely to also be delayed 2 to 3 years. • Operational year 2034, again likely to be delayed. Generally, SZC movements increase on a linear basis rather than the more ‘peaky’ numbers from other projects for cable corridors. It is also important to understand that the split definition of Early Years’ between freight and workers has a bearing on traffic movement. In the assessment and DCO it was presumed that both would be at a similar time. This has proven to not be the case with the park and ride sites opening in early 2026 but SLR not likely until late 2027/2028. Thus, the workforce is likely to be increasing earlier than allowed for in the assessment when compared to	2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030				2031				2032				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	HGV								150	234	240	180	88	102	162	162	170	170	93	90														Other								230	340	350	352	318	340	332	296	218	230	232	216															HGV								10	140	180	14	8	90	164	69	84	81	61	58	50	83	86	86	8	0	0	0	93	93	0	0	0	0	Other								62	343	369	368	30	156	210	205	390	416	209	202	126	211	210	136	62	0	0	0	143	143	0	0	0	0	HGV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	254	250	320	268	116	170	252	334	239	177	171	61	58	50	83	86	86	8	0	0	93	93	0	0	0	0	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	230	340	412	696	687	506	362	452	428	435	622	632	209	202	126	211	210	136	62	0	0	143	143	0	0	0	0	The Applicant has undertaken robust and detailed traffic modelling, including with respect of cumulative impacts arising from other projects.
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		delivery of the road infrastructure. Evidence provided elsewhere by SCC shows that some transport impacts, notably on the A1094/B1069 are higher than forecast. In the recent LionLink consultation little detail was provided to allow SCC to comment on the number of construction vehicles, routing or phasing. It is notable that the applicant only considers that access S-BM09 (ie B1121) will be impacted by LionLink, not the A12 or other routes.	
6.1	Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]	SCC expects the Applicant to implement, monitor, and coordinate mitigation measures across relevant plans to minimise disruption to healthcare access, including engagement with communities and providers, temporary access arrangements, and coordination with other NSIPs. Regarding Document 9.86, SCC notes the Applicant's references to [REP2-014], including Table 2.2 against References 39 - 42 and Table 2.12 against reference 127, and the associated cross-references to the Health and Wellbeing and Inter-Project Cumulative Effects assessments. SCC does not consider that the Applicant has directly addressed the specific matters raised in SCC's Deadline 2 submission, namely the expectation that the Applicant should implement, monitor and coordinate mitigation measures to minimise disruption to healthcare access. This includes engagement with healthcare providers and communities, consideration of temporary access arrangements where required, and coordination with other NSIPs where cumulative construction impacts may affect access routes. The responses cited by the Applicant largely address inter project coordination at a strategic infrastructure. The matters raised by SCC relate not solely to assessed health outcomes, but to the practical management of construction related disruption and its potential to affect access to primary care, emergency services, community health services, and other healthcare provision. SCC therefore reiterates its expectation that the Applicant should demonstrate how healthcare access has been specifically considered. This should include details of engagement with relevant healthcare providers to identify sensitive access routes and service delivery constraints, monitoring and mitigation.	The Applicant has provided response regarding monitoring of health and wellbeing within Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions .
6.2	Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]	SCC believe the Applicant should develop and implement a Local Employment and Skills Plan prepared in collaboration with SCC. SCC welcome the confirmations set out in A10.15 of Document 9.86 setting out the intention to discuss the terms and develop Skills and Employment Plans in order to submit such a plan at Deadline 6.	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6 .
6.3	Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]	Doc 9.7.65, Change 2 and Change 5, Applicant indicates there are no new or different significant effects on health and wellbeing. Whilst the Applicant states that the proposed changes do not introduce changes to cited technical chapters and therefore gives rise to no new or different likely significant effects on health and wellbeing, this position is not fully substantiated from a public health perspective. The extension of the Order Limits materially	The Applicant has responded to this matter in detail within Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions . Please refer to 3HW4.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		changes receptor proximity, bringing construction activities closer to residential properties that were not previously assessed within the Environmental Statement. Even if predicted impacts for noise, vibration, air quality and traffic remain within assessed thresholds, a reduction in separation distance can influence magnitude, duration and perception of effects, particularly in relation to construction phase disturbance and associated stress responses. In the absence of any formal revision or addendum to the relevant technical chapters to reflect the reduced separation distances to additional receptors, and without specific confirmation that these receptors have been quantitatively assessed against the original assessment methodology and significance criteria, the conclusion that no new or different likely significant effects would arise lacks foundation. A proportionate and comprehensive approach would be to formally review the relevant Environmental Statement chapters in light of the revised Order Limits to demonstrate, with clear evidence, that predicted impacts at the nearer receptors remain within assessed parameters and that mitigation measures continue to be effective. On that basis, SCC considers that the Applicant's position should be further substantiated rather than accepted at face value.	
6.4	Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]	The consenting and construction of major infrastructure projects such as the Proposed Scheme can have significant and enduring impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of local residents. Changes to the local environment, including alterations to landscape character, increased noise, vibration, activity, and the presence or introduction of large-scale infrastructure, can diminish residents' sense of place, belonging, and control. Uncertainty surrounding the scale, duration, and nature of the works, as well as concerns about continued access to essential services, community facilities, social infrastructure and green/blue spaces, may contribute to heightened stress, anxiety, and reduced quality of life, particularly among vulnerable groups such as older people, disabled residents, and those without access to private transport. To effectively mitigate the effects of prolonged construction disturbance on community wellbeing, SCC expect the Applicant to revise the proposed core working hours to minimise avoidable noise, vibration, and disruption and protect public mental health. Public Health recognise the Applicants comments detailed in Document 9.73 reference 1GEN49 regarding programme certainty, contractor logistics, national energy objectives, and potential constraint costs. The strategic need case and delivery pressures are noted. However, from a public health perspective, infrastructure delivery must be balanced against the protection of community health and wellbeing. Extended core working hours, including routine Sunday and Bank Holiday working, have the potential to materially reduce predictable periods of respite for affected communities over a prolonged construction programme. Environmental health and public health practice recognises that sustained noise, vibration and activity outside conventional	The Applicant has provided response regarding monitoring of health and wellbeing within Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions. The Applicant has provided its latest position regarding core working hours within Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points – Deadline 4 (please refer to Action Point AP106). The core working hours proposed are required in order to facilitate the delivery of this critical nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure. There are robust controls in management documents including in Application Document 7.5.3 (C) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-068] and Application Document 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] that mitigate the effects of construction activity, and there are restrictions on noisy works (namely percussive piling) and on HGV movements on weekends in any case. These measures, combined with the removal of bank holiday weekends at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site, support the position that the proposed core working hours (including weekends where necessary) are reasonable and justified. The Applicant has aligned the working hours for Works 1A and 1B , as well as those elements of Work No. 4, Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 that are required to construct, operate and/ or mitigate the environmental impacts of Work No. 1A and Work No

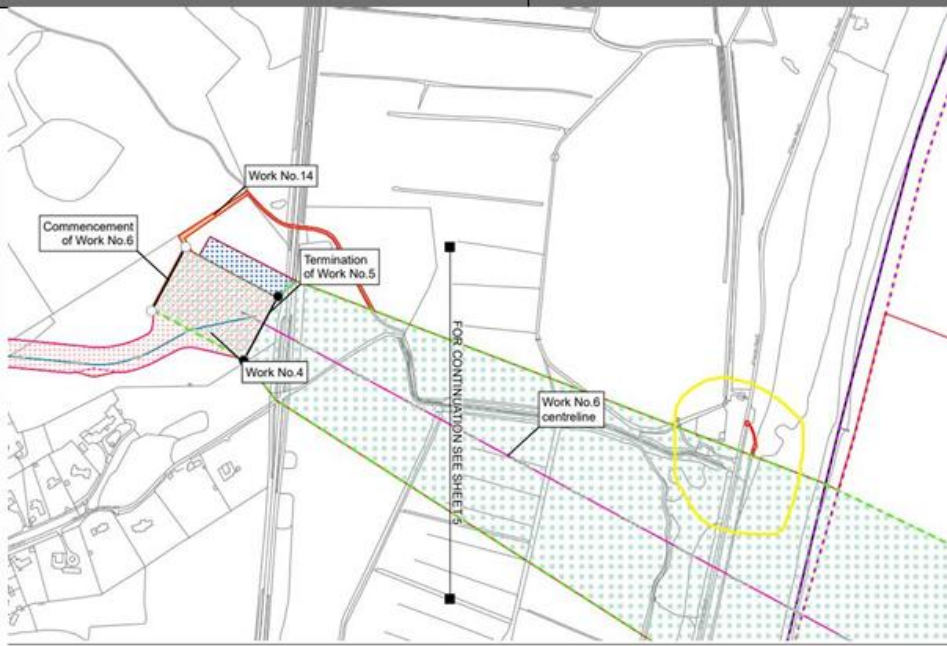
Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		weekday hours can contribute to sleep disturbance, stress, reduced respite, and wider mental wellbeing effects, even where technical thresholds for “significance” are not exceeded. Development of nationally significant infrastructure should not come at a disproportionate cost to community mental health and quality of life, particularly where impacts are experienced over extended durations. Whilst SCC recognises the need for a degree of programming flexibility, the Applicant has not demonstrated that routine weekend and Bank Holiday working across the onshore elements represents the least harmful approach, nor that alternative phasing or geographically targeted restrictions have been fully explored. Public Health therefore maintains that working hours are restricted to Monday–Friday: 08:00 18:00 and Saturday: 08:00–13:00, with no works permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays, except in exceptional circumstances agreed in advance with SCC with start-up and close-down periods should be strictly limited to no more than one hour either side of the core hours and must exclude any activity likely to cause disturbance to nearby residents or businesses. Monitoring Public Health considers that the Applicant should develop and implement a proportionate but robust Mental Health and Wellbeing Monitoring Plan for the duration of the Project (construction and early operation), with clear reporting routes and defined review points. Reliance solely on publicly available GP or Primary Care data would be insufficient, as this captures only those individuals who actively present and self-report. This approach risks underrepresenting wider community impacts, particularly among individuals who experience stress, anxiety or wellbeing deterioration but do not engage with formal health services. • Engagement with Primary Care leads within the project catchment to identify emerging trends Whilst community surveys may provide more direct insight into lived experience, these too have methodological limitations, including potential response bias where views are influenced by opposition to the Project rather than demonstrable mental health effects. Nevertheless, survey and qualitative approaches can provide valuable triangulation when designed appropriately and interpreted alongside service data. Learning from monitoring arrangements associated with other NSIPs, including Sizewell C, suggests that a multi layered approach is more robust. This may include: • Population health management (PHM) data and trends in Primary Care activity. • Monitoring of referrals to social prescribing and community mental health services. • Engagement with Primary Care leads within the project catchment to identify emerging trends. • Regular liaison with Community Mental Health Teams	1B, to those secured in the SPR DCO (see Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6). Additionally, the Applicant as part of the DCO submission has produced a report which sets out how it has approached coordination with other projects with the aim to reducing the impact on the environment and local communities. Further details are set out in Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363]. Coordination with other projects and other promoters has been ongoing for several years and has materially influenced the development of the Proposed Project. The outcome of this coordination is a project that has thoroughly explored and, where feasible, delivered a range of opportunities for the reduction of impacts on the environment and host communities. These opportunities are embedded in the routing and siting decisions, the approach to design and mitigation, and in the ways that the Proposed Project might work with other developers during the delivery stages to reduce impacts on communities and the environment. In accordance with National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 3.3.80 and NPS EN-5 paragraphs 2.13.11, 2.14.2 and 2.15.1 (DESNZ, 2023), the Applicant has considered approaches to coordinate wherever possible with other projects at the strategic and/or project levels to reduce impacts on local communities and the environment. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) submitted at Deadline 6 to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. A detailed response regarding the existing commitments, and further proportionate measures to demonstrate recognition of the LPA and community’s concerns regarding health and wellbeing is set out in Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions in response to 3HW3.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• Clear community routes for raising concerns (with mechanisms to ensure issues are captured, categorised and escalated appropriately) • Periodic reporting to relevant local authority and health partnership forums to enable two-way dialogue • Consideration of independent or academic evaluation to provide objective assessment of early and cumulative impacts including work undertaken by Suffolk MIND as detailed: https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/reports-and-accounts/ and University of Suffolk as detailed: https://www.uos.ac.uk/about/news/2025/university-publishes-independent-study-on-early-impacts-of-sizewell-c/ • Public Health does not seek to prescribe the precise methodology; however, the Applicant should set out a transparent, evidence-based framework that combines quantitative service data with qualitative community insight, establishes a baseline, defines indicators and thresholds, and explains how findings would trigger mitigation or adaptation of measures. • Following SCC's guidance on community engagement: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/community-engagement-and-wellbeing-policy.pdf Without such a structured monitoring plan, there is a risk that mental health and wellbeing impacts are either under detected or interpreted in isolation, limiting the ability to respond proportionately and effectively.	
n/a	Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]	Failure to Provide Local Tourism Evidence Despite Admitting Visitor Perception is Relevant. Whilst we welcome the potential use of SZC Park and Ride facilities as a means of reducing construction traffic is welcome, SCC remains dubious about the applicant's statement of <i>"limited robust evidence"</i>. This is not the same as "no adverse effect" and consideration still needs to be given to the effect on the visitor economy <i>"the Proposed Project is a much smaller scheme with a more limited construction workforce and duration and therefore has the potential for significantly fewer and more localised effects"</i>. Whilst thus statement may be correct, it does not recognise the cumulative effect of overlapping NSIPs, as these projects will not be happening in isolation.	The Applicant maintains the view that the cumulative impacts will not have a significant effect on tourism.
	Document 9.114 (A) Interim Phase 3 Archaeological Report [REP4-103]	Submission of this interim report is noted. SCCAS look forward to the submission of the full Phase 3 evaluation report in due course. In line with previous advice, the results of this additional archaeological survey work have shown that although some further archaeological remains have been defined in this new area to the east of the D-shaped enclosure and mitigation through	Noted. Section 8.5 of OWSI provides that "No works (either pre-commencement or construction) involving ground disturbance may commence within defined archaeological mitigation areas until they have been formally signed off by the Archaeological Advisor to the LPA from SCCAS."

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		excavation will be required in this section of the cable corridor, there is a suitable alternative route available which would avoid the enclosure entirely and not impact upon any archaeological remains of national significance. Provision for suitable archaeological mitigation within this part of the scheme, including the additional area added as part of the Changes Consultation, should be included in the revised OWSI, which the Applicant has advised will be submitted in due course.	
A2.20	Document 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 3 and 3A [REP4-082]	<i>Hedgerows will be maintained at a height of 2.5 3.5m. The applicant will consider deletion of specific reference to dimensions as a matter for the detailed LEMP post DCO consent.</i> SCC Ecology welcome the proposed deletion of the hedgerow widths and height requirements from future documents.	Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk submitted at Deadline 6 reflects this update.
A3.4	Document 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 3 and 3A [REP4-082]	<i>The acid grassland restoration and enhancement will be maintained for 10 years as it is mitigation for the temporary loss of acid grassland. This area should have returned to a suitable condition before the ten years of maintenance has ended.</i> SCC Ecology agrees with the stated 10-year aftercare period for this area of habitat. The loss is classed as temporary and therefore not subject to any requirements regarding BNG for the red line boundary.	Noted.
A3.6	Document 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 3 and 3A [REP4-082]	<i>However, 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.</i> SCC Ecology agree with the applicants' stance regarding overwintering surveys at RSPB North Warren. The survey data from the RSPB will be more comprehensive for this location.	Noted.
A9.1/A9.4	Document 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 3 and 3A [REP4-082]	<i>The Applicant intends to work closely with the Council and its contractors to develop a Social Value strategy. The Applicant has not committed to a dedicated Employment, Skills, and Education Strategy due to the perceived limited scale of construction employment impacts. The Applicant is exploring collaboration opportunities.</i> SCC notes the Applicant's intention to submit outline Skills and Employment Plans (SEPs) at Deadline 6. However, the Applicant has not yet contacted SCC to initiate the discussions necessary. These discussions are imperative to develop a SEP that reflects local requirements and aligns with the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), which SCC operates on behalf of Suffolk. SCC reiterates that the SEP must provide clear workforce requirements for all phases of the project, including workforce numbers, skills, role durations and the anticipated split between home-based and non-home-based labour. This information is essential for coordinated workforce planning across Suffolk's NSIPs. The SEP should also set out how the Applicant will work with the RSCF to align training provision, address skills gaps and support a "right	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		skills, right time” pipeline that maximises local employment opportunities and contributes to long-term legacy skills development. The SEP must include a jointly developed education and training strategy demonstrating engagement with FE, HE and private providers, and supporting inclusive pathways such as apprenticeships, Bootcamps and modular training. It should also explain how supply-chain workforce needs will be shared with the RSCF to strengthen local supply-chain capacity. SCC expects the Applicant to commit to early and ongoing information-sharing to support adaptive management across Suffolk’s NSIPs, enabling the RSCF to maintain accurate labour-market intelligence and manage cumulative pressures. The SEP should also support the monitoring of wider socio-economic effects and confirm participation in joint monitoring and governance through existing SCC and RSCF structures. Given the limited time before Deadline 6, SCC invites the Applicant to make contact without delay to begin the development of a comprehensive SEP.	
1ECOL14	Document 9.87 (A) Applicant's Comments on Responses to First Written Questions [REP4-083]	<i>The Application document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk submitted at Deadline 4 has been updated to be clearer about a commitment to an update survey for dormice and to include precautionary mitigation to enable continued dormouse connectivity if any dormice are found during the updated surveys.</i> SCC Ecology welcome the position of the applicant regarding further dormouse surveys at this location.	Noted and welcomed.
1SERT7	Document 9.87 (A) Applicant's Comments on Responses to First Written Questions [REP4-083]	<i>The Applicant has agreed to submit outline Skills and Employment Plans at Deadline 6. The Applicant will arrange meetings to progress and discuss suitable opportunities that will form the outline plans with the local authorities.</i> SCC notes the Applicant's position regarding the relatively small construction workforce associated with the Suffolk and Kent onshore schemes. However, SCC emphasises that workforce impacts cannot be considered in isolation. Sea Link forms part of a wider programme of major energy infrastructure in Suffolk and the East of England, and even modest workforce numbers contribute to cumulative demand pressures on labour supply, training capacity, accommodation, and local services. For this reason, SCC welcomes the Applicant's intention to submit an outline Skills and Employment Plan (SEP) at Deadline 6 and supports the Examining Authority's requirement for such a plan. A project-specific SEP remains essential to ensure that Sea Link's workforce needs are integrated into coordinated planning across Suffolk's NSIPs and to maximise opportunities for local residents, local providers and the supply chain. SCC also notes the Applicant's commitment to engage with local planning authorities and encourages early contact with SCC, particularly in its role operating the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), so	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		that meaningful discussions can take place and a comprehensive SEP can be developed in time for Deadline 6.	
15.3	Document 9.89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085]	<i>The Applicant does not intend to include a Skills and Employment Plan within the DCO due to the relatively small construction workforce (around 86 FTE at peak). Instead, it considers that contributing to wider regional skills initiatives outside the DCO would be more proportionate and effective.</i> Suffolk County Council (SCC) notes the Applicant's position that the scale of the Sea Link construction workforce is modest when considered in isolation. However, SCC emphasises that Sea Link does not exist in isolation: Suffolk is currently host to a concentration of major energy-related NSIPs, and even comparatively small workforce demands contribute to cumulative labour-market pressures, training capacity constraints and the wider socio-economic impacts experienced across the county. For this reason, SCC strongly supports the Examining Authority's Action Point requiring the Applicant to provide a Skills and Employment Plan (SEP) including a local education and training strategy, or to set out a timetable for its submission. A dedicated SEP is the appropriate and proportionate mechanism for ensuring that the project's workforce needs, however modest, are understood, planned for and integrated into county-wide, cross-project labour-market management. This is essential if Suffolk is to mitigate cumulative risks and maximise opportunities for local residents. SCC welcomes the Applicant's stated willingness to support regional skills initiatives, but this must be underpinned by project-specific commitments and clear information. Without a defined SEP, SCC, through the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), cannot meaningfully incorporate Sea Link's workforce requirements into coordinated workforce planning or develop appropriate training pathways in collaboration with local FE, HE and training providers. SCC looks forward to early engagement with the Applicant and encourages immediate contact so that the SEP required by Action Point 105 can be developed in collaboration with the RSCF and submitted in a timely manner.	The Applicant has prepared Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan submitted at Deadline 6.
AP3	Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition 1 (CAH1) at Deadline 4 [REP4-086]	<i>Response to suggested alternative access routes to the Saxmundham Converter Station provided by SCC at Deadline 4.</i> SCC attaches Appendix A to illustrate potential options for an alternative access route utilising the Sizewell Link Road.	Noted. The matters of alternative accesses considered for the Saxmundham Converter Station site are set out in detail in previous submissions into the Examination including the Applicant's response to Suffolk County Council relevant representations, presented in Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014] , and in application documents including the Application Document 8.1 Corridor Preliminary Routing and Substation Siting Study (CPRSS) [APP-368] and Application Document 8.2 Options Selection and Design Evolution Report [APP-369] . Alternative accesses were robustly considered, consulted on, and backchecked in light of feedback and emerging assessment findings.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Figure 6.4.2.77	Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition 1 (CAH1) at Deadline 4 [REP4-086]	SCC makes the following comments: • B1121 through Sternfield and Friston has been recognised as unsuitable for construction in past DCOs. In particular the right turn onto the A1094 for south / west bound traffic is difficult. • The use of Snape Road, Sternfield is not a like for like alternative being a C class road not B and concerns about additional traffic at the A1094/B1069 Snape Church crossroads have been raised throughout the examination. • The applicant has presumed the Chantry Road / Mill Lane forms part of the B1119 which it does not nor is it suitable for large vehicles. • No consideration seems to have been given that the B1121 would need to be closed from the site entrance S-SM09 to the bridge to allow movement of any temporary structure (if this option chosen). The access off C248 Aldeburgh Road, whilst shown within the red line is not annotated as a work no. (REP4 006) presumably this would be works no. 14 (as REP4-218). SCC notes that at present this is an informal parking area adjacent to the highway and not an access. If use is required to access the site at this location a formal access design will be required to be submitted to the highway authority for approval.  If the temporary bridge (option2) is to be stored within the site adjacent to the River Fromus will this require a large site compound than shown as works no.4 (SO1) in REP4-008?	The Applicant acknowledges SCC comments and responds to each of the points as follows: • Response to point 1: Due to the geometry of the B1121/A1094 junction construction HGVs will be banned from left turns into the B1121 from the A1094 and right turns out of the B1121 onto the A1094. This will form part of the induction process for the overhead line works and communicated with suppliers prior to deliveries being made. All HGVs for the limited works requiring access from the B1121 Aldeburgh Road, will report (prior to and post works) to the construction compounds. Compounds shall be accessed via the B1069 Snape Road or from the A1094 at the Hazlewood Hall Farm access. Therefore, access to and from the works site off the B1121 Aldeburgh Road will be from the east only, where the geometry is suitable for HGV access. • Further response to point 1: Fewer than 30 peak daily construction vehicles are expected along the B1121 Aldeburgh Road and B1121 Saxmundham Road through Friston as a result of S-BM11, which will be limited to access to existing overhead line towers and pylon works. This route will otherwise not be used by HGVs associated with the Proposed Project, as stated within (and secured by) Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064]. Only two HGVs are expected to form part of this 30-vehicle daily peak so only minimal HGV movements are expected over the relatively short period of the overhead line works. • Response to point 2: The Applicant has carried out junction modelling for the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1069 Snape Road junction. The junction modelling includes a Sensitivity Test, to consider potentially higher Baseline traffic flows at other times of the year driven by tourism related traffic peaks in summer months. The junction modelling also includes scenarios with and without cumulative traffic. The junction modelling has been submitted at Deadline 6 within an updated version of Application Document 6.3.2.7.A ES Appendix 2.7.A Transport Assessment Note to provide a summary of the junction modelling scope, methodology and results. • Further response to point 2: The junction capacity assessments carried out pursuant to discussions with SCC Highways demonstrate that the Proposed Project will not have a significant effect on the operation of key local junctions and that the conclusions within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] and Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			Onshore Scheme Inter Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] are valid and robust. Whilst the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1069 Snape Road junction is expected to operate over capacity, this is the case both with and without the Proposed Project. Additional mitigation has nonetheless been identified to manage construction worker traffic through this junction, secured within the updated version of Application Document 7.5.1.1 Outline CTMTP – Suffolk which was submitted at Deadline 6. No further additional mitigation is considered to be necessary following the junction modelling. • Response to point 3: This is acknowledged by the Applicant. To confirm, Chantry Road and Mill Lane also do not form construction routes for the Proposed Project and these routes, along with the B1119 Rendham Road, will not be used by construction HGVs. • Response to point 4: The Applicant confirms that the B1121 Main Road will not need to be closed from the site access at S-BM09 to Benhall Rail Bridge. The closure is from the B1121 Main Road / B1121 Church Hill junction to Benhall Rail Bridge, to prevent through traffic along the B1121 Main Road. Access to residents and businesses shall be maintained at all times. The access off Thorpe Road to the foreshore is for monitoring the trenchless installation only. Therefore, only minimal light vehicle movements (quad bike and trailer or similar) or most likely foot traffic would be required to access the order limits from the informal parking area. Any vehicle access will be controlled by the contractor. Due to the limited number and nature of the proposed vehicles accessing at this location, the formal construction of an access would be disproportionate and does not form part of the Proposed Project.
AP 47	Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Issues Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) at Deadline 4 [REP4-086]	<i>There is no permanent infrastructure sited within the Heritage Coast or its setting. The only effects are associated with the construction of the landfall and HVDC cable corridor, which along with their reinstatement would result in short term, temporary and minor adverse, not significant effects. The Applicant therefore considers that the temporary nature of the Proposed Project's interface with the Heritage Coast is compatible with the special character.</i> The tests referenced in para 5.10.11 of EN-1 do not specify that they must be adhered to only in relation to permanent effects. The development includes temporary works which are not compatible with the special character of the Heritage Coast for the reasons set out in SCC's response to this Action Point. Moreover, the Applicant has not considered the offshore elements of the	The Applicant considers the temporary nature of the Proposed Project on the Heritage Coast, as set out in the response within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. This includes offshore elements of the Proposed Project including vessels at sea associated with the landfall as referred to within the detailed assessment of the Heritage Coast within Application Document 6.3.2.1.C ES Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-097].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		designated Heritage Coast, which will be affected by vessels undertaking the Applicant's works.	
AP115	Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Issues Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) at Deadline 4 [REP4-086]	<i>The local authorities raised concerns as to whether article 10 could lead to TCPA applications which bypass the controls secured by the draft DCO, and also that the article could be used to sidestep the controls in other made DCOs.</i> SCC does not consider that the Applicant has fully considered the implications of the second concern recited here which was raised by SCC in ISH 2. Subparagraph (2), which remains unchanged, provides: '(2) To the extent any development carried out or used pursuant to a planning permission granted under the 1990 Act or development consent granted under the 2008 Act or compliance with any conditions of that permission or requirements of that development consent is inconsistent with the exercise of any power or right under this Order or the authorised project: (a) that inconsistency is to be disregarded for the purposes of establishing whether any development which is the subject matter of that planning permission or development consent is capable of physical implementation; and (b) in respect of that inconsistency, no enforcement action under the 1990 Act or the 2008 Act may be taken in relation to development carried out or used pursuant to that planning permission or development consent whether inside or outside the Order limits. ' (underlining added) As written, the parts underlined would allow that, where there is an 'inconsistency' because of overlap with the Sea Link DCO (i.e. at Friston), no enforcement action under the 2008 Act can be taken 'in respect of that inconsistency'. Thus, if there was an inconsistency in (say) the landscaping or drainage details as between the EA2 DCO (together with its control documents) and those details in the Sea Link DCO (together with its control documents), and the development was undertaken under the EA2 DCO but the physical works as carried out were not strictly in accordance with the EA2 DCO (together with its control documents), it would appear that no enforcement action under the 2008 Act could be taken in relation to those non compliant physical works. That may not be what is intended, but it seems to be the effect of the current wording. To deal with the concern, there may be a need to refine or in some way define 'inconsistency' so it is made tighter. Article 10(3) would also stop such works from being the subject of enforcement action for being inconsistent with the Sea Link DCO. The potential for this consequence does not appear to have been acknowledged by the Applicant in its responses regarding Article 10. SCC has discussed Article 10 with the Applicant and intends to engage further to reach agreement on appropriate wording.	The Applicant addressed this point in its discussions with local authorities including SCC in its response to AP115.
5.16	Document 9.91 Applicant's Comments on Change Request (CR1) Relevant and Written Representations [REP4-089]	Table 3.7 of Application Document 9.76.5. Change Request: Addendum to Volume 6 Environmental Statement (CR1-055) identifies that scrub on the embankment is suitable for badgers and this will require further survey prior to works commencing.	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		SCC Ecology welcomes the commitment from the applicant regarding the requirement for further surveys for badger at this location.	
5.19	Document 9.91 Applicant's Comments on Change Request (CR1) Relevant and Written Representations [REP4-089]	Noted: these surveys will be undertaken pre construction once the extent of vegetation removal has been confirmed. SCC Ecology welcomes the commitment to these further surveys from the applicant.	Noted.
	Document 9.112 (A) Benhall Railway Bridge [REP4-101]	Noted that NG have replaced 100 transformers in the past 10 years but that it is not common practice for developers to assist highway authorities in developing or protecting long term resilient routes to allow access to sub stations. The applicant has not considered any other structure on the local road network, for example those on the A12 where it is known that some structures cannot accommodate abnormal loads in terms of weight. It is notable that restrictions on the A12 have been causing delays to AILs moving to and from the SZC project i.e. post consent. By consideration post consent this means that any impacts associated with temporary or permanent works on the highway network are not assessed in terms of impact (i.e. delay or construction impacts such as noise noting that for major routes such as the A12 this needs to be undertaken outside network peaks). SCC has encouraged all NSIP developers to undertake a feasibility study of AIL routes to their project to identify any specific concerns and generally this has been accepted (SZC, SPR, Sunnica) albeit this commonly indicates gaps in structural data requiring further review and inspection before an assessment of the structure to carry planned loads can be completed and movements approved. SCCs position is that it is preferable to undertake repairs / improvements to the bridge to prove a long term benefit albeit an understanding of the impacts of such works would be required before making a final decision. If LionLink were to be consented with the proposal to also use this route the benefits of a long term solution are greater. To assist this SCC is working with the applicant to identify additional inspection of the structure required to design any repair or improvement works. SCC is familiar with the use of 'mini' bridges for example on the A137 at Ostrich Creek and the A140 at Brockford Street. In both cases significant work was required to deploy and remove the bridges with closure of a major route. See the following articles: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyxxz71w2jpo At present details of the size and layout of any temporary structure for option 2 has not been submitted to SCC for formal comment and concerns remain about installing a structure with the challenging geometry of the bridge and adjacent road. SCC has not seen the topographical survey of the Benhall Railway Bridge (2.3.2), and would welcome the opportunity to review it as this may help understand the practicality of a temporary bridge. SCC notes in [REP4- 139] National Rail considers that: A railway closure of the line beneath Benhall Bridge would be necessary, if either of	The Applicant has provided further information in the Application Document 9.112 Benhall Railway Bridge Crossing Feasibility Study which was submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 4. At ISH2 (Application Document 9.89 Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2), Item 13.1 [REP4-085]) the Applicant addresses directly the issue of railway closures.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		the Applicant's proposed options (bridge strengthening works or use of a mini bridge) were undertaken to facilitate abnormal load crossings. Both options involve substantial works to be carried out either above or immediately adjacent to an operational railway line, which, to ensure the safety of passengers and the railway, would necessitate a closure of the line during the works. At present, it is not possible to comment on the specific duration and timing of any railway closure, as this would depend on several factors including, the operational timetable for the line, the scope and method of the works, and the availability of pre-booked possessions. SCC is concerned about the impacts on the rail network as well as the highway network, particularly if the former disrupts rail freight deliveries to SZC and increases HGVs on the local network. The use of the B1122 to access the site in the same way as EA2 is a potential option. However, SPR have yet to access any of the structures on this route and its suitability for transportation of abnormal loads is not a certainty (as presumed in 1.1.12). Presumably the applicant would provide internal haul roads to allow access to the convertor station site. SCC notes that movement of cables are not included in the estimated AIL movements in 1.2.3 so it is presumed they use alternative access routes. Nor does the total include movement of plant on low-loaders which may exceed 46 tonnes. Whilst acknowledging the uncertainties with the duration of disruption for either option 1 or option 2 the former requiring 28 days appears less disruptive than 15 three-day closures (possibly double if LionLink uses this route). It is noted that the developer has proposed storing the temporary overbridge at the River Fromus compound. Clarity is sought if the movement of this bridge will require closure of the B1121 from the site access to the A12 which would be more disruptive if only the section from the A12 to B1121 Church Hill (Sternfield) is required.	
	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]	GG11 mentions managing staff / vehicles entering and leaving the site but how this is done nor that the shift patterns assumed in the CTMP will be affected.	Some flexibility must be maintained particularly while contractors are being selected.
	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]	GG15 runoff onto the public highway must be prevented by providing suitable drainage or other restraint.	
	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]	GG17 does not define when wheel washing should be required. In the Highway Authorities view this should be at any location where there is a risk of mud or debris being tracked onto the public highway.	Wheel washing is to be done "where required". The need for some degree of contractor flexibility is reiterated.
	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]	TT01 refers back to OCTMTP for measures to control means of access and egress to the public highway but not how this is achieved.	They are achieved by way of the measures in the OCTMTP.
	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]	TT04 states that by limiting the number of HGVs to 30 per day (not clear if deliveries or two-way movements) on Sundays and bank holidays these will not have an impact. Survey data from a number of roads indicates that baseline traffic is higher during August than neutral months and that greater peaks can occur on Sundays or	The Applicant has carried out junction modelling activity further to engagement with SCC, as set out in Application Document

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Bank Holidays. Therefore, while the proportional impact of the development is likely to be reduced on these days but the total cumulative impact higher. Further work is needed to assess the available information to allow a quantitative assessment to be made.	
	Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]	TT11 Unsure if the taxi service will also be made available to other non-motorised users of the B1121.	The Applicant will consider this and respond in due course.
	Document 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP4-217] - Article 11 (street works)	Paragraphs 15.10 to 15.19 of SCC's LIR [REP1-130] set out SCC's concerns in respect of article 11 (street works). The following point concerning article 11 is in addition to those included in the LIR. SCC consider certain of the powers listed in article 11(1) are, absent robust justification, in excess of those required to deliver the project and could compromise the street authority's ability to safely manage its network at reasonable expense. Specifically, the matters listed in sub paragraphs (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (i) could result in permanent works being incorporated into the highway maintainable at public expense without any involvement from the street authority. This is a matter of concern for SCC who are bound by the Highways Act 1980 (s41) to maintain such works or remove or modify them at public expense. Absent a suitable highways side agreement or protective provisions to protect SCC's highways interests, SCC considers art.11(1) should be subject to the street authority's consent.	The Proposed Project team remains in ongoing dialogue with SCC Highways to ensure that the impacts of the Proposed Project are appropriately managed and mitigated, including in relation to protective provisions. The Applicant does not consider that any amendment to the draft DCO is necessary at this stage.
	Document 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP4-217] - Schedule 3, Requirement 3 (detailed design)	Please see SCC's reply to question 2GEN6, included in SCC's answers to the ISH2 questions and which are also submitted at Deadline 5.	
	Document 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP4-217] - Schedule 3, Requirement 6 (management plans to be approved)	New sub-paragraph (3) of Requirement 6 states - "All landscaping works must be carried out and maintained in accordance with the Landscape and Ecological Management Plans approved under sub-paragraph (1), and in accordance with the relevant recommendations of appropriate British Standards". [Emphasis added]. SCC considers the emphasised words are vague (which "relevant" recommendations? which British Standards?). Requirements are the DCO equivalent of planning conditions (section 120(2)(a) Planning Act 2008) and one of the six tests for conditions is precision (Circular 11/95: Use of conditions in planning permission (paragraph 14). As currently drafted, sub-paragraph (3) is imprecise and SCC considers it should be reworked by the applicant to ensure the requirement is drafted with precision.	This provision is sufficiently precise. It accords the Applicant a necessary degree of flexibility and allows for the exercising of professional judgment as to the appropriate standards to be measured against.
	Document 3.1 (G) draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP4-217] - Schedule 3, Requirement 6 (management plans to be approved)	New sub-paragraph (4) of Requirement 6 states - "Any tree or shrub planted as part of an approved Landscape and Ecological Management Plans that, within a period of five years after planting, is removed, dies or becomes, in the opinion of the relevant planning authority, seriously damaged or diseased, must be replaced in the first available planting season with a specimen of the same species and size as that originally planted unless	The Applicant has provided additional wording in the updated oLEMP at Deadline 6 to include the temporal aspect of the adaptive management and monitoring (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk)

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		alternative timing or a different specimen is otherwise approved by the relevant planning authority". Owing to the erratic nature of Suffolk's weather patterns (especially in spring), a ten-year aftercare period would be considerably more appropriate than five years. Any species planted must be native and ideally of local provenance to give the best chance of successful establishment.	

Table 18.5 Applicant's Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-179]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		SCC submitted REP5-179 to illustrate their proposed Alternative Access Route to Saxmundham Converter Station.	The Applicant appreciates this submission and confirms that the route shown was the same one that the Applicant responded to at Deadline 5 [REP5-125]. Without revisiting the conclusions of that document, the Applicant remains firmly of the view that the northern access route was properly considered at the pre application stage and was objectively assessed to be a materially worse option than the 'western route' proposed by the Applicant.

Table 18.6 Applicant's Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-180]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Hedgerows and Important Hedgerows	It should be anchored in the ES and in the definitions of the DCO that "hedgerow" and "important hedgerow" have the meaning given in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Any important hedgerows that are to be removed should be listed in a Schedule of the DCO (Removal of Important Hedgerows) and identified on an appropriate plan.	The Applicant will consider this drafting matter further but does note that the approach taken to the current drafting is a well-precedented approach Non-important hedgerows are identified on Application Document 2.12 Trees and Important Hedgerows to be Removed or Managed Plans [CR1-023] as 'existing tree, group, woodland, or hedge to be retained/managed/removed'. The ExA has asked the Applicant to respond to these, and the following, hedgerow points raised by SCC in their third written question 3ECOL17. Please see the Applicant's response to 3ECOL17. SCCs DL5 appendix does not take account of the fact that full hedgerow surveys have already been undertaken, and a colour-coded map produced showing important hedgerows, classified using the criteria listed in REP5-180. This is contained within Application Document 6.4.2.2.A (B) Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report (including Badgers and Important Hedgerows) [AS-028], Figure 6.4.2.2.A.7 and includes hedgerows of both historical and ecological importance. A table accompanying this figure explaining which criteria have led to the classification of each hedgerow as important is provided in Table 1.6 of Application Document

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			6.3.2.2.A (B) ES Appendix 2.2.A Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report (Redacted) [AS-004]. This document also includes the requested photographs. The Applicant believes SCCs DL5 Appendix B [REP5-180] may have been produced by SCC landscape team who potentially did not previously notice the Important Hedgerow information already submitted into the Examination (as noted above). This has been drawn to their attention in meetings since they submitted their D5 response.
	Hedgerows and Important Hedgerows	No work should be allowed to commence until full and complete hedgerow surveys have been carried out. This is necessary to inform the baseline against which Biodiversity Net Gain and the success of the LEMP would be assessed and to agree replacements as part of the landscaping scheme.	See above response. The ExA has asked the Applicant to respond to these, and the following, hedgerow points raised by SCC in their third written question 3ECOL17. Please see the Applicant's response to 3ECOL17.
	Hedgerows and Important Hedgerows	SCC considers that important hedgerows for the purposes of this scheme should include: - Those meeting the Hedgerow Regulations, including the criteria for Archaeology, History, Wildlife and Landscape as listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. - If bat surveys identify 20 or more passes by bats the hedgerow should be considered important as a bat corridor. - All the hedgerows where one or more passes of a barbastelle have been recorded - due to the rarity of the species and margin for error in recording. - Those that perform an important visual function.	See above response. The ExA has asked the Applicant to respond to these, and the following, hedgerow points raised by SCC in their third written question 3ECOL17. Please see the Applicant's response to 3ECOL17.
	Hedgerows and Important Hedgerows	Any required hedgerow removal will need to be compliant with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which restricts the timings of this in relation to nesting birds. Also, as hedges are an invaluable habitat resource the removal of hedges, if required, must have a degree of control, suitable assessment, and adequate mitigation, including that hedges can only be removed in accordance with any approved plans.	This is noted.
	Hedgerows and Important Hedgerows	To enable full understanding and assessment of locations of important hedges, and areas, where either Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) needs to be undertaken, or offsetting of residual impacts needs to be agreed SCC would ask the applicant to: - Append a column which identifies, by reference to the hedgerow regulations, why hedgerows are considered important. - Display the above hedges on a colour – coded map of an appropriate scale, distinguishing between the different criteria and include the additional hedgerows covered by points 2 (bat passes) and 3 (visual importance) above.	See above response. The ExA has asked the Applicant to respond to these, and the following, hedgerow points raised by SCC in their third written question 3ECOL17. Please see the Applicant's response to 3ECOL17.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		- Confirm that the hedgerows in the cable corridor have been assessed against all the criteria in the hedgerow regulations, regarding, for example the presence of other protected species (Part II 6 (3)) and proximity to rights of way (Part II 8). - Provide photos of each of the hedgerows which fall within the definition of 1, 2 and 3 above as and in accordance with point C. This will provide a reference for the baseline. - Confirm which hedgerows the applicant is proposing to HDD. - Confirm how adverse impacts on hedgerows are minimised, for example by defining a minimum width for the cable corridor, when crossing hedges or coppicing, rather than removing hedgerows from temporary visibility splays. This should be individual for each hedgerow (as circumstances may differ).	
	Trees	The Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which should be included in the ES, should provide full Tree Surveys in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction. These Tree Surveys should then be used to inform the detailed design stage and micro-siting of all works and required tree protection measures, such as protective fencing.	Efforts to minimise vegetation loss and commit to reinstatement works are secured within Application Document 7.5.7.1 (B) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk and Application Document 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) . Application Document Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP-294 and APP-295] includes tree survey information which utilises the requested guidance (BS5837:2012).
	Trees	Ancient and veteran trees and ancient woodlands are considered irreplaceable habitats and landscape features and any impacts on these should be avoided.	The Applicant has addressed these points in its response to SCC's LIR – see in particular section 5 of [REP2-026] .
	Trees	Post Consent, no works should be allowed to commence until a full Arboricultural Impact Assessment (including Tree Survey and Tree Protection Plan) and an Arboricultural Method Statement, (including location specific special construction method statements, where works are to be carried out within rootzones of trees that are to be retained) in accordance with BS 5837:2012 are submitted to and agreed with the relevant LPAs in writing.	The Applicant has already undertaken AIAs – see [APP-294] and [APP-295] .
	Trees	No article in the DCO should automatically authorise any works to any tree subject to a tree preservation order. Such works, if demonstrated to be unavoidable, should be agreed with the relevant LPA on a case-to-case basis so that appropriate compensation can be agreed and secured.	The Applicant addresses its position on mitigation for tree impacts at 5.164 of [REP2-026] .

Table 18.7 Applicant’s Comments on the Suffolk County Council Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-181]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Page 2 to 3	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: General	In ExQ1_1GEN11 the ExA asked the Applicant to prepare comparison tables between the DCOs for EA1North and EA2 and the proposed DCO for Sea Link to assist it in understanding the extent of any differences in the controls and mitigations regulating the construction and operation of the Friston substation, which is common to both the EA1N/EA2 projects and the Sea Link project, and the justification for any such differences. It is, and always has been, the Applicant’s case that the Sea Link project can be delivered if the Friston substation is provided as part of the EA1N/EA2 DCOs (described by the Applicant as Scenario 1), and the Applicant confirmed at ISH1 that it was “confident that delivery of the substation under the SPR consents remains by far the most likely scenario” [Transcript of ISH1 at 00:08:48:00 in EV3-006]], but the Applicant has also stated that it requires the ability to provide the Friston substation under its own DCO (which the Applicant has described as Scenario 2) to cater for the possibility that the Friston substation is not delivered under one or other of the EA1N/EA2 DCOs. SCC has accepted the principle that any DCO for the Sea Link project needs to cater for the possibility that the EA1N/EA2 projects do not proceed, unless and until it is clear that one or other of them will deliver the Friston substation, but has emphasised that this should not enable the Applicant to resile from any of the controls or mitigations that have been secured by the EA1N/EA2 DCOs (which are identical as regards the Friston substation): see para 4.2.3 of SCC’s Post-Hearing Submissions following ISH1 [REP1A-057]. The Applicant provided its response to 1GEN11 in the Applicant’s Response to the ExQ1s [REP3-069] and in the accompanying Appendix C [part of REP3-070]. SCC did not comment on the specifics of the exercise carried out by the Applicant at Deadline 4, but it did maintain the point that the Applicant should not seek under its own DCO to resile from what has already been secured by the EA1N/EA2 DCOs: see section 21.1 of SCC’s Post-Hearing Submissions following ISH2 [REP4-150].	The Applicant has worked hard with the local authorities to align the consents as far as possible at Friston Substation, including going far beyond what is necessary given there are different ways of resolving the same issue. However, it is not possible, necessary or appropriate to try to secure requirements for one project to the DCO for another, entirely different project. See the Applicant’s response to 3GEN29 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions.
Page 3		SCC has noted the concerns expressed by Friston Parish Council [REP4-186] about the detailed content of the Applicant’s Appendix C and SCC shares many of those concerns. In particular, it does appear that many of the draft Sea Link DCO provisions, as formulated by the Applicant, that would apply in Scenario 2 (but not in Scenario 1) provide less oversight and control by the discharging authority, such that the Applicant does appear to be (a) resiling from the controls that are set out in the EA1N/EA2 DCOs and (b) ‘having a second bite at the cherry’, in that those EA1N/EA2 controls were imposed after careful consideration in an Examination at which the Applicant had full opportunity to make representations and availed itself of that opportunity on several occasions. SCC does not consider there is any justification for this approach. It is not the case that the Applicant has evidenced that the Friston substation cannot be effectively delivered if it is subject to all of the controls of the EA1N/EA2 DCOs. Far from it, because that situation arises in Scenario 1, which the Applicant regards as “by far the most likely scenario”. In other words, there is no evidential case for ‘second thoughts’ or for reducing the controls that both the EA1N/EA2 ExA(s) and the Secretary of State considered were necessary in consenting the Friston substation works.	See above. The Applicant strongly disagrees that there has been any intention to renege on commitments made, but would note that EA1N and EA2 are applications made by a different Applicant, for different works, with different Order limits, different needs cases, different impacts and different mitigation measures to address those different effects. It is therefore not at all surprising that the wording of the DCOs and management plans are different.
Page 3 to 4		SCC acknowledges that, even now, there may be circumstances where Scenario 2	The Applicant welcomes SCC’s recognition that Friston Substation is and must remain part of the works for Sea Link.

		remains necessary as a matter to be addressed by the Sea Link DCO, but it does not accept that there is a justification for the Friston substation to proceed with lesser controls than are already in place. The exercise undertaken in the Applicant's Appendix C shows how difficult it is to ensure that in formulating a different package of controls that will apply in Scenario 2 (but not in Scenario 1) there is no scope for the 'watering down' of mitigations or for resiling from the EA1N/EA2 controls. SCC sets out specific comments on individual matters in the table below, but it also considers that, as an over-arching point, there should be no derogation or regression from the controls for the Friston substation as set out in the EA1N/EA2 DCOs (without the express consent of the discharging authority).	
Page 4		SCC also acknowledges that, as matters stand, the Applicant does not have the powers (unilaterally) to undertake works for the Friston substation via the EA1N/EA2 DCOs (albeit it is in advanced discussions with SPR for a transfer of those powers). To ensure no derogation or regression without consent, SCC suggests an additional Requirement to be included in the Sea Link DCO, as follows: "Requirement [x] (new substation at Grove Wood, Friston, Suffolk) (1) Unless otherwise approved by the relevant planning authority, the Suffolk Substation (Work No. 1B) must be constructed in compliance with each Requirement applicable to Work No.41 of the East Anglia TWO Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 ("SI 2022/433"), as if Work No.1B were constructed under SI 2022/433. (2) In so far as any Requirement of SI 2022/433 ("the 2022/433 Requirement") entails the making of an application by the undertaker for the purposes of Work No. 41 or the approval of an application by the discharging authority for the purposes of that work, and at the date when the undertaker intends to carry out works comprised in Work No. 1B no application has been made and no approval of an applications has been given, the 2022/433 Requirements are deemed to be Requirements of this Schedule for all purposes concerned with their discharge and the undertaker is deemed to be a person entitled to apply for their discharge and the relevant planning authority is deemed to be the discharging authority. (3) The discharge of a 2022/433 Requirement by the relevant planning authority in accordance with paragraph (2) is conclusive evidence that that Requirement has been discharged for the purposes of this Schedule."	See response to 3GEN29 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions.
Page 4		Such a provision would be effective to 'import' the controls of the EA2 DCO into Schedule 3 of the Sea Link DCO and ensure that the Friston substation could not be provided without compliance with the terms of the EA2 DCO. It would therefore eliminate the risk of derogation or regression without consent. Any such consent would be circumscribed by paragraph 1(4) of Schedule 3 as regards materially different environmental effects. It would also allow the Applicant to 'stand in the shoes' of SPR in so far as any of those controls had not been discharged as at the date when the Applicant wished to undertake the works and take the necessary steps to seek their discharge. Such a provision would obviate the need for the Sea Link DCO to replicate (but in different terms) the controls on the Friston substation set out in the EA1N/EA2 DCOs.	See above. The Applicant has always been and remains open to suggestions of any further controls from the EA1N/ EA2 DCO to be reflected in the Sea Link DCO, for example, at this deadline the Applicant has amended the construction working hours to make it clear that the working hours for Friston Substation will also apply to associated drainage, landscaping, public rights of way works and construction compounds as requested by SCC. However, the Applicant cannot secure documents submitted to discharge requirements on the SPR DCOs.
Page 5	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs:	LV03 of the REAC [REP4-235] states: "As set out within the Outline LEMP for Suffolk, a five-year aftercare period will be established for all reinstatement and mitigation planting along the HVDC and HVAC cable corridors. For the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, all planting associated with the	See Applicant's response to 3GEN24 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions.

	Implementation and maintenance of landscaping	Fromus Bridge, permanent access track, Friston substation (under Scenario 2) and Saxmundham converter station will be managed and maintained for the life time of the asset.” It is unclear to SCC why the Applicant has committed to maintenance of planting for the Fromus Bridge, access track, Friston Substation and Saxmundham converter station for the lifetime of the assets, but only secures a five year period to replace failed planting on the face of the Order. Either the DCO wording is intended to be a minimum period for the entire project with planting for the cited permanent infrastructure to be replaced throughout the lifetime of the assets should planting fail; or, the referenced managing and maintenance period within LV03 excludes the replacement of failed planting for the lifetime of the assets. When commenting on Requirement 15 of the SPR DCOs in Appendix C of [REP3-070], the Applicant implies that its commitment is stronger than SPR’s on account of the longer maintenance period: “... planting related to the mitigation of effects associated with Friston Substation (which would be within Work 33 of SPRs consents) would be maintained for the lifetime of the asset if implemented by the Sea Link team, committing to a longer period in the Sea Link application than is referenced in SPR’s requirement 15.” However, this is apparently contradicted by the DCO wording which suggests failed planting will only be replaced if it falls within a five-year period after planting. SCC considers that the DCO wording should be amended to reflect LV03 to ensure it is clear that failed planting will be replaced throughout the lifetime of the permanent infrastructure.	
Page 5-7	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Construction hours for the grid connection works	The Applicant is incorrect to state that these requirements are identical. The SPR DCO requirement controls ‘grid connection works’ which are defined as works 34 and 38 to 43 and any associated development. These works are defined as follows: A nationally significant infrastructure project as defined in sections 14 and 16 (electric lines) of the 2008 Act comprising— Work No. 38 — up to three cable sealing end compounds, one of which may include circuit breakers, comprising an electrical compound with electrical equipment and overhead line gantries to allow the connection of Work No. 41 to the overhead lines comprised within Work No. 39 together with cables connecting the national grid substation to the cable sealing ends, extension of the permanent access comprised within Work No. 34 and works to the overhead line pylons. Work No. 39 — replacement, upgrade and realignment works to the overhead line pylons in the vicinity of Work No. 38 together with up to one new additional overhead line pylon to the north west of the national grid substation comprised within Work No. 41. Work No. 40 — temporary realignment works to the overhead line pylons in the vicinity of Work No. 38. and associated development within the meaning of section 115(2) (development for which development consent may be granted) of the 2008 Act comprising— Work No. 41 — a new national grid substation to the north west of Work No. 30 at Grove Wood, Friston and extension of permanent access comprised within Work No. 34. Work No. 42 — temporary construction consolidation sites, access and extension of permanent access comprised within Work No. 34. Work No. 43 — temporary working areas for the purposes of constructing Work Nos. 39 and 40 including access.	The working hours for Work 1A and 1B in the Sea Link DCO are identical to those applied to the grid connection works in the SPR DCO; this was not stated incorrectly. SCC’s issue is understood to be whether additional works that are not part of the construction of the substation or associated overhead line works should also be subject to the SPR working hours. In terms of the definition of Work 1A and 1B in comparison to the SPR DCO, this was provided in detail in Application Document 9.73.1 Applicant’s Responses to First Written Questions [REP3-070] in Table C.1, which is the same document being referenced by SCC in this response. However, to avoid the need to cross refer, please see below for a summary: • Work No. 33 are split across Work No. 13, Work No. 15 and Work No. 17 (as well as some elements being part of Work No. 1A and 1B). • Work No. 34 equivalent works included in Work No. 1B. • Work No. 38 works are not part of the Sea Link application. • Work No. 39 equivalent works are part of Work No. 1A. • Work No. 40 equivalent works are part of Work No. 1A.

Work No. 34 — formation of a new permanent access road from the B1121 north of Kiln Lane to the onshore substation and national grid substation including vegetation clearance on the eastern side of the road, highway modifications and traffic management measures. and in connection with such Work No. 34 and Work Nos. 38 to 43 and to the extent that they do not otherwise form part of any such work, further associated development comprising such other works as may be necessary or expedient for the purposes of or in connection with the relevant part of the authorised project and which fall within the scope of the work assessed by the environmental statement, including—

- (a)haul roads, ramps, and other vehicular and pedestrian means of access, including creation of new tracks and footpaths, and widening, upgrades, alterations and improvements of existing roads, tracks and footpaths;
- (b)bunds, embankments, swales, landscaping and boundary treatments;
- (c)habitat creation;
- (d)spoil storage and associated control measures;
- (e)jointing bays, link boxes, cable protection, joint protection, manholes, marker posts, tiles and tape, lighting and other works associated with laying cables and pulling cables through cable ducts;
- (f)water supply works, foul drainage provision, surface water management systems, temporary drainage during installations of cables and culverting;
- (g)works to alter the position of apparatus, including mains, sewers, drains and cables;
- (h)works to alter the course of, or otherwise interfere with, non-navigable rivers, streams or watercourses;
- (i)landscaping and other works to mitigate adverse effects of the construction, maintenance or operation of the authorised project;
- (j)works for the benefit or protection of land affected by the authorised project;
- (k)working sites in connection with the construction of the authorised project, construction lay down areas and compounds and storage compounds;
- (l)works of restoration; and (m)fencing or other means of enclosure.

The Sea Link draft DCO, by comparison, does not control the working hours of several impactful works on the grid connection site as a result of the wording of the requirement and the works. This is clearly illustrated on Sheet 2 of the Works Plans [REP4-006] which show several works outside of Work no. 1A and 1B proposed for the site which would not have to be undertaken in accordance with the working hours consented for the site under the SPR DCOs. This includes elements of Work no. 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17. Elements of these works, including drainage and construction compound works, are explicitly controlled under the SPR DCO working hours requirement as they come within the definition of ‘grid connection works’. Therefore, the DCO wording should be amended to accurately reflect the Applicant’s claim in Appendix C of [REP3-070] that the two requirements are identical. Since the Applicant has taken a different approach in defining Works in the DCO to SPR, SCC considers the most straightforward way to amend this requirement would be to define its application spatially according to Sheets 2 and 3 of the Works Plans [REP4-006] which represent the works in close proximity to Friston.

Without prejudice to SCC’s principal position on Core Working Hours as it relates to the project as a whole, SCC offers the following rewording of subparagraph (7) of Requirement 7 with the aim of achieving alignment with the SPR consents for the substation site: (7) In respect of Work No.1A and Work No. 1B, and all other

- Work No. 41 equivalent works are part of Work No. 1B.
- Work No. 42 and 43 equivalent works are included partially in Work No. 1B and part under Work No. 4 (namely the temporary construction compound).
-

Therefore, the majority of works above were included in 1A or 1B or are not part of Sea Link application.

However, following discussions with SCC and ESC, the Applicant has also agreed to explicitly commit to carrying out other works that are part of the SPR application under the same working hours as that was always the Applicant’s intention. The Applicant has therefore updated requirement 7(7) to explicitly refer to landscaping, drainage, footpath and construction compound works that are associated with Work No. 1A and 1B but part of other work numbers.

The Applicant does not consider it appropriate to refer to all works on the Works Plan sheets as proposed by SCC as this would then include works that are not part of the SPR DCOs. In particular, other works on these sheets include the installation of underground cables. The typical working patterns of National Grid cable teams are 12 days on, 2 days off, so applying the SPR working hours to these cable works would have a greater adverse effect on the ability of the Applicant to deliver the project efficiently and effectively than restrictions for the construction of Friston Substation.

		elements of the authorised development, including associated development, located within the area defined in Sheets 2 and 3 of the Works Plans – Suffolk, construction work may only take place between 0700 hours and 1900 hours Monday to Friday and 0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays, with no activity on Sundays or bank holidays, except as specified in subparagraph (8).	
Page 8	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Control of artificial light emissions during operational phase	SCC notes that requirement 3 of the most recent draft of the DCO [REP4-235] requires approval for operational lighting of the converter station but not the Friston substation. SCC does not see why this project would be justified in deviating from the SPR consent in this way. SCC notes East Suffolk Council’s concerns (e.g. within [REP3-085]) over the control of lighting and supports their ask for an appropriate requirement for a lighting management plan.	As SCC is well aware, the issue here has not been the Applicant deliberately deviating from SPR’s approach, but dealing with a position where the detailed operational lighting plans are in preparation but not yet finalised and preparing an outline plan (for Sea Link) in parallel with a detailed plan (for the EA2 application) is problematic and more likely to lead to confusion than reassure parties on the design approach. The majority of management plans for EA2 have now been discharged so the Applicant can secure the salient design points in Requirement 3; however, this does not yet apply to operational lighting. The Applicant is therefore neither in a position to develop a separate outline plan nor secure measures in a detailed, discharged plan. However, to resolve the issue of future discharge in the event that Friston Substation is constructed under the Sea Link DCO, the Applicant has added a requirement as part of Requirement 3 for an Operational Lighting Management Plan to be submitted and approved by the relevant planning authority in the event that Friston Substation is constructed under the Sea Link DCO.
Page 8 to 9	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Onshore preparation works management plan	SCC does not object to the principle of small-scale activities occurring prior to discharge of requirements. However, the extent of activities proposed to be consented as pre-commencement works goes beyond small-scale activities such as environmental surveys. Activities of concern under the definition of pre-commencement operations include: <i>‘(f) site clearance;</i> <i>(i) set up works associated with the establishment of construction compounds;</i> <i>(j) temporary accesses;’</i> These works could involve heavy duty machinery which can cause environmental impacts. Construction compounds involve large areas of hardstanding surface which is likely to be impermeable and so require drainage plans which SCC should approve or be consulted upon. These points also apply to the construction of temporary accesses under pre-commencement activities. Site clearance will likely involve interaction with ecological and arboriculture receptors. Moreover, it is not clear whether ancient and veteran trees could be felled as a pre-commencement operation if the Applicant considered it compatible with commitment A05 of the REAC [REP4-235]. Impacts on archaeology would also be a concern. SCC notes that pre-commencement operations must be carried out in accordance with the outline management plans. However, if the works did not satisfy this requirement, there is potential for substantial adverse effects to arise beyond what was assessed in the Environmental Statement. As such, it is vital that notifications	The works detailed as pre-commencement operations are well activities that are well precedented as being appropriate works under this category. The purpose of pre-commencement works is to enable these preparatory activities prior to discharge of all management plans so to add management plans for pre-commencement works would defeat the object of this category of works. As SCC acknowledges, the pre-commencement works would be undertaken in the context of extensive management plans and controls. This includes all measures associated with vegetation clearance as well as measures on archaeology. The Applicant is legally bound to these management plans so the suggestion that SCC require control in case the Applicant commits illegal activity is not reasonable or appropriate. Nor is it appropriate or necessary for the relevant planning authority to ‘verify’ that the Applicant is planning to undertake activities permissible under the DCO as pre-commencement works. This is not the purpose of the notification period. The Applicant disagrees there is a need to amend the approach to pre-commencement activities.

		for pre- commencement operations are required to demonstrate compliance with the relevant plans in Requirement 5 and outline plans in Requirement 6. In addition, the relevant planning authority should get more than merely 7 days’ notice for pre-commencement works as this provides little opportunity to verify that the activities are valid and comply with the relevant controls. As has been stated by SCC and other local authorities during the examination, the presence of multiple NSIPs means the resources of local authorities are becoming increasingly stretched. 7 days, which is 5 working days or less, hardly provides for any opportunity for a technical review of the notification in comparison to all the relevant controls. A more proportionate and reasonable approach would require confirmation from the relevant planning authority that the pre-commencement operations accord with the DCO which must be given within a more reasonable time period such as 28 days. The County Council should also receive the notification as certain pre-commencement activities will fall within its remit such as highways, water environment and archaeology. In short, whilst SCC is not opposed to the principle of deviating from the SPR consents on this matter, SCC is deeply concerned with the disproportionately short notification period and lack of any process of confirmation from a local authority.	
Page 9 to 11	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Control of noise during operational phase	SCC notes East Suffolk Council’s concerns with the control of operational noise, as found in ESC’s LIR [REP1-128], which have not yet been addressed. SCC considers that there should be some requirement to ensure that noise levels will be monitored to ensure that compliance with commitment NV07 cited by the Applicant can be judged quantitatively and echoes ESC’s concerns with the lack of alignment to the site rating consented as part of the SPR consents. However, SCC defers to ESC’s position as the relevant authority on noise and vibration matters.	The Applicant has secured a low noise level at all noise sensitive receptors as part of commitment NV11 in the REAC, with NV07 and NV09 providing further commitments to reducing noise levels further where possible. Given these firm commitments, the Applicant does not consider it necessary to secure even lower noise limits in NV07. Please also see Application Document 9.33 Operational Noise Levels -Technical Note. As has been discussed on numerous occasions with SCC, the SPR requirements on noise cannot be secured on the Sea Link DCO as they apply cumulatively to three substations, two of which are not within the Sea Link Order limits and are not part of the Sea Link DCO. The SPR substations are also likely to generate significantly more noise than Friston substation due to the equipment proposed. It is entirely inappropriate and unenforceable to try to secure requirements applying to equipment outside the Applicant’s control as part of the Sea Link DCO.
Page 11	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Restriction on carrying out grid connection works where consented in another order	SCC does not consider it justified for Requirement 15 of the Sea Link DCO to only apply when works associated with Work No. 1B is completed rather than when the relevant part of Work No. 1B is under construction under another consent. There is no need for the Sea Link DCO to retain the unqualified ability to carry out the substation works when they are already being carried out under another consent. Instead, this possibility should be restricted such that it only activates should the SPR projects be paused and work on the substation under that consent subsequently paused. In addition, the Sea Link DCO should refer to the grid connection works as stated in the SPR DCO. This is because the Friston substation site contains multiple works outside of Work No. 1B which overlap with the SPR consents. All works within the site which are included in the SPR consents should form the definition of “grid connections works”.	The Applicant disagrees that any amendment to Requirement 15 is necessary. Completion of works is the correct criterion given that otherwise there would remain a risk that SPR ‘commence’ works on site but the construction of Friston Substation is not completed for any reason. At present the Applicant would then have ‘lost’ the powers to complete and construct the substation that is an essential part of the Sea Link project; which is not an acceptable outcome. The Applicant disagrees that it is required to structure the works in its DCO in the same way as has been done for a different project. However, the Applicant did agree to SCC’s request to change the construction working hours in Requirement 7 for Friston Substation so they apply to other works such as landscaping and drainage that are part of the

			SPR works at the site. As has been extensively discussed, the mitigation works are not identical and do not need to be given they are mitigating the effect of different works.
Page 11 to 12	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Installation of cable ducts	SCC does not see why a similar requirement cannot be inserted into the Sea Link Order in relation to Lion Link on account of the overlapping cable routes. This would make progress towards compliance with relevant parts of the NPS for energy, such as paragraph 3.3.80 of EN-1 concerning the avoidance of unnecessary impacts where avoidable through coordination. SCC considers the Applicant should engage with SCC to agree appropriate wording.	The Applicant cannot install ducts for Lionlink as part of the Sea Link application because the works for Lionlink cable are not part of the Sea Link works and the Applicant does not have consent for them. The location of Lionlink cables are also not yet fixed as the application for Lionlink has not yet been finalised or submitted.
Page 12 to 13	Alignment of requirements with EA1N and EA2 wind farm DCOs: Control of development during operational phase	SCC strongly objects to the Applicant's position and considers the SPR requirement to be necessary not only for the substation but all parts of the permanent onshore infrastructure which requires mitigation necessary to be acceptable in planning terms which could be undermined by Permitted Development rights. In paragraph 30.5.32 of the ExA's recommendation to the Secretary of State for EA21, the ExA details that it considers the mitigation measures which could be undermined by the extensive Permitted Development rights enjoyed by NGET to 'be necessary to make the proposed onshore substations development acceptable in policy terms'. Clearly, the significant residual effects of the converter station, substation, Fromus bridge and permanent access road despite proposed mitigation measures strongly supports the position that most, if not all, mitigation measures in relation to these works are necessary should the application be consented. Unless there is some restriction on these permitted development rights, there is, as identified in the decision on EA1N and EA2, a real risk that the mitigations secured in the DCO necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms are reduced in effectiveness in a way not envisaged by the decision maker. Therefore, a requirement akin to Requirement 44 of EA1N/EA2 is necessary for the Sea Link DCO. The relevant Permitted Development rights limited in the SPR DCOs are: Class B – electricity undertakings Permitted development B. Development by statutory undertakers for the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity for the purposes of their undertaking consisting of— <i>(a) the installation or replacement in, on, over or under land of an electric line and the construction of shafts and tunnels and the installation or replacement of feeder or service pillars or transforming or switching stations or chambers reasonably necessary in connection with an electric line;</i> <i>(b) the installation or replacement of any electronic communications line which connects any part of an electric line to any electrical plant or building, and the installation or replacement of any support for any such line;</i> <i>(c) the sinking of boreholes to ascertain the nature of the subsoil and the installation of any plant or machinery reasonably necessary in connection with such boreholes;</i> <i>(d) the extension or alteration of buildings on operational land;</i> <i>(e) the erection on operational land of the undertaking of a building solely for the protection of plant or machinery;</i> <i>(f) any other development carried out in, on, over or under the operational land of the undertaking.</i> See https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/schedule/2/part/15/crossheading/class-	See Applicant's response to 3GEN32 in Application Document 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions .

19. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Suffolk Energy Action Solutions Ltd (SEAS)

19.1 Introduction

- 19.1.1 Table 19.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-152].
- 19.1.2 Table 19.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-153].
- 19.1.3 Table 19.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-154].
- 19.1.4 Table 19.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-155].
- 19.1.5 Table 19.5 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-157].
- 19.1.6 Table 19.6 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-158].
- 19.1.7 Table 19.7 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-159].
- 19.1.8 Table 19.8 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 4 Response [REP4-203].
- 19.1.9 Table 19.9 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-145]
- 19.1.10 Table 19.10 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-146]
- 19.1.11 Table 19.11 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-147]
- 19.1.12 Table 19.12 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-148]
- 19.1.13 Table 19.13 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-149]
- 19.1.14 Table 19.14 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-150]
- 19.1.15 Table 19.15 summarises the Applicant’s comments on SEAS Deadline 5 Response [REP5-151]
- 19.1.16 The Applicant has previously responded to the point raised in SEAS Deadline 4 Response **REP4-202** in the **Application Document 9.38.6 Deadline 5 Cover Letter [REP5-001]**.
- 19.1.17 The Applicant has previously responded to SEAS Deadline 4 Response **REP4-240** at Deadline 5 in **Application Document 9.128 Applicant’s Response to Nicholas Bridges Representations RR-3944 and REP3-132 and SEAS REP4-240 [REP5-141]**.
- 19.1.18 The Applicant's has responded to SEAS Deadline 5 Response **[REP5-205 and REP5-206]** in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.
- 19.1.19 **The Applicant has responded to SEAS** Deadline 5 Response **[REP5-206]** in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 19.1 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-152]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		1. Introduction Coastal Erosion and Energy Infrastructure on the Suffolk Coast – A Local Perspective This is the written follow up to speaking at the ISH 2, day 2 session 3.	The Applicant acknowledges this representation relation to coastal erosion but observes that its points are for the most part high-level concerns about the proposed project, which makes it difficult to provide a granular and focussed response.

What we are seeing on the ground now matters directly to how major energy infrastructure projects – but specifically Sea Link – should be assessed.

What We Are Asking For

Given the pace and scale of change now being observed, we are asking for three straightforward and reasonable steps:

- 1. An urgent site inspection by the Examining Authority, so current conditions can be seen first-hand
- 2. New, climate-informed surveys for Sea Link and all other current and proposed energy projects, carried out now – not after consent
- 3. A proper reassessment of coastal erosion risk, including quantified projections over the lifetime of the project, secured monitoring, and clear responsibility if things go wrong.

Climate change here is not some future risk. It is already reshaping this coastline. Sea-level rise, storm surges and increasingly severe storms are accelerating erosion at a pace that is far beyond what many existing surveys predicted. Conditions have changed materially since much of the baseline work for Sea Link and other projects was carried out. That is why we believe the current assessment framework is no longer adequate.

2. What’s Happening on the Ground Now The most dramatic changes are happening at Thorpeness. Cliff erosion has accelerated sharply because the ground is saturated, making it extremely friable and prone to sudden collapse. The Red House on North End Avenue was lost several years ago, and in just past few weeks three more houses have been demolished following Storms Bram, Goretti and Chandra. Five flats are being demolished this week, with more properties expected to follow which the shocking feature on national BBC 6pm News on Tuesday 27th January served to illustrate.

The above short montage of drone footage from BBC Politics East 1/2/26, shows the physical changes being wrought and confirms that around 27 metres of cliff have been lost in just two years, compared with earlier predictions of around 2 metres. At this rate, Thorpeness village faces a very real and imminent risk of flooding.

Along the wider coast, recent storms have stripped beaches back to levels many residents have never seen before. In places like Aldeburgh, historic gabions that had been buried for decades are now exposed. There is no guarantee that the shingle will return, and permanent sediment loss becomes more likely with every major storm.

- The Applicant recognises that there is unavoidably a degree of uncertainty associated with providing reliable estimates of future coastal erosion.
- As such the Applicant has adopted a pragmatic approach involving a commitment (MPE08) to monitor intertidal and subtidal sections of the cable route over the operational life of the Proposed Development. MPE08 commits the Applicant “to consider the potential for coastal erosion over the lifetime of the project in line with the Final Offshore Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).”
- The Proposed Project comprises low carbon infrastructure (as defined in NPS EN-1) which is a key part of efforts to fight climate change.
- The Applicant has submitted an **9.144 Additional Sediment Dispersion Modelling - Technical Note at Deadline 6**.
- The Applicant’s view is that the Proposed Project provides a pragmatic, robust and proportionate response to managing coastal erosion.

This matters because beaches and sediment movement are not just scenery – they are part of the coast’s natural defence system. Once they are destabilised, erosion can accelerate very quickly.

3. Why This Matters for Sea Link and Other Energy Projects

This rapidly changing coastline is the setting for several major energy schemes: Sizewell C, Sea Link, SPR and potentially LionLink. These projects involve horizontal directional drilling, onshore and offshore cabling, and works beneath beaches, cliffs and sensitive conservation areas.

The proposed Sea Link landfall sits on a coastline that is already acknowledged by the Applicant to be highly sensitive and actively eroding. Their own data shows a long-term net loss of beach since the early 1990s, with accelerated erosion between 2016 and 2021 in the Thorpeness–Aldeburgh area.

Despite this, the Applicant repeatedly concludes that erosion impacts will be “negligible”, largely on the basis that the area affected is small and that natural processes will quickly restore equilibrium.

From a local perspective, that argument simply doesn’t reflect reality. A highly dynamic coastline is not a resilient one. It is often closer to tipping points, where relatively small interventions can trigger disproportionate and sometimes irreversible change – especially during storm events.

4. Burial Depth, Exposure Risk and Real-World Experience

The Applicant places a lot of confidence in burial depth and design standards. However, there is a clear local precedent that undermines this reassurance.

In October 2018, a fibre-optic telecommunications cable installed north of Thorpeness – buried well below the beach by an experienced international contractor – became fully exposed overnight following high winds and tides. This happened less than a decade after installation and demonstrates that burial depth alone is not a reliable safeguard on this stretch of coast. Extreme but entirely foreseeable conditions can rapidly undermine design assumptions and yet this precedent is not meaningfully addressed in the Sea Link assessment.

No specific meter-by-meter burial depths are currently fixed. The applicant states that "as it stands, our assessment offshore, we haven't finalized specific depths because they are subject to the CBRA and detailed design". NGET argues that "monitoring plans"

and final depth assessments are usually deferred until a contractor is appointed, which SEAS and other parties challenge as being "too late" for the examination. In our view this deprives the ExA of the ability to assess the environmental impact of that depth (e.g. sediment disturbance or "frac-out" risk) before the DCO is granted.

Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) will be used to install the cables deep beneath the beach and intertidal area. The cables are intended to pass "deep beneath the shoreline" to avoid surface impacts and ensure the infrastructure remains unaffected by coastal erosion over its lifetime. NGET argues that burial via HDD is a mitigation measure against erosion. However, documents like APP-339 (p. 23) admit that "ground strength" dictates burial depth. As illustrated in points above SEAS argue that recent events show ground strength as being highly unstable.

*See Appendix below regarding examples of cable burial agreed parameters.

5. Sediment Movement and Wider Knock-On Effects

Longshore sediment transport along this frontage is critical. It helps maintain beach levels, protects settlements, and supports sensitive habitats such as the RSPB North Warren and Hazlewood Marshes.

Those marshes have already been breached by storm surges, converting freshwater habitat into saltmarsh and increasing inland flood risk. Further breaches could have serious ecological consequences and could leave Aldeburgh effectively cut off far sooner than previously anticipated.

Any intervention that alters sediment pathways – even if the physical footprint seems small – risks knock-on effects well beyond the immediate landfall area. Yet there is no conservative, quantified modelling showing how sediment transport might be affected under storm conditions or over the lifetime of the project.

6. Monitoring, Mitigation and Responsibility

Despite acknowledging that this is a highly sensitive and eroding coastline, the Applicant has not secured:

- Long-term beach profile monitoring at the landfall
- Clear trigger points for intervention if erosion accelerates
- Transparent reporting arrangements
- A clear liability framework if cables become exposed or erosion is worsened

	Short-term construction monitoring is not enough for infrastructure expected to operate for decades in a rapidly changing coastal environment. Deferring these issues to post-consent plans does not give confidence that risks are being properly managed. SEAS challenge whether NGET has modelled the predicted erosion profile against the technical burial limits for the full 40–60 year lifespan of the project 7. Policy, Precaution and the Burden of Proof National policy is clear. Where environments are sensitive and impacts may be irreversible, applicants are expected to assess risks conservatively, address uncertainty transparently, and apply the precautionary principle. In this case: • Erosion risk is acknowledged but consistently downplayed • Key uncertainties are deferred rather than resolved • Worst-case and lifetime scenarios are not meaningfully explored • Assertions are repeated without new evidence Simply stating that impacts will be negligible does not make them so. Ultimately, it may be climate change itself that determines whether this location is suitable for this kind of infrastructure at all. 8. In Conclusion The evidence shows that the proposed Sea Link landfall would be built on a coastline that is already eroding, highly sensitive and changing faster than previous assessments anticipated. Relying on outdated surveys, qualitative assurances and post-consent fixes does not meet the standards required for nationally significant infrastructure in such a setting. For these reasons, coastal erosion alone weighs heavily against granting Development Consent as things currently stand.

Table 19.2 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-153]

SEAS WRITTEN REPRESENTATION OF ISH2 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
2-10		As explained at ISH2, Day 3, it is beyond dispute that the people of Suffolk SEAS represents and the land they cherish are facing a tsunami of major infrastructure projects without precedent nationwide.	The Applicant has responded to these points in previous submissions.

		The sensitivity of the context to what it is being asked to bear is clear, and the ExA already has ample confirmation of that from its colleagues’ report into the EA1N/EA2 DCO examination. That there will be wide-ranging significant adverse cumulative effects, both intraproject and inter project, and as regards inter-project that even the construction effects alone (let alone operational) will occur over a period that can fairly be described as generational, is obvious. Both law (the EIA Regulations), policy (see e.g. EN-1 at para. 4.15) and ultimately s.104 itself require these effects to be: (a) properly assessed; and (b) taken into account, including in the benefits/disbenefits balance. However, the Applicant has signally failed to properly assess cumulative effects. This places the ExA in an unenviable position in terms of reporting to the Secretary of State. Consider, that whilst the DCO regime that this DCO Application is subject to is meant to be a front-loaded process, with the hard work of assessment done up front, including in response to pre-application consultation, this DCO Application is nothing but a stream of glaring deficiencies of assessment, either wholesale absences or what might as well be, that fail to provide any realistic sense of the cumulative impact. Thus, across the piece the Appellant’s work reflects a lack of necessary quantitative assessment, failure to assess substantively, repeated reliance on meaningless and uninformative qualitative assessment, denial of the long-term drawn out effects on people, flora and fauna, of construction year upon construction year of cumulative energy projects, then the essentially permanent operational phase, and a stubborn insistence that unless impacts overlap exactly temporally or spatially they are not to be counted. This, though, is not how people live and not how they experience, nor how wildlife and the landscape will be affected. Equally, deficiencies in individual topic-area assessments, both as to the effects of this Proposal in isolation and the topic-area-specific assessment of cumulative effects, then knock on to multi-topic-area assessments.	The Applicant has undertaken a robust assessment in line with the PINS guidance on cumulative effects assessment and also in line with the requirements of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) 2017. Where there is a natural element of uncertainty, such as for the intra-project cumulative effects assessment, for the reason set out previously, the applicant has taken a robust approach and reported a significant effect. The Applicant has sought to strengthen several commitments in the REAC and CEMP to ensure there is further consideration of these effects and any additional mitigation that may be put in place.
11(1)	Traffic/transport:	It is inexplicable that it is only now, after what is well over a year of denial on the Applicant’s part (as the warnings date back before the Application was made), that the Application has finally promised some junction modelling. It is far too late, but better late than never. However, we can only guess at what data will be fed into that: the Applicant still refuses to accept that it is inappropriate it has used nonneutral month traffic data. Yet its approach flies in the face of the relevant guidance and good practice, as SEAS and PJA’s Richard Ellam have already explained at length.	The Applicant maintains its position that junction modelling was not necessary as part of the original assessment work. The proposed working hours are designed to minimise additional construction worker vehicle trips on the surrounding highway network at the busiest times (during the network peak hours) and peak construction traffic levels will be short-term and temporary in duration. In addition, no potential for significant effects have been identified with respect to Driver Delay at junctions within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] or Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067], based on queue length surveys carried out at these junctions during the AM and PM peak periods, and peak construction traffic forecasts. Nonetheless, junction modelling has been carried out at the Examining Authority’s

request and following discussions with the Local Highway Authorities.

Kent

The Applicant submitted the junction modelling within Kent at Deadline 5 within **Application Document 6.3.3.7.A (B) Environmental Statement Appendix 3.7.A Transport Assessment Note [REP5-029]**.

The analysis consists of junction modelling for three junctions within the Kent study area, comprising the Sevenscore, Ebbsfleet and Minster roundabouts and provided a summary of the junction modelling scope, methodology and results based on the agreed scope and methodology for the junction modelling, as discussed and agreed with Kent County Council (KCC) Highways on 15 January 2026.

The Applicant has since held a further meeting with KCC Highways on 31 March 2026 to review KCC’s feedback on the junction modelling and their request for additional measures for inclusion within **Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline CTMTP – Kent**. Following this meeting, additional measures have been included within an updated version of **Application Document 7.5.1.2 Outline CTMTP – Kent** (submitted at Deadline 6), as agreed during the meeting.

It was also agreed that the junction modelling and Baseline traffic data used to inform the junction modelling was acceptable, and that a Sensitivity Test to consider potentially higher baseline traffic flows at busier times of the year was not required by KCC Highways.

Suffolk

The Applicant held a further meeting with Suffolk County Council (SCC) and East Suffolk Council (ESC) on 30 March 2026, and the junction modelling outputs were subsequently shared with them on 1 April 2026. This included junction modelling for the A12/ B1121 Main Road junction (to the south of Saxmundham), the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1121 Aldeburgh Road junction and the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1069 Snape Road junction. Whilst it was agreed with SCC Highways that the Baseline traffic surveys (carried out in January/ February 2024) were appropriate for use (methodology and neutral month period of data collection was agreed with SCC in advance of the surveys), the junction modelling nonetheless includes a Sensitivity Test, to consider potentially higher Baseline traffic flows at other times of the year driven by tourism related traffic peaks in summer months. The junction modelling also includes scenarios with and without cumulative traffic. The junction modelling has been submitted at Deadline 6 within an updated version of **Application Document 6.3.2.7.A ES Appendix 2.7.A Transport Assessment Note** to provide a summary of the junction modelling scope, methodology and results.

The junction capacity assessments carried out pursuant to discussions with SCC Highways demonstrate that the Proposed Project will not have a significant effect on the operation of key local junctions and that the conclusions within **Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054]**

			and Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] are valid and robust. The A12/ B1121 Main Road (South) and A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1121 Aldeburgh Road junctions are expected to operate within capacity with and without the Proposed Project. Whilst the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1069 Snape Road junction is expected to operate over capacity, this is the case both with and without the Proposed Project. Additional mitigation has nonetheless been identified to manage construction worker traffic through this junction, secured within the updated version of Application Document 7.5.1.1 Outline CTMTP – Suffolk which was submitted at Deadline 6. No further additional mitigation is considered to be necessary following the junction modelling. In view of the above, the Applicant considers matters relating to junction modelling to have been fully addressed. The Applicant also reiterates that the Baseline traffic flows which have informed Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] are based on an agreed survey methodology with SCC Highways and remain appropriate for the purposes of the original assessment work. The Applicant’s position on this matter remains unchanged from that previously summarised within Application Document 9.79 Applicant’s Comments on Written Representations [REP2-034] and Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant’s Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014]. The above Sensitivity Test has been carried out for the purposes of the junction modelling in Suffolk only, following further consultation with SCC Highways. No further traffic surveys or seasonality adjustments are required to inform Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054], as agreed with SCC.
(2)	Noise:	Mr Thornley-Taylor has not only had to point the Applicant to the policy requirement for prediction of noise, he has also had to point out and explain some genuinely fundamental matters, even as to how to correctly approach assessment of the significance of low frequency noise, and to explain the noise effect of adding the noise of one transformer to another. We hope that a proper predictive noise assessment of the actual noise-generating equipment proposed here will emerge, but have limited confidence that it will.	Please see responses in Table 19.5, below.
(3)	Tourism and the local economy	Once again, the Applicant is still in the starting blocks, if that, with no assessment worth the name. It has ignored the fundamental of cost in its assessment of available accommodation, has “assessed” (if it can be called that) blind to type of accommodation, has had no regard for the knock-on effect on the local rental market of workers taking accommodation out of that market, and it has carried out no quantitative attitudinal survey and done nothing to establish a baseline, leaving it to East Suffolk Council to, belatedly, attempt to do so.	The Applicant has considered these points in Application Document 9.117 Applicant’s Response to AP104 from Issue Specific Hearing 2, Application Document 9.123 Applicant’s Response to Second Written Questions (please refer to 2SERT3) and Application Document 9.135 Applicant’s Response to March Hearing Action Points (please refer to AP26).

(4)	Landscape, visual impact, and heritage impact:	The Applicant has wrongly dismissed any number of impacts for lack of spatial overlap, or simply because it has decided, rather arbitrarily, they are outside an area it considers affected.	The Applicant has responded to inter and intra cumulative effects previously. Reference should be made to Application Document 9.128 Applicant’s Response to Nicholas Bridges Representations RR-3944 and REP3-132 and SEAS REP4-240 [REP5-141] .
(5)	tourism-dependent business	The Applicant’s repeated drumroll of “no significant effect” does not bear any kind of scrutiny, and instead destroys public faith in its work. The notion that the person whose tourism-dependent business is suffering due to removal of tourist discretionary spend replaced by salary-hoarding construction workers, who then experiences traffic problems every which way, and has to see the fruits of these projects imposed in harmful juxtaposition with the landscape, will not experience a significant adverse effect, is for the birds. And that is before we add on the years and years they will experience it over the construction phase alone.	The Applicant considers that it’s approach has been robust.
12-13		In the context of people’s lives being impacted for a generation by construction, and this beautiful, fragile, tranquil landscape changed for what will feel like perpetuity to those experiencing it, the Applicant’s failures of assessment are inexcusable. It is imperative that the ExA is provided with the right evidence against which to apply the policy tests, and to put into the balance. The Applicant has failed to do so. Whether it will make any progress in that regard in the lifetime of this examination is moot.	See above responses
14		In terms of how the ExA should approach matters in reporting, SEAS suggests that the only appropriate approach, given the precautionary principle on which EIA is founded, is that the Applicant should be given no benefit of the doubt, and the Application should be assessed on the basis the Proposals impacts will be worst case.	Please see Application Document 9.141 Intra Project Cumulative Effect Significance - Technical Note for further explanation as to why the reported significant intra-project cumulative effects are considered likely to be moderate at most.

Table 19.3 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-154]

Written representation following ISH2 on 28th January 2026

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1	Reptiles on Pegwell Bay hoverport- insufficient survey information and consideration of impacts and avoidance/mitigation.	It is incumbent on the Applicant to provide evidence that there are no cracks or fissures in the hardstanding apron of the disused hoverport, to be crossed by vehicles. If there are, these features are likely to support reptiles, as these animals routinely use them for shelter and protection throughout the year, although particularly in the winter when they provide hibernation features with stable environmental conditions. Any movement or collapse of such cracks and fissures risk harming reptiles, which are legally protected from intentional killing and injuring via part of Section 9(1) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	Reptiles will generally confine themselves to areas close to cover rather than open areas away from vegetation where they are exposed to predation. The Applicant has commitment to measures to ensure that cracks on the hoverport are either avoided or not damaged and this has also been included in the Kent Ecology and Biodiversity Chapter for Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
2	Barbastelle bats – Suffolk	Barbastelle bats - insufficient survey as no advanced surveys (capture and radio-tracking) undertaken, despite the species being frequently recorded within the Order limits, and the area known to be of at least National importance for breeding barbastelles due to presence of multiple nursery roosts, as found during the Sizewell C baseline surveys.	As discussed at ISH2 and ISH3 the Applicant does not consider further survey for bats is required and none has been requested by any statutory consultees.
3		There is evidence from the timing of static survey recordings that unknown barbastelle roosts are present on or adjacent to the Order limits. Due to the importance and sensitivity of such receptors, residual impacts on nearby SEAS – ISH2 WR Ecology-D4-10 Feb 2026 -Dr Denny evidence 3 linear features such as hedgerows, could be significant. This cannot be determined, given the lack of appropriate baseline survey.	As discussed at ISH2 and ISH3 the Applicant does not consider further survey for bats is required and none has been requested by any statutory consultees.
4		Advanced capture and tracking surveys are commonly used for finding roost sites, as they are known to be the most effective method, particularly for barbastelle bats, which are known to frequently change their roost locations. That is why these methods are routinely used for larger Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, where impacts are likely to be more significant, and why both Sizewell C and LionLink (National Grid Ventures) have employed this survey technique. We recognise it is a more invasive technique (as raised by the Applicant at the ISH), which is why only a few surveyors in England are licensed to undertake such work, as a high level of experience and training is required, with stringent levels of accountability.	As discussed at ISH2 and ISH3 the Applicant does not consider further survey for bats is required and none has been requested by any statutory consultees.
5		The latest edition of the Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2023 ¹), states on p.83 that such methods are likely to be required on projects with greater impacts on 'difficult to survey' bat species such as tree-roosting.. species; more sensitive bat populations (generally Annex II bat species). It goes on to state tree-roosting bat species are perhaps the most challenging to survey using standard techniques, given the frequent movements of these species between roost trees, the shade and complexity such roosts are often surrounded by, and the low bat encounter rates from standard techniques. Barbastelle breeding roosts are almost always in trees, and they are one of four Annex II bat species occurring in the UK.	As discussed at ISH2 and ISH3 the Applicant does not consider further survey for bats is required and none has been requested by any statutory consultees.
6		In summary, trapping and tagging of barbastelles should have been undertaken, and without the knowledge coming from it, we have no idea where the barbastelles recorded during other baseline surveys are roosting/breeding. Therefore, the impact assessment for bats is invalid.	As discussed at ISH2 and ISH3 the Applicant does not consider further survey for bats is required and none has been requested by any statutory consultees.
Other ornithology/ecology matters which were not covered during ISH2 due to time restriction:			
7	Acid grassland enhancement / creation	First, we note that the Applicant has recently reduced the area of proposed acid grassland from 12 to 6 ha. We would like to highlight this and ask that the Examining Authority ask the Applicant to explain the rationale for this. Second, the Applicant is	The Applicant is not proposing to create acid grassland on an existing pig field but to restore and enhance existing acid grassland to the south of that field. The amount of acid grassland to be created has been reduced because the amount of acid grassland to

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		proposing to create acid grassland on an existing pig field, to reach the required condition within 10 years. There are numerous research papers showing that such an aim is highly ambitious particularly on fertile soils with high pH and phosphorous (P) levels. We would expect a pig field to have high pH and P levels, and request the Examining Authority to request details of the pH, P and other chemical content of soil samples from the field, and additional information on whether and why the Applicant is confident acid grassland of adequate condition can be created within this time frame.	be temporarily affected has reduced from the amount on which the original 12ha figure was based.
8	Suffolk onshore Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	We are concerned about the quality and breadth of the surveys and assessment underpinning the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Sea Link proposal.	The Applicant considers the HRA and its surveys are robust.
9		There has been inadequate survey effort for marsh harrier and nightjar, both qualifying species for the nearby Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (Sandlings, Alde-Ore Estuary and Minsmere-Walberswick). For example, much of the Sea Link development area is within the foraging range of marsh harriers breeding in the nearby Alde-Ore Estuary and Minsmere-Walberswick SPAs. Yet, despite marsh harriers being known to use the Sea Link proposal area, the species is not even mentioned in the Suffolk section of the HRA. And dedicated surveys, such as Vantage Point (VP) surveys, for the species were not undertaken, which does not follow standard practice (e.g. Hardey et al 20132 ; Gilbert et al 19983). Indeed, the applicant undertook VP surveys for the Kent onshore scheme. Why not the Suffolk onshore scheme which is well within the regular foraging range from SPAs with breeding MR as a Qualifying feature?	The Applicant considers survey effort for both marsh harrier and nightjar are adequate and appropriate. No statutory consultee has identified a need for additional survey for either species. Impacts on marsh harrier in Suffolk are assessed in the HRA report. Vantage point surveys were undertaken for the Kent Onshore Scheme due to a new section of overhead line and the potential for collision risk.
10		The Applicant said it had scoped out potential impacts on marsh harriers and nightjars, and that Natural England hadn't raised this as an issue. I would assert that should marsh harriers (and nightjars) routinely forage over the Sea Link Order limits, it could comprise part of their core foraging areas from the nearby SPAs. Breeding marsh harriers are vulnerable to disturbance as they usually need to provision several chicks. A disturbance research literature review (Goodship & Furness 20224) reported a 300-550m disturbance risk distance for marsh harriers, and 30-75m flight initiation disturbance distance. Significant areas of habitat surrounding the proposed development are at risk of direct disturbance. In the case of polygamous males, they are often provisioning multiple nests, and during the chick-rearing stage males routinely hunt up to 26km from the nest. Disturbance within their core foraging range during sensitive breeding periods is likely to have a significant effect on the breeding success and body condition (and therefore survival), with direct impacts for the SPA populations and therefore the integrity of these populations.	The Applicant's has never scoped out impacts on nightjar or marsh harrier. Rather the Applicant has concluded there will be no significant effect or adverse effect on integrity on either species. An impact assessment regarding both species is contained within the HRA report for the project.
11		The HRA must consider whether the integrity of a population of a qualifying species will be impacted by the proposal. I do not	See above comments. The Applicant considers the HRA is robust.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		believe this is possible to assess due to the deficient baseline survey data. We therefore emphasise the need for the HRA to include an Appropriate Assessment to be conducted on a precautionary basis that removes all real scientific doubt so far as adverse effect on integrity is concerned.	
12-14		There are two specific derogation tests at the Appropriate Assessment stage of the Habitats Regulations process, which I believe the Sea Link proposal does not pass: - Test 1 is the consideration of viable alternative solutions. I assert that Sea Link was too limited in considering suitable alternatives, and this is the same for the LionLink proposal partially included within this DCO. - Test 2 is whether the proposal meets Imperative reasons of overriding public importance (IROPI). Given the evidence others have presented during this open floor hearing questioning the need for Sea Link at all, the project is clearly not imperative (see final point below).	Derogations are not required since the HRA has been able to conclude no adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites.
15-16		I request that the Examining Authority pay particular attention when reviewing the adequacy of the baseline ecology surveys and assessments, and to consider in detail the need for an Appropriate Assessment and the above Habitats Regulations tests, which I believe the DCO application fails to address and/or meet. SEAS respectfully requests that the Examining Authority refrain from treating the Applicant's dismissal of the SEAS concerns and previous Relevant Representation as definitive and instead undertake a full and rigorous examination of the concerns raised.	See above comments

Table 19.4 Applicant's Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-155]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
2-3	Introduction	The actual SEAS' submission focusses on the health and wellbeing implications of the Sea Link project for Suffolk communities, which have been systematically overlooked in their Environmental Statement (henceforward - "the ES") and further comments. Despite extensive engagement from SEAS, local residents, and local authorities, the Applicant in their documents: [APP-058] 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health & Wellbeing [REP1-111] 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-034] 9.79 Applicant's Comments on Written Representations - Health & Wellbeing and the most recently [REP1A-043]	The Applicant has no comments on this matter.

		9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA have, in effect, abused the very concept of mental health and wellbeing, reducing it to procedural citations and generic environmental proxies.	
4	Failure to meet National or Professional standards	The Applicant's Health & Wellbeing assessment, [APP-058], fails to meet national or professional standards. It does not reflect the true mental health risks facing Suffolk's coastal and rural communities, despite clear evidence from our own survey, the <i>Suffolk Mind and East Suffolk Council Wellbeing Survey in Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham</i> presented and submitted by Councillor Sarah Whitelock in her oral and written representations [REP1A-087], and testimony at Open Floor Hearings. Residents are already experiencing chronic stress, anxiety, disturbed sleep, fear of landscape loss, and cumulative emotional exhaustion from multiple NSIPs, including Sizewell C and other developments. Tragically, the local community has experienced two recent suicides, reflecting the severe mental health pressures in the area.	The Applicant believes they have taken a robust approach to the health and wellbeing assessment.
5		The Applicant's responses repeatedly: I. Ignore Suffolk-specific evidence: by dismissing community surveys and local testimonies as "non-representative," while relying on their own generic ES assumptions. II. Rely on non-specialist judgement: the Health and Wellbeing chapter was prepared by economic and environmental specialists with no clinical, public health, or trauma expertise. IEMA and national guidance require competent specialist input when assessing psychosocial impacts. III. Conflate physical determinants with mental health: by treating noise, visual amenity, and access to services as proxies for complex psychological impacts, without assessing place attachment, identity erosion, or chronic stress. IV. Obscure cumulative and inter-project effects: the ES does not capture sustained community stress caused by overlapping NSIPs, despite repeated community testimony. V. Engage in circular reasoning: for example, the Applicant cites APP-058 itself to justify APP-058, providing no independent evidence of adequacy.	The Applicant believes it's approach to the health and wellbeing assessment is robust.
6		Specifically, the narrowing of discussion in the Issue Specific Hearing 26-28 January 2026 to core working hours, traffic, noise, and light pollution illustrates a pattern: the Applicant reduces mental health to environmental trivialities, and totally ignore such broader psychosocial impacts as: • cumulative disruption, • uncertainty, • erosion of community wellbeing, etc	The Applicant has no further comments on this.

7		Light pollution, for example, is treated in isolation, however, it adds to sleep disturbance and stress already documented in local residents. These narrow references mask the sustained, and clinically significant mental health burden facing communities	A nighttime assessment is provided within Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137]. The Applicant has provided an Outline Lighting Strategy at Deadline 6 (Application Document 9.147 Outline Operational Lighting Management Plan). Refer to Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] at AP129 for updated details on lighting controls.
8		The ES fails to meet the substantive requirements of national health guidance. Local evidence, including the SAND survey, and Suffolk Mind and East Suffolk Council Wellbeing Survey, shows: • High levels of anxiety, chronic stress, disturbed sleep, and emotional exhaustion. • Disproportionate vulnerability among East Suffolk’s older population. • Loss of sense of security and control, and fear of landscape industrialisation, and many other.	The Applicant has no further comments on this.
9		However, these factors have not been integrated into baseline assessments, significance testing, or mitigation planning. Assertions that mental health impacts are “secondary” or “holistically considered” in environmental proxies are insufficient and unsafe.	The Applicant has no further comments on this.
10		Action Point 106 [EV6-033] confirms that working hours remain a live issue within the Examination; however, in a worst-case cumulative context involving multiple overlapping NSIPs, the issue extends beyond individual projects or bank holidays. As set out in SEAS’ Written Representation on Mental Health and Wellbeing [REP1-279], extended or misaligned working hours remove predictable periods of respite and risk creating continuous disturbance, a recognised driver of chronic stress, sleep disruption and psychological harm. Alignment with the working hour restrictions secured for EA1N and EA2 is therefore essential to prevent compounding cumulative mental health impacts on already vulnerable communities	The Applicant has no further comments on this.
11	In summary:	.The Sea Link’s Health and Wellbeing assessment is methodologically inadequate, non-localised, and lacks clinical rigour. Until an independent, clinically-led Mental Health & Trauma Impact Assessment is undertaken, incorporating Suffolk-specific evidence, cumulative NSIP impacts, and expert psychosocial evaluation, the ES conclusions cannot be relied upon. Appended is SEAS’ detailed rebuttal to the Applicant’s “[REP2-034] 9.79 Applicant’s Comments on Written Representations - Health & Wellbeing demonstrating the inadequacy of the current Health and Wellbeing assessment.	The Applicant has no further comments on this.

		We urge the Examining Authority to recognise these shortcomings and require a professionally informed, evidence-based psycho-social assessment before any decision on the Sea Link project is made. Suffolk communities deserve transparent, rigorous, and clinically robust evaluation of the mental health and wellbeing implications of this proposal.	
	SEAS Request for Full Disclosure of Relevant Representation AP458	The Applicant has provided only a short, paraphrased summary in Volume 4. Compulsory Acquisition Information, Document 4.2.2. Statement of Reasons Appendix B Schedule of Negotiations with Land Interests (REP3 016).	The Applicant can confirm all Relevant Representations are available on the PINS website. The Rep submitted by The King’s Most Excellent Majesty in Right of His Crown is here - Relevant Representations Representation by The Crown Estate and simply said - The Crown Estate requests to be registered as an Interested Party in the examination of Sea Link. Our interest in the project relates to the proposed cable route and the agreement of land and seabed rights required to deliver the project. The Applicant has confirmed there was an error in the Appendix B to the Statement of Reasons document which was show on screen during the CAH and the Relevant Representation was attributed to the incorrect Affect Party.

REBUTTAL TO NGET RESPONSE TO SEAS WRITTEN REPRESENTATION ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING
SEAS rebuttal to the Applicant’s Response to SEAS Written Representation [REP1-279],

1	The SEAS Reference 2.1	This submission sets out SEAS’ concern that National Grid’s Health & Wellbeing assessment does not comply with national standards and does not reflect the true mental health risks facing Suffolk’s communities.	Responded to under REP4-203
2-3		The Applicant’s response (referenced to their later responses to points 6.1 and 6.3 below, which in turns cross-referenced to the Table 2.61, References 3.1; 3.2; 3.5; 3.6; 3.8; and 3.9 of Application Document 9.34.1Applicant’s Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043]) relies primarily on procedural references, repeated citations of IEMA guidance, and assertions of “holistic consideration” without addressing the substantive failings of the Health & Wellbeing assessment identified by SEAS. Specifically: I. Local evidence is omitted or discounted: The ES fails to incorporate robust Suffolk-specific evidence, including community survey data, oral testimony from the Open Floor Hearings, and local mental health indicators. The Applicant’s attempt to dismiss these sources as “non-representative” ignores the substantial qualitative and experiential evidence demonstrating chronic stress, anxiety, and place-based psychological harm. II. Specialist input is absent: Despite acknowledging potential psychosocial effects, the ES was prepared without involvement from qualified mental health clinicians, public health specialists, or trauma-informed experts. IEMA guidance itself notes that assessment of mental health and psychosocial impacts requires specialist competence; this requirement has not been met.	Responded to under REP4-203

		III. Proxy measures are insufficient: The ES repeatedly treats environmental determinants such as noise, air quality, traffic, and visual amenity as surrogates for mental health impacts. This conflates physical exposures with psychosocial outcomes and fails to assess cumulative, long-term, or trauma-related impacts. IV. Circular and defensive reasoning: The Applicant cites [APP-058] and prior procedural engagements to justify conclusions, without providing independent evidence that the assessment is accurate, reliable, or clinically robust. The ES does not evaluate whether the proposed project could exacerbate existing mental health vulnerabilities in Suffolk communities. V. Cumulative NSIP impacts remain unassessed in practice: While the Applicant references cumulative effects assessments, these rely on spatial and temporal proxies, not on clinically-informed evaluation of psychological harm. There is no consideration of the sustained emotional burden imposed by overlapping projects, which the SEAS evidence clearly demonstrates. Therefore, the current Applicant's Health & Wellbeing assessment remains methodologically inadequate, non-localised, and unsafe for decisionmaking. The Applicant's reliance on process and guideline citations does not compensate for the absence of clinically-led evaluation or meaningful integration of lived experience. An independent Mental Health & Trauma Impact Assessment, conducted by HCPC-registered clinicians or senior public health specialists, is essential to provide the Examining Authority with a reliable basis to understand the real mental health risks of the Proposed Project for Suffolk communities.	
4	The SEAS Reference 2.2	According to the applicant's Statement of Competence, the Health & Wellbeing chapter [APP-088], was prepared with no contribution from qualified mental health or public health professionals. Instead, it was authored by an economic development specialist and an environmental management professional. Neither holds clinical qualifications or expertise in assessing psychological risk, trauma, or community mental health.	Responded to under REP4-203
5-6		The Applicant's response to this (also referenced to the Table 2.61, Reference 3.1 of Application Document 9.34.1Applicant's Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043] does not address the substance of the concern raised, which relates to the absence of discipline-specific expertise in the preparation of the Health and Wellbeing assessment. While Regulation 14(4) of the EIA Regulations requires the use of competent experts, competence must be relevant to the topic being assessed. The Statement of Competence confirms that the Health and Wellbeing chapter was prepared by environmental and economic specialists without qualifications or professional	Responded to under REP4-203

		expertise in mental health or public health. Membership of IEMA and experience in DCO processes demonstrate procedural competence in environmental assessment, but do not in themselves constitute competence to assess psychological risk, trauma, mental health pathways, or community wellbeing impacts. The Applicant has not demonstrated how the absence of qualified mental health or public health input does not affect the robustness or reliability of the assessment, nor how this deficit is remedied by subsequent response tables – their logic is circular: “We are competent because our Statement of Competence says we are competent.”	
7	The SEAS Reference 2.3	This fundamental omission affects every conclusion within the ES. Without specialist input, the assessment fails to consider psychological vulnerability, cumulative stress, lived experience, or the recognised determinants of community wellbeing.	Responded to under REP4-203
8		While cross-referencing their response to the Table 2.61, References 3.5; 3.6; 3.1; and 3.8 of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant’s Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043], the Applicant in a copy-paste way asserts that Health and Wellbeing impacts have been fully assessed in accordance with IEMA guidance and WHO definitions, while not addressing the core concern regarding the absence of specialist mental health or psychosocial expertise. The Applicant still relies on environmental determinants (e.g. noise, visual amenity, access to services) and consultation processes to infer mental wellbeing, rather than undertaking a direct assessment of psychological vulnerability, cumulative stress, or lived experience. The Applicant further acknowledges that specific indicators of stress, anxiety, or resilience are not separately assessed, confirming that psychosocial impacts are not evaluated as a distinct impact pathway. In addition, the three health and wellbeing “thematic meetings” cited were not meetings with affected local communities but with organisations and representatives, and no agendas or minutes have been provided to demonstrate how local lived experience or emotional impacts informed the assessment. Consequently, conclusions of “no significant effect” are derived from a framework that does not directly test for mental health harm or cumulative psychosocial burden, and therefore do not substantively rebut the concern raised.	Responded to under REP4-203
Suffolk’s Documented Mental Health Vulnerabilities (Not Reflected in the ES)			
9-10	The SEAS Reference 3.1	Public Health Suffolk, Suffolk Mind, and the NHS ICS all identify Suffolk’s coastal and rural communities as having heightened mental health risks. The Applicant’s response: (cross-referenced to the Table 2.61, References 3.5; 3.6; 3.1; and 3.8) of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant’s Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043]). does not address the evidence cited by Public Health Suffolk, Suffolk Mind and the NHS	Responded to under REP4-203

		ICS regarding heightened mental health risk in Suffolk's coastal and rural communities. Instead, it repeats the general justification of the Health and Wellbeing Study Area and methodology set out in Reference 3.6, focusing on spatial coverage and compliance with IEMA guidance, while asserting that the assessment is sufficient without providing supporting evidence or logical explanation. This does not show how elevated baseline vulnerability was identified, weighted, or assessed, nor how place-based mental health risks specific to coastal and rural communities were considered. Generic sensitivity categories do not demonstrate engagement with the specific vulnerability concerns raised, and the response therefore does not rebut the point made.	
11	The SEAS Reference 3.2	The Mind/ESC Survey Report identifies high levels of anxiety, chronic stress, disturbed sleep, reduced emotional resilience and low fulfilment of basic psychological needs.	Responded to under REP4-203
12	The SEAS Reference 3.3	Sleep is the lowest-met emotional need across the region, and East Suffolk's disproportionately older population is particularly vulnerable to environmental and psychological disruption.	Responded to under REP4-203
13	The SEAS Reference 3.4	None of this Suffolk-specific evidence was used to inform the ES health baseline [APP-088], rendering the assessment generic, incomplete and unsuitable for decision-making	Responded to under REP4-203
14	The SEAS Reference 3.5	It is important to note that the survey forming the basis of the Mind/ESC Survey Report was conducted between 13 June 2022 and 14 March 2023, prior to the commencement of major construction works at Sizewell C. The substantial disruption now being experienced was therefore not reflected in the survey data. The testimonies provided at the Open Floor Hearings suggest that, were the survey repeated today, the results would show significantly higher levels of stress, anxiety, sleep disturbance and emotional exhaustion than those reported in 2022–2023. This further highlights the inadequacy of the Applicant's reliance on outdated baseline assumptions and reinforces the need for an updated, clinically robust assessment of current community wellbeing.	Responded to under REP4-203
15-18	The SEAS Reference 4.3	East Suffolk Councillor, Sarah Whitelock, articulated the findings of the Suffolk Mind & East Suffolk Council - Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham Wellbeing Report and illustrates the extent to which communities are experiencing cumulative psychological pressure that the Applicant has not acknowledged or assessed. The Applicant's response to the References 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 4.3 (listed above) was copy/pasted "The SL response was the repeated "The applicant considers the assessment reported in Application Document 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing [APP-058] is robust, but in light of the latter raised the applicant will give this further consideration and will respond at Deadline 3 if necessary." Moreover, the Applicant's response does not engage with Suffolk-specific evidence regarding high anxiety, chronic stress, disturbed sleep, and low fulfilment of psychological needs, nor does it	Responded to under REP4-203

		explain how these data have informed the ES baseline. The Mind/ESC survey was conducted prior to major construction at Sizewell C, meaning current disruption and psychosocial stress are likely substantially higher. Furthermore, evidence from East Suffolk Councillor Sarah Whitelock highlights cumulative psychological pressure in the affected communities, which the Applicant has not assessed. Instead, the Applicant asserts the assessment is “robust” and may be considered at a later deadline. This non-substantive deferral fails to demonstrate that the Health and Wellbeing assessment adequately reflects local vulnerabilities or cumulative mental health impacts, leaving the ES generic, incomplete, and insufficient for informed decision-making. The Applicant’s response reiterates that cumulative effects have been assessed and found to be “not significant,” but does not engage with the concern that residents are experiencing prolonged and overlapping disruption from multiple NSIPs, resulting in sustained community stress. The assessment relies on aggregating environmental topic conclusions rather than evaluating cumulative psychosocial burden arising from long-term disruption and uncertainty. This mirrors a recurring pattern in the Applicant’s responses, SEAS – Rebuttal to Applicant’s Response to SEAS WR of HEALTH & WELLBEING - Deadline 4 – 10 February 2026 6 whereby assertions of robustness and non-significance are repeated without evidencing how lived experience or cumulative mental health impacts have been meaningfully assessed.	

Existing Emotional Burden & Cumulative Trauma Already Evident

19-20	The SEAS Reference 4.1	Residents are not encountering Sea Link in isolation. Years of disruption from Sizewell C, cable corridors, substation development and other upcoming NSIPs have already created high levels of community stress. The Applicant’s response (cross-referenced to the Table 2.61, Reference 3.5 of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant’s Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043]) reiterates that cumulative effects have been assessed and found to be “not significant,” but does not engage with the concern that residents are experiencing prolonged and overlapping disruption from multiple NSIPs, resulting in sustained community stress. The assessment relies on aggregating environmental topic conclusions rather than evaluating cumulative psychosocial burden arising from long-term disruption and uncertainty. This mirrors a recurring pattern in the Applicant’s responses, whereby assertions of robustness and non-significance are repeated without evidencing how lived experience or cumulative mental health impacts have been meaningfully assessed.	Responded to under REP4-203
21	The SEAS Reference 4.2	At the Open Floor Hearings, residents consistently reported emotional exhaustion, anxiety, sleep disturbance, fear of loss of landscape and identity, and an overwhelming cumulative burden ²	Responded to under REP4-203

22-23	The SEAS Reference 4.4	A further illustration of community concern was provided by a resident of Friston, who spoke during the OFH1 Session 3, the person reflected the growing distress among residents who feel caught between multiple overlapping energy projects. Although individual circumstances varied, the person's testimony echoed a consistent pattern heard across the hearings, that local people are already living with heightened emotional pressure and that Sea Link let alone LionLink adds yet another layer to an already overwhelming burden." The Applicant's response to the References 4.2 and 4.4 does not engage with lived experience evidence presented at the Open Floor Hearings, including testimony describing heightened emotional pressure arising from prolonged exposure to multiple overlapping energy projects. Instead, the Applicant repeats cross-references to the cumulative effects assessment and Study Area justification (the Table 2.61, References 3.5 and 3.6 of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043]), relying on environmental topic conclusions and generic vulnerability categories to assert that effects are "not significant." This response does not demonstrate how repeated, consistent testimony regarding cumulative psychological burden, fear, and emotional exhaustion has been analysed or weighed. The repeated use of identical responses to distinct representations highlights a pattern whereby qualitative evidence of lived experience is not meaningfully assessed, but instead deflected through restatement of existing conclusions.	Responded to under REP4-203
24-25	The SEAS Reference 4.5	These testimonies align closely with Suffolk Mind's findings on low "security" and "control," and increasing levels of worry and tension. Despite this, the ES did not examine any of this lived experience through recognised psychological methodologies, contrary to national guidance. The Applicant's response ("A further detailed response will be provided at a later deadline.") does not engage with the substance of this representation and instead defers consideration to a later deadline. SEAS has identified a clear alignment between resident testimony at the Open Floor Hearings and Suffolk Mind's findings on low perceived security and control, and increasing worry and tension, which are recognised psychological determinants of mental health. The ES does not assess these factors using any recognised psychological or psychosocial methodology, and the Applicant has not explained why such assessment was omitted. Deferring a response does not demonstrate that these impacts have been evaluated or that the ES is currently adequate for decision-making, and instead reinforces the concern that lived experience and psychosocial harm pathways have not been meaningfully assessed.	Responded to under REP4-203
Lack of Qualified Mental Health Expertise			
26	The SEAS Reference 5.1	No clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, trauma specialists, or public health professionals contributed to the preparation of the	Responded to under REP4-203

		[APP-058] ES 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing. Despite this absence of relevant SEAS Mental Health and Wellbeing WR – Deadline 14 expertise, the ES nevertheless seeks to interpret psychological stress, assess significance, and propose mitigation measures, tasks that require specialist clinical and public health competence.	
27-28	The SEAS Reference 5.2	The reliance on non-specialists to make these judgements raises a serious concern regarding the adequacy, accuracy, and reliability of the ES conclusions. Without appropriately qualified professional input, the assessment cannot be considered a sound basis for evaluating the mental health implications of the Sea Link project. The Applicant's response again in a copy/paste way refers to their response to point 2.2, which is cross-referenced to the Table 2.61, Reference 3.1 of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043], without actually responding to the SEAS' references above.	Responded to under REP4-203
29		SEAS does not dispute that the ES meets the procedural requirements of Regulation 14(4) in being prepared by competent EIA practitioners. However, this does not address the substance of References 5.1 and 5.2. Chapter 11 interprets psychological stress, resilience, significance and mitigation without input from clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, trauma specialists or public health professionals. Competence in EIA coordination and membership of IEMA does not equate to discipline-specific expertise required to evaluate mental health impacts. The Applicant has therefore relied on non-specialist judgement to draw conclusions on mental health significance, raising concerns about the adequacy and reliability of the assessment as a basis for decision-making.	Responded to under REP4-203
30		As with earlier references, the Applicant's response relies on cross-referencing generic statements of compliance rather than engaging with the specific expert competence issues raised. This reinforces SEAS's concern that substantive mental health evidence is being addressed procedurally rather than analytically.	Responded to under REP4-203
Failure to Meet National Guidance			
31	The SEAS Reference 6.1	Public Health England's Health Impact Assessment in Spatial Planning (2020) requires assessments to use local health evidence, identify vulnerable population groups and consider the full range of mental, social, and psychosocial pathways through which major developments affect wellbeing.	Responded to under REP4-203
32	The SEAS Reference 6.2	IEMA's Guidelines for Health in EIA (2022) similarly require a holistic, evidence based appraisal of mental, psychological, and social wellbeing, including explicit consideration of cumulative impacts, local inequalities, and the need for competent specialist input.	Responded to under REP4-203
33-35	The SEAS Reference 6.3	The Sea Link ES does not meet these standards. It treats mental health as a secondary matter, relies on generic assumptions rather	Responded to under REP4-203

		than Suffolk-specific data, and fails to assess cumulative or locally relevant determinants of psychological wellbeing. As a result, the ES lacks the depth and professional rigour required for sound decision-making. The Applicant's response is a copy/pasted cross-reference to the Table 2.61, References 3.1; 3.2; 3.5; 3.6; 3.8; and 3.9 of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043]. And this Applicant's response again relies on repeated assertions of alignment with IEMA guidance but does not demonstrate compliance with the substantive requirements of national health guidance. Public Health England (2020) and IEMA (2022) require explicit assessment of mental, social and psychosocial pathways, use of local health evidence, consideration of cumulative psychological burden, and appropriate specialist input. Chapter 11 instead treats mental health as secondary and derivative of physical environmental determinants, relies on generic datasets rather than Suffolk-specific lived experience, and does not apply recognised psychological or psychosocial methodologies. The dismissal of qualitative evidence further conflicts with HIA guidance. As such, the ES does not meet the depth, methodological rigour, or holistic intent of national guidance for assessing mental health and wellbeing impacts.	
Suffolk's Rural Identity and Psychological Stakes			
36	The SEAS Reference 7.1	The Suffolk landscape plays a crucial role in residents' sense of identity, wellbeing, and emotional stability. This relationship is strongly evidenced in the local wellbeing report and by the oral evidence heard at the Open Floor Hearings.	Responded to under REP4-203
37	The SEAS Reference 7.2	Landscape industrialisation, prolonged uncertainty and loss of tranquillity can trigger chronic stress and erode residents' sense of security and place attachment.	Responded to under REP4-203
38-39	The SEAS Reference 7.3	The ES treats these impacts solely as "visual effects," failing to consider their psychological dimensions. The Applicant responds the References 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 in a copy/pasted way, while keep pointing back to the very document whose adequacy is under challenge, and Inspectors notice that. The Applicant's response conflates assessment of landscape and visual effects with assessment of psychological impacts. While Chapter 11 references visual amenity and community identity as determinants, it does not analyse place attachment, loss of tranquillity, identity erosion or chronic stress as psychological mechanisms, nor does it apply recognised psychosocial frameworks or Suffolk-specific lived evidence. Reliance on "professional judgement" without specialist mental health input or transparent methodology does not meet national guidance. The response further relies on the conclusions of APP-058 itself, which is the subject of SEAS's challenge, and therefore does not substantively address the identified failure to assess the psychological dimensions of landscape industrialisation.	Responded to under REP4-203

Conclusion			
40	The SEAS Reference 8.1	The evidence presented demonstrates that the Sea Link Environmental Statement significantly underestimates the health and wellbeing impacts on SEAS Mental Health and Wellbeing WR – Deadline 1 5 Suffolk communities. The area’s well-documented mental health vulnerabilities, combined with the sustained and cumulative burden of multiple major infrastructure projects, make a clinically robust and locally informed assessment essential.	Responded to under REP4-203
41	The SEAS Reference 8.2	Until such an assessment is undertaken, the conclusions of the [APP-058] ES 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing4 cannot be considered reliable. The assessment was not prepared or reviewed by qualified mental health or public health specialists, it omits essential Suffolk- specific evidence, and it fails to recognise or evaluate the cumulative psychological harm already being experienced.	Responded to under REP4-203
42	The SEAS Reference 8.3	SEAS therefore asks the Examining Authority to recognise these shortcomings and to conclude that the current Health & Wellbeing assessment does not provide a safe or sound basis for decision-making.	Responded to under REP4-203
43	The SEAS Reference 8.4	An independent, clinically led Mental Health & Trauma Impact Assessment undertaken by HCPC-registered clinicians or senior public health specialists is required. This assessment must incorporate local mental health data, cumulative NSIP impacts and the significant lived experience evidence presented through community surveys, written submissions and the Open Floor Hearings.	Responded to under REP4-203
44.	The SEAS Reference 8.5	Only such a rigorous and professionally informed assessment can provide the Examining Authority with the reliable foundation necessary to understand the true implications of the Sea Link proposal for community health, wellbeing and resilience.	Responded to under REP4-203
45		The Applicant’s response to the References 8.1, 8.1, 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 is routinely copy/pasted cross-reference to the Table 2.61, references “OverallConclusion”, of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant’s Detailed Responses to Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP1A-043], and relies entirely on repetition of procedural assurances, general methodological references, and circular claims regarding APP-058 itself, without addressing the substantive failings identified by SEAS.Despite asserting adherence to IEMA guidance and a holistic definition of health, the ES continues to:	Responded to under REP4-203
1	Ignore Suffolk-specific evidence:	Local survey data, Open Floor Hearing testimonies, and the Mind/ESC report demonstrating high levels of stress, anxiety, disturbed sleep, and emotional exhaustion have not been meaningfully incorporated into baseline assumptions or significance testing.	Responded to under REP4-203
2	Rely on non-specialist judgement:	The ES attempts to assess psychological stress, cumulative trauma, and mental health significance without input from clinical	Responded to under REP4-203

		psychologists, psychiatrists, trauma specialists, or public health experts. IEMA guidance and national best practice explicitly require competent specialist input when evaluating psychosocial impacts.	
3	Conflate physical determinants with mental health:	Landscape change, visual amenity, noise, and traffic are treated as proxies for psychological impacts. There is no operationalised assessment of place attachment, loss of tranquillity, identity erosion, chronic stress, or cumulative emotional burden, all of which are well-evidenced in the Suffolk context.	Responded to under REP4-203
4	Misrepresent survey reliability	The Applicant dismisses community evidence as non-representative, while simultaneously treating its own generic ES assumptions as sufficient. This double standard undermines the credibility of the baseline and significance assessment.	Responded to under REP4-203
5	Obscure cumulative and inter-project effects	Despite repeated assurances, the ES limits its spatial analysis and does not assess the psychological consequences of overlapping NSIPs in a clinically-informed way. The claim of “no significant cumulative effect” is unsubstantiated and directly contradicted by community testimony.	Responded to under REP4-203
6	Engage in circular reasoning	The Applicant repeatedly cites [APP-058] and its own conclusions to defend APP-058. This provides no independent evidence that the assessment adequately captures mental health impacts and is procedurally inadequate	Responded to under REP4-203
46	The SEAS Conclusion	Therefore, until an independent, clinically-led Mental Health & Trauma Impact Assessment is undertaken, incorporating Suffolk-specific evidence, cumulative NSIP impacts, and expert psychosocial evaluation, the ES conclusions cannot be relied upon. The current Chapter 11 assessment remains generic, methodologically flawed, and unsafe for decision-making, providing no defensible basis for the Examining Authority to assess the true health and wellbeing implications of the Sea Link project.	Responded to under REP4-203

Table 19.5 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-157]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
SEAS WRITTEN REPRESENTATION OF THEIR ISH2 ORAL REPRESENTATION on NOISE and VIBRATION			
<i>Agenda Item 14 - Noise and vibration</i>			
14.1	Construction noise assessment (including assessment assumptions, noise contour figures, s61 consents, mitigation and monitoring)	The applicant’s conclusions in the Construction Noise and Vibration Assessment rely on a blanket mitigation effect of 10 dB applied in every case without any specific calculation to demonstrate that such a reduction is practicable. Should it in any case be found to be impracticable, the prediction of no more than minor significant effects will not be achieved. The Construction Noise and Vibration Management plan relies on a requirement to achieve “Best Practicable Means” and therefore if a mitigation measure capable of achieving a 10dB reduction proves	The Applicant can assist in clarifying the noise reductions in the construction noise assessment presented in the ES as presented in Application Document 6.2.2.9 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration [AS-109] and Application Document 6.2.3.9 Part 3 Kent Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration [AS-111] as set out below. Detailed construction noise assessments have been undertaken for every noise sensitive receptor (NSR) along the Project based on the available information. They present a relative worst-case outcome

impracticable, the stated results will not be achieved. The concept of Best Practicable Means comes from statutory provisions relating to mitigation of noise from sources in developments which either exist or have already undergone detailed design. When a development is at the application stage and has not been subject to detailed design, the definition of what is practicable is quite different as more fundamental design changes are possible. Explicit noise limits, including noise from construction, should be included as requirements in the DCO.

based on the worst-case (noisiest) task for each activity, for all works locations (including at limits of deviation (LoD)), without mitigation. Where applicable, the assessment considers activities that may occur concurrently (noting that this would reflect the worst-case tasks for each of those activities). The outcome of the assessments is therefore considered a reasonable worst-case. These worst-case, unmitigated noise levels are compared against the 65 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ threshold for potential significant effects during the main 'weekday' working periods. (Works during weekend, bank holiday, and night-time periods are considered separately, relative to lower thresholds).

This separates NSRs into two categories:

- Those where worst-case, without mitigation construction noise levels are below the threshold; and
- Those where worst-case, without mitigation construction noise levels are potentially above the threshold (these NSR are identified as 'hot-spots').

Significant adverse effects are not expected at NSR where worst-case, without mitigation construction noise levels are predicted to be below the threshold. These NSR would, however, still be subject to further detailed assessments by the contractor, as per commitment NV03 of **Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235]**. Mitigation in the form of best practicable means (BPM) would still be employed to reduce potential adverse effects at these locations as per commitments NV01 and NV03 of the REAC, with the Noise and Vibration Management Plan (NVMP) being updated accordingly.

NSR where worst-case, without mitigation construction noise levels are predicted to be above the threshold are referred to the 'hot-spots'. These are locations where mitigation is likely to be required to avoid significant adverse effects, relative to the findings of the assessment presented in the ES.

In most 'hot-spot' cases a reduction smaller than 10dB would be required to avoid significant effects. It is therefore not the case that mitigation providing at least a 10dB reduction is required to avoid significant adverse effects at these locations.

These 'hot-spot' locations are where predicted construction noise levels fall between 65 dB and 75 dB. In these situations there is a high level of confidence that noise levels can be mitigated below the 65 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ threshold to avoid potential significant adverse effects. There are no locations with predicted noise levels exceeding 75 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$, where reductions greater than 10dB would be required to similarly avoid potential significant adverse effects.

This confidence stems from a number of factors:

- The assessment assumes relatively worst-case plant for source noise levels. If quieter plant were used, noise levels would be lower;

- The assessment assumes the worst-case task for each activity. Noise levels from other tasks that form that activity would be lower;
- Where the assessment assumes multiple activities occurring simultaneously, each task uses the worst-case activity. Where activities do not occur simultaneously, or where the worst-case activity is not taking place, noise level would be lower;
- The assessment includes the Limit of Deviation. Where works are located within the LoD, or at the proposed swathes or works location, they would be therefore further from the NSR than assumed in the ES assessment, and noise levels would be lower;
- The assessment includes consideration of works at the nearest point to all NSR. As above, where works are located further from NSR, noise levels would be lower;
- The assessment assumes activities occur over the whole assessment period (but include percentage on-times). If activities occurred over a shorter period, noise levels over the assessment period would be lower;
- The assessment has no consideration of site layout or orientation (e.g. locating plant further from NSR). Where site layout and orientation is considered by the contractor(s), noise levels would be lower;
- The assessment does not include consideration of alternative methods. Where quieter alternative methods can be used, noise levels would be lower;
- The assessment does not include the effects of screening. Where activities are screened from NSR, noise levels would be lower;
- The assessment does not include other BPM measures that may be identified by the contractor. Where measures are identified, noise levels would be lower.

Based on these points, there is a high level of confidence that construction noise levels in the ES assessment falling in the range of 65 to 75 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ can be reduced to below 65 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ during the actual works.

Many of the factors identified above relate to refinements to assumptions, rather than the introduction of mitigation. It is likely that many threshold exceedances would not occur (irrespective of mitigation) once assessment assumptions are refined by the contractor(s). That said, mitigation in the form of BPM would be implemented for all works, whether above the threshold or not.

As a final consideration, should the contractor'(s)' detailed assessments identify exceedance of the noise level threshold, significant effects would only occur where the temporal criteria for significant effects are also exceeded. In such instances, temporal

			restrictions would be implemented as part of consideration of best practicable means (BPM), secured via commitments NV01 and NV03 of the Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] to ensure that threshold exceedances would not be of sufficient duration to cause a significant adverse effect. In summary, for the reasons set out above, the Applicant does not consider that it is necessary for a requirement to be introduced with a specific dB attenuation to avoid significant adverse effects from construction noise associated with the Project.
14.2	The need for operational noise limits at all operational sites	The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) includes at section 5.12 16 paragraphs regarding Noise and Vibration. These include at 5.12.6 a requirement for “a prediction of how the noise environment will change with the proposed development”. This is for operation and construction. Paragraph 2.7.98 of EN-3 states "The Secretary of State should consider the noise and vibration impacts according to Section 5.12 in EN-1 and be satisfied that noise and vibration will be adequately mitigated through requirements attached to the consent." Paragraph 5.12.12 of EN-1 states "Applicants should submit a detailed impact assessment and mitigation plan as part of any development plan, including the use of noise mitigation and noise abatement technologies during construction and operation."	Please see responses to ExQ2 2NV1 and ISH2 AP 124.
		No noise or vibration prediction has been made by the applicant for the operation of this development. The ES (Appendix 2.9.D 1.1.1.) states in its introduction that it “does not provide a definitive indication of noise impacts from the proposed Saxmundham Converter Station” and instead presents “an assessment of noise from a ‘generic’ converter station with standard noise mitigation measures applied”. Noise contours have been provided in “Document 9.82: Operational Noise Contour Plan for Saxmundham Converter Station” REP3-075, but these are labelled “indicative” and are therefore do not present the results of a prediction exercise specific to this proposal taking account of the actual noise sources and their engineering specifications which are to be installed if consent is granted. At paragraph 5.12.17 EN-1 states “The Secretary of State should not grant development consent unless they are satisfied that the proposals will meet the following aims, through the effective management and control of noise: • avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • where possible, contribute to improvements to health and quality of life through the effective management and control of noise. The Secretary of State cannot be satisfied that those aims will be met, firstly because a prediction specific to this application has not been made in accordance with 5.12.12 of EN1, and secondly the draft DCO contains no requirement specifying numerical limits on	Although the operational noise assessments presented in Application Document 6 .3.2.9.D Appendix 2.9.D Suffolk Operational Noise Assessment [AS-119] and Application Document 6 .3.2.9.D Appendix 2.9.D Kent Operational Noise Assessment [AS-123] are presented as indicative, the underlying plant noise source data are based on robust assumptions, using plant data from similar facilities. Similarly, the mitigation assumed in the assessment is based on standard mitigation options (e.g. enclosures) which are readily available. There is therefore a high level of confidence in findings of the assessment. It is common for development such as Sea Link to have not gone through detailed design at planning stage. As such, there is a commitment for noise to be considered at detailed design stage, in commitments NV07 and NV09 of Application Document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235], for Suffolk and Kent, respectively. The commitments explicitly state <i>“Proposed substations and converter stations will be designed such that noise from their normal operation does not cause a significant adverse effect at nearby noise sensitive receptors. Additionally, where practicable, the substation and converter station designs will seek to achieve noise levels at nearby noise sensitive receptors as low as reasonably possible.”</i>

		operational noise or in any other way giving effect to 2.7.98 of EN-3. The applicant is relying on future unspecified design effort to avoid significant effects and this could only be acceptable if it is demonstrated that the mitigation measures to be applied are feasible from an engineering point of view, and that achievement of the outcome relied on can be enforced through explicit Requirements contained within the DCO. The particular characteristics of the major potential noise sources involved in a development of this kind, including the fact that electrical transformers emit tonal noise which can result in both higher sound levels at receptors than general approaches to noise assessment predict, and cause more significant noise impacts than noise sources without these characteristics. The requirements in the DCO for the current proposals are in strong contrast to those in the DCO for East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two which included explicit requirements for the control of cumulative noise at representative noise sensitive locations.
14.3	Operational noise impacts including low frequency noise	The Proposal here has characteristics which set it apart from most developments where noise effects are a potential issue. These include very low background noise levels, noise with characteristics that can cause higher noise levels than predicted by simple models, and greater effects on human beings. In particular the main noise sources have tonal characteristics which necessitate special attention in the prediction and assessment process. The fact that the distances between sources and receptors are larger than normal means that predictions are subject to uncertainties in noise propagation effects. An important issue is the potential for constructive interference between tonal noise from more than one transformer. The consequence of adding two tones constructively is an increase of 6 dB. With regard to low frequency noise, a method of assessing its significance is to use dBC as well as dBA and if dBC-dBA is more than 10 dB then further consideration is necessary. Low-frequency noise The commonly referenced criterion of dBC - dBA > 10 dB is a screening method only, intended to indicate whether further consideration of low-frequency noise may be warranted. It is not, in itself, an impact criterion. The presence of low-frequency sound is not disputed. Transformer noise is well known to contain low-frequency components, including prominent tonal components at 100 Hz. Accordingly, the assessment does not rely on the dBC - dBA screening method to determine acceptability. Instead, in line with standard practice, the potential effect of low-frequency and tonal noise is explicitly addressed through the application of appropriate corrections within the BS 4142 assessment, which is the relevant framework for assessing operational industrial sound. For completeness, the predicted difference between average night-time dBA and dBC sound levels including the Proposed Development is less than 10 dB at all receptor locations, with the maximum difference being approximately 5 dB. This compares with an existing ambient night-time dBA-dBC difference of approximately 4 dB. Mitigation of low-frequency noise Substation noise mitigation measures are specifically designed to address the low-frequency component of transformer noise. Standard transformer enclosures are typically designed to provide at least 20 dB attenuation at 100 Hz, with greater attenuation at higher frequencies. The assessment adopts a worst-case assumption that all transformer sound energy is emitted at 100 Hz. In practice, the sound energy is distributed across a range of frequencies, with significant energy at higher frequencies where attenuation is

		greater. As 100 Hz represents the least attenuated of the dominant frequencies, this assumption is inherently conservative and ensures that both the assessment and mitigation of low-frequency noise are robust. Constructive interference and the “6 dB increase” The statement that constructive interference between tonal noise sources would result in a 6 dB increase is potentially misleading. Under idealised conditions, the addition of two perfectly coherent sine waves of identical frequency and level can result in a local maximum increase of up to 6 dB at specific locations. By comparison, the addition of two incoherent sources of equal level results in a 3 dB increase. The difference between these two cases is therefore 3 dB, not 6 dB. More importantly, such an increase would only occur under highly specific and idealised conditions that are not representative of real-world environmental noise propagation. In practice: • Constructive interference at one location is necessarily accompanied by destructive interference elsewhere, such that the spatially averaged sound level is unchanged. • At 100 Hz, the distance between adjacent interference maxima and minima is approximately 1.7 m, meaning that any localised increase is highly spatially variable and not representative of receptor exposure. • The presence of multiple sound sources and a broad frequency spectrum, most of which are not phase-coherent, renders the net effect of constructive interference negligible in overall sound level terms. Furthermore, the assessment already significantly overestimates the contribution at 100 Hz by assuming that all transformer sound energy is emitted at this frequency, by an amount substantially greater than any potential difference between coherent and incoherent addition. Conclusion The assessment therefore robustly addresses tonal and low-frequency noise effects using conservative assumptions and appropriate mitigation, and the issues raised do not indicate any material underestimation of operational noise impacts.
Conclusions	My expert view is, firstly, that the Examining Authority should, prior to reporting to the Secretary of State, require the applicants to carry out a full set of operational and construction noise predictions, taking into account the actual equipment, machinery and plant that it is intended to install, and applying site-specific mitigation measures based on the performance of actual noise reduction measures and not generic assumptions. The predictions	Please see responses above.

should of course take fully into account corresponding predictions from other developments in the area which are capable of contributing to a cumulative effects. Secondly, the DCO should be amended to include requirements stating numerical noise limits for both operational and construction noise in the manner of other comparable Orders.

Table 19.6 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-158]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1-4	No Price or Accommodation Type Analysis Was Undertaken	1. During ISH2 the Applicant (NGET) admitted, through its witness (Mr Dave Wieger as recorded in the ISH2 transcript) it has surveyed for available accommodation with no regard whatsoever to the price of accommodation and blind to the different types of accommodation. The assessment only counted rooms, it did not consider: Price, Type of accommodation or Suitability. 2. After East Suffolk Council raised the issue of pricing, the ExA asked the Applicant directly: “So at the moment you've looked simply at the amount of rooms available, not necessarily the type of room cost of room, anything like that that doesn't go into it.” The Applicant’s response: “On behalf of the applicant. That’s correct.” 3. So, the Applicant has simply not fed that vital data into its assessment. As such, the Applicant’s claim that housing the construction workforce of these Proposals and all projects, cumulatively, will present no issue in terms of the availability of tourist accommodation, is unsupported by any analysis of price or typology. 4. The significance of this omission is reflected in the ExA’s Action Point 102 (EV6-033).	A response to the ExA’s request to incorporate affordability into the assessment of accommodation capacity is provided in Application Document 9.117 Applicant’s Response to AP104 from Issue Specific Hearing 2 .
5-8	Absence of Rental Market Impact Assessment	5. The Applicant also admitted, again through Mr Wieger that it has given no consideration to the impact on local rental costs of this Proposal or all projects cumulatively. No rental price modelling, demand impact modelling, inflationary effect assessment or cumulative rental market assessment 6. The ExA asked: “And what would that likely do. Do you think for rental costs across the area with that uplift of demand at that time.” 7. Mr Wieger responded: “That level of analysis hasn't been undertaken as part of the scope of the work. So... couldn't answer that.” Later, he reinforced this when discussing cumulative impacts: “...yes, you'd make use of the private rental sector, as I said, haven't done analysis of changes in prices or anything like that.” 8. These concerns are reflected in the ExA’s Action Point 104 (EV6-033).	

24	Precautionary Approach – Worst Case Basis	24. In the absence of a cumulative, location-specific quantitative baseline, and given the acknowledged difficulty of forecasting socio-economic and tourism impacts in a cluster of projects described by East Suffolk Council as “unprecedented and potentially without comparison”, it is not possible to conclude with confidence that effects would be less than significant and major adverse (using what SEAS understands to be the Applicant’s grading, the highest impact). In circumstances of acknowledged uncertainty, absence of modelling, and unresolved cumulative quantification—including worst-case rental demand (Action Point 104), assessment on a worst-case cumulative basis is required.	The Applicant does not agree that there is an absence of cumulative modelling or quantitative assessment. A cumulative, socio-economic, recreation and tourism assessment has been undertaken and is presented within the Environmental Statement and subsequent technical notes. This includes quantitative modelling of employment generation, accommodation capacity, labour supply and social infrastructure capacity, taking account of overlapping construction programmes and worst-case assumptions.
25-28	Working Hours in a Worst-Case Cumulative Context	25. Action Point 106 (EV6-033) demonstrates that working hours remain a live matter within the Examination. However crucially, in a cumulative context involving multiple overlapping NSIPs impacting the same area, the issue extends beyond individual bank holidays. 26. Divergence in working hour controls between projects risks removing coordinated periods of respite for communities and visitors. EA1N and EA2 secured restrictions of 07:00–19:00 Monday–Friday, 07:00–13:00 Saturday, with no Sunday or bank holiday working. In what must be treated as a worst-case cumulative impact scenario, the absence of equivalent controls for Sea Link would contribute to continuous rather than intermittent cumulative effects across a range of receptors, particularly during peak tourism periods. 27. Weekends and bank holidays are peak visitor and high-value trading periods, and are central to the coastal tourism economy. Working during peak tourism periods has a disproportionate economic and perceptual impact. 28. In these circumstances, alignment with the working hour restrictions secured for EA1N and EA2 would materially reduce cumulative socio-economic, tourism and local community effects, and would provide predictable periods of respite within an otherwise prolonged duration construction environment.	The Applicant has considered programme implications and risk for the Proposed Project, and has concluded that it can accommodate the exclusion of bank holidays from the core working hours at the converter station site in Suffolk (except by agreement with the local planning authorities), without prejudicing its ability to accelerate the project in accordance with the NESO Clean Power 2030 objectives. Furthermore, and recognising the desirability of this outcome to stakeholders and communities, the Applicant is also able to agree that for the bank holiday Mondays that form part of a ‘bank holiday weekend’ (meaning Easter Monday, the early May bank holiday, the Spring bank holiday, and the summer bank holiday) the associated (preceding) Saturday and Sunday are also not worked. This is facilitated by the likely implications of the exclusion of the bank holiday Mondays on contractor shift patterns, and also reflects the fact that the Applicant does not anticipate working every weekend in all areas of the project at all times in any case. On this basis, the Applicant is comfortable reducing its flexibility in the manner proposed at the converter station sites, although further limitations would introduce unacceptable risks to the ability to programme and deliver the works in a sufficiently timely manner. This reduction in flexibility is proposed specifically at the converter station site in Suffolk because it is acknowledged that these are large static construction sites where work will be being undertaken for 4-5 years (as opposed to smaller single site works such as individual substations, or works with shorter construction periods). Notwithstanding this, the reducing in flexibility on bank holidays and the bank holiday weekends set out above is not for the purpose of mitigating effects (the ES identifies no impacts that would require this mitigation) but is proposed following a project-specific review in the context of ongoing discussions with stakeholders. The possibility of working on bank holidays is retained for those works which are likely to be more transient, for example the cable sections, where construction activity will be undertaken at each location for shorter periods of time in any case. The possibility of working on bank holidays is also retained for any railway works, where possessions may be dictated by third parties and where bank holiday work may be a necessity. Wording reflecting the above has been added to Requirement 7 (see Appendix C ‘Revised dDCO Requirements’)

Table 19.7 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-159]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
SEAS oral representation at ISH2 on Sea Link Traffic & Transport			
1.1-1.2	Introduction	PJA were appointed by the Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) to carry out a technical review of the transport evidence prepared in respect to an application by National Grid Electricity Transmission. The technical review considered the highways and transport implications of the proposed development.	This is acknowledged and responses have previously been provided by the Applicant to this technical review within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014] .
1.3		The proposed development and others in the area will generate a significant level of new vehicular trips onto the local highway network over a number of years. In my view, the approach adopted in appraising the impact of the development is not robust, has not followed correct and proper procedure, proposed very limited mitigation and provides no comfort that the development will not have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding local communities. I have explained this in more than one written contribution, which I know SEAS has previously supplied to the Examination, this includes the following documents: · RR-5210 (https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020026-000626-07.%20SEAS%20Traffic%20&%20Transport%20RR%20FINAL%20-%20combined_Redacted.pdf) · REP1-275 https://nsipdocuments.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/publisheddocuments/EN020026-001296-SEAS%20WR%2007.Traffic%20and%20Transport-Deadline118%20Nov%202025%20-%20Combined.pdf · REP2-120 https://nsipdocuments.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020026-001901-7.%20SEAS%20REBUTTAL%20of%20NGET%20TRAFFIC%20AND%20TRANSPORT%20Responses%20-%20DL2%20Dec%209%202025.pdf · REP3-138 https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020026-002328-SEAS%20comments%20to%20the%20Applicants%20Responses%20to%20SEAS%20WR%20Traffic%20&%20Transport%20DL%203A%20DRAFT.pdf	The Applicant has previously responded to these comments within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014] , as well as within Table 30.1 of Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064] .
1.4-1.5		The responses from the Applicant at the hearing, acknowledged these deficiencies and noted that further work was being carried out to seek to address them. Whilst this is welcome, it remains of great concern that such fundamental issues around traffic impacts are unresolved at such a late stage in the process.	The Applicant has previously responded to comments relating to the baseline survey data, junction modelling and the cumulative assessment within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014] , as well as

		In summary of the previous issues, the Applicant has failed to survey correctly by not using data from non-neutral months; failed to carry robust and detailed junction modelling, not adequately assess cumulative impacts and not proposed proper and robust mitigation.	within Table 30.1 of Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064]. Further to this, the Applicant has provided a further response to the junction modelling and baseline survey data within their response to Point 11(1) in Table 19.3 above. The Applicant considers this matter to have been fully addressed.
1.6-1.8	HGV traffic	The volume of HGV traffic will be increased by 346 HGV movements per day from this single development. This will result in significant material changes in the constitution of traffic flows in the surrounding towns and villages, which have not been properly or rigorously considered. The base traffic survey data, upon which the DCO evidence has been based, was carried out in the non-neutral months of January and February 2024. Traffic volumes in these months, in this location, are much lower (5-10%) than both a typical neutral month and in the busy summer months (25% lower). The surveys used cannot thus be considered a representative sample of data and this undermines the entire transport evidence base and its subsequent conclusions. The Applicant continues to ignore this matter. The assessments conducted have also given no consideration to the implications of seasonality in this specific location. The summer months generate 25% more traffic than those surveyed in the application.	The Applicant has previously responded to these comments within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014], as well as within Table 30.1 of Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064]. Further to this, the Applicant has carried out junction modelling for the A12/ B1121 Main Road junction (to the south of Saxmundham), the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1121 Aldeburgh Road junction and the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1069 Snape Road junction following further consultation with SCC and ESC. The junction modelling includes a Sensitivity Test (representing a 21% uplift to the Baseline survey data), to consider potentially higher Baseline traffic flows at other times of the year driven by tourism related traffic peaks in summer months. The junction modelling also includes scenarios with and without cumulative traffic. Therefore, the Applicant considers this matter to have been fully addressed. The Applicant reiterates that the Baseline traffic flows which have informed Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] are based on an agreed survey methodology with SCC Highways and remain appropriate for the purposes of the original assessment work. The Applicant's position on this matter remains unchanged from that previously summarised within Application Document 9.79 Applicant's Comments on Written Representations [REP2-034] and Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014]. The Sensitivity Test has been carried out for the purposes of the junction modelling in Suffolk only, following further consultation with SCC Highways. No further traffic surveys or seasonality adjustments are required to inform Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054], as agreed with SCC.
1.9-1.11	Detailed Junction Modelling	There has been a complete lack of any detailed junction modelling in the DCO evidence base to assess its impact properly and robustly on key junctions and their safe operation. The impacts on key corridors such as the A12, the B1121 and the A1094 corridor, are not modelled in detail and consider only on a relative level. At the hearing it was finally acknowledged in respect to comments from SEAS and the County Council, that detailed junction modelling to assess the impact at key locations is to be carried out. It is disappointing that such a fundamental issue had not been addressed at the outset of the DCO Application, but I await the results.	The Applicant has provided a response to the junction modelling within their response to Point 11(1) in Table 19.3 above. In summary, the Applicant has carried out junction modelling for the A12/ B1121 Main Road junction (to the south of Saxmundham), the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1121 Aldeburgh Road junction and the A1094 Aldeburgh Road/ B1069 Snape Road junction following further consultation with SCC and ESC. The junction modelling includes a Sensitivity Test, to consider potentially higher Baseline traffic flows at other times of the year driven by tourism related traffic peaks in summer months. The junction modelling also includes scenarios with and without cumulative traffic. The junction modelling has been submitted at Deadline 6 within an updated

		In the absence of detailed junction modelling and a proper level of appraisal, it is impossible to conclude whether mitigation is required (indeed no significant mitigation has been proposed to date) and that the impact of the development is acceptable. This is a fundamental issue, also identified by the County Council, that remains unanswered and is compounded by the issues with the base survey data, which as noted the applicant continues to ignore.	version of Application Document 6.3.2.7.A ES Appendix 2.7.A Transport Assessment Note to provide a summary of the junction modelling scope, methodology and results. The Applicant considers this matter to have been fully addressed.
1.12-1.16	Cumulative developments on HGV	The development is one of several major new developments within the surrounding area. The cumulative impacts of these are considerable and material and they have not been considered robustly. The cumulative increased in HGV movements in the area from these are significant. This needs to be properly considered in any revised assessments, to date it simply has not been and the work carried out superficial. There remain major concerns over the proposed use of the railway bridge at Benhall for the use of construction traffic. There is a lack of clarity in the Applicant's proposed mitigation measures in respect to the Bridge. Overall, the submission to date is based on inappropriate and weak baseline data, does not properly or robustly explore key issues and areas of concerns, repeatedly dismisses impacts as insignificant and ignores significant adverse impacts, notably from the cumulative impacts. At the hearing, it was finally accepted by the applicant that this is the case and further work is ongoing. I would respectfully request that SEAS are provided with any updated information, as soon as this is available, in order that SEAS may pass it to me for consideration. Given the above, it is impossible to conclude that the key policy tests in EN-1 and NPPF paragraph 116 policy, broadly that the transport impacts of the development are not severe, are met.	The Applicant has previously responded to these points within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014], as well as within Table 30.1 of Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064]. The Applicant's latest position relating to the junction modelling and baseline survey data is also set out within their response to Point 11(1) in Table 19.3 above. In terms of the cumulative traffic and transport assessment, extensive work has been carried out on reviewing potential cumulative traffic and transport effects within Suffolk including within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] and Application Document 9.26 Traffic & Transport Cumulative Assessment (Suffolk) [REP1-110]. The traffic and transport cumulative assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] concluded that no significant cumulative effects were likely on traffic and transport receptors when the Proposed Project is considered alongside other developments. Further discussions have since been held with SCC Highways in January and February 2026, and further information has been provided as part of Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. Further to the above, the Applicant has reviewed the latest construction traffic forecasts available for East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm within their Construction Traffic Management Plan (dated November 2025) and for LionLink Offshore Interconnector within their PEI Report (dated January 2026). This latest information has not resulted in any changes to the previous worst-case traffic parameters/ assumptions that were adopted for the cumulative assessment of these schemes. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened in and assessed within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. This includes peak construction trips for five schemes in combination with operational trips for three schemes, with the assumption that the peak construction phases of the schemes under construction would all directly overlap with the peak construction phase of the Proposed Project. The cumulative

	assessment includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment therefore remains to be robust and has informed the junction capacity modelling submitted at Deadline 6.

Table 19.8 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-203]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Health and Wellbeing			
1 to 8	Introduction	SEAS provided introduction summarising the points raised throughout the remainder of the submission. This covers the SEAS reference 2.1 to 2.3.	The Applicant’s responses below address each of the points raised in the introduction section of the rebuttal.
9 to 18	Suffolk’s Documented Mental Health Vulnerabilities (Not Reflected in the ES)	SEAS provided comments on the documented mental health vulnerabilities in Suffolk. This covers the SEAS reference 3.1 to 3.6.	The Applicant considers that the matters raised reiterate previous submissions and a response regarding the consideration of vulnerable populations can be found in Table 2.61 (Reference 3.6) of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014]), and in Table 1.5 (Reference <i>Issue 3.6</i>) of Application Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]. Specifically, in response to SEAs comments regarding how the ES fails to incorporate robust Suffolk-specific evidence, the Applicant’s formal position and previous responses referenced above state that the Study Area used in Application Document 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing [APP-058] of which data is presented at local ward (Saxmundham and Aldeburgh & Leiston) and local authority (East Suffolk) level, adequately encapsulates the more granular geographies within the analysis, as while the assessment adopts a holistic spatial focus to capture wider influences, it also considers the health and wellbeing characteristics of local communities. The methodology ensures that the assessment undertaken is not prejudiced against specific areas. Rather, it applies an objective and evidence-based approach to evaluating health and wellbeing impacts across the defined Study Area, ensuring that no areas are overlooked or underrepresented. As such, it captures localised impacts in communities such as Friston, Aldeburgh and Saxmundham. Application Document 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing [APP-058] also considers vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions in its assessment of health and wellbeing effects, in terms of sensitivity classification. This ensures that differential health outcomes and potential

disproportionate effects on more sensitive populations are appropriately captured within the assessment.

Specifically, the baseline health and demographic data presented in the ES at local ward level (Saxmundham and Aldeburgh & Leiston) identifies that these wards are characterised by an older population, with a higher prevalence of self-reported ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ health and long-term health conditions. While mortality outcomes are generally better than national averages, the age profile and health sensitivities of the population indicate that local communities may be more vulnerable to changes affecting access to services, amenities, and the local environment.

In addition, the Applicant has reviewed additional baseline indicators which provides further insight beyond the ES, including ONS self-reported wellbeing outcomes (life satisfaction, happiness, anxiety and sense of worthwhileness). For example, this indicates that the East of England is broadly consistent with the national position. Average life satisfaction is aligned with the England benchmark (both geographies recording a mean score of 7.5), while reported happiness (7.4 compared to 7.5 nationally) and sense of worthwhileness (7.7 compared to 7.8) are fractionally lower. Mean anxiety levels in the region are slightly below the national average (3.1 versus 3.2). These data indicate that East Suffolk demonstrates generally stable wellbeing outcomes, consistent with regional and national trends. While this supplementary information provides additional context regarding community wellbeing and resilience, it does not materially alter the baseline profile presented in the ES, which remains robust and representative.

The assessment recognises that certain sub-groups may be more sensitive to change due to geographic proximity, access constraints, deprivation or existing health vulnerabilities. The combined use of ward-level data and a defined sensitivity framework ensures that these populations are appropriately considered and that potential localised impacts are identified. In the absence of more granular publicly available health data, the ward and local authority levels represent the most reliable and proportionate spatial units for assessment. The approach accords with relevant IEMA guidance and ensures that no communities within the Study Area are overlooked.

Further, in response to SEAs reference of the Mind/ESC survey, **Appendix A Applicant’s Further Response to SEAS REP1-279** within **Application Document 9.111 (A) Applicant’s Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]** sets out the Applicant’s full consideration and response.

Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured

			through Application Document 9.83 Code of Construction Practice [REP3-076] and Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP3-078] to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. As the REAC and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) are further developed, the applicant will continue to liaise with the local authorities on the management of potential effects on mental health and wellbeing.
19 to 25	<i>Existing Emotional Burden & Cumulative Trauma Already Evident</i>	SEAS provided comments on the existing emotional burden & cumulative trauma already evident in Suffolk. This covers the SEAS reference 4.1 to 4.5.	The Applicant considers that the matters raised reiterate previous submissions and a response regarding the consideration of the cumulative impact can be found in Table 2.61 (Reference 3.5 and Reference 3.6) of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014], and in Table 1.5 (Reference <i>Issue 3.5</i> and <i>Issue 3.6</i>) of Application Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]. Additionally, Appendix A Applicant's Further Response to SEAS REP1-279 within Application Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100] sets out the Applicant's further consideration regarding the Mind/ESC Survey Report cited by SEAS. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured through Application Document 9.83 Code of Construction Practice [REP3-076] and Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP3-078] to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. As the REAC and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) are further developed, the applicant will continue to liaise with the local authorities on the management of potential effects on mental health and wellbeing. The Applicant's response addresses the matters raised and has no further comments.
26 to 30	<i>Lack of Qualified Mental Health Expertise</i>	SEAS provided comments on the lack of qualified mental health expertise. This covers the SEAS reference 5.1 to 5.2.	The Applicant considers that the matters raised reiterate previous submissions and a response regarding the lack of mental health expertise, and competence of experts who have prepared the ES can be found in Table 2.40 (Reference 2.2) of Application Document 9.79 Applicant's Comments on Written Representations [REP2-034] and in Table 1.5 (Reference <i>Issue 3.8</i>) of Application Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]. The Applicant's response addresses the matters raised and has no further comments.

31 to 35	Failure to Meet National Guidance	SEAS provided comments on the failure to meet national guidance. This covers the SEAS reference 6.1 to 6.3.	The Applicant considers that the matters raised reiterate previous submissions and a response regarding the failure to meet national guidance, specifically regarding how the ES does not meet the depth, methodological rigour, or holistic intent of national guidance for assessing mental health and wellbeing impacts can be found in Table 2.61 (References 3.1; 3.2; 3.5; 3.6; 3.8; and 3.9) of Application Document 9.34.1 Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014]), and in Table 1.5 (Reference <i>Issues 3.1; 3.2; 3.5; 3.6; 3.8; and 3.9</i>) of Application Document 9.111 (A) Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and Wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100] . The Applicant's response addresses the matters raised and has no further comments.
36 to 39	Suffolk's Rural Identity and Psychological Stakes	SEAS provided comments on Suffolk's rural identity and psychological stakes. This covers the SEAS reference 7.1 to 7.3.	The Applicant considers that the matters raised reiterate previous submissions and a response regarding the lack of mental health expertise, and competence of experts who have prepared the ES can be found in Table 2.40 (Reference 7.1) of Application Document 9.79 Applicant's Comments on Written Representations [REP2-034]. Measures to address disruption and potential effects on mental health and wellbeing arising from construction activities are secured through Application Document 9.83 Code of Construction Practice [REP3-076] and Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP3-078] to reduce or avoid adverse human health and wellbeing related impacts during the development. As the REAC and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) are further developed, the applicant will continue to liaise with the local authorities on the management of potential effects on mental health and wellbeing. The Applicant's response addresses the matters raised and has no further comments.
40 to 46	Conclusion	SEAS provided conclusions summarising the points raised throughout the submission. This covers the SEAS reference 8.1 to 8.5, and the SEAS overall conclusion.	The Applicant's responses above address each of the points raised in the conclusion section of the rebuttal and has no further comments.

Table 19.9 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-145]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		1. Introduction 1.1 This document sets out the position of Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) regarding National Grid Electricity	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Transmission's (NGET) proposed construction access route over Benhall Railway Bridge, onto a newly constructed access road from the B1121, and across a new bridge over the River Fromus to reach the Saxmundham converter station site. SEAS considers this proposal technically unsound, environmentally damaging, and based on a flawed assessment of feasibility and risk.	
		1.2 The proposed route would impose disproportionate impacts on Benhall, Sternfield, Saxmundham and the Fromus Valley, while offering no demonstrable engineering or logistical advantage. It is a direct consequence of NGET's decision to select a converter station site that is inherently inaccessible and poorly suited to the scale of construction required.	The Applicant does not accept that characterisation of the site. The Applicant selected the site after a careful process involving the review of alternatives – see Appx B to [REP2-014] . The Applicant responds to the suggestion that RAF Leiston should be used, inter alia, at p.309 of that document.
		1.3 SEAS supports Suffolk County Council's proposed northern access route, which avoids the constraints of Benhall Railway Bridge, reduces environmental harm, and provides a more credible and deliverable solution. This rebuttal also highlights the wider pattern of deficiencies in the Sea Link project, including the absence of a transparent alternatives assessment, contrary to the requirements of EN-1 (which requires applicants to demonstrate that "all reasonable alternatives have been properly considered") and EN-5 (which requires a proportionate and robust appraisal of routeing and site selection). The failure to meet these policy tests has resulted in the Applicant overlooking more suitable converter station locations and lower-impact access options.	Alternative sites have been carefully considered – see above.
		2. Change 4 – Benhall Railway Bridge, Suffolk: A Rebuttal of NGET's Feasibility Assessment	
		2.1 NGET's feasibility study [REP4-101] seeks to justify the use of Benhall Railway Bridge as the primary construction access route for Sea Link. The evidence presented does not demonstrate that the bridge is structurally suitable, that mitigation is deliverable, or that the associated disruption is acceptable. The assessment relies on unverified assumptions, incomplete investigations, and mitigation options that fail to resolve the fundamental unsuitability of the route.	The Applicant is satisfied that the analysis in the Document 9.112: Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4-101] is robust. It presents three options so that alternative approaches can be taken if an option is deemed infeasible.
		Uncertain Structural Capacity 2.2 The bridge is currently restricted to 46 tonnes because Suffolk County Council cannot verify the condition of the encased steel beams. NGET acknowledges that each transformer delivery would impose approximately 113 tonnes on the structure, more than double the permitted limit. No intrusive investigations have yet been undertaken, and the bridge's true capacity remains unknown. The feasibility study therefore cannot credibly assert that the bridge can be strengthened to accommodate AILs or withstand years of heavy construction traffic.	The Crossing Feasibility Study is clear that it will undertake further investigations as to whether the bridge can be made suitable for AIL weight. The view that it can be return to its original design load is based on current knowledge and professional judgment.
		Mitigation Options Are Speculative and High-Risk	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		2.3 NGET presents three options: bridge remediation, a temporary “mini-bridge,” and a long diversion route for AILs. None provides a reliable, low-impact solution. • Option 1 (Remediation) depends on SCC and Network Rail approvals, intrusive investigations, and potentially lengthy closures of the B1121. The scope, cost, and duration of works are unknown, and the programme risk is significant. The feasibility of strengthening the bridge is unproven. • Option 2 (Mini-bridge) requires a three-day full closure of the B1121 for each AIL movement, totalling around 45 days of closure. The structural assumptions underpinning this option have not been validated, and the cumulative disruption to Benhall, Sternfield and Saxmundham is not assessed. • Option 3 (Diversion via Yoxford–Leiston–Snape) avoids the bridge but shifts AILs through multiple residential areas already impacted by Sizewell C. The route includes several pinch points and requires upgrading the cable haul road. It does not provide a long-term maintenance solution.	
		2.4 These options demonstrate uncertainty, not flexibility. A nationally significant project should not rely on a menu of untested access strategies.	It is both practical and reasonable to consider multiple options. This helps ensure that the proposal can be brought forward if one option should prove infeasible or to have unacceptable impacts. The presentation of multiple options does not prevent analysis of the impacts of any particular option, as SEAS’ representation reflects.
		Programme and Third-Party Dependencies Undermine Deliverability 2.5 NGET concedes that key elements of Option 1 depend on Network Rail possessions and SCC approvals. These are limited, competitive, and outside NGET’s control. The feasibility study does not demonstrate that the required possessions can be secured within the construction programme, nor does it assess the consequences if they cannot. The suggestion of a “hybrid” approach, using Options 2 or 3 until Option 1 becomes viable would compound disruption and increase programme risk.	It is practical and reasonable for the Applicant to take into account regulatory uncertainty and grapple with that. SEAS does not explain why the mooted hybrid approach would compound disruption or increase risk. The availability of a hybrid approach would, if anything, indicate less risk.
		Community and Cumulative Impacts Are Minimised, Not Assessed 2.6 The study repeatedly downplays the disruption associated with closures, diversions, and repeated AIL movements. It does not assess: • the cumulative impact of Sea Link, Sizewell C, and LionLink traffic • the effect of extended closures on emergency access, school traffic, or local businesses • the long-term consequences of routing heavy construction traffic through Benhall, Sternfield and Saxmundham The absence of cumulative impact assessment is a critical flaw.	The Applicant is satisfied that its cumulative impact assessment is comprehensive and robust. These are general and sweeping criticisms and it is difficult to respond to them with any more granularity therefore.
		A Conclusion Not Supported by Evidence	It is appropriate that the Applicant has grappled with uncertainty. It has taken a practical and reasonable approach in presenting

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		2.7 NGET asserts confidence in its proposals, yet the feasibility study shows that: • the bridge's condition is uncertain • structural capacity is unproven • mitigation works are speculative • programme risks are substantial • community impacts are significant • no single option is demonstrably deliverable	alternative options to reduce delivery risk. The Applicant has grappled with this in detail by producing the Crossing Feasibility Study, which is considered robust.
		2.8 This is not a sound basis for a primary access route. The feasibility study does not justify the use of Benhall Railway Bridge and does not demonstrate that the proposed route is the least-harm or most deliverable option.	The Applicant has carefully considered these options and considers them operationally necessary. The Applicant discarded a proposed Option 4, which involved the construction of a semi-permanent bridge because it performed poorly by comparison to other options, reflecting its selective approach (see section 2.5. of Application Document 9.76.2 Change Request Report [CR1-052])
		3. Impact Implications of NGET's Proposed Route and the Fromus Bridge Crossing	
		3.1 NGET's proposed access route requires the construction of a new permanent bridge, approximately 4-5 metres high, across the River Fromus, together with a new access road cut across the open valley slopes south of Saxmundham. This intervention would introduce significant environmental, landscape, heritage, and community impacts that are both unnecessary and avoidable.	The design impacts of the bridge are addressed in ExQ3 CH3. See also p.24-25 of [REP2-014]. The size of the Bridge is from the Q95 level of the river Fromus , therefore the height of the bridge above bank level will be 2 -3 meters depending on final design.
		Environmental and Landscape Harm to the Fromus Valley 3.2 The Fromus Valley is a sensitive corridor with ecological value. The construction of a new bridge and access road would result in habitat loss, hydrological disruption, and long-term fragmentation of wildlife corridors. The floodplain is characterised by soft ground conditions, high water tables, and heightened flood risk, all of which increase the complexity and uncertainty of engineering works. The proposed bridge would represent a major intervention with long-term maintenance liabilities and potential vulnerability to future climate impacts.	
		3.3 The Environmental Statement acknowledges that the access bridge would have a moderate adverse impact at Year 1 and only reduces this to minor (not significant) by Year 15. SEAS [RR-5210] challenges this conclusion, noting that the mitigation assumptions, principally planting and bunding, are overstated and do not materially reduce the visual prominence or character disruption caused by the road and bridge, even in the long term.	The Applicant has prepared a robust and comprehensive EIA. The issues SEAS raises are disagreements of judgment. The Applicant is entitled to rely on reasonable professional judgments as to the impacts of the bridge. See in particular the Applicant's detailed responses to the identified impacts of the bridge in [REP2-014].
		Permanent Harm to the Setting of Hurts Hall 3.4 The proposed Fromus Bridge and access road would cause permanent, unmitigable harm to the setting of Hurts Hall, a heritage asset whose significance derives in part from its relationship with the surrounding historic parkland and the open, undeveloped valley landscape.	See response above.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		3.5 The MBELC 2025 assessment (as referenced in SEAS RR-5210) concludes that: • the new bridge and access road fragment historic parkland, • they introduce industrial development onto previously open valley slopes, and • they open new views of the converter station from the B1121, fundamentally altering the rural character of the area.	See response above.
		3.6 These impacts are not temporary. They represent a permanent transformation of the landscape setting of Hurts Hall and the Fromus Valley. The ES's suggestion that planting will reduce the impact to "minor" by Year 15 is not supported by the MBELC analysis, which finds that the scale, height, and engineered form of the bridge cannot be screened or absorbed into the landscape, even with extensive planting.	See response above.
		Community Impacts on Benhall, Sternfield and Saxmundham 3.7 The new access road would cut through open countryside, permanently altering the landscape character and introducing industrial traffic into an area currently defined by rural tranquillity. The associated noise, dust, vibration, and visual intrusion would have a profound effect on residents of Benhall, Sternfield and Saxmundham, particularly those living near the B1121 and the proposed access corridor.	See in particular the Applicant's response to SCC at pp.6-9 of [REP2-014] .
		3.8 The route would bring HGVs directly past homes, farms, and community facilities. It would also increase traffic pressure on the A12 junction at Benhall, an area already under strain from existing and planned regional infrastructure projects.	See the comment above and §B.5.7 of Appx B to [REP2-014] .
		A Direct Consequence of Poor Site Selection and the Availability of Credible Alternatives 3.9 The extensive engineering required to force access into the Saxmundham converter station site, including a new bridge across the River Fromus, a new access road carved across the valley slopes, and intrusive works to Benhall Railway Bridge, is a direct consequence of poor site selection. The site is inherently inaccessible, environmentally sensitive, and constrained by heritage assets, floodplain dynamics, and proximity to residential areas.	The Applicant has explained in detail its assessment of alternatives and its choice of site, in response to SEAS, at Appx B of [REP2-014]
		3.10 SEAS has repeatedly demonstrated, through its submissions [RR-5210], [REP1-282], [REP2-113] and [REP3-142], that NGET has not undertaken a transparent or robust alternatives assessment. These submissions identify a credible, lower-impact alternative at the former RAF Leiston site.	See above comments on alternatives.
		3.11 The existence of this credible alternative, underscores the avoidable nature of the harm caused by the proposed Fromus Bridge and access road. The MBELC 2025 assessment, referenced in SEAS RR-5210, concludes that the proposed bridge would cause permanent, unmitigable harm to the setting of Hurts	See above comments on alternatives and site selection.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Hall and the historic parkland. This harm arises solely because NGET has chosen a site that cannot be accessed without major engineering interventions.	
		3.12 The need for a new bridge, a new access road, and extensive modifications to Benhall Railway Bridge is therefore not an inevitable requirement of delivering Sea Link. It is the result of a site selection process that failed to consider viable alternatives and failed to apply the principle of selecting the least-harm location, as required by EN-1, which obliges applicants to demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives have been properly examined, and by EN-5, which requires a proportionate and robust appraisal of routeing and site selection. The Applicant's approach does not meet these policy expectations and has led directly to the unnecessary impacts now proposed for the Fromus Valley and surrounding communities.	See above comments on alternatives and site selection.

Table 19.10 Applicant's Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-146]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
1	Introduction	SEAS and its expert advisors have reviewed the adequacy of responses from the Applicant at Deadline 4 to issues raised at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (including the summary [REP4-159] of matters raised by SEAS at that hearing) and to the Examining Authority's questions to the Applicant in ExQ2. The relevant documents are: RE4-025; REP4-058; REP4-083; REP4-085; REP4-086; REP4-099; REP4-101; REP4-236	Comment noted
2 - 3	PD-021 - ExQ2	SEAS welcomed question 2LVIA11, which asks the Applicant to include contingency measures within the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) should acid grassland creation fail. 3. SEAS considers that the same question (2LVIA11) should also be asked in relation to paragraph 2.9.32 of the Environmental Statement (ES).	The oLEMP (Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk [REP4-065]) already sets out the measures necessary for the successful acid grassland reinstatement (Section 4.2, 6.7 and 7.2) which includes contingency measures if the acid grassland reinstatement is not proceeding according to the success criteria agreed with the local planning authority (paragraph 6.7.3 of Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk [REP4-065]).
4 - 10	REP4-025- 6.2.2.2(D) Environmental Statement Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology & Biodiversity.	In this ES update SEAS has made the following observations re: Acid Grassland. Para 2.9.32 – The same question (2LVIA11) should be asked in relation to para 2.9.32 of the ES: a. Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) b. Include contingency measures for acid grassland in case reinstatement plans fail or are not achievable within the	See above response. Detail on the acid grassland and the ability to create is set out in the Suffolk oLEMP. The detailed survey data that 0.3ha of the acid grassland meets the botanical criteria for Priority Habitat has not been submitted into the examination but has been shared with Natural England, who asked the Applicant to split the habitat into priority habitat acid grassland and semi-improved acid grassland.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		timeframes stated. This should be reflected in the REAC [REP4-235]. The Applicant should be providing more detail at this stage on the suitability of the proposed location and its soils for such creation, to ensure it is an appropriate location. Para 2.9.50 of the ES states only 0.3ha of the aid grassland meets the Priority Habitat criteria. Has the supporting data for this been presented elsewhere? If so, it would be useful if this were cross-referenced. If not, then it needs to be. Para 2.9.50 of the ES describes the presence of bands of semi-improved neutral grassland. This habitat type does not exist in the UKHab habitat descriptions, which now forms the standard guidelines. We request that this habitat be described using the latter. Par 2.9.63 of the ES states that the acid grassland creation location has suitably sandy soils and is close to other areas of acid grassland. However, there is no consideration of the recent land use of this location, and how that might have altered the chemical and physical composition of the soil such that it may not now be suitable for acid grassland reversion, particularly over the short-term interim period required to off-site the temporary loss of the existing acid grassland. Again, we believe the Applicant should be providing more detailed evidence that the location is suitable for such habitat creation. .	Semi-improved neutral grassland is a Phase 1 Habitat category and is still legitimate terminology. Therefore, the Applicant will not be updating this to UKHab. As noted above (and discussed in the oLEMP) the Applicant is no longer planning arable reversion as part of the acid grassland creation proposals. Rather the Applicant will restore a degraded 6ha area of acid grassland primarily by reintroducing appropriate management to address the tussocky sward and presence of bracken and gorse. This can achieve the necessary restoration well within the 10 year timescale for which the land is secured.
11	REP4-058 - 6. 6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked)	Regarding the revised HRA, we note that loss of functionally-linked land for all European Sites except Sandlings SPA, continues to be screened out. We believe the lack of any baseline data for foraging marsh harrier from the Alde-Ore and Minsmere-Walberswick SPAs is a flaw in this assessment, and means it cannot screen out the potential for land functionally-linked to these SPAs not being impacted.	The Applicant considers the assessment of loss of functionally-linked land is robust. As stated in the Applicant's response to SEAS Relevant Representation, surveys only recorded marsh harrier feeding in the wetlands of the RSPB reserve and this will be crossed by trenchless methods. While they may also forage over arable farmland, there is a very large amount of suitable farmland within 15 km of the marsh harrier nest sites in the RSPB reserve even allowing for Sea Link and other schemes, and foraging birds of prey are at very low risk of significant disturbance compared to birds on the nest or roosting.
12	REP4-083 - 9. 87 (A) Applicant's Comments on Responses to First Written Questions (ExQ1)	1ECOL6 – p55. The Applicant is relying on photographs to demonstrate there are significant areas of intact concrete on the former hoverport area. As reptiles can access fissures as narrow as 5mm, to underpin a robust assessment a detailed survey to accurately map such features is required to determine whether vehicles need to track across them. Otherwise, reptiles are at risk of killing and injury in contravention of the W&CA.	Reptiles will generally confine themselves to areas close to cover rather than open areas away from vegetation where they are exposed to predation. The Applicant has commitment to measures to ensure that cracks on the hoverport are either avoided or not damaged and this has also been included in the Kent Ecology and Biodiversity Chapter for Deadline 6. The Applicant does not intend to traverse habitat within which reptiles may be found (restricting access to open unvegetated hardstanding). Therefore, a reptile survey of the adjacent habitats, even if it confirmed the presence of reptiles, would not affect the approach to using the site for access. As discussed in ISH2 reptiles may spend short periods of time basking on hardstanding but because they are exposed to predators will spend little time there and will depart quickly as soon as vehicles approach. The Applicant

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			will also put measures in place to ensure existing areas of hardstanding are not collapsed by vehicle movements (as this would be a health and safety concern aside from environmental considerations). The Applicant therefore does not see a necessity for reptile surveys.
13		1ECOL31 p70. The above also applies to 1ECOL31	See above response to comment on 1ECOL6
14 - 15	REP4-085 - 9. 89 (A) Applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)	Section 3. 1, p5. The Applicant states: <i>"Reptile surveys are designed to identify active populations during the active season. If reptiles were hibernating within cracks, simply driving over the surface would not disturb them; any structural risks (e. g. , cracks collapsing) will be assessed as part of the structural survey"</i>. We do not agree. Firstly, reptile surveys identify areas used outside the hibernation season, but these can include crevices in concrete that can be used for shelter on a diurnal basis throughout the active season, e. g. at night, or in cool or wet weather. In addition, likely hibernation features can be elucidated through reptile surveys early in the active season (e. g. March), when individuals do not venture far from their chosen hibernaculum to bask. A detailed survey of such features and their structural integrity to withstand the predicted vehicle movements without risk of damage (and therefore killing or injury to reptiles) is required.	See above responses on reptiles
16		Section 3 & 4, p9. We strongly disagree that tracking surveys are not required. Data from other bat surveys suggest there may be a barbastelle maternity roost close to the substation location. Given the number of other barbastelle maternity roosts identified during the SZC baseline surveys (using tracking techniques), it would not be surprising if others exist close-by, including within the Order Limits of Sea Link. Hedgerows close to maternity roosts will be important dispersal and foraging habitats, so their temporary loss could have a significant impact on the local conservation status of a rare Annex II bat species. Such information would likely result in a material change to the impact assessment, contrary to the Applicant's response.	See responses to this point raised in SEAS Deadline 4 response
17		We would also like to highlight, that this Summary document only covers issues discussed during the hearing, and not any written representation submitted after due to lack of time during the hearing. We look forward to the Applicant responding to our concerns regarding deficient survey effort for two key SPA species: nightjar and marsh harrier, using functionally-linked land within the Order Limits.	See above responses

Table 19.11 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-147]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		1 Introduction	The Applicant notes and has responded to the various the submission from SEAS in relation to need.
		2. SEAS has previously presented the case to the ExA, that there is no need for Sea Link.	Without revisiting the substance of these documents (most recently [REP5-142] and in the Applicant’s 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions submitted at Deadline 6) the Applicant’s view remains that there is a strong need case for the Proposed Project which is consistent with the ‘urgent’ need for low carbon infrastructure set out in NPS EN1.
		3. As part of this, SEAS has explained why Sea Link cannot meet the “efficient and economic” test set by EN-1. Necessarily, an important element of that, is the much higher cost of Sea Link compared to SEAS’ solution, particularly as Sea Link (the DCO Proposals as submitted) fails to meet the need to cover the suggested worst case network fault deficit in Kent, whereas the SEAS/Save Minster Marshes solution does.	For the reasons set out in these submissions the Applicant does not think that the ‘alternatives’ proposed by SEAS are practical or will deliver the benefits to the wider network that the Proposed Project will.
		4. To this point, SEAS has worked merely on the basis of the as-at-2018 stated cost of Sea Link, which was said by the Applicant to be about c. £1.1bn in 2018 terms, which if so, would translate into in excess of £2bn at “today’s” (2025) costs, for all the reasons set-out in the footnote below.	The Applicant has an obligation to have regard to the following statutory duties under the Electricity Act 1989. Under Section 9(2) of the Electricity Act 1989:
		5. However, SEAS believes that since the Sea Link project was initiated in c. 2018 there has been considerable “project creep” that may not have been fully reflected in the cost base submitted as part of the Application to this DCO.	“to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission”.
		6. The purpose of this short submission is limited to exploring the question of whether, in fact, the £1.1bn at-2018 costs estimate given by the Applicant/SEAS’ previous extrapolation of that to costs in today’s (2025) terms as in excess of £2bn, might in fact be a material underestimate.	These obligations mean that National Grid is responsible for the delivery of new electricity transmission infrastructure (within England and Wales) and for the cost of projects, as costs will ultimately be borne by electricity users.
		7. It is in any event the case that even at £1.1bn, Sea Link cannot conceivably be considered to meet the “efficient and economic” test, given the cost of the alternative solution is a fraction of that. But the ExA may be assisted by consideration of whether even £1.1bn-2018/over £2bn-2025 underestimates the position.	The Proposed Project has been brought forward by the Applicant in accordance with and having had regard to these obligations and following a prolonged and ongoing engagement with National Energy System Operator (NESO), the independent public body with responsibility for Britain’s electricity and gas networks.
		8. Specifically, SEAS draws the ExA’s attention to the question of whether each of the following project items has been fully costed and those costs have fully incorporated into the 2018 cost base. We would hope that the Applicant would be providing this information in any event, in response to the ExA’s questions on need, the answers to which are due at Deadline 5. However, we set these points out now, as we would not want them to be missed. If the Applicant is not providing the information already (which it	The Applicant reiterates the position set out in REP5-142, and in no way accepts that the SEAS/Save Minster Marshes solutions ‘ <i>fully resolves the stated network and boundary deficits</i> ’.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		should be), then to respond should be a relatively easy and quick process for the Applicant. 9. The items SEAS has identified are these (there may be more, the Applicant will know if so): a. The compulsory acquisition and re-development of the Ramsgate Hoverport. b. The requirement to raise the level of the proposed HVDC converter station and substation site at Minster Marshes by 2m, including massive aggregate infill and significant piling works, as the proposed site is in a flood plain. c. The structural remediation/ improvement (or an alternative solution) to permit the structurally safe use of the Benhall Railway bridge, to permit AILs to access the proposed Saxmundham HVDC site. d. The requirement to build a new 4m to 5 m high bridge over the River Fromus (& flood plain) to carry all the construction traffic (including multiple AILs) to the proposed Saxmundham converter station site. e. The requirement to do about 1km of HDD drilling from an offshore platform near to Aldeburgh, underneath the RSPB North Warren reserve, which was not required when landfall would have been made at Sizewell. f. The incremental cost of c 8 kms of additional cut & cover trenching for HVDC cables being taken farther inland (to Saxmundham) versus the original planned Sizewell. 10. For each of these items, and any others SEAS has missed, the question that presents is whether it has been fully costed and properly included in the stated £1.1bn project (in 2018 money). To take the matter one step on, the further question could be asked: what would it cost in 2025 money. 11. SEAS' own view, having researched the likely cost implications of these items that SEAS understands to be project changes since the £1.1bn costing was arrived at, is that the true cost of Sea Link is likely to be more than £3bn in 2025 terms. 12. Whereas the SEAS/Save Minster Marshes solution fully resolves the stated network and boundary deficits in both Suffolk	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		and Kent at a cost of less than £200m in 2025 terms (and note, this cost would probably be barely £100m, if allowance were made for the normal lifecycle replacement of the conductors on the Sizewell to Bramford double OHL). 13. SEAS provides this further information and analysis in order to assist (both the ExA and the Secretary of State). SEAS is convinced that the Secretary of State would not wish to contemplate the additional spend involved even if the difference were between a SEAS' solution cost of £200m and a Sea Link as-at-2018 cost of £1.1bn. In fact, it is likely the true difference is much greater. 14. If the Applicant does address cost in its Deadline 5 response to the ExA's questions concerning need, then SEAS will consider and provide further material if necessary.	

Table 19.12 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-148]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
SEAS Rebuttals of Applicant’s comments (REP4-236 Table 3.1) on SEAS late Deadline 3 submission [REP3-140] - IntraProject Cumulative Effects			
1	Introduction	The Applicant’s response does not address the specific points raised in SEAS’ rebuttal REP3-140. In that submission SEAS identified a number of methodological deficiencies in the cumulative impact assessment, including the continued reliance on earlier documents rather than engaging with the substance of SEAS’ arguments, the absence of a coherent integrated cumulative assessment across the principal co-located NSIPs, the failure to assess the cumulative duration and sequential nature of infrastructure construction, and the fragmentation of impacts across individual topic areas. The Applicant’s response in REP4-236 does not engage with those points. Instead it simply asserts that the cumulative assessment follows best practice and guidance and that the project list was agreed with local planning authorities. These statements do not address the concerns raised in REP3-140 regarding the adequacy of the cumulative assessment presented in the Environmental Statement cumulative impact assessment [APP-060]. In particular, the response does not explain how the assessment evaluates the combined and sequential effects of multiple major infrastructure projects affecting the same locality over extended periods, nor does it address SEAS’ concern that the assessment remains fragmented across individual topic areas rather than providing an integrated evaluation of cumulative effects experienced by communities and receptors. Accordingly, the methodological concerns identified in REP3-140	SEAS is not clear as to the meaning of the proposal to conduct a “combined and sequential effects of multiple major infrastructure projects affecting the same locality over extended periods”. The Applicant has conducted an assessment of cumulative impacts in line with best practice, guidance, and case law. SEAS’s comments in this representation repeatedly restate that formulation without providing clarity as to its meaning. The criticisms raised by SEAS are primarily that the Applicant has not taken into account the cumulative impacts of inchoate schemes. The Applicant reiterates its position that its approach to cumulative impact assessment, including the selection of projects for assessment, reflects best practice.
6	Introduction	The Applicant’s response does not address the point raised by SEAS in REP3-140. In that submission SEAS referred to the conclusions of the EA1N/EA2 Examining Authority not as a narrow precedent relating to landscape assessment, but as evidence that the Friston–Saxmundham area has already been recognised as highly sensitive to cumulative energy infrastructure development. SEAS’ point was that the cumulative context has materially changed since the EA1N and EA2 examination, with the addition of further major infrastructure proposals including the Proposed	The Applicant has had careful regard to the findings of the ExA. The Applicant directly addressed those findings in its response to AP107 – see [REP4-086].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Project and the foreseeable LionLink project, particularly in light of the further project information now available in the PEIR for LionLink. This evolving concentration of infrastructure requires a comprehensive and integrated cumulative assessment of the emerging energy hub at Friston. The Applicant's response does not engage with that issue. Instead it refers back to the cumulative effects assessment contained in the Environmental Statement cumulative impact assessment [APP-060]. However, referring to APP-060 does not address the concern raised in REP3-140, namely that the Environmental Statement does not provide an integrated evaluation of the combined and sequential effects of multiple colocated NSIPs at this location. The statement that LionLink is now being "reviewed" as further project information becomes available further illustrates the point raised by SEAS: the cumulative context continues to evolve, yet the assessment relied upon remains the applicationstage assessment presented in APP-060. Accordingly the Applicant's response does not demonstrate that a comprehensive cumulative assessment of the emerging Friston infrastructure cluster has been undertaken, and the concern identified in REP3-140 remains unresolved.	
7-8	Introduction	The SEAS submission referred to the conclusions reached by the Examining Authority in the East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO examinations, which found that the cumulative effects arising from those two schemes in this location were substantial and that the planning balance was only just sufficient. SEAS relies on that finding as evidence that the Friston– Saxmundham area has already been recognised as highly sensitive to the cumulative delivery of major energy infrastructure. The relevance of this precedent is that the addition of further nationally significant infrastructure projects in the same location requires particularly careful and comprehensive cumulative assessment. The Applicant's response does not engage with this point. Instead it refers again to the cumulative assessment presented in the Environmental Statement cumulative effects chapter [APP-060] and to the preparation of a project long list agreed with local planning authorities. These procedural matters do not address the substantive issue raised by SEAS, namely whether the assessment adequately evaluates the cumulative implications of further infrastructure development in a location already identified as experiencing substantial cumulative effects. The concern identified by SEAS therefore remains unresolved.	See the response above.
9	Introduction	The SEAS submission did not dispute that additional projects were listed within the Environmental Statement cumulative assessment [APP-060]. Rather, the point raised was that the emergence of multiple further NSIPs in the same location materially alters the cumulative context and requires a comprehensive cumulative assessment capable of evaluating the escalation in scale and concentration of infrastructure at the Friston– Saxmundham energy hub. The Applicant's response confirms that the original assessment of LionLink within APP-060 relied on assumptions in the absence of detailed project information. The Applicant also confirms that it now intends to review its cumulative assessment in light of the information published in the LionLink statutory consultation documents. This confirms the concern raised by SEAS that the application stage cumulative assessment was undertaken on the basis of incomplete information and does not represent a settled assessment of the cumulative context.	This amounts to a disagreement over the list of projects which need to be assessed for cumulative impacts. For the reasons given above, the Applicant remains of the view that its selection of projects is appropriate. It is unclear why SEAS criticises the Applicant for reviewing LionLink at the request of the ExA. And the fact that the ExA has focussed on LionLink and not other projects indicates they do not agree with SEAS that other projects which have not been assessed must be factored into the cumulative impact assessment in the manner SEAS requests.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The Applicant also refers to the practice of assessing cumulative effects based on the residual effects of other developments after mitigation. SEAS does not dispute that cumulative assessment may consider residual effects. However, this methodological point does not address the substantive concern raised by SEAS, which is that the Environmental Statement does not evaluate the implications of the emerging concentration of major energy infrastructure projects in this location. The fact that individual projects may include mitigation measures does not remove the need to assess the combined effects of multiple co-located NSIPs. Cumulative assessment is concerned with the interaction of developments in the same place and over time, rather than whether each project in isolation has been mitigated to an acceptable standard. Accordingly the Applicant's response does not demonstrate that the Application includes a comprehensive cumulative assessment of the proposal in their known and foreseeable context.	It is notable that the review of LionLink did not necessitate a change to the assessments in the EIA.
10	Introduction	The SEAS submission referred to conclusions reached by the Examining Authority during the East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO examinations as evidence that the Friston–Saxmundham area has already been recognised as experiencing substantial cumulative effects from major energy infrastructure. SEAS did not suggest that those passages should be treated as determinative for the present application. Rather, they were cited to demonstrate that this location has already been identified through the planning process as highly sensitive to the cumulative delivery of multiple large infrastructure schemes. In that context, the central point raised by SEAS is that the addition of further nationally significant infrastructure projects in the same location requires a comprehensive and integrated cumulative assessment capable of evaluating the combined implications of that concentration of development. The Applicant's response does not address that argument. Instead it simply repeats the assertion that the cumulative effects assessment undertaken is compliant with policy, the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and relevant guidance. A general assertion of compliance does not address the substantive concern raised by SEAS as to whether the Environmental Statement actually evaluates the cumulative implications of further infrastructure development in a location already identified as experiencing substantial cumulative effects. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unresolved.	See response above.
12	Multiple overlapping NSIPs have now been supplemented by yet further overlapping NSIPs, and other projects.	SEAS' submission did not suggest that the Applicant should speculate about the detailed design of other projects. Rather, the concern raised was that the cumulative assessment fails to identify and assemble the full suite of overlapping developments affecting the same locality. As set out in REP3-140, evidence presented by the Applicant's own professional witnesses acknowledges that additional developments exist beyond those included in the cumulative assessment, with Mr Ellam noting that "numerous other smaller developments aren't included". This concern is not addressed by referring to the availability of detailed project information. The issue raised by SEAS is structural: where projects are excluded from the cumulative framework on the basis that insufficient detail is available, the cumulative assessment will	See response above.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		systematically underestimate the scale and concentration of development affecting the area. Identifying the existence of additional overlapping schemes is necessary in order to understand the evolving cumulative context, even where detailed design information is not yet available. The Applicant's response therefore does not address the concern raised by SEAS that the cumulative assessment fails to assemble the full suite of overlapping developments required to evaluate cumulative effects in accordance with policy and the EIA framework.	
17	Multiple overlapping NSIPs have now been supplemented by yet further overlapping NSIPs, and other projects.	The Applicant's response confirms the concern raised by SEAS. SEAS' point was that the Application is currently being examined on the basis of an incomplete cumulative picture. The Applicant now confirms that it is reviewing planning information to identify additional developments and updated project information, and that the results of this review will be submitted at Deadline 5. This acknowledgement indicates that the cumulative context is still evolving and that the applicationstage cumulative assessment presented in APP-060 does not yet represent a settled or complete assessment of cumulative effects. The Applicant's response therefore does not address SEAS' point that the Proposals are presently being examined against an incomplete cumulative framework.	It is unclear why this is a basis for criticising the Applicant's approach to EIA.
21	Breakdown of additional conflicting NSIPs, plus additional Housing and Major Road projects: Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage (SWRTS) NSIP.	SEAS' submission did not suggest that the Applicant should speculate about detailed design information for other schemes. Rather, the concern raised was that the cumulative framework for the Application fails to assemble and evaluate the full range of overlapping NSIPs and other major projects affecting the area. The Applicant refers to LionLink and the Helios Energy Solar Park as examples of schemes where limited information may constrain detailed cumulative assessment. However, the existence of these projects, and their potential contribution to the evolving concentration of major infrastructure in the locality, is not in dispute. Identifying such schemes within a coherent cumulative framework is necessary in order to understand the cumulative context, even where detailed modelling may not yet be possible. In addition, further project information for LionLink is now available following publication of the LionLink Preliminary Environmental Information Report in January 2026. The Examining Authority has therefore required the Applicant to update the Sea Link cumulative impact assessment to reflect this information (EV6-033 Action Point 107). This reinforces SEAS' point that the cumulative context continues to evolve and cannot be addressed solely by reliance on the application-stage cumulative assessment. The Applicant's reliance on Planning Inspectorate guidance and the judgment in <i>SASES v Secretary of State</i> does not resolve this issue. That judgment addressed circumstances where extremely limited information was available for the projects in question. The concern raised by SEAS is different: that the cumulative framework for the Application does not adequately reflect the known and evolving suite of overlapping infrastructure proposals affecting the area.	The Applicant has, as SEAS observes, explained on several occasions why the selection of projects to be assessed for cumulative impacts follows best practice, law, and guidance. The Applicant has followed the ExA's guidance on further assessment. The Applicant does not agree with SEAS' proposed approach to EIA.
25	Helios Energy (Solar) Park NSIP	The Applicant's response simply refers back to its answer to point 21 and therefore does not address the concern raised by SEAS in relation to the Helios Energy (Solar) Park NSIP. As explained in response to point 21 above, the issue raised by SEAS is not whether detailed	See responses above as to the Applicant's approach to identifying projects suitable for cumulative impact assessment.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		cumulative modelling can be undertaken where limited project information exists, but whether the cumulative framework for the Application properly reflects the known and evolving suite of overlapping NSIPs and major projects affecting the area. The existence of the Helios Energy (Solar) Park proposal is part of that evolving cumulative context. Simply referring to Planning Inspectorate guidance and deferring consideration on the basis that project details are limited does not demonstrate that the Application includes a coherent and policy-compliant cumulative assessment of the cumulative infrastructure context in which the Proposed Project would be delivered.	
27	Suffolk County Council Highways A12 improvements.	SEAS identified the Suffolk County Council A12 improvement scheme as a defined project that alters the cumulative context in which the Proposed Project would be delivered. The issue raised was whether this scheme has been incorporated into the cumulative assessment framework for the Application. The Applicant's response instead focuses on a limited traffic comparison, suggesting that the construction peak for the A12 works would not coincide with the peak construction period for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme and that forecast traffic increases would be modest. This does not address the concern raised by SEAS. The question is not solely whether peak traffic flows coincide, but whether the existence of the scheme has been properly incorporated into the cumulative assessment of overlapping infrastructure and construction activity affecting the same area. In addition, reliance on the absence of exact peak overlap does not address the potential for sequential or partially overlapping construction activity to affect communities and infrastructure over extended periods. As noted in previous SEAS submissions, cumulative effects may arise from the combined duration and concentration of infrastructure works rather than from a single coincident peak. The Applicant's response therefore does not demonstrate that the A12 improvement scheme has been incorporated into a coherent cumulative framework for the assessment of the Proposed Project.	The Applicant's analysis referred to by SEAS, that the traffic impacts of the A12 Improvements and the Proposed Project will largely materialise at different and mutually exclusive times, is a reasonable and relevant consideration in assessing the cumulative impacts of these schemes on traffic and transport.
41	The South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood (SSGN)	The Applicant's response confirms the concern raised by SEAS. SEAS identified the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood as a defined development in the same locality that has the potential to interact with the Proposed Project and therefore materially alters the cumulative context. The Applicant's response does not explain how this scheme has been incorporated into the cumulative framework for the Application. Instead, the Applicant states that it is reviewing planning information and will identify whether updated information changes the findings of the existing cumulative effects assessment at Deadline 5. This acknowledgement indicates that the cumulative project list and assessment remain under review during the course of the Examination. The reliance on the application-stage cumulative assessment presented in the Environmental Statement cumulative chapter [APP-060] therefore does not demonstrate that the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood has been incorporated into a settled and coherent cumulative assessment for the Proposed Project.	The SSGN was factored into the cumulative impact assessment – see [APP-059]. It remains a Tier 3 development because it is a planning allocation. This means that other than knowing the proposed location there is absolutely no information about the potential effects any development that may come forward. As such it is impracticable to undertake any quantified assessment above and beyond the assessment already provided in [APP-059].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
46-47	41-housing development at Benhall next to the 9 houses already situated at Shotts Meadow.	The Applicant provides no response to this point, and therefore does not address SEAS' concern that the consented housing development at Benhall alters the local and cumulative context of the proposed Bridge works.	SEAS' position was that the Applicant "does not assess how this additional development alters the local and cumulative context at Benhall, nor how its interaction with the proposed Bridge works will be experienced". The Applicant has explained in its response to ESC that noise and vibration monitoring and controls will be followed in respect of works at Benhall, and that such works would be "very limited" (see [REP4-089] at §5.15 and §5.43)
53-54	NG ESO (now NESO) Connections Tec Register and Interconnector Register	SEAS referred to the NESO Connections and Interconnector Registers as evidence of additional nationally significant infrastructure proposals affecting the same network geography and therefore forming part of the evolving cumulative context. The point raised was not that detailed cumulative modelling should be undertaken in the absence of sufficient project information, but that such projects must be recognised within the cumulative framework used to understand the overall infrastructure landscape. Reliance on the Lang J judgment regarding detailed cumulative assessment does not address this concern.	That a project appears on the NESO Register does not mean that the project is suitable for inclusion in the cumulative impact assessment. It does not necessarily show that sufficient information is available about the project to incorporate it into a cumulative impact assessment in the manner SEAS proposes.
55	NG ESO (now NESO) Connections Tec Register and Interconnector Register	SEAS' submission was that cumulative assessment with consented projects such as EA1N, EA2 and Sizewell C, and with the now-defined LionLink project, is capable of being undertaken as part of the present Application rather than deferred to future projects. The Applicant refers again to the cumulative assessment presented in the Environmental Statement cumulative chapter [APP-060] and confirms that it is now reviewing the additional information published for LionLink on 13 January 2026. This acknowledgement indicates that the cumulative context continues to evolve and that the application stage assessment relied upon by the Applicant was undertaken before this further information became available. The response therefore does not demonstrate that the Application is supported by a comprehensive and up-to-date cumulative impact assessment of the known infrastructure proposals affecting the area.	See responses on LionLink above.
57-60	Lime Tree Energy Park -developer BNRG Langmead Ltd Red House Farm – developer Cambridge Power Ltd Manor Farm – developer Qair Renewables UK Ltd	SEAS' submission was that a lawful cumulative assessment begins with accurate identification of the relevant projects forming part of the cumulative context. Using publicly available NESO Connections and Interconnector Registers, SEAS identified additional overlapping and sequential schemes which were not reflected in the cumulative project scope presented with the Application. The Applicant does not dispute the existence of these projects but instead states that the cumulative assessment represents a point-in-time exercise based on the information available when the Environmental Statement was prepared and that the project list is now being reviewed. This confirms the concern raised by SEAS that the cumulative framework relied upon in the Application does not reflect the full and evolving project landscape. The Applicant also refers to the absence of sufficient information to undertake detailed cumulative modelling. SEAS' point is not that detailed stage-four modelling must be undertaken for every project listed on the NESO registers, but that the cumulative framework must first identify the full suite of overlapping infrastructure proposals affecting the area. Failure to identify these projects within the cumulative scope evidences an incomplete cumulative framework. The Applicant's response therefore does not address SEAS' concern that the cumulative assessment presented in the Application fails to capture the full set of overlapping and sequential infrastructure proposals affecting the area.	See the Applicant's comments on the projects included above.
65	Lime Tree Energy Park -developer BNRG Langmead	The Applicant's response does not address the point raised by SEAS. SEAS' submission was that the cumulative project information presented in the InterProject Cumulative Effects Short List [APP-093] represents a static catalogue prepared at application stage and does not provide an	As the Applicant's approach to LionLink reflects, it has taken into consideration where relevant and appropriate evolving information about relevant schemes.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Ltd Red House Farm – developer Cambridge Power Ltd Manor Farm – developer Qair Renewables UK Ltd	integrated, up-to-date picture of how multiple infrastructure schemes overlap geographically and temporally in the same communities. The Applicant's response confirms that the cumulative project list is now being reviewed and that updated information will be submitted at Deadline 5. This acknowledgement supports SEAS' concern that the cumulative framework relied upon in the Application does not reflect the full and evolving project landscape identified during the Examination. The Applicant also refers to the absence of sufficient information to undertake detailed cumulative modelling for schemes such as the Suffolk Water Recycling Transfer Scheme (SWRTS). SEAS' point is not that detailed modelling must be undertaken where information is limited, but that the cumulative framework must recognise the existence of such schemes in order to understand the overall concentration of infrastructure proposals affecting the area. Accordingly, the Applicant's response does not address SEAS' concern that the cumulative assessment presented in the Application fails to provide a coherent and up-to-date cumulative picture of the infrastructure proposals affecting the locality.	
SEAS Rebuttals of Applicant's comments (REP4-236 Table 3.2) on SEAS late Deadline 3 submission [REP3-140] – InterProject Cumulative Effects			
1	Introduction	The Applicant's response does not engage with the substance of SEAS' point. The references to REP4-083, REP4-094 and REP4-086 simply restate the Applicant's position on the adequacy of the LVIA; they do not address the concerns raised in RR-5210 regarding the understatement of cumulative landscape and visual effects and the structural limitations of the cumulative assessment. Moreover, following ISH2 the Examining Authority required the Applicant to provide further information relating to cumulative effects and visualisation material (EV6-033). The Applicant's assertion that the matter has already been addressed "in full" is therefore premature while additional cumulative assessment material remains to be submitted and examined.	AP107 was complied with. A review of the updated information published by NGV for the LionLink project on 13 January 2026 has been completed and are reported in Appendix C to [REP5-126] . The newly published information has not changed any of the assessment findings included in the original cumulative assessments contained in: 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effect [APP-060] 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [APP-290] 6.9 Water Framework Directive Assessment [APP-293] 6.11 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment [APP-296].
2	Introduction	The Applicant's response refers to the material provided in Appendix A of REP4-086. However, the figures provided do not resolve the issue raised by SEAS. The visualisations consist of simplified block models which do not include key design components such as electrical equipment, structures, overhead wirescapes or landscape mitigation, and do not provide the level of detail necessary to assess cumulative landscape and visual effects. These shortcomings prevent a meaningful assessment of how the combined Sea Link and LionLink infrastructure would be experienced in the landscape. Given the scale of the proposed infrastructure and the sensitivity of the receiving landscape, this level of visualisation is not sufficient to allow a robust cumulative landscape and visual assessment.	The visualisations have been professionally prepared and are a robust and appropriate form of assessment.
8	Why cumulative visualisations / photomontages showing the LionLink converter station at Saxmundham are required.	The Applicant has not provided any response to the point raised. SEAS notes that subsequent to this exchange the Applicant provided material described as "LionLink Cumulative Visualisations" within Appendix A of REP4-086. The Examining Authority has required the Applicant to review and update its cumulative effects assessment in light of further LionLink project information (EV6-033 Action Point 107), and the adequacy of cumulative visual assessment therefore remains dependent on the further material to be submitted in response to that request.	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
9	N/A	The Applicant's reference to AP125 in REP4-086 does not address the point raised by SEAS. The response indicates that any wider landscape design or cumulative mitigation for the co-located Sea Link and LionLink infrastructure would "more readily be identified and secured by LionLink". LionLink is a separate project which has not yet been consented and may not proceed. It cannot therefore be relied upon to secure mitigation for impacts arising from the Proposed Development. Deferring mitigation for a known cumulative infrastructure cluster to a future and uncertain project does not demonstrate that the cumulative effects of the co-located converter stations have been robustly assessed or mitigated within this Application.	It is reasonable to consider that LionLink, which is an inchoate scheme, will have more scope to adapt to provide mitigations of cumulative impacts between the projects, than the Proposed Project which is at a more advanced stage. If LionLink does not proceed then it is unclear how it could occasion cumulative impacts that require mitigation.
11-14	N/A	The Applicant's response does not engage with the point raised by SEAS. The issue identified by SEAS was that the Applicant had sufficient indicative information available at application stage and during the PEIR process to produce meaningful cumulative visualisations but declined to do so, leaving a material gap in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The response instead refers to cumulative visualisations now provided in Appendix A of REP4-086 following the Examining Authority's request at ISH2 (AP109) – see point 2 above. The provision of these late-stage visualisations does not address SEAS' point that the necessary information to produce cumulative visual material was available earlier in the assessment process. Furthermore, the Examining Authority has required the Applicant to update cumulative assessments and related material in light of the additional information now available for LionLink (AP107). The adequacy of the cumulative visual assessment therefore remains subject to further work to be submitted at Deadline 5.	It is not clear why the timing of the visualisations undermines their robustness or evidential value.
15	N/A	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	As SEAS notes in the introduction to [REP3-139], the Applicant's position is that it had previously responded to this point. The Applicant refers to that response accordingly. That is why the table in SEAS' representation did not include this point.
17-18	N/A	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.
20	N/A	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.
22	N/A	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.
23-26	Misleading public consultation and visual evidence	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.
N/A	N/A	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.
27-29	Landscape and visual harm from collocated infrastructure	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
37-40	Conclusion	No response is provided to this point. The concern raised by SEAS therefore remains unaddressed.	See above.

Table 19.13 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-149]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
SEAS Rebuttals of Applicant's comments (REP4-236 Table 3.3) on SEAS late Deadline 3 submission [REP3-139]			
N/A	Introduction	This submission provides SEAS response to the Applicant’s comments in REP4-236 on SEAS late Deadline 3 submission (REP3-139) concerning tourism and socio-economic impacts. In multiple instances the Applicant’s response does not address the specific issue raised by SEAS but instead refers back to earlier submissions, including the Environmental Statement Socio-Economics and Tourism Assessment chapter (REP1A-005) and related documents, without revisiting the underlying assumptions of the assessment. Across a number of tourism and socio-economic issues the Applicant’s assessment relies on assumptions for which the underlying data or methodology is not fully explained. In such circumstances it is not appropriate to rely on those assumptions to support a conclusion that no significant adverse effects are anticipated. Where uncertainty exists, the EIA assessment should test a reasonable worst-case scenario rather than assume that effects will be negligible. Clarification of the underlying data and assumptions is therefore necessary. The rebuttals set out below therefore focus on whether the Applicant’s responses substantively address the points raised during the Examination and whether the conclusions relied upon remain supported in light of the issues identified by SEAS and the further clarification requested by the Examining Authority. The tourism economy of the Suffolk coast is closely tied to the distinctive qualities of the Aldeburgh area. Aldeburgh in particular combines an unspoilt coastal setting, historic townscape and internationally recognised arts culture centred on the Aldeburgh Festival and Snape Maltings. Visitors are drawn by the experience of tranquillity, landscape character and cultural identity of the area rather than by conventional resort infrastructure. This makes for high-quality tourism demand which is particularly sensitive to changes in landscape character, tranquillity of the local environment and visitor experience. SEAS therefore urges the Examining Authority to reiterate the need for the Applicant to	The Applicant’s responses below address each of the points raised in the introduction section of the SEAS submission.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		assess these location-specific qualities accurately when evaluating potential tourism effects. Further work with the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation (DMO), including updated visitor perception research (quantitative attitudinal study), would assist in understanding how the cumulative infrastructure proposals affecting the Suffolk coast may influence visitor behaviour and destination image. This further research is fundamental, otherwise the scale of risk and their significant adverse cumulative effects attached to these proposals, cannot be properly assessed. Evidence from local tourism businesses also indicates that concerns about the concentration of infrastructure proposals are already affecting visitor booking behaviour, reinforcing the importance of properly evaluating destination image and visitor perception.	
N/A	Tourism & Snape Maltings	The Applicant's response refers to the 500 m study area used in the Environmental Statement (REP1A-005) and to conclusions from the traffic severance assessment. However, SEAS' point relates to potential deterrence of visitors arising from disruption to road access and travel experience. Neither the 500 m proximity threshold used in REP1A-005 nor the traffic severance assessment in APP-054 evaluates tourism demand or visitor behaviour. The response therefore does not address the issue raised.	The Applicant has provided detailed response on this matter regarding visitor perception and tourism impacts within Table 1.4 of Application Document 9.111 Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]. This addresses the matters raised in full.
12	Tourism & Snape Maltings	The Applicant refers to the cumulative assessment in APP-060 and to its response to ExQ1 1SERT1 in REP3-069 as addressing the potential impact of the Proposed Project on tranquillity, landscape and tourism. However, neither document evaluates the issue raised by SEAS, which concerns the potential for prolonged and cumulative infrastructure development to alter the image and perception of the Suffolk coastal tourism destination. APP-060 assesses cumulative landscape, visual and socio-economic effects but does not examine how sustained industrialisation of the landscape may influence visitor behaviour or tourism demand. Similarly, the response to 1SERT1 in REP3-069 acknowledges adverse and in places significant localised landscape effects, including perceptual aspects such as tranquillity, but does not evaluate how those effects—particularly when experienced over an extended construction period and alongside other infrastructure schemes—may affect the attractiveness of the area as a tourism destination. Instead, the response relies largely on a statement that tourism is not expected to be materially affected, supported by reference to comparator projects, rather than providing a location specific assessment of	The Applicant has provided detailed response on this matter regarding visitor perception and tourism impacts within Table 1.4 of Application Document 9.111 Applicant's Response to Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation and Health and wellbeing Submissions [REP4-100]. In addition, the Applicant is committed to a proportionate and responsive approach. Through REAC commitments SE04 and SE05 [APP5-116], updated at Deadline 6, the Applicant will maintain ongoing engagement with tourism stakeholders and monitor worker accommodation patterns.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		potential impacts on destination image, visitor perception or tourism demand. The issue raised by SEAS is therefore not addressed. Evidence from local tourism businesses also indicates that concerns about the concentration of infrastructure proposals are already affecting visitor booking behaviour, reinforcing the importance of properly evaluating destination image and visitor perception.	
16	Tourism & Snape Maltings	The Applicant relies on comparator evidence presented in REP3-065, drawing on experience from other NSIPs including Sizewell B and Hinkley Point C. However, those projects are not demonstrated to be analogous to the circumstances of the Suffolk coast. In particular, they do not replicate the combination of a fragile tourism destination, a cluster of overlapping NSIPs, and a prolonged period of cumulative infrastructure construction affecting the same coastal area. The reliance on Hinkley Point C as a comparator is also problematic. That project is located in a different tourism context and was delivered as a largely single infrastructure scheme rather than as part of a cluster of overlapping NSIPs. The Suffolk coast, by contrast, faces several concurrent infrastructure projects affecting a relatively small tourism-dependent landscape centred on destinations such as Aldeburgh, Thorpeness and Snape Maltings. These circumstances are therefore not directly comparable. The Applicant also argues that these comparator schemes are larger than the Proposed Project and therefore represent a conservative benchmark. However, scale alone does not address the cumulative effects arising from multiple overlapping developments in the same area. With respect to the BVA research, the Applicant highlights that the majority of respondents stated that the developments would make no difference to their likelihood of visiting. However, the research also identified a proportion of visitors who indicated that they may be discouraged from returning. The potential implications of such responses for visitor behaviour and local tourism businesses are not evaluated in the Applicant's response.	The Applicant's position has been addressed previously. The Applicant is of the view that the cumulative impacts will not have a significant effect on tourism.
21	The Proposals and the Cumulative threat	The Applicant refers to earlier responses in REP3-064 and REP2-014 and to the cumulative traffic assessment in APP-060. However, these references do not address the specific issue raised by SEAS, which concerns the use of January–February traffic conditions as the baseline for modelling in a highly seasonal tourism area. While APP-060 assumes that the construction peaks of major	The Applicant has previously responded to these points within Table 2.57 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014], as well as within Table 30.1 of Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064]. The Applicant's latest position relating to the junction modelling and baseline survey data is also set out within their response to Point 11(1) in Table 19.3 above. In summary, the junction modelling

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		projects could overlap, the reliability of the cumulative traffic assessment still depends on the underlying baseline traffic data used in the modelling. SEAS has previously identified that seasonal traffic levels in the area increase significantly during the visitor season. The Applicant's response does not explain why a winter baseline is appropriate in a location where traffic conditions are materially different during peak tourism periods. The reliance on standard NSIP methodology therefore does not address the question of whether the modelling baseline adequately reflects the conditions experienced on the local road network during periods of highest visitor activity.	within Suffolk includes a Sensitivity Test (representing a 21% uplift to the Baseline survey data), to consider potentially higher Baseline traffic flows at other times of the year driven by tourism related traffic peaks in summer months. The junction modelling also includes scenarios with and without cumulative traffic. Therefore, the Applicant considers this matter to have been fully addressed. In terms of the cumulative traffic and transport assessment, extensive work has been carried out on reviewing potential cumulative traffic and transport effects within Suffolk including within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] and Application Document 9.26 Traffic & Transport Cumulative Assessment (Suffolk) [REP1-110]. The traffic and transport cumulative assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060] concluded that no significant cumulative effects were likely on traffic and transport receptors when the Proposed Project is considered alongside other developments. Further discussions have since been held with SCC Highways in January and February 2026, and further information has been provided as part of Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. Further to the above, the Applicant has reviewed the latest construction traffic forecasts available for East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm within their Construction Traffic Management Plan (dated November 2025) and for LionLink Offshore Interconnector within their PEI Report (dated January 2026). This latest information has not resulted in any changes to the previous worst-case traffic parameters/ assumptions that were adopted for the cumulative assessment of these schemes. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment in Suffolk therefore remains to be based on the eight cumulative schemes which were screened in and assessed within Application Document 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. This includes peak construction trips for five schemes in combination with operational trips for three schemes, with the assumption that the peak construction phases of the schemes under construction would all directly overlap with the peak construction phase of the Proposed Project. The cumulative assessment includes the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) of Sizewell C, East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm, East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm and LionLink Offshore Interconnector. The Traffic and Transport cumulative assessment therefore remains to be robust and has informed the junction capacity modelling submitted at Deadline 6.
29	Consequences for Tourism and the Local Economy, and Recreation	The Applicant reiterates its conclusion that there will be no significant inter-project cumulative socio-economic effects, citing	The Applicant has provided detailed response regarding accommodation capacity within both Application Document 9.117 Applicant's Response to AP104 from Issue Specific Hearing 2,

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		the accommodation assessment in REP1A-005 and the cumulative assessment in APP-060. However, the response does not address the specific mechanism of impact raised by SEAS (including in REP4-158), namely the potential displacement of tourism accommodation and pressure on the private rental sector arising from the combined workforce of multiple concurrent NSIPs. The Applicant refers to its further submission responding to AP104 (REP4-237). While this document provides additional analysis, it does not materially change the underlying conclusion. The analysis assumes that construction workers can be accommodated within a 60-minute drive-time area and aggregates accommodation capacity across a very wide geography. Such an approach does not address the potential for localised effects in coastal settlements where tourism activity is concentrated, including Aldeburgh, Thorpeness and Southwold, which the Applicant itself recognises as locations where accommodation constraints could arise. The additional analysis also relies heavily on the availability of private rental accommodation, which represents the overwhelming majority of the accommodation capacity assumed in the assessment. The assessment applies national vacancy rates for the private rental sector and assumes that a proportion of this stock would be available for construction workers. However, the English Housing Survey data used for this purpose is national-level data and does not provide evidence of vacancy levels in the Suffolk coastal housing market. The response therefore does not demonstrate that the assumed rental availability reflects conditions in the local housing market. Independent review of the Applicant's accommodation assessment commissioned by East Suffolk Council has also identified inconsistencies in the accommodation data and a lack of transparency in the underlying datasets and assumptions (REP4-184). The Applicant also states that accommodation demand from the Proposed Project represents a relatively small proportion of cumulative demand and that the majority of accommodation pressure would arise from other schemes, particularly Sizewell C.	and Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions (please refer to 2SERT3). Additionally, the Applicant has provided response to the independent review of the Applicant's accommodation assessment commissioned by East Suffolk Council within 2SERT1 of Application Document 9.123. Regarding comments on the use of English Housing Survey (EHS) data at a national level, the Applicant maintains that this approach has been adopted to ensure robustness. The EHS is a large, nationally representative survey (approximately 13,000 households annually), supported by well-established sampling and weighting methodologies. Official technical guidance notes that estimates derived from small sample sizes should be treated as indicative only, implying reduced reliability at regional and particularly local scales. Accordingly, national-level data is less sensitive to sampling variability and local anomalies, providing a more stable and statistically robust benchmark. The use of national data therefore ensures a more reliable and defensible evidence base for the assessment, avoiding undue reliance on less robust regional estimates. This approach is consistent with established practice in environmental assessments, particularly where local data is limited, incomplete, or subject to significant uncertainty. Furthermore, national vacancy rates have been considered over a ten-year trajectory, demonstrating a consistent range of approximately 10% to 11% between 2013 and 2025. This stability further supports the robustness of the national dataset as an appropriate basis for assessment. In addition, regarding concerns over impacts on coastal settlements where tourism activity is concentrated, including Aldeburgh, Thorpeness and Southwold, the Applicant has set out REAC commitments SE04 and SE05 [APP5-116, updated at Deadline 6], which provides a proportionate and responsive approach to maintaining ongoing engagement with tourism stakeholders and monitor worker accommodation patterns. Overall, the Applicant maintains the view that the cumulative impacts will not have a significant effect on tourism.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		However, the issue raised by SEAS concerns the combined effect of several concurrent infrastructure projects on the local economy and tourism sector. The fact that accommodation demand is shared across multiple projects does not reduce the potential for cumulative displacement of tourism accommodation or pressure on local housing supply. Finally, the Applicant proposes monitoring where workers are staying and considering potential measures if constraints arise. While this commitment is noted, monitoring during construction does not substitute for a robust assessment of impacts prior to consent being granted. The reliance on post-consent monitoring indicates that the Applicant recognises the possibility of accommodation constraints, yet the assessment continues to conclude that no significant cumulative effects are anticipated. In summary, the Applicant's additional submission REP4-237 was requested by ExA to clarify the worst-case level of accommodation demand arising from cumulative construction workforces. It does not address the core issue raised by SEAS. The analysis aggregates accommodation capacity across a large study area, relies on national rental vacancy assumptions rather than local market data, and does not evaluate the potential displacement of tourism accommodation or pressure on the coastal housing market arising from cumulative construction workforces. The basis for concluding that there will be no significant cumulative socio-economic effects therefore remains unsubstantiated.	
36-38	Conclusions	The Applicant states that a full assessment of socio-economic, recreation and tourism effects has been undertaken within REP1A-005 and that the methodology adopted is consistent with comparable NSIPs. However, the concern raised by SEAS is not whether an assessment has been undertaken, but whether the assumptions and methodology used remain appropriate in light of issues raised during the Examination. As recorded in previous SEAS submissions, including the ISH2 Written Representation (REP4-158), a number of aspects of the Applicant's assessment have been questioned during the Examination. The Examining Authority has subsequently sought further clarification on accommodation impacts through Action Point 104 (EV6-033), to which the Applicant responded in REP4-237, and has also requested additional information on accommodation capacity and cumulative demand through ExQ2 (PD-021).	The Applicant's responses above address each of the points raised in the conclusion section of the SEAS submission.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The Applicant refers to the Visitor and Tourism Assessment Technical Note (REP3-065). However, that document largely reviews experience from other NSIPs and reiterates the conclusions of the Environmental Statement rather than revisiting the underlying assumptions of the assessment for the Proposed Project. The continued reliance on the original assessment and methodology, without substantive revision in light of issues raised during the Examination, means that the adequacy of the Applicant's conclusions on tourism and socio-economic impacts remains in question.	

Table 19.14 Applicant's Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-150]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Summary of outstanding Traffic and Transport Issues following ISH2 and ExQ2			
1	Introduction	SEAS and its expert advisors have reviewed the adequacy of responses from the Applicant at Deadline 4 to issues raised at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (including the summary [REP4-159] of matters raised by SEAS at that hearing) and to the Examining Authority's questions to the Applicant in ExQ2. The relevant documents are: REP4-039; REP4-061; REP4-083; REP4-085; REP4-086; REP4-099; REP4-101; REP4-236 The last of these documents [REP4-236] contains at table 3.4 the Applicant's principal commentary on our own submissions.	Noted.
2	Late and selective responses from the Applicant.	A number of the key points made in previous representations continue to be ignored and remain unaddressed. This includes the validity of the base survey data, the impact of seasonality, road safety impacts and the lack of physical mitigation. The applicant continues to ignore these concerns, and whilst the Applicant acknowledged at ISH2 the need to carry out detailed junction modelling and consider the cumulative impacts further, it is still of significant concern that such fundamental issues in respect to traffic and transportation have not yet been duly considered.	The Applicant considers that its approach to transport and traffic issues has been robust and sufficient.
3.1	Junction modelling – incomplete scope	In [REP4-086] the Applicant notes the proposed scope of junction modelling, restricting the scope to three junctions (A12/B1121, A1094/B1121, A1094/ B1069), claimed to be the '<i>...key junctions which will be used by construction traffic associated with the Proposed Project...</i>' This ignores the key A12/A1094 junction, which SEAS specifically suggested be included in this exercise.	AP62 requires the Applicant to liaise with County Councils, not SEAS, as to the junction modelling, which it has done. The scope of the traffic and transport assessment had been agreed with local authorities. Per the ExA's action point, further study is

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
.3.2	Junction modelling – incomplete scope	The selection of ‘affected’ junctions in any case seem to be arbitrarily based on the requests of Suffolk County Council, rather than a considered scoping and trip generation exercise, demonstrating the potential impacts at the numerous other junctions within the study area. There are potentially other junctions that are materially affected that have still not been duly considered.	being undertaken in conjunction with those authorities. That is a robust approach to assessing traffic and transport impacts.
4.1	Junction modelling – cumulative impact, journey time analysis	In AP61 and AP62 [EV6-033], it is noted that ‘ <i>The Applicant has received an updated list of additional cumulative schemes for consideration from both KCC Highways and SCC Highways. In addition to this, the Applicant is undertaking a review of the cumulativeproject long list.</i> ’ - and that the work considering the cumulative impacts of developmentwill be redone and submitted at Deadline 5. It is of considerable concern that the cumulative impacts of development are being re-assessed at this stage. We also note that the work to date presented in this area is simply the presentation of forecasted traffic flows. There was repeated reference at the ISH to ‘ <i>modelling</i> ’ of cumulative impacts. It should be noted that there has been no detailed modelling of cumulative impacts , merely reports on the levels of traffic flow.	
4.2	Junction modelling – cumulative impact, journey time analysis	In AP62, reference is made to the request, at the ISH from various parties, for journey time analysis . The NGET response implies that this will be considered in the very limited junction modelling, the applicant is now proposing to undertake. This is not an adequate response to the issue raised, nor what was meant by the original request; it will only consider queuing time at the approaches to the three locations identified for junction modelling across the entire study area.	AP62 requires the Applicant and the local authorities to consider “whether information regarding predicted journey time analysis is required”. The wording of the Action Point is clear.
5	Benhall Bridge	We have reviewed the CTMP and other submissions in respect to Benhall Bridge, and make the following summary notes:	The Applicant’s assessment is a worst case scenario of a 28 day closure of the B1121, to account for a potential requirement from Network Rail of limiting works on the deck of the bridge to possessions only, however the Applicant would look to further mitigate this duration through temporary works design and phasing of the remedial works (see p.10 of the Crossing Feasibility Study).
5.1	Benhall Bridge	The applicant concludes a maximum of 28 days would be required to repair the bridge to satisfactory standards. Despite the clear need for inspections and assessment to assess the repair work required. It seems highly unlikely that a construction programme can be identified when the works haven’t been identified.	
5.2	Benhall Bridge	Similarly, NGET acknowledge that possessions are completely at the discretion of Network Rail and that the applicant will have no control over that – this adds substantially to the uncertainty of bridge closures for longer periods of time. Alternative options to build a mini bridge alongside it are clouded with similar uncertainties.	
5.3	Benhall Bridge	In this context, our advisors have reviewed the Crossing feasibility study and Suffolk County Council’s post CAH1 hearing submission on alternative access routes should the Benhall route not be	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		feasible. The council's preference is for a northern route from the B1122.	
5.4	Benhall Bridge	As with much of the transport evidence base to date, there has not yet been a comprehensive assessment and detailed analysis of options considered. If the Benhall Bridge option is not feasible, then once again a full, detailed and timely analysis of other options is absolutely essential.	The Applicant considers its Crossing Feasibility Study to be a sufficient and detailed analysis.

Table 19.15 Applicant’s Comments on the SEAS Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-151]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		SEAS welcomes the Applicant’s acknowledgement that bank holidays and associated weekends should not normally be worked at the converter station sites. However, the proposed controls remain materially weaker than those already secured for comparable infrastructure in the area. For the nearby Friston/Kiln Lane substation, construction hours were restricted to 07:00 19:00 Monday–Friday and 07:00–13:00 Saturday, with no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays. SEAS considers that the same standard should apply to the proposed converter station, given its similar scale, duration, and proximity to residential communities. Furthermore, these working hour controls should apply across all elements of the project, not solely the converter station sites. Even where works are described as “transient”, such as cabling operations, these activities frequently occur in close proximity to villages, residential properties, and community receptors, and can therefore cause significant disturbance. Periods of predictable respite are an important component of safeguarding community health, wellbeing, and the local visitor economy. The assertion that no mitigation is required does not adequately reflect the cumulative pressures already highlighted within the Examination SEAS therefore considers that Requirement 7 should adopt the Friston precedent and apply consistent working hour limits to all project works, ensuring predictable periods of respite for communities already facing cumulative impacts from multiple infrastructure schemes in the area.	The Applicant acknowledges concerns regarding working hours but would seek to emphasise that the proposed hours are intended to provide flexibility to carry out works when and where needed. The Applicant requires the necessary flexibility to allow contractors to programme and phase their works, and to accommodate unforeseen construction phase issues without elements of the project being pushed onto the critical path. It is also important that construction activities that are less likely to affect communities, for example works within the superstructure of a converter station building, are not onerously restricted. The Applicant has significantly limited core hours in response to concerns raised by local authorities and in response to AP106 – see for example p.58 of [REP4-086].

20. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Thanet District Council

20.1 Introduction

- 20.1.1
- Table 20.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Thanet District Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-160].
- 20.1.2
- Table 20.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Thanet District Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-161].
- 20.1.3
- Table 20.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Thanet District Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-162].
- 20.1.4
- The Applicant’s has responded to Thanet District Council Deadline 5 Response [REP5-207] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 20.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Thanet District Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-160]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Ecology and Biodiversity			
1.1.3	Nemo Link	TDC confirmed that there are no conditions remaining to be discharged with regard to Nemo Link and our comments with regard to the implications of the previous cable works outlined in REP3-103 ExQ1P2 remain the same.	This response is noted.
1.1.4	Access to and use of Hoverport	TDC advised that there were concerns regarding the structural integrity of the hoverport and whether the proposed matting (trackway) would provide sufficient structural support and this may be undermined by voids below the concrete slabs. TDC requests that ground-penetrating radar surveys are undertaken of the hoverport and that this should be secured through the REAC.	Kent Onshore Chapter 5 Geology and Hydrogeology fAPP-065) for the Sea Link project acknowledges that the hoverport represents a potential source of contamination but in the context that the hoverport site is only proposed for access and that there will be no ground disturbance from the project, has concluded (in the change application documents) that it does not represent a likely significant effect. This is based on the presence of hardstanding across the hoverport, which overlies any made ground and potential sources of contamination. The Project is seeking to prevent any interactions with potential contamination – and is committed to undertaking a Structural Integrity Assessment of the hardstanding at the hoverport to ensure it is suitable for the limited construction and maintenance access proposed. Further mitigation such as the deployment of track matting will be used as appropriate. Maintaining the structural integrity of the hardstanding will prevent exposure of any potential sources of contamination (as well as protect vehicles) and therefore significant effects on the environment from contamination at the hoverport, as a result of the Project are considered unlikely.
1.1.5		Further to the oral submission, TDC would like to clarify that the potential instability of the hoverport has the potential to have an adverse effect on ecology as per the context of the discussion of this item. TDC confirmed this will be reviewed and comments submitted at Deadline 4 as follows:	Kent Onshore Chapter 5 Geology and Hydrogeology fAPP-065) for the Sea Link project acknowledges that the hoverport represents a potential source of contamination but in the context that the hoverport site is only proposed for access and that there will be no ground disturbance from the project, has concluded (in the change application documents) that it does not represent a likely significant effect. This is based on the presence of hardstanding across the
1.1.6		Pegwell Bay is a sensitive ecological area, designated as part of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area	

	(SPA), Ramsar site, and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is a National Nature Reserve (NNR), where any release of contaminants could have significant adverse impacts on protected habitats, species, and water quality. The former hoverport site includes a concrete pad and skirt structure historically used for hovercraft operations. The pad incorporates colliery shale as fill material, which may contain residual contaminants, including hydrocarbons from former fuel storage tanks at the site. There is therefore a risk of residual pollution within the subsurface materials.	hoverport, which overlies any made ground and potential sources of contamination. The Project is seeking to prevent any interactions with potential contamination – and is committed to undertaking a Structural Integrity Assessment of the hardstanding at the hoverport to ensure it is suitable for the limited construction and maintenance access proposed. Further mitigation such as the deployment of track matting will be used as appropriate. Maintaining the structural integrity of the hardstanding will prevent exposure of any potential sources of contamination (as well as protect vehicles) and therefore significant effects on the environment from contamination at the hoverport, as a result of the Project are considered unlikely.
1.1.7	A concrete skirt surrounds the pad preventing further release of these materials. The proposed activities involve up to 40-tonne vehicles traversing the site, crossing the edge of the concrete skirt to access the bay. This could impose significant mechanical stress on the aging concrete structure, leading to cracking, fragmentation, or breakup at the edges. TDC has previously objected to the siting of a compound at the hoverport site to protect this ecologically significant area.	There is no compound proposal at this site.
1.1.8	The primary concern is the risk of structural damage to the concrete skirt from heavy vehicle movements. Such damage could result in: • Release of Contaminated Materials: Breaching the skirt may expose and mobilize colliery shale fill, allowing it to erode or be tracked into Pegwell Bay. The shale may contain fuel residues from historical tank storage, posing a pollution risk to marine sediments, water, and biota. • Tracking of Contaminants: Vehicles exiting the pad onto the bay foreshore may transport potentially contaminated materials, exacerbating spread into the intertidal zone and potentially affecting protected species such as birds, invertebrates, and saltmarsh habitats. • Cumulative Environmental Impact: Repeated vehicle movements may accelerate degradation, leading to ongoing releases rather than isolated incidents. This is particularly concerning given the site's proximity to internationally protected wetlands, where these risks are heightened by the site's coastal location, where tidal action could rapidly disperse any released materials, making containment challenging.	Noted. As discussed in ISH2 the Applicant does not intend to track vehicles over broken concrete thus causing further damage. Aside from the environmental concerns this would also be a health and safety risk for the drivers of relevant vehicles. The Applicant has committed to undertaking a structural survey and this will identify the specific need for structures to protect the underlying concrete or to inform micro-routing of the access corridor.
1.1.9	TDC objects to the proposed activity of siting and operating up to 40-tonne vehicles on the former hoverport site, particularly involving crossings over the concrete skirt into Pegwell Bay. The potential for environmental damage outweighs the operational benefits; and alternative access methods should be considered and prioritised.	As stated at section 2.2.3 in Application Document 9.13 (C): Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Clean) [REP4-229], the need for hoverport access arises as a consequence of the HDD exit pits being located in the upper intertidal mudflats.

			Section 2.2.4 further explains that there is no alternative access from Sandwich Road or from anywhere else within the Pegwell Bay Country Park as a consequence of avoiding the lagoon and saltmarsh. Please refer to the Applicant's response to 2ECOL24 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] for the proposed control measures to which the Applicant has committed.
1.1.10		Should the Examining Authority determine that some form of site access is unavoidable, TDC recommends the imposition of the following commitments to safeguard Pegwell Bay from contamination risks caused by structural damage. These commitments emphasize prevention, monitoring, and rapid response.	Noted. These have been suggested through the Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] .
1.1.11	Controlled Access to the Bay:	Vehicles and machinery must not directly traverse the edge of the concrete skirt. Instead, access should be facilitated via engineered ramps or temporary bridging structures designed to distribute weight and prevent direct contact with the skirt. These structures must be constructed from non-contaminating materials (e.g., geotextile-reinforced matting) and approved by an independent structural engineer prior to use. The hoverport area and all access points must be pre-assessed via non-invasive surveys (e.g., ground-penetrating radar) to identify weak zones. Limit vehicle movements to designated structurally sound pathways within the apron, avoiding proximity to the bay edge by at least 5 meters unless bridged. All entry/exit points must incorporate wheel-wash facilities (non-toxic to marine environment and aquatic organisms) or decontamination zones to prevent tracking of materials from the pad into the bay. Vehicles should be inspected and cleaned before and after bay access.	Noted. These have been suggested through the Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] .
1.1.12	Ongoing Monitoring for Pollutant Release:	A monitoring program must be established, including baseline surveys of the concrete skirt integrity, subsurface materials, and bay sediments prior to commencement. Regular inspections (at least monthly, or more frequently during operational periods) should assess the skirt for cracks, erosion, or damage using non-destructive techniques such as ground-penetrating radar or visual drone surveys. Environmental monitoring should include sampling of bay water, sediments, and biota for contaminants at predefined locations, with trigger levels for action based on Environment Agency guidelines. Monitoring data must be submitted to relevant regulators (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England).	Noted. These have been suggested through the Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] .
1.1.13	Emergency Preparedness and Reporting:	An emergency response plan must be in place, detailing the agreed actions and containment measures in the event of skirt damage or material release. Any detected contamination must trigger the emergency response plan and consultation with regulators. Where required, prompt	Noted. These have been suggested through the Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] .

		remediation must be carried out, followed by habitat restoration in line with SSSI management plans. Incidents of damage to the bay or associated habitats must be reported to regulators immediately, including details of the cause, extent, and proposed remedial actions to be taken. Verification reporting to the agreed remedial actions taken must be provided to the regulators.	
1.1.14	Impact on breeding birds and vegetation cutting	With regard to Natural England's request for a full restriction covering the whole breeding bird season on tree height reduction works within the Sandwich Bay to Hackling Marshes SSSI, TDC confirmed that we have no further comments during the hearing and would review this position in writing at Deadline 4. Upon further review of the matter, TDC supports the request made by Natural England for a full restriction of the breeding bird season given the sensitivity of the site and importance to bird species.	Noted. Requirement B65 of the REAC was already amended at Deadline 5 (as requested by the ExA) to include a restriction on tree height reduction during March to August.
Ornithology			
1.1.15	Noise	TDC did not make an oral submission for this item but would like to seek clarity on noise matters in relation to Pegwell Bay and marine ornithology. The Applicant indicated that the noise assessment in the Marine Ornithology chapter of the ES has not assessed the worst-case scenario based on the limits of deviation. The noise assessment has only assessed the impact based on the preferred location of the works. Moving these works would potentially have a greater impact on sensitive breeding bird areas around the mouth of the River Stour.	The Applicant confirmed at Deadline 4 [REP4-086] that the assessment of disturbance to roosting and feeding waterbirds presented in Application Document 6.2.4.5 (C) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 5 Marine Ornithology [REP2-003] and the Application Document 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [REP3-028] has considered a worst case scenario of the cable pull in works occurring anywhere within the limits of deviation shown on Figure 6.4.4.5.8 in Application Document 6.4.4.5 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Ornithology submitted at Deadline 4 (depicted as the area hashed) with the modelled noise attenuation taken from the perimeter of the limits of deviation.
Marine Animals			
1.1.16		TDC did not make an oral submission for this item but would like to seek clarity as to the works to be undertaken during high tide and low tide as the Applicant advised there would be limited works at high tide and therefore there would be no impact on the marine mammals. However, document 9.13 (B) Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Clean) [REP2-011] confirms that works will be undertaken at high tide. Therefore TDC requests clarification on the works at Pegwell Bay and the potential effects on marine animals.	The construction of the HDD exit pits at Pegwell Bay requires the construction of a cofferdam (or x4 smaller cofferdams, i.e. x1 for each duct). These works will take place during low tide. Once the cofferdam is in place works inside the cofferdam can take place at all states of the tide. The assessments have considered the impact of air-borne sound on seals in the River Stour during the construction of the cofferdam (Application Document 6.2.4.4 (H) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Clean) [REP5-023]), and assessments in the benthic chapter - Application Document 6.2.4.2 (D) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology [REP4-029] - have considered the impact on habitats and infaunal communities living in the mudflat sediments. The operations required during cable pull in will be undertaken around low tide as the trench will be excavated with vehicles that need dry or very shallow water conditions. Cable installation below low water will take place at all states of the tide. The impact of air-borne sound in relation to seals and underwater sound in relation to all marine mammals have been considered in detail in Application Document 6.2.4.4 (H) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [REP5-023].

Landscape and visual			
1.1.17	Visual Impact	TDC advised that the Council consider viewpoints 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11 should also be assessed as major adverse at year 1 and 15. Currently only viewpoint 4 is considered to result in a major adverse at years 1 and 15. This position has been submitted with the Local Impact Report and draft Statement of Common Ground.	The Applicant's position on TDC comments on the Applicant's visual assessment is contained partially within Application Document 7.4.5 (D) Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and the Thanet District Council [REP5-046] and also Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] relating to AP41.
1.1.18		In terms of further mitigation, TDC considers that given the size, scale and form of the buildings proposed together with the landscape and the topography, there is nothing more that can be done to mitigate the visual impact. The NPS recognises that there is likely to be residual harm as a result of developments, such as this, and this is recognised by the Applicant in that mitigation of visual impacts has limitations. However, it is clear that the applicant has undervalued the visual impact of the proposed development on these viewpoints.	The comments regarding additional mitigation are noted and the Applicant expands on this point in relation to AP41 within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The Applicant's position on TDC comments on the Applicant's visual assessment is contained partially within Application Document 7.4.5 (D) Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and the Thanet District Council [REP5-046] and also Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] relating to AP41.
1.1.19	Landscape Character Assessment	The key landscape character area is the Stour Marshes in which the Applicant has assessed that there would be no residual significant adverse effect at year 15. However, TDC confirmed that the impact would be significant adverse for the full duration of the project given the aforementioned location, the scale and the characteristics of the landscape as it stands. Therefore this is considered to be a major adverse effect for the whole operational period that would be significant.	The Applicant disagrees that there would be significant adverse effects on the Stour Marshes Landscape Character Area (LCA) at operation year 15 due to the reasoning set out in Application Document 6.3.3.1.C ES Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-145] and in response to 2LVIA9 in Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Question [REP5-135] .
1.1.20		TDC confirmed viewpoint 4 provides a good representation of the landscape character of the Stour Marshes although all viewpoints provide a good indication of the current landscape characteristics of the Stour Marshes.	Comment acknowledged.
1.1.21	Additional Planting	The Applicant was asked whether additional planting further away from the converter station and substation could further mitigate the landscape and visual impacts. The Applicant confirmed that the Stour Marshes is not a landscape that is defined by wooded or heavily planted areas. Therefore, further planting would be contrary to the characteristics of the marsh landscape.	As stated within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] relating to AP41, additional landscape planting has been considered in the wider landscape with the aim of reducing the landscape and visual effects. This has been discounted largely because the wider landscape, particularly to the west of the railway line, has characteristics more akin to the former marshland, including being less vegetated and more open, therefore additional mitigation planting is not considered to be appropriate.
1.1.22		TDC did not comment at the time but would like to query how additional planting in the landscape would result in such harm to the landscape that it is not possible to be provided to mitigate the	The Applicant's assessment sets out that there would be a significant adverse effect on the Stour Marshes LCA at operation year 1 (Application Document 6.3.3.1.C ES Appendix 3.1.C

		impact of the proposed development. Yet, the applicant is content on siting a nationally significant infrastructure project in the landscaping and concluding that it would have no significant effect on the landscape character of the Stour Marshes. Clearly, the proposed development would result in a significant change to the landscape character of the Stour Marshes and whilst additional planting within the wider area may not reinforce the characteristics of the marsh landscape it should be considered if it helps mitigate the impact of the proposed development	Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-145]). It is explained why this effect is considered to be minor adverse (not significant) at operation year 15 within Application Document 6.3.3.1.C ES Appendix 3.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment [APP-145] and in response to 2LVIA9 in Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Question [REP5-135]. The openness, limited vegetation and no built form within part of the former marshland is not disputed however the Kent Onshore Scheme would be in a less sensitive part of LCA E1 with existing context of containment, vegetation and built form. Additional mitigation planting is not considered to be appropriate for the reasons noted in the above responses and within Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] relating to AP41.
Design			
1.1.23		Design was not explicitly discussed within the ISH2 but was included within the discussion on the item 21 – dDCO. TDC has provided further detailed comments within that section below.	Noted.
Public Rights of Way			
1.1.24		TDC would like to add to the oral representation that there are numerous PRowS which will be disrupted during the five-year construction period both within the Order Limits and within proximity which will negatively impact the users of the PRow discouraging use of these routes. The project during the construction phase will adversely impact PRow users, due to construction traffic, new pylons, PRow crossings and temporary diversions and once operational the experience of the users of the PRow and other routes will be significantly altered by the presence of the converter, substation and additional pylons.	Application Document 7.5.9.2: Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Kent [APP-353] includes consideration of management of impacts on PRow users during construction, as well as reinstatement/remediation after temporary closure.
Noise and Vibration			
1.1.25	Section 61 application –	TDC confirmed at the hearing that it would be helpful if we were consulted when the noise and vibration management plan is carried out, so that we can review the conclusions and determine whether a section 61 application is required. The contractor construction Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) which will inform the Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (NMP) should be submitted and agreed by the Local Authority. The NIA should be undertaken by a suitably qualified acoustician and significant impacts, as determined by the ABC methodology in BS5228 shall oblige the contractor to apply for a s61 consent from the Local Authority particularly if the NIA is being undertaken on the basis of ‘best practical means’. This should be included in the commitment ID NV03 in the REAC.	Noted. Application Document 7.5.8.2 Outline Construction Management Plan – Kent [AS-134] includes consideration of the points noted.
1.1.26		Background noise levels – TDC confirmed that five decibels (dB) below background noise levels has been requested due to the proximity of the Great Oaks Small School, which is the nearest	The applicant acknowledges this comment and the additional sensitivity of the Great Oaks Small School. A 5dB reduction in

		sensitive receptor and is a special needs school, so we were keen to see five DB below background target level in this instance	threshold was requested in relation to construction noise and this is noted in the ES. With regards to operational noise, the assessment presented in the ES indicates that the rating level would be more than 5dB below background sound levels during both daytime and night-time periods. However, the night-time level is not deemed to be relevant at this receptor due to it's daytime operation (although the 5 dB below background request is still being achieved).
1.1.28		TDC was asked if 34dB would be an acceptable level and it was confirmed the five dB below the background noise level is still the requirement from TDC but it is accepted that 34dB is exceptionally low.	The local authority request is acknowledged by the Applicant. Commitment NV09 of Application Document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] includes consideration of the aims of the local authority, where this can be achieved, or otherwise as low as reasonably practicable.
Socio-economics and tourism			
1.1.28	Effects and potential reputational impact on the tourism industry	TDC note the applicant has undertaken their own review of the NSIPs and their potential effects on tourism and visitor activity. However, we consider the comparison with Sizewell C does not really reflect the position of the Sea Link Project, as it is located on the primary road network in Thanet which is one of the main routes into and out of Thanet and is also the main route for tourist destinations. Therefore, this has the potential to deter visitors and create a negative perception of Thanet as a tourist destination, particularly when combined with additional construction traffic, which might be actual or perceived. TDC has prepared and published the Thanet Visitor Survey 2025, in which overcrowding, traffic and parking issues were raised as concerns within that survey.	The Applicant has reviewed the content of the Thanet Visitor Survey 2025 and has no comments on this matter.
1.1.29 1.1.30	Effects of construction traffic on tourism	TDC made our position clear on this matter within our Local Impact Report and our comments within the Statement of Common Ground. TDC agrees with the points made by Suffolk County Council with regard to the lack of respite with a construction period of seven days a week over a number of years. It is really important that the local community can enjoy this area and use it for recreation during this period. Consequently, a key concern is that there has been no assessment of the impact of construction traffic on tourism on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Thanet has peak periods within our network and the economy being heavily reliant on tourism means that at certain times, particularly bank holidays and weekends, outside the traditional peak periods, congestion reaches a quite extraordinary level.	The impacts of construction work on Saturday afternoons, Sunday and Bank Holidays have been assessed within the EIA and this is reported within the ES within the technical chapters, where relevant. Construction work, including that undertaken if and where needed on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays, would be suitably controlled by Application Document 7.5.3 (B) Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [AS-127] , Application Document 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] and Application Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk [REP4-061] . In terms of construction traffic, the traffic and transport assessment within Application Document 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] specifically includes an assessment of the Saturday lunchtime period (12pm to 1pm) based on forecast construction traffic movements during the peak period of construction and does not identify the potential for significant effects as a result of the Proposed Project. This offers a robust assessment, given that construction traffic levels on Sundays and Bank Holidays will be restricted through the measures identified within and secured by Application Document 7.5.1.1 (C) Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan – Suffolk [REP4-061] and Requirement 7 'Construction working Hours' in

			Application Document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order (updated version submitted at Deadline 6). For example, no HGVs will arrive or depart site on Sundays or public holidays, other than for exception activities, where these would then be limited to 30 HGVs per day. Therefore, no construction traffic impacts are expected on Sundays and Bank Holidays with these measures in place. There will be no construction working at all at the Suffolk converter station site and the Kent converter station and substation site on Bank Holiday weekends.
		Thanet acknowledges that the Applicant has suggested that the working on Sundays and Bank Holidays is likely to be more sporadic and not every Sunday and Bank Holiday but the concern would be that there would be no control over that. It would require the reliance on goodwill from the Applicant that they would only work on Sundays and Bank Holidays if absolutely necessary but the councils would have no control over work on Sundays or Bank Holidays if that wasn't restricted in some way.	A response to the ExA action points regarding construction working hours (Reference AP106) has been provided in Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2).
1.1.31	Tourism accommodation capacity	TDC would like to raise a concern that the tourism capacity analysis from the Applicant lacks the detail to sufficiently inform the potential impact of the proposed development as it did not include the type or cost of rooms available for potential construction workers	A response to the ExA's request to incorporate affordability into the assessment of accommodation capacity is provided in Application Document 9.117 Applicant's Response to AP104 from Issue Specific Hearing 2.
1.1.32	Skills and Employment Plan	TDC would welcome a skills and employment plan but request the inclusion of a local education strategy and engagement with local education providers. It would be a good opportunity to capture these potential benefits and the site would provide considerable educational opportunities beyond the employment elements. TDC would welcome the Applicant considering the inclusion of a local education strategy.	Application Document 9.120 Detailed Skills, Supply Change and Employment Plan is to be submitted at Deadline 6.
Cumulative Effects			
1.1.33	Intra Project Effects –	As per TDC's response to ExQ1, a concern is raised that the Applicant is unable to understand and identify a level of impact assessment to an effect and therefore it is unclear as to how they have determined whether or not an effect is significant and whether this is a negligible, slight, minor or major adverse effect. Consequently, an effect may not be considered significant by the Applicant when it is. TDC is also concerned that the Applicant considers the assessment of cumulative effects not to be robust (as stated within the ISH2) and as such would like to seek clarification as to whether a robust and appropriate cumulative assessment has been undertaken.	The Applicant's position is set out at Ref 3.16.1 in Application Document 7.4.5 (D): Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and Thanet District Council (Clean) [REP5-046]. Following TDC's acknowledgement of the comments provided, the Applicant's understanding is that this point is agreed.
1.1.34	Inter Projects Effects	In addition, TDC have raised significant concerns regarding the list of cumulative sites which omits a number of sites that TDC consider should be included particularly in regard to the traffic and transport impacts on the A229. It is understood the applicant is reviewing this information in light of our comments in the Statement of Common Ground.	The Applicant's position is set out at Ref 3.16.2 in Application Document 7.4.5 (D): Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and Thanet District Council (Clean) [REP5-046].

The draft Development Consent Order

1.1.35	“unreasonably withheld or delayed” and the 35 day decision period	TDC’s position remains the same as set out in the response to ExQ1 and the Statement of Common Ground. TDC supports the points made by East Suffolk Council and concern around the ability for district councils to discharge a large number of applications which may arrive in one go and are likely to require considerable engagement and consultation with other agencies and bodies that would potentially delay that beyond 35 days. There are often cases where consultees ask for a longer period than the standard eight weeks so a 35 days period is unlikely to be achievable.	The Applicant notes these points but remains of the view that the drafting is appropriate, as set out within Application Document 9.90 Applicant’s Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] and Document 9.89 Applicant’s Written Summaries of Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 [REP4-085] .
1.1.36		In turn, this then has implications on determining if an application to discharge a requirement was unreasonably withheld or delayed. Without definition of what constitutes unreasonableness if it is difficult to understand the necessity of this wording. TDC supports the comments made by East Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council and notes that there are existing mechanisms to deal with unreasonableness such as through the appeals process.	See response above.
1.1.37	Requirement 3 Converter Station Design	TDC has concerns regarding the vagueness of the Design Principles Document. Firstly, the reference to ‘general accordance’ provides an additional layer of flexibility when the design process, which is already based on a number of design principles, should already enable sufficient flexibility within the design process. Therefore, Requirement 3 should require the details to be in accordance with the Key Design Principles as set out in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent.	Please refer to the Applicant’s response to 2GEN5 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant’s Response to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] and the Applicant’s position as set out in Ref 3.3.1 of Application Document 7.4.5 (D): Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and Thanet District Council (Clean) [REP5-046] .
1.1.38		Secondly, the design principles document consistently refers to technical details and documents that “could” be provided rather than “will” be provided which adds to that uncertainty in terms of ensuring that we do get a development which meets the good design principles. This is reflected in the provision (or not) of the concrete platform.	See response above.
1.1.39		At Page 48 of the Design Principles – Kent, it originally stated that the concrete platform “will” be used but now states “may” be used. This assumes further engineering investigations are ongoing meaning that either the concrete base may not be needed and an alternative measure is provided, whatever that may be. Therefore, it is unclear whether the final design to be submitted will indeed accord with the Design Principles if the proposed design fundamentals are continuing to change during the examination stage of the proposed development.	See response above.
1.1.40		In addition to the above, TDC would like to raise the issue with the Design Approach Document – Kent [REP1A-031] which currently proposes four design options based on the design principles. This demonstrates a significant amount of flexibility already inherent in the design principles. Furthermore, these design options are very different and it makes assessment of the landscape and visual impact more difficult particularly with the considerable variations available within the design parameters. Therefore, the Design	The LVIA has been undertaken on a worst-case basis with reference to the flexibility of the Design Principles and Limits of Deviation. This is set out within Section 1.5 within Application Document 6.2.3.1 Part 3 Kent Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual [APP-061] .

	Principles are too vague and allow a significant variation in design possibilities. TDC notes that a preferred contractor has been selected to deliver the converter and substation and therefore there is an opportunity to narrow down the parameters of the design principles or at the very least present a preferred final design option.	
1.1.41	Thirdly, the wording of Requirement 3 should refer to all above ground built-form including the converter station, substation and pylons. There is currently no mechanism to secure the design and appearance of the substation and pylons. Whilst it is acknowledged there is limited scope in the design of these features of the NSIP due the functionality of the infrastructure, there will be some elements where good design choices can be made in terms of layout, positioning materials, screening etc. that TDC should have the ability to control and enforce. For example, the applicant confirms they have only a few options with regard to the pylon design and the heights. Whilst the maximum height is set out in the dDCO, details of the height of the pylons and the final design should be approved by TDC to ensure compliance with the DCO.	Please refer to the Applicant's response to 2GEN5 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Response to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] and the Applicant's position as set out in Ref 3.3.1 of Application Document 7.4.5 (D): Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and Thanet District Council (Clean) [REP5-046] .
1.1.42	TDC also requests that the final design of the above ground built-form should be developed in consultation with a Design Review Panel recognising that the applicant has engaged with the Design Review Panel and that this should form part of Requirement 3	See response above.

Table 20.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Thanet District Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-161]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		TDC made three submissions in relation to the ISH2 Agenda.	As the agenda for the Issue Specific Hearing 2 was agreed and the hearings have finished the Applicant has not comments to make.

Table 20.3 Applicant’s Comments on the Thanet District Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-162]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
3	Kent County Council (KCC) was unable to attend the hearing. KCC to respond to: The applicant’s comments in response to Matthew Denny that reptile surveys are unnecessary at the former hoverport site as reptiles would not generally be present on the hardstanding area and would be unlikely to be affected if present in	TDC considers that a reptile survey should be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to determine the facts of this matter and should consider the use of the hardstanding areas for foraging, basking and sheltering.	Reptiles are generally not present on hardstanding areas (a view which is shared by KCC in Written post hearing submissions including written summaries of oral cases made at hearings the w/c 26 January 2026 [REP4-123]). Insofar as reptiles may spend short periods of time basking on hardstanding, they will spend little time there due to being exposed to predators, and will depart quickly as soon as vehicles approach. Any risk from vehicle movements to sheltering reptiles within the cracks of the hardstanding will be assessed and addressed as part

	cracks in the hardstanding due to the proposed track reinforcement. ● The applicant’s comments that wider invasive non-native species control measures are not required to be undertaken by the applicant at the hoverport to offset the wider effects of the works. ● Provide comment on the approach to non-significant enhancements as outlined in item 3.5.17 of the applicant’s DL3 statement of common ground (SoCG) with Dover District Council. ● The applicant’s comments that there are no industry standard metrics relating to the quantity of land required to mitigate for impacts on skylark		of the structural survey, since the structural risk of cracks collapsing would also be a health and safety concern, in addition to environmental considerations. Given the above, and given the proposed routes do not cross vegetated or ruderal areas which form habitats suitable for reptiles, the Applicant considers that a reptile survey is not necessary.
26	NE to respond to: ● The applicant’s statement that birds tend to divert up and over overhead lines rather than seeking to turn away from them.	TDC recommends a wider consultation to include Thanet Coast Project Birdwise alongside KWT. Consultation with the North East Kent Marine Protected Area Management Group would also be appropriate as it would capture the aforementioned consultees.	It is assumed that TDC’s reference to ‘Thanet Coast Project Birdwise’ relates to two separate organisations (as no single organisation bearing this name can be found): Thanet Coast Project and Bird Wise East Kent respectively. In this respect, Bird Wise East Kent submitted a Relevant Representation [RR-0584] which is referred to in 2ECOL32 of ExQ2 [PD-021]. Thanet Coast Project did not take the opportunity to submit a Relevant Representation – had it wished for its submissions to be considered as part of the Examination it may be expected to have done so. As for the suggested consultation with the North East Kent Marine Protected Area Management Group, the Applicant considers that the views the Group have been substantially taken into account: ● 6 of the 9 relevant authorities comprising the Group are actively engaged in the Examination process (Natural England, Environment Agency, Southern Water, Thanet District Council, Dover District Council, and Kent County Council); ● The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities submitted a Relevant Representation; and ● A Draft Statement of Common Ground has been prepared between the Applicant and the Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners: see Application Document 7.4.14 (B) Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and the Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners (Clean) [REP5-062]. This will continue to be progressed during the Examination period to reach a final position. For the reasons above, the Applicant does not consider that any wider consultation as recommended by TDC to be necessary.

35	To provide clarification as to whether there is evidence of a recent increase in cetacean species as highlighted by Kent Wildlife Trust, close to the Kent landfall, including bottlenose dolphin	TDC recommends a wider consultation to include Thanet Coast Project Birdwise alongside KWT. Consultation with the North East Kent Marine Protected Area Management Group would also be appropriate as it would capture the aforementioned consultees.	See response above.
68	Applicant to respond to: - Appendix B of the applicant's Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP2-011] states 'not available' under the sound source for the Offshore trencher, argocat and mass flow excavator. Does this mean that these elements were or weren't assessed and in which case what assumptions were used and what are the implications for the noise contour mapping? - The applicant's response to ExQ 1NV15 [REP3-069]] explains that noise contour mapping work assumes that the hoverport is soft ground and that this is proportionate due to the size of the area modelled. Given that the hoverport is largely hardstanding with vegetation and that it will be extensively used by construction vehicles, can the applicant provide further justification for this assumption? - First written question 1NV4 [PD-017], asked about use of hovercraft in Pegwell Bay. The applicant's response to 1NV4 [REP3-069] explains that the use of hovercraft is for safety purposes only and won't be used on a regular basis. Can the applicant explain how they would be brought to the site and how they would be stored? Can the use of the hovercraft be limited to emergency use in the dDCO or REAC? ExQ 1MO4 [REP3-069]] regarding piling noise levels and the use of an LAFmax of 91dB at 10m. This confirmed that the maximum piling noise level Whilst this action point is directed to the Applicant, TDC would welcome a noise contour	Whilst this action point is directed to the Applicant, TDC would welcome a noise contour plan for Minster converter station, including the 'Noise Change Level' with reference to baseline conditions given in Appendix 3.9D Kent Operational Noise Assessment AS-123: Table 1.3 Summary of representative background sound levels Monitoring Location Representative background sound level, dB LA90,15min Daytime (35dB) Night-time (29dB).	An operational noise contour plan for Minster Converter Station is provided within Application Document 9.102 Operational Noise Contour Plan for Minster Converter Station [REP5-124]. The reason for showing noise level change relative to 38dB L_{Aeq,8h} (as opposed to the value suggested by TDC) is explained at the Applicant's response to AP68 in Application Document 9.90 Applicant's Response to January Action Hearing Points – Deadline 4 [REP4-086].

	plan for Minster converter station, including the 'Noise Change Level' with reference to baseline conditions given in Appendix 3.9D Kent Operational Noise Assessment AS-123: Table 1.3 Summary of representative background sound levels Monitoring Location Representative background sound level, dB LA90,15min Daytime (35dB) Night-time (29dB). in the applicant's data set was 104dB but values were more typically in the low 90dB range. Is the applicant able to provide this dataset to the examination to support this assumption? • At DL3 the applicant provided an operational noise contour plan for Saxmundham [REP3- 075]. Produce a similar plan for Minster converter station. • Explain why in figure 2 of the Operational Noise contour Plan [REP3-075] the noise level change contours are being compared with a 38dB LAeq8h level.		
70	Provide a detailed assessment of low frequency noise impacts for proposed operational sites, based on the most up to date level of design detail available, incorporating comparison of dB(A) and dB(C) levels.	Whilst this action point is directed to the Applicant, TDC confirms agreement with the proposed approach to assessing low frequency noise. As suggested by Rupert Thornely-Taylor any difference of 10dB or more shall be mitigated	Please refer to the Applicant's response to AP70 in Applicant Document 9.108 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) - Deadline 5 [REP5-126]. The Applicant notes TDC's agreement to the proposed approach. However, the Applicant does not agree that this is correct approach, and does not align with standard practice for consideration of tonality from operational noise, including from substation equipment Subsequent agreement in principle at Deadline 6 with both ESC and TDC is for tonality to be assessed in accordance with the method described in BS 4142:2009+A1:2024 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound' (BS 4142) which is standard practice. Notably, the 'Reference method' described in Annex D of BS 4142 will be used to assess tonality during any commissioning measurements.
71	The MMO was unable to attend the hearings. The MMO to respond to: • The MMO's response to ExQ 1PE4 [REP3-094] explains that there would be a need for a	In response to the second bullet point, TDC would like to add that Bentonite is not biodegradable and will remain in the environment indefinitely. This can impact salinity and compact the Pegwell Bay natural sediment, changing the environment and potentially polluting groundwater or smothering Pegwell bay's aquatic life.	The Applicant notes that reference to offshore by PLONOR, and more generally, relates to the marine environment which is recognised to be any area below mean high water springs (MHWS) and thus 'offshore' includes the region between the tides (between MHWS and MLWS) a region which is also referred to as the

	designated disposal site for dredge arisings. MMO to explain the necessary steps required to be taken by the applicant prior to the close of examination to ensure that a dredge disposal area is defined. • The MMO’s DL2 response [REP2-056] highlighted a number of issues relating to the terminology associated with substances used in the marine environment (e.g. bentonite), emphasising the need for substances to be on the OSPAR pose little or no risk (PLONOR) list. Is there a need for the Deemed Marine Licence (DML) to explicitly secure that only substances from the OSPAR list are used in addition to the current provisions in Part 2, Condition 8 of the DML?	Furthermore, the OSPAR/PLONOR list only references "OFFSHORE," but this is a likely risk on the "FORESHORE" which TDC has raised previously. (https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=32939).	intertidal zone, the foreshore or the beach. The risk to marine organisms applies equally to fauna across the entire marine environment and thus, PLONOR is applicable to all areas of the marine environment below MHWS. The use of drilling mud on the foreshore at Pegwell Bay is required only in relation to the HDD and this occurs entirely within a cofferdam. An assessment of the release of drilling fluids at Pegwell has been undertaken in Application Document 6.2.4.2 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology [REP5-021]. The release of drilling fluid at Pegwell Bay has been assessed and on the basis that the potential volume released is very low (up to 40 m³) and that the drilling fluid will contain inert, non-toxic particles only the potential impact to benthic habitats and species were found to be not significant. In addition, the REAC [Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]] includes a specific commitment – LVS05, regarding the management of drilling fluids as follows: <i>‘Drilling fluids required for trenchless operations will be carefully managed to minimise the risk of breakouts into the marine environment. Specific avoidance measures would include: ● the use of biodegradable drilling fluids (pose little or no risk (PLONOR) substances) where practicable; ● drilling fluids will be tested for contamination to determine possible reuse or disposal; and ● If disposal is required drilling fluids would be transported by a licensed courier to a licensed waste disposal site.</i> This commitment is secured in Application Document 7.5.2 Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan via DCO Schedule 3, Requirement 6 Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan.
102	District and County Councils to provide details as to what tourist accommodation may be available for tourists, taking into account Sea Link and other development workers who may be staying in such accommodation within the construction phases.	TDC would like to raise a concern that the tourism capacity analysis from the Applicant lacks the detail to sufficiently inform the potential impact of the proposed development as it did not include the type or cost of rooms available for potential construction workers. TDC is seeking to source additional information to assist the ExA as soon as possible.	As part of its analysis on cumulative worker accommodation demand and capacity in its response to 2SERT3 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant’s Response to Second Written Questions [REP5-135], the Applicant has, amongst other things, considered the total available accommodation stock within the defined study area for the Kent Onshore Scheme, with a breakdown into the forms of accommodation available for all workers. As explained, a precautionary approach was adopted which assumes that only hotels with the lowest CoStar cost classification “economy” have been included as potential accommodation which could be used by construction workers. The Applicant considers the above analysis to contain adequate detail to sufficiently inform the potential impact on tourism accommodation capacity, contrary to TDC’s concern raised. The Applicant notes and welcomes the additional information TDC has undertaken to provide the ExA.

103	TDC to provide relevant data from its 2025 visitor survey.	The TDC Visitor Survey 2025 can be accessed here: https://www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk/business-support/research/visitor-survey-research-2025/	Noted.
115	All parties (applicant and councils) to meet/liase to agree suitable wording of article 10 which all parties are content with, with an update on progress and any agreement submitted.	TDC is awaiting further contact from the Applicant with regard to the suitable wording of article 10. The key matter for TDC is to ensure that article 10 does not enable the Applicant to renege on the commitments and mitigation secured through the DCO if a TCPA application was submitted and approved. Whilst it is unlikely to be the Applicant's intention the wording of article 10 needs careful drafting to ensure it accounts for the Hillside litigation whilst also not undermining the DCO itself.	The Applicant will continue to liaise with TDC and the other host local authorities to agree suitable wording for article 10. The Applicant notes the points raised by TDC.
116	All parties (including NGV, SPR and Manston airport) from onshore of offshore existing or potential future consent to comment on article 10.	As above.	See response above.
120	Councils and consultees to provide comments on the table setting out the relevant planning authorities and consultees.	It is understood that TDC is required to provide a response at Deadline 5 once the Applicant provides the table setting out the relevant planning authorities and consultees.	To be actioned by local councils and consultees.
124	Consider whether a specific noise design parameter is required in relation to the converter and substation sites, equivalent to requirement 12 of the EA1 North DCO	Whilst this action point is directed to the Applicant, TDC welcomes design criteria in relation to specific noise and low frequency component. As referenced at the hearing, a rating level of 5dB below background at nearest receptors should be designed in and requirement secured.	Please refer to the Applicant's response to AP124 in Applicant Document 9.108 Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) - Deadline 5 [REP5-126] . As to the suggested rating level of 5dB below background at nearest receptors, the applicant notes that these are aspirational aims. Agreement in principle at Deadline 6 with ESC and TDC is for noise rating levels to be ≤34 dB L _{Ar,Tr} , and as low as reasonably possible below this at nearby noise sensitive receptors.
131	Suggest alternative wording for requirement 3 including which above ground elements of the proposed development should be included.	TDC has liaised with the other host local authorities (Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council and Kent County Council) to produce the following alternative wording for Requirement 3. It should be noted that this wording is in draft form and based on the current status of the application. As a result, the authorities propose that the Overarching and Project Level Design Principles also serve as controls within the Requirement on account of the inadequacy of the current form of the Key Design Principles. As reflected in the proposed wording, the authorities do not take issue with the final designs being controlled by some form of Critical Design Constraints (CDCs) to ensure the functionality of the built infrastructure is not compromised by the design which the Applicant has cited as a key concern. The proposed wording should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the current wording of the CDCs and design principles within [APP-366] and [APP-367]. The authorities have detailed outstanding problems with these documents both during ISH2 and in written submissions. Should the wording of the Design Principles in these documents change, the Councils' view on	The Applicant's comments to the proposed alternative wording provided by the host local authorities are captured in its response to 2GEN5 in Application Document 9.123: Applicant's Response to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] .

appropriate wording for Requirement 3 may change. For instance, should the Key Design Principles become sufficiently robust, reference to the Overarching and Project Level Design Principles may become unnecessary. The authorities consider such an approach to be preferable to improve the precision of the requirement wording.

Whilst the proposed wording does not resolve all outstanding matters relating to the design of the onshore infrastructure, it does secure a robust approval process for these designs which is a necessary step towards demonstrating application of the mitigation hierarchy and making the application acceptable in planning terms.

In addition to rewording of the principles within [APP-366] and [APP-367], further work is needed to ensure a robust design process will be followed during the project's delivery. The design processes for the onshore infrastructure referenced in the proposed requirement wording must be embedded into the project's delivery programme to ensure optimal design outcomes are achieved as far as possible. The authorities consider that the Applicant should provide detail on how this will be carried out and secured at the next deadline.

Amended Requirement 3 (converter station design)

Requirement 3 should be recast as follows – “(1) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 3B (Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

2) No stage of Work No. 3A (Access road to the Suffolk Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of the River Fromus Bridge have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council in accordance with the design details and the River Fromus Bridge Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 3A must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

(3) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 1B (new Substation at Grove Wood, Friston) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Suffolk County Council. The submitted details must be in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.1 Design Principles –

Suffolk. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 1B must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

(4) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 9B (Kent Converter Station) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England in accordance with the design details and the Converter Station Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 9B must be carried out in accordance with the approved Details.

(5) No stage of development of the above ground elements of the authorised development comprised in Work No. 11 (new Kent Substation) may commence until details of the layout, scale and external appearance of that work have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Kent County Council and Historic England in accordance with the design details and the Substation Design Principles found in Document 7.12.2 Design Principles – Kent. Approval of the submitted details may not be withheld where doing so would contravene a Critical Design Constraint. Work No. 11 must be carried out in accordance with the approved Details.

(6) In this requirement, “the design details” means the Critical Design Constraints, Overarching Design Principles, and the Project Level Design Principles”.

21. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

21.1 Introduction

- 21.1.1
- Table 21.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Deadline 4 Response [REP4-163].
- 21.1.2
- The Applicant’s has responded to Maritime and Coastguard Agency Deadline 5 Response [REP5-209] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.**

Table 21.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-163]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Examining Authority’s ISH2 Action Point questions and the Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 January 2026 Supplementary agenda additional questions at Deadline 4 (10 February 2026). Please find attached two tables of responses from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The MCA is the National Competent Authority for the SUNK Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) appointed by DfT under SOLAS Chapter V - Regulation 12 and His Majesty’s Coastguard (HMCG) has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of Sunk VTS. Master Mariners, SUNK VTS operators and representatives of the UK Technical Services Navigation have contributed to the responses in the attached tables. We hope this is helpful to the Examination Authority.	The Applicant has no comments on make in relation to this matter and provided a response to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency’s REP4-164 and REP4-165 at Deadline 5 [REP5-132].

22. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Adrian Smith

22.1 Introduction

22.1.1 Table 22.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Adrian Smith Deadline 4 Response [REP4-166].

Table 22.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Adrian Smith Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-166]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I attended the Compulsory purchase hearing on Tuesday 27.01.2026 by Teams link and would like to make the following comments as I am unable to attend the satellite venue in Sandwich, when this could be scheduled, as I feel sure it would be designated for AOB on Friday when I am travelling to Manchester. The agenda was discussed by the planning inspectorate and the applicant in great detail and with reference to various documents taken as understood by the participants whether they be King’s Council or Planning Inspectors, all of whom are experts in their particular fields. I would like to remind you that the decisions you are making will affect hundreds of thousands of ordinary people, who may not understand the intricacies or indeed the terminology of the process. There was an instance early on where the applicant was given 5 minutes to talk, which he did admirably, but during those 5 minutes, I am not sure he actually said anything! The process may take longer if plain English is used, rather than reference numbers, but surely with a decision of this magnitude, this is the least we deserve? The decisions will certainly affect the rest of my life and directly impinge on my daily life by increase in HGV traffic, loss of habitat for numerous species, potential closure, or restriction of Pegwell Bay Country Park and probably loss of value of my property. There were numerous “action points” for the applicant to take away, which would indicate that they have not prepared thoroughly enough to anticipate points that the Planning Inspector will pick up upon. They are allowed time to rectify their submissions, surely, we, as the people it will affect adversely, should be afforded a similar courtesy to ensure we understand what is going on in our neighbourhood which will shape our lives for years to come. The entire process is streamlined for people who understand all of the processes, the man on the street does not, yet it is he and the voiceless wildlife who will bear the brunt of these decisions, made on their behalf, by people whose daily lives are unlikely to be	The Applicant notes the the Examinaiton is intended to be primarily a written process, and is confident that the Examination process gives all parties the opportunity to participate in the process and that the Proposed Project includes sufficient measures to mitigate and off set the impact on the environment. Following the close of the hearings in January, the Applicant submitted its Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-087].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		affected unless they actually live in the areas designated for these plans.	

23. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Andrew McDonald

23.1 Introduction

23.1.1 Table 23.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Andrew McDonald Deadline 4 Response [REP4-167].

Table 23.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Andrew McDonald Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-167]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	In registering for Issue Specific Hearing 2, I listed these topics that I hoped to raise: The Study area; Cumulative impact; Impact on minor roads and quiet lanes from diversionary pressure; insufficient and incorrect baseline and modelling. I was unable to contribute during the hearing itself, but submit here in writing my concerns over the Applicant’s attitude to these issues during the ISH, specifically in the first part of Day 2, under the agenda headings 13.1 to 13.5. Negligible Impact 1. Negligible impact. This was the Applicant’s choice of phrase in response to the ExA’s questions on junction modelling. Despite repeated requests for details and a timetable of further modelling from both the ExA and SCC, it was clear that it is the Applicant’s determined view that the Sea Link project would have ‘...negligible impact on the local highways’. This misrepresents the situation. 1.1 The Applicant continues to suggest that the impacts of their own project’s traffic should be treated in isolation, although they may in fact represent the last straw for an overburdened local road system. This leads to the fallacy that the ‘embedded mitigation’ of SZC and other project impacts will never be in conflict with their own assumptions or mitigations; 1.2 The Applicant assumes that the mere delivery (however late) of junction modelling on the major roads is the end of the argument, and will satisfy policy requirements. Their spokesman emphasised this: ‘We don’t feel that modelling is required, because we’re not going to have an impact...’ – which leaves the commitment to carry out any modelling clearly labelled as a token gesture. SCC and National Highways have both disagreed with this statement. NGET	Where the term ‘negligible’ is used it is as a well established term for assessing impacts and it is based on the evidence of the relevant Traffic and Transport Chapter of the Environmental Statement. The Applicant has already discussed junction modelling with the relevant highway authorities, submitting junction modelling to Kent County Council at Deadline 5 and will submit further modelling information to Suffolk County Council at Deadline 6. The Applicant considers that the Application fully assesses the secondary traffic impacts of the Proposed Project, including cumulative impacts with other NSIP projects.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		met with SCC Highways in August 2025, and not after that until a week before ISH2, which hardly demonstrates a clear focus on getting this issue dealt with in accordance with its importance. NGET must be held to the timetable for junction modelling, and for any actions that will follow the conclusions of that modelling. Secondary Impacts 2. Secondary impacts. Nowhere in the discussion at ISH2 was there any detailed treatment of second-order, cumulative impacts on local roads outside the study area. Interested Parties (notably East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership in REP2-047) have pointed out that cumulative, long-term traffic congestion affecting commuters, local businesses and schools transport will undoubtedly lead to voluntary diversions along unsuitable roads and lanes. This is a matter for all of the NSIP projects contributing to the traffic load, and not merely the biggest contributor. The limited initial impact of SZC construction preparation is already making itself a grim and heavy burden on local villages outside the study area, and this should be taken as a clear signal for NGET to be held to detailed assessments and mitigations for their own contribution, and their share of the cumulative impact, especially on local roads and quiet lanes.	

24. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Anthony Fincham

24.1 Introduction

24.1.1 Table 24.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Anthony Fincham Deadline 4 Response [REP4-168].

Table 24.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Anthony Fincham Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-168]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I will not repeat what I and others have said before but I would like to make 3 points arising out of the ISH at the end of January which I was able to attend in large part: 1. Failure to answer your questions. The applicant repeatedly said it would take a point away and respond by deadline 4. That was, in fact, its typical response and few of your questions were answered notwithstanding the very large team it marshalled for the hearing. The fact that at this late stage it apparently had no answers speaks volumes for the cavalier approach it appears to have adopted to this process. I would ask you to hold the applicant to its promise to respond to your questions and I hope that this will be tracked and monitored.	Following the close of the hearings in January, the Applicant submitted its Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-087] . This document will allow Mr Fincham to satisfy himself that the Applicant has responded to all the Action Points issued by the Examining Authority.
		2. Need. SEAS has made a detailed case that there is no need for this project. This is supported from the Kent end. There is a far quicker, cheaper and less environmentally damaging alternative. As in so many other areas the applicant has not fully engaged with this or hitherto made any real response. It is demonstrable that the original justification for Sea Link has fallen away and the rationale such as it is lies on shifting sands. You indicated that after deadline 4 you would give renewed consideration to SEAS’s request for an ISH on the question of need and I urge you to fix a hearing at which you can be addressed on need. I think that is important to place you in the best possible decision to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State and so that all interested parties and the applicant feel they have had a proper opportunity to make their case. Need is the prior question at the heart of this examination. If the applicant fails to satisfy you on need no other question arises.	The Applicant has responded [REP5-142] at Deadline 5 to the various submissions made by SEAS in relation to need. Without re-visiting this document, the Applicant considers that Sea Link is strongly supported by policy in NPS EN-1 recognising the “urgent need for new electricity network infrastructure to be brought forward at pace to meet our energy objectives” (paragraph 3.3.65). and that the Proposed Project is Critical National Priority (CNP) Infrastructure. For the reasons set out in REP5-142 the Applicant fundamentally rejects the suggestion that the original justification for Sea Link has fallen away or that the rationale has shifted. Nor does the Applicant accept that there are quicker and cheaper alternatives to Sea Link available.
		3. Cumulative impact. I draw attention to the inadequacy of the applicant’s consideration of the cumulative impact on the local community of the multiplicity of overlapping projects. This has been documented by SEAS with expert assistance	The Applicant has made a substantial submission on Cumulative Effects of multiple projects at Deadline 6 in response to EV9-018 , as well as elsewhere in the Application.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		and there is no need to repeat the many points made here. I also respectfully remind you of the clear signal given by the inspectors in the EA1N and EA2 examinations when they made what they described as a finely balanced recommendation. I gave you the reference in my written submission after the first hearing. Friston Council made the same point.	The Applicant's view is that the impacts of cumulative effects is acceptable and in accordance with relevant policies.

25. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Cllr T-J Haworth-Culf

25.1 Introduction

25.1.1 Table 25.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Cllr T-J Haworth-Culf Deadline 4 Response [REP4-169].

Table 25.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Cllr T-J Haworth-Culf Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-169]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I write further to the Sea Link DCO live hearings held this week, and to the concerns raised during those hearings which remain unresolved up to Deadline 4. I would like to express my thanks to the examiners for their continued and thorough manner in conducting these hearings. Location It is deeply concerning that, despite the statutory status of Aldeburgh Town Council, its interests and tourism values continue to be overlooked, notwithstanding Aldeburgh’s position as the largest and most economically and culturally significant community affected. I again request the urgent correction of the inaccurate claim that the project lies “in between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness”; it is, in fact, within Aldeburgh.	The Applicant notes this observation. The Applicant recognises that the potential for future environmental changes associated with the Proposed Project during construction, operation and decommissioning are currently a source of concern for local tourism. To address this concern, the Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive and robust EIA, through which no residual significant effects have been identified for Socio-economics, Leisure and Tourism following the application of appropriate mitigation.
		Coastal Erosion Before I continue, it would be remiss of me not to mention that concerns are further compounded by the significant and accelerating loss of coastline witnessed in recent weeks at Thorpeness and the surrounding areas. Coastal erosion is no longer a distant or abstract risk but a present and visible reality, resulting in the permanent loss of land especially the many more meters lost this week, the habitat, and natural protection. The continued degradation of this fragile coastline heightens anxiety for residents, landowners, and businesses already facing uncertainty, and it must be fully acknowledged that introducing further large-scale infrastructure into an area experiencing such rapid environmental change risks exacerbating damage that cannot be reversed. I would also like it on record that I thank and concur with representations from David Mackie, and comments from Charlotte Fox regarding the lack of holistic, long-term planning, stating that East Suffolk is being subjected to a chaotic imposition of major infrastructure with little regard for the disproportionate burden on local residents.	Commitments have been made that relate to monitoring of coastal change. For example, MPE08 - Further analysis will be undertaken to consider the potential for coastal erosion over the lifetime of the project in line with the Final Offshore Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Coastal erosion has been carefully considered. The Environment Agency raised this point and the Applicant responded at Para 2.4.16. I of [REP2-014]. The Applicant has robustly assessed worker accommodation and it satisfied there is sufficient residual capacity. See the Applicant’s response to 2SERT3 in [REP5-135] 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Question. In response to the point raised on impacts on local businesses and community assets, the Applicant has previously provided responses to these points raised in Table 2.11 (against reference 106) of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations Identified by the ExA [REP2-014]. The Applicant is setting up meetings with the local planning authorities to discuss the potential for monitoring impacts on visitors and tourism following the grant of development consent (if granted).

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Workers Accommodation Throughout the hearings, repeated and consistent concern was expressed regarding the lack of capacity for additional workers' accommodation in Aldeburgh and the surrounding towns and villages. It is clear from both local evidence and lived experience that no meaningful accommodation capacity remains. This situation has been significantly exacerbated by the Sizewell C development, which has already removed substantial volumes of twelve-month and long-stay tourist accommodation from the area. Economic Impact As raised during the hearings, this displacement is having a direct and ongoing adverse effect on local high street businesses. These businesses depend on sustained yearround tourism rather than short seasonal peaks, and the cumulative loss of accommodation is undermining their viability. This economic harm has not been adequately quantified or assessed within the application. These businesses require urgent assistance now, before it is too late. I know from speaking to local businesses that some seriously considering to not re new their leases when due, they are becoming unviable and this news is catastrophic, not just for Aldeburgh and wider but the whole county. Impact on road networks Concerns were also clearly articulated during the hearings regarding the severe congestion of the rural road network. These roads are not designed to accommodate prolonged construction traffic, and congestion is already widespread. The evidence presented does not adequately reflect the reality of rural road constraints, nor does it convincingly address the compounded impact of concurrent major infrastructure projects. Regarding the cumulative impacts, I remain concerned that the applicant have not adequately assessed the impacts regarding the extra traffic through Snape and at the A1094/B1069 junction. Tourism In addition, concerns raised at the hearings highlighted the absence of robust and upto-date tourism impact surveys. Before this project can be properly examined, up to date and meaningful comprehensive tourism and accommodation assessments must be undertaken to reflect current conditions on the ground, rather than relying on assumptions that are out of date, not transferable from other projects and no longer hold true. Aldeburgh Carnival I also wish to highlight the serious concerns raised regarding the award-winning Aldeburgh Carnival, following discussions with	The Applicant is also reviewing potential opportunities to liaise with tourism related businesses to seek their views on how tourism impacts can be minimised. As to impacts on the junction, see the Applicant's response to AP59 in [REP5-126]. The Applicant has carefully assessed the impacts of the proposed development on tourism, in itself and with regards to cumulative impacts arising from other relevant projects. The Applicant recognises that the potential for future environmental changes associated with the Proposed Project during construction, operation and decommissioning are currently a source of concern for local tourism. To address this concern, the Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive and robust EIA, through which no residual significant effects have been identified for Socio-economics, Leisure and Tourism following the application of appropriate mitigation [REP2-014] at Table 2.30. See also [REP1A-005]. The Applicant notes the concerns regarding Aldeburgh Carnival and accommodation supporting that, but refers to its above comments on accommodation. The Applicant has carefully considered the impact of the Proposed Project on local residents, in itself and cumulatively with other relevant projects, as part of its EIA. See in particular [APP-058] 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		members of the Carnival Committee, including the Secretary. The committee has expressed deep anxiety about the extreme loss of accommodation during the summer holiday period, which will directly affect the Carnival as it approaches its 83rd year. This long-established and much-loved event relies heavily on visitor accommodation to support attendance, participation, and fundraising. Any reduction in capacity threatens not only the viability of the Carnival itself but also the vital funds it raises each year for local charities—contributions that are deeply woven into the social fabric of the community and must not be undervalued, diminished, or placed at risk by this project. Other Matters The hearings rightly raised the issue of human impact. Long working hours, increased light pollution, noise, and sustained construction activity present serious risks to mental health and wellbeing. These effects are cumulative and long-term and disproportionately affect small rural communities with limited capacity to absorb further disruption. Recognition of these impacts to date has been insufficient. The hearings further highlighted that anxiety is mounting among landowners, residents, and businesses directly affected by the proposal. Ongoing uncertainty and the lack of clear, resolved information are having a tangible impact on mental health and wellbeing, particularly for those facing potential land take, access disruption, or longterm proximity to construction activity. It is paramount and crucial that everything that can be done to ease these concerns is forefront. I have profound concerns about the severe and cumulative impacts that will be experienced by my division, its residents, local businesses, and the surrounding environment should this project be consented. This area holds multiple environmental and planning designations for a reason: to protect a sensitive and valued landscape and the communities within it. The scale and intensity of the proposed cable routes, runs, and associated infrastructure will have substantial and lasting effects on those living in, or in close proximity to, these works. The disruption to daily life, local businesses, and residents' mental health is significant and, in some cases, may never fully recover. I also echo concerns raised regarding Sizewell B and C outage figures. Evidence already shows workers seeking alternative accommodation, as existing local provision is fully booked (as demonstrated in the attached screenshot). The reality of outages occurring every six months, lasting up to three months at a time, presents an ongoing and unsustainable burden on local communities. Furthermore, as more detailed information regarding the Helios project has emerged, clearly it's impacts are substantial	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		and must be fully considered in combination with this proposal, rather than assessed in isolation. Given that these concerns were repeatedly raised during the hearings and remain unresolved up to Deadline 4, it is clear that the current evidence base is incomplete. Until these matters are fully and properly addressed, the Examining Authority cannot reasonably assess the true scale of harm arising from the proposal and that the applicant needs to provide you with this information. The matters above must be resolved before there is nothing left. Behind every field, holding, and access route are businesses, landowners and farming families who have cared for this land for generations, now living with relentless anxiety and the loss of both present and future livelihoods as unprecedented disruption dismantles lives and incomes they have never known to be so fragile, and who deserve meaningful recognition, support, and protection before irreversible harm is done and it is simply too late. Once again, thank you in advance for your consideration to my concerns and requests.	

26. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Cllr Tricia Austin

26.1 Introduction

26.1.1 Table 26.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Cllr Tricia Austin Deadline 4 Response [REP4-170].

Table 26.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Cllr Tricia Austin Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-170]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Further to my comments at the ExA’s Issue Specific Hearings, I would like to add: Impact on Local Economy We are extremely concerned about the likely impact of the SeaLink project in its present form on the local economy. Thanet rates as the most deprived district in Kent, with low incomes, poor education & health outcomes and limited affordable housing. Thanet has consistently featured in studies as one of the poorest areas in the country, and currently sits 26th from bottom amongst nearly 300 Council areas in the Index of Multiple Deprivation, placing it in the most disadvantaged 10% nationally. It is therefore clearly vital for our citizens that we do all we can to build prosperity in Thanet. A large company like National Grid coming into the area might appear helpful, but in practice it is difficult to see any benefits from the SeaLink project to Thanet. From an economic perspective, Thanet’s one growth industry is tourism & the visitor economy, which accounts for some 8,000 jobs. Visitors report visiting the coastline (80%), outdoor activities (12%) and food & drink (20%) as key influences in their choice of location – so preserving and enhancing these is key to bringing in more visitors. SeaLink will do the reverse. National Grid plans, inexplicably to local people, to site a massive, weighty converter station on marshland. Somewhat late in the day it appears to have dawned on NG that vast quantities of aggregate will be required to create any sort of stable base for such construction.	The Applicant’s comments on the points raised are as follows: Impact on Local Economy The Applicant notes the concerns about the impact on the local economy of Thanet. A complete assessment of socio-economic effects has been undertaken. This is set out in Application Document 6.2.3.10 (B): ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 10 Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism [REP1A-007]. This concludes that no likely significant effects on visitors and tourism will result from the Proposed Project. Job losses at visitor attractions and tourism-related businesses are considered unlikely to occur as a result of the Proposed Project. The option identification and selection process for the Kent Converter Station is set out in Application Document 7.3: Design Development Report [APP-321]. The concerns about traffic are noted. The construction vehicle routing has also been designed to minimise impacts across the highway network, as set out within Application Document 7.5.1.2: Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan [APP-338]. Application Document 6.2.3.7: Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-067] concludes that construction traffic generated by the Proposed Project is not expected to result in any significant impacts on the surrounding highway network with the identified management and mitigation in place. Further, Application Document 6.2.3.8: ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 8 Air Quality [APP-068] explains that no likely significant effects to air quality will result from the Proposed Project. The concerns about the carbon footprint arising from the construction of the Proposed Project are noted. These are addressed in Application Document 6.2.5.1: ES Part 5 Combined Chapter 1 Climate Change [APP-085], which concludes that the climate change effects associated with the Proposed Project are not

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• Thus, during the construction phase, Thanet's narrow historic streets and country lanes will thus see constant heavy traffic, noise and disruption. The carbon footprint of such construction alone should give us pause – ironic given the project's aim is presented as ensuring future sustainable energy systems. • Ramsgate, Cliffsend and the Minster Marshes themselves will be particularly adversely affected by the construction. Heavy plant movements and the constant stream of aggregate lorries will slow the flow of traffic in the area, which already suffers from a poor road system, disrupting other industries. • We heard during the Issue Specific Hearings that National Grid expects to bring in the majority of its workers from outside Thanet. When asked about the impact of overnight stays on longer-term rental costs in Thanet, they were quick to point out that many workers will travel into the area daily. The further impact of this additional traffic on our inadequate road system, the impact of extra pollution on our air quality and the higher carbon footprint incurred cannot be welcomed. • Visitors to the area are highly likely to be adversely affected by the traffic, noise and pollution, which will discourage them from exploring. • Once the project is complete, the once-beautiful Minster Marshes, a focus for birdwatchers, walkers & holidaymakers, will feature a massive converter station, visible for miles around where previously there were unspoilt open views. • Local businesses appear likely be adversely affected – for example: ○ Our cafes and bars, particularly those close to the site, but also those on the route from the aggregate works on Ramsgate Port, are likely to suffer extensively from dust, noise and vibration, as well as from traffic holdups. Many are struggling already and this may be the last straw. ○ Our tour guides, wildlife photographers, film-makers, birdwatch leaders and seal watching boats will no longer have peaceful, natural locations to capture on film or to introduce to visitors. The enterprising individuals who have carved out these niches for themselves in the local visitor economy are likely to experience serious damage to their enterprises.	significant. It is noted that the proposed project comprises low carbon infrastructure as defined within the NPS EN-1..
		mpact on jobs and skills	Impact on jobs and skills

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• We have seen no information on National Grid's jobs & skills plans, but we noted above that they appear not to plan to employ local workers. • This is a massive missed opportunity. Clearly specialist roles may need to be brought in from elsewhere, but employing local workers in routine roles could go some way to help counterbalance some of the negative impacts on the local economy highlighted above. • This approach shows disrespect for the potential of local people. By taking on and training local staff, National Grid would be able to do several things at once: ○ Create additional jobs that can be taken by local people ○ Contribute to raising skills levels to improve workers' job prospects in future ○ Introduce a modest positive impact on the local economy to help balance some of the negative impacts mentioned above ○ Reduce traffic flows, car miles and pollution in the area ○ Reduce negative impacts on availability of overnight rentals ○ Improve relationships with the local community • This last point is an important one, as the fact that NG have made no effort to improve local relationships highlights their approach throughout this project: to regard the location as immaterial, the landscape as disposable, the wildlife as insignificant and the local community as not worth working with. This is deeply disappointing.	The Applicant notes the encouragement to recruit construction workforce locally. The Applicant encourages its contractors to use local services and labour where possible but due to some of the specialist nature of the works National Grid cannot dictate this to them as the required skills may not be available locally. A Detailed Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan outlining opportunities for local workers is submitted at Deadline 6. Table 10.20 of Application Document 6.2.3.10 (B): ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 10 Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism [REP1A-007] states the construction phase will create an estimated 50 average net additional jobs per annum. This assessment estimates 30% of the construction workforce will be sourced from the surrounding area, based on benchmarks against similar energy infrastructure schemes. This equates to approximately 15 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles, providing job opportunities for local residents
		We urge ExA to take all these points into account. Thank you	

27. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Fiona Cramb

27.1 Introduction

27.1.1 Table 27.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Fiona Cramb Deadline 4 Response [REP4-173].

Table 27.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Fiona Cramb Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-173]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Firstly I’d like to endorse submissions made to you by the community action groups, including SEAS and others. I will try not to repeat points that others have made. I wasn’t able to attend the issue specific hearings, but I did look at some of the coverage and would like to raise the following points: Cumulative impact This is the issue that affects myself, my family, our home and our neighbours most directly. As I said at the open floor hearings this matter was not sufficiently well considered by the planning inspectors examining the Scottish power renewables EA1 North and EA2 development consent orders. The inspectors failed to use the powers that they had to compel the developers and indeed National Grid to come forward with information that was already in the public domain about the additional projects that were planned to connect at the Friston substation. These included this project and the project now called Lion Link. In my submissions to the Scottish Power Renwables DCO examination I made the point that should all these projects be given permission to connect at the proposed National Grid substation we would be encircled by Cable routes and overwhelmed by industrial scale infrastructure. This is indeed coming to pass and is already incredibly disruptive and distressing for us and our neighbours this without the impact of the Sizewell C construction programme. The cumulative impact of these projects going ahead often with overlapping construction timetables means that we and our neighbours are facing huge levels of disruption blighting our lives, the area we love to say nothing of the value of	The Applicant acknowledges this representation and the issues it identifies. In particular these are concerns relating to cumulative impact and as to the needs case of the proposed project. The Applicant has prepared a cumulative impact assessment relating to onshore impacts in Suffolk – see [APP-059] and in particular section 13.4. AP107, which required the Applicant to consider the impact of LionLink, was complied with. A review of the updated information published by NGV for the LionLink project on 13 January 2026 has been completed and are reported in Appendix C to [REP5-126]. The newly published information has not changed any of the assessment findings included in the original cumulative assessments contained in: 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effect [APP-060] 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [APP-290] 6.9 Water Framework Directive Assessment [APP-293] 6.11 Marine Conservation Zone Assessment [APP-296].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		our homes. I still find it disgraceful and unfathomable that the developers and National Grid are able to blight our homes by drawing the boundaries of their construction site, in this case three construction sites, along our garden fence making our property unsaleable and yet we are entitled to no compensation for this. We are grateful to SEAS for documenting with expert assistance the cumulative impact. We all recall the clear signal given by the inspectors in the SPR EA1N and EA2 examinations when they made what they described as a finely balanced recommendation. I hope you will give this due consideration.	
		The need for this project I support the argument made by SEAS and other others that there is no need for this project. I believe SEAS has provided you with detailed arguments around how the justification for this project has been superseded by the opportunities for much less environmentally damaging alternatives. I believe you indicated that after deadline 4 you would give renewed consideration to SEAS’s request for an ISH on the question of need. I support this request.	The needs case for the project are addressed in Application Document 9.129: Applicant’s Response to 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of Need [REP5-142]. The Applicant does not agree that the needs case for the proposed project is lacking. Indeed, such is the urgency to deliver the Proposed Project that the National Electricity System Operator (NESO) Clean Power 2030 report identifies the 2030 delivery of the Proposed Project (alongside the separate Norwich to Tilbury overhead line project) as being critical to delivering a network which supports clean power pathways. In addition, the National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 states that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure, which includes the Proposed Project. NPS EN-1 further states (at paragraph 3.3.63) that “Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP Infrastructure and it should be progressed as quickly as possible”, and also recognises (at paragraph 1.2.8) that over the next decade the onshore and offshore transmission network will require substantial reinforcement in East Anglia to handle increased power flows from offshore wind generation. This is discussed in Application Document 7.1 Planning Statement [APP-319] superseded by [AS-057].

28. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Fiona Gilmore

28.1 Introduction

28.1.1 Table 28.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Fiona Gilmore Deadline 4 Response [REP4-174].

Table 28.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Fiona Gilmore Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-174]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	1. Threat to Tourism/ Hospitality Jobs and Local Economy A number of concerns have been raised by Interested Parties throughout the DCO Hearings, but the Applicant has yet to respond on a range of outstanding questions. Tracking those promised responses is critical as there remain so many unanswered questions. By way of example, the lack of current quantitative studies exploring visitors’ attitudes to perceived and real “blight” to a unique tourism offer along the Heritage Coast is a deficiency that makes any quantitative estimate of the loss of visitors and loss of businesses and jobs very difficult to measure. The 2019 DMO study signals a decline of 17% visitors. We think this could be optimistic given the new information regarding the scale of at least seven energy projects. We extrapolate from 17% decline a loss of around £500 million during 10-12 years of construction. How do National Grid along with EDF and ScottishPower together seek to compensate this loss of revenues from visitors? Some promotional literature advertising the region is absolutely no compensation. If the experience is no longer “tranquil” and “beautiful”, no amount of advertising will bring our cherished visitors back. Other North Sea countries prohibit major construction projects taking place during tourism seasonal peaks in tourism resorts. The Applicant’s discourse continues to ignore the fact that they wish to construct one of the largest energy infrastructure hubs in Europe bang next to a premium tourism resort. From our conversations with developers in the Netherlands and Belgium, they find it hard to understand how this country can be contemplating the construction of such an energy hub in an area of outstanding beauty and so rich in biodiversity. They do not build their hubs in precious lowland wetland areas but very carefully choose hubs in industrial zones such as Zeebrugge and Rotterdam. The Heritage Coast is the wrong place for such a scale of hub. The noise of	The Applicant has carefully assessed the impacts of the proposed development on tourism, in itself and with regards to cumulative impacts arising from other relevant projects. The Applicant recognises that the potential for future environmental changes associated with the Proposed Project during construction, operation and decommissioning are currently a source of concern for local tourism. To address this concern, the Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive and robust EIA, through which no residual significant effects have been identified for Socio-economics, Leisure and Tourism following the application of appropriate mitigation [REP2-014] at Table 2.30. See also [REP1A-005]. See also p.14 of [REP2-014]. Sizewell C’s visitor perception survey indicated that 39% of respondents might be discouraged from visiting the local area during the construction phase. However, the Applicant’s recent review of published monitoring reports of actual impacts observed from Sizewell B and Hinkley Point C found that initial concerns observed in surveys have not translated into measurable reductions in visitor numbers or tourism-related employment. On the contrary, the local tourism sector remained confident and continued to grow during the construction period. On that basis there is limited robust evidence to suggest that negative visitor perception identified / observed in surveys prior to construction will result in material adverse effects on tourism. Furth to the above, the Applicant has answered the ExA’s Third Written Questions a number of which relate to tourism and the local economy and these answers are submitted at Deadline 6 as 9.136 Applicant’s Responses to Third Written Questions.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		construction, the lights at night and the relentless flow of HGVs are going to deter tourists particularly at seasonal peaks.	
		2. Needs Case: request for a dedicated Hearing I am surprised that the ExA does not see the need for a further Hearing to interrogate the Needs Case. I hope that the ExA will reconsider this given the fact that it is cheaper, faster and far less damaging to communities and environments to opt for the upgrading of pylons and there is no actual need for Sea Link. There are better offshore grid solutions which will come into play over the next ten years. The UK has been slow to grasp the opportunity for offshore converter platforms and blind to the opportunity to upgrade existing industrial hubs closer to London. A developer led culture has brought us to this parlous situation. It is absolutely critical that these ill-conceived plans are interrogated fully in a dedicated Hearing where the alternative cheaper, faster solutions are given a full airing. It is surely the duty of developers and officers to consider cheaper, faster solutions?	The needs case for the project are addressed in Application Document 9.129: Applicant's Response to 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of Need [REP5-142]. The Applicant does not agree that the needs case for the proposed project is lacking. Indeed, such is the urgency to deliver the Proposed Project that the National Electricity System Operator (NESO) Clean Power 2030 report identifies the 2030 delivery of the Proposed Project (alongside the separate Norwich to Tilbury overhead line project) as being critical to delivering a network which supports clean power pathways. In addition, the National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 states that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure, which includes the Proposed Project. NPS EN-1 further states (at paragraph 3.3.63) that "Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP Infrastructure and it should be progressed as quickly as possible", and also recognises (at paragraph 1.2.8) that over the next decade the onshore and offshore transmission network will require substantial reinforcement in East Anglia to handle increased power flows from offshore wind generation. This is discussed in Application Document 7.1 Planning Statement [APP-319] superseded by [AS-057].
		3. Coastal erosion: crumbling cliffs and eroding shorelines have not been fully assessed. The alarmingly fast-changing geological landscape should be reassessed by objective specialists. This coast is not suitable for these infrastructure projects.	Coastal erosion has been carefully considered. The Environment Agency raised this point and the Applicant responded at §2.4.16. I of [REP2-014].
		4. Mental health I have friends living on the frontline who are struggling mentally with the intrusion of this industrial onslaught. Already for residents living next to the Friston SPR works, machine lights are destroying the dark skies and changing the tranquil countryside profoundly. 10 to 12 years of heavy industrialisation for these Friston residents and for Saxmundham residents in the near future along with the other impacted communities has not been examined in terms of the cumulative impact. I knew one of the men who committed suicide. I heard the story of the other man who despaired after being told by an agent that his cottage was valueless. Both men had put their life savings in to the purchase of their homes. Anxiety leads to depression and ill health and disease. It is shameful that these very real issues are treated by developers with seeming disdain. If other North Sea countries can consider social, economic and environmental issues holistically and respect their importance,	Furth to the above, the Applicant has answered the ExA's Third Written Questions a number of which relate to health and well being and these answers are submitted at Deadline 6 as 9.136 Applicant's Responses to Third Written Questions.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		why does the UK planning system relegate these concerns in favour of developers' short term profit targets? The Winsor Report (July 2023) signalled the need to accelerate the planning process but emphasised the need for the application of holistic network design criteria at the outset of planning hub locations. This is a tipping- point for coastal Suffolk. The cumulative adverse impacts are too great a burden on a fragile coast and the communities will be broken by this onslaught. The evidence of despair and depression is there in the health and wellbeing reports presented by SEAS and ESC. It is beholden on the developers to acknowledge the adverse impacts and seek alternative solutions.	

29. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Iain Brown

29.1 Introduction

29.1.1 Table 29.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Iain Brown Deadline 4 Response [REP4-175].

Table 29.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Iain Brown Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-175]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	In observing the extensive land acquired even prior to the DCO approval for SZC, it alarms me, and many other residents, as to the demands that will be made on Suffolk Coastal to satisfy SeaLink , Lion Link - and beyond. If one thing is clear, it is that NG obscure the extent of their ambition at every opportunity. The fact that certain routes are selected over other more obvious access points is at question. As is the insistence that “drilling” will be acceptable on a constantly eroding Coastline. The cause and effect is enormous as evidenced recently by the tragic loss of homes on the crumbling cliffs at Thorpeness (and also Sizewell). And lest we forget, the village of Slaughden was consumed by the North Sea less than a century ago. The heavy personal cost to current residents of this Coast is clear for all to see. And now we have SeaLink. It is the major concerns over the decision making of SeaLink and NG, regarding route selection and land acquisition for these proposed works that greatly worries many people. Including King Charles, who has now signalled his apparent objection to SeaLink. These concerns greatly increased when it was recently revealed that NESO employees have been offered “preferential shareholding” in NG. There must be clarification and the fullest disclosure by the Applicant on this matter. This situation could possibly influence decisions regarding “Compulsory Acquisition “ targets, the manner and extent of acquisition, fair pricing and commercial termsinvolved. This could well lead to “Conflicts of Interest” arising, as so clearly described in recent press reports, especially The Telegraph article of 4 th January 2026 by Jonathan Leake (Energy Editor). Will the future NG acquisition targets, beyond those already identified, be subject to the oversight and approval of NESO Executives holding NG share certificates? Will this inspire NESO to further support NG wider ambitions and perhaps extend potentially lucrative “Compulsory Acquisition” beyond the immediate needs of SeaLink? There are already fears that the	The route selection and site selection, including the need for land acquisition, have been fully assessed. The reasoning for the arrangement of the Proposed Project is contained in: • Application Document 6.2.1.3: ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044] • Application Document 8.1: Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Substation Siting study (October 2022) [APP-368] • Application Document 8.2: Options Selection and Design Evolution Report (October 2023) [APP-369] • Application Document 8.3: Strategic Options Report (October 2023) [APP-370] • Application Document 7.2: Strategic Options Back Check Report [APP-320] The Applicant notes the concerns about the Suffolk coastline. The Applicant recognises the sensitivity of this, and potential impacts have been assessed in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F): ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment. As to the concerns raised about compulsory purchase of land, the Applicant recognises that compulsory purchase of land can be upsetting and stressful for landowners. It notes that any compulsory purchase sought under this application must be justified and is subject to a test of “<i>compelling case in the public interest</i>”. These are explained in Application Document 4.2 (H): Statement of Reasons [REP5-009]. Moreover, as explained at ISH2, the Applicant cannot seek compulsory purchase powers relating to equipment belonging to another project, as each project is a separate undertaking.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		proposed footprint of land to be acquired in Friston and Saxmundham will be enlarged beyond that already stated. As land access is acquired, will other NG related projects now be tumbling through the door behind Sealink and LionLink? Will more land be compulsorily acquired for Solar Farms? Will there be more, as yet unidentified, "land takes" (as described by SeaLink's James Buckley at the CAH 27th January) due in Suffolk and Kent, enhancing NG Shareholder value in the process? The obfuscation and lack of honesty that has dogged every NG-related proposal thus far does them no credit at all. I sincerely hope that the recent re-designation of Friston as "Kiln Lane" is not a coded precursor to allow for further "land takes" that could establish a larger Industrial Complex to facilitate increasingly expansive "Energy projects" to invade Suffolk Coastal in the future. It certainly looks like NG's Trojan Horse is being delivered to the Heritage Coast and it will be scandalous if the State owned NESO employees with preferential NG Shares, fiscally benefit from the regions enforced subjugation to these projects. It appears that these protected areas of Suffolk Coastal and Minster Marshes are being sacrificed to the financial benefit of NG and SeaLink shareholders. As already noted, even the King objects!	

30. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Marianne Fellowes

30.1 Introduction

30.1.1 Table 30.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Marianne Fellowes Deadline 4 Response [REP4-176].

Table 30.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Marianne Fellowes Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-176]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	4. Noise pollution at HDD Compound, RSPB North Warren reserve. *Please note this is not between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, this is within the Aldeburgh boundary completely. Should commitment be changed to read; ‘for a maximum of 6 months’. And would ExA please ask for provision of quiet (enclosed) generators to further reduce dB created. Linked to this, what measures could also be incorporated to reduce vibration impact to receptors? The HDD compound is proposed to be sited within a sensitive area of National Landscapes, can the compound size/impact be reduced further by providing equipment storage, workers parking and welfare facilities elsewhere (with shared transport provided to/from a location further away)? What light pollution would also be caused by 6 month working timeframe? 15. Construction vehicles using Suffolk Access S-BM13 off Thorpe Road in the Construction Traffic Management Plan It is not clear how the King Charles III England Coast Path and Suffolk Coast Path, or the Thorpe Road will be ‘managed’ by the Applicant during HDD construction operations, and maintenance if vehicles are needed to access S-BM13. The shingle area to the East of Thorpe Road is an extensively used footpath and cycleway to/from Thorpeness as part of the vital Tourism economy, and daily exercise/enjoyment as it links directly	The Applicant has taken steps to address potential impacts arising from the compound near the RSPB reserve. For example, following Statutory consultation, the proposed construction compound in this area has been reduced in size and moved further away from the mentioned Statutory designations. In addition to reducing the potential for ecological effects, these changes have also helped to lessen the impact on nearby relevant receptors, residential properties, and the flood zone. This revised design was presented at Targeted consultation (see §1.7.23 of [APP-313]). A nighttime assessment is provided within Application Document 9.124 Landscape and Visual Nighttime Assessment [REP5-137] The Applicant addresses impacts on the King Charles III path and other PRoWs at §7.15.1 of [REP2-024]. Application Document 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP3-078] states in Commitment B60 that “There will be no vehicle access to shingle habitats.” The beach is separated from Thorpe Road by the shingle habitat, so therefore there will be no vehicles accessing the beach from S-BM13 (Thorpe Road). Maps of the works are provided at [REP1-001]. Thorpe Rd and the coast are at plate 6. The Applicant does not agree that the needs case for the proposed project is lacking. Indeed, such is the urgency to deliver the Proposed Project that the National Electricity System Operator (NESO) Clean Power 2030 report identifies the 2030 delivery of the Proposed Project (alongside the separate Norwich to Tilbury overhead line project) as being critical to delivering a network which supports clean power pathways. In addition, the National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 states that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure, which includes the Proposed Project. NPS EN-1

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		to the ancient, Grade I* Moot Hall to the South walking past the Scallop Shell sculpture tribute to Benjamin Britten. The Applicant states there will be no need to restrict access, but this cannot be the case during HDD which will require safety fencing and exclusion around it. Applicant said that vehicles may need to access the beach to clean up any Frac-out. How close to the shoreline will HDD equipment or shipping be required? People walk along the high-water mark and where the sea breaks onto the shore, and daily swim in this area. 45-49. Suffolk Coast & Heaths National Landscape (AONB) It is widely accepted and articulated in NPS EN-1 that AONBs have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty and that development consent can only be granted in these areas in “exception circumstances”. There is strong evidence that this application is not compatible with the special characteristics of the Suffolk Heritage Coast especially landscape character and visual amenity. Scenic qualities include; • striking landfall of shingle beaches and cliffs, inspiration for poetry, music etc. • varied habitats, and protected species of flora and fauna, birds and insects. • appeal to the senses – from openness of vista, big skies and memorable views, and • the quality of light, smell, sounds (including bird song). Other landscape characteristics and qualities include; • a sense of remoteness with few major roads and minimal traffic, dark skies, • a lack of human influence (few man-made structures, absence of development), • a sense of the passing of time, and • a return to nature, in other words relative tranquillity not found elsewhere. I would encourage the ExA to also ask the Suffolk Coasts & Heaths National Landscape to also address this question and provide evidence to you.	further states (at paragraph 3.3.63) that “Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP Infrastructure and it should be progressed as quickly as possible”, and also recognises (at paragraph 1.2.8) that over the next decade the onshore and offshore transmission network will require substantial reinforcement in East Anglia to handle increased power flows from offshore wind generation. This is discussed in Application Document 7.1 Planning Statement [APP-319] superseded by [AS-057]. The Applicant has provided details on its approach to good design through the Design Approach Documents Application Document 7.11.1 Design Approach Document – Suffolk [APP-364] and Application Document 7.12.1 Design Principles – Suffolk [APP366]. Along with the coordination document Application Document 7.10 Coordination Document [APP-363] these design approach documents discuss the need for ongoing liaison with stakeholder through the detailed design process.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Part of the test for exceptional circumstances EN-1 5.10.32 is the needs case for the development. I would request ExA to hold an ISH on the Need Case so this can be examined. I believe there is no evidence that there is a need to bring 2GW power into this area via SeaLink. Equally both SZC and SPR EA1N & EA2 were offered connection agreements based on capacity being available on the Grid, with no mention of the need for SeaLink within their DCO examinations, and no other projects have been approved since, so therefore there is no additional need to take 2GW away from the area. If there is a national need/overriding public interest to bring addition power to Kent this could come direct from offshore windfarms or via an offshore HVDV Convertor Station similar to the new SPR High Voltage Direct Current off-shore Convertor Station for EA3. If there is a need to take excess power brought ashore by SPR EA1N and EA2 outside of the East Suffolk coast and the 400KV line does not have capacity, then this power should not be brought ashore to begin with to the Friston Substation and should connect via offshore cable to an industrial area closer to where the power is needed. This assessment should include the cost of, and scope for, developing all or part of the Application elsewhere outside of the designated area or meeting the need for it in some other way – and the Applicant has not included this. Other technologies exist which have not been costed or presented as part of this Application including OHA approaches. There is also no negative impact on the local economy if the project was not located here. In fact, the tourist economy would be better served if it was not consented here. The special qualities of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths National Landscape also includes the SSSI categorisation at RSPB North Warren and Aldeburgh-Leiston SSSI. 5.3.11 states that “where a proposed development on land within or outside an SSSI is likely to have an adverse effect on an SSSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) development consent should not normally be given. (*Note this does not have to be significant adverse effect.) And an exception should only be made “where the benefits (including need) of the development at this site clearly outweigh both the impact that is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of specific scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national networks of SSSIs. “	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		In conclusion it is clear that the needs case for the development at this site versus elsewhere need to be examined and the extent established. The negative impact cannot be fully mitigated within the budget or timeline which the Applicant has. The ExA for SPR EA1N and EA2 commented that the environmental harm of that project to the area was only just outweighed by the overarching public interest, and that any further development in the area should be considered very carefully. NGV LionLink project rejected landfall in the same location at Aldeburgh saying there was “substantial ecological and other challenges, and constraints”. The Applicant themselves in discussing Inter-project cumulative effects 7.16.16 states that “The concentration of construction activity associated with the landfalls and HVDC cable corridors within part of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB has the potential to alter the perception of the AONB with construction of major energy projects becoming a temporary characteristic feature of the landscape.” Even temporary would be of harm to the National Landscape and SSSIs. Total cumulative effects on representative viewpoints would also have the “potential to be significant” as a result of the Suffolk Onshore scheme (SeaLink) with SPR EA1N & EA” and LionLink – at all project stages. 130. Design Principles. It is not clear how even with involvement of the Panel that the Guidance for National Infrastructure Commission Design Group principles can be incorporated into this Application and consulted on. The Design Principles Handbook is clear that these should include; • Lowest possible carbon impact to enhance the environment and contribute to nature recovery, and be ready to withstand growing climate pressures. (*Note a further 5m of cliff was lost at Thorpeness since the ISH2 with 23m lost in the last 6 months). • Developing a truly inclusive and accessible design that is sympathetic to the social and community context in which it will operate • How the project will serve as a “active Steward” for the local landscape, prioritizing nature-based solutions and boosting a local sense of identity • Look beyond the site boundary at how the project can maximise the value of investment, including by working with other partners.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		With ref to NPS EN-1 5.10.33 I am concerned that the Sec of State would not be able to ensure that the project should be carried out to the highest environmental standards secured via the DCO because the Application lacks design detail and my experience is that it is only when contracts are let (post approval) that full details of projects are agreed. The Applicant has also demonstrated that they wish to provide minimal landscaping and has consistently downplayed impacts throughout the application.	

31. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Paul Atkinson

31.1 Introduction

31.1.1 Table 31.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Paul Atkinson Deadline 4 Response [REP4-177].

Table 31.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Paul Atkinson Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-177]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I submit this representation in support of Suffolk County Council’s proposal for a northern access route to the Saxmundham converter station, further to the discussion held at Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) on 27 January 2026 and the Examining Authority’s Action Points 2 and 3. The northern route presents a credible, lower-impact and more deliverable alternative to the Applicant’s preferred western access route. The evidence heard at CAH1 demonstrates that the Applicant’s assessment of alternatives has been incomplete and that the northern route now requires full and transparent consideration within the examination. During CAH1, Suffolk County Council explained that it has consistently raised concerns regarding the deliverability and environmental consequences of the Applicant’s western access proposal. The Council identified two principal constraints: the inadequacy of the Benhall railway bridge for Abnormal Indivisible Loads, and the Applicant’s proposal to construct a new bridge over the River Fromus. Both matters remain unresolved. The Council made clear that these constraints may render the western route either unduly harmful or not demonstrably deliverable. The Examining Authority acknowledged this position and noted that, despite the Council’s repeated concerns, the Applicant had not provided a sufficiently detailed or convincing response. At CAH1, the Examining Authority asked Suffolk County Council to provide further detail of the northern access route at Deadline 4, noting that a clear description of the alignment had not yet been set out in the examination documents. The Authority indicated that this information was required in order for the Applicant to respond appropriately and for the alternative to be assessed on its merits. This request confirms that the northern route is a relevant alternative within the scope of the examination and that further comparative assessment is now necessary. The CAH1 discussion also revealed that the Applicant’s rejection of the northern route was based primarily on journey time, distance, and assumptions regarding the availability of the Sizewell	The Applicant acknowledges this representation, which supports the mooted northern access to the Saxmundham converter station. It is noted that the site of the converter station, whilst not directly in issue here, was selected after a careful process involving the review of alternatives – see Appx B to [REP2-014]. The Applicant responds to the suggestion that RAF Leiston should be used, inter alia, at p.309 of that document The Applicant is satisfied that the analysis in the Document 9.112: Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4-101] is robust. It presents three options so that alternative approaches can be taken if an option is deemed infeasible. The Applicant also notes that it does not accept that the approach taken to the Fromus bridge has resulted in a flawed consultation. Statutory consultees were able to address the bridge and their feedback was considered (see §9.6 of the Consultation Report [APP-301]). See p.417 §TT5 of that document where the excessive weight of AILs is expressly raised and responded to under the consultation. The Applicant does not agree that the representations before the ExA are imbalanced in favour of the Fromus bridge route. SCC is a key local authority and as this representation observes has made its case for the alternative route. Representations to similar effect have been made by Bernhall and Sternfield Parish Council. The Applicant directly responded to SCC’s proposal for the northern route to be used and it relies on its explanation set out in [REP5-125]. Without revisiting the conclusions of that document, the Applicant remains firmly of the view that the northern access route was properly considered at the pre application stage and was objectively

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Link Road. The Applicant did not provide a detailed engineering comparison between the northern and western options, nor did it address the environmental, heritage, or landscape implications of the western route. It did not explain how the Benhall railway bridge could be made suitable for AIL movements without significant disruption, nor did it justify the need for a new Fromus bridge in a sensitive valley landscape. These omissions are material in the context of National Policy Statements EN-1 and EN-5, which require a balanced assessment of alternatives, including environmental and heritage impacts. In addition to the environmental and heritage concerns, the western access route carries substantial financial and socio-economic implications that have not been adequately addressed by the Applicant. Strengthening the Benhall railway bridge to accommodate AIL movements would require significant engineering works. Such works would almost certainly necessitate partial or full closure of the A12 at this location, with consequential disruption to local communities, commuters, and businesses. There is also a realistic prospect of temporary restrictions or closures on the railway line itself during certain phases of the strengthening works. The economic consequences of these interventions — including delays, diversions, reduced accessibility, and impacts on local trade and employment — have not been assessed or presented by the Applicant. Similarly, the construction of a new bridge over the River Fromus represents a major capital expenditure, involving complex engineering in a sensitive landscape. Beyond the direct construction cost, this intervention would require road closures, temporary diversions, and long-term alterations to the local highway network. The Applicant has not provided any transparent assessment of these impacts, nor has it demonstrated that such a structure is necessary when a viable alternative exists that avoids the Fromus Valley entirely. By contrast, the northern access route avoids these costs and disruptions. It would utilise the Sizewell Link Road, a modern strategic highway designed to accommodate heavy construction traffic, including AIL movements, without the need for major new infrastructure. It would avoid the Benhall railway bridge altogether, removing the need for strengthening works and eliminating the associated disruption to both the A12 and the rail network. It would also avoid the need for a new Fromus bridge, thereby preventing both the financial cost and the community impacts associated with such a structure. The northern route is therefore technically feasible, environmentally preferable, economically proportionate, and more	assessed to be a materially worse option than the ‘western route’ proposed by the Applicant. As set out in REP5-125 the different route alternatives were the subject of two rounds of assessment and it is not correct to say that there has not been a proportionate assessment of the available access route alternatives.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		aligned with existing strategic infrastructure. It reduces construction risk, avoids unnecessary engineering interventions, and protects the landscape and heritage setting of Saxmundham. It also responds directly to the Examining Authority's concern, expressed at CAH1, that if the western route were found unacceptable late in the examination, it would be too late for the Applicant to propose an alternative. A full assessment of the northern route is therefore essential at this stage to ensure procedural fairness and to avoid the risk of an incomplete examination. To conclude: The examination does not yet contain a balanced or proportionate assessment of the available access route alternatives. The Applicant's analysis of the northern route has been limited, while the significant engineering, environmental, heritage, economic, and community impacts of the western route have not been fully addressed. In these circumstances, it is essential that the Applicant is required to undertake a complete and evidence-based comparison of both options so that the Examining Authority can determine the least harmful and most deliverable solution.	

32. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Walberswick Parish Council

32.1 Introduction

32.1.1 Table 32.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Walberswick Parish Council Deadline 4 Response [REP4-179].

Table 32.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Walberswick Parish Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-179]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I am responding on behalf of Walberswick Parish Council as the Councillor delegated to deal with NSIP projects in our area including Sealink. I attended three days of ISH hearings on 28,29,30 January 2026 but did not make any oral representation given the preference of the Panel to receive written input when possible. I am writing in response to several issues of concern covered during the 3 days of ISH. Converter Site: Access and Design The hearings and WRs have demonstrated that the selection of the converter station site in Saxmundham is highly flawed. It is of huge frustration to witness the Applicant proposing increasingly extreme ‘mitigation’ to make this site workable when good project planning and management should have led to the conclusion that a different site is necessary. We are particularly troubled by the Applicant’s desire to retain the converter station site despite its obvious inaccessibility. All its possible “solutions” to the inability of the Benhall Bridge to support such infrastructure simply create new problems that fall on the community, the roads, the rail network and the environment. As ExA understands, our area has no alternative road or rail routes. Those that exist are already sub-standard prior to SeaLink. It is a travesty for the Applicant to propose ever higher costs on to the transport network (including closing the rail which impacts communities all the way to Lowestoft), the community’s right to peaceful enjoyment of their homes, and to threaten the survival of local businesses, heritage assets and the natural environment in its desire to construct converter stations in a location that it cannot even reach. Another case in point about the inappropriateness of the converter station site was the discussion on the proposed excessive working hours the Applicant said they needed in order to make the chosen converter station site viable. This amply demonstrates that Sea	The Applicant’s comments on the issues of concern raised are as follows: Converter Site: Access and Design The Applicant notes the concerns about the siting of the Saxmundham Converter Station. Application Document 7.1 (C): Planning Statement [AS-057] summarises the selection of siting of the Proposed Project, including the evolution and selection of emerging preferences captured in Application Document 8.1: Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Substation Siting Study (October 2022) [APP-368] and Application Document 8.2: Options Selection and Design Evolution Report (October 2023) [APP-369]. Further, section 4.4 of Application Document 7.3: Design Development Report [APP-321] explains, amongst other things, how legislation, policy, as well as the Holford and Horlock Rules have informed the selection of the site for the Saxmundham Converter Station. As part of the design development the site selection process and consideration of alternatives are also summarised in Application Document 6.2.1.3: Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044]. Site access, as well as the assessment of potential effects on the road network, is addressed in Application Document 6.2.2.7: ES Part 2: Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054]. Construction vehicle routing has been designed to minimise impacts on the surrounding highway network through management and mitigation as set out in Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D): Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064]. With such measures in place, no significant impacts on the highway network are identified. As explained in the Applicant’s response to 2NV2 of Application Document 9.123: Applicant’s Responses to Second Written

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Link's proposed location is untenable if it can only be built if contractors are given a free hand to work all day, every day of the year without regard to its impact. Presumably such an approach was banished from the British economy more than a century ago. In this regard, we are appreciative of ExA's questioning of the Applicant on the proposed working hours. As all the speakers pointed out, it would be unacceptable under any conditions to provide no respite to the local community from the congestion, noise, pollution, and other externalities of the project. But for the Applicant to even consider that they should be permitted such work hours when working within the same location as SZC, SPR and other projects which quite rightly are NOT permitted to do so, is indicative of how desperate the Applicant is to continue with their ill-conceived plans with no regard to its impact on others. One must also wonder that even if the extreme work arounds proposed by the Applicant to build the converter station were possible, how can a converter station be operated without permanent and sustainable access? Would the applicant propose to redig haul roads, construct new temporary bridges, close the rail line as it needed and disrupt the surrounding community whenever a transformer needs replacement or any AIL needs to be removed or delivered? A third area of concern relates to the discussion of design aspects. We were troubled by the Applicant's unwillingness to commit to any design elements beyond their "grey box" when, in 2 fact, they had offered throughout consultations and within their documentation more sympathetic and less offensive design options. This is particularly troubling given the site's impact on heritage assets, ProW and the sense of space discussed at the hearings and raised in many oral and written representations. It was particularly worrying that the Applicant, in arguing that its design choices were constrained by the need to be "electricity-led", implied that the more sympathetic design options offered throughout consultations and in their materials did not meet such a standard. We also learnt that Lionlink would be using the same architect as Sealink so that the buildings would be aligned – presumably in whatever way SeaLink's Applicant determined. At the time of the ISH, I took the opportunity of attending the Statutory Consultation just launched by Lionlink. I confirmed with Lionlink engineers that the architect they were using was indeed the one selected by National Grid for Sealink. But the Lionlink engineers also confirmed that the 4 "designer" converter stations on offer to the community for both projects were all "electricity-led". That is, the engineers for LionLink confirmed that 100% of the necessary electric kit would work in any of the proposed designs. Therefore, the Applicant for SeaLink either doesn't understand the	Question [REP5-135], core working hours are not proposed to be 24 hours. Contrary to what is suggested by WPC, a new permanent access is proposed for the Saxmundham Converter Station. This is Work No. 3A under Schedule 1 of the dDCO and can be identified on Application Document 2.5.1 (C): Works Plans – Suffolk [REP4-006]. A full appraisal of options and approaches to design are set out in Application Document 7.11.1 (B) Design Approach Document – Suffolk [REP1A-029].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		converter station design or was untruthful. We believe that this point needs to be challenged further by ExA.	
		Inclusion of Lionlink in the Sealink DCO At the Open Floor Hearings and in the initial written submission of Walberswick Parish Council to the Sealink DCO, we raised our concern that the Applicant was attempting to sneak in through the back door “pre-approval” of Lionlink by including converter station land and some cable routes for Lionlink within the Sealink DCO. Whilst this was not a specific issue at the ISH, information gleaned from the ISH makes the inclusion of Lionlink land even more pernicious. That is, as we noted above and as discussed at considerable length at the ISH, there are many problems with SeaLink’s converter site accessibility, design issues, short and long-term negative impact on the community, transport, heritage assets and Prows. However, these negative aspects would potentially be doubled if Sealink were to receive approval and thereby lock in these same mistakes with a kind of “pre-approval” for Lionlink. It is striking that Lionlink chose to initiate its Statutory Consultations in January 2026 whilst the ISH for Sealink were ongoing. Given NSIP timelines, the fact that National Grid (in both its public and private guises) is the developer of both projects, and the supposed claims of “coordination” by the Applicant, these two projects should have been presented together. There is no urgency in either project that would have prohibited adjusting the timelines to allow the Inspection Panel and Interested Parties to fully assess the cumulative impact of these projects and how/if the local area could be expected to absorb them. However, the Applicant for Sealink and National Grid Ventures for Lionlink clearly took the decision that it would benefit themselves (and disadvantage the Local Authorities and Interested Parties) if the projects were not examined together. In this regard, it is of note that in response to the request made at the ISH by Friston Parish Council to require laying of the cables of Sea Link and Lionlink from the Converter Stations to the Kiln Lane Sub-station simultaneously, SeaLink demurred on the basis it was a different project. We would ask ExA to stop the Applicant from playing the system by arguing both that it is coordinating and not coordinating, that it can get approval for the land for Lionlink, but cannot commit to do the work together in a way to lower impact. We submit that responses made by the Applicant at ISH should lead the ExA to recommend the exclusion of all aspects of Lionlink 3 within the	Inclusion of LionLink in the Sea Link DCO The application for the Proposed Project is assessed on its own merits. The DCO examination process does not allow for a project to be used to seek “<i>pre-approval</i>” for other projects, nor can it be used to impose requirements on other projects. The Applicant notes that the LionLink scheme is a separate project that is currently at pre-application stage and is subject to the outcomes of statutory consultation and further optioneering before any application is made. It is promoted by a different party. NGV is a separate legal entity, with different legal duties to the Applicant, as addressed by the Applicant in previous submissions. Given the prospect of LionLink coming forward, the Applicant has proactively engaged with NGV/LionLink not only to avoid physical incompatibilities between the schemes, but also to allow for a consistent and coordinated approach. This is what it has done. Such coordination opportunities may well lead to a reduction of overall impacts. Indeed, the ExA has asked the Applicant in 3AS10 of ExQ3 about the opportunities to minimise the temporary and permanent use of BMV land through coordination with other projects, including LionLink. Further, as confirmed at ISH2 in relation to Item 20, where information does become available for LionLink to enable a reliable cumulative assessment, it will be taken into account to the assessment of interproject cumulative effects.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Sealink DCO given that this would prejudge the suitability of the future project without any scrutiny and lock in poor project choices associated with SeaLink.	
		Cumulative Impact There was much discussion of cumulative impact at the hearings not only during that specific agenda item, but when examining so many other aspects of this ill-conceived project. To us, questions raised by ExA and statements made by Interested Parties and local authorities demonstrated that the arguments of the Applicant in relation to cumulative impact are insufficient and divorced from reality. We would like to associate ourselves with the arguments put forward by SCC, ESC, SEAS and other Interested Parties in this regard. But there is one essential element of cumulative impact that I found was not specifically mentioned. That is, for good or evil, SZC is underway and is recognised as the biggest infrastructure project in the UK if not in Europe. Moreover, it is being financed almost entirely by the taxpayer and by all of us who pay our electricity bills. SZC is struggling to deliver within the insufficient and overburdened road and rail system in Suffolk Coastal, in an area with no housing for workers and within a heavily protected environment. One does not have to have any love for SZC to recognise that it is in the overriding interest of the local community and the nation that SZC get built as quickly as possible, without the huge ballooning of costs and years of delay that have befallen every other nuclear plant of its kind in the UK and across the globe. It is this interest, both National and Local, that should, more than anything, preclude a project like Sealink from getting approval. As SEAS and others have set out extremely well (most recently in REP 3-125), there is no compelling reason to connect Suffolk and Kent and certainly no compelling reason to do so now. The building of Sealink directly interferes with supporting infrastructure being built by SZC (such as the SZC link road), adds considerable risk and congestion to inappropriate road networks, disrupts commuter rail, requires even more workers to be bussed in, takes even more housing that is already beyond strain by SZC. Any discussion of “coordination” is misplaced. There is no room for any additional infrastructure in Suffolk Coastal that will not impact SZC. Completing SZC – lowering the impact on the community and the Nation – must have priority over bringing in new NSIPs particularly those like SeaLink that have no local benefit nor particular connection to this area and possibly no strong need whatsoever.	Cumulative Impact The Applicant notes WPC’s concerns raised in relation to the delivery of Sizewell C. The need for the Proposed Project has been detailed in numerous application documents. WPC is directed to Application Document 9.129: Applicant’s Response to 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of need [REP5-142] in particular, which sets out the need case. As for the suggested interference with infrastructure and housing, these have been assessed in Application Document 6.2.2.7: ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] and Application Document 6.2.2.10 (B) ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism [REP1A-005]

33. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Canterbury and District Angling Association

33.1 Introduction

33.1.1 Table 33.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Canterbury and District Angling Association Deadline 4 Response [REP4-180].

Table 33.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Canterbury and District Angling Association Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-180]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	We note for the above document that there is no mention of Canterbury and District Angling Association in your notes, and specifically under note 2.2.5. We have a 5 year lease agreement of which 4years and 4 months are remaining between the Land Owner and the CDAA. We have, at present up to 1200 members who could potentially want to access this site in pursuit of their paid up membership to the Association. Access is gained from Ebbsfleet Lane North, over the level crossing and turning immediately right onto Brook Lane. We have a locked gate on Brook Lane which we control, which in turn leads to our two fishing lakes. Brook Lane is a track lane and subject to potholing by traffic. CDAA maintains this track and once a year, when dry, fill the potholes in. The heavy and abnormal of amount of traffic from National Grid Contractors has added to these potholes along with bankside damage. NG have made a concerted effort to fill some of the holes and reinforce parts of the bank. However, we feel more damage has been done than repaired, especially when packing up in wet weather. Please log our interest in this matter and refer to us in any necessary documentation. We do get correspondence from the planning inspectorate, the last document dated 05/12/2025 your ref EN020026.	The Applicant notes the use made by the Angling Association and its reliance on Brook Lane. The Applicant has addressed its impacts on Brook Lane. As explained at 6.17.88 of [REP2-020], Application Document 7.5.9.1 Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan – Suffolk [APP-352] has been prepared as part of the DCO application to reduce impacts on Public Rights of Way (PRoW) wherever possible.

34. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Environment Agency

34.1 Introduction

- 34.1.1
- Table 34.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Environment Agency Deadline 4 Response [REP4-185].
- 34.1.2
- Table 34.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Environment Agency Deadline 4 Response [REP4-214].
- 34.1.3
- Table 34.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Environment Agency Deadline 5 Response [REP5-173].
- 34.1.4
- The Applicant has responded to Environment Agency’s Deadline 4 Response Appendix D from **REP4-185** at Deadline 5 in **Application Document 9.119 Applicant's Comments on Late Responses to ExA First Written Questions [REP5-131]**.
- 34.1.5
- The Applicant’s has responded to Environment Agency Deadline 5 Response [REP5-192] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 34.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Environment Agency Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-185]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
APPENDIX A - Our response to the Examining Authority’s queries raised during Issue Specific hearing 2			
73	NE and the Environment Agency (EA) to comment on the contrasting positions in [REP3A-028] and [REP2-051] regarding the potential for morphological change in Pegwell Bay due to the presence of HDD reception facilities	We discussed this question with Natural England on 06 February 2026. Natural England stated that they had no comments regarding morphological change in Pegwell Bay and the HDD reception pits. Instead, their main concerns related to the impacts on designated sites within their remit. Our current geomorphological concerns relate to the implications of the landfall cabling, and the migration of the mouth of the River Stour. Therefore, we do not believe we hold contrasting opinions regarding the potential for morphological change in Pegwell Bay in relation to the presence of HDD reception facilities Within our Relevant Representation [RR-1586], we raised numerous issues regarding geomorphology in Kent: EA026; • EA027; • EA031; • EA032. EA026 and EA027 were resolved in our response letter to the Applicant (ref.XA/2025/100429/02-L01, dated 14 November 2025), following our review of the 9.20.1 Landfall Sediment Modelling Report Aldeburgh [PDA-037] and 9.20.2 Landfall Sediment Modelling Report Pegwell Bay [PDA-038]. We found that these documents reasonably characterized sediments within the landfall locations. This was stated in our Deadline 2 Response letter [REP2-050]. Issue EA031 was also resolved in our Deadline 2 Response letter, as our Kent geomorphologist felt confident that the project team had appropriately assessed the sensitivity of the morphology at Pegwell Bay. EA032 is our only outstanding issue regarding geomorphology, which specifically relates to the depth of the landfall cabling and the migrating mouth of the River Stour. Please see Appendix B for our current position on this issue. We were not aware of the submission of the Late Deadline 1 Submission - 9.13 Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note - Accepted at	The Applicant notes the resolution of EA026, EA027, and EA031. In relation to EA032, an additional commitment has been added at Deadline 5 for the Proposed Project to monitor the migration of the Stour channel at Pegwell Bay. The EA is also referred to the Applicant’s response to EA032 (from EA’s Appendix B of [REP4-185]) in this document below. The Applicant confirms that after discussions with the EA, REAC commitment MPE09 has been updated to: <i>The River Stour Channel will be monitored throughout the operational life of the asset in line with a monitoring and contingency plan. The plan will set out the frequency and methods for monitoring the location of the channel, contingency actions to be undertaken should the River Stour migrate to a location close to the cable and a ‘trigger’ point for when actions would be taken.</i> The Applicant is also in the process of agreeing a requirement to also cover this matter.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-108] or the 9.13 (B) Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Clean) [REP2-011]. We have now reviewed this document, and can confirm that the HDD reception facilities will not significantly impact the Morphology of Pegwell Bay. We understand that even after drilling and cable placement, permanent scour protection remains 0.5 m below bed level over the exit shafts to the cable. However, even if this scour protection were to be exposed by some erosion (which is highly unlikely in this low energy environment with sea level rise), the size and extent of it is not enough to have a notable effect on geomorphology. Prior to this, temporary scour protection at ground level of the exit shafts, which may be in place for 2 years, could cause short term impacts on coastal processes. This may involve scour downstream of obstructed waves/currents, and build-up of some sand or shingle, but these impacts should be reversible. The four coffer dams of 30 m x 5 m in size each, installed for up to 60 days, also would not have any long-term impacts on the coastal processes.	
77.	Submit draft wording for a requirement in relation to decommissioning at the Suffolk landfall and River Fromus crossing.	<u>River Fromus crossing requirement</u> To ensure that the River Fromus Crossing doesn't impact Water Framework Directive macro invertebrates, we have proposed a requirement for the detailed design of the crossing. The wording for the requirement is as follows: 1. No development of the crossing over the River Fromus shall commence until detailed designs have been submitted to and approved by East Suffolk Council and, following consultation with the Environment Agency, East Suffolk Council has confirmed that the detailed bridge design has a layout and scale that comprises: a) a soffit height of no lower than 10.49m Above Ordnance Datum (approximately 4m above the Q95 flow level) b) a deck width no wider than 6m c) abutments that are set back no less than 8m from the top of the bank 2. Unless a crossing is proposed which comprises a soffit height of a minimum of 12.49m Above Ordnance Datum (approximately 6m above the Q95 flow level), then no development of the crossing over the River Fromus (as part of work no.3a) shall commence until a macro invertebrate monitoring and contingency plan has been submitted to and approved by East Suffolk Council, following consultation with the Environment Agency. Note: Monitoring is to occur for a period of five years following completion of the construction of the Fromus crossing. The details must include: I. The requirement to carry out Water Framework Directive compliant surveys twice yearly (spring and autumn), upstream and downstream of the Fromus crossing. II. On receipt of results if mitigation is found to be necessary then part of the contingency plan is to submit a mitigation strategy for approval.	The Applicant continues to liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the proposed wording of this requirement. The ExA WQ2 question 2WE4 has asked whether the Applicant (as well as SCC) agrees with the proposed wording and if not, why not. The Applicant has set out its current position in response to this question in document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions. As per the Applicant's position in Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to Action Points from Issue Specific Hearing 3, agreement has been reached between the Applicant and the EA on the wording of Requirement 3 – Bridge over the River Fromus within the dDCO.
		<u>Suffolk Landfall decommissioning requirement</u> To address coastal erosion risks at the end of the project's lifetime, we have established a formal requirement to assess the removal of Suffolk	The Applicant notes the Environment Agency's proposed wording of this requirement and the review of the text by East Suffolk Council's legal

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		landfall infrastructure prior to the project's decommissioning. This assessment will ensure that any decision to leave assets in-situ, will take account of the potential flood risk and ecological implications, and consider whether there it'd be more beneficial to removal all infrastructure. We are currently awaiting the review of the text of this requirement by East Suffolk Council's legal counsel. The current wording for the requirement is as follows: If the decision is taken to decommission the project, then within 1-year prior to the end of the operational lifetime of the development, a decommissioning plan for the joint bays and cables of the scheme's Suffolk landfall infrastructure must be submitted to and approved by East Suffolk Council, following consultation with the Environment Agency. The plan must assess whether the risk of removing cable infrastructure is appropriate, including a survey to assess the width, depth and structural stability of the beach and landfall location. Therefore: 1. If infrastructure removal is deemed appropriate, then the following assessments/activities must be carried out: a. Programming. b. Dismantling. c. Materials management. d. An assessment of the impact of works on flood defences, including: i. Pre and post decommissioning work surveys, to assess structural stability. ii. A vibration assessment, and an agreement on safe vibration. limits with the Environment Agency. iii. Demonstrating works will not result in a reduction of ground. levels or crest heights that could compromise flood defences. 2. If removal is not found to be appropriate, then; a. A contingency plan must be in place, to cover any remediation required when removal becomes necessary.	counsel. The Applicant will will continue to liaise with the Environment Agency on the proposed wording of this requirement. As described in 9.93 (A) Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note [REP4-091] the confirmed approach to decommissioning will be detailed within the final Decommissioning Plan submitted to the Secretary of State for approval approximately 2 years prior to decommissioning commencing. This will be subject to agreement with the relevant authorities based on further and more refined surveys and assessments performed prior to decommissioning in line with the relevant legislation and guidance in place at that time.
83	Position regarding minster Converter Station and Substation footprint	We have been asked to "Set out position with respect to the Minster Converter Station and Substation footprint and any impacts on land drains are present which address surface water in the associated fields and these could be affected in a manner which increases the risk of flooding including having regards to the applicant's position as set out in the response to Kent County Council's Local Impact Report [REP2-028]." We believe that the lead local flood authority is best placed to answer this question, as the lead on surface water flooding. However, we would want to ensure that the Applicant's methods for managing drainage and mitigating surface water run-off doesn't increase fluvial or tidal flood risk in the area. Certain methods, such as installing SuDs with swales and retention ponds, may displace flood storage and disrupt flow routes. We note that an ordinary watercourse falls within the proposed converter station's boundary, and thereby means that the converter station falls partly within fluvial and tidal flood zones 2 and 3. As per our requests under EA065, EA069, EA070 and EA075, we require compensatory flood	The Applicant has engaged with Kent County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board in developing the drainage designs for the Minister Converter Station and Substation. There would be no operational drainage ponds, basins or swales within areas of fluvial or tidal flood risk in the area. The land drain within the proposed converter station site boundary would be infilled and its function fulfilled by the Projects drainage infrastructure. The Project has made a secured commitment to providing compensatory storage within the Order Limits for loss of floodplain storage associated with construction of a small number of pylons within the fluvial floodplain of the River Stour. This commitment will be included in the Deadline 5 submission of Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		storage for all areas falling within the floodplain (specifically fluvial floodplain for the river Stour).	
84	Position regarding land/ coastal erosion with respect to flood risk and FRA	Within our relevant representation [RR-1585], under EA079, we raised that there was a lack of quantified assessment of the rate of erosion at the landfall location over the lifetime of the project. We requested that the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) include a coastal erosion assessment for Suffolk. Please see our response regarding EA079 in Appendix B. We are currently requesting that the FRA is updated to include estimates on coastal erosion in relation to the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping (NCERM) data. Furthermore, there needs to be clarification from the Applicant on any implications for the proposal, aswell as consideration for the relevant Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan. We note National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), section 2.3.2 states that: “As climate change is likely to increase risks to the resilience of some of this infrastructure, from flooding for example, or in situations where it is located near the coast or an estuary or is underground, applicants should in particular set out to what extent the proposed development is expected to be vulnerable, and, as appropriate, how it has been designed to be resilient to: • Coastal erosion – for the landfall of offshore transmission cables and their associated substations in the inshore and coastal locations respectively.” Regarding coastal erosion towards the end of the development's lifetime in Suffolk, we have requested a landfall infrastructure decommissioning requirement (see in our response to 77.). This will ensure that appropriate assessment is carried out if the development is to be decommissioned, to consider whether it'd be more beneficial for flood risk (and ecology) if all aspects of the development are removed, or left in-situ. Please note, we have no concerns regarding coastal erosion in respect to the landfall area of Pegwell Bay in Kent. A Shoreline Management Plan policy of Hold the Line is in place up to 2105.	The Applicant has responded to the matter in document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086].
85.	Update on if it is necessary to relocate the proposed location of attenuation ponds for functional need including fluvial flooding matters.	We note that Additional Submission accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority – Applicant's response to the ExA's s89(3) letter 8 July 2025 & 5 August 2025 – 9.4 Supplementary Environmental Information - Flood risk assessment [AS099] describes how one attenuation pond is within Flood Zone 3. As per EA091, we require clarity from the Applicant regarding any temporary attenuation ponds located within flood zone 3 in respect to: • The volume of water that would be displaced by the pond. • Whether the pond would be moved to an area outside of the flood zone. • Clarification of how long the temporary attenuation pond would be in place for.	The information requested by the Environment Agency regarding the temporary attenuation pond serving construction of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme is provided in 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086] in response to Action Point 85. This submission also provides the rationale as to why this temporary pond would not cause an increase in flood risk elsewhere in accordance with policy requirements. Refer to the Applicant's response to 3WE1 of Application Document 9.136: Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The Applicant has not yet clarified any of the above details. Once we have clarity on the above details, we can determine whether this attenuation pond needs to be relocated outside of the fluvial floodplain. The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) states under section 5.8.12 “Development should be designed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the lifetime of the development. There should be no net loss of floodplain storage and any deflection or constriction of flood flow routes should be safely managed within the site.”	
86.	Set out all remaining areas of disagreement regarding the applicant's approach to applying the sequential and exception tests.	We remain concerned with the Applicant's approach to sequential and exception tests in both Suffolk and Kent. In regards to the remaining areas of disagreement on these matters, please refer to the following issues in Appendix B: EA069 • EA070 • EA075 • EA076 • EA079 • EA081 • EA083 • EA088 • EA091 For these issues, please see the relevant Deadline 2 response letter: • EA065 (see Deadline 2 response letter – [REP2-144]) • EA066 (see Deadline 2 response letter – [REP2-050]) • EA068 (see Deadline 2 response letter – [REP2-050]) • EA089 (see Deadline 2 response letter – [REP2-050])	The Applicants position is summarised in 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086], and continues to engage with the Environment Agency to resolved the referenced issues. For the specific issues listed, please refer to the Applicant's response to Appendix B below.
87.	Set out position with respect to requested wording for requirement in dDCO regarding the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and a 4m bridge soffit height at the proposed River Fromus bridge crossing.	Our position is that we will accept a crossing design of at-least 4m (10.49m above ordnance datum) soffit height for the River Fromus bridge crossing, subject to the inclusion of a WFD macro invertebrate monitoring and contingency plan. We believe the inclusion of this requirement will ensure that the crossing is WFD-compliant. Please see our response to 77. regarding the current draft of the wording for the River Fromus crossing requirement. As well as the minimum soffit height, we also require the deck width to be no wider than 6m, and the abutments to be set-back no less than 8m from the top of the bank. This is to ensure that there's no impacts to the riparian corridor, or increased shading of the River Fromus, which may cause a deterioration in WFD water quality. We believe that the inclusion of the requirement will ensure there's compensatory mitigation measures in-place in the event that impacts to WFD macro invertebrates are observed. We have engaged with the project team on this matter since 2024. We initially requested a crossing height minimum of 6m from the surface of the river at Q95 to the soffit, at any point under the crossing; however we soon accepted 5m (with the inclusion of a monitoring and contingency plan). For other crossings in Suffolk a soffit height of at-least 6m was secured, which provides precedence for our comments regarding Sea Link's proposed Fromus crossing. This was secured for: • the Sizewell C two village bypass crossing on the River Alde located less than 2.5km from this proposed crossing (see: here). • For the Sizewell C Leiston Beck permanent crossing a soffit height of 6.8m was secured (see: here).	The Applicant continues to liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the proposed wording of this requirement. The ExA WQ2 question 2WE4 has asked whether the Applicant (as well as SCC) agrees with the proposed wording and if not, why not. The Applicant has set out its current position in response to this question in document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions. As per the Applicant's position in Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to Action Points from Issue Specific Hearing 3, agreement has been reached between the Applicant and the EA on the wording of Requirement 3 – Bridge over the River Fromus within the dDCO.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Our concerns regarding the soffit height were based on several publications, which demonstrated that weak-dispersing polarotactic invertebrates (WFD invertebrates) require a minimum clearance height below watercourse crossings, and a level of reflected polarised light under watercourse crossings, for them to successfully migrate upstream. Russev (1959) observed that after mating, masses of female mayfly fly up to 3–4 km upstream 5–15m above the river midline. This is essential for the lifecycle of mayfly species, and is known as the compensation flight; this serves to compensate for the larval drift that occurs during the aquatic life stage of eggs and larvae. Malnas et al (2011) observed that bridges acted as optical barriers and population disruptors for the mayfly (see: here). It is well evidenced that inappropriately designed watercourse crossings create a barrier to the movement of weak dispersing taxa (WFD invertebrates). Numerous publications describe how reflected polarized light from asphalt surfaces act as a trap to polarotactic invertebrates: • Asphalt Surfaces as Ecological Traps for Water Seeking Polarotactic Insects, How can the Polarized Light Pollution of Asphalt Surfaces be Reduced, Malik et al (2010); • Bridges as optical barriers and population disruptors for the mayfly, An overlooked threat to freshwater biodiversity, Malnas et al (2011); • Lamp-Lit Bridges as Dual Light-Traps for the Mayflies, Szaz (2015); • Why Do Mayflies Lay Their Eggs En Masse On Dry Asphalt Roads. Kriska (1998). The bridges already present in this section of the River Fromus are likely to be having an impact on the taxa present. Any additional impact caused by the construction of another bridge, that is inappropriately designed, could lead to detrimental effects on the taxa present and could contribute to a deterioration in the invertebrate populations; this may thereby contribute to a deterioration in WFD water quality. The shading of the watercourse, and the physical presence of the Fromus crossing in the flight corridor, would interrupt the migration route for the invertebrates. Any polarised light pollution, either reflected from surfaces, or emitted from artificial lights, would further impact the invertebrates, as it would act as a sink to any invertebrates attempting to pass over the crossing. Reflected polarised light pollution should be reduced as far as possible to minimise this impact. Under the The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, development must support “good” WFD status of waterbodies and must not prevent potential “good” status. Where it does not support “good” or prevents potential “good” status then proposals must be changed, or if this is impossible, a WFD Article 4.7 (regulation 19) defence must be provided. On 23 October 2025, we emailed the Applicant’s project team stating that we’d be willing to accept a 4m, instead of 5m, soffit height. We deemed this as acceptable for WFD compliance, subject to the inclusions of a monitoring and contingency plan within a draft requirement. If monitoring revealed that the crossing was impacting WFD invertebrates, then the contingency plan would ensure suitable compensation and mitigations could be made to prevent a deterioration in their population.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		We note that the project team has committed to ensuring that in the 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Clean) [REP3-078] “A lightcoloured rough textured surface to the proposed crossing of the River Fromus will be considered as part of the crossing design/specification in order to mitigate reflected polarised light pollution.” We approve of this commitment.	
88	Confirm any outstanding concerns with respect to meeting the objectives of the WFD.	We currently do not believe the development will meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), in respect to the relevant River Basin Management Plans. For the outstanding concerns, please refer to the following issues in Appendix B: • EA032 • EA040 • EA041 • EA043 • EA045 • EA046 • EA053 Issue EA013 relates to the River Fromus Crossing. We are yet to resolve this issue, as we require the inclusion of the crossing requirement within the draft DCO. This will ensure impacts to WFD macroinvertebrates are mitigated or compensated for. Please view our answer to question 77. for the wording of this requirement. There are a number of fisheries issues that remain unresolved. However, these issues relate to surveying, and scoping in of Lamprey, only - we believe that there are sufficient mitigation measures in place to avoid impacts to this species regardless. Therefore, we do not believe these issues pose an outstanding concern with respect to meeting the objectives of the WFD. These fisheries issues are as follows: • EA009 • EA010 • EA011	The Applicant continues to liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the proposed wording of the River Fromus bridge requirement. The ExA WQ2 question 2WE4 has asked whether the Applicant (as well as SCC) agrees with the proposed wording and if not, why not. The Applicant has set out its current position in response to this question in document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions. The Applicant agrees with the EA’s view regarding the meeting of WFD objectives as they relate to lamprey.
121	Consider whether there is need for the word ‘substantially’ in accordance with, for requirements. (for applicant)	We note that this question was raised for the Applicant. However, we are aware that there are a number of requirements within the 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Clean) [REP3-006] that utilize the phrase “substantially in accordance”. We have requested to be consulted on some of these requirements (see Appendix B). We request the removal of the term “substantially” from the following requirements: • Requirement 6 - Construction management plans to be approved: - o Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (which must be substantially in accordance with the Onshore Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan) (a) - o Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – Suffolk (which must be substantially in accordance with the Outline LEMP – Suffolk) (f) - o Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – Kent (which must be substantially in accordance with the Outline LEMP – Kent) (g) - o Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (LEMP) – Suffolk (which must be substantially in accordance with the Outline Construction NVMP - Suffolk) (h) - o Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (LEMP) – Kent (which must be substantially in accordance with the Outline NVMP – Kent) (i) - o Code of Construction Practice (which must be substantially in accordance with the outline Code of Construction Practice) (r) Using the term “substantially” results in the requirement being unenforceable and imprecise. This is contrary to the 2 of the 6 tests for planning conditions within paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	The EA is referred to the Applicant’s response to AP121 in Application Document 9.90 (A): Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The Applicant has considered this wording in the context of the Requirements as currently drafted and remains of the view that it is the correct formulation. It does not result in the Requirements being unenforceable and/or imprecise.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix B: Our response to documents submitted at deadline 3			
		Please note that our response includes only those issues IDs (from our deadline 2 response letters ([REP2-050] and [REP2-144]) for which the Deadline 3 submissions are relevant and seek to address. We have not provided further comment on issue IDs where no relevant documents, or substantive comments, were submitted at deadline 3. Therefore, these issues remain unresolved, and we expect that the Applicant will submit relevant information for them at deadline 4. These outstanding issue IDs are as follows: • EA009 • EA010 • EA012 • EA013 • EA019 • EA044 • EA064 • EA066 • EA068 • EA076 • EA083 • EA089 Please also see Appendix C: Summary of our position, for a tracker of which issue IDs are resolved and unresolved.	Noted.
	Requirement 6-Construction management plans to be approved	We request to be consulted/an approving body for the following: • Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (a) • Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – Suffolk (f) • Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – Kent (g) • Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (LEMP) – Suffolk (h) • Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (LEMP) – Kent (i) • Construction Drainage Management Plan (o) • Flood Management Plan (FMP) (p) • Code of Construction Practice (r) • Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (s)	The Applicant confirms that the EA is named as a consultee for the: • Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan • Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan – Suffolk • Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan – Kent • Material and Waste Management Plan – Suffolk • Material and Waste Management Plan – Kent Unlike the other outline management plans that have been submitted to the Examination, the final REAC will be that secured under Schedule 3 Requirement 5 of the dDCO. As the EA has been able to comment fully on this document, the Applicant does not consider it necessary for there to be a further consultation and/or approval of the REAC.
	Requirement 11 - Removal of temporary bridges and culverts	We request to be consulted on/listed as an approving authority on requirement 11 (1), in regards to the temporary bridge over the River Stour (as stated in section 4.6.74 of REP1A-004).	Updated wording is currently being considered
EA001	Biodiversity	We do not consider this issue resolved. We previously requested that “wildlife (namely nocturnal protected species)” to be included within NV03 in addition to other ‘sensitive receptors’ so that appropriate site-specific mitigation can be identified”. This has not been included. We require this to be included in commitment NV03. We note that B71 has now been added which notes that construction working hours will be followed over winter, which limit working hours to between ‘7am to 7pm’, when within 4m of a watercourse, to avoid otter disturbance. However, during the winter, this timeframe would cover periods following sunset and sunrise, when otters are most active. We also believe the trigger for the winter working timings should be any activity within 10m a watercourse and not 4m. We require this to commitment to be amended to state that during winter, construction works within 10m of any watercourse are only to be undertaken beyond 1-hour after sunrise, or prior to 1-hour before sunset, except during emergencies. This will ensure that works aren’t undertaken	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		during hours of darkness during the winter, and thereby avoid disturbing otters.	
EA002	Biodiversity	We do not consider this issue resolved. We raised concerns that natural colonisation would take place too slowly following temporary habitat losses along ditches (due to cable installations). This would put water voles at risk of predation. The Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk (Clean) [CR1- 045] still refers to either planting or natural colonisation to reinstate ditch habitat (section 4.4.1). We require the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk (Clean) [CR1-045] to be amended to state that riparian planting of mature emergent vegetation will take place following any temporary habitat losses along ditches.	Application Document 7.5.7.1 (C): Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065] has been updated to reflect this change and submitted at Deadline 4.
EA004	Biodiversity	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We raised concerns that a uniform riparian buffer zone of 10m for all construction and associated activities needed to be stated in commitment GG15 of the Late Deadline 1 Submission - 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-102]. Within 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] GG15 has been updated to include a “10m buffer zone for all construction and associated activities such as refuelling and storage of materials around watercourses, on-site ditches, silt traps and bunding.” We are therefore content to resolve this issue.	Noted. No comments from the Applicant required.
EA032	Geomorphology	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the cable burial depth would not be deep enough to avoid the moving mouth of the River Stour. We requested that the cables be buried a minimum 3m below the bed of the low flow of the channel of the mouth of the Stour. We note that the MPE02 has been amended to state: o “For subtidal sections of the cable route, the minimum depth of lowering (DOL) to the top of the cable is 0.5 m (in areas of bedrock), with a target DOL for the Proposed Project approximately 1 m to 2.5 m, to be achieved where possible dependant on the seabed geology. At the Kent landfall, a target DOL of 1.5 m will apply to allow for the potential future lowering of the intertidal bed levels.” This does not resolve our concerns regarding the cable burial depth. In order to mitigate for this risk, as stated in our relevant representation and Deadline 2 response letter, we require the depth of the cable to be deeper than the mouth of the low flow Stour channel.	Issue of potential future geomorphology of Pegwell Bay and migration of the River Stour channel that could lead to exposure of the buried cable: • There is no analysis, modelling or survey that could be undertaken in the present day to reliably predict the future course of the River Stour channel in the intertidal beach area, particularly in response to climate change effects which are also subject to significant uncertainty. • Although considered unlikely, it is acknowledged there is uncertainty regarding potential future migration of the low water channel. • To reliably avoid cable exposure in any eventuality, a large depth of burial (order of metres below the base level of a future river channel, itself potentially several metres deep) would be required. This has been assessed as likely to cause unacceptable issues in terms of thermal performance of the buried cable, and would require a disproportionate scale of excavation works to achieve that burial depth below the present day beach level. • Following agreement with the Environment Agency during a call 19th March and 24th March, REAC commitment MPE09 will be updated at Deadline 6 to state that: • The River Stour Channel will be monitored throughout the operational life of the asset. Monitoring will be undertaken annually for the first five years following installation, after which

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			the frequency and scope of monitoring will be reviewed in consultation with the Environment Agency. • If monitoring demonstrates that the River Stour channel is migrating and is likely to interact with the installed cable, the Applicant will consult with and agree appropriate mitigation measures with the Environment Agency. The Applicant will also consult the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB's) and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate. Where required to implement any mitigation, the Applicant will apply for and obtain any necessary separate Marine Licence and undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to implementation. • Monitoring of the River Stour channel within Pegwell Bay will be undertaken using a proportionate, risk-based approach and may include aerial and drone surveys, geomorphological assessments, marine bathymetric surveys, comparison of LiDAR datasets, and review of available satellite imagery to identify any material change in channel position, morphology, or migration over time. • A trigger for consultation with the Environment Agency will be if monitoring demonstrates that the River Stour channel has migrated to within 50 metres of the as-built cable location. • Following consultation, any required mitigation measures will be agreed with and approved by the Environment Agency prior to the undertaking of any remedial works. • The principles for post-installation monitoring and asset maintenance, including remediation of an exposed cable, are set out in the latest version of the Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP), as updated at Deadline 5.
EA040	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We previously raised that in the unplanned event of a fire at a substation or converter station, fire supressing agent/firewater may enter the site drainage system and subsequently the water environment. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP3-060] • 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy [REP3-061] Whilst the sections 8.1.12 (Suffolk) and 8.1.13 (Kent) state that penstock valves will be installed to isolate the outfall in the event of a pollution incident, the Applicant must: • Confirm that the valve will close automatically, and clarify what will be the trigger event for the action. • Clarify that in the event of automation failure, there will be a manual override. • Commit to providing a maintenance plan for the penstock valve. Therefore, this issue is not resolved.	The Applicant will include a new commitment within the Deadline 5 submission of Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan. This will secure that 'As described in the Suffolk and Kent Drainage Strategies (Documents 9.17.1 and 9.17.2), penstock valves will be installed to isolate the outfalls of the drainage systems serving the operational substations and converter stations to prevent a pollution incident in the event of fire detection. The valves will be designed to close automatically, with a manual override available in the event of automation failure and the systems would be suitably maintained over the operational lifetime of the Project'.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
EA041	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the disposal of contaminated construction and concreting water, as-well as rainfall runoffs from the batching plant area, may introduce contaminants into the receiving water environment. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP3-060] • 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy [REP3-061] • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] • 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked) [REP3-077] Whilst commitment W26 [REP3-079] mandates regular visual monitoring, water quality sampling will only occur after a visible change is detected. This approach creates a lag between observation, source, tracing and testing, potentially allowing harmful substances to be released before mitigation can be implemented. Our comments on water monitoring through construction into operation - as stated in EA046 - should be adhered to. Sections 8.1.8 [REP3-060] and 8.1.9 [REP3-061] clarifies that prefabricated concrete products for outfalls and bridge piers will be used, which is welcomed. However, there is still no commitment to provide the timing for in-situ pours, or for control concrete washout. GG17 [REP3-079] states that “wash water will be prevented from passing untreated into watercourses and groundwater using appropriate measures”. It is unclear what these measures are, and how water is intended to be disposed of. There is a difference in wording between sections 8.1.14 [REP3-060] and 8.1.15 [REP3-061], as the first for Suffolk states “Provision of a suitable vehicle wash area on hardstanding which drains to foul or suitably treated on site”, whilst the latter for Kent only says “which drains to foul”, so we seek clarification if this is correct. It is unclear if it is treated on site, or if disposal offsite or discharge to the water environment is proposed.	The Applicant has rectified the discrepancy between sections 8.1.14 [REP3-060] and 8.1.15 [REP3-061], of the Drainage Strategies. The revised reports will be submitted at Deadline 5. In Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan further amendments have been made to commitment W32 to secure that: ‘Where in-situ concrete pours are required, there will be detailed provision for timing, weather conditions, and runoff control. These construction works will be minimised during heavy precipitation events and carried out during dry months where practicable. Details of containment measures for concrete washout (such as lined washout pits, bunded areas) will also be specified.’ Commitment W26 has also been updated to stipulate that, where construction works take place in proximity to sensitive watercourses quarterly monitoring will be undertaken in the year prior to construction commencing, so an up to date water quality baseline is established. Monitoring will then be undertaken fortnightly during construction and after heavy rainfall events. Locations to be monitored are immediately upstream and downstream of any proposed surface water outfalls or water crossings. The primary method will be via in-situ handheld devices operated by the ECoW, with samples sent off to laboratories of potential pollution is detected. If pollution is confirmed, appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented to prevent further deterioration.
EA043	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that dewatering of both rainfall runoffs and potentially elevated groundwater at the construction site. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP3-060] • 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy [REP3-061] • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] • 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP3-007] The draft DCO [REP3-007] has not been updated to include the Environment Agency as a named consultee for requirement 6, specifically (o) Construction Drainage Management Plan and (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan. 8.1.8 [REP3-060] and 8.1.9 [REP3-061] mention silt traps, filter logs and settlement basins, which are good mitigation measures. However, we still	The Applicant has rectified the discrepancy between sections 8.1.8 [REP3-060] and 8.1.9 [REP3-061] of the Drainage Strategies. The revised reports will be submitted at Deadline 5.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		have concerns over “discharging into a watercourse” and comments of the dewatering system being “generally clean”. We require this wording to be amended to state that the dewatering system will be clean. In conjunction with EA046, we seek clarification how the Applicant would determine that any dewatering discharges are free from contamination. Whilst, GG15 commits to silt traps, and W02 to silt fences or silt screens, water quality monitoring, as requested in issue EA046, will help provide confidence that there is no risk of deterioration. We welcome changes to GG15 which now acknowledges “10m buffer zones for all construction and associated activities such as refuelling and storage of materials around watercourses, on-site ditches, silt traps and bunding.” Please note, this issue is linked to EA045.	
EA045	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the pumping (over pumping) process may allow silty water to enter the water course downstream. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP3-060] • 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy [REP3-061] • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] • 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP3-007] The draft DCO has not been updated to include the Environment Agency as a named consultee for requirement 6, specifically (o) Construction Drainage Management Plan and (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan. The draft DCO [REP3-007] has not been updated to include the Environment Agency as a named consultee for requirement 6, specifically (o) Construction Drainage Management Plan and (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan. 8.1.8 [REP3-060] and 8.1.9 [REP3-061] mention silt traps, filter logs and settlement basins, which are good mitigation measures. However, we still have concerns over “discharging into a watercourse” and comments of the dewatering system being “generally clean”. We require this wording to be amended to state that the dewatering system will be clean. In conjunction with EA046, we seek clarification how the Applicant would determine that any dewatering discharges are free from contamination. Whilst, GG15 commits to silt traps, and W02 states silt fences or silt screens, water quality monitoring, as requested in issue EA046, will help provide confidence that there is no risk of deterioration. Whilst, GG15 commits to silt traps, and W02 to silt fences or silt screens, water quality monitoring, as requested in issue EA046, will help provide confidence that there is no risk of deterioration. We welcome changes to GG15 which now acknowledges “10m buffer zones for all construction and associated activities such as refuelling and storage of materials around watercourses, on-site ditches, silt traps and bunding.” Please note, this issue is linked to EA043.	The Applicant has rectified the discrepancy between sections 8.1.8 [REP3-060] and 8.1.9 [REP3-061] of the Drainage Strategies. The revised reports will be submitted at Deadline 5. Also, the following has been added to commitment G15 and will be reflected in the deadline 5 submission of Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Where in over pumping takes place associated with in channel works, measures to prevent downstream siltation would be implemented. Examples include deployment of sedi-mats, straw bales/straw bale cages and rock filter dams. Specific measures for each work site would be selected in accordance with the size of the watercourse and the volume of flow.
EA046	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that there would be impacts to water quality for the WFD watercourses Hundred	Commitment W26 in Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management has also been updated to stipulate that,

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		River and River Fromus, especially during the construction and decommissioning phases. We requested regular water quality monitoring to be carried out both during and after the construction and decommissioning phases. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] • 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP3-007] • 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked) [REP3-077] We are pleased to see that the Environment Agency will be consulted on Requirement 13 (Decommissioning), within [REP3-007]. However, there has been no amendment to the [REP3-079] or [REP3-077] in regards to surface water quality monitoring. We need to be confident that a water quality baseline can be established. If a monitoring plan isn't suitably designed, then we will not be confident that trends will be detected. Therefore, our issue remains unresolved. From our Comments on any further information/submissions received by deadline 1 and deadline 1A [REP2-050]: We welcome the addition of W26 in Late Deadline 1 Submission - 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-103]. However, a commitment to monitoring, including taking water samples, should be included in all phases of the project construction, operation and decommissioning. Currently there is a lack of detail, and it should be made clear that site walkovers and visual monitoring alone are not a suitable method of monitoring. A monitoring plan should provide details of frequency, quantity, location and method of monitoring. These locations should include monitoring upstream and downstream of any proposed surface water outfalls and water crossings. Methods may include in-situ handheld devices or samples sent off to laboratories. Monitoring should start prior to construction, so that the water quality of any possibly affected areas are known, and a baseline is established. We note that there is no outline Operational Environment Management Plan (OEMP), nor a requirement for an OEMP to come forward. We require further discussions with the Applicant on how monitoring would be secured during operation.	where construction works take place in proximity to the Hundred River and River Fromus, which are sensitive watercourses, quarterly monitoring will be undertaken in the year prior to construction commencing, so an up to date water quality baseline is established. Monitoring will then be undertaken fortnightly during construction and after heavy rainfall events. Locations to be monitored are immediately upstream and downstream of any proposed surface water outfalls or water crossings. The primary method will be via in-situ handheld devices operated by the ECoW, with samples sent off to laboratories of potential pollution is detected. If pollution is confirmed, appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented to prevent further deterioration.
EA048 and EA049	Waste	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We previously raised that not all relevant waste legislation or waste types were mentioned in the 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environment Management Plan [APP-340]. We have reviewed the 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP3- 007], and note that we have been listed to be consulted on requirement 6. (n) Material and Waste Management Plan. We are therefore content to resolve these issues.	Noted.
EA053	Groundwater and Contaminated Land	We do not consider this issue resolved. Previously we raised that the assessment of risks from heat generated by the cable to groundwater had been omitted. The Applicant stated in their 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA (Clean) [REP2-014] is subject to further discussions with	The EA is referred to Application Document 9.130 Groundwater Heat Pollution - Technical Note [REP5-143] which was submitted at Deadline 5.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Environment Agency. We have not yet been engaged further on this issue. Therefore, this issue remains unresolved. We are pleased to see that EA054 is resolved. However, we are yet to see any proposed mitigation measures to resolve EA053	
EA054	Groundwater and Contaminated Land	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We initially raised that the wording for GH08 in Document 7.5.3.1 CEMP Appendix A Outline Code of Construction Practice [APP-341] was vague and therefore insufficient for managing risks to controlled waters. We requested a requirement inclusive of the unsuspected contamination wording (provided in our deadline 2 response letter [REP2-050]) to be included in the draft Development Consent Order. The 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP3-007] has been updated to include the requested wording. We are therefore content to resolve this issue.	Noted.
EA060	Groundwater and Contaminated Land	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that GH12 in the 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [APP-342], the superseded by document Late Deadline 1 Submission - 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-102] did not provide reassurance that risks would therefore be assessed and managed, if the most vulnerable areas couldn't be avoided. We have reviewed 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079]. GH12 has been amended to state "vulnerable" areas. We are therefore content to resolve this issue.	Noted.
EA065	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the sequential approach within Flood Zone 3 was not being clearly applied to avoid Flood Zone 3b. The Applicant confirmed at the Examination hearing on 29 January 2026 that the proposal will not be split into component parts for the purposes of vulnerability classification, and instead is considered wholly essential infrastructure, rather than water compatible. Therefore, in line with the national Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 7-079-20220825, the Applicant as part of the Exception Test, must consider the Notes to Table 2 (Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK): “+” In Flood Zone 3a essential infrastructure should be designed and constructed to remain operational and safe in times of flood. “*” In Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain) essential infrastructure that has passed the Exception Test, and water-compatible uses, should be designed and constructed to: • remain operational and safe for users in times of flood; • result in no net loss of floodplain storage; • not impede water flows and not increase flood risk elsewhere.” In particular, some components in Suffolk and Kent are within Flood Zone 3b, and we require further consideration of how these components are compliant with the notes to Table 2 above. In regards to any temporary structures, such as attenuation basins and outfalls, we require clarification of how long they'd be in place. For drainage pipes and outfall pipes we require clarification as to whether they're located below or above ground.	The Applicant has responded to this matter in document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. It is also confirmed that the Applicant has made a secured commitment to providing compensatory storage within the Order Limits for loss of floodplain storage associated with construction of a small number of pylons within the fluvial floodplain of the River Stour. This commitment will be included in the Deadline 5 submission of Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan. Refer also to the Applicant's response to AP2 in Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		From our deadline 2 response letter [REP2-050]: It is still unclear what approach to the sequential test the Applicant is proposing. In line with PPG Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 7-079-20220825, some developments may contain different elements of vulnerability, and the highest vulnerability category should be used, unless the development is considered in its component parts. If the Applicant is proposing to split their proposal into component parts (e.g., 1 No. temporary drainage outfall and 1 No. permanent infiltration outfall pipe (buried) and outfall are water compatible), then they would need to provide clarity on what vulnerability is proposed for each component. However, if the applicant is merely stating that these components are essential infrastructure that have water-compatible uses, these should be designed and constructed to: • remain operational and safe for users in times of flood; • result in no net loss of floodplain storage; • not impede water flows and not increase flood risk elsewhere. We agree that the pylons works would be deemed “essential infrastructure” and so is appropriate for flood zone 3, as long as the exception test is passed. The pylons once constructed should not impede flow as they are to be “open” structures, so therefore should not increase flood risk elsewhere. Additionally, if the pylons are to be placed within the tidal floodplain only, then floodplain compensation won't be required. However, if new pylons are to be constructed within the fluvial floodplain, then the Applicant should consider if and what flood compensation may be required. Please see EA069 and EA089 for more details on the River Stour floodplain.	
EA069	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] We have yet to receive a commitment to re-instate land to pre-construction levels within 5 years of commencing construction. Currently, the Applicant only commits to this for temporary haul roads (W06) and temporary attenuation ponds (W31). We require this commitment to be extended to all temporary works within floodplain. We are pleased by the changes to W01, which reflects that activities within the floodplain will be considered in accordance with a method approved under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. From our deadline 2 response letter [REP2-050]: We do not consider this issue resolved. We have identified that the River Stour floodplain within the boundary of the scheme is fluvially-influenced in areas, as well as having areas of tidal/fluvial crossover, and solely tidal influence. Of particular concern is the right bank floodplain of the River Stour between grid references 630950, 162775 and 632100, 162300 and additionally at grid reference 632650, 159900 as these areas fall within the defended fluvial floodplain, and parts of these areas are within the functional floodplain. We would not be requiring compensation for works in tidal areas or areas which have tidal/fluvial cross-over. However, floodplain compensation is required for any areas of development in fluvial areas, to manage the flood risk associated with the River Stour floodplain. This will ensure that the permanent and temporary elements of the scheme are not displacing fluvial flood storage. Given the proposed temporary nature of the bridge	The Applicant confirms that commitment W06 has been amended, now securing that ‘Temporary haul routes and all other temporary works within Flood Zone 3 and areas of high and medium risk of flooding from surface water will be removed at the end of the construction phase and the ground surface will be reinstated to pre-project levels’. This commitment will be included in the Deadline 5 submission of Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan. As detailed above, provision of compensation storage for permanent works in the Stour fluvial floodplain (limited to pylons) is also secured by a new commitment within Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		(we assume 5-years given the length of the construction phase), associated temporary works, and the large size of the Stour floodplain, we will ensure compensation requirements are proportionate and reasonable. Compensation for temporary works should be balanced against the commitment to fully reinstate the land to its pre-construction condition upon removal. We note that Commitment W06 (REP1-102) states “No construction materials should be stored within Flood Zone 3 and areas of high and medium risk of flooding from surface water, where this cannot be avoided, for example in the River Stour floodplain adequate mitigation measures will be applied. For example, model outputs would inform the placement of soil during construction and soil stockpiles would be aligned in the direction of flow to avoid impeding flood flow routes.” We require a clear commitment to re-instate land to pre-construction levels within 5 years of commencing construction. Currently, the Applicant only commits to this for temporary haul roads. We accept that it may not be possible to provide all the details of stockpiles at this stage. Further detail regarding the stockpiles would be needed for us to be fully satisfied from a flood risk perspective, but it is acknowledged that this will be dealt with via the Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) process. At FRAP stage, we’d require the details relating to the location, length of time in place, quantity of material and method for storing the material. Please note, this issue interlinks with EA089.	
EA070	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that details were omitted regarding temporary attenuation ponds and outfalls within floodplain. There were no details regarding their construction method, and the expected changes in ground level in order to construct these temporary features. We requested clarity as to whether the temporary attenuation ponds would be located in the fluvial floodplain. We are yet to receive this clarification. If they are to be located in fluvial floodplain, then we’d require a commitment that floodplain storage compensation would be undertaken. We note that commitment W31 mentions that drainage ponds will be removed and land-levels re-instated following construction. However, this does not commit to floodplain storage compensation during the construction phase. Please note, this issue relates to EA075.	The Applicant confirms that one temporary pond serving the Suffolk Onshore Scheme would be located in the fluvial floodplain. Details of this pond are provided document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086], which also provides justification for why floodplain compensation storage is not necessary. There would also be one temporary pond serving the Suffolk Onshore Scheme would be in the fluvial floodplain of the River Stour, compensation for this pond could be accommodated via the provision that is secured via the commitment associated with compensation storage for proposed pylons that will be included within Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan.
EA075	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that commitment W06 of document Late Deadline 1 Submission - 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-102] for temporary and permanent haul/access roads within the floodplain could result in loss of flood storage or impedance to flood flow. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] The Applicant has updated commitment W01 to reflect that activities within the floodplain will be considered in accordance with a method approved under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. However, we require confirmation as to whether any land raising is proposed, and if confirmed, any measurements of it being provided in metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). This is part of our original request under EA075	Refer also to the Applicant’s response to AP2 in Application Document 9.135: Applicant’s Response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3, which confirms that W06 has been revised. The new wording is included in Table 1.1 of the updated Flood Risk Assessment and within the REAC to be submitted at Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		in our relevant representation response [RR-1586]. This issue links with EA069, and EA070.	
EA079	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We have reviewed the following documents: • 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP3-079] • 6.2.4.1 (D) Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Clean) [REP3- 020] • 3.1(F) Draft Development Consent Order (Tracked) [REP3-007] • 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292] We previously raised there was a lack of quantified assessment of the rate of coastal erosion at the landfall location over the lifetime of the project. We are pleased by the inclusion of commitment MPE08 in [REP3-079] relating to the exposure of offshore burial cables. We require confirmation whether this includes erosion in proximity to the shore where the cables will make landfall, and update the wording accordingly. We note that the estimates on coastal erosion in relation to NCERM data are only referenced within Table 1.17 of the [REP3-020]. We would expect these estimates to also form part of, or at least be referenced in, the 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP292]. The FRA should clarify whether the NCERM estimates (presented within Table 1.17 of the Marine Physical Environment chapter) have any implications for the proposals as they currently stand. It was stated in the Examination meeting on 29 January 2026 that the applicant had no major concerns. However, this still needs to be addressed in the FRA. We expect this information to consider the rate of erosion and landfall location in relation to the relevant Shoreline Management Plan, and reference any related Beach Management Plans. We only require this amendment to the FRA in regards to Suffolk. We are pleased to see that “in consultation with the Environment Agency” has been added to requirement 13 Decommissioning of the [REP3-007]. This adequately addresses our concerns relating to decommissioning. Regarding the wording for the Suffolk Landfall infrastructure decommissioning requirement, please see our answer to the examining authority’s question 77. in Appendix A. We request that this wording is included in the draft Development Consent Order. We note National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), section 2.3.2 states that: “As climate change is likely to increase risks to the resilience of some of this infrastructure, from flooding for example, or in situations where it is located near the coast or an estuary or is underground, applicants should in particular set out to what extent the proposed development is expected to be vulnerable, and, as appropriate, how it has been designed to be resilient to: • Coastal erosion – for the landfall of offshore transmission cables and their associated substations in the inshore and coastal locations respectively.”	The Applicant has responded to the matter in document 9.90 (A) Applicant’s Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. Refer also to the Applicant’s response to AP2 in Application Document 9.135: Applicant’s Response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3, which confirms that section 4.3 (Operational Risk Assessments for Suffolk and Kent) of the Flood Risk Assessment has been updated to include the requested information. This will be submitted at Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
EA081	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We previously raised that the bridge over the River Fromus may be retained after operation phase without an adaptation plan for future flood risk. We are pleased to see that the Environment Agency will be consulted on Requirement 13 (Decommissioning), within [REP3-007]. However, there has been no re-adjustment of the Mannings Roughness value in the hydraulic modelling relating to the River Fromus crossing, or a commitment to floodplain compensation. Therefore, this issue is unresolved. From our Deadline 2 Response letter [REP2-050]: We do not consider this issue resolved. We previously raised that the bridge over the River Fromus may be retained after operation phase without an adaptation plan for future flood risk. We note that the bridge abutments for the Fromus crossing fall outside the design flood extent and hence there is no loss of floodplain storage associated with the abutments. However, we note that the review of the hydraulic modelling for the Fromus crossing noted that the flood extent is sensitive to Manning's roughness within the river channel at this location. There are higher roughness values causing out of bank flooding and some impact to the proposed right bank bridge abutment. In light of this, it would be prudent to ensure the channel and embankment vegetation in the vicinity of the proposed crossing is well maintained throughout the operational life of the bridge. This is also applies beyond decommissioning phase if the crossing is to be retained. We note that B32 within Document Late Deadline 1 Submission - 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-102] states there will be riparian habitat planting along the riparian corridor of the River Fromus. Given the sensitivities shown in the model to manning roughness, increase in vegetation along the watercourse may exacerbate flood risk. To resolve this issue, we require the following: • Alter the wording for requirement 13. (Decommissioning) in Late Deadline 1 Submission - 3.1(E) draft Development Consent Order (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-036] to be amended to include the wording “for the approval of by the relevant planning authority, in consultation with the Environment Agency”. • Adjust the Mannings Roughness value in the modelling, re-assess flood risk, and adjust the design if necessary; or commit to providing floodplain compensation in Suffolk (inclusive of the River Fromus).	The Applicant has responded to this matter in 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. The Applicant confirms that the wording of Requirement 13 of the dDCO has been amended to include the requested wording. The River Fromus flood model was run with a roughness co-efficient that was increased by 20%. Flows remain in channel at the crossing site. Flows exceed the channel upstream of the bridge and flow south down the right bank floodplain, to interact with the ramped bridge abutment. The abutment does not block the flow which can pass freely around the structure and continue down the floodplain. Minor water level increases are restricted to land within the Order Limits and therefore do not increase flood risk to third party land. Refer also to the Applicant's response to AP2 in Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3 for actions taken in respect of EA081.
EA091	Flood Modelling	We do not consider this issue resolved. Previously, we stated that the flood map for planning NAFRA2 data hadn't fully been considered for two temporary attenuation ponds, joint bays and a temporary crossing (S/WA/0057).	The requested information regarding the temporary pond is provided in 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		We have not been provided with the requested information raised in our Deadline 2 Response letter [REP2-050]. Therefore, this issue is unresolved. From our Deadline 2 Response letter [REP2-050]: The Document Additional Submission accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority – Applicant’s response to the ExA’s s89(3) letter 8 July 2025 & 5 August 2025 – 9.4 Supplementary Environmental Information - Flood risk assessment [AS-099] describes how one attenuation pond is within Flood Zone 3. This pond will be designed to exclude flood water ingress, and the supplementary note describes how impacts would be negligible due to the small temporary loss of storage. We require clarification from the applicant regarding: • The volume of water that would be displaced by the pond • Whether the pond would be moved to an area outside of the flood zone • Clarification of how long the temporary attenuation pond would be in place for In addition to the above we request clarification of how the removal of temporary attenuation ponds will be secured. It is not clearly stated within the Late Deadline 1 Submission - 7.5.3.2 (B) CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-102] or in Late Deadline 1 Submission - 3.1(E) draft Development Consent Order (Clean) - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP1-036].	Commitment W31 within Document 7.5.3 Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan secures the removal of the temporary attenuation ponds. Refer also to the Applicant’s response to AP2 in Application Document 9.135: Applicant’s Response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3 for actions taken in respect of EA081

Appendix C: Summary of our position

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments																																																																																																																								
		<table><tr><th>Subject</th><th>Relevant Rep Reference</th><th>Deadline 1</th></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA001</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA002</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA003</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA004</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA005</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA006</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA007</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA008</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA009</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA010</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA011</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA012</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA013</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA014</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA015</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA016</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA017</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA018</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA019</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA020</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA021</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA022</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA023</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA024</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA025</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA026</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA027</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA028</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA029</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA030</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA031</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA032</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Resources</td><td>EA033</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Resources</td><td>EA034</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Resources</td><td>EA035</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA036</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA037</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA038</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA039</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr></table>	Subject	Relevant Rep Reference	Deadline 1	Biodiversity	EA001	Not Resolved	Biodiversity	EA002	Not Resolved	Biodiversity	EA003	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA004	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA005	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA006	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA007	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA008	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA009	Not Resolved	Fisheries	EA010	Not Resolved	Fisheries	EA011	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA012	Not Resolved	Fisheries	EA013	Not Resolved	Fisheries	EA014	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA015	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA016	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA017	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA018	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA019	Not Resolved	Fisheries	EA020	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA021	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA022	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA023	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA024	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA025	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA026	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA027	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA028	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA029	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA030	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA031	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA032	Not Resolved	Water Resources	EA033	Issue Resolved	Water Resources	EA034	Issue Resolved	Water Resources	EA035	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA036	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA037	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA038	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA039	Issue Resolved	Noted.
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Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Water Quality	EA040	Not Resolved
	Water Quality	EA041	Not Resolved
	Water Quality	EA042	Issue Resolved
	Water Quality	EA043	Not Resolved
	Water Quality	EA044	Issue Resolved
	Water Quality	EA045	Not Resolved
	Water Quality	EA046	Not Resolved
	Water Quality	EA047	Issue Resolved
	Waste	EA048	Issue Resolved
	Waste	EA049	Issue Resolved
	GWCL	EA050	Issue Resolved
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	GWCL	EA052	Issue Resolved
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Appendix D: Continuation of our response to the Examining Authority’s Written Questions 1

1.1.3 The Applicant responded to Environment Agency’s Deadline 4 Response Appendix D from **REP4-185** at Deadline 5 in **Application Document 9.119 Applicant's Comments on Late Responses to ExA First Written Questions**.

Table 34.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Environment Agency Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-214]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Sea Link Issue Specific Hearing 2 supplementary questions			
ISH2.022.	Advance mitigation planting	Requirement 6 of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [REP3- 006] does not secure advanced planting, as it only prevents the authorised development from commencing, so could not be enforced for advanced planting. It therefore needs to be secured separately in the dDCO. Could advance mitigation planting be added to precommencement operations in article 2, with a requirement that precommencement operations cannot be carried out until details of advance planting are approved with a timetable for their implementation? Suggest some wording. We are not clear as to whether advance mitigation planting would involve riparian planting, and whether this would be considered as advanced mitigation. Advanced mitigation planting is referred to in the 7.5.7.1 (B) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk (Version 2, change request) (Clean) [CR1-045] as ‘advanced planting to provide early establishment of woodland planting’ (section 5.1.4). We require clarification from the Applicant as to whether this would include riparian planting, as it may be relevant to our issue EA002 within our Relevant Representation [RR-1586]. We stated under EA002 in our Relevant Representation [RR-1586] there was a lack of precautionary approach to temporary habitat loss and protected species. This issue was partially resolved in our comments on the response to our relevant representation [REP2-050], however we stated that we required the 7.5.7.1 (B) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan - Suffolk (Clean)	Refer to the Applicant’s response to AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant’s Response to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3 , which confirms that the applicant and the EA have reached agreement on the wording on Requirement 3 – Bridge over River Fromus.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		[AS-059] Section 5.2.3 to be updated to include riparian planting of mature emergent vegetation. This would ensure natural recolonisation and mitigate predation risks for water voles. Once we have received clarity as to whether advance mitigation planting involves mitigation planting, we would follow one of two scenarios: • Scenario 1 - o If riparian planting is not included within the advanced mitigation planting, then we feel this is outside of our remit and we have no comment to make. • Scenario 2 - o If riparian planting is included within the advanced mitigation planting, we will alter our position. If the riparian planting is considered within the advance mitigation planting and is placed under requirement 2 'pre commencement activities' this would take away our ability to ensure the mitigations proposed are appropriate at a highly sensitive WFD waterbody (the Fromus River). We would require the applicant to consult us (The Environment Agency) with their riparian planting plans and seek our approval. The actions taken by the applicant within this corridor may require a Flood Risk Activity Permit and seek the appropriate license for approval.	
ISH2.028.	Limit to deviation for Fromus Bridge	Provide suggested wording for adding this to article 5 of the dDCO. We suggest the following wording: 5. (d) In respect to the work no.3a, specifically the bridge proposed over the river Fromus, deviate in regards to the following: (i) the soffit level not extending below 10.49 metres above ordnance datum; (ii) the deck width not extending beyond 6 metres; (iii) abutment set back from the River Fromus not retracting beyond 8 metres from the top of the bank. This wording reflects current discussions on the River Fromus crossing, and a proposed requirement we wish to be input into Schedule 3 Requirements of the DCO. We are currently waiting on our legal department's review of the wording. We will then request that the finalized requirement wording is input into Schedule 3.	

Table 34.3 Applicant’s Comments on the Environment Agency Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-173]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix A: Our response to documents submitted at Deadline 4			
	Response details	Please note that our response includes only those issues IDs for which the Deadline 4 submissions are relevant and seek to address. We have not provided further comment on issue IDs where no relevant documents, or substantive comments, were	Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		submitted at deadline 4. Therefore, these issues remain unresolved, and we expect that the Applicant will submit relevant information for them at deadline 5. These outstanding issue IDs are as follows: • EA019 • EA040 • EA053 • EA064 • EA075 Please also see Appendix B: Summary of our position, for a tracker of which issue IDs are resolved and unresolved.	
Requirement 6	Construction management plans to be approved	We are pleased that we are now named as being a consultee for: • Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (a) • Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – Suffolk (f) • Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – Kent (g) • Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (LEMP) – Suffolk (h) • Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (LEMP) – Kent (i) • Material and Waste Management Plan (n) • Drainage Management Plan - Suffolk (o) • Drainage Management Plan – Kent (p) We request to be consulted/an approving body for the following: • Flood Management Plan (FMP) (q) • Code of Construction Practice (r) • Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)	Given the EA has been able to fully comment on and suggest changes to the outline Code of Construction Practice during the Examination, it is not considered necessary for the EA to be listed as a consultee. The Code of Construction Practice will be subject to scrutiny and approval by the relevant district or county council. Unlike the other outline management plans that have been submitted to the Examination, the final REAC will be that secured under Schedule 3 Requirement 5 of the dDCO. As the EA has been able to comment fully on this document, the Applicant does not consider it necessary for there to be a further consultation and/or approval of the REAC.
Requirement 11	Removal of temporary bridges and culverts	We request to be consulted on/listed as an approving authority on requirement 11 (1), in regards to the temporary bridge over the River Stour (as stated in section 4.6.74 of REP1A-004).	
EA001	Biodiversity	We do not consider this issue resolved. Commitments B71 and NV03 in document Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-234] have not been updated. B71 still states “During winter, construction work within 4 m of any watercourse areis only to be undertaken during 7am to 7pm, except during emergencies, to avoid disturbing otter during the core of the night.” These proposed construction timings over winter still include periods of darkness when otters are most active.	Updated wording is currently being considered.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		NV03 has not been updated to include specific reference to wildlife (namely nocturnal protected species) as a 'sensitive receptor'.	
EA002	Biodiversity	We do not consider this issue resolved. Commitments B25, B46 and B47 in document Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-234] have been included in relation to water vole. We are content with the additional details provided regarding water vole watching briefs and timings prior to vegetation removal. However, vegetation clearance should be undertaken following pre-commencement surveys as outlined in B01. If, as it is assumed in commitment B46, that any ditch may have water vole present, these surveys should be undertaken immediately before vegetation clearance, and any burrows should be identified either on the ground or on a site plan as detailed in Condition 7 of the Class Licence. We want the need for pre-commencement water vole surveys immediately before vegetation clearance be made clearer within these commitments. For document 7.5.7.1 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk [REP4-065] we are satisfied with the wording in section 4.4.1 which now states that ditch reinstatement will be through the planting of mature emergent vegetation and not through natural colonisation. However, this issue cannot be resolved until section 4.3.1 of the Document 7.5.7.2: Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent [REP4-067] is also updated to reflect the same i.e. "Gaps in ditch marginal vegetation will be planted with mature emergent vegetation purchased from nurseries as requested by the Environment Agency"	The Applicant will update the Kent oLEMP at section 4.3.1 to reflect the wording requested.
EA009	Fisheries	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. We had raised concerns that Brook Lamprey had been omitted, but they are now included in Document 6.2.2.2 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP4-025].	Noted. No comments from the Applicant required.
EA010	Fisheries	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. Please see EA009 above.	Noted. No comments from the Applicant required.
EA012	Fisheries	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved. Please see EA009 and EA010 above.	Noted. No comments from the Applicant required.
EA013	Fisheries	We are satisfied and consider this issue resolved.	Noted. No comments from the Applicant required.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		We requested for the River Fromus Crossing a requirement for a soffit height of 4m, including a monitoring and contingency plan for invertebrates. We have reviewed document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [REP4-217] and the wording we wanted has been included for (3) Bridge over the River Fromus.	
EA032	Geomorphology	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the cable burial depth would not be deep enough to avoid the moving mouth of the River Stour. We requested that the cables be buried a minimum 3m below the bed of the low flow of the channel of the mouth of the Stour. Commitment MPE02 in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] has not yet been updated to require the depth of the cable to be deeper than the mouth of the low flow Stour channel, in order to mitigate for the risk. Alternatively, the cable route needs moving further north away from the mouth of the Stour. The Applicant should also provide a comparison of the depth of the mouth of the low flow Stour channel with the likely depth of the cable. Appendix C Pegwell Bay Indicative Landfall Layout within document 9.13: Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229] shows there is only 350 m between the mouth of the Stour and the marine limits of deviation (green dotted line), showing movement of the mouth of the Stour northwards is still a risk. Section 1.7.24 of document 6.2.4.1 Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment [REP4-027] states “Ongoing maintenance dredging carried out by the local port authority has also proved to be an effective measure in helping to stabilise the channel position for navigation purposes and further reduces the risk of future channel migration.” This could be an alternative solution to this issue. A commitment to dredging by the applicant in combination with the local port authority, if the mouth of the Stour were to move into the marine limits of deviation during the lifetime of the project. Although not ideal, dredging would be a suitably low impact method of controlling the movement of the mouth. We want to avoid any risk of the construction of a retaining wall/scour protection. The Environment Agency should be included as a named consultee for REAC Number B68 within documents 7.5.2 Outline	Issue of potential future geomorphology of Pegwell Bay and migration of the River Stour channel that could lead to exposure of the buried cable: There is no analysis, modelling or survey that could be undertaken in the present day to reliably predict the future course of the River Stour channel in the intertidal beach area, particularly in response to climate change effects which are also subject to significant uncertainty. Although considered unlikely, it is acknowledged there is uncertainty regarding potential future migration of the low water channel. To reliably avoid cable exposure in any eventuality, a large depth of burial (order of metres below the base level of a future river channel, itself potentially several metres deep) would be required. This has been assessed as likely to cause unacceptable issues in terms of thermal performance of the buried cable, and would require a disproportionate scale of excavation works to achieve that burial depth below the present day beach level. Following agreement with the Environment Agency during a call 19th March and 24th March, REAC commitment MPE09 will be updated at Deadline 6 to state that: <i>The River Stour Channel will be</i> monitored throughout the operational life of the asset. Monitoring will be undertaken annually for the first five years following installation, after which the frequency and scope of monitoring will be reviewed in consultation with the Environment Agency. <i>If monitoring</i> demonstrates that the River Stour channel is migrating and is likely to interact with the installed cable, the Applicant will consult with and agree appropriate mitigation measures with the Environment Agency. The Applicant will also consult the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB's) and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate. Where required to implement any mitigation, the Applicant will apply for and obtain any necessary separate Marine Licence and undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to implementation. <i>Monitoring of the River Stour channel within</i> Pegwell Bay will be undertaken using a proportionate, risk-based approach and may include aerial and drone surveys, geomorphological assessments, marine bathymetric surveys, comparison of LiDAR datasets, and review of available satellite imagery to identify any material change in channel position, morphology, or migration over time.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-223] and 9.83: Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232]. Any infrastructure related to the cable, be it above or below ground, would become an issue if scouring were to occur.	<i>A trigger for consultation with the Environment Agency will be if monitoring demonstrates that the River Stour channel has migrated to within 50 metres of the as-built cable location.</i> <i>Following consultation, any required mitigation measures will be agreed with and approved by the Environment Agency prior to the undertaking of any remedial works.</i> <i>The principles for post-installation monitoring and asset maintenance, including remediation of an exposed cable, are set out in the latest version of the Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP), as updated at Deadline 5.</i>
EA041	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the disposal of contaminated construction and concreting water, as-well as rainfall runoffs from the batching plant area, may introduce contaminants into the receiving water environment. We are pleased with the changes made to commitment W26 in the document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] however, we want it confirmed in which documents will further water quality monitoring details be provided in, to ensure that we are consulted on it in future. The Securing Mechanism for W26 is listed as being the Outline Code of Construction Practice, and we are not listed as a relevant consultee for this. We wish to be listed as a relevant consultee or for W26 to be secured by document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] for which we are a listed consultee. GG17 in the REAC [REP4-235] has not been updated so we wish to reiterate our previous comments that it is unclear what these measures are, and how water is intended to be disposed of. 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP3-060] and 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy [REP3-061] have not been updated, so we wish to reiterate our previous comments that sections 8.1.8 [REP3-060] and 8.1.9 [REP3-061] still have no commitment to provide the timing for in-situ pours, or for control concrete washout. Additionally, there is a difference in wording between sections 8.1.14 [REP3-060] and 8.1.15 [REP3-061], as the first for Suffolk states “Provision of a suitable vehicle wash area on hardstanding which drains to foul or suitably treated on site”, whilst the latter for Kent only says “which drains to foul”, so we seek clarification if this is correct. It is unclear if it is treated on site, or if disposal offsite or discharge to the water environment is proposed.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		We have reviewed the document 7.5.2 Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224] and acknowledge the details of the Marine Pollution Contingency Plan in Table 1-5. Table 1-6 Landfall Commitments and Mitigation Measures, REAC Number LVS05 is about Drilling Fluid management; however, it is not as detailed as sections 1.10.42 - 1.10.46 were, so we have concerns about where all the previous details are now captured. Please note this is linked to EA046.	
EA043	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that dewatering of both rainfall runoffs and potentially elevated groundwater at the construction site. We are pleased that we are now named to be consulted on the Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan in the document: 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [REP4-217]. We still wish for document 9.7 Applicant's Schedule of Changes to the Draft Development Consent Order (Clean) [REP4-227] to be updated to include the Environment Agency as a named consultee for requirement 6, specifically (o) Construction Drainage Management Plan and (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan. We are pleased that in the document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235], GG15 has been updated to include silt fences, however the requirement should be explicit with recognition for permits if there is any chance of contamination (<u>Discharges to surface water and groundwater: environmental permits - GOV.UK</u>), rather than saying only "agreement of appropriate authority". For commitments W20 and W24, we need to see a commitment for the applicant to eventually provide a SuDS maintenance schedule to ensure that the proposed filter drains/swales/header drains remain in good condition. In conjunction with EA046, we seek clarification how the Applicant would determine that any dewatering discharges are free from contamination. Whilst, GG15 commits to silt traps, and W20 to silt fences or silt screens, water quality monitoring, as requested in issue EA046, will help provide confidence that there is no risk of deterioration. Please note, this issue is linked to EA045.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points .

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
EA045	Water Quality	We do not consider this issue resolved.	The Applicant has rectified the discrepancy between sections 8.1.8 of Application Document 9.17.1 (B): Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP5-083] and 8.1.9 of Application Document 9.17.2 (B): Kent Drainage Strategy [REP5-085] to address the specific comments on this matter.
		We were concerned that the pumping (over pumping) process may allow silty water to enter the water course downstream.	
		We are pleased that we are now named to be consulted on the Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan in the document: 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [REP4-217].	Commitment GG15 has been updated and the new wording included into the REAC at Deadline 6.
		We still wish for document 9.7 Applicant's Schedule of Changes to the Draft Development Consent Order (Clean) [REP4-227] to be updated to include the Environment Agency as a named consultee for requirement 6, specifically (o) Construction Drainage Management Plan and (q) Operational Drainage Management Plan.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points .
		Documents 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy [REP3-060] and 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy [REP3-061] have not been updated, so we wish to reiterate our previous comments that we still have concerns over “discharging into a watercourse” and comments of the dewatering system being “generally clean”. We require this wording to be amended to state that the dewatering system will be clean.	
		In conjunction with EA046, we seek clarification how the Applicant would determine that any dewatering discharges are free from contamination. Whilst, GG15 commits to silt traps, and W02 states silt fences or silt screens, water quality monitoring, as requested in issue EA046, will help provide confidence that there is no risk of deterioration.	
EA046	Water Quality	Please note, this issue is linked to EA043.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points .
		We do not consider this issue resolved.	
		We were concerned that there would be impacts to water quality for the WFD watercourses Hundred River and River Fromus, especially during the construction and decommissioning phases. We requested regular water quality monitoring to be carried out both during and after the construction and decommissioning phases.	
		While the amendments to W26 in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] are positive, we would prefer for the monitoring pre-construction to be monthly, in line with other projects. We also need it confirmed in which documents further water quality monitoring details will be provided in, to ensure that we are consulted on them in future.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Additionally, the Securing Mechanism for W26 is listed as being the Outline Code of Construction Practice, and we are not listed as a relevant consultee for this. We wish to be listed as a relevant consultee or for W26 to be secured by document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] for which we are a listed consultee. We also request that post-construction monitoring (i.e. into operation) is carried out to ensure that water quality returns/remains at baseline as it transitions into “business as usual”. We request that this commitment is secured in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] so that we are consulted on this.	
EA065	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that the sequential approach within Flood Zone 3 was not being clearly applied to avoid Flood Zone 3b. We welcome that the applicant has assessed the storage lost because of the pylon structures within the River Stour Floodplain (in Kent) and that the applicant has committed to compensatory storage for this. We note that a map in the document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] is included of the functional floodplain for the River Stour which is welcomed but more widely across the scheme area we still need an assessment of functional floodplain, particularly with respect to any built development which may fall within the functional floodplain. We still require an assessment of the loss of floodplain storage and associated impact for the temporary attenuation pond 640430, 262030 in Suffolk and the temporary haul roads within the functional floodplain for the River Stour in Kent.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.
EA066	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. As previously stated in our previous response (ref: XA/2025/100350/02-L01, dated: 09 December 2025) there is a statement in Ex 1.3.2 within the document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] that: “With these measures in place, the residual risk of flooding during the construction phase has been assessed as low risk for all sources, except where it locally increases to medium.” We note that this relates to all sources. It is unclear as to where the flood risk has been increased during the construction phase from low to medium. It needs to be made clear	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		that flood risk should not increase, so we require the Applicant to change the wording. Document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] has not yet been updated, however the applicant confirms within document 9.101: Kent Onshore Scheme – Fluvial Flooding from the River Stour [REP4-096] that they need to do compensation and that this mitigation “will be secured through the addition of a new commitment to the relevant control document (e.g. Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP3-078]) at the next appropriate deadline”. This is welcome and we look forward to reviewing this.	
EA068	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We welcome the addition to commitment W02 in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] that there will be no open cut crossings of main rivers. However, the applicant should not have stockpiles within Flood Zone 3b in any circumstances, rather than just “where practicable”. We need the applicant to commit to positioning stockpiles/storing materials outside of the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) and they should endeavour to store these outside of Flood Zone 3 completely, where feasible. We are content with a buffer zone of 15m from a main river (16m where river is tidal) if this is also outside of FZ3b and ideally, also outside of FZ3. We consider this to be achievable for the Suffolk side of the project. We encourage the applicant to engage with us for the Kent side of the project as we recognise the above may be more difficult to achieve. Please note, this issue is related to EA070.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.
EA069	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. It remains unclear as to whether the applicant will reinstate all land levels to preconstruction levels within 5 years of commencing construction following temporary works. Commitment W06 within document 9.83: Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] states “Temporary haul routes within Flood Zone 3 and areas of high and medium risk of flooding from surface water will be removed at the end of the construction phase and the ground surface will be reinstated to pre-project levels, except in instances where the ground level has been adjusted as part of the Proposed Project subject to the provisions of the draft DCO in Article 27 (see Application Document 3.1)”.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		This commitment is only for temporary haul roads, we want the ground surface to be reinstated to pre-project levels, for all temporary works and for it to be clear that this will be done within 5 years of commencing construction following temporary works. Requirement 9 “Reinstatement schemes” within document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [REP4-217] states land “is to be reinstated to a condition suitable for its former use, or such condition as the relevant planning authority may approve, within 12 months of completion of the construction of the stage of authorised development for which it was required”. If the wording is updated to include that ground levels will be reinstated to pre-project levels for all temporary works that could resolve this issue. Requirement 27 “Temporary use of land for carrying out the authorised project” within document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [REP4-217] paragraphs (5)(i) and (6)(h) state that the undertaker is not required to “restore ground levels adjusted as part of the authorised project”. Where land is within a Flood Zone, we would expect ground levels to be reinstated to pre-project levels, within 5 years of commencing construction following temporary works. This is to limit flood risk being increased on or offsite. Please note, this issue interlinks with EA075 and EA089.	
EA070	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that details were omitted regarding temporary attenuation ponds and outfalls within floodplain. There were no details regarding their construction method, and the expected changes in ground level in order to construct these temporary features. The applicant has now provided further clarification in document 9.90: Applicant's Response to January Hearing Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) – Deadline 4 [REP4-086] on why Flood Zone 3 cannot be avoided, as well as confirmation that the 2 temporary attenuation ponds in Flood Zone 3 would be in place for a two-year period. This additional information is welcomed. However, to progress the assessment, we still require the applicant to supply the following information: • The volume of storage that will be lost. • An assessment of impacts to third parties. • Details of the proposed compensatory storage.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• Confirmation of whether the works fall within Flood Zone 3b. • An evaluation of any adverse effects on existing flood flow routes. • The crest level of the storage embankment. • Sufficient design information to support decision-making. If either of the attenuation ponds are within Flood Zone 3b, the applicant should be mindful of the requirements of the Exception Test: specifically, that there should be no net loss of floodplain storage and that the development must not impede flood flows. The crest level of the attenuation pond should be above the 1 in 100-year flood level We note that commitment W31 in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] states that drainage ponds will be removed and land-levels re-instated following construction. However, this does not commit to floodplain storage compensation during the construction phase. Please note, this issue relates to issue EA075 and issue EA091.	
EA076	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We were concerned that wording within mitigation commitments GG14 and W02 reflected activities occurring 15m from watercourses. We welcome the update to commitment W02 to say “prevent storing of soil stockpiles within 15m of a main river (16m where river is tidal)” in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235]. However, we want a commitment that the buffer of 15m from a main river, and 16m where the main river is tidal, should, in addition to stockpiles, be for: • Compound areas • Heavy machinery • Materials that could move in a flood event We believe this is achievable for the Suffolk side of the project. We encourage the applicant to engage with us for the Kent side of the project as we recognise the above may be more difficult to achieve. Commitment GG14 in document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] is specific to the storage of fuels/oils/chemicals and stipulates a minimum buffer of 10m from watercourses. We would prefer this commitment to also	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		be updated to clarify that fuels/oils/chemicals should be stored 10m from a watercourse, unless the watercourse is designated as a main river, and then fuels/oils/chemicals should be stored 15m from a main river, and 16m where the main river is tidal. If the applicant is unable to commit to this, we ask that they clarify why and then we can state if we agree if the additional distance from main rivers is reasonable or not. Please note, this issue is related to issue EA068.	
EA079	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue resolved. We previously raised there was a lack of quantified assessment of the rate of coastal erosion at the landfall location over the lifetime of the project. The applicant has not updated document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] to include the estimated rates of erosion. We welcome that further analysis of erosion as part of commitment MPE08 within document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235], however this relates to offshore exposure and is unclear what offshore is defined as in this context. Document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] provides limited detail regarding predicted coastal erosion at the Suffolk landfall over the lifetime of the development. In particular, the Flood Risk Assessment does not summarise the erosion rates, climate change assumptions, or how these relate to the proposed cable burial depth and the conclusion that flood risk would not be adversely affected. Commitment MPE06 within document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] will include monitoring of beach profiles considering erosion rates and the landfall sites at the Suffolk landfall site. If there was a risk of the cable becoming exposed leeward, we would expect the applicant to commit to beach recharge. This issue relates to 2WE5. in the ExA 2 questions.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.
EA081	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue to be resolved. We previously raised that the bridge over the River Fromus may be retained after operation phase without an adaptation plan for future flood risk.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] has not yet been updated, but we are providing a further response to our Deadline 2 Response letter [REP2-050] so there's no ambiguity and to provide the applicant with clarity on how we think this issue can be resolved. The proposed Fromus crossing does not interact with Flood Zone 3b or Flood Zone 3a, as set out in document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292] and confirmed by the applicant's hydraulic modelling. However, the proposed crossing, if retained, is likely to alter the future Flood Zone 3 flood extent as implied by the sensitivity test related to the manning's value. We note that the applicant opted to reduce the roughness value within the updated modelling when compared with the Environment Agency's original Manning's n value and this has reduced the flood risk within the outputs. Whilst we acknowledge that there is some degree of subjectivity to the roughness value, as for example these will change seasonally, the applicant acknowledges that an average value has been used and there is a sensitivity within the model to this value being changed. For example, in the design event (1 in 100--year plus 29% climate change scenario), when Manning's roughness is increased by 20%, the model shows flooding on the right bank (western floodplain) of the River Fromus at grid reference E: 638760, N: 262270. This sensitivity should inform the resilience of the crossing and if it is shown to adversely affect the access road, constrict flood flow routes, or if the bridge is to be retained post decommissioning, then we would anticipate the bridge design, and specifically the rampart and western approach road, to account for this sensitivity to the manning's n value. This is illustrated in Figure 24 on page 20 of Appendix B (Fromus Hydraulic Modelling Technical Note) within document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292]. As the western bridge rampart is raised above the design flood level, we have no concerns regarding flood risk impacts on the rampart itself or elsewhere during the proposed lifetime of the development. The changes in water levels identified when comparing the baseline and proposed (with bridge) scenarios in the design event roughness sensitivity test occur only near the bridge rampart and remain within the order limits for the development. Our concern relates specifically to the western access road leading to the bridge rampart and to the potential constriction of flow routes. In the hydraulic model, this road is not raised and is represented 'at grade'. We therefore request that the applicant confirms whether this section of road would be inundated during the design event	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		roughness sensitivity test, and whether access would be impeded under such conditions. Given the model's sensitivity to Manning's roughness at this location, we consider it prudent for the applicant to ensure that the approach road is raised at E: 638760, N: 262270 to maintain safe and reliable access during the design event or consider decommissioning the bridge after the operational phase noting the sensitivities to roughness and also longer term climate change when considering the credible maximum scenario. If the bridge is to be left in situ beyond the development lifetime and not decommissioned, consideration must be given to how the structure will be maintained and who the asset owner would be. Retaining the structure in perpetuity without an identified owner or maintainer could give rise to flood risk issues both at the crossing and approach road itself and elsewhere.	
EA083	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue to be resolved. We asked that appropriate mitigation is in place within Document 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) to ensure the River Stour (Kent) is protected in relation to the overhead line crossing. Commitment W33 has been added to document 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP4-235] to highlight mitigation that will be in place to prevent falling debris – in the form of debris netting under the temporary bridge. It states that details and a method statement for the scaffolding will be included within the final CEMP. While it is good that this has been included, we want to see a high-level method statement about the bridge design and how the River Stour will be protected during the construction, use and decommissioning of the temporary bridge. We recommend more detail is provided upfront regarding the River Stour crossing design; however, we appreciate that detailed designs will be submitted during the Flood Risk Activity Permitting (FRAP) application. It is crucial that we work with the Applicant on these designs early, as the Applicant should be aware that a FRAP may not be forthcoming, regardless of the Development Consent Order being approved. We request to be consulted/an approving body for the Outline code of construction practice.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.
EA088	Flood Risk	We do not consider this issue to be resolved. Previously we stated that details relating to HDD exit pits and the use of rock bags/concrete mattresses had been omitted.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The document 9.13: Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229] still does not confirm locations or distances from the main river or defence line.	
EA089	Flood Risk	We do not consider this use to be resolved. Previously there was an omission of details regarding mitigation for storage of materials within the River Stour floodplain. We note the applicant has stated within Document 9.101: Kent Onshore Scheme – Fluvial Flooding from the River Stour [REP4-096] that we do not require compensation for temporary works. This is incorrect. As stated in part 2 of our deadline 2 response letter [REP2-144]: We would not be requiring compensation for works in tidal areas or areas which have tidal/fluvial cross-over. However, floodplain compensation is required for any areas of development in fluvial areas, to manage the flood risk associated with the River Stour floodplain. This will ensure that the permanent and temporary elements of the scheme are not displacing fluvial flood storage, and increasing flood risk elsewhere. Given the proposed temporary nature of the bridge (we assume 5-years given the length of the construction phase), associated temporary works, and the large size of the Stour floodplain, we will ensure compensation requirements are proportionate and reasonable. Compensation for temporary works should be balanced against the commitment to fully reinstate the land to its pre-construction condition upon removal. Within Document 9.101: Kent Onshore Scheme – Fluvial Flooding from the River Stour [REP4-096] the applicants state “Final floodplain storage compensation proposals would be presented by the appointed contractor and this mitigation will be secured through addition of a new commitment within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC).” We look forward to reviewing this and ask the applicant to confirm within that commitment how the compensation will be provided. Please note, this issue interlinks with EA069.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.
EA091	Flood Modelling	We do not consider this issue resolved.	Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Previously, we stated that the flood map for planning NAFRA2 data hadn't fully been considered for two temporary attenuation ponds, joint bays and a temporary crossing (S/WA/0057). We have not been provided with all of the requested information raised in our Deadline 4 Response letter [REP4-185]. Therefore, this issue is unresolved. We note and welcome commitment W31 in document 9.83: Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232] to remove the temporary attenuation ponds after 2 years. As noted in issue EA070 as well, we still require the applicant to provide clarity on the flood risk impacts associated with the temporary attenuation pond at grid reference 640430, 262030, including any loss of floodplain storage and the associated requirement for compensatory storage, particularly where impacts to third parties may occur. If the attenuation pond lies within Flood Zone 3b, the applicant should be mindful of the requirements of the Exception Test: specifically, that there should be no net loss of floodplain storage and that the development must not impede flood flows. The crest level of the attenuation pond should be above the 1 in 100-year flood level. Please note, this is related to issue EA070.	

Appendix C: Summary of EA position

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments																																																																																																																											
		<table><tr><th>Subject</th><th>Relevant Rep Reference</th><th>Deadline 1</th></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA001</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA002</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA003</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA004</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA005</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA006</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA007</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td>EA008</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA009</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA010</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA011</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA012</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA013</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA014</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA015</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA016</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA017</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA018</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA019</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA020</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA021</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA022</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA023</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Fisheries</td><td>EA024</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA025</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA026</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA027</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA028</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA029</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA030</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA031</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Geomorphology</td><td>EA032</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Resources</td><td>EA033</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Resources</td><td>EA034</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Resources</td><td>EA035</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA036</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA037</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA038</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Marine</td><td>EA039</td><td>Issue Resolved</td></tr><tr><td>Water Quality</td><td>EA040</td><td>Not Resolved</td></tr></table>	Subject	Relevant Rep Reference	Deadline 1	Biodiversity	EA001	Not Resolved	Biodiversity	EA002	Not Resolved	Biodiversity	EA003	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA004	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA005	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA006	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA007	Issue Resolved	Biodiversity	EA008	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA009	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA010	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA011	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA012	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA013	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA014	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA015	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA016	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA017	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA018	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA019	Not Resolved	Fisheries	EA020	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA021	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA022	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA023	Issue Resolved	Fisheries	EA024	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA025	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA026	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA027	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA028	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA029	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA030	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA031	Issue Resolved	Geomorphology	EA032	Not Resolved	Water Resources	EA033	Issue Resolved	Water Resources	EA034	Issue Resolved	Water Resources	EA035	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA036	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA037	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA038	Issue Resolved	Marine	EA039	Issue Resolved	Water Quality	EA040	Not Resolved	Noted.
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		Water Quality	EA041	Not Resolved
		Water Quality	EA042	Issue Resolved
		Water Quality	EA043	Not Resolved
		Water Quality	EA044	Issue Resolved
		Water Quality	EA045	Not Resolved
		Water Quality	EA046	Not Resolved
		Water Quality	EA047	Issue Resolved
		Waste	EA048	Issue Resolved
		Waste	EA049	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA050	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA051	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA052	Issue Resolved
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		GWCL	EA058	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA059	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA060	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA061	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA062	Issue Resolved
		GWCL	EA063	Issue Resolved
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		Flood Risk	EA066	Not Resolved
		Flood Risk	EA067	Issue Resolved
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		Flood Risk	EA071	Issue Resolved
		Flood Risk	EA072	Issue Resolved
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		Flood Risk	EA085	Issue Resolved
		Flood Risk	EA086	Issue Resolved
		Flood Risk	EA087	Issue Resolved
		Flood Risk	EA088	Not Resolved
		Flood Risk	EA089	Not Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA090	Issue Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA091	Not Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA092	Issue Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA093	Issue Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA094	Issue Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA095	Issue Resolved
		Flood Modelling	EA096	Issue Resolved

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix C: EA response to the Examining Authority's Written Questions 2			
Draft development consent order (dDCO)			
2GEN15 Local	Question to: Local Authorities and Environment Agency (EA). Question: Article 53 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.	We are not the navigation authority for the section of the River Stour in Anglia that this project covers. The EA is responsible from Brundon Mill in the Parish of Sudbury in the District of Babergh in the County of Suffolk to the Cattawade Barrage, partly in the Parish of Brantham in the same District and partly in the Parish of Lawford in the District of Tendring in the County of Essex.	Refer to the Applicant's response to 2GEN15 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .
Ecology and Biodiversity			
2ECOL19	Question to: Applicant EA Local Authorities Question: 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.	We are nearly satisfied that the Applicant is adequately mitigating for any potential runoff from the River Fromus Bridge crossing. EA41 is still unresolved due to concerns the disposal of contaminated construction and concreting water, as-well as rainfall runoffs from the batching plant area, may introduce contaminants into the receiving water environment. However, within the Biodiversity Net Gain measures, the Applicant includes proposals to create two attenuation ponds either side of the River Fromus Bridge which will be primarily for drainage but will be designed to improve biodiversity and habitat for riparian mammals. They will also be undertaking riparian enhancements along the River Fromus across a 500m stretch including wetland mix planting (particularly around the bridge) and reprofiling of the banks. This will likely lead to improvements in diffuse pollution issues. We agree that it would be disproportionately expensive to address any point source pollution issues. We look forward to the applicant addressing our comments on issue EA41.	Refer to the Applicant's response to 2ECOL19 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .
2ECOL44.	Question to: Local authorities EA	We are happy with the wording of B18 but would expect to see detailed designs in relation to this, irrelevant of watercourse type, prior to any works taking place. In addition, any pumps used to	Refer to the Applicant's response to 2ECOL44 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Question: REAC provision B18 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?	pump surface waters during any relevant works should be fitted with 2mm mesh screens.	
Water Environment			
2WE1	Question to: Applicant, SCC, KCC, EA Question: Water environment – joint position statement 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: • 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).	Please see at the end of this table where we have put our comments next to the applicants comments provided to us on 2 March 2026.	Refer to the Applicant's response to 2WE1 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .
2WE2.	Question to: SCC, EA Question: Need to relocate temporary drainage pond out of fluvial flood zone 3 in Suffolk SCC and EA: Do the parties accept the applicant's response to AP85	The applicant has now provided further clarification on why Flood Zone 3 cannot be avoided, as well as confirmation that the temporary attenuation pond would be in place for a two-year period. This additional information is welcomed. However, to progress the assessment, we still require the applicant to supply the following information: • The volume of storage that will be lost. • An assessment of impacts to third parties.	Refer to the Applicant's response to 2WE2 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	[REP4-086], which concludes it is not necessary to relocate the particular drainage pond, or if not why not?	• Details of the proposed compensatory storage. • Confirmation of whether the works fall within Flood Zone 3b. • An evaluation of any adverse effects on existing flood flow routes. • The crest level of the storage embankment. • Sufficient design information to support decision-making.	
2WE3	Question to: EA, KCC Question: Loss of floodplain storage 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: • 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?	We are not comfortable “agreeing” to findings within documents – but we can accept findings. We accept that floodplain compensation is required, as we have previously stated within our responses with regards to the fluvial floodplain. Without knowing the compensation strategy or the precise locations on where the applicant intends to compensate for flood storage, we’re unable to agree that there is sufficient space to create the compensation areas. The applicant would need to highlight where they intend to compensate for the loss of flood storage to confirm whether it is sufficient. The compensation strategy should demonstrate that there is sufficient flood volume storage and include calculations as to how the strategy has been considered. The applicant will be aware of the vast nature of the floodplain within the Stour Catchment and so will need to be careful as to designing a compensation strategy. The applicant has suggested that this can be added into a new commitment, however it will be important for the applicant to demonstrate that the compensation areas are sufficient and useful. So, whilst it is possible that this can be secured through a REAC commitment, we would like to see evidence of this first, and their compensation strategy should be forthcoming. Any new commitment should allude to the creation of a Floodplain Compensation Strategy and should be reviewed by the Environment Agency. We note that there is some temporary land raising relating to spoil, haul roads, and an attenuation pond in the functional floodplain. The applicant has not provided any detail on the volumes lost as a result of land raising as part of the construction phase of the development or committed to compensatory storage for temporary works. Whilst we acknowledge that these works are temporary in nature they have the potential to influence flood risk elsewhere. On this basis we require that the applicant provides detail on the volume of storage lost in the present day fluvial design event. If compensatory storage is not achievable for temporary works then the applicant should provide quantitative evidence that	Refer to the Applicant’s response to 2WE3 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant’s Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		demonstrates the flood risk impacts will remain on-site and will not impact flood risk to third parties in line with EN-1 paragraph 5.8.12.	
2WE5	Question to: Applicant, EA Question: Flood risk assessment - coastal erosion 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. 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?	We have reviewed the Applicant's response to ISH2 Action Point 84 [REP4-086]. While the Applicant references paragraphs 4.3.23 and 4.3.24 of the Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] (FRA) and supporting modelling within the Marine Physical Environment chapter of the Environmental Statement. The FRA itself provides limited detail regarding predicted coastal erosion at the Suffolk landfall over the lifetime of the development. In particular, the FRA does not summarise the erosion rates, climate change assumptions, or how these relate to the proposed cable burial depth and the conclusion that flood risk would not be adversely affected. The Environment Agency therefore considers that further clarification would assist the Examining Authority in understanding how coastal erosion has been accounted for within the FRA.	Refer to the Applicant's response to 2WE5 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Response to Second Written Questions .
2WE1 . Water Environment – joint position statement			
2WE1	Flood risk and assessment	Applicants Position: The Applicant has prepared: 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292] which appraised flood risk to and arising from the Project from all relevant sources. 9.4 Supplementary Environmental Information -Flood risk assessment [AS-099] which appraised the new EA Flood Map for Planning data set published in March 2025 and provided clarification on Project interactions with Flood Zone 3b. 9.101 (A) Kent Onshore Scheme - Fluvial Flooding from the River Stour [REP4-096] detailing how the Kent Onshore Scheme would interact with the River Stour fluvial floodplain and how any impacts would be mitigated. At Deadline 5 the following will be submitted: 9.99 Groundwater Flood Risk at Minster – responding to the recent EA Groundwater Flood Warning that was issued for Kent and presenting an assessment of risk to the proposed Converter	In addition to the documents listed here, the Applicant has also provided Application Document 9.122: Surface Water Flood Risk and Climate Change – Technical Note [REP5-134] to supplement the information provided within Application Document 6.8: Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292]. As to the specific points raised by the EA: In relation to coastal change, the EA is referred to the joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points. In relation to the Fromus crossing, the EA is referred to the joint position statements provided in response to AP2 and AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points. In relation to the attenuation basin, the EA is referred to the Applicant's response to 3WE1 in Application Document 9.136: Applicant's Response to Third Written Questions.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Station site, informed by site specific GI data. 9.122 Surface Water Flood Risk and Climate Change – which presents and interprets information to address Suffolk County Councils request to provide surface water climate change flood maps (also providing information for Kent) In combination, these submissions, which have been informed by all latest available flood risk data provide for a robust assessment of flood risk to and arising from the Project. Measures securing flood risk mitigation and controls are detailed in 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) [REP4-234]. These measures will ensure that the Project is safe from flooding over its operational lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The policy requirements set out in EN-1 with regard to flood risk and assessment have therefore been met. Environment Agency Position: To address this question, we will go through section 5.6 and 5.8 of NPS EN-1 and highlight matters of concern in relation to the Environment Agency's remit: • 5.6.10 considers what aspects relating to coastal change the applicant should consider. We note as part of this, that the applicant should consider how coastal change could affect flood risk. This relates to our response for ExQ2: 2WE5. • 5.8.5 refers to climate change adaptation. The applicant has assessed climate change as part of their modelling. We agree with the approaches taken in terms of climate change assessment. Although we do have some concerns regarding the capacity for climate change adaptation in the context of the Fromus crossing – especially if the crossing is retained post-decommissioning. • 5.8.6 refers to consideration of flood risk from all sources at all stages of the planning process. We interpret that statement to be inclusive of all phases of the development, inclusive of the construction phase, and in the event that components are retained post-decommissioning. The two key matters are the retention pond during construction and the Fromus crossing which may be retained post-decommissioned. • 5.8.7 relates to making infrastructure in flood risk sites safe for its lifetime. In the context of the operation phase, we consider the Fromus crossing to be the only matter of minor concern in Suffolk. • 5.8.9 (and 5.8.21) relates to the Sequential Test. It is for the Secretary of State to determine if the Sequential test has been satisfactorily demonstrated. • 5.8.10 relates whether it is appropriate to proceed to the Exception Test following application of the Sequential Test. It is for the Secretary of State, having regard to the ExA recommendations	In relation to floodplain storage and compensation, the EA is referred to the joint position statement provided in response to AP2 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points and the Applicant's comments to 2WE3 in Application Document 9.131: Applicant's Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		and the evidence provided, to form a view on whether this is acceptable. • 5.8.11 considers the Exception Test. We are broadly happy that the Suffolk side of the proposal considers part b of the Exception Test. As stated above the two key areas of concern in relation to this are the Fromus crossing and the placement of the attenuation basin. • 5.8.12 considers increases to flood risk elsewhere, loss of floodplain storage, and impact on flood flow routes. Inthe context of the proposed development, we have two outstanding concerns relating to the proposed Fromus crossing (constriction of flood flow routes) and temporary attenuation pond (flood storage as in Flood Zone 3 – however the applicant it yet to determine if this is Flood Zone 3b). It is our view that the applicant could address a number of outstanding issues relating to 5.8.12 if they ensured no net loss of storage during the construction phase, noting that this is more of a concern on the Kent side of the proposal. Additionally, 5.8.30 considers loss of floodplain storage and compensation. Also, 5.8.31 considers off-site compensation and flow constriction. • 5.8.13, 5.8.14, and 5.8.15 set out the requirements for a Flood Risk Assessment. These require that flood risk from all sources both to the development and arising from the development is considered, taking into account the development's vulnerability classification, as well as climate change impacts. The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment that addresses these requirements although we have some outstanding concerns relating to specific aspects of the development which are highlighted in our response to 5.8.12 above. • 5.8.16 relates EN-1 to the PPG. We would like to highlight <i>Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 7-004-20220825</i> which relates to the proposed attenuation pond – the applicant should apply the avoid, control, mitigation manage hierarchy. We are working towards solutions with the applicant. We note that the applicant has partially addressed some issues, but more specificity focusing on each issue would help to ensure timely resolution. The applicant's response suggests that the project will be safe from flooding for its operational lifetime – we need the applicant to ensure this is the case for all phases of the development, and for any retained components (see highlighted text to the left). The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment [APP 292] (FRA) that addresses several of the core requirements of NPS EN-	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		1, including flood risk from all sources, climate change allowances, and the need to ensure the development remains safe for its lifetime. The FRA engages with the Sequential and Exception Tests, and the consideration of climate change within the hydraulic modelling is considered acceptable. However, NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.8.41 requires the Secretary of State to be satisfied that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Or, where it cannot be wholly avoided, that any increase can be mitigated to an acceptable and safe level. At present the FRA has insufficient information in relation to the temporary attenuation pond – see response to ExQ2: 2WE2 above. These relate to the loss of floodplain storage, ensuring no adverse effects on flood flow routes, and clarity on whether the proposed attenuation pond is in Flood Zone 3a or 3b. We are seeking clarity on the Fromus modelling. As the applicant is preferring to retain the crossing and modelling shows a sensitivity to manning's roughness, this raises concerns about the access to the rampart to ensure operability in times of flood and means that sensitivity testing of the proposed crossing becomes more relevant to design. Lastly, we have raised concerns relating to erosion and landfall at Suffolk – see EXQ2: 2WE5 for context. Given that coastal change may influence flood risk over the lifetime of the development, the FRA should explain whether erosion estimates have implications for the proposal. Until these issues are addressed, the FRA cannot yet demonstrate the development avoids increasing flood risk elsewhere, nor that residual risk can be mitigated to an appropriate level to satisfy paragraph 5.8.42.	
	Compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive	Applicants Position: The Applicant is confident that mutually satisfactory wording of a Requirement regarding design of the Fromus bridge can be agreed. The Applicant is working with the Environment Agency to address outstanding concerns with regard to water quality matters. We are reviewing the EA submission Comments on any further information/ submissions received by deadline 3 [REP4- 185] and propose to make further changes and additions to commitments within the Register of Environmental Commitments to provide the water quality safeguards that are sought.	The parties have reached agreement on this issue. Refer to joint position statement provided in response to AP5 of Application Document 9.135: Applicant's Response to March Hearing (CAH2 and ISH3) Action Points .

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The Applicant has produced a robust WFD compliance assessment in accordance with relevant guidance and informed by several site specific surveys. Mitigation measures and controls will prevent waterbody deterioration, and the Project would not impeded implementation of any planned measures and objectives for waterbodies within the River Basin Management Plan. Notwithstanding the ongoing discussions described above, the Applicant has satisfied all the policy requirements in EN-1 with regards to WFD. Environment Agency Position: We have reviewed document 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [REP4-217] and the wording we wanted has been included for (3) Bridge over the River Fromus. We are satisfied with this wording and now consider issue EA013 as resolved. As stated for ExQ2 2ECOL19. we are nearly satisfied that the Applicant is adequately mitigating for any potential runoff from the River Fromus Bridge crossing. Issue EA41 is still unresolved due to concerns the disposal of contaminated construction and concreting water, as-well as rainfall runoffs from the batching plant area, may introduce contaminants into the receiving water environment.	
	Sequential and Exception test (in answering clearly set out all reasonings relating to NPS EN1, paragraph 5.8 .42 (In responding it is assumed this should be ref to EN-1 para 5.8.36).	Applicants Position: The following is summarised against each bullet point of EN-1 para 5.8.36: • <i>The application is supported by an appropriate FRA</i> See response above • <i>The Sequential Test has been applied and satisfied as part of site selection</i> Flood risk was one of a wide range of factors included in the site selection decision making process. However, the linear nature of the Onshore Schemes, along with the multitude of social and environmental constraints, means that it is inevitable that not all parts of the Proposed Project can reasonably be located within areas at the lowest risk of flooding. • <i>A sequential approach has been applied at the site level to minimise risk by directing the most vulnerable uses to areas of lowest flood risk</i>	No comment required from the Applicant at this stage. The Applicant will comment on the EA's response when this is provided.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		This approach has been successfully applied, with all operational above ground operational assets (Substations, Converter Stations) situated in areas at low risk of flooding, with the exception of a small number of pylons that are part of the Kent Onshore Scheme (which for technical reasons could not avoid the floodplain and if subject to inundation would remain undamaged and operational). During construction, high risk flood zones have also been avoided for the most vulnerable temporary works e.g site compounds and the majority of temporary drainage basins (with justification provided for the situation of a small number of basins in areas at higher risk – [see REP4-086]. • The proposal is in line with any relevant national and local flood risk management strategy Drainage designs have been prepared in accordance with the National Standards for SuDS as well as local Suffolk and Kent guidance. • <i>SuDS (as required in the next paragraph on National Standards) have been used unless there is clear evidence that their use would be inappropriate;</i> The Project design embeds SuDS to manage operational surface water runoff and is also committed to using suitable SuDS to manage construction worksite runoff. This is secured by REAC commitments W06, W11, W19, W20, W23 and W24. • <i>In flood risk areas the project is designed and constructed to remain safe and operational during its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.</i> Operational Project infrastructure in flood risk areas is limited to pylons and drainage outfalls. These are resilient to periodic inundation without damage or operational disruption. Mitigation (compensation storage) and suitable outfall design would prevent flood risk increases elsewhere. • <i>The project includes safe access and escape routes where required, as part of an agreed emergency plan, and that any residual risk can be safely managed over the lifetime of the development.</i> The proposed Converter and Substations would be accessed via routes that are not at risk of flooding. During construction, in the limited areas where construction activities would take place with a floodplain (namely pylon works in the Stour floodplain) these work sites would be managed by the Contractor in accordance with	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		defined protocols for a flood emergency, such that residual risks would be low. • <i>Land that is likely to be needed for present or future flood risk management infrastructure has been appropriately safeguarded from development to the extent that development would not prevent or hinder its construction, operation or maintenance</i> The Proposed Project would not impede or hinder any future flood risk management proposals or infrastructure. In conclusion, all the policy requirements set out in EN-1 para 5.8.36) have been satisfied. Supplementary details regarding these Planning tests are also provided in Document 7.2 Planning Statement [AS-057]. Environment Agency Position: We wish for this question to be clarified before we respond, to ensure we are responding correctly. Should our response be relating to NPS EN1, paragraph 5.8.42 or NPS EN1 paragraph 5.8.36? We will provide our response by the next relevant deadline.	

35. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Natural England

35.1 Introduction

- 35.1.1
- The Applicant has reviewed Natural England’s Cover Letter [REP5-214] and has responded to the issues raised in this covering letter in the tables listed below and as such has no specific comments to make on this document.
- 35.1.2
- Table 35.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-215].
- 35.1.3
- Table 35.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-216].
- 35.1.4
- Table 35.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-217].
- 35.1.5
- Table 35.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-218].
- 35.1.6
- Table 35.5 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-219].
- 35.1.7
- Table 35.6 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-220].
- 35.1.8
- Table 35.7 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-221].
- 35.1.9
-
- 35.1.10
- The Applicant’s responded to Natural England Deadline 4 Response Comments on National Grids Responses to ExQ1 [REP4-196] at Deadline 5 in **Application Document 9.119 Applicant's Comments on Late Responses to ExA First Written Questions [REP5-131]**.
- 35.1.11
- The Applicant’s has responded to Natural England Deadline 5 Response [REP5-199] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions**.

Table 35.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-215]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Appendix A5 to the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission – Natural England’s Additional Comments on the Suffolk Onshore			
Documents reviewed: [REP2-014] 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA (Clean); [REP2-015] 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA (Tracked Changes); [REP3-021] 6.2.4.1 Version D, Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment; [REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked); [REP3-060] 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy; [REP3-077] 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked); [REP3-079] 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC); [REP3-064] 9.36 Applicants Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2; [REP4-026] 6.2.2.2 (D) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked Changes). The following document has no further NE comment: [REP3-075] 9.82 Operational Noise Contour Plan for Saxmundham Converter Station.			
	Document details	In formulating these comments, the following documents have been considered in relation to the impacts of the Sea Link Energy cable on Suffolk Onshore Ecology:	This is noted by the Applicant.
	Summary	Natural England note that some of the risk and issues have now been resolved, including the noise contour map, public rights of way, the assessment of features that may be affected by dust soiling, and one of the points relating to acid grassland. Concerns remain around impacts from artificial lighting on designated features of Sandlings SPA and on Barbastelle bats. A new query has arisen from the Suffolk Drainage Strategy submitted at Deadline 3, which identifies that a permanent outfall serving Saxmundham	This is noted by the Applicant. Detailed responses are provided below.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		converter station will feed into the Alde-Ore Estuary designations, and we advise this should be assessed within the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Post-consent measures relating to Horizontal-directional Drilling have been included, such as preparation of an HDD Landfall Method Statement, but these points remain open on our Risks and Issues log as we have advised information should be provided at consent stage to inform decision making. Our previous queries relating to soil assessment are open awaiting submission of the updated Outline Soil Management Plan that the applicant is due to submit during the course of examination. Our advice relating to Functionally Linked Land to Sandlings SPA remains, as a clear and robust assessment is still required.	
Natural England's detailed comments on Suffolk Onshore			
A5.1	[REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked), Section 7.2.15	We note the applicant has included further clarity about the noise contour map in Appendix E Figure 3. They have clarified that the extent of the contour shown represents the expected extent of noise from the noisiest of the proposed activities, i.e. the maximum. This resolved our query in Appendix A1 submitted at Deadline 1, NE Ref 7.	This is noted by the Applicant.
A5.2	[REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked), Section 7.2.17	We note the amendments to paragraph 7.2.17 of the appropriate assessment stage of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), which confirms that lighting will be needed at the trenchless compound S10. This refers to commitment B38 of 7.5.3.2 CEMP Appendix B Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC), which states that: “Around construction compounds and the converter station and substation works areas, direct illumination of boundary features would be avoided. Lighting would be designed to comply with published guidelines [specifically, Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK’ guidance Note (GN 08 / 23)...].” (square brackets showing additional text that has since been added to the REAC). While we acknowledge that the construction compound S10 lighting has now been included in the appropriate assessment, and we welcome that illumination of boundary features will be avoided, we do not accept that the addition to paragraph 7.2.17 constitutes a robust assessment of potential impacts. We advise there is insufficient evidence for the conclusion that there will be no significant impacts to the designated features of Sandlings SPA arising from the HDD construction compound.	Further text has been added into the HRA to cover this point. A conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity can be reached because: 1. Commitment B38 states that ‘<i>Around construction compounds and the converter station and substation works areas, direct illumination of boundary features would be avoided</i>’. Therefore, there will be no direct illumination of the tree line that separates the SPA from the HDD compound 20 m from the SPA boundary. 2. Commitment B23 states that ‘... <i>At the trenchless compound, a barrier of a minimum height of 3m will be used ... to prevent visual disturbance</i>’ of the Sandlings SPA. This would include disturbance from lighting fixtures’. This barrier would therefore prevent all lighting from below 3 m in height from escaping the compound. 3. The only features at the HDD site that would be above 3 m would be the top of the HDD rig, recycling system and excavator boom. These features are not considered to be visually disturbing and lighting would be small and targeted task lighting which would be controlled by REAC measures B38 and GG21. 4. GG21 states that ‘<i>Construction lighting will be of the lowest levels necessary to safely perform each task. It will be designed, positioned and directed to reduce the intrusion into adjacent properties, protected species and habitats (e.g. watercourses) and designated conservation sites</i>’. 5. If the lighting columns themselves have to be above 3m this would also be captured by the provision in B23 and GG21 to either raise

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		A robust assessment of the impacts of lighting from construction compound S10 on Sandlings SPA birds and whether the proposed mitigation would be sufficient to avoid an adverse effect on integrity.	relevant parts of the barrier to above 3 m, and/or by adding specific cowling to lighting fixtures.
A5.3	[REP3-060] 9.17.1 Suffolk Drainage Strategy, Section 4.2.7	We note a permanent outfall serving the Saxmundum converter station is proposed to a tributary of the River Fromus, which feeds into the Alde-Ore Estuary designations approximately 6km downstream. We therefore disagree with the conclusion made in paragraph 4.2.37 of 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment HRA that a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on water quality to designated sites can be ruled out at the screening stage based on best practice pollution management alone. The potential for effects caused by this outfall should be specifically addressed and assessed in the HRA. The potential risk to Alde-Ore Estuary SPA, Alde-Ore Estuary Ramsar and Alde-Ore & Butley Estuaries SAC should be assessed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Impacts to features of Alde-Ore Estuary SSSI, where they differ from those of the European sites, should also be assessed.	Reference to the Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC/SPA/Ramsar site and the outfall has been added to the Application Document 6.6 (H) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report , submitted at Deadline 6. However, it should be noted this is not a new impact and while this specific outfall was not previously discussed, the potential for pollution impacts on European sites in Suffolk during construction was already covered in paragraphs 4.2.30 to 4.2.38 in Application Document 6.6 (A) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [APP-290] , while pollution impacts on European sites in Suffolk during operation (i.e. from outfalls) was already covered in paragraphs 4.2.46 to 4.2.49 in Application Document 6.6 (A) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [APP-290] . The control measures identified in those paragraphs would protect all receiving watercourses and thus all downstream European sites including, but not limited to, Alde-Ore & Butley Estuaries SAC. This is particularly the case since the outfall in question would only carry surface water runoff following attenuation, and given the SAC is 6 km downstream.
A5.4	[REP3-077] 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked), Table 1.1, measure GG32	We welcome that Public Rights of Way closures and diversions will be coordinated with East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarms.	This is noted by the Applicant.
A5.5	[REP3-077] 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked), Table 1.1, measure B59 and B60.	We note the inclusion of measures B59 and B60, including preparation of a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Landfall Method Statement, Drilling Fluid Management Plan and HDD landfall hydrofracture modelling, as well as notifying Natural England of any changes to the drilling depth or location of HDD entry or exit points. These post-consent measures are welcomed. However, points 10, 11 and 12 on our Risks and Issues log point out that outline information is needed at the consent stage to inform decision making.	The preparation of a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Landfall Method Statement, Drilling Fluid Management Plan and HDD landfall hydrofracture modelling post consent is a standard approach taken by DCO projects including the recent Five Estuaries and North Falls OWFs, as much of the information contained within these documents are subject to detailed design. The Applicant confirms that Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project [REP1A-003] and Application Document 9.13 Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229] provides the maximum design scenario for the proposed project which has formed the basis of the Environmental Assessment. Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] provides outline content of what the Drilling Fluid Management Plan would cover under Section 2.3. This Outline CSIP sets out the principles with which the final CSIP must substantially accord. The CSIP will be submitted for approval by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and is secured via condition of the Deemed Marine Licence in Schedule 16 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO).

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
A5.6	[REP3-077] 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked), Table 1.1, measure B63	We advise reference to groundwater investigation surveys should be “ground investigation surveys”. Amend text for clarity.	The Applicant confirms that the CoCP is no longer an active document in the application. All mitigation is now secured within the REAC and relevant outline plans.
A5.7	[REP3-064] 9.36 Applicants Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2, Table 15, Point 13	We note the applicant's point that the acid grassland mitigation/compensation area is not being proposed as mitigation for loss of Functionally linked Land (FLL) for Sandlings SPA during construction. Our advice remains that the assessment in document 6.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment, paragraphs 7.2.4 to 7.2.9, lacks sufficient clarity to be able to rule out an adverse effect on integrity. Clear and robust assessment of the impacts of loss of Functionally linked Land on both designated features of Sandlings SPA within the HRA.	The Applicant has expanded on the text presented in Application Document 6.6 (H) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report , submitted at Deadline 6, and included reference to nightjar: • The acid grassland is considered functionally-linked for foraging, not nesting. No nesting woodlark or nightjar were recorded within the Order Limits despite two years of breeding bird survey. • Habitat structure (short vegetation on sandy soils with patches of bare ground) is more important than botanical composition. Evidence from arable land on sand left fallow = woodlarks start nesting. • The maximum duration of works in acid grassland 6 months (NE say the timescale isn't clear but it is explicitly stated) • Affected areas will come back into use as foraging habitat in the next nesting season once works have ceased (i.e. will only be unavailable for one nesting season), without any lag time for acid grassland to re-establish. High confidence. • There is over 100 ha of acid grassland within 2 km of the SPA (c. half within the SPA itself), plus arable fields left fallow, so area affected area < 5% of available foraging and nesting habitat. • The assessment above would also apply to foraging nightjars. However, they have broader foraging requirements than woodlarks (including foraging in deciduous woodlands, scrub, and various types of grassland). Therefore, temporary loss of the acid grassland will have less impact on nightjars than on woodlarks. Moreover, although dedicated nightjar surveys were undertaken for the DCO they were not recorded using habitat outside the SPA unlike woodlarks. As a result, the loss of functionally-linked habitat for less than one nesting season will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA.
A5.8	[REP3-064] 9.36 Applicants Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2, Table 15, Point 13	We acknowledge the applicant's point that the primary aim is to restore an area of acid grassland to good condition both botanically and in terms of structure, and that once restored the area will have consequential benefits for woodlark and skylark but that the purpose was not specifically for mitigation or compensation for those species. This clarification answers our question in point A19 of our risks and issues log (ref 4 appendix A1 REP1-154 submitted at Deadline 1). Please note though that further clarity regarding acid grassland impacts and mitigation is still needed under point A20.	The Applicant considers that it addressed the matters raised under point A20 in Application Document Written representations (WR) and summaries for any that exceed 1500 words – Appendix A1 Comments on Suffolk Onshore – Assessment of impacts to nightjar and woodlark in Sandlings SPA [REP1-154] in the following documents: section 2.3 of Application Document 9.34.1 (B) Applicant's Detailed Responses to the Relevant Representations identified by the ExA [REP2-014] , and table 15.1, points 9-15 of Applicant Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064] , with additional information provided in Table 3.1, point 6 of Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241] . Natural England's comment acknowledges one response the Applicant provided in Table 3.1 (point 13) of Application

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A [REP4-241] but not the other six. Please can Natural England clarify specifically what information on the acid grassland enhancement is still considered outstanding. The Applicant notes that the accompanying comment log at D5 states that <i>'Impacts to the proposed enhancement area via cultivation, pH remain outstanding'</i>. However, the Applicant believes it has responded to these queries in Application Document 9.123 Applicant's Responses to Second Written Questions [REP5-135] specifically question 2LVIA3 where we responded: <i>'The baseline pH and effects of the agricultural use of adjacent land on the success of enhancements, has been outlined in Table 15.1 of Application Document 9.36 Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadline 2 [REP3-064].</i> <i>This explains that the pH of this area does not require testing as the site currently supports degraded acid grassland [as confirmed in surveys reported in point 2 of Table 15.1 of REP3-046 this area is undermanaged U1b Festuca ovina-Agrostis capillaris-Rumex acetosella acid grassland] and has not been recently cultivated. Further information on the adjacent agricultural land use is contained within AP44 in Application Document 9.90 (A) Applicant's Response to Action Points from Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP4-086]. This confirms that the fields between the pig sheds to the north and the degraded acid grassland to the south are already used as part of the pig farm operations during a standard farming rotation, alternating with the cultivation of high value crops. Therefore, no change in farming practice is expected.</i> <i>The fact the acid grassland has been able to persist despite these operations, and that its degraded state is clearly due primarily to lack of management (e.g. bracken and gorse encroachment and a tall tussocky sward) indicates that the current farming operations to the north will not hinder ecological improvement of the sward through reintroduction of good management.'</i>
A5.9	[REP3-021] 6.2.4.1 Version D, Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment, Section 1.7.6	We note the changes made to Document 6.2.4.1 version D, Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment. Paragraph 1.7.6 states that the landfall site is within policy unit ALB14.1, and that the policy for Epoch 1 and 2 is for No Active Intervention, and for Epoch 3 Managed Realignment (MR). However, the landfall is actually within policy unit ALB14.2, which has a policy for MR within all three Epochs. Additionally, the policy for ALB14.1 was changed in 2015 and is also MR for all three Epochs. This information can be found on the gov.uk website: https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/unit/SMP7/ALB14.2	This is noted by the Applicant.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		However, we consider that this error does not alter the conclusions of the assessment. The offshore landfall transition bay will be more than 800m from the current coastline and the estimated erosion rate quoted in the report, based on the erosional frontages adjacent to the proposed HDD landfall point, is 77m by 2055 and 118m by 2105. As long as the cable is at a depth that means it will not be exposed by beach lowering as the cliff line rolls back there should be no change to the assessment findings.	
A5.10	[REP3-021] 6.2.4.1 Version D, Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment, Section 1.8.3	Paragraph 1.8.3 states an embedded mitigation measure for Coralline Crag is to not pre-cut trenches but use cable protection (rock bags and mattresses). However, in line with our comments in Appendix A3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission comments on Suffolk Onshore Ecology, there is no assessment of the potential impacts of cable protection on the area particularly where the bedform is mobile in nature. In addition, as also raised in our Deadline 3 Appendix A3, the HDD exit pits are proposed to come up through an area of Coralline Crag and no assessment of potential impacts to this geological feature is provided.	The Applicant would like to re-iterate that it has already committed to the HDD exit pits avoiding the Coralline Crag outcrop to exit in a location where there is sufficient unconsolidated sediment where the cable can be buried using lowering
		We advise these potential impacts should be assessed.	
A5.11	[REP4-026] 6.2.2.2 (D) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked Changes), Section 2.9.44	We note the term 'loop effect', which we had queried, has been changed to 'residual effect', resolving this query.	This is noted by the Applicant.
A5.12	[REP2-015] 9.34.1 Applicant's Comments on Relevant Representations Identified by the ExA (Tracked Changes), Table 2.32. row A2 and A16.	We welcome the applicant's commitment to further assessment work and submission of an updated Outline Soil Management Plan during the course of examination. We note this has not yet been received.	This is noted by the Applicant and the revised Outline Soil Management Plans are being submitted at Deadline 6.
		This point remains open on our Risks and Issues log as we are awaiting the updated Outline Soil Management Plan to be submitted during the course of examination.	
AS.13	[REP2-015] 9.34.1 Applicant's Comments on Relevant Representations Identified by the ExA (Tracked Changes), Table 2.32, row A9.	We note that, while being in both high and medium categories, nationally designated sites where features may be affected by dust soiling have been assessed using the worst-case scenario, i.e. they have been treated as high sensitivity in the assessment. This resolves point A9 in our Risks and Issues log.	This is noted by the Applicant.
AS.14	[REP2-015] 9.34.1 Applicant's Comments on Relevant Representations Identified by the ExA (Tracked Changes), Table 2.32, row A15	We note that the King Charles III England Coast path will remain open, as the crossing will be by HDD, which resolves point A15 in our Risks and Issues log.	This is noted by the Applicant.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
AS.15	[REP2-015] 9.34.1 Applicant's Comments on Relevant Representations Identified by the ExA (Tracked Changes), Table 2.32, row A3 and A17	We understand that the applicant has contacted Natural England's licensing service in line with our earlier advice. However, we are concerned that potential impacts to Barbastelle bats remain from artificial lighting and advise that the applicant contact our licensing team for advice. We advise the applicant to engage further with our licensing service regarding potential impacts to Barbastelle bats from artificial lighting.	The Applicant notes that Natural England has now requested that we contact their licensing team for general advice on lighting controls for barbastelle bats. We have therefore contacted the licensing team, but our experience is that they do not provide general advice of this type, and we do not expect to get further advice. Natural England has standing advice for bats, including lighting, and that document is their default reference (Bats: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK). The document advises the applicant to design lighting to avoid roost entrances, commuting routes and foraging habitats, which the Applicant can confirm we have done. There are numerous lighting protections during construction and operation secured in the REAC, and discussed in the Suffolk Ecology and Biodiversity chapter, that provide comprehensive lighting protection to hedgerows and to the nearest likely barbastelle roost at Bloomfield's covert: During construction these are B30 and B38, while during operation this is B39. • Commitment B38: 'Around construction compounds and the converter station and substation works areas, direct illumination of boundary features (i.e. hedgerows used for bat commuting) would be avoided. Lighting would be designed to comply with published guidelines, specifically, 'Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK' Guidance Note (GN 08 / 23).' • Commitment B30: 'A minimum 20 m setback of construction compounds from the hedge used by barbastelle which connects Important Hedgerows 3 and 5 as shown in Application Document 6.4.2.2.A.7 Suffolk Important Hedgerows will be instituted'. Also worth noting that those construction compounds are not the Applicant's preference which are the compounds further west and would be even more distant. • Commitment B39: 'Permanent operational lighting would be directed to the interior of the Converter Station and on as low a column height as practicable, with measures such as hoods or cowls implemented where required to avoid light spill onto Bloomfield's Covert woodland and immediately surrounding habitat. An exception will be at the access gate where lighting will need to be directed into the access area for safety Lighting at the access point will be controlled via passive infrared sensor or similar to limit its period of use'. The converter station is 50 m at its closest from Bloomfield's Covert and, as discussed in the Suffolk Ecology Chapter, detailed lighting plans show that light levels fall below 1 lux within the boundary of both the substation and converter station and well over 50m from Bloomfield's Covert.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			Lighting is therefore already controlled by several measures in the REAC and through Requirement 3(b), which requires submission of operational lighting details prior to installation and for those details to be in accordance with the Key Design Principles. Moreover, as shown in the Suffolk oLEMP figures, there will be extensive woodland planting around the converter station, including between the converter station and Bloomfield's Covert. This will provide further screening between the wood and the converter station and considerably enhance general habitat for barbastelles in the long-term compared to the current situation where the wood is set within an arable landscape.
AS.16	[REP3-079] 9.84: Register of Environmental Actions and Commitment (REAC), measure B60	As there is a commitment in the REAC that there will be no vehicle access to shingle habitats this resolves point A6 in our risks and issues log.	This is noted by the Applicant.

Table 35.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-216]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix B5 to Natural England’s Deadline 5 Submission – Natural England’s Additional Comments on the Kent Onshore			
Documents reviewed: REP3-029: 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked); REP4-068: 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent (Tracked Changes); REP4-222: 6.2.3.2 (E) Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked); REP4-234: 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked); REP4-242: 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Tracked Changes). Natural England have reviewed, but have no comments to make on the following documents in relation to onshore matters: REP3-001: 9.38.4 Cover Letter; REP3-061: 9.17.2 Kent Drainage Strategy; REP3-069: 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions; REP3-070: 9.73.1 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions – Appendices; REP3-077: 9.83 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked); REP3-079: 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked); REP4-003: 2.3 (E) Land Plans Part 2 of 2; REP4-007: 2.5.2 (C) Works Plans – Kent; REP4-044: 6.3.3.9.B (B) ES Appendix 3.9.B Kent Construction Noise and Vibration Data (Tracked Changes); REP4-079: 9.28 (B) Winter Bird Use of Golden Plover Enhancement Area (Tracked Changes); REP4-226: 7.12.2 (B) Design Principles - Kent (Tracked); REP4-233: 9.83 (B) Outline Code of Construction Practice (Tracked); For Standard Advice for Air Quality Impacts in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects please refer to Annex 1 of Appendix B3 to the Natural England Deadline 3 Submission [REP3-117].			
B5.1	[REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment (Tracked), Section 4.4.21	References to loss of functionally linked land have not been updated to show as a construction phase impact rather than an operational phase impact. Natural England notes that the Applicant has questioned whether this change is essential in their response to our Relevant Representations comment B19. Natural England advises that while the change is not essential to the outcome of the assessment, as the impact has still been considered and satisfactorily mitigated, it should be made for completeness.	In line with previous responses, the Applicant does not propose to make this change. The Applicant notes the change is not essential to the outcome of the assessment.
B5.2	[REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment (Tracked)	Natural England notes that regarding matters relating to air quality impacts although an updated HRA has been provided, there are no apparent changes that would change our position. In a letter dated 16 October 2025 Natural England informed local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) that we are changing how it responds to consultations that might affect air quality.	This is noted by the Applicant. A 100 m setback between the generators and the SSSI has been included in the REAC (measure AQ11) which has been agreed with Natural England.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		This advice will be based on our best scientific understanding of how to assess development impacts on air quality. Natural England has previously provided bespoke air quality advice on this project in our Relevant Representations dated 23 June 2025 (EN020026). We have reviewed this case and after careful consideration, concluded that the air quality related aspects arising from this DCO can be addressed using our new standard advice, please see previous advice in response [REP3-117] Appendix B3. Therefore, we will not be providing any further bespoke advice on this case. Though it would be helpful for the Applicant to demonstrate how they have taken our advice into account.	
B5.3	[REP4-068] 7.5.7.2 (C) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Kent (Tracked Changes), Section 3.3.5	Natural England notes that “<i>Noise monitoring would be included adjacent to the SSSI to confirm the mitigation measures met the required noise thresholds</i>”, and that “<i>Any works causing noise levels above 60dB LAmax, will take place outside the bird breeding season (March to September included)</i>”, which we welcome. However, we also note that “<i>Seasonal restriction on any activities relating to construction of the Minster Converter Station and Substation that are calculated, following detailed design, to be above 60dB LAmax at the boundary of the SSSI, are to be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to June).</i>” It remains Natural England’s advice that the bird breeding season should be considered to be March to September inclusive, and that any works which are likely to disturb breeding birds should preferably be timed to avoid these months wherever practicable. However, where this is not practicable, Natural England advises that an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) is appointed to undertake a thorough check of all vegetation for any signs of breeding activity before works proceed, and that works stop if necessary to avoid disturbance to breeding birds. We note that section 1.6.1 of this document has been updated to include reference to an ECoW being appointed, which we welcome. As such, we ask that the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) is updated to include reference to this measure under B45, B50 and B65 (similarly to how B02 has been worded under REP4-234 9.84 (B) REAC February 2026, for example). Provided that works are timed to avoid the breeding bird season wherever practicable, and an ECoW is appointed to oversee all relevant works, and these commitments are secured within a named plan/document, Natural England will be satisfied no significant impact upon Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI due to construction disturbance.	In line with this comment, the underlined change has been made to measure B50 in Application Document 9.84 (D) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC), submitted at Deadline 6: ‘<i>Any activities relating to construction of the Minster Converter Station and Substation, that are calculated, following detailed design to be above 60dB LAmax at the boundary of the SSSI, are to be undertaken outside the period March to June. If such works are undertaken during July to September, a suitably qualified ornithologist will check the area of SSSI within which the activities are forecast to be subject to noise levels above 60 dB LAmax to confirm the absence of qualifying nesting bird features of the SSSI. The relevant works will only occur if no active nests of SSSI qualifying birds are identified.</i>’

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
B5.4	[REP4-222] 6.2.3.2 (E) Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity (Tracked), Section 2.9.216	Natural England notes that additional information has been provided to rule out impacts from back-up generator emissions on Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI. Based on the information provided, Natural England can concur with the conclusion of no effects to the SSSI.	This is noted by the Applicant.
B5.6	[REP4-234] 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked), measure B45	Natural England notes that this measure, proposed to address impacts on breeding birds from the installation of overhead line pylons, now states that these works “<i>will either take place outside the bird breeding season or will only occupy approximately two months of the breeding season <u>unless otherwise agreed with Natural England.</u></i>” We advise that it is not clear what this means. Natural England refer the Applicant to our advice provided above under REP4-068: 7.5.7.2 (C), regarding avoiding construction during the breeding bird season where practicable, securing an ECoW to oversee all relevant works and updating your REAC measures to reflect this.	As requested by the Examining Authority, the Applicant updated this measure in Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115] . The Applicant believes the underlined text will address Natural England’s comment: ‘ <i>Installation of overhead line pylons either side of Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI will not cover the entire breeding season (March to September included) but will either take place outside the bird breeding season or will only occupy approximately two months of the breeding season unless otherwise agreed with Natural England. <u>Any works causing noise levels above 60dB Lamax at the boundary of the SSSI, will take place outside the bird breeding season (March to August included).</u></i> ’
B5.7	[REP4-234] 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked), measure B50	Natural England notes that this measure, proposed to address disturbance to breeding birds relating to construction of the Minster Converter Station and Substation, continues to reference the breeding bird season as March to June. Natural England refers you to our advice provided above under REP4-068: 7.5.7.2 (C), regarding avoiding construction during the breeding bird season where practicable, securing an ECoW to oversee all relevant works and updating your REAC measures to reflect this.	In line with this comment, the underlined change has been made to measure B50 in Application Document 9.84 (D) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) , submitted at Deadline 6: ‘ <i>Any activities relating to construction of the Minster Converter Station and Substation, that are calculated, following detailed design to be above 60dB Lamax at the boundary of the SSSI, are to be undertaken outside the period March to June. <u>If such works are undertaken during July to September, a suitably qualified ornithologist will check the area of SSSI within which the activities are forecast to be subject to noise levels above 60 dB LAmx to confirm the absence of qualifying nesting bird features of the SSSI. The relevant works will only occur if no active nests of SSSI qualifying birds are identified.</u></i> ’
B5.8	[REP4-234] 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked), measure B65	Natural England notes that this measure, proposed to address Impact on breeding birds due to tree height reduction works, continues to reference the breeding bird season as March to June. Natural England refers you to our advice provided above under REP4-068: 7.5.7.2 (C), regarding avoiding construction during the breeding bird season where practicable, securing an ECoW to oversee all relevant works and updating your REAC measures to reflect this.	As requested by the Examining Authority, the Applicant updated this measure in Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115] . The Applicant believes the underlined amended text will address Natural England’s comment: ‘ <i>Any tree height reduction required in Sandwich Bay to Hackling Marshes SSSI to ensure no interference with the new overhead line during operation, will not take place during March <u>to August inclusive</u></i> ’.
B5.9	[REP4-234] 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked), GG31	Natural England notes that this measure, proposed to address environmental impacts associated with decommissioning works, has been updated to reflect our previous advice. Natural England welcomes this change and considers this issue resolved.	This is noted by the Applicant.
B5.10	[REP4-242] 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Receive at Deadline 3 and 3A	Natural England notes the applicant's comment in response to our advice regarding works being restricted for the entirety of the breeding bird season (March-September inclusive).	See above responses to these comments on works near the SSSI during the nesting season.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	(Tracked Changes), Table 3.2, Section 2.9.199	Natural England notes that this appears to be an ongoing issue and wish to proceed in a pragmatic and proportionate way. As such, we refer again to our advice above provided above under REP4-068: 7.5.7.2 (C), regarding avoiding construction during the breeding bird season where practicable, securing an ECoW to oversee all relevant works and updating your REAC measures to reflect this. Provided this approach is appropriately secured in a named plan/document, Natural England is satisfied that any necessary tree works, which we understand are likely to be minimal and infrequent, should be able to avoid impacts on breeding birds.	

Table 35.3 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-217]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix D5 to the Natural England Deadline 5Submission – Natural England’s Additional Comments on Marine Physical Environment			
Documents reviewed: [REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked); [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked); [REP4-058] 6.6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked); [REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked); [REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A; [REP4-090] 9.92 (A) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan; [REP4-091] 9.93 (A) Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note; [REP4-102] 9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note; [REP4-224] Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 7.5.2 (B) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked); [REP4-230] Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 9.13 (C) Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Tracked); [REP4-234] Late Deadline 4 Submission – 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked); [REP4-242] 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Tracked Changes) - Late Deadline 4 Submission Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority			
Detailed comments			
1	[REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Section 1.7.65 and Figure 9.13.1, Appendix C [REP4-230].	Natural England notes that [REP4-028] does not include any further consideration of potential impacts on the intertidal and designated site features due to migration of the River Stour channel towards the buried cable during the life of the Project. However, uncertainty exists regarding the future position of this channel and whether natural processes could expose the cable. This could lead to a requirement for remedial cable reburial/protection works. Therefore, we advise that ensuring an adequate cable burial depth is key. Appropriate consideration also needs to be given to potential climate change effects, not just mean sea level rise, but increased storminess and increased rates of erosion. It is also important to undertake monitoring of the intertidal area through the Project lifetime. We note the Applicant’s commitment to undertake depth of burial monitoring surveys post installation (MPE05) in [REP4-234]. Natural England advises that further consideration needs to be given to ensuring an adequate depth of cable burial across the intertidal zone of Pegwell Bay, including addressing uncertainties regarding migration of the River Stour channel towards the buried cable, sea level rise, seabed erosion and impacts from increased storminess associated with climate change. The Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) has not been revised	The Applicant confirms that it has updated commitment MPE09 relating to River Stour Migration as discussed and agreed with the Environment Agency. MPE09: <i>The River Stour Channel will be monitored throughout the operational life of the asset in line with a monitoring and contingency plan secured under Requirement 6. The plan will set out the frequency and methods for monitoring the location of the channel, contingency actions to be undertaken should the River Stour migrate to a location close to the cable and a ‘trigger’ point for when actions would be taken.</i> A Requirement securing the above has also been included at Deadline 6. The Applicant can confirm that Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020] has been updated to consider potential changes to natural processes due to climate change.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		since 2024. We advise that this should be updated with the most recent information and aligned with other relevant documents. Furthermore, we advise that monitoring of the cable route through Pegwell Bay over the lifetime of the project should be carried out to ensure there are no unexpected changes to intertidal morphology, important designated features and supporting habitat.	The Applicant has updated commitment MPE05 in Application Document 7.5.2 (C) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP5-067] to include reference to monitoring at the Kent Landfall. Application Document 9.21 Sea Link Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) [PDA-039] is an engineering document used to inform design of the Proposed Project. Information included in the CBRA has been used to inform Application Document 9.92 (B) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) [REP5-117] which is secured under Requirement 6 of the dDCO and the dML in Schedule 16 in Application Document 3.1 (H) draft Development Consent Order (DCO) [REP5-005]. Application Document 9.21 Sea Link Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) [PDA-039] will be updated post consent based on information acquired from pre-construction surveys. Information in the updated CBRA will be used to inform preparation of the final CSIP which will be approved by the MMO will set out the final design details for the Offshore Scheme up to MHWS (including both the Suffolk and Kent landfalls).
2	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked). Section 1.8.4.	Natural England notes the addition of MPE04 control/management measure. This is a commitment to keep rock berm height and width to a practical and safe minimum. However, these rock berm parameters have not been quantified or assessed in relation to potential disruption to marine processes. Natural England advises that a practical and safe minimum rock berm height and width should be defined and environmental impacts assessed to demonstrate that significant disruption of marine processes is unlikely to occur.	The Applicant can confirm that potential effects of rock berms (for cable crossings and remedial rock protection (if required) have been assessed regarding potential disruption to marine processes. However, it is acknowledged specific dimensions for remedial rock berms had not been explicitly referenced in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020] - Table 1.19. Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment – Table 1.19 and assessment text have subsequently been updated for Deadline 6 to include specific reference to rock berms.
3	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Section 1.8.4	Natural England notes and welcomes control/management measure MPE06 to undertake monitoring of the beach profile and erosion rates at the Suffolk landfall (where rock bags are planned to be placed at the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) exit pits) over the Proposed Project lifetime. Whilst this is welcomed, we note that there is no corresponding measure for monitoring coastal change at the Kent landfall. Natural England advises that the same control/management measure should be applied to the Kent landfall and both commitments to monitoring should be included in an In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP).	The Applicant can confirm that commitment MPE06 was updated at Deadline 5 Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) [REP5-116], Application Document 7.5.2 (C) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked) [REP5-067] and Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020] to widen the commitment to also include the Kent landfall. The revised wording of commitment MPE06 now reads: <i>Over the operational lifetime of the Proposed project, monitoring of the beach profile and erosion rates is carried out at the Suffolk and Kent landfall site where rock bags are planned to be placed at the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) exit pits.</i> The Applicant can also confirm that this commitment is included in Application Document 9.140 Outline In-Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) submitted at Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
4	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Section 1.8.4	Natural England notes and welcomes the addition of management measure MPE07 to avoid creating pre-cut trenches at the Coralline Crag and instead using rock bags or mattresses to protect cables to avoid impacts to geological features and aid the recovery post decommissioning. This is welcomed. However, we wish to see commitment MPE07 go further to ensure that cable protection and any cables which are likely to become exposed, are removed at decommissioning and committed to.	The Applicant confirms that the confirmed approach to decommissioning will be detailed within the final Offshore Decommissioning Plan submitted to the Secretary of State for approval approximately 2 years prior to decommissioning commencing. This will be subject to agreement with the relevant authorities based on further and more refined surveys and assessments performed prior to decommissioning in line with the relevant legislation and guidance in place at that time. The approach will be based on an assessment of relative net environmental benefit, taking into consideration the in situ ecological value of the offshore components alongside other factors such as navigational safety, available technology and the feasibility of recycling. Further consents as required, including marine licensing, will be sought at the time of decommissioning and will factor in the- assessments carried out.
5	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Sections 1.9.9-1.9.12 and Table 1.18	Natural England notes that whilst the impact assessment considers the temporary use of rock bags/concrete mattresses to protect the HDD exit pits/ducts during construction, the Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) has not been captured in Table 1.18. The proposed temporary protection will likely interact with, and modify, the local nearshore wave regimes and associated sediment transport patterns. This may result in localised scour and increased erosional potential in important and sensitive inter-tidal/subtidal areas. Therefore, we consider it important to adequately assess the magnitude and scale of these impacts. Natural England advises that the MDS for of temporary rock bags/concrete mattresses at the HDD exit pits/ducts should be quantified and impacts fully considered and assessed.	The Applicant can confirm that Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020] was updated at Deadline 5 to provide further detail on the temporary use of rock bags/concrete mattresses to protect the HDD exit pits/ducts during construction. This included an update Table 1.19 to provide further clarity on the MDS that was assessed in relation to temporary protection at the HDD exits and an update to the impact assessment presented in paragraph 1.9.32 to 1.9.45. The Applicant has also completed additional sediment dispersion modelling at the approaches to the landfalls. The results are presented in Application Document 9.144 Additional Sediment Dispersion Modelling Technical Note submitted at Deadline 6. It can be concluded from the additional sediment dispersion modelling that the conclusions in relation to sediment dispersion and transport at the landfalls presented in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020] remain valid. Where appropriate, Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment has been updated for Deadline 6 to include findings from the additional modelling.
6	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Table 1.18	Natural England notes that temporary bog mats will be used where the access corridor from the former hoverport crosses the Nemo and Thanet cables. The aim being to protect the cables and minimise potential for disturbance to the ground around the cables. While we encourage efforts to reduce environmental impacts, we are concerned that the movement of heavy construction plant and vehicles (e.g. 40t excavators) across the intertidal, could lead to impacts on important intertidal mud/sand flats (including disturbance and spreading of sediment around the bog mats and release of contaminants from the hoverport). These potential impacts have not been adequately considered or assessed. Natura England advises that further investigation is needed to assess the potential for disturbance of intertidal mud/sand flats due to the movement	As stated in response to Application Document 9.86 (B) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Tracked Changes) - Late Deadline 4 Submission Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority [REP4-242] – NE comments 2.2.5 on 9.13 (B) Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Clean) [REP2-012], the Applicant has not explicitly stated that bog matting will be used where the access corridor crosses the Nemo and Thanet cables. The Applicant states that that there will be a requirement for protective matting (or similar) to be installed over the Thanet and Nemo cables. At this stage it is not possible to commit to a specific type of trackway material.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		of heavy construction vehicles/plant across the access route from the former hoverport to the HDD working area. Furthermore, our concerns remain regarding the potential release of contaminants into coastal waters and sediments from the hoverport site due to the movement of heavy construction vehicles/plant. This also requires further investigation.	However, to provide clarity on this point, the Applicant has updated Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment for submission at Deadline 6, to include further detail on potential effects of the use of the mudflats for construction access and temporary use of protective matting at the Nemo and Thanet crossings. This assessment concludes that potential impacts will be negligible. The final material proposed for the trackway (where required) will be identified in the Pegwell Bay Landfall Construction Method Statement which will be prepared by the Undertaker in accordance with Commitment B68 included in Application Document 7.5.2 (D) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan and Application Document 9.84 (D) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) both submitted at Deadline 6. Regarding the potential release of contaminants into coastal waters, the risk of the release of contamination from the hoverport is considered to be very low. However, notwithstanding this low risk, the Applicant has committed (commitment W37) to preparing a hoverport condition monitoring plan post consent to monitor the condition of the hoverport during construction. This will include measures for identifying and managing any potential contamination risk and will be prepared in consultation with the EA, NE, KWT and TDC for approval by TDC. This commitment is included in Application Document 7.5.2 (D) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan, Application Document 7.5.3 (D) Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan and Application Document 9.84 (D) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) all submitted at Deadline 6.
6	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Section 1.9.27 – 1.9.29	Natural England notes the further consideration given to potential impacts on coastal processes and intertidal morphology in Pegwell Bay due to the presence of cofferdams during construction, which is welcomed. Whilst we welcome the Applicant's predictions of temporary morphological impacts, we note that there is a lack of empirical evidence (for example, from Thanet OWF or Nemo Link) to support these conclusions. We are also concerned that the Applicant has not assessed the sensitivity of the saltmarsh to potential blockage effects/impacts to drainage due to the close proximity of the cofferdams to the saltmarsh edge (i.e. 105-140m). In our advice at Deadline 3A [REP3A-028], we commented on the Applicant's assurances that a distance of 105-140m between the exit pits and the saltmarsh would be sufficient to avoid damage. However, the potential for blockage related impacts on the saltmarsh due to the presence of cofferdams has not been considered in the Marine Physical Environment chapter [REP4-028]. Natural England considers it important for the Applicant to fully consider mitigation measures and where impacts can't be avoided provide supporting evidence to demonstrate the recoverability of the intertidal mud/sand flats and saltmarsh habitats to pre-construction conditions.	The Applicant can confirm that further information on potential impacts on coastal processes and intertidal morphology due to the presence of cofferdams during construction was provided in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020]. The Applicant has also further updated the assessment specifically in relation to the saltmarsh and potential blockage effects due to the proximity of the cofferdam to the seaward edge of the saltmarsh. These updates are included in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment submitted at Deadline 6. These chapter updated have been based on the additional sediment modelling (Application Document 9.144 Additional Sediment Dispersion Modelling Technical Note), which has also been submitted at Deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Moreover, we advise that the Applicant should commit to post-installation surveys to demonstrate recovery of the intertidal mud/sand flats. Natural England also advises that the Applicant should consider the sensitivity of the saltmarsh to potential blockage effects due to the close proximity of the cofferdams.	
7	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Figure 1.9.44 and Figure 6.4.4.1.11	Natural England welcomes Figure 6.4.4.1.11 which identifies the location of cable crossings along the offshore scheme route. Although we note it does not identify other sections of the cable route where cable protection may be required. We also note the location of the Farland North crossing directly adjacent to an Annex I sandbank – this appears to be Aldeburgh Napes. We highlight that the Aldeburgh Napes sandbanks are considered to offer protection to the Aldeburgh and Thorpeness coastlines from wave impact. Therefore, we are concerned, that the presence of a cable crossing adjacent to Aldeburgh Napes could interrupt bedload transport, alter sandbank morphology, and influence shoreline change. Burningham and French (2008) also identified a long-term trend of gradual denudation of the Aldeburgh Napes sandbanks which could also be affected by the adjacent cable crossing. Natural England advises that this impact pathway should be further considered and assessed. We also advise that other potential cable protection locations along the offshore cable route should be identified.	The Applicant confirms that Figure 6.4.4.1.11 does also identify the need for rock back fill at the Sunk. Throughout its operational lifetime, it is intended that the cable will be lowered into the seabed with the exception of cable crossings. The Cable Burial Risk Assessment [PDA-039] for the Proposed Project has considered the technical feasibility of the route in balance with the consenting/environmental feasibility, based on the collected benthic, bathymetric, geophysical, and geotechnical survey data acquired during and after the seabed survey. This engineering assessment has provided a high level of confidence that the ground conditions for the Proposed Project are sufficient to lower the cable across the entire route. Furthermore, areas of Pre-Sweeping have also been identified across the cable route to ensure burial depths are met in these areas. The Applicant would ensure that the appropriate remediation processes outlined within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan are followed to ensure the current burial depths of the cable are achieved for the project. Based on the above, the Applicant has already provided Natural England all of the areas across the cable route where cable protection may be required. The Applicant has updated the assessment (Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020]) in relation to the impact of North Farland cable crossing to the Aldeburgh Napes sandbank. The scale of the proposed cable protection is small relative to the size of the Aldeburgh Napes sedimentary system. Cable protection features are characterised by: • Low berm height • Narrow crest width • Shallow side slopes • A footprint small relative to the width of the active sediment transport pathway The magnitude of any impact is dependent on the alignment of scour protection relative to prevailing sediment transport directions. Bedload sediment may temporarily accumulate on the updrift side of the cable protection. Under worst-case alignment scenarios, sediment is expected to pass over the berm crest, allowing normal transport processes to resume.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			The seabed is anticipated to recover within a relatively short timescale, dependent on local sediment transport rates. Following recovery, no long-term effects on future sediment transport rates are expected.
8	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked) Section 1.9.56 – 1.9.60	Natural England notes that whilst sediment plume dispersion modelling has not been carried out for cable installation at the Kent landfall; the Applicant has given further consideration to increased suspended sediment concentrations (SSCs) and sediment deposition due to cable burial installation. However, the Applicant considers that any increase in SSC will appear as a short duration ‘spike’ while sediment deposition on the intertidal surface will be limited. This is welcomed, but advise that further details are needed, such as anticipated maximum spatial extent of increased SSCs and subsequent sediment deposition thickness due to cable installation, before we can be confident in the Applicant’s conclusions. Natural England advises that the maximum suspended sediment dispersion extent and concentration, and associated sediment deposition due to cable installation at Pegwell Bay, should be provided. Alternatively, if available, supporting evidence from projects such as Nemo Link or Thanet OWF should be presented to demonstrate the scale and extent of increased SSCs and sediment deposition. This will increase understanding of potential construction impacts on saltmarsh and intertidal mud/sand flats.	The Applicant can confirm that additional sediment dispersion modelling has been completed at the approaches to the Suffolk and Kent landfalls. The results are presented in Application Document 9.144 Additional Sediment Dispersion Modelling Technical Note submitted at Deadline 6. It can be concluded from the additional sediment dispersion modelling that the conclusions in relation to sediment dispersion and transport at the landfalls presented in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020] remain valid. Where appropriate, Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment has been updated for Deadline 6 to include findings from the additional modelling.
9	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked)	Natural England notes that the assessment of operational cable protection impacts on Goodwin Sands MCZ and Cross Ledge sandbanks only considers the presence of the Nemo Link crossing which is approx. 3km away. The potential impact of cable protection placed adjacent to the MCZ or on/adjacent to the Cross Ledge sandbanks has not been considered in the assessment. Natural England advises that potential impacts on the Goodwin Sands MCZ and Cross Ledge sandbanks due to the placement of cable protection measures on/adjacent to these sandbank systems need to be considered and assessed.	The Applicant has applied the mitigation hierarchy alongside Natural England’s advice at the pre-application stage and has avoided routing through the Goodwin Sands MCZ. There are therefore no direct impact pathways to this MCA. The Goodwin Sands MCZ boundary is approximately 2.6 km from the cable crossing point at KP 113.1 (Nemo Link) and 260 m from the Thanet cable crossing point at KP 107.6. The Cross Ledge Sandbanks are approximately 3 km and 8 km from the crossing points at KP 113.1 and KP 107.6, respectively. While locally some scour is expected to occur around any external cable protection, the hydrodynamic and sediment transport regimes that are associated with development and maintenance of the Goodwin Sands MCZ complex, occur on a regional scale that would not be altered by the presence of low-lying protection at the Thanet Sout crossing situated 260 m away from the Goodwin Sands MCZ (Application Document 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment). Furthermore, the Cable Burial Risk Assessment [PDA-039] for the Proposed Project has provided a high level of confidence that the ground conditions adjacent to the Goodwin Sands MCZ are sufficient to lower the cable meaning any remedial rock in the vicinity of Goodwin Sand is considered highly unlikely. Additionally, pre-sweeping at this location has also been identified and assessed to further ensure that required burial depths are met without the need for cable external protection. The Applicant would

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			ensure that the appropriate remediation processes outlined within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan are followed to ensure the current burial depths of the cable are achieved. Therefore, outside of the two crossing locations identified above, there is no planned additional rock to be laid in the vicinity of the Goodwin Sands MCZ. In addition to the above, previous advice given on recent offshore wind DCOs from SNCBs is that turbine foundations and/or cable protection should be located at a buffer of 150 m from a designated site for sandbanks. With the closest cable crossing for the Proposed Project located 260 m from the Goodwin Sands MCZ, it is considered that this is more than a sufficient buffer to limit any impacts to the MCZ from external cable protection. The Applicant can confirm that an updated assessment of the potential effects of operational cable protection on Goodwin Sands MCZ and Cross Ledge sandbanks was provided in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020]. Further information has also been provided in Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment submitted at Deadline 6.
10	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked). Figure 6.4.4.1.4 and 1.7.138 – 1.7.145	Natural England notes the updated data in Table 1.17 on the estimated average erosion width from the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping (NCERM) dataset for 2055 and 2105, and the addition of Figure 6.4.4.1.4 which presents the estimated future erosion extent at the Kent landfall. These additions are welcomed, although, we note that the erosion risk data have not been considered within the context of the relevant Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). Natural England advises that the coastal erosion risk data should be considered in the context of relevant SMP.	The applicant has specifically used the NCERM dataset for No Future Intervention (NFI) to present the potential worst-case scenario. The shoreline management plans are considered within the baseline section of the report. Further, a series of commitments (MPE06 and MPE08) in Application Document 7.5.2 Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan and in Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) ensure that climate driven changes do not go undetected and that additional mitigation can be implemented before the risk of cable exposure occurs and the project remains aligned with SMP policies and future coastal management decisions.
11	REP4-028] 6.2.4.1 (E) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked), [REP4-050] 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked). Section 1.7.138	Natural England welcomes confirmation in [REP4-242] that the 2024/5 NCERM2 dataset has been used to assess future baseline conditions associated with potential shoreline change. This resolved this issue.	Noted. Issue resolved.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
1	[REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked) Sections 1.5.2 and 1.7.22	Natural England notes that the assessment of impacts on Goodwin Sands MCZ due to cable protection measures only considers the Nemo Link crossing point which is approximately 3.3km from the MCZ. It does not consider indirect impacts on the MCZ due to the placement of cable protection measures adjacent to the MCZ. However, as stated in 1.7.22, cable installation and repair may require protection measures at some locations where the minimum target cable burial depth of 0.5m cannot be achieved. Given that the Offshore Scheme Boundary runs adjacent to the MCZ there is a potential for impacts on the MCZ due to placement of cable protection adjacent to the MCZ, which could interrupt bedload sediment transport processes and, in turn, affect seabed morphology in the MCZ. Natural England continues to remain concerned that the placement of cable protection measures adjacent to Goodwin Sands MCZ during the operational phase have the potential to affect hydrodynamic and sediment transport regimes and, in turn, lead to morphological change within the MCZ. Further justification and consideration of these impacts to the MCZ are still required to support conclusions made by the Applicant.	The Applicant can confirm that further information on potential effects of cable protection (rock berms) along the section of cable adjacent to the Goodwin Sands MCZ in terms for interruptions to bedload sediment transport processes was provided at Deadline 5 Application Document 6.11 (D) Environmental Statement Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked) [REP5-039]. The Applicant has applied the mitigation hierarchy alongside Natural England's advice at the pre-application stage and has avoided routing through the Goodwin Sands MCZ. There are therefore no direct impact pathways to this MCA. The Goodwin Sands MCZ boundary is approximately 2.6 km from the cable crossing point at KP 113.1 (Nemo Link) and 260 m from the Thanet cable crossing point at KP 107.6. The Cross Ledge Sandbanks are approximately 3 km and 8 km from the crossing points at KP 113.1 and KP 107.6, respectively. While locally some scour is expected to occur around any external cable protection, the hydrodynamic and sediment transport regimes that are associated with development and maintenance of the Goodwin Sands MCZ complex, occur on a regional scale that would not be altered by the presence of low-lying protection at the Thanet Sout crossing situated 260 m away from the Goodwin Sands MCZ (Application Document 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment). Furthermore, the Cable Burial Risk Assessment [PDA-039] for the Proposed Project has provided a high level of confidence that the ground conditions adjacent to the Goodwin Sands MCZ are sufficient to lower the cable meaning any remedial rock in the vicinity of Goodwin Sand is considered highly unlikely. Additionally, pre-sweeping at this location has also been identified and assessed to further ensure that required burial depths are met without the need for cable external protection. The Applicant would ensure that the appropriate remediation processes outlined within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan are followed to ensure the current burial depths of the cable are achieved. Therefore, outside of the two crossing locations identified above, there is no planned additional rock to be laid in the vicinity of the Goodwin Sands MCZ. The Applicant confirms that Paragraph 1.7.22 has been updated at Deadline 6 to reflect the above. In addition to the above, previous advice given on recent offshore wind DCOs (North falls) from SNCBs is that turbine foundations a50 m from a designated site (MCZ) for sandbanks. With the closest cable crossing for the Proposed Project located 260 m from the Goodwin Sands MCZ, it is considered that this is more than a sufficient buffer to limit any impacts to the MCZ from external cable protection.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
2	[REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked) Sections 1.5.24	Whist Natural England welcomes the height of any protection to <1m there is no evidence presented to support conclusions drawn by the Applicant that this is sufficiently low as to not disrupt coastal and marine processes. Natural England advises that further evidence is required to demonstrate that marine and coastal processes will not be significantly disrupted by the placement of cable protection and impact on benthic features of the MCZs	The Applicant can confirm that further information to support the conclusions that the height of any additional cable protection (maximum 1 m) is sufficiently low as to not disrupt coastal and marine processes was provided at Deadline 5 Application Document 6.11 (D) Environmental Statement Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked) [REP5-039] .
1	[REP4-090] 9.92 (A) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Table 3.1	Natural England notes that it is stated that the maximum length of pre-sweeping is 17.563 m. However, we would advise that this is a typo and should be 17.563 km which would align with the anticipated pre-sweeping between KP 96.32 and KP 113.883. Natural England advises that the max. length of pre-sweeping in the Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) should be amended.	The Applicant confirms that the Pre-Sweeping section of the oCSIP has now been updated at Deadline 6.
2	[REP4-090] 9.92 (A) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 1.12 – 1.14	Natural England notes that currently the CSIP is high-level. While it is stated that the current CSIP is outline, more specific details will need to be provided. Natural England refers the Applicant to the subsea cable best practice guidance which recommends the information that should be clearly laid out in the CSIP, for example: any relevant mitigations proposed in the Environment Statement (ES), footprint of impact of chosen methodologies and how they comply with the ES, and detailed cable installation programme. The CSIP should also be compared with the information provided in the CBRA.	The Applicant confirms that the oCSIP has been updated at Deadline 6 with all available information at the time of writing. The level of detail within this oCSIP is comparable to other DCO project such as North Falls and Five Estuaries. The Applicant confirms that Section 4.3 of the CSIP has been updated to include ' <i>The current CBRA [PDA-039] will be reviewed and updated post-consent and prior to construction</i> '. This oCSIP should be read in conjunction with the outline Offshore CEMP (Application Document 7.5.2) and Red Throated Diver Protocol (Application Document 7.8) which outline relevant best practice and mitigation measures as stated within Section 1.3.
3	[REP4-090] 9.92 (A) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 4.3.9	Natural England notes that the minimum depth of lowering (DOL) in areas of bedrock is 0.5m, with a target DOL of approximately 1-2.5m to be achieved where possible dependent on the seabed geology. However, we note that the target DOL for the Kent landfall is 1.5m [REP4-224], has not been included here. Natural England advises that, for consistency, the CSIP target DOL parameters should reflect the same information presented in relevant related documents.	The Applicant confirms that Paragraph 4.3.10 has been updated at Deadline 6 to reference the Kent Landfall.
1	[REP4-091] 9.93(A) Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note Section 2.1.2	Natural England notes that sediment transport studies have been commissioned and undertaken which outline the short- to medium-term nearshore beach variance and stability at both landfalls. We also note that surveys will be used to provide an indication of the condition of the infrastructure and state of the environment, which is also welcomed as the baseline conditions and value of receptors are likely to change through the life of the Project. Natural England welcomes the Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note. We would welcome the opportunity to review the decommissioning sediment transport studies to inform understanding of future beach and landfall changes and stability in due course.	Comment Noted.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
1	[REP4-102] 9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note Section 2.1.5	Natural England notes the amendment that has been made to commitment GH14 in the REAC to ensure that the lengthened HDDs will exit a minimum of 45m east of the continual Coralline Crag outcrop. This is welcomed.	Comment Noted.
2	[REP4-102] 9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note Section 1.1.3 (and GG14 in REAC)	Natural England notes that the Proposed Project has committed to the HDDs exiting in areas that do not have Coralline Crag outcrop at the surface, as well as exiting east of the continuous coralline crag outcrops defined by Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) mapping. This is based on Cefas mapping if the Crag. However, the age of the Cefas mapping is not stated. Therefore, we advise that up-to-date mapping may be required to ensure that the extent and location of the Coralline Crag outcrops are identified prior to HDD installation. We advise that the Applicant should consider whether mapping of the Coralline Crag is needed prior to HDD installation. This will inform understanding of the extent and location of the Crag prior to undertaking HDD installation works.	The extent of the Coralline Crag in relation to the HDD exit pits will be mapped as part of the planned pre-installation surveys as described in Application Document 7.5.2 (D) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan and Application Document 9.92 (C) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan submitted at Deadline 6.
3	[REP4-102] 9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note Section 2.1.4	Natural England notes that the Applicant considers that due to the Coralline Crag being 'a weak rock, as exemplified by it forming a resistant outcrop on the sea floor, the HDD bore is expected to be self-supporting in the Coralline Crag and there is not expected to be any localised collapse that could migrate upward to the surface outcrops.' Furthermore, we note in [REP4-082] that the HDD will be designed to ensure that it is within the competent ground beneath the Crag outcrops to ensure that surface outcrops are unaffected by the HDDs. This is also welcomed. Natural England welcomes the Applicant's efforts to design the HDD at sufficient depth to ensure it is within competent ground beneath the crag outcrops thus avoiding any impacts to the surface outcrops. Whilst the HDD will pass through the Coralline Crag at depth, it is anticipated that this will not lead to collapse of surface outcrops. This resolves our concerns regarding construction impacts on the Coralline Crag.	Noted. Issue resolved.
4	[REP4-102] 9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note	Natural England notes that [REP4-102] considers only interaction between the HDD exit and the Coralline Crag marine outcrops (i.e. construction phase). We consider that there remains the potential for operational impacts on the Coralline Crag due to cable repair/replacement through the lifetime of the Proposed Project. Natural England advises that potential operational impacts on the Coralline Crag should be considered.	As set out in Application Document 6.2.1.4 (D) Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project (Clean) [REP1A-003] , four HDD ducts will be installed at each landfall during construction. This will ensure that there is a spare duct available that can be used during operation, should there be a requirement to repair or replace any section of cable at the landfall. Installation of the spare duct during construction will minimise the risk of any potential impacts on the Coralline Crag due to cable repair/replacement through the lifetime of the Proposed Project.
1	[REP4-234] Late Deadline 4 Submission – 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) Table 3.4 / MPE07	Natural England notes that the commitment to avoid installation of cables at the Coralline Crag without pre-cut trenches (MPE07) is not reflected in the Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) [PDA-039]. In the CBRA it is stated that competent bedrock (Coralline Crag, Chalk, and flint beds) subcrops or outcrops, the preferred method of protection is by mechanical trenching. The recommended DOLs in the CBRA are not aligned with more recent documents such as the REAC, Code of Construction Practice	The Applicant confirms that is has already committed within outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (Application Document 9.92) to the following: <i>The current CBRA [PDA-039] will be reviewed and updated post-consent and prior to construction.</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		(CoCP), Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP4-224]. Natural England advises that the DOLs (and other information) presented in the CBRA should be updated to align with the latest information provided in more recent documents/submissions.	This Outline CSIP sets out the principles with which the final CSIP must substantially accord. The CSIP will be submitted for approval by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and is secured via condition of the Deemed Marine Licence in Schedule 16 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO).
2	[REP4-234] Late Deadline 4 Submission – 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked) Table 2.3 / B68	Natural England notes commitment B68 states that a Pegwell Bay Landfall Construction Method Statement will be prepared covering marine cable pull-in and cable burial between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and the trenchless crossing exit pit. However, we query whether this will cover all activities associated with construction at landfall? Natural England request clarity on the scope and purpose of this document. We would welcome it being a named live plan to be refined to inform construction, with the finalised plan signed off and agreed by MMO in consultation with relevant SNCB prior to construction.	The preparation of a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Landfall Method Statement, Drilling Fluid Management Plan and HDD landfall hydrofracture modelling post consent is a standard approach taken by DCO projects including the recent Five Estuaries and North Falls OWFs, as much of the information contained within these documents are subject to detailed design. The Applicant confirms that Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project [REP1A-003] and Application Document 9.13 Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229] provides the maximum design scenario for the proposed project which has formed the basis of the Environmental Assessment. Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] provides an outline content of what the Drilling Fluid Management Plan would cover under Section 2.3. This Outline CSIP sets out the principles with which the final CSIP must substantially accord. The CSIP will be submitted for approval by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and is secured via condition of the Deemed Marine Licence in Schedule 16 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO). Furthermore, the Applicant has updated B68 and Application Document 7.5.2 Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan [REP5-066] at Deadline 6 to further clarify what would be included in this method statement: <i>HDD Landfall Method Statement: This document describes how the HDD contractor manages and carries out the HDD activities associated with the installation of the landfall ducts. The document will typically be titled HDD Landfall Risk Assessment & Method Statement (RAMS) as it includes a risk assessment of key construction, health and safety, and environmental risks. In summary, the document provides an outline method statement for the HDD works from initial setup of the HDD rig through to the as-left condition of the duct, with detailed In summary, the document provides an outline method statement for the HDD works from initial setup of the HDD rig through to the as-left conditcon of the duct, with detailed contentontent on the pilot drilling, reaming, and duct installation. Discrete operations such as, rig anchorage, casing installation, and marine works, while included in the RAMS,</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			are typically covered in greater detail in their own separate RAMS.iDrilling Fluid Management Plan: This plan outlines the methodology and equipment used for the circulating drilling fluids used during the HDD process and contingency plans for mitigating drilling fluid losses into the ground and unplanned breakout ('frac-out') of drilling fluid at surface. Some contractors prefer to separate out unplanned breakout / frac out mitigations into a separate Frac Out Plan or similar; if so, it will be included in the documents provided to the relevant stakeholders identified in Measure B59 of the REAC. Pegwell Bay Landfall Construction Method Statement: This will set out final design details and installation methods for the cofferdams, HDD exits (informed by the HDD Landfall Method Statement), marine cable pull-in and burial. It will also include detail on the working area around the cofferdams, construction access routes (all phases) including detail on use of bog matting etc. at cable crossings, site clearance (following HDD installation and subsequent marine cable pull-in and burial) and will detail all construction plant and equipment that will used during installation. This method statement will also include details of all environmental mitigation measures that will be implemented during landfall construction and marine cable pull in and burial and all environmental management procedures.

Table 35.4 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-218]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix E5 to the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission – Natural England’s Intertidal and Benthic Ecology Advice			
Documents reviewed Sea Link Deadline 3 Submission Documents: [REP3-025] 6.4.4.1 (C) ES Figures Marine Physical Environment (Tracked); [REP4-030] 6.2.4.2 (D) Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology (Tracked Changes); [REP4-058] 6.6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked Changes); [REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked Changes). • [REP4-072] 7.7 (C) Marine Biosecurity Plan (Tracked Changes); [REP4-090] 9.92 (A) Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan; [REP4-091] 9.93 (A) Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note; [REP4-102] 9.113 (A) The Coralline Crag Technical Note; [REP4-224] Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 7.5.2 (B) Outline Offshore Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tracked); [REP4-230] Late Deadline 4 Submission - Accepted at the discretion of the Examining Authority - 9.13 (C) Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note (Tracked); [REP4-234] Late Deadline 4 Submission – 9.84 (B) Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) (Tracked).			
Detailed Comments			
E5.1	[REP4-030] 6.2.4.2 (D) Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology (Tracked) Section 2.9.9	Natural England disagrees with the tracked changes which set out justification for why peat and clay exposures and subtidal chalk have a sensitivity rating of ‘medium’ to temporary disturbance. Natural England highlights that these habitats are NERC Section 41 Habitats of Principal Importance, Features of Conservation Importance (FOCI) and Marine Irreplaceable Habitats (Tillin et al. 2022), regardless of biological communities present. Subtidal chalk and peat and clay exposures are finite, irreplaceable habitats and which will not recover if physically damaged. Both habitats	The sensitivity rating for peat and clay exposures, and chalk, has been updated to high and the assessment adjusted accordingly. Application Document 6.2.4.2 (F) Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology, submitted at Deadline 6. The Applicant has also added additional baseline information and has updated the impact assessments for peat and clay exposures and subtidal chalk habitats, based on a detailed review of the results presented in Application Document 9.80 Integrated Geophysical and Geotechnical Survey Report [REP2-035] including quantification of potential impacts. Based on the small area of effect to these habitats, particularly considering the wider distribution of such habitats, including surficial clay which is

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		have low resilience and resistance to physical pressures, with penetration impacts in particular having the potential to permanently damage the structure of the habitat (Tillin et al. 2025). Natural England advises that high sensitivity is recorded for impacts to peat and clay exposures and subtidal chalk. Natural England refers to previous advice issued in Appendix [REP3A-027] at Deadline 3a regarding outstanding issues for the quantification and assessment of impacts to peat and clay exposures and subtidal chalk. Natural England advises that commitments to avoid impacts to Section 41 habitats by micro-siting should be secured in the DCO, please see our R&I log, Tab C - DCO, point number C10.	indicative of the London Clay geology that is common in the southern North Sea (note that no peat exposures were found within the Offshore Scheme corridor) the impact rating remains assessed as minor and not significant.
E5.2	[REP4-030] 6.2.4.2 (D) Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology (Tracked) Section 2.9.32	Natural England notes that the sensitivity for reef features of the Thanet Coast SAC to temporary increases in suspended sediment concentration (SSC) and sedimentation has been updated from low to medium, in line with the precautionary principle. While this resolves in part the R&I Log points E26, E41 and E45 regarding the sensitivity assessment for reef features to increases in SSC and sedimentation, we note however that the assessment itself has not been updated based on the increased sensitivity. Therefore, impacts to reef features remain outstanding.	Some additional information clarifying the impact assessment for SSC and sedimentation in relation to reef habitats has been updated (see paragraph 2.9.38) of Application Document 6.2.4.2 (F) Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology, submitted at Deadline 6.
E5.3	[REP4-072] 7.7 (C) Marine Biosecurity Plan (Tracked Changes) Section 6	Natural England welcomes the tracked changes provided regarding biosecurity measures and commitments. Issue considered resolved.	This is noted by the Applicant.
E5.4	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Sections 1.1.9 and 1.1.10	Natural England notes that the Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) approach is the same as that proposed for Eastern Green Link (EGL) 1 and 2. Having recently reviewed the first of these phases for EGL1, Natural England is not supportive of this approach, because in practice it means that the impacts from each of the phases can't be considered holistically and that impacts will have occurred prior to the final discharge of the Marine Licence condition. Natural England advises that there are two CSIPs or two phases only. One for Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) landfall works and one for the rest of the offshore scheme works in totality.	The Applicant considers that a single CSIP is sufficient to cover both landfall works and offshore installation. This not only follows the recent Eastern Link 1 and 2 cable projects, but also recent DCOs including North Falls and Five Estuaries. The Phases outlined in the CSIP mirror those already present within Condition 4(3) of the dML.
E5.5	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Sections 1.1.11, 3.3.7 and 7.	Natural England notes that Section 6 is referenced when Section 7 considers sediment disposal management. In Section 7.1.3 we also note that reference is made to disposal of excavated material from the exit pits being placed elsewhere within the order limits or removed. We advise that, if this were to happen, there is a risk of habitat change/loss of supporting habitat from the removed area and depending on location, at the disposal area. Thus potentially extending the	The Applicant confirms that references in this document have been checked and amended for Deadline 6. The Applicant confirms that 'traditional dredge and disposal' i.e. removing sediment from the seabed and disposing elsewhere is not proposed as part of the Proposed Project. Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] has been updated at Deadline 6 to clarify this

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		impact footprint. In addition, there is a risk that insufficient excavated material would remain to support backfilling any exit pits with natural sediment, which is preferential. Furthermore, we note that pre-sweeping also known as sandwave levelling is mentioned for the whole of the offshore scheme. But there is limited discussion in relation to minimising impacts from suspended sediment and deposition of the sediment. To only reference avoidance of sensitive benthic habitats is not sufficient mitigation especially within or adjacent to designated sites. Natural England advises that an Outline Sandwave Levelling plan is provided to support the consenting process. And that further mitigation measures are committed to including (but not exclusively) placing dredged sediment, 50m away from <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reef, within like for like sediment areas, adjacent to and updrift of the sandwave, and using a fall pipe to aid recovery and avoid impacts to sensitive benthic habitats. We also advise that further assessment is required to fully understand the potential impacts on near shore habitats and features from sediment excavation and deposition, and the potential to support a more natural backfill of the exit pits.	point. There is no designated disposal area outside of the Order Limits, the sand derived from pre-sweeping would be deposited within the Order Limits (in line with its commitments within the outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan) within the local area of pre-sweeping (same sediment cell) i.e side cast. Furthermore, the Applicant has included REAC commitment MPE10: <i>At the Kent landfall, reinstatement of the excavation pits through both natural and, if required, mechanical backfill within the intertidal mudflats will be completed following removal of the cofferdams. This measure will be included in the Pegwell Bay Landfall Construction Method Statement which is already secured within the Offshore CEMP.</i> The Applicant confirms the information regarding Pre-Sweeping activities is already included within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] which has also been reviewed and updated at Deadline 6. This also includes the following mitigation in Section 8.3: <i>The Applicant will avoid relocating any sediment to with 50m of any Annex II Sabellaria spinulosa reef identified during pre-construction surveys and adjacent to and updrift of the sandwave.</i> The Applicant considers that the above amendments submitted at Deadline 6 addresses Natural England concerns.
E5.6	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Sections 1.1.12 and 1.1.13	Natural England highlights that any changes to named plans need to be signed off by regulators in consultation with relevant SNCB. And that the final CSIP should be informed by the results of the post construction monitoring. Natural England advises that this section is updated to reflect these requirements to avoid conflicts in the post consent phase.	The Applicant confirms that the following is contained within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117]: <i>This Outline CSIP is a ‘living document’ that will be revised by the Principal Contractor (with relevant input from the National Grid and Subcontractors), as required, at agreed intervals or at the request of the MMO in consultation with relevant stakeholders.</i> <i>Updates to the CSIP may relate to changes in construction methodologies, new or updated mitigation measures, changes in guidance or legislative requirements, or to reflect newly identified environmental sensitivities ahead of construction. Any updates to the CSIP will be communicated to the MMO in consultation with stakeholders, and if required, the CSIP will be re-submitted for approval.</i>
E5.7	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 1.4	Natural England notes that where cable protection is required, water depth will be safeguarded. Natural England advises that all locations for cable protection are considered not just where Grid Link is crossed.	The Applicant confirms that this extract is specifically in relation to the Ports three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depths for future dredging purposes.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
E5.8	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan	Natural England notes that drilling fluid will be removed from the cofferdam where practical. However, we have raised concerns with this in Appendix J3A to our Deadline 3A submission	Cable protection in its entirety is discussed elsewhere within Section 5 of Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] .
	Section 2.3.3	Natural England advises that further consideration is given to the containment of drilling fluids to ensure removability.	Drilling fluids would be used to suspend rock cuttings and carry them out of the borehole, cooling the drilling equipment, clearing debris from the drilling bit, sealing the borehole and reducing friction on the drilling equipment. Drilling fluids required for trenchless operations will be carefully managed to minimise the risk of breakouts into the marine environment. Specific avoidance measures would include: • the use of biodegradable drilling fluids (pose little or no risk (PLONOR) substances) where practicable; • drilling fluids will be tested for contamination to determine possible reuse or disposal; and • If disposal is required drilling fluids would be transported by a licensed courier to a licensed waste disposal site. The Applicant has already committed under GH10 within Application Document 9.84 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC), that the HDD contractor will produce a detailed, drilling fluid management plan to be approved by the MMO in consultation with relevant stakeholders including Natural England, that includes drilling fluid breakout mitigation measures, where HDD is proposed. This commitment is also outlined within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] submitted at Deadline 5. This document also states <i>'Before removal of the cofferdam, the drilling fluid will be removed from within the cofferdam as far as practicable. Following removal of the cofferdam the duct end will be buried and a watch will be kept over the following week for any accumulations of drilling fluid, that will be removed using the same methods as used during pilot drilling'</i>. Additionally, the Applicant has also updated Condition 4 of the dML following advice from the MMO at Deadline 6. The Applicant considers the above to secure sufficient mitigation with regards to the impacts of drilling fluids on the marine environment.
E5.9	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan	Natural England notes that monitoring requirements and commitments are insufficient within the named plans and are not reflective of the scale of environmental risk associated with the project.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.140 Outline In Principle Monitoring Plan (oIPMP) , proportionate to the Proposed Project, has been submitted at Deadline 6.
	Section 3.2 and 6	We also note that any monitoring included within the CSIP is from an engineering perspective.	This oIPMP outlines the approach to the following relevant topics and / or receptor groups based on the general guiding principles

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Natural England has advised for several thematic areas for this project that an Offshore In-Principal Monitoring Plan (IPMP) is required at the consenting phase to include hypotheses which will be tested to considered residual environmental concerns. With survey detail provided at the post consent phase. We are aware that the Applicant considers this to be an Offshore Windfarm requirement and not a 'cables' one. We highlight that in the intervening time since Viking Link the submission of an IPMP has become best practice for all marine major casework.	outlined above and recent DCO submissions, namely Five Estuaries and North Falls Offshore Wind Farms: • Marine Physical Environment; • Benthic and Intertidal Ecology; • Fish and Shellfish Ecology; • Marine Mammals; • Offshore Ornithology; • Commercial Fisheries; and • Marine Archaeology. Due to the unavailability of Natural England during Examination to attend a Thematic Meeting up to this point, the above document will be discussed with Natural England at their earliest availability, which they have confirmed as the 16th of April 2026. The Applicant, would however, re-iterate that the need for an oIPMP should be dependent on the type of activity and associated impacts and not because the Project is applying for DCO consent as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. The most recent offshore projects which have applied for DCO consent are Offshore Windfarms. The magnitude of impacts associated with Offshore Windfarms are very different to a bundled HVDC subsea cable such as is comprised in the Proposed Project in terms of construction footprint, volumes of sediment disturbance, noise profiles, vessel activity, permanent subsea infrastructure and programme. Recent Major UK Subsea Cable only projects consented though Marine Licences and DCO's, with a similar Project Description to the Proposed Project, where it was not considered necessary to submit an oIPMP prior to consent include: • Eastern Green Link 1; • Eastern Green Link 2; • Aquid; • Greenlink; and • Neuconnect.
E5.10	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 3.3.1	Natural England is concerned that boulder clearance could occur without there being the appropriate checks and measures in place and that further impacts could occur from the placement of displaced boulders. Natural England advises that boulder clearance, placement and mitigation measures need to be considered further in this plan. And the final CSIP would then be signed off by the MMO in consultations with the relevant SNCB. The commitments should include the placement of boulders being	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] (Section 3.4) has been updated at Deadline 6 to include: <i>Boulders would be relocated locally to similar habitats and placed to be reflective of the surrounding habitats and not in a linear berms which have the potential to disrupt sediment transport.</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		in similar habitats and placed to be reflective of the surrounding habitats and not in a linear berms which have the potential to disrupt sediment transport.	The Applicant confirms that the following is contained within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117]: <i>This Outline CSIP is a 'living document' that will be revised by the Principal Contractor (with relevant input from the National Grid and Subcontractors), as required, at agreed intervals or at the request of the MMO in consultation with relevant stakeholders.</i> <i>Updates to the CSIP may relate to changes in construction methodologies, new or updated mitigation measures, changes in guidance or legislative requirements, or to reflect newly identified environmental sensitivities ahead of construction. Any updates to the CSIP will be communicated to the MMO in consultation with stakeholders, and if required, the CSIP will be re-submitted for approval.</i>
E5.11	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 3.3.3 – 3.3.6	UXO clearance Natural England defers to our advice in Appendix F5 of our Deadline 5 submission	The Applicant notes that Natural England's Appendix F5 states 'Natural England considers this issue resolved'.
E5.12	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 4.1	Natural England notes that installation activities will be 24/7, but the impacts of this and any associated noise and light disturbance considerations in named plans are not referenced. Natural England advises that, while this is not a benthic issue per se, references to assessments in named landfall documents should be included for completeness. Please see response to ExQ2 ECOL27 in Appendix K of our Deadline 5 submission.	The Applicant confirms that for completeness, Table 1.2 has been included within the oCSIP at Deadline 6 which references all other relevant Outline Plans.
E5.13	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 4.2 and 4.3	Natural England is unclear if both the Simultaneous cable Lay and trenching/Burial (SLB) or the Post lay trenching of cables/burial (PLB) have been assessed and that commitments have been made to ensure that impact parameters will remain within those assessed in the ES chapters. Natural England advises that clarity is provided to ensure that the impact parameters of SLB and PLB will remain with those assessed in the ES.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project [REP1A-003] and Application Document 9.13 Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229] provides the maximum design scenario for the proposed project which has formed the basis of the Environmental Assessment. The Applicant confirms that the benthic footprint and disturbance of both options is the same and has therefore been assessed accordingly within the Environmental Chapters.
E5.14	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 5	Natural England notes that there is no specific commitments/consideration on the potential cable protection to be used. Natural England advises that cable protection which is most readily removable e.g., concrete mattresses and rock bags should be used within and adjacent to MPAs, especially where the risk of sediment transport disruption and changes to marine processes is high.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] (Section 5) has been updated at both Deadline 5 and Deadline 6 to provide additional information on types of potential cable protection. Section also includes: <i>The Applicant will ensure that the contractor considers measures to avoid use of microplastics where possible.</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			<i>The Applicant will factor in the removability of cable protection for the Proposed Project dependent on its use and available best practice guidance for cable decommissioning.</i>
E5.15	[REP4-090] 9.9.2 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan Section 5.15	It is unclear to Natural England what is included within remediation works, noting that 12 km is a considerable length of cable protection. It is also not clear how 15% of the cable route requiring cable protection has been determined and assessed with the ES Chapter. Natural England advises that further information and clarity is provided and any documents updated accordingly to avoid ambiguity.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] (Section 5) has been updated at both Deadline 5 and Deadline 6 to provide additional clarity on Remediation activities.
E5.16	[REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked Changes) Section 1.4.24	Natural England notes that no evidence has been presented to support conclusions drawn i.e., that rock berms and/or concrete mattresses below 1m are unlikely to impact marine process and consequently impact on benthic features. Therefore, Natural England is unable to support these conclusions Natural England advises that the Applicant should signpost to the evidence to support the MCZ assessment conclusions.	An update to the assessment of the impact of cable protection to Goodwin Sands MCZ was provided in Application Document 6.11 (D) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment that was submitted at Deadline 5. The Applicant also refers NE to the response provided below to Reference E5.18 regarding the impact of cable protection on physical processes and consequently on benthic features. The MCZ Assessment (Application Document 6.11 (E) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment) has also been updated to include some revised text in E5.18 provided below and has been submitted at Deadline 6.
E5.17	[REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked Changes) Section 1.5.25	Natural England notes that no evidence has been presented to support conclusions drawn i.e., that rock placed 0.5 m below the seabed will remain buried over the lifetime of the project and is unlikely to impact on Thanet Coast MCZ. Therefore, Natural England is unable to support these conclusions. Natural England advises that the Applicant should signpost to the evidence to support the MCZ assessment conclusions.	Application Document 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment has been updated (see paragraph 1.5.27) with supporting evidence based on the additional SSC and deposition modelling undertaken for locations within Pegwell Bay, provided in Application Document 9.144: Additional Sediment Dispersion Modelling - Technical Note . Both documents have been submitted for Deadline 6.
E5.18	[REP4-060] 6.11 (C) Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked Changes) Section 1.5.29	Natural England notes that no evidence has been presented to support conclusions drawn for Goodwin Sands MCZ. Therefore, Natural England is unable to support these conclusions. Natural England advises that the Applicant should signpost to the evidence to support the MCZ assessment conclusions. Noting that type, footprint, length, highlight and location of cable protection are all factors which influence impacts and should be considered within the assessment. Please also see Appendix D5 to our Deadline 5 submission.	The Applicant refers Natural England to its Deadline 6 submission responses and updated Physical Processes Chapter (Application Document 6.2.4.1) which states: The Applicant has updated the assessment (Application Document 6.2.4.1 (F) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment (Tracked) [REP5-020]) at Deadline 5 and is also re-submitting at Deadline 6. <i>While locally some scour is expected to occur around the protection, the hydrodynamic and sediment transport regimes that are associated with development and maintenance of these sandbank systems, occur on a regional scale that will not be altered by the presence of low-lying protection situated ~3 km away for the nearest cable crossing (Thanet South – Application Document 6.4.4.1 (D) Environmental Statement Figures Marine Physical Environment). The requirement for any remedial rock protection in the vicinity of the Goodwin Sands MCZ or the Cross</i>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			<i>Ledge Sandbanks is also considered to be limited. The magnitude of the impact is assessed to be negligible in both cases.</i> <i>The Goodwin Sands are a naturally dynamic morphological feature that form part of a closed sedimentary system. Historical evidence has shown that the system has been resilient to and capable of recovering from past disturbance, including dredging undertaken in 1998 (Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust, 2024).</i> <i>A report for the High Court of Justice (2019) (Thomson v Marine Management Organisation & Others, 2019 EWHC 2368 (Admin).) presents extensive technical evidence, modelling outputs, and expert advice demonstrating that the Goodwin Sands sandbank system is self-maintaining, highly resilient, and capable of natural recovery, in response to assessing the potential effects of dredging 2 million m³ of sand from Goodwin Sands involving lowering of up to 2-4 m in places.</i> <i>The modelling indicates that, although localised disturbance may occur, the overall form and behaviour of the sandbank remain stable due to ongoing natural sediment transport processes. The report concludes that the Goodwin Sands possess a high degree of morphological resilience, enabling them to absorb small-scale impacts without affecting their wider structure or long-term evolution (Thomson v Marine Management Organisation & Others, 2019 EWHC 2368 (Admin).).</i> <i>The evidence demonstrates that the Goodwin Sands function as a high-energy, constantly shifting sediment system driven by strong tidal flows and wave action. Expert modelling and regulatory assessments show that any changes resulting from human activity are minor, temporary, and confined to the immediate vicinity, with no potential to alter large-scale currents or sediment pathways. The ecology of the sandbank also reflects this dynamic setting, comprising species that recover rapidly following disturbance. Collectively, these assessments confirm that the Goodwin Sands possess substantial morphological and ecological resilience, allowing them to accommodate small-scale impacts without affecting their overall form or long-term development (Thomson v Marine Management Organisation & Others, 2019 EWHC 2368 (Admin).).</i> <i>Figure 6.4.4.1.16 Bedload transport at the Goodwin Sands MCZ shows that the cable and therefore the long axis of the protection associated with the cable crossing points shown in the figure, is aligned to the direction of sediment transport and bedform migration, thus further reducing any potential blockage effect.</i> Application Document 6.11 (D) Environmental Statement Marine Conservation Zone Assessment (Tracked) [REP5-039] was resubmitted at Deadline 5 and is also being updated for Deadline 6.
E5.19	[REP4-102] 9.113 The Coralline Crag Technical Note	Natural England welcomes that the exit pits will be located outside of the continuous areas of Coralline Crag. However, we advise that prior to	The Applicant confirms that avoidance is already committed to in the REAC GH14:

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Section 1.1.2	construction this will need to be confirmed in the CSIP and that avoidance is committed to in the Register of Environmental Commitments doc. Natural England advises that commitments are included in the Register of Environmental Commitments (REAC) to secure this mitigation measure.	<i>HDDs at Suffolk will exit within the Order Limits, a minimum of 45 m East of the continual Coralline Crag outcrop boundary from where the HDD crosses, as identified within the CEFAS defined dataset presented within Plate 2.3 of Application Document 9.113 The Coralline Crag Technical Note.</i> The Applicant is also updating the dML Condition to align with this REAC commitment at Deadline 6 to: <i>Trenchless Landfall Techniques</i> <i>10.—Landfall installation must only use trenchless landfall techniques between the onshore transition joint bay and the exit pits.</i> <i>(1) No exit to trenchless landfall techniques must occur within 105m of saltmarsh habitat within Pegwell Bay.</i> <i>(2) The temporary working area will be located at a minimum distance of 50m from the edge of the saltmarsh habitat within Pegwell Bay.</i> <i>(3) (2) No exit to trenchless landfall techniques must occur within 50m of MLWS at Leiston to Aldeburgh SSSI.</i> <i>(4) No exit to trenchless landfall techniques must occur within 45m east of the continual Coralline Crag outcrop in Suffolk.</i> Pre-construction surveys are secured within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] and Application Document 9.140 Outline In Principle Monitoring Plan under Condition 4 of the dML submitted at Deadline 6.
E5.20	[REP4-091] 9.93 (A) Offshore Decommissioning Technical Note	Natural England notes that there is no reference to OSPAR requirements to fully remove infrastructure at the time of decommissioning. Furthermore, we would welcome commitments for amendments/updates to the plan to be signed off by the MMO in consultation within the relevant SNCB. Natural England advises that all surface laid infrastructure (including cable protection) and cables at risk of becoming exposed are removed at the time of decommissioning and that the commitment should be made now to do this. We recognise that further OSPAR derogations cases can be applied for at the time of decommission and inform the final Decommissioning Plan, but for now we advise that best practice should be followed and OSPAR requirements committed to as a minimum.	OSPAR Guidance specifically for decommissioning subsea cables is limited. The Applicant is therefore assuming that this OSPAR reference is to '<i>Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations</i>' which also has little refence to subsea cables and the Proposed Project has no surface infrastructure which requires disposal. The benefits of any such cable recovery and recycling need to be weighed up against any potential adverse effects on the marine environment, which requires an evidence base. There remains uncertainty and differences in opinion about whether cables should be left in-situ or recovered owing to a lack of clarity in the potential impacts or merits of recovery. So, despite these many drivers, recovery of cables is not currently the status quo, and any existing approaches are highly geographically- or jurisdictionally-variable (Clare et al 2025).

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			The Applicant confirms that the confirmed approach to decommissioning will be detailed within the final Offshore Decommissioning Plan submitted to the Secretary of State for approval approximately 2 years prior to decommissioning commencing. This will be subject to agreement with the relevant authorities based on further and more refined surveys and assessments performed prior to decommissioning in line with the relevant legislation and guidance in place at that time. The approach will be based on an assessment of relative net environmental benefit, taking into consideration the in situ ecological value of the offshore components alongside other factors such as navigational safety, available technology and the feasibility of recycling. Further consents as required, including marine licensing, will be sought at the time of decommissioning and will factor in the- assessments carried out.
E5.21	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP	All advice provided on REACs are also relevant to [REP4-234] Environmental Commitments	This is noted by the Applicant.
E5.22	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP	Natural England advises that an outline Repair Preparedness plan should be provided at consent and assessed. With the final plan provided prior to construction. Otherwise, a separate marine licence will be required	A repair preparedness plan (RPP) would be prepared which details the actions to be taken, from detecting a fault to re-commissioning the project. This is already secured within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] submitted at Deadline 4 and updated at Deadline 5.
E5.23	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure LVS05	Natural England welcomes this commitment, but we note that the text in Section 2.3.3 of the CSIP doesn't align with this commitment Natural England advises that the text in the CSIP is updated to align with this text.	The Applicant confirms that this text is now replicated within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan submitted at Deadline 6.
E5.24	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure B42	Natural England welcomes the commitment to undertake trenchless cable installation under the saltmarsh, any deviation from this post consent will require a DCO/dML change request. Nore required by Applicant.	This is noted by the Applicant.
E5.25	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure B59	Natural England welcomes the commitment for there to be a Landfall Method Statement (LMS) and Drill Fluid Management Plan (DFMP), but notes that the update to this commitment doesn't take account of advice provided in Appendix J3A to our Deadline 3A submission in regard to modifications to these plans being included within final plans agreed with MMO in consultation with NE prior to construction. This is important within Designated sites where NE are also a regulator. Natural England also advises that the Hydrofracture modelling should be included within and used to inform the LMS and DFMP. Natural England advises that this commitment and B68 is updated to reflect our regulatory advice.	The preparation of a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Landfall Method Statement, Drilling Fluid Management Plan and HDD landfall hydrofracture modelling post consent is a standard approach taken by DCO projects including the recent Five Estuaries and North Falls OWFs, as much of the information contained within these documents are subject to detailed design. The Applicant confirms that Application Document 6.2.1.4 Part 1 Introduction Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Project [REP1A-003] and Application Document 9.13 Pegwell Bay Construction Method Technical Note [REP4-229] provides the maximum design scenario for the proposed project which has formed the basis of the Environmental Assessment.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] provides an outline contents of what the Drilling Fluid Management Plan would cover under Section 2.3. This Outline CSIP sets out the principles with which the final CSIP must substantially accord. The CSIP will be submitted for approval by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and is secured via condition of the Deemed Marine Licence in Schedule 16 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO). The Applicant has however, also included the Landfall Method Statements under Condition 4 of the dML submitted at Deadline 6 in consideration of this advice.
E5.26	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure B60	Natural England highlights that the landfalls are within designated sites. Therefore there is a requirement for all plans, including contingency measures to manage incidents to be signed off by the LPA and/or MMO in consultation with relevant SNCB prior to construction. And again, real time ECoW check in with regulators and relevant SNCB remains a requirement to ensure that the contingency plan remains fit for purpose. Natural advises that this commitment is updated to reflect our regulatory advice.	The Applicant confirms that all outline plans relevant to the Offshore Scheme are secured under Condition 4 of the dML which would require MMO approval in consultation with relevant SNCBs prior to construction.
E5.27	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measures B67 and B69	Natural England welcomes the commitment to use LGP vehicles, but there are no parameters provided. We also note the use of the Hoverport doesn't take into account the risks we raised at Deadline 4 in relation to increased damage to the site from its use, and disturbance buffers/separation distances not being sufficient. Natural advises that this commitment is updated to reflect our regulatory advice. In addition, LGP vehicles should have a pressure lower than a human footprint.	The Applicant confirms that Condition 10 of the dML has been updated at Deadline 6 to reflect the existing REAC commitments: <i>Trenchless Landfall Techniques</i> <i>10.—Landfall installation must only use trenchless landfall techniques between the onshore transition joint bay and the exit pits.</i> <i>(1) No exit to trenchless landfall techniques must occur within 105m of saltmarsh habitat within Pegwell Bay.</i> <i>(2) The temporary working area will be located at a minimum distance of 50m from the edge of the saltmarsh habitat within Pegwell Bay.</i> <i>(3) (2) No exit to trenchless landfall techniques must occur within 50m of MLWS at Leiston to Aldeburgh SSSI.</i> <i>(4) No exit to trenchless landfall techniques must occur within 45m east of the continual Coralline Crag outcrop in Suffolk.</i> The Applicant considers the above buffers to be sufficient. With regards to LGP vehicles, as an example the typical ground pressure for a 36-ton excavator on standard tracks is approximately 8-9 psi (pounds per square inch), which is lower than the pressure exerted by the average human, of 8 to 16 psi of ground pressure while standing.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
E5.28	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure GH14	We note that >45m is quoted in this commitment where as 50m is discussed in the CSIP [REP4-090]. Natural England advises that clarity is provided by the Applicant and plans should be updated accordingly.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] was updated at Deadline 5.
E5.29	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure LVS05	Please see comment above.	The Applicant confirms that this text is now replicated within Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan submitted at Deadline 6.
E5.30	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Table 1.7 General Marine	We refer the Applicant and the ExA to our comments on the CSIP which are also relevant to Table 1.7 of the Outline Offshore CEMP.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.92 Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan [REP5-117] was updated at Deadline 5 and Deadline 6 in consideration of these comments.
E5.31	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure MPE06	Natural England queries the alignment between the CEMP and the CSIP in relation to the use of the permanent rock bags Natural England would welcome the documents/plans aligning, with all protection being only for the lifetime of the project where possible.	The Applicant confirms that both documents have been reviewed and updated at Deadline 6.
E5.32	[REP4-224] 7.5.2 Outline Offshore CEMP Measure BE06	Natural England advises that the commitment to provide this post consent doesn't follow marine best practice for NSIPs and marine major casework. Natural England advises that an Outline IPMP should be provided to support consent.	The Applicant confirms that Application Document 9.140 Outline In Principle Monitoring Plan (oIPMP), proportionate to the Proposed Project, has been submitted at Deadline 6. This oIPMP outlines the approach to the following relevant topics and / or receptor groups based on the general guiding principles outlined above and recent DCO submissions, namely Five Estuaries and North Falls Offshore Wind Farms: • Marine Physical Environment; • Benthic and Intertidal Ecology; • Fish and Shellfish Ecology; • Marine Mammals; • Offshore Ornithology; • Commercial Fisheries; and • Marine Archaeology. Due to the unavailability of Natural England during Examination to attend a Thematic Meeting up to this point, the above document will be discussed with Natural England at their earliest availability, which they have confirmed as the 16th of April 2026. The Applicant, would however, re-iterate that the need for an oIPMP should be dependent on the type of activity and associated impacts and not because the Project is applying for DCO consent as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. The most recent offshore projects which have applied for DCO consent are Offshore Windfarms. The magnitude of impacts associated with Offshore Windfarms are very different to a bundled HVDC subsea cable such as is comprised in the Proposed Project in terms of

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			construction footprint, volumes of sediment disturbance, noise profiles, vessel activity, permanent subsea infrastructure and programme.
			Recent Major UK Subsea Cable only projects consented though Marine Licences and DCO's, with a similar Project Description to the Proposed Project, where it was not considered necessary to submit an oIPMP prior to consent include: • Eastern Green Link 1; • Eastern Green Link 2; • Aquid; • Greenlink; and • Neuconnect.

Table 35.5 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-219]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix F5 to Natural England Deadline 5 Submission – Natural England’s Additional Comments on Marine Mammals			
Documents reviewed: [REP1-122] EN020026-001440-9.49 Seals and Airborne Sound Disturbance Technical Note (Clean).pdf (Table 2); [REP3-022] 6.4.4.4 (F) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Tracked Changes) (Tables 2 and 3); [REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked) (Table 4); [REP4-032] 6.4.4.4 (G) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Tracked Changes) (Table 3); [REP4-070] 7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes) (Table 1); [REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Table 1).			
The following documents have been reviewed with no further comments made: [REP3-070] 9.73 Applicant's Responses to First Written Questions – Appendices [REP4-088] 9.90.1 Hearing Actions Deadline 4 Appendix J Piling Noise Dataset.			
	Summary	There are two key outstanding issues that Natural England consider essential to understanding the impact of the project on marine mammals: – Quantification of the number of animals potentially impacted, – Assessment of in-combination impacts of underwater noise on harbour porpoise in the Southern North Sea SAC. If the applicant requires more guidance for these issues we recommend they refer to the Offshore Wind Phase III Best Practice guide: Offshore wind – best practice advice to facilitate sustainable development – Natural England. Whilst the activities considered therein are different, the approach to assessing impact alone and in-combination for marine mammals is the same and following this approach should make undertaking a suitable assessment easier. Section 6 covers marine mammals with the following sections being particularly relevant: • 6.1.2.4 Abundance / population and density estimates, • 6.3.1 EIA-level assessments, • 6.3.2 HRA-level assessments, • 6.3.3 Underwater noise assessments, and • 6.5 Cumulative and in-combination impact assessments.	The Applicant has updated Application Document 6.4.4.4 (H) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals to include estimates of the number of seals that could potentially be impacted by underwater sound. There are no recognised thresholds for disturbance in seals so a precautionary approach has been taken based on EDR values for harbour porpoise, a marine mammal species that has much higher sensitivity to underwater sound. This has been submitted at Deadline 6. The Applicant has updated Application Document 6.6 (H) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report to include further summation analysis of area affected by underwater sound for the Southern North Sea SAC. Submitted at Deadline 6.

Detailed Comments			
1	[REP4-070] 7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes) [REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A Deadline 3, Appendix F3, Comment 1	Natural England notes that with regards to further clarification being required for the Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (MMMP) the update has removed some unrequired sections in [REP4-070] and Natural England are satisfied that other issues can be resolved post consent. However, the document still lacks focus on practical mitigation steps to undertake, although we note that it meets the minimum requirements for geophysical surveys. Provided updates to the EIA marine mammal chapter demonstrate this is the only activity potentially causing injury, the current document is sufficient as an outline MMMP. However, Natural England highlights that the purpose and further clarity noted above should be addressed when the principal contractor is in place and the final MMMP is developed. This should include separating out the information relevant to onshore activities and airborne sound levels into a separate document as this is not relevant to mitigation activity during geophysical surveys. Natural England considers this issue resolved.	The Applicant confirms that following updates to the Application Document 6.4.4.4 (H) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals, in relation to the quantification of impacts to seals from underwater sound, there is no potential for injury to marine mammals. The updated EIA chapter was submitted at Deadline 6. On this basis the oMMMP is now complete.
2	[REP4-070] 7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes) [REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A Deadline 3, Appendix F3, Comment 1	Natural England notes that document [REP4-070] refers to updated JNCC guidelines and states a 30-minute pre-shooting watch. Natural England considers this issue resolved.	Noted.
3	[REP4-070] 7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes) [REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A Deadline 3, Appendix F3, Comment 2	Natural England notes that with regards to the environment adviser/manager role the update has removed this and other roles not relevant to the MMMP implementation. Natural England considers this issue resolved.	Noted.
4	[REP4-070] 7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes) 5[REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A	Natural England notes that with regards to the Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) the update has removed references to targeting PAM for harbour porpoise. Natural England now considers that this will be suitable for other receptors. Natural England considers this issue resolved.	Noted.

	Deadline 3, Appendix F3, Comment 4		
5	[REP4-070] 7.5.11 (C) Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Plan (Tracked Changes) [REP4-082] 9.86 (A) Applicant's Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A Deadline 3, Appendix F3, Comment 5	Natural England notes that with regards to the proposed Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance the update has included reference to the need for a separate MMMP when applying for a Marine Licence for UXO clearance and the relevant guidance. Natural England considers this issue resolved.	Noted.
6	REP3-022] 6.4.4.4 (F) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Tracked Changes) [REP1-122] EN020026-001440-9.49 Seals and Airborne Sound Disturbance Technical Note (Clean).pdf	The Environmental Statement (ES) marine mammal chapter has been updated based on the technical note. There have been no updates to the airborne sounds section of the HRA to reflect the updated sound modelling for seals provided in 9.49. The HRA should use the sound modelling to justify the decision to determine no Adverse Effect on Site Integrity (AEoSI). Natural England do not consider this has been adequately undertaken, however we do not believe that further work would change the outcome of the assessment and we are therefore content to agree with the conclusion of no AEoSI based on the assessment in its current form. Given the late stage in Examination and that Natural England can agree with the overall conclusion, we are content to mark this as resolved in this case.	There are no sites designated for seals in the vicinity of Pegwell Bay. Thus, potential impacts of the Proposed Project's Offshore Scheme to seals hauled out in the River Stour, and the wider Pegwell Bay area is not an HRA issue. Instead, impact pathways to seals have been fully considered in Application Document 6.2.4.4 (H) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [REP5-023]. There are however, some sites designated for seals, within the wider marine mammal study area that were screened in for Appropriate Assessment, despite the distance from the Sea Link Offshore Scheme. These sites are the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, designated for harbour seal, 110 km from the Sea Link RLB; the Humber Estuary SAC and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC, both designated for grey seal, 160 km and 412 km from the Sea Link RLB respectively. The assessments found no significant impacts to these sites, either alone or in combination with other projects, from the Proposed Project.
8	[REP3-022] and [REP4-032] 6.4.4.4 (F&G) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals (Tracked Changes) vF page 61 and vG page 53	Natural England welcomes the useful inclusions to the EIA on the noted pages. Unfortunately, this does not resolve our key concern that we cannot currently agree with the conclusions of the EIA. At this stage we are particularly concerned that there is still no quantification of the potential impacts to certain marine mammal species, specifically the number of harbour and grey seal that could be impacted. Natural England notes that the document includes figures for animal densities in the area. These should be combined with underwater noise modelling to give an estimate of the number of animals potentially impacted. We note this has been undertaken for cetaceans in paragraph 4.9.30, however the same calculations should also be carried out for the two seal species present.	The Applicant confirms that estimates of the number of seals that could be impacted by underwater sound, and an update to the impact assessment, have been provided in Application Document 6.4.4.4 (H) Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals submitted at Deadline 6.
7	[REP3-029] 6.6 (E) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Tracked) Pg 131, 133, 134, 135, 136 & 138.	Natural England welcome the addition of a paragraph on in-combination for the projects on these pages. Unfortunately, this is not a sufficiently completed in-combination assessment. Natural England recommends that to work towards resolving the issue the Applicant needs to add a full assessment of the in-combination impact of the listed projects.	The Applicant has updated Application Document 6.6 (H) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report to include further analysis in relation to the assessment of in-combination effects from underwater sound to the Southern North Sea SAC considering all other listed projects. This was submitted at Deadline 6.

	This should be in the form of a table that lists each of the projects that have been identified and require an in-combination assessment. For each project the worst-case percentage disturbance, both daily and seasonally, from the projects respective HRAs should be included alongside the percentage figures from this project. These should be added together to give total figures for the in-combination assessment.

Table 35.6 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-220]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Appendix G5 to the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission – Natural England’s Additional Comments on Offshore Ornithology.			
Documents reviewed: [REP4-058] 6.6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report. Natural England has also reviewed the following documents and noted the changes, but has no further comment on them: [REP3-027] 6.4.4.5 (C) ES Figures Marine Ornithology; [REP3-069] 9.73 Applicant’s Responses to First Written Questions; [REP3-070] 9.73.1 Applicant’s Responses to First Written Questions – Appendices; [REP4-052] 6.4.4.5 (D) ES Figures Marine Ornithology; [REP4-082] 9.85 Applicant’s Comments on Other submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A.			
	Summary	Natural England’s primary concern for marine ornithology is potential vessel-related disturbance impacts to red-throated diver (RTD) a feature of the Outer Thames Estuary (OTE) Special Protection Area (SPA). Natural England is becoming increasingly concerned in relation to disturbance of red-throated divers from the more persistent presence of OWF-related vessels and could make a meaningful contribution to in combination effects on the OTE SPA. As a result of this we advise that there is a likely significant effect from the proposals alone and in-combination which should be considered in more detail in the Appropriate Assessment. Natural England welcomes the Applicant’s proposed seasonal restriction (Nov 1–Mar 31) to avoid impacts. However, we note that this has not been fully applied, specifically, the prelaying grapnel run (PLGR) occurs from Jan 1 - Mar 31, overlapping with RTD presence and risking displacement. Additionally, restrictions currently apply only within the SPA. Natural England recommend extending a 2 km buffer beyond the seaward boundary of the OTE SPA to account for vessel disturbance and advise that inclusion of the updated restrictions is essential to mitigate Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEoI). We advise that all mitigation measures should be secured within a named plan/document.	The Applicant confirms that all mitigation relevant to Red Throated Diver is secured within Application Document 7.8 Red Throated Diver Protocol. This plan would be adhered to throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Project as outlined in Condition 11 of the dML submitted at Deadline 6. This includes the updated Seasonal Restriction for Red Throated Diver and mechanisms in place for any unforeseen Emergency Repairs within the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. This Document has been updated at Deadline 6 following agreement with Natural England on our call 01/04/2026.
Detailed Comments			
1	[REP4-058] 6.6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report Section 5.3.5, pg 86.	Natural England notes that the Applicant summarises the <u>offshore</u> scheme impacts by stating ‘the Suffolk <u>Onshore</u> Scheme will result in LSE ‘in combination’ with other Projects’. Natural England assumes that the Applicant is referencing the Offshore scheme and therefore all named plans should be updated where required.	This typing error has been corrected in 6.6 (H) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report, submitted at Deadline 6.
2	[REP4-058] 6.6 (F) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	Natural England re-iterates comments in Appendix G4 [REP4-193] ref. 3 at Deadline 4 concerning the omission of the export cable laying for North Falls OWF from the in-combination assessment for OTE SPA. Noting that for all the other projects screened in that might contribute effects on RTD in OTE SPA incombination the Applicant has already acknowledged that	The Applicant has now committed to including PLGR within the Season Restriction. In-Combination Effects are therefore removed.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
	Section 8.3, Section 8.3.14-17, pg. 131.	simultaneous or protracted cable laying from multiple projects could increase vessel activity and disturbance/displacement of RTD in the OTE SPA. Natural England advises that unless it can be appropriately justified by the Applicant, cable laying work for North Falls OWF should be included in the in-combination impact assessment as advised in Appendix G4 [REP4-193] ref. 3 at Deadline 4. Natural England advises that the mitigation planned for cables works both during construction and operation and maintenance activities could eliminate any contribution to RTD disturbance from their cable laying activities, if the seasonal restriction offered as mitigation, is adhered to in full. Natural England also re-emphasise that the seasonal restriction proposed as mitigation will only remove any in-combination effect if impacts from the Pre-Lay Grapnel Run can be shown to make no meaningful contribution to those effects or is included within the seasonal restriction.	

Table 35.7 Applicant’s Comments on the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-221]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Appendix L5 to the Natural England Deadline 5 Submission – Natural England’s comments on the second round of Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) – Action Points Relevant to Natural England			
Natural England’s response to the action points following the second set of Issue Specific Hearings [EV6-033]			
1	Pins Action Point Number: 2	Action Point: Natural England (NE) was unable to attend the hearing. NE to respond to: • NE to share any additional data relating to the post implementation phase of Nemo Link or Thanet cable works in Pegwell Bay, for example in terms of changes in benthic ecology or bird foraging. • The applicant’s comments regarding progress with quantifying the number of red throated diver impacted by the works in line with NE requirements. NE’s Response: Natural England is not the information asset owner for the monitoring data for these projects. We would advise that these reports may be requested from the MMO. However, many may already be published on the MMO's public register.	This is noted by the Applicant.
2	Pins Action Point Number: 17	Action Point: Provide clarification regarding measures that have been required by Natural England to mitigate the impact of ground investigations within the designated sites in Kent and Suffolk in the event that mitigation is required to be secured for further ground investigations in designated sites. NE’s Response: Mitigation measures are bespoke to the proposed works, their locations, and the specific features being affected. Therefore, any list	

		we provide would apply only to the works that were undertaken. However, it is likely that agreement on appropriate mitigation could be reached once the details of the proposed works are known.	
3	Pins Action Point Number: 20	Action Point: REAC provision B45 [REP3-078] states that works to install the pylons either side of Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI will not cover the whole breeding season (March to September included) but will either take place outside the breeding season or only occupy approx. 2 months of the breeding season. Given that works could occur in the core breeding season, explain how this provision can be relied on to avoid likely significant effects on breeding birds. NE's Response: Natural England refers to our advice in REP4-068, re. avoiding construction during the breeding bird season where practical, securing an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to oversee all relevant works and updating the REAC measures to reflect this. It remains Natural England's advice that the bird breeding season should be considered to be March to September inclusive and that any works which are likely to disturb breeding birds should preferably be timed to avoid these months. REP4-068 section 1.6.1 has been updated to include the appointment of an ECOW and Natural England have asked The Applicant to update the REAC to include reference to this measure under B45, B50 and B65. Provided these commitments are secured within a named plan/document Natural England will be satisfied there will be no likely significant impact upon Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI due to constructions disturbance.	As requested by the Examining Authority, the Applicant updated this measure in Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]. The Applicant believes the underlined text will address Natural England's comment: <i>'Installation of overhead line pylons either side of Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI will not cover the entire breeding season (March to September included) but will either take place outside the bird breeding season or will only occupy approximately two months of the breeding season unless otherwise agreed with Natural England. Any works causing noise levels above 60dB L_{max} at the boundary of the SSSI, will take place outside the bird breeding season (March to August included).'</i>
4	29 th Jan Transcript	Action Point: Taken from transcript [EN020026-002412-SL_29JAN_ISH2_PART2_Transcript] 01:01:49:22 - 01:02:23:09: Physical Processes - can NE expand on our concerns about physical processes impacts and the presence of the cofferdam? NE's Response: Natural England is concerned that the presence of cofferdams during construction could interfere with waves and/or current flows, affecting sediment transport, and giving rise to morphological change in the intertidal zone at Pegwell Bay. The Applicant considers that any changes to morphology will be small-scale in magnitude and temporary with recovery of the intertidal/coastal morphology predicted to be small-scale (within one or two tidal cycles). Whilst we welcome the Applicant's predictions of temporary morphological impacts, there is a lack of empirical evidence (for example, from Thanet OWF or Nemo Link) to support these conclusions. The intertidal mudflats in Pegwell Bay support internationally important bird populations, and form qualifying features of nationally and internationally designated sites and we, therefore, consider it important to provide supporting evidence to demonstrate the recoverability of the intertidal mud/sand flats to pre-construction conditions.	The Applicant confirms that its assessment on cofferdams is detailed within Application Document 6.2.4.1 (G) Environmental Statement Part 4 Marine Chapter 1 Physical Environment which is also being updated at Deadline 6 with respect to the additional sediment modelling which has been completed at Pegwell Bay.

		We are also concerned that the Applicant has not assessed the sensitivity of the saltmarsh to potential blockage effects due to the close proximity of the cofferdams to the saltmarsh edge (i.e. 105-140m). In our advice at Deadline 3A [REP3A-028], we commented on the Applicant's assurances that a distance of 105-140m between the exit pits and the saltmarsh would be sufficient to avoid damage. However, the potential for blockage related impacts on the saltmarsh due to the presence of cofferdams has not been considered in the Marine Physical Environment chapter [REP4-028].	
5	Pins Action Point Number: 26	Action Point: NE to respond to: • The applicant's statement that birds tend to divert up and over overhead lines rather than seeking to turn away from them NE's Response: Natural England notes the comments from the applicant during ISH2 suggesting that coastal birds are going over the overhead wires whilst smaller birds maybe going under them. We would welcome the Applicant providing detailed, locally specific empirical data (or directing us to where it is included within the submitted documents) to allow us to provide a detailed response on this matter. Notwithstanding this, we would also direct the Examining Authority to Natural England's response to the <u>ExA's Question 2ECOL48 and 2ECOL50 in Appendix K5 to our Deadline 5 submission, which states that Natural England is supportive of the installation and use of bird diverters to existing overhead cables to reduce the risk of collision.</u>	The Applicant understands that Natural England does not <u>require</u> the Applicant to erect diverters on the existing overhead line network to mitigate for an otherwise significant effect that would be generated by the Proposed Project. Rather, the intention of your statement was that Natural England are supportive in general of National Grid installing bird diverters to the existing overhead cables, to minimise any existing risk of collision from the existing overhead line network.
6	Pins Action Point Number: 73	Action Point: NE and the Environment Agency (EA) to comment on the contrasting positions in [REP3A-028] and [REP2-051] regarding the potential for morphological change in Pegwell Bay due to the presence of HDD reception facilities. NE's Response: Previously provided in Natural England's submission at Deadline 4 [REP4-189] within the cover letter - for completeness the response was as follows: Natural England and the Environment Agency have had a meeting since the ISHs on the 6th February 2026 to discuss action point 73 regarding the potentially contrasting positions for morphological change in Pegwell Bay and the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) reception pits. Natural England wishes to highlight that the remits for both organisations differ, with Natural England's main concern related to the impacts on designated sites rather than the water quality, morphology, and flood risk elements of the Environment Agency's remit. Therefore, we do not believe we hold contrasting opinions regarding the potential for morphological change in Pegwell Bay due to the presence of HDD reception facilities.	This is noted by the Applicant.

36. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Southern Gas Networks Plc

36.1 Introduction

36.1.1 Table 36.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Southern Gas Networks Plc Deadline 4 Response [REP4-199].

Table 36.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Southern Gas Networks Plc Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-199]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		As set out in SGN’s Written Representation, SGN requires protective provisions, in a form acceptable to them, to be included within the Development Consent Order. Discussions have been ongoing between the Promoter and SGN, with progress taking place. Taking this fact into account, and in the interests of efficiency, SGN is therefore providing this brief update to the Examination on the status of its discussions with the Promoter in lieu of a formal written submission. Should discussions not reach a satisfactory conclusion to protect SGN’s assets and its undertaking then SGN reserves the right to make further submissions during the Examination	The Applicant notes this submission and confirms that discussion over Protective Provisions are ongoing and that a final position will be set out at Deadline 7.

37. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Angela Stevens

37.1 Introduction

37.1.1 Table 37.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Angela Stevens Deadline 4 Response [REP4-206].

Table 37.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Angela Stevens Council Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-206]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-ruralaffairs	“The UK has today (Wednesday 26 February) outlined its commitment to the implementation of UN COP15 biodiversity framework by publishing its National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP) - showing how we intend to meet all the global targets and goals. The resumed session of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Rome, Italy, will focus on unresolved items from Cali, Colombia in October 2024, including an international strategy to mobilise finance for nature and the mechanism to review global progress against the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). A partnership between Defra, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and Northern Ireland’s Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the NBSAP commits the UK to achieving all 23 of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets at home and outlines how its four countries will work together to fully implement each of these, including commitments to: • Expand protected areas to at least 30% of the land and seas • Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity • Enhance biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry • Ensure sustainable, safe and legal harvesting and trade of wild species The NBSAP draws on commitments made by the UK, its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies – which make a significant contribution to global biodiversity – to summarise our collective ambition to work together to address biodiversity loss.	The impacts of the project on Ecology and Biodiversity are assessed in the relevant ES Chapters the Applicant does not accept that the project will have any unacceptable impacts on biodiversity, and in fact as confirmed in REP1A-025, the Proposed Project is seeking to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity to align with National Grid targets.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Achieving these goals to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 will be part of the global pathway towards a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. Nature Minister Mary Creagh said: “The UK continues to drive progress on nature protection and restoration both at home and across the world. “It’s never been more important to tackle the nature and climate crises, and that’s why we will continue to press for concerted action to ensure full implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. “There is more work to do with our international partners, and the UK will be at the forefront of negotiations in Rome.” Ruth Davis, the UK’s Special Representative for Nature, said: “We need urgent action to address the nature crisis and that means working to halt biodiversity loss both internationally and at home. “The launch of the NBSAP is a signal of the UK’s commitment to match international cooperation on nature with domestic activity to protect and enhance our natural world. “We will continue to play our part in achieving our international nature targets, while working with other nations to make a difference across the globe.” Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said: “Nature underpins our economy, health and security. We rely on ecosystems for food, water and air, for resilience in the face of climate change and in sustaining our physical and psychological wellbeing. ” Therefore, I, Angela Stevens, object most strongly to the National Grid/Sea Link Project.	
2	Re National Grid/Sea Link Project EN020026 - Sea Link My PINS Ref: FB26C8073 Re Serious Flooding Risk	I object strongly to the National Grid/Sealink project due to the future risk of serious flooding of the nearby historical town of Sandwich, (which has flooded in the past), the River Stour and the surrounding areas. It only takes a brief look at the Archimedes Principle to see the devastating effect of 300,000 aggregate that	The project is the subject of a full Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292] that fully assesses the impacts of the Proposed Project on the wet marshland of Minster Marshes and does not identify any increased risk of flooding to the town of Sandwich.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Sea Link are proposing to put on the wet marshland of Minster Marshes in Kent, which will displace 300,000 tons of water. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archimedes%27_principle “Archimedes' principle states that the upward buoyant force that is exerted on a body immersed in a fluid, whether fully or partially, is equal to the weight of the fluid that the body displaces. Archimedes' principle is a law of physics fundamental to fluid mechanics. It was formulated by Archimedes of Syracuse.” That proves that 300,000 tons of water will run into the streams and River Stour, which will undoubtedly flood the town of Sandwich and surrounding areas. Also, if aggregate is put on the Minster Marshes, they will no longer be able to act as a sponge, again risking flooding to Sandwich and the surrounding areas	

38. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from David Stevens

38.1 Introduction

- 38.1.1 Table 38.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on David Stevens Deadline 4 Response [REP4-207].
- 38.1.2 Table 38.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on David Stevens Deadline 4 Response [REP4-208].
- 38.1.3 Table 38.3 summarises the Applicant’s comments on David Stevens Deadline 4 Response [REP4-209].
- 38.1.4 Table 38.4 summarises the Applicant’s comments on David Stevens Deadline 5 Response [REP5-154].

Table 38.1 Applicant’s Comments on the David Stevens Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-207]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		1) Need Argument put forward by the Applicant In RR-4892 this was summarised as: It should be noted that all the values referred to below are provided by the Applicant in APP-320 and are assumed to be correct. • Estimated total scaled generation capacity by 2037 is 14,245.3 MW. • Forecast Average Cold Spell (ACS) Peak demand for 2030/2031 is 1,556.1 MW (this is likely to be significantly higher by 2037!). • The supply is considerably more than load so excess (12,689.2 MW) must be transferred across the SC2 boundary which is referred to as the Planned Transfer. • NG must plan for worst case scenario which, they say, would be a fault in the double circuits connecting Canterbury North to Kemsley. • With the fault described above the remaining circuit capability (the maximum power that can cross the boundary) for SC2 is reduced to 5,873 MW. • NG state that circuit capability can be increased by 300W giving a new total of 6173 MW. • This would leave a deficit of 12,689.2 – 6173 = 6,516.2 MW. • NG argue that part of the solution is to export some of that deficit (2,000 MW) via Sea link. The Applicant is describing an N-1 fault where failure of a single component, in this case an OHL, would cause widespread supply interruptions. In RR-4892 it was argued that this deficit could be dealt with by a combination of battery storage of 2,531.2MW and Interconnectors of 5,720MW within SC2. However, this is only a sticking plaster solution and there is a need to reinforce the infrastructure within SC2.	The Applicant has responded to this point in and in response to 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of Need in REP5-142 which addresses the points made in REP4-207.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		2) New infrastructure required The Applicant states that “The principle underlying the NETS SQSS is that the NETS should have sufficient spare capability or "redundancy" such that fault conditions do not result in widespread supply interruptions.” (APP-320) The Applicant argues that Sea Link is the solution to this N-1 problem within SC2. However, Sea Link would still leave a deficit within SC2 of 4,516.2MW should the worst-case fault occur between Canterbury North and Kemsley risking an interruption of supply and thus appears to contravene the NETS SQSS and the N-1 Principle. Further infrastructure would be required within SC2 to solve this N-1 problem, so Sea link is NOT the answer. The solution is to build a new overhead line (OHL) between Canterbury North and Kemsley. Using Google maps and the measure distance function, it is possible to follow the existing OHL route between Canterbury North substation and Kemsley substation. The distance is 29km. Using data produced by the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) “A Comparison of Electricity Transmission Technologies: Costs and Characteristics” by Mott MacDonald April 2025, it is possible to calculate the approximate cost of a new 7,482MW OHL. It should be noted that the shorter the cable, the more expensive the construction is. Using IET 2025 data gives a figure of £4.03m / km for a 3km length (p42), £3.20m for a 15km length (p45) and £2.95m / km for a 75km length (p48). This gives costs for the 29km OHL of £117m, £93m and £86m respectively. With the distance being 29km the likely cost will be between £86m and £93m. The provision of this second OHL of 7,482MW is more than sufficient to offset the 6,516.2MW deficit calculated by the Applicant should the “worst-case fault” between Kemsley and Canterbury North occur. Unlike Sea Link this single solution does satisfy the requirements of NETS SQSS and the N-1 Principle. Suffolk	
		3) Need Argument put forward by the Applicant The Applicant calculates that if the worst-case fault occurred between Bramford and Sizewell which “leaves the remaining double circuit with a maximum potential capability of 6,930 MW and generation transfer of 8782.1 MW leaving a deficit of more than -1852 MW”. However, the generation figure of 8,782 includes two interconnectors. One is Nautilus (1500MW) which is no longer relevant because it is now going to Grain. This reduces the deficit to 352MW.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Seb Stevens for the Applicant acknowledged this in the ISH 1 but: “planned transfer of scale generation would reduce from 1852MW to 352MW, and indeed, a shortfall in transfer capacity of 352MW is still a needs case that would need to be met”. (REP3-011) SEAS in REP3-125 concur that this 352MW deficit needs to be met but “can easily be accommodated by a reconductoring of the Sizewell to Bramford double circuit that will have to be done, in any event, before Sizewell C ‘s reactors are commissioned. Increasing the thermal and load capacity of the conductors of those double circuits can be accomplished easily, at an incremental cost of only £ tens of millions rather than £billions for Sea Link with two onshore HVDC converters etc.” This can also be done much quicker than building a new circuit. Using IET 2025 data it is possible to calculate the cost of reconductoring one of the two double circuits between Sizewell and Bramford which is a distance of 55km. The cost of reconductoring, according to the IET 2025 data (p106), with a cost of £1.20m / km for an additional capacity of up to 2,494MW would be £66 million. Although doing one of the double circuits would add more resilience to the network (greater than the Sea Link value of 2000MW), it would seem sensible to reductor both and would add up to 4,988MW to the Sizewell group. This would give a total cost of £132m. .	
		4) Cost Comparison The final cost of the Sea Link project is unknown and documentation from Sea Link is contradictory and does not seem to be realistic. The cost of £1.1 billion is either based on 2018/2019 prices (REP3-011) or 2021/2022 prices (APP-320) depending on which document you read. 2025 IET data on page 105 gives the build cost for a 180km 2000MW HVDC subsea cable with a convertor station at each end as £2,549m. Using that data it is possible to estimate the likely cost of Sea Link to be at least £2 billion rather than the £1.1 billion referred to by the Applicant. Combining the cost of building a new OHL in Kent (circa £90m) and reconductoring both of Sizewell to Bramford OHLs (£132m) gives a total cost circa £222m.Sea Link cost circa £2 billion (with extra infrastructure needed in addition) compared with £0.222 billion.	The Applicant confirms that the estimated cost of the Proposed Project is approximately £1.1 billion (2018/19 price base, the price base of the RIIO-T2 price control) as per Application Document 4.1 (C): Funding Statement [REP4-011]. As to the point raised about a possible alternative, the Applicant has considered alternative solutions, including their relative costs, in Application Document 6.2.1.3: ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044] and Application Document 7.2: Strategic Options Back Check Report [APP-320].
		5) Capacity added to the Network Sea Link will add 2000MW capacity to the network. A new OHL between Canterbury North and Kemsley will add 7,482MW capacity to the network. Reconductoring both OHLs between Sizewell and Bramford will add up to 4,988MW capacity to the network.	As noted above, the needs case for the project (including in response to the point made here) are addressed in Application Document 9.129: Applicant’s Response to 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of Need [REP5-142].
		6) Related projects Kent	As noted above, the needs case for the project (including in response to the points made here) are addressed in Application

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		It should be noted that there is no need to reinforce the Richborough to Canterbury North infrastructure because a new 400kv OHL involving 60 pylons was completed in 2018 for the NEMO project. In addition, new substations were built at Richborough and Canterbury North and these were also completed in 2018. It should also be noted that there is no need to reinforce the Kemsley to Littlebrook infrastructure because a new 400kv OHL was completed in 2020 and a new 400kv substation at Littlebrook was completed in 2024. Suffolk The reconductored OHLs between Sizewell and Bramford will connect into the proposed new OHL between Norwich and Tilbury via Bramford. The examination for this NSIP begins on 9th February.	Document 9.129: Applicant's Response to 2GEN1 and 2GEN2 in respect of Need [REP5-142].
		7) Related legislation The Applicant has sought Compulsory Acquisition powers as a vital part of their application. Section 122 of the Planning Act 2008 makes clear that: “122 Purpose for which compulsory acquisition may be authorised: (3) The condition is that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be acquired compulsorily.” There is not a compelling case in the public interest to spend approximately £2 billion on Sea Link when a cheaper (£0.222 billion), less environmentally damaging, effective alternative is available. Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 states that “It shall be the duty of an electricity distributor— (a) to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity distribution;”. Spending circa £2 billion rather than £0.222 billion is not efficient, coordinated or economical and appears to contravene Section 9 of the Act. There is not a compelling case in the public interest to spend circa £2 billion on Sea Link when it does not satisfy the requirements of NETS SQSS and the N-1 Principle. A new OHL would satisfy both at a fraction of the cost.	The Applicant has set out its rationale for the compulsory acquisition of land for the proposed project in Application Document 4.2 (H): Statement of Reasons [REP5-009]. The legal test of a compelling case in the public interest is addressed fully here.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		I feel that the applicant has not put forward a compelling needs case and ask that an ISH be held on the subject of “Need”	

Table 38.2 Applicant’s Comments on the David Stevens Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-208]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		Mr Stevens submitted a number of photographs to illustrate the state of the area around Manston Airport outfall, which he felt illustrated the risk to the surface, increasing the risk of heavy metals, including Arsenic and Lead, leeching into the SSSI.	The Applicant has confirmed that it has included a new commitment (W37) which states that: <i>‘The Applicant will prepare a hoverport condition monitoring plan post consent to monitor the condition of the hoverport during construction. This will include measures for identifying and managing any potential contamination risk and will be prepared in consultation with the EA, Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust and Tendering District Council’</i> which is secured within the 7.5.3 (C) Outline Onshore Construction Environmental Management Plan that was submitted at Deadline 5. [REP5-068]

Table 38.3 Applicant’s Comments on the David Stevens Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-209]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		The Applicant has applied for an increase in the order limits for the Hoverport under Change 1 and the deadline for responses has passed. However, new evidence has come to light during the ISH 2 hearing. The Applicant made clear that the area around the Manston Outfall would not be used but when questioned about why this area was included in the order limits the response from the applicant was that “the order limits have been set in order to allow the identification of the most suitable route with a certain amount of flexibility to work around areas where there has been degradation”. I fail to see how an area that is clearly not suitable for use gives any flexibility. Under the Change 1 request I would urge the Ex-A to refuse to allow these unsuitable areas on the northern edge of the apron to be included within the order limits. Under the original plans the Applicant intended to access the intertidal area from the southern edge of the apron. Despite showing that the access routes are now on the eastern edge of the apron, the southern part of the apron is still included in the order limits. This southern access route is totally unsuitable because a) there is the real risk of damaging the saltmarsh in this area b) the apron shows the greatest deterioration in this area.	The Applicant can see no objections at all to Mr Stevens raising these points at this stage of the Examination. The reasons for the Change Request in relation to the hoverport, Change Request 1, are set out throughout the Application, including within the Change Request Report [CR1-052]. The Applicant’s view is there is a lot of merit in having the flexibility to find the most suitable route and avoid areas of particular degradation or ecological value. For the reasons set out above, the Applicant is confident that the Proposed Project incorporates robust measures for identifying and managing any potential contamination from the Hoverport.

	It can be clearly seen from the photographs that this area of the apron is totally unsuitable and there is no reason why it should still be included within the order limits.

Table 38.4 Applicant’s Comments on the David Stevens Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-154]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Executive Summary The plans put forward by the Applicant risk: • Removing two of the three access points to the Hoverport for the public. • Preventing access for people with limited mobility (unable to negotiate stairs). • Preventing access for people in wheelchairs / mobility scooters. • Preventing or a the very least making it difficult for families with young children and pushchairs. • Devastating the local ecology due to the sheer quantity of vegetation / habitat that will have to be removed. • Contravening under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	The Applicant has responded to all points in the Summary Below.
		Introduction The former Hoverport site is a rewilded, biodiverse site that supports rare and protected species. It is widely used by locals throughout the year giving access to nature walking predominately on hard standing which is particularly important in the winter months. At present, the public have 3 ways to access the whole of the Hoverport. The route from Sandwich Road down the old access road has a gentle sloping hardstanding surface which is ideal for people with limited mobility, those in wheelchairs and families with pushchairs. Details from the Applicant show the proposed order limits (REP4-003) and the possible alternative routes across the Hoverport (REP3-070). In REP4-086 the Applicant states in answer to AP9 that “the construction access would be typically 7m wide to enable the two-way movement of vehicles”. The Applicant goes on to say that “fencing would be Heras or similar to segregate the construction vehicles from pedestrians and adjacent sensitive habitat”	See below.

	Implications for public access In REP4-086 the Applicant states in answer to AP11 that “The hoverport shall not be used as a construction compound or for the parking of vehicles”. This means that all the vehicles including heavy plant will be doing 4 journeys (2up and 2down) along the access road each day. To enable two-way movement of vehicles established habitat will have to be cleared to give the 7m width specified by the applicant. As indicated in my introduction, the approach road shown in Fig. 1 above is used by the public to access the Hoverport site either from point 01 or point 04. Even if it is deemed acceptable by a suitably qualified ecologist to clear the vegetation to allow two-way traffic there will not be room for the safe movement of pedestrians. At its widest point, the road is 8.5m reducing to 8.0m kerb to kerb which only leaves a maximum of 1m for a pedestrian footpath and a suitable barrier. As indicated above, the Applicant seems to think a “Heras Fence or similar” would provide a safe separation between the public and heavy plant. I am no Health and Safety expert, but I cannot imagine that this would pass any risk assessment. It is my opinion that concrete blocks such as Jersey Blocks would be required. It is clear to me that either the Applicant accepts that two-way traffic is not possible on this part of the approach or that the public will be excluded from using either access point (01 or 04). This would only allow pedestrian access using the steep stairs (shown in the photographs below). This will prevent anyone with mobility issues and anyone in a wheelchair from access to the Hoverport area. I believe this is discriminatory. In addition, families with young children and / or using a pushchair will at best find it very difficult to access the Hoverport and is a possible Health and Safety issue. Although I do not feel that the Applicant should be allowed to use the Hoverport at all but the least bad option would be for the Ex A to insist that there is only one-way traffic on the approach with a dedicated footpath for the public separated by Jersey Blocks or similar.	There are no plans to close any of the registered public rights of way, where they interact with the access to the Hoverport these will be managed during the periods of time when construction traffic is using the site. The access route across the hoverport will be fenced off, however crossing points will be provided to maintain public access where necessary.
	Clearing of vegetation a) On the approach road	Having walked the site, the Applicant is confident that there is sufficient open unvegetated areas of hardstanding that will enable it to comply with Commitment B66 of Application Document 9.84 (C): Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments

As has already been stated above, to give 7m of hardstanding on the approach road, vegetation will have to be cleared.

This appears to be contrary to the statement given by the Applicant in REP4-089 1.1.7 which states that:

“For the first stretch the existing track will be used (the habitat of interest being either side of that track) then for the final stretch construction plant will drive across the open unvegetated areas of hardstanding, thus avoiding habitat suitable for orchids, rare invertebrates or reptiles. There will thus be no vegetation clearance, although some pruning back of shrub branches may be needed depending on extent of growth prior to works commencing”.

b) Mid-section

The approach road comes to what had been a roundabout for the former Hoverport site, but it is now heavily overgrown (see photograph below). This has reduced the access considerably as can be seen in Figure 2 below.

It would appear from the evidence that to achieve a 7m two-way access route considerable vegetation clearance will be required and not just *“some pruning back of shrub branches”*.

The photograph clearly shows the established habitat on the roundabout and either side of the track as acknowledged by the applicant as “the habitat of interest”. In REP3-078 the Applicant makes the following commitment (my emphasis):

“To ensure ecological interest features of the former hoverport are not affected during construction, the following approach will be taken: a) pre-construction botanical survey will be undertaken to map vegetation stands of particular significance to protect, such as orchids or dense stands of dock or wild carrot (the larval floodplants of the two rarest vertebrates on site). b) An access route will subsequently be marked out which avoids these stands, along with dense stands of other vegetation. c) A suitable qualified ecologist will be on site to supervise and guide the marking out of the access route”.

It is hard to see how the route adopted by the Applicant can possibly avoid removing “dense stands of other vegetation” with the resulting loss of habitat.

In REP4-089 1.1.7 the Applicant states that *“The hoverport site is known to support rare invertebrates, including fiery clearwing moth and Sussex emerald moth, both of which are legally protected*

(REAC) [REP5-155]. There will be no vegetation or tree clearance, save for limited branch pruning of shrubs adjacent to the route where necessary depending on extent of further growth.

As noted above, public access will be maintained to the Hoverport and suitable mitigation measures will be put in place where there are temporary impacts.

<i>under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It also contains habitat suitable for reptiles and supports populations of man orchid and lizard orchid”.</i> The two-way movement of heavy noisy vehicles so close to this habitat is bound to have a serious negative effect on the rare, protected invertebrates and should not be permitted. Both the photographs above illustrate that there is no clear path free from vegetation. In the second photograph it is possible to see two kerbs in the foreground. This gives a maximum width of 5.9m if all vegetation is cleared but this would be contrary to the commitment given in REP3-078. In the second photograph it is possible to see on the right-hand side a bridge (no longer in use) and there is a set of steep stairs beyond that. This could be the only access route for the public. As stated before, this would make it very difficult for people with limited mobility and impossible for people in wheelchairs to access the Hoverport. It would also make it much more difficult for families with young children and pushchairs to access the site.		
c) Final area of vegetation Although the distance from kerb to kerb in the area shown in Fig 3 increases to 13m, there is no clear path that is free of vegetation: For all the reasons listed above I firmly object to the plans put forward by the Applicant for the use of the Hoverport. David Stevens.		See above.

39. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Stephen Byrne

39.1 Introduction

- 39.1.1
- Table 39.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Stephen Bryne Deadline 4 Response [REP4-210].
- 39.1.2
- Table 39.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Stephen Bryne Deadline 4 Response [REP4-211].
- 39.1.3
- Error! Reference source not found.** summarises the Applicant’s comments on Stephen Bryne Deadline 5 Response [REP5-168].

Table 39.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Stephen Byrne Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-210]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1	Introduction	We submit this Written Representation in respect of the Sea Link Project DCO, with specific reference to the proposed converter station and associated infrastructure at Minster Marshes. We acknowledge the urgent need for reinforcement of the transmission network but contend that the Applicant has failed to select the least-damaging option consistent with EN-1 and EN-5, and has inadequately assessed alternatives, environmental impacts, and technology options. Our representation identifies four primary grounds of objection: 1. Flaws in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). 2. Failure to properly assess the Richborough brownfield alternative. 3. Suboptimal technology choice, contrary to Best Practicable Environmental Option principles under EN-5. 4. Failure to address public value and Green Book obligations. We respectfully request that the Examining Authority issue targeted Rule 17 questions and convene Issue Specific Hearings (ISHs) on HRA, alternatives, and technology selection.	The Applicant considers that its HRA assessments (primarily contained in [REP5-036]) and analysis are robust and sufficient. The criticisms made of the HRA are general and high-level which makes it difficult for the Applicant to provide a granular response. Nevertheless, the Applicant considers: • The Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA has been assessed and carefully considered by the Applicant – see for example p.29; • As has the Thanet Coast SAC – see for example Ex1.4.4; • As has the Pegwell Bay Ramsar site – see for example §7.4 • Noise, artificial light, and construction disturbance has naturally formed part of that assessment – see for example §7.3.49 • As has visual intrusion and fragmentation of dark-sky conditions – see for example §§4.2.26, 4.4.13. • Recreational pressure and construction traffic have been considered – see for example §4.2.25 • The Applicant’s ornithological surveys were sufficient. The Wintering Bird Survey Report was conducted between October 2022 and March 2023 (see [REP1A-015] at §1.1.15) and the Breeding Bird surveys were conducted in March to July 2023 inclusive (see [REP1A-017] at §1.3.21). • Lighting assessment was rigorous and the Applicant has made numerous REAC commitments relating to lighting – for example B39, and B58, which specifically follows best practice guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) • The HRA assessed cumulative effects – see for example Ex1.4.60
2	Policy Framework	• EN-1 (Overarching NPS for Energy) requires decision-makers to "seek opportunities to avoid and minimise adverse impacts" (§4.2.8). • EN-5 (Electricity Networks Infrastructure) requires that early-stage network planning balances cost, timely delivery, and minimisation of community and environmental impacts (§1.1.8). • Revised EN-1 and EN-5 came into force on 17 January 2024.	As to the site selection, and whilst the matrix presented is noted, the Applicant has considered Richborough Substation as the Kent

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		• The Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) impose strict obligations at the screening, Appropriate Assessment (AA), and Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) stages. • The Green Book (2020) requires holistic, public value-based appraisal using the Five Case Model.	network connection point, but after consultation and assessment determined that would significantly constrain the proposed project and it was determined that a new substation would be required (see §3.6.125 of [APP-044].
3	Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	The Applicant's HRA is inadequate and does not satisfy the precautionary principle. 3.1 European Sites at Risk • Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA: supports important wintering populations including turnstone, sanderling, and dark-bellied brent goose (JNCC citation). • Thanet Coast SAC: designated for sandbanks, reefs, and marine habitats. • Pegwell Bay Ramsar site and NNR: nationally and internationally important for birds, intertidal habitats, and saltmarsh. 3.2 Impact Pathways • Noise, artificial light, and construction disturbance. • Visual intrusion and fragmentation of dark-sky conditions. • Recreational pressure and construction traffic. 3.3 Survey Gaps • The Applicant's ornithological surveys did not cover the full overwintering season (Nov–Mar). • Lighting assessment did not benchmark against ILP GN08 or CIE standards. 3.4 In-Combination Effects The HRA does not adequately assess cumulative effects with: • Manston Airport (reinstatement). • Port of Ramsgate operations. • Pegwell Hoverport expansion. • Local development plans. Request: The ExA should require updated HRA with in-combination analysis and evidencebased precautionary measures.	
4	Alternative Assessments – Richborough Brownfield Option	The Applicant dismissed Richborough without sufficient justification. Richborough offers: • Brownfield credentials: former power station site with grid infrastructure. • Industrial setting: avoids new encroachment into sensitive marshland. • Proximity to grid assets: existing 400kV substation and SF₆-free pilot. • Reduced biodiversity risk: compared with Minster Marshes and its adjacency to SPA/SAC/NNR.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments						
		By contrast, Minster requires extensive new infrastructure, reliance on constrained hoverport land, and incurs severe ecological risk. Request: The ExA should require a side-by-side alternatives matrix (Minster vs. Richborough).							
5	Technology Choice – Converter Station Design	The Applicant proposes a standard, bulky converter design. Modern, compact alternatives exist: ● Hitachi HVDC Light® and Siemens HVDC PLUS®: compact VSC converters with reduced footprint and height. ● Operational deployments: Amprion/Hitachi contract (Germany, 2024) demonstrates industry-standard scale. ● Multi-vendor interoperability: demonstrated in UK Project Aquila and HVDC Centre trials. The Applicant has not evidenced why these options were excluded. In addition, NGET has publicly committed to eliminate SF₆ by 2050 and halve emissions by 2030. Indoor, compact GIS/VSC options would better align with this obligation. Request: The ExA should require the Applicant to provide: ● Side-by-side technology comparison (standard vs. compact VSC). ● Justification for exclusion of BAT options. ● GIS shapefiles showing converter station footprint and construction compounds.							
6	Value for Money (VfM) and Public Value	The Applicant presents only a private CAPEX-based case. The Green Book (2020) requires a Five Case Model including social and environmental value. Richborough likely delivers superior public value when biodiversity, tourism, community wellbeing, offsetting costs, and litigation risk are included. Request: The ExA should direct the Applicant to prepare a Green Book-compliant VfM comparison of Minster vs. Richborough.							
7	Alternatives Matrix (Minster vs. Richborough)	<table><tr><th>Criteria</th><th>Minster Marshes</th><th>Richborough</th></tr><tr><td>Land type</td><td>Greenfield, sensitive marsh adjacent to SPA/SAC</td><td>Brownfield, former power station site</td></tr></table>	Criteria	Minster Marshes	Richborough	Land type	Greenfield, sensitive marsh adjacent to SPA/SAC	Brownfield, former power station site	
Criteria	Minster Marshes	Richborough							
Land type	Greenfield, sensitive marsh adjacent to SPA/SAC	Brownfield, former power station site							

Reference	Matter	Point Raised			Applicant's Comments
		Proximity to designations	Direct adjacency to SPA, SAC, Ramsar, NNR	Away from sensitive sites, within industrial corridor	
		Flood risk	High – marshland	Managed flood defences, industrial setting	
		Infrastructure	Requires new compounds, hoverport reliance	Existing 400kV substation, industrial access	
		Biodiversity risk	Severe (wintering birds, intertidal habitats)	Lower (already industrialised site)	
		Visual/landscape	Converter station ~28m height in open marsh	Screened within industrial landscape	
		Programme risk	Land access constraints (hoverport)	Established access corridors	
		Cost	Likely lower CAPEX but higher ecological/social cost	Higher CAPEX but lower longterm risk/cost	
		Public value	Net loss of biodiversity and amenity	Potential net gain through regeneration	

We respectfully request that the ExA:

- 8
- Formal Requests to the Examining Authority
1. Issue Rule 17 questions requiring the Applicant to:

• Provide GIS shapefiles of Order Limits and construction compounds.

• Provide a side-by-side site selection comparison (Minster vs. Richborough).

• Provide technology comparison (standard vs. compact VSC).

• Provide updated HRA including full in-combination analysis.

• Provide Green Book–compliant VfM comparison.

2. Convene Issue Specific Hearings on:

• Habitats Regulations Assessment.

• Alternatives and brownfield options.

• Converter station technology selection

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
9	Conclusion	The Applicant has not demonstrated compliance with EN-1/EN-5 obligations to minimise impacts, nor with the Habitats Regulations, nor with public value appraisal standards. A brownfield Richborough option, combined with modern converter technology, would better deliver the urgent grid need while safeguarding internationally important habitats and securing value for money. Accordingly, we urge the Examining Authority to seek full clarification on these points before determining whether the proposed Minster Marshes site is acceptable.	

Table 39.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Stephen Byrne Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-211]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
1	Purpose of this submission	This submission is made to assist the Examining Authority in determining whether the Applicant has demonstrated that the chosen converter station location and configuration represent the least damaging feasible solution, having regard to environmental sensitivity, technological options, land use compatibility, and deliverability. This submission does not oppose the Sea Link project in principle. Its purpose is to ensure that a project of national significance is implemented using the most appropriate and futureproofed choices, while minimising avoidable environmental and land-use impacts.	The Applicant welcomes the points made here intended to assist the ExA. Area A as identified in Application Document 8.1 Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Substation Siting study (October 2022) [APP-368] was further refined at Figure 11-1 to take account of the alternative connection point, the extensive area of flood zone within the preferred converter site option Area A south of the River Stour, the potential technical constraints associated with crossing the River Stour, and the presence of the Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI. This shows proposed converter and substation site as a graduated swathe, consistent with the Applicant’s approach to consenting guidance. A precise location for the converter and substation had not been identified at this stage.
2	Richborough Energy Park – previously preferred converter location	The Applicant’s earlier routeing and siting work identified “Converter Area A – Richborough Energy Park” as the initially preferred Kent converter location. This reflected: - proximity to existing grid infrastructure, - established industrial/energy land use, • potential to avoid higher flood-risk areas, - reduced connection distance. This represented an area of search, not a fixed plot. The examination record does not include a scaled layout showing where within the Energy Park the converter would have been located, nor does it provide a transparent explanation demonstrating why that preference later changed.	For the avoidance of doubt, this swathe was outside the Richborough Energy Park, but proposed Richborough substation as the network connection point in Kent. However, as explained at section 5.2 of Application Document 7.3: Design Development Report [APP-321], significant constraints were identified with connecting into Richborough substation as a consequence of other proposed energy developments, following which a review was undertaken for an alternative HVAC connection. Importantly, following this review based on the connection point no longer being Richborough substation, the conclusions on the landfall area of search, cable corridors, and converter site option area all remained unchanged.
3			In short, this submission appears to be based on the false premise that the converter and substation was intended to be located <u>within</u>

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
4	Current Energy Park context and coexistence with battery infrastructure	Richborough Energy Park remains an active and expanding strategic energy infrastructure site, currently hosting: • HVDC converter infrastructure (Nemo Link), • grid-scale battery energy storage, • ongoing energy development. Planning permission for the battery installation was granted in September 2024. The examination record does not indicate that the Applicant objected to that development on the basis that it would compromise delivery of Sea Link as nationally significant infrastructure, nor that land was formally safeguarded for Sea Link at that location. This raises a legitimate question as to whether coexistence was considered feasible at that time, or whether Richborough was no longer treated as a required converter site.	Richborough Energy Park, and that the design change was a consequence of constraints due to footprint/envelope. This is incorrect. As such, the Applicant does not consider it necessary to provide the requested documents and trusts the above explanation to adequately address the matters for clarification. Effects on the water environment have been comprehensively assessed in Application Document 6.2.2.4: ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 4 Water Environment. Further, the Applicant has considered alternative options in Application Document 6.2.1.3: ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered.
	Technology-adjusted feasibility (compact / stacked HVDC configurations)	Modern HVDC converter configurations using compact VSC technology, indoor GIS, and vertically stacked equipment are widely recognised as materially reducing horizontal landtake compared with conventional layouts. Based on publicly available engineering precedents, compact configurations are typically of the order of 3–6 hectares permanent footprint, broadly comparable to infrastructure already accommodated within Richborough Energy Park. The examination record does not demonstrate whether such configurations were evaluated when considering Richborough feasibility. Accordingly, it remains unclear whether any identified constraints at Richborough were absolute site limitations or dependent upon the assumed design envelope.	
5	Need for a demonstrable “fit test”	The current record does not provide a scaled constraints plan demonstrating: • where the converter would have been located within Richborough, • the effect of existing infrastructure, easements, and land use, • whether a reduced-footprint configuration could be accommodated, • whether constraints are absolute or design-dependent. In the absence of such evidence, the feasibility of Richborough cannot be verified either way.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
6	Water environment, aquifer and floodplain sensitivity	The Applicant is therefore respectfully requested to provide: • A scaled layout showing available and sterilised land within Richborough Energy Park, • An overlay of a reduced-footprint converter configuration, • A table identifying which constraints are absolute and which are design-dependent.	
		The Environmental Statement confirms that: • the Stour Marshes and floodplain are highly sensitive, • groundwater and drainage interactions are material, • deterioration of water body status must be avoided, • flood and groundwater conditions are key environmental factors. Given this sensitivity, the selection of a large-footprint installation within a floodplain environment requires particularly clear justification. The examination record does not present a transparent comparative assessment showing that the chosen location represents the least damaging feasible option in water-environment terms.	
7	Programme, delivery and time-to-completion	The submitted programme reflects an assumed design and layout. Alternative configurations — including compact or modularised arrangements — can materially affect construction duration and time to energisation. Earlier completion would accelerate system benefits and revenue generation, potentially offsetting higher capital costs associated with reduced-impact designs. The examination record does not demonstrate whether programme sensitivity to design alternatives has been assessed.	
8	Transparency of alternatives assessment	The Applicant's earlier documentation confirms that alternatives must include design, technology, size and scale, yet the examination record does not clearly evidence a transparent comparison between: • Richborough and the chosen location, • conventional and compact converter configurations, • footprint and environmental consequences, • programme and delivery implications. This leaves uncertainty as to whether the selected option represents the least damaging feasible solution.	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
9	Constructive position	This submission does not seek to delay or prevent implementation of Sea Link. Rather, it seeks to ensure that: • site and design choices are demonstrably optimal, • environmental and groundwater impacts are minimised, • future-proof and proportionate infrastructure is delivered, • alternatives have been transparently assessed.	
10	Matters for clarification	The Applicant is respectfully requested to clarify: 1. Where within Richborough Energy Park the converter was envisaged during earlier studies. 2. Whether coexistence with the battery installation was assessed and how this affected feasibility. 3. Whether reduced-footprint / compact converter configurations were evaluated. 4. Whether any constraints at Richborough are absolute or design-dependent. 5. Whether programme duration is sensitive to converter configuration and site selection. 6. Whether a transparent comparative assessment of environmental and waterenvironment impacts has been undertaken between alternative siting and design options.	
11	Conclusion	The earlier identification of Richborough as a preferred converter location, combined with the absence of a transparent technology-adjusted feasibility assessment, leaves uncertainty as to whether the current proposal represents the least damaging feasible solution. Clarification of the above matters would assist the Examining Authority in reaching a fully informed decision. Additional Comment Water environment and site comparison The Applicant's Environmental Statement confirms that infrastructure development can adversely affect groundwater, surface water and drainage regimes, and that development must avoid deterioration of water body status in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. The Statement further acknowledges flood and groundwater vulnerability at Minster Marshes and the need to steer development to areas of lowest flood risk where possible. Independent engineering evidence from Richborough Energy Park demonstrates that major energy infrastructure, including a multi-hectare impermeable platform, has been successfully engineered in an environment characterised by	

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		shallow groundwater and tidal drainage constraints. This confirms that water environment challenges are material but manageable through design and mitigation. In these circumstances, a transparent comparison of water-environment consequences between alternative siting and design options remains necessary to demonstrate that the selected proposal represents the least damaging feasible solution.	

Table 39.3 Applicant’s Comments on the Stephen Byrne Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-168]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		1. Purpose of this Submission This submission addresses the proportionality of the Applicant’s selection of Minster Marshes as the converter station location. It focuses on: 1. The “closest suitable location” contention; 2. The absence of quantified route-length comparison; 3. The environmental and hydrogeological risk differential between Minster and Richborough; 4. Construction and whole-life maintenance complexity; 5. The need for transparent clarification of the site selection evolution. This note does not rehearse earlier submissions but seeks to assist the Examination in ensuring that the balance required under the National Policy Statements is demonstrably evidence-based. 2. Chronology and Site Evolution 2. Chronology and Site Evolution The Applicant’s Main Alternatives Considered chapter identifies Richborough (Area A) as initially preferred, citing shorter HVDC and HVAC routes. Planning permission for substantial Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) infrastructure at Richborough was granted in September 2022, with earlier phases approved in 2021. The Sea Link DCO application submitted in March 2025 identifies Minster Marshes as the preferred converter location. It is therefore clear that: • Richborough was at one stage preferred notwithstanding BESS consents; • The shift to Minster occurred subsequently;	The reason for the slection of Minster Converter Station are set out in Application Document 8.1 Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Substation Siting study (October 2022) [APP-368] As explained at section 5.2 of Application Document 7.3: Design Development Report [APP-321], significant constraints were identified with connecting into Richborough substation as a consequence of other proposed energy developments, following which a review was undertaken for an alternative HVAC connection. Importantly, following this review based on the connection point no longer being Richborough substation, the conclusions on the landfall area of search, cable corridors, and converter site option area all remained unchanged. In short, this submission appears to be based on the false premise that the converter and substation was intended to be located <u>within</u> Richborough Energy Park, and that the design change was a consequence of constraints due to footprint/envelope. This is incorrect. As such, the Applicant does not consider it necessary to provide the requested documents and trusts the above explanation to adequately address the matters for clarification.

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- The precise decision point and technical trigger for that shift are not clearly dated in the public record.

The Examination would benefit from explicit clarification of what materially changed between the stage at which Richborough was preferred and the stage at which it was set aside.

3. The “Closest Suitable Location” Contention National Grid has advanced Minster as the “closest suitable location”. However:

- Earlier appraisal documentation described Richborough as enabling shorter HVDC and HVAC routes.
- No simple side-by-side distance table has been provided in the application documents.

Given that “closeness” is measurable, the Examination cannot assess proportionality without quantified data.

It is likely that both sites lie within a relatively confined geographic envelope and that route length differences are a matter of several kilometres rather than orders of magnitude.

If this is correct, then the question becomes one of balance: Are modest route-length differences proportionate when weighed against materially different environmental risk profiles?

4. Environmental Risk Differential

Minster Marshes presents the following characteristics:

- Low elevation (low AOD) with tidal influence;
- Flood Zone 2 designation in parts;
- Shallow groundwater conditions;
- Location above a Principal Chalk Aquifer in a water-stressed region;
- Undeveloped marshland setting.

Richborough Energy Park is:

- A long-established brownfield industrial platform;
- Historically used for major power infrastructure;
- At comparatively higher elevation;
- Already hosting substantial energy installations.

This is not an argument that Minster is unbuildable.

It is an argument that the environmental and hydrogeological exposure profile of Minster is materially different.

If route-length savings are modest, the Examination must determine whether those savings justify greater long-term aquifer, flood and marshland interface risk.

5. Construction and Whole-Life Complexity

From a geotechnical and maintenance perspective:

Minster Marshes is likely to involve:

- Greater ground improvement and platform engineering;
- Higher groundwater management complexity;
- Greater flood-interaction design requirements;
- Increased corrosion and drainage management over 50+ years.

Richborough, while potentially involving contamination management and spatial constraints, is an established industrial platform with long history of heavy infrastructure use.

The key issue is whole-life risk exposure.

For nationally significant transmission infrastructure expected to operate over multiple decades, whole-life resilience should weigh materially in the site selection balance.

6. Proportionality Under the National Policy Statements Under EN-1, site selection must demonstrate that environmental impacts have been avoided where reasonably practicable.

If the distance differential between Minster and Richborough is modest, the Examination must consider:

- Whether marginal engineering efficiencies outweigh increased environmental sensitivity;
- Whether the brownfield alternative was proportionately reassessed following BESS consents;
- Whether the decision pivot was driven primarily by substation connection engineering rather than land suitability.

This is a matter of transparent balancing rather than opposition to infrastructure.

7. Clarifications Sought To assist the Examination, it is respectfully requested that the Applicant provide:

1. A quantified comparison table showing: o HVDC landfall-to-converter route length (km) for Minster and Richborough; o Converter-to-grid connection works length (km) for each option; o Total route-length differential.

2. An estimate of CAPEX differential using the Applicant's own unit assumptions.

3. A brief technical note clarifying: o Whether Richborough was excluded primarily for spatial, electrical or programme reasons; o Whether a compact layout solution at Richborough was tested against the consented BESS envelope.

4. Confirmation that whole-life groundwater, flood and maintenance risk were explicitly weighted in the comparative appraisal.

8. Additional Related Matters In the interests of completeness, the Examination may also wish to consider:

- Whether climate change allowances over the full operational life have been comparatively assessed between sites;
- Whether long-term groundwater monitoring obligations differ materially between the two locations;
- Whether brownfield preference principles were fully tested before selecting undeveloped marshland;
- Whether the grid resilience implications of each connection arrangement have been comparatively evaluated. These are not objections but legitimate proportionality questions.

9. Conclusion The issue is not whether Minster Marshes can technically host the converter station.

The issue is whether, in light of:

- The earlier preference for Richborough;
 - The likely modest route-length differences;
 - The materially different environmental and hydrogeological exposure;
 - The increased whole-life complexity associated with marshland construction; the balance struck by the Applicant has been demonstrated with sufficient quantified transparency. A concise, data-based comparison would materially assist the Examination.
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40. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Elaine Parkin

40.1 Introduction

40.1.1 Table 40.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Elaine Parkin Deadline 4 Response [REP4-212].

Table 40.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Elaine Parkin Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-212]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Please save Minster marshes from becoming an industrial site. Bird life and other wildlife thrives in this unspoiled environment. The UK is meant to be protecting and enhancing nature, of which we have the least in Europe. Places like these marshes are irreplaceable; they are vital for wildlife, yet targeted, like so many other areas in the country, for destruction. Please make a stand and protect them	The Applicant notes the concerns about the impacts on wildlife and bird life in Kent. These impacts are assessed in Application Document 6.2.3.2 (F): ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP5-017]. The Applicant has made a number of commitments to reduce the impacts on wildlife within Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]. The above documents also address the comments made in relation to local bird life.

41. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Wendy King

41.1 Introduction

41.1.1 Table 41.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Wendy King Deadline 4 Response [REP4-213].

Table 41.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Wendy King Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-213]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		These areas are of vital importance to our wildlife in Kent, these types of landscapes are rare and so precious to our eco system. They cannot be so easily destroyed without any care or protection	The Applicant notes the concerns about the impacts on wildlife in Kent. These impacts are assessed in Application Document 6.2.3.2 (F): ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP5-017]. The Applicant has made a number of commitments to reduce the impacts on wildlife within Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]. The above documents also address the comments made in relation to local ecosystems.

42. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Susan Bridges

42.1 Introduction

42.1.1 Table 42.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Susan Bridges Deadline 4 Response [REP4-239].

Table 42.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Susan Bridges Deadline 4 Submission [REP4-239]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Introduction	
		This submission summarises remaining concerns about National Grid Electricity Transmission’s (NGET) Sea Link application. The main concern is why and how NGET is pursuing this application, when the ExA included in its East Anglia One North (EA1N) and East Anglia Two (EA2) DCO consent report “The effects of the cumulative delivery of the Proposed Development with the other East Anglia development on the transmission connection site near Friston are so substantially adverse that utmost care will be required in the consideration of any amendments or additions to those elements of the Proposed Development in this location.”	The Applicant has assessed the potential inter-project cumulative effects with other proposed developments (including effects arising from construction). In respect of Suffolk, the details are set out in. Application Document 6.2.2.13: ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. The same issue is also the subject of a number of Written Answers submitted at Deadline 6.
		2. Cumulative harm: how can the ExA accurately assess Sea Link’s cumulative harm if the origin of the harm is not fully addressed? The following details cumulative harm before the EA1N and EA2 DCOs were consented.	The Need for the Proposed Project is set throughout the submission, and the reasoning for selecting the present option for the Proposed Project, are contained in Application Document 6.2.1.3: ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044] and Application Document 7.2: Strategic Options Back Check Report [APP-320].
		3. June 2014 Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) EA1 received DCO consent for a coordinated “Energy Motorway” to send 3.6GW of power to Bramford along a new 37km cable route from Bawdsey, a major long-lasting benefit for all SPR’s offshore electrical power projects.	
		4. March 2016 SPR submitted a non-material change to alter the transmission technology from HVDC to HVAC, despite it resulting in a changed trench configuration and an entirely different design of the onshore substation at Bramford. I.e., SPR’s submission was a material change. NGET, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and local authorities did not challenge the non-material change category which included SPR’s lawyers arguing there was no legal definition of what represents a non-material change. They ignored guidance for changing and revoking DCOs for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs), including distinguishing material and non material changes.¹	

5. January 2017 SPR submitted a second non-material change to reduce SPR's DCO obligation to construct six cable trenches to three trenches. [Also noted was a change in HVDC technology from Symmetric Monopole HVDC to Bipole HVDC was not included or approved.] Potentially if all six trenches originally mandated by the EA1 DCO consent had been fully utilised using Bipole HVDC, at 1 Changing or revoking a development consent order for nationally significant infrastructure (Planning Act 2009) www.communities.gov.uk ISBN: 978 1 4098 2605 7, November 2010 Planning Act 2008: Guidance on Changes to Development Consent Orders, December 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government 1 the same level as East Anglia THREE, as much as 8.4GW (6 x 1.4GW) could have been routed from Bawdsey to Bramford against the originally consented 3.6GW. Instead, the non-material change resulted in EA1's power being reduced to 2.1GW and was a material change. Again, there were no objections from NGET, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the local authorities to the non-material change category. Ironically, in 2016/17, SPR had considered reopening the cable route to connect their EA1N and EA2 projects through the Bawdsey to Bramford route, as evidenced by Minutes of meetings with PINS.

6. July 2017 NGET revised their agreement for SPR to connect at Bramford and required SPR to connect EA1N and EA2 to an unspecified site in the Leiston area, where NGET had no transmission connection and where there were known constraints: proximity to Sizewell C and the ANOB National Landscape designation. The EA1N and EA2 DCO applications required NGET to provide a transmission connection and the DCO consent included a NGET transmission connection.

7. It is clear that NGET's decision to not oppose the downgrading of the Bawdsey to Bramford route from HVDC to HVAC and reducing the number of trenches from six to three were harmful and inadequately justified decisions given the need to enable the transition away from fossil fuels and developing a new HVDC grid. Both decisions were accepted by the Secretary of State without due diligence by the relevant parties. Likewise when changing the EA1N and EA2 grid connection from Bramford to the Leiston area, there was no understanding or acknowledgement that the changes were material changes. And the consequential harm of HVAC cable trenching from Thorpeness, through an ANOB National Landscape, to Friston and three substations within sight of St Mary the Virgin, a Listed Grade 2 early 14th century church within the setting of the ANOB National Landscape. The significant harm could have been avoided if the 2014 EA1 DCO had been protected and the cumulative harm assessed by NGET, SPR, district and county councils before the Secretary of State agreed the changes.

8. The above failures of process were brought to the attention of Rachel Reeves MP, chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial

Strategy Committee and Neil Parish MP, Chair of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee by Michael Mahony in a letter dated 2 January 2019 on behalf of SASES (Substation Action Save East SuAolk), see copy attached. No action seems to have been taken to stop the harm accumulating.

9. Why wasn't the Bawdsey to Bramford route's 8.4GW potential capacity protected and maximised? What is its potential today and how much capacity is still available? Given the rural landscape and Listed heritage assets at Saxmundham, Sternfield and Benhall, the Sea Link application should be refused. The EA1N and EA2 wind farms have not started construction in the North Sea. It seems 2 possible their electricity could still landfall at Bawdsey as HVDC Bipole or HVAC, saving Friston and the surrounding landscape at Saxmundham, Sternfield and Benhall from substantial environmental harm.

10. NGET's Vol.9: Examinations Submissions, Document 9.69: Applicant's Written Response to Open Floor Hearing 1, Version A, December 2025. On page 11 NGET refutes the claim that SPR was acting as a trojan horse for NGET during the EA1N and EA2 DCO examinations. It is possible to believe the EA1N and EA2 applications were a trojan horse for the transmission connection needed for them. Further, if the substation "will only be delivered once under one of these three consents", the connection could not be built separately from EA1N and EA2 without applying for a material change. Due diligence would need to be applied before the Secretary of State could accept or refuse the change. Please can the ExA examine the implications of NGET's assumptions. Such a change would have an impact on the baseline for assessing Sea Link's cumulative harm, particularly if the EA1N and EA2 DCO consent could be revoked.

11. Protecting National Parks and ANOB National Landscapes Attached is a copy of a letter sent to the Prime Minister last year requesting the Government not to weaken laws protecting National Parks and National Landscapes. Every National Park and ANOB National Landscape is watching the outcome of the Sea Link DCO application because of the very harmful precedent it could set for other projects earmarked for the Saxmundham area. 12. National Parks, ANOB National Landscapes, Listed heritage assets and their settings should not be harmed for renewable energy infrastructure on the scale proposed at Saxmundham, Sternfield and Benhall without an inclusive DCO application for all the NSIPs accumulating after the Sea Link application. It seems to be an abuse of the NSIP planning process to allow successive applications using the same transmission connection site at Friston, particularly if SPR revoke their DCO consents for EA1N and EA2. Successive applications are wasting millions of pounds, ExA time and the burden of participating in the DCO process falls unreasonably on the same communities during each successive application. Community well-being and cumulative harm is

becoming a concern, particularly as the Lion Link DCO application has started before the Sea Link examinations.

43. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Antonia Rowena Jane Mayo

43.1 Introduction

43.1.1 Table 43.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Antonia Rowena Jane Mayo Deadline 5 Response [REP5-152].

Table 43.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Antonia Rowena Jane Mayo Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-152]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Don’t build on marshland	The Option Identification & Selection process for Kent Converter Station is set out in the Applicant’s Design Development Report [APP-321]. For the reasons set out in Application Document 6.8 Flood Risk Assessment [APP-292] the Applicant is of the view that Kent Converter Station can be safely constructed without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

44. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Christopher Paul Nicholson

44.1 Introduction

44.1.1 Table 44.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Christopher Paul Nicholson Deadline 5 Response [REP5-153].

Table 44.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Christopher Paul Nicholson Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-153]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Sea Link DCO: response to the consultation I’ve lived in for five years and been visiting here for nine years. In that time I have witnessed the accumulation of NSIP’s in a very localised area in this small and rural community. Any one major infrastructure project in this are would have a significant effect on the community during construction and a lasting, adverse impact on the village and the welfare of its residents. But, no, there are four NSIP’s competing for space, construction labour, road access and infrastructure resources. The cumulative effect of these projects and simultaneous construction programs has never been assessed. When one of these projects is a nuclear power station that will almost certainly not come on stream for 15 to 20 years with a concomitant construction & commissioning program then the prospect for rural Suffolk is over whelming. Notwithstanding the engineering argument for coming inland with a cable network, only to take it offshore again, with absolutely no benefit to local electricity consumption, reduced bills etc and the need to completely reassess the engineering assumptions for the Suffolk development in the first place I shall concentrate my response on location, access and visual impact. Location The site for the huge development is not tucked away in a low lying brownfield area, out of sight for the great majority of people but on a hill top farm with great agricultural soil and exposure to all points of the compass. From the site it’s possible to see several miles across green countryside in all directions and is very close to a small community of dwellings on the south side at Sternfield. The scale of the development for one converter is huge: that is land area and height. Further, access to the site has not been resolved. A decision has been made on location without rigorous consideration, until recently of how to actually get to the site. Access to the site The 'Western' access to the site, off the A12 and via the B1121 Saxmundham Road is being reconsidered due to the significant cost and disruption created by temporarily or permanently	The Applicant has assessed the potential inter-project cumulative effects with other proposed developments (including effects arising from construction). In respect of Suffolk, the details are set out in. Application Document 6.2.2.13: ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects [APP-060]. This includes the cumulative effects with Sizewell C, a project which the submission refers. The Applicant’s comments to the points raised under the headings are as follows: Location In developing the Proposed Project and selecting the site for the Saxmundham Converter Station, the Applicant assessed a series of site areas, informed by the potential network connection points explained in Application Document 8.1 Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Substation Siting study (October 2022) [APP-368]. The consideration of options and reasoning that led to the defined proposal are set out at section 4.4 of Application Document 7.3: Design Development Report [APP-321]. It is important to note the requirement for the Converter Station to be located within 5km of the consented Friston Substation. A complete assessment of the impacts on agriculture, best and most versatile (BMV) land and soils in Suffolk has been undertaken. This is set out in Application Document 6.2.2.6 (B) Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 6 Agriculture and Soils [PDA-019]. Concern about the scale of the Saxmundham Converter Station is noted – the Applicant has proposed landscape mitigation screening to partially screen views of the building. Access is addressed below. Access to the site As explained in Application Document 9.107: Applicant’s Response to Suffolk County Council’s Deadline 4 Submission on Alternate Access to Saxmundham Converter Station, the Applicant has appraised various route options (including the northern access proposed by SCC) in developing its proposals in

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		strengthening the Benhall railway bridge and building a new bridge over the Fromus. The alternative route proposed by Suffolk County Council, the 'Northern route', coming down from the new Yoxford roundabout and via part of the Sizewell link road, must force a rethink on the actual location of the site. To take the access road so far North west of the site only to return via a very long route back to the Saxmundham site has no logic or merit. I fully support the 'Northern' route. If implemented, the existing proposed location for the multi converter site, close to Saxmundham and on the top of a hill has no technical, engineering or financial merit. A new site, as close to the Sizewell link road and using it for construction has significantly more logic, again from a technical, engineering and financial standpoint. Adequate LVIA Such a development of the proposed scale and location clearly requires a Landscape and Visual Assessment and that it should be executed with the rigour of methodology set out in Application Document 6.3.2.1.A Appendix 2.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology, and the PEIR Volume 2.2A;). However, despite the sites exposed location, the LVIA has only six images. What is particular lacking are any views that give a good understanding of the electrical transmission infrastructure, pylons, switch gear and the like that will be as obtrusive, visually, as the main buildings. Views 5 & 6 have been taken from low level and show the proposed development partly hidden by trees. I argue that more distant views at the same compass locations, more distant and at a higher elevation would give a truer rendering of the installation. This is particularly true if taken from the junction of Snape Road, Kiln Lane and Red Lane and from the Leiston to Saxmundham road, B119, junction with Kiln Lane. These views at a higher level, across farm land will show the real visual impact of the development. Add the transmission infrastructure and a more accurate visual impact would be very clear. Mitigation The intention is good: three cited documents propose a design approach that, 'seeks to maximise the opportunity for landscape integration planting and screening to improve landscape fit and minimise visual impact; giving consideration of the 'orientation and massing of the Saxmundham Converter Station in order that existing landscape features can be retained and enhanced' and 'designing and arranging the converter station building to be sympathetic to their surroundings and be integrated into the landscaped setting of the site.' Design Approach Document 7.11.1. The National Policy statements EN-1 section.4.7.6 states “Whilst the applicant may not have any or very limited choice in the	Application Document 6.2.1.3: Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered of the Environmental Statement [APP-044]. The Applicant has concluded that the western access remains the preferred option as it provides the shortest access off the A12 and minimises the amount of construction traffic on the rest of the local road network whilst providing a dedicated purpose-built access into the site which would result in fewer complications with regards to maintenance activities, any planned maintenance and undertaking of any emergency maintenance during the operational stage of the Proposed Project. Adequate LVIA The representative viewpoints used in the LVIA have been agreed with Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, Natural England and the SECH Partnership as part of various landscape thematic meetings held throughout 2024. It is considered that the 23 representative viewpoints chosen are proportionate and consistent with the methodology set out within Application Document 6.3.2.1.A Appendix 2.1.A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Photomontage Methodology. They provide adequate representation for the detailed assessment of visual effects as presented in Application Document 6.3.2.1.D: ES Appendix 2.1.D Visual Amenity Baseline and Assessment [APP-098]. Illustrative visualisations which include the external electrical infrastructure have been produced and are contained in [REP1-298, REP1-299, REP1-300, REP4-086 and REP5-127]. The impact of infrastructure has been considered fully in the assessment of landscape and visual effects (including the effect of transmission infrastructure) in Application Document 6.6.2.1 (B): ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual [REP4-023], which has been undertaken using worst-case scenario parameters. Mitigation The Proposed Project has been designed, as far as possible, following the mitigation hierarchy in order to, in the first instance, avoid or reduce landscape and visual impacts and effects through the process of design development, and by embedding measures into the design of the Proposed Project: see Application Document 7.11.1 (B): Design Approach Document – Suffolk [REP1A-029]. Outline landscape mitigation (as shown in Application Document 7.5.7.1 (D) Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan – Suffolk updated and submitted at Deadline 6) has been included in all of the visualisations along with an indicative area of earth bunding to the north of the Saxmundham Converter Station. The exact cut and fill balance is not known until the detailed design is undertaken but R.2 Key Design Principle

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		physical appearance of some energy infrastructure, there may be opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate good design in terms of siting relative to existing landscape character, land form and vegetation. A further document: The Preliminary Environmental Report Document 2.2.9.4 Mitigation measures, states: 'Locating the Saxmundham Converter Station as far as practicable within the southern extent of the site, away from the B1119 and the gateway approach into Saxmundham and to maximise the opportunity for landscape integration planting and screening to improve landscape fit and minimise visual impact: and give (sic) — Consideration of the orientation and massing of the Saxmundham Converter Station in order that existing landscape features can be retained and enhanced (woodland, hedgerow planting)... So, it comes as a surprise that no mitigation is shown in any of the LVIA images and therefore no attempt to follow the good guidelines in the documents referenced above. Such mitigation in the form of planting and earth management in the form of banks and berms would help significantly in reducing the visual impact of the development. This is particularly true looking at Viewpoint 4: Public bridleway southeast of Saxmundham where the co-located converter station is very close to the road. The huge volume of arisings from site excavations must be utilised on-site to provide primary screening not only for the primary converter development but for the co-located converters too. Indeed, if ground floor levels were reassessed the reduction in height and increase in arisings would go a long way to meeting the environmental goals and reducing visual impact while providing additional material for land form screening. Furthermore, this must be one of the first actions on the site as soon as excavations commence to give time for physical and planted screening to mature. Such use of excavation arisings, from site, used on site will further reduce excavated material going off site and the consequent reduction of HGV movements. In summary: adopt the alternative site approach and access proposed by SCC and, logically resitet the converter site north east of the Saxmundham site towards the Sizewell link road, benefiting already form the Planning consent for that road and its current construction status. In any site proposal. diligently apply LVIA methodology to fully convey views of the development including long distant views and accurately showing the extent and scale of transmission infrastructure in addition to the buildings themselves and include all mitigation The Sea Link Converter must not be built on the Saxmundham site. From a technical, engineering and financial analysis and permanent and construction access, it can be far better sited and constructed significantly closer to the Sizewell link road, on a brownfield site.	contained in Table 3.1 of Application Document 7.12.1 (B) Design Principles – Suffolk [REP4-073] specifically identifies that cut material is used to provide '<i>additional visual screening elevating planting to reduce visual impact</i>'.

45. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Janet Arthur

45.1 Introduction

45.1.1 Table 45.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Janet Arthur Deadline 5 Response [REP5-155].

Table 45.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Janet Arthur Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-155]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Further to the proposed project in Saxmundham. I have attended several open days around the area, read and listened to as much as is humanly possible to take on board of all the information that I can understand. I am still not convinced that this project is viable, in the right place, at the right time for the right price. It will be of no advantage to the residents of Saxmundham to have either of the converter stations built here, either financial gain or with regard to enhancing our Saxon township. Taking away our surrounding fields, trees and sky lines. All that has been offered by way of compensation to us residents is to have a dog walking area, a new road leading up to the converters, and perhaps the enhancing of the said converters. None of which is at all useful to the mainly pensioner residents who came here to this area, to live out our well deserved retirement in peace and quiet with beautiful clear skies and wildlife. Have I misinterpreted it, is there something I have missed completely? The only people making any money and profit by stealing this end of life experience, are the backers of NGV LIONLINK and other followers of same. We will never recoup our green and pleasant lives the majority of us will be 6ft under or smoke. Doesn't seem worth the effort, money or debt for UK to suffer, especially us. With virtually a 3rd world war on the horizon, why are we wasting money on such a project. I've worked hard all my life and am not prepared to give my future years listening to machines, being covered in dust when it's sunny and hot or watching our wild life diminish and be scattered onto the roads, lying in heaps beside it. This is already happening with Sizewell C. We don't need anymore. Too much, at this junction of the UK. Stop it all immediately, take another look around and make an up-to-date plan of action taking into account what damage you are doing to us all. Put the whole of the project down the Channel leave our coast and country side alone.	In considering the viability for the Proposed Project, the Applicant has been guided by its duties under the Electricity Act 1989, as well as the policies and regulations set by Government. It considers that the Proposed Project strikes a justifiable balance between, on the one hand, providing an efficient, coordinated and economical solution, and on the other hand, the desirability of preserving amenity. Further information on the funding strategy to ensure the project’s successful implementation is available at Application Document 4.1 (C): Funding Statement [REP4-011]. The rationale for implementing the Proposed Project in the selected location at the intended timeframe, and the design process through which the Applicant has undergone to arrive at the submitted application, as explained in Application Document 7.3: Design Development Report [APP-321]. The likely significant effects of the Proposed Project have been comprehensively assessed and the mitigation hierarchy has been applied. Where possible, proposals have avoided impacts through siting, routeing, design layout, and/or timing. Where avoidance has not been possible, measures to minimise, rehabilitate, restore, and/or offset impacts have been identified within individual chapters within the Environmental Statement. Mitigation measures have been committed to as set out within Application Document 9.84 (C): Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-155].

46. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from John Axtell

46.1 Introduction

46.1.1 Table 46.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on John Axtell Deadline 5 Response [REP5-156].

Table 46.1 Applicant’s Comments on the John Axtell Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-156]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
REP5-156 Comments on Any Other Submissions Received at Deadline 5			
	Access to the Converter Site	<i>I understand that there is a proposal from Suffolk County Council to access the Sea Link site near Saxmundham via a Northern Access Route utilising the Sizewell Link Road (B1122). This certainly seems like a better solution than the previous proposal to access via the B1121 which would be hugely disruptive in that the bridge crossing the railway line at Benhall is not structurally able to handle such large vehicles and any work to replace or upgrade this bridge would significantly disrupt residents and businesses. The proposed alternative Northern Access Route from the Sizewell Link Road will be utilising new infrastructure built to accommodate large vehicles and therefore be a more suitable and sustainable access route. There is, of course, still a question about the initial decision to site Sea Link near Saxmundham. If the Northern Access Route is adopted, then it would be worth considering siting Sea Link on Leiston Airfield which is a much more suitable site. Many thanks for carefully considering my comments</i>	The applicant can confirm that the White Arch Railway Bridge (Benhall Road over Rail Bridge) is currently able to accommodate existing Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and therefore standard construction vehicles which will be required to travel over the bridge as part of the Sea Link Scheme. Currently the owner of the Bridge (Suffolk County Council) have placed a weight restriction on the bridge which the applicant is looking to carry out further surveys to assess. Nonetheless, the bridge is still capable of taking all of the construction traffic for the proposed project with the exception of a few large loads for which the approach to the movement of these has been covered in the applicants submission to the Examination within Application Document 9.112 (A) Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4 – 101]. The B1121 Main Road through Benhall is a local access lorry route as defined by Suffolk County Council as the highway owner and operator and is suitable in structure and width to accommodate the construction traffic proposed. The traffic and transport assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] does not identify the potential for significant effects to arise on the surrounding highway network as a result of construction traffic during the peak construction phase, including for the B1121 Main Road. The proposed site access on the B1121 Main Road is located to the south of the signalised junction within Saxmundham, with construction vehicles travelling to/ from the south via the junction with the A12. The construction Traffic from the project will therefore not use the main traffic lights for Saxmundham except for a small number of vehicles at the start of the project to construct the proposed bridge over the River Fromus. Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064] was updated at Deadline 5 to include a cap on HGV vehicle movements through the signalised junction in Saxmundham to ten per day. Construction traffic HGVs will not use diversions through Saxmundham during any closures of the B1121 that the project requires for works on the White Arch Railway Bridge. This is a

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			commitment which is also included within Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064]. The reason the project does not agree that the Northern Access route is suitable for the project is set out in Application Document 9.107: Applicant's Response to Suffolk County Council's Deadline 4 Submission on Alternate Access to Saxmundham Converter Station [REP5-125]. All Routing and siting of the converter stations and cable routes has previously been covering in 8.1 Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Substation Siting Study (October 2022) [APP-368]

47. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Liz Stephen

47.1 Introduction

47.1.1 Table 47.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Liz Stephen Deadline 5 Response [REP5-157].

Table 47.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Liz Stephen Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-157]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Not suitable.	The identification of the strategic option and site selection for the Proposed Project, including the relevant Application Documents, are summarised at section 6.2 of Application Document 7.1 (C): Planning Statement [AS-057] .

48. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Malcolm Shawn Kirkaldie

48.1 Introduction

48.1.1 Table 48.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Malcolm Shawn Kirkaldie Deadline 5 Response [REP5-158].

Table 48.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Malcolm Shawn Kirkaldie Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-158]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I have been reluctant to comment on pretty much anything, with the constant changes by Sealink and the NG and especially as they are still polluting and digging land and blocking local drains. The findings of the digs and bore holes will be very significant! This is another DCO which overrides and goes into another (Manston Airport. The Hovercraft Apron is a high risk area for pollutants getting into the Highway run offs and brings a real possibility of blocking drains in fact it will block drains and bring real time consequences to a triple SSI. The fact that NG and Sealink have glossed over the intertidal areas and the invertebrates that enable birds to feed is shameful. I personally gave a specimen to the Natural History Museum from the Bay. In essence what we have here is Lawfare from the NG and others at Sealink to dumb down the real affects and problems that are overarching the biggest problem will be traffic management and its causal affect on highway maintenance at great public costs and the very real risk of emergency services getting to and from the Thanet areas. Finally and having been involved with the Manston DCO I now have a great distrust of the ministerial system and PINS as well you know the minister has the final say! Can PINS assure the public that full disclosure of ministerial meetings etc has been made public?	The Applicant acknowledges these points but notes that they are high level concerns and it is therefore difficult to address them granularly. However, at a high level, the Applicant does not agree that intertidal areas have been inadequately considered. A summary of assessments relating to intertidal areas are addressed in [REP5-019] and NPS EN-3§2.8.119 is directly addressed at p.8. An Intertidal Characterisation Survey 2023 was conducted at the Kent landfall. Relevant impacts, including drilling fluid discharge within the intertidal area during HDD excavation process, are considered (see p.84). The Applicant also does not accept that the proposed project will have unacceptable traffic impacts. Impacts have been considered in separate EIA chapters - 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport, and 6.2.3.7 Part 3 Kent Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport. No likely significant effects have been identified for traffic and transport in either Kent or Suffolk (see respectively §3.2.1 and §3.2.2. of [REP1A-013].

49. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Marion Walker

49.1 Introduction

49.1.1 Table 49.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Marion Walker Deadline 5 Response [REP5-159].

Table 49.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Marion Walker Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-159]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I am a resident of [..]and live [..] to the bridge that is causing a lot of problems. I believe a new solution has been put forward by Suffolk County Council to take the traffic away from Benhall bridge and involves a northern route via Leiston which involves using the new roadways being built for Sizewell C. I think if the project is approved this should be one of the conditions to use this new route! Our local road systems around Benhall & Saxmundham are not built to withstand the volumes of traffic which are already increasing because of Sizewell C/Scottish Power/2 Solar Farms & Suffolk Water Recycling! At 8am the A12 near our home has tailbacks of over a mile which if the junction by us got blocked it could result in gridlock which would then hinder all traffic including emergency vehicles. This is happening all over this region and if the traffic continues to increase exponentially I dread to think what the outcome will be. Your comments will be appreciated.	The Applicant notes the points raised. Application Document 9.107: Applicant’s Response to Suffolk County Council’s Deadline 4 Submission on Alternate Access to Saxmundham Converter Station [REP5-125] sets out the Applicant’s reasoning for concluding that the western access remains the preferred option. A complete traffic and transport assessment for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme has been undertaken in Application Document 6.2.2.7: ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054]. This does not identify any significant impacts on the highway network during the construction phase with the proposed embedded mitigation and control and measurements in place as set out within Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D): Outline Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk, which is secured through Requirement 6 of Schedule 3 of the dDCO.

50. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Mrs P Dorcey

50.1 Introduction

50.1.1 Table 50.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Mrs P Dorcey Deadline 5 Response [REP5-160].

Table 50.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Mrs P Dorcey Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-160]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I object to the whole project it is not a suitable site in Suffolk or Kent.	The identification of the strategic option and site selection for the Proposed Project, is set out in detail in the relevant Application Documents, which are summarised at section 6.2 of Application Document 7.1 (C): Planning Statement [AS-057] .

51. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from National Trust

51.1 Introduction

- 51.1.1
- Table 51.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on National Trust Deadline 5 Response [REP5-161 & REP5-176].
- 51.1.2
- The Applicant has responded to National Trust Deadline 5 Response [REP5-198] in **Application Document 9.131 Applicant’s Comments on Responses to Second Written Questions.**

Table 51.1 Applicant’s Comments on the National Trust Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-161 & REP5-176]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Current position on Heads of Terms negotiations On 22 January 2026, the Applicant’s agent re-issued the Heads of Terms with clarification on easement consideration. The Trust’s agent subsequently provided a comprehensive written response on 10 February 2026, setting out comments and required amendments to the Heads of Terms, including matters relating to construction methodology, mitigation and easement width. A meeting to discuss these matters was held on 2 March 2026. The Applicant’s agent has since responded in writing, and the Trust is currently considering those responses.	The Applicant notes that National Trust’s REP5-161 and REP5-17 replicate each other so for ease of reference responds to both submissions here. Discussions between the Applicant and the National Trust over Heads of Terms are ongoing. Additional information has been submitted to the National Trust for review in the form of their SOCG on 01 April 2026. The Applicant has received an annotated SOCG on the 9 th April which it is reviewing. The Applicant will update the Examination at Deadline 7.
		Further comments on prioritisation of National Trust Heads of Terms to avoid risk of triggering Special Parliamentary Procedure In line with the National Trust’s established approach to engagement with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, the Trust considers it important that discussions on the Heads of Terms are prioritised and progressed without delay. Early resolution of land agreements is critical to providing certainty for both parties and to enabling the Trust to consider whether any objection can be resolved through agreement. Failure to make timely progress risks prolonging uncertainty and could ultimately result in the matter being referred to Special Parliamentary Procedure, which would be undesirable for all parties. The Trust therefore encourages National Grid to prioritise these negotiations so that issues relating to land rights, construction methodology and mitigation can be resolved through agreement wherever possible.	

52. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Peter Smith

52.1 Introduction

52.1.1 Table 52.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Peter Smith Deadline 5 Response [REP5-162].

Table 52.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Peter Smith Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-162]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	The Examining Authority’s written questions and requests for information (ExQ2) This project is on land formed from alluvial deposits within the Wantsum Valley after the Ice Age when the English Channel opened up through the land bridge joining Thanet to France. The reduced flow of water through the Wantsum Channel allowed it to silt up over time and form what looks like solid land. This then looks like an ideal site on a desk top study, nice and flat with few obstructions. There are problems with this, the crust looks very solid, but it is only about 1m thick, on top of the blancmange subsoil that has very limited strength and quickly moves sideways allowing any heavy objects to sink a long way, as we have found when a contractor’s D7 Caterpillar got stuck one evening, the driver went back to get help, next morning he had difficulty finding his machine as there was only a few inches of it left above ground. This reaction is best demonstrated with a kid’s squeeze ball in hand and just squeeze and it bulges out between the fingers. During the construction of the Richborough power station they ran into the sinkage problem and had to resort to piling up to 75m to reach solid chalk at the bottom of the Wantsum Channel. This project involves much haulage of heavy loads that will cause sinkage and a deep pan, below any matting or other protection, which will disrupt the natural drainage leading to waterlogging. Farming this land requires a lot of skill – if it is moved when it is too moist it will smear and easily forms a watertight barrier. If this barrier forms below the surface as a pan it will be out of the reach of weather, subject to waterlogging and crops will not grow well. Reconditioning this soil may take a lifetime. I Have farmed in the Wantsum Valley since I returned from 3 years study at the RAC in 1954.	The Applicant notes the information provided. The likely significant agriculture and soil effects from the Proposed Project in Kent are addressed in Application Document 6.2.3.6 (B) ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 6 Agriculture and Soils [PDA-023]. Please refer also to Application Document 9.83 (B): Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP4-232], which contains control measures to minimise impacts and reinstate land to its pre-construction use and condition (or as agreed with the landowner). A Minster Converter Station Ground Conditions and Water Management – Technical Note is submitted at Deadline 6

53. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Rebecca Graves

53.1 Introduction

53.1.1 Table 53.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Rebecca Graves Deadline 5 Response [REP5-163].

Table 53.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Rebecca Graves Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-163]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	I am absolutely sickened by the continued desecration of the Minster Marshes by constant exploratory tests, resulting in damage to the ground and wildlife. Minster Marshes and the old hoverport site at Pegwell Bay are home to a significant number of rare birds most of which most are on the UK red bird protected list. Hundreds if not thousands of birds will either be killed or driven away. Creating a green space to encourage birds once you have destroyed their habitat is counterproductive and absolutely not 'green'. Removing natural habitat with endangered birds and wildlife and sealife will have a devastating effect on the local ecosystem. Thanet and the surrounding areas have one of the lowest percentage of green spaces in the entire UK. We have our coastline and marshes instead. Taking these away using the cheapest option to connect so called green electric systems will completely devastate the only area we have, vital for our area and our generation to come. We know the effect of the installation of the electric power lines already in place, killed hundreds of mute swans, just heartbreaking. We have already suffered a huge amount if swan deaths due possibly to contaminated water in this area. These plans are a total disregard of local ecosystems for pure profit. We will have nothing left. I work in Children's Mental Health, spending time outside is proved to be vital in improving wellbeing and mental health. We will have no areas left of peaceful tranquillity whilst observing all the wealth of wildlife we have, all for profit! We know there are other options but this one is the cheapest. Riding roughshod over an area of one of the highest levels of poverty and deprivation for profit, the benefit of which will not be passed on to the local residents is just unforgivable. I am surprised this plan is legal, considering the level of destruction planned. Completed by an organisation who quite likely not living in this area. We absolutely must preserve what we have. I am sickened by the total disregard for such a huge project and the effect it will have on people, wildlife and the ecosystems we have. I implore you to reconsider, moving the plans elsewhere to avoid destroying our area for the cheapest option available. I	The Applicant notes the concerns about the impacts on birds in Minster Marshes, Pegwell Bay, as well as Thanet and its surrounding areas. In relation to those locations, the impacts on birds are assessed in Application Document 6.2.3.2 (F): ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP5-017] and Application Document 6.2.4.5 (C): ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 5 Marine Ornithology [REP2-003]. The Applicant has made commitments to reduce the impacts arising from construction on birds within Application Document 9.84 (C) Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) [REP5-115]. The above documents also address the comments made in relation to local ecosystems. Impacts on health and wellbeing have been assessed fully within Application Document 6.2.3.11 (B) Part 3 Kent Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing [AS-003]. No anticipated significant effects are likely as a result of the Proposed Project. The Applicant notes the point raised about options. Details about the alternative options considered, along with the reasoning for selecting the present option for the Proposed Project, are contained in Application Document 6.2.1.3: ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044] and Application Document 7.2: Strategic Options Back Check Report [APP-320].

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		hope that National Grid have a conscience and stop any plans in this area.	

54. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Richard Blight

54.1 Introduction

54.1.1 Table 54.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Richard Blight Deadline 5 Response [REP5-164].

Table 54.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Richard Blight Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-164]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	This project poses significant threats to a range of interrelated subjects, particularly those concerning people's habitats, the necessity for natural reserves, and the wellbeing of a vast array of natural species, from microbes to mammals. In addition, the diverse plant life present in these environments faces destruction as a direct consequence of the proposed activities. The effects of this project extend far beyond human living conditions. It jeopardises the habitats of numerous other inhabitants with whom we share our environment, including fish in the seas and birds in the sky. Actions such as dumping spoil ground in Pegwell Bay, as well as constructing high-voltage electricity pylons across essential land, not only disrupt natural systems but also contribute to the ongoing destruction of nature and the habitats of all living beings. The driving force behind this project appears to be pure greed, with profit prioritised over environmental stewardship. There are alternative methods available to deliver power to those in need. For example, laying the cable up the Thames to the area requiring electricity and constructing battery storage facilities near its final destination—on land already repurposed from its original inhabitants—would minimise further environmental harm. Ultimately, the current approach represents the cheapest option, benefiting only those seeking personal gain at the expense of nature, habitats, and the broader community.	The Applicant notes the concerns raised. The likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Project have been subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment process, the findings of which are set out in the Application Documents comprising the Environmental Statement. In respect of the impacts on ecology and biodiversity, please refer to: • Application Document 6.2.2.2 (D): ES Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP4-025] for the Suffolk Onshore Scheme • Application Document 6.2.3.2 (F): ES Part 3 Kent Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP5-017] for the Kent Onshore Scheme • The impacts on ecology and biodiversity of the Offshore Scheme are addressed in Application Document 6.2.4.2 (E): ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 2 Benthic Ecology [REP5-021], Application Document 6.2.4.3 (B): ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 3 Fish and Shellfish [AS-022], Application Document 6.2.4.4 (B): ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 4 Marine Mammals [AS-024] and Application Document 6.2.4.5 (C): ES Part 4 Marine Chapter 5 Marine Ornithology [REP2-003]. Details of alternative solutions considered by Applicant are available in Application Document 6.2.1.3: ES Part 1 Introduction Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered [APP-044] and Application Document 7.2: Strategic Options Back Check Report [APP-320].

55. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Saira Gegory

55.1 Introduction

55.1.1 Table 55.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Saira Gregory Deadline 5 Response [REP5-165].

Table 55.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Saira Gregory Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-165]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
N/A	N/A	Please do not build on increasingly rare and important habitat. I need wild spaces with natural rare and wild plants and wildlife that live there. I NEED to have these spaces protected against the onslaught of so called human progress because it actually killing us, by killing the planet bit by bit. NO to building on MINSTER MARSHES.	The Option Identification & Selection process for Kent Converter Station is set out in the Applicant’s Design Development Report [APP-321]. The impacts of the project on Ecology and Biodiversity are assessed in the relevant ES Chapters, with no unacceptable impacts identified, and asset out in REP1A-025, the Proposed Project is seeking to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity to align with National Grid targets.

56. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Samatha Caley

56.1 Introduction

- 56.1.1
- Table 56.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Samantha Caley Deadline 5 Response [REP5-166].
- 56.1.2
- Table 56.2 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Samantha Caley Deadline 5 Response [REP5-183].

Table 56.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Samantha Caley Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-166]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
Deadline 5 Other			
	Other	<i>I am a very concerned resident of Benhall, Saxmundham. The White Arch Railway Bridge was not built to carry all the Sealink Converter Station traffic, especially the huge and very heavy lorries. Also the B1121, which runs through the village of Benhall, is not built to withstand all of this extra traffic. There are numerous small roads & lanes which have a junctions with the B1121. With all the Sizewell C traffic now (and for the next 10 years!) the road is very dangerous. Closure of the railway bridge for any construction purposes will hold many problems for local people trying to get out onto the A12 forcing traffic towards Saxmundham and therefore past the entrance to the proposed construction site. There are already long queues at the traffic lights in Saxmundham at the busy times and this will massively increase the burden on the town. The most obvious route to the Converter Station would be the Northern Access Route off the A12 onto the Yoxford to Sizewell Link Road, which has already been built. I thought the whole idea is for all the energy projects in this area to work together to minimise the disruption to the local residents so we can all try and live a relatively normal country life. After all some of us have been here for over 50 years. The adoption of the Northern route would demonstrate this</i>	The applicant can confirm that the White Arch Railway Bridge (Benhall Road over Rail Bridge) is currently able to accommodate existing Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and therefore standard construction vehicles which will be required to travel over the bridge as part of the Sea Link Scheme. Currently the owner of the Bridge (Suffolk County Council) have placed a weight restriction on the bridge which the applicant is looking to carry out further surveys to assess. Nonetheless, the bridge is still capable of taking all of the construction traffic for the proposed project with the exception of a few large loads for which the approach to the movement of these has been covered in the applicants submission to the Examination within Application Document 9.112 (A) Benhall Railway Bridge - Crossing Feasibility Study [REP4 – 101]. The B1121 Main Road through Benhall is a local access lorry route as defined by Suffolk County Council as the highway owner and operator and is suitable in structure and width to accommodate the construction traffic proposed. The traffic and transport assessment within Application Document 6.2.2.7 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 7 Traffic and Transport [APP-054] does not identify the potential for significant effects to arise on the surrounding highway network as a result of construction traffic during the peak construction phase, including for the B1121 Main Road. The proposed site access on the B1121 Main Road is located to the south of the signalised junction within Saxmundham, with construction vehicles travelling to/ from the south via the junction with the A12. The construction Traffic from the project will therefore not use the main traffic lights for Saxmundham except for a small number of vehicles at the start of the project to construct the proposed bridge over the River Fromus. Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064] was updated at Deadline 5 to include a cap on HGV vehicle movements through the signalised junction in Saxmundham to ten per day.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
			Construction traffic HGVs will not use diversions through Saxmundham during any closures of the B1121 that the project requires for works on the White Arch Railway Bridge. This is a commitment which is also included within Application Document 7.5.1.1 (D) Construction Traffic Management and Travel Plan Suffolk [REP5-064] . The reason the project does not agree that the Northern Access route is suitable for the project is set out in Application Document 9.107: Applicant's Response to Suffolk County Council's Deadline 4 Submission on Alternate Access to Saxmundham Converter Station [REP5-125] .

Table 56.2 Applicant’s Comments on the Samantha Caley Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-183]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
Deadline 5 – Comments on any further information /submissions received by deadline 4 Folder.			
	Comments on any further information/ submissions received by deadline 4 folder]	I am a very concerned resident of Benhall, Saxmundham. The White Arch Railway Bridge was not built to carry all the Sealink Converter Station traffic, especially the huge and very heavy lorries. Also the B1121, which runs through the village of Benhall, is not built to withstand all of this extra traffic. There are numerous small roads & lanes which have a junctions with the B1121. With all the Sizewell C traffic now (and for the next 10 years!) the road is very dangerous. Closure of the railway bridge for any construction purposes will hold many problems for local people trying to get out onto the A12 forcing traffic towards Saxmundham and therefore past the entrance to the proposed construction site. There are already long queues at the traffic lights in Saxmundham at the busy times and this will massively increase the burden on the town. The most obvious route to the Converter Station would be the Northern Access Route off the A12 onto the Yoxford to Sizewell Link Road, which has already been built. I thought the whole idea is for all the energy projects in this area to work together to minimise the disruption to the local residents so we can all try and live a relatively normal country life. After all some of us have been here for over 50 years. The adoption of the Northern route would demonstrate this	Please see comments above on REP5-166.

57. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Sydney Jury

57.1 Introduction

57.1.1 Table 55.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Sydney Jury Deadline 5 Response [REP5-169].

Table 57.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Sydney Jury Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-169]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		Mt Sydney raised a number of concerns over the use of the Hover Port site, principally the potential for pollution.	The Applicant has already provided responses relating to the colliery spoil and confirmed that there is no risk as a result of the proposed access across the hoverport.

58. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from East Anglia ONE North Limited, East Anglia TWO Limited, ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited

58.1 Introduction

58.1.1 Table 58.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on East Anglia ONE North Limited, East Anglia TWO Limited, ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited Deadline 5 Response [REP5-171].

Table 58.1 Applicant’s Comments on the East Anglia ONE North Limited, East Anglia TWO Limited, ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-171]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
	Response to Deadline 5 Submission	1. Introduction 1.1 We refer to the above Project and confirm we are instructed by ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited (“SPR”), East Anglia ONE North Limited (“EA1NL”) and East Anglia TWO Limited (“EA2L”) (together, the “SPR parties”). 1.2 SPR is the parent company of EA1NL, who has the benefit of the East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 (“EA1N”), and EA2L, who has the benefit of the East Anglia TWO Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022 (“EA2”). 1.3 This submission provides comments on a number of deadline 4 submissions (“DL4”) made by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (the “Applicant”) and provides a brief update on matters of discussion between the SPR parties and the Applicant.	The Applicant notes these comments.
		2. Comments on DL4 submissions – Land documents 2.1 As flagged in the SPR parties’ DL4 submission [REP4-113], the SPR parties had provided the Applicant with information to allow for the book of reference and land plans for the Project to be updated by DL4 to accurately reflect the SPR parties’ interests 2.2 It appears that the application documents have been updated to accurately reflect that EA1N/EA2 own a number of plots purchased from Ian Rix. 2.3 It appears that the application documents have been updated to accurately reflect that EA1N/EA2 own a number of plots purchased from Ian Rix. However, a number of inaccuracies remain in the book of reference [REP4-021/REP4-022]. These inaccuracies and the corrective action required are outlined in the table below.	The Applicant has held a meeting with representatives of SPR’s companies on the 1 st of April 2026 to discuss and resolve these matters. Updates to the book of reference will be provided at deadline 6.

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		3. Update on other matters <u>Landscaping</u> 3.1 By way of update, the SPR parties advise that the landscape management plan ("LMP") submitted to discharge requirement 14 of the EA1N and EA2 Development Consent Orders was approved by East Suffolk Council on 18 February 2026. 3.2 As flagged in the SPR parties' deadline 4 submission [REP4-112], it is understood that refinements may be required to the LMP in order to accommodate the Project, if the development consent order is granted for the Project. The SPR parties continue to work closely with the Applicant to understand how such refinements could be managed, which would be subject to a further approval process.	The applicant acknowledges point 3.1 and welcomes point 3.2 and is happy to work with SPR on the update to the LMP and any subsequent approvals process
		<u>Protective provisions</u> 3.3 The SPR parties provided a suite of draft protective provisions to the Applicant on 19 February 2026. If accepted, these protective provisions would resolve several of the SPR parties' concerns regarding the Project. 3.4 The SPR parties are awaiting a substantive response on the draft protective provisions. However, they understand the Applicant is planning to submit its preferred version of the protective provisions at examination deadline 5. That being the case, the SPR parties provide their preferred protective provision at Appendix 1 of this submission, for the examining authority's consideration.	The applicant notes its submissions made at ISH2 in respect of the draft Protective Provisions provided by SPR. The applicant is working with SPR on appropriate Protective Provisions and will provide an update at Deadline 7.
		4. Further response to action point 69 At examination deadline 4, the SPR parties provided a preliminary response to the examining authority's action point 69. As flagged in that submission, the SPR parties have prepared a further response to that action point, which is provided in Schedule 1 to this submission. Schedule 1 Response An Operational Phase Noise Management Plan – ONSS ("ONMP") has been discharged under Requirement 12 and Requirement 27 of the EA1N and EA2 DCOs. The ONMP incorporates operational noise information provided by the Applicant and sets out how operational noise will be managed in accordance with the cumulative operational noise limit prescribed in Requirement 27 of the EA1N and EA2 DCOs. SPR accept that the National Grid Kiln Lane substation will not include transformers or other equipment that are likely to contribute to cumulative noise. The Applicant has	The applicant notes SPR's Response

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant's Comments
		provided specifications of the switchgear it plans to install at the National Grid Kiln Lane substation and further information on the intended operation. SPR understands that all switches will be internal (i.e. within the main building), switch duration will be very brief (circa 75 milli-seconds), and switching events will be infrequent. As such, SPR accepts that the operation of the National Grid Kiln Lane substation is expected to make a minimal contribution to cumulative operational noise under standard operation.	

59. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Marine Management Organisation

59.1 Introduction

59.1.1 Table 59.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Marine Management Organisation Deadline 5 Response [REP5-175].

Table 59.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Marine Management Organisation Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-175]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1.1	Applicant’s Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Clean) [REP4-241].	The MMO has reviewed the Applicant’s response to 1PE4 within REP4-241 and in the ‘Applicant’s Comments on Responses to First Written Questions’ [REP4-083]. The MMO notes within REP4-241 that the Applicant states that they disagree “with the need for a designated disposal site outside of the order limits for the Proposed Project”. The MMO notes the question did not relate to disposal sites outside of the order limits rather the designation of a disposal site in general. Material deposited within the order limits may still require the area be designated per the MMO’s OSPAR reporting requirements.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.2	Applicant’s Comments on Other Submissions Received at Deadlines 3 and 3A (Clean) [REP4-241].	The MMO has provided further comments relating to the need for a disposal site at point 1.89 below.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.3	Trinity House Comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 3 – comments on draft Development Consent Order [REP4-205].	The MMO notes the requested amendments to the DCO by Trinity House with regards to the following: • Pre-construction plans and documentation • Aids to Navigation • Post construction	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.4	Trinity House Comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 3 – comments on draft Development Consent Order [REP4-205].	The MMO has no concerns with Trinity House requesting to Schedule 16, Part 2 Conditions 4 and 14 regarding the pre and post construction documents.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.5	Trinity House Comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 3 – comments on draft Development Consent Order [REP4-205].	With regards to the amendments to Condition 7 subsection (3)(a)-(c) <i>Aids to Navigation</i> in order to maintain consistency with the standard navigation conditions, the MMO requests that sub-section 3 be amended to state: <i>“(3) The undertaker must during the whole period from the commencement of construction of the authorised project to the completion of decommissioning keep Trinity House and the MMO informed of progress of the authorised project including;”</i> This inclusion will align the condition with other DMLs previously consented and allow the MMO to ensure the Applicant is complying with the conditions.	The Applicant confirms that this addition will be included within the revised DCO/DML at Deadline 6.

1.6	Trinity House Comments on any further information/submissions received by Deadline 3 – comments on draft Development Consent Order [REP4-205].	The MMO notes the comments regarding the proposed inclusion of Trinity House and ExQ2 question 2SN5, as a recipient of the notification for unauthorised deposits as part of the Section 16, Part 2 Condition 9 (Force Majeure). The MMO does not agree with this section for the reasons outlined in Section 3.6 of the MMO's Deadline 3 response [REP3-095] however, should this section remain within the consented DCO then the MMO has no issue with Trinity House, MCA or UKHO being notified alongside the MMO. The MMO further notes the Applicant's response in REP4-241 that this section is currently under review by the Applicant and an updated version of the DCO will be submitted at a Deadline 5.	The Applicant confirms that the MMO, Trinity House and the MCA are included within Condition 9 (1) of the dML which was submitted at Deadline 5.
1.7	9.7 (E) Schedule of Changes to the Draft Development Consent Order (Clean) [REP4-227]	The MMO has reviewed the above document and noted the changes made to the dDCO at Deadline 4. The MMO also acknowledges that this does not include other wider amendments to the dDML (Schedule 16) as these will be reflected in the updated dDCO being submitted at Deadline 5. The MMO will provide comments on the updated DML at a subsequent deadline.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.8	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (OSCIP) [REP4-090]	The MMO is currently reviewing the above plan with consideration to the Applicant's response within REP4-241 regarding the need for a disposal site. The MMO is continuing to review the information and other representations including from the Port of London Authority (PLA) [REP4-198] and London Gateway Port Limited [REP4-188]. The MMO will provide further comments on the OSCIP at a future deadline.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.9	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (OSCIP) [REP4-090]	Should a disposal site need to be designated the MMO will require that the outstanding sample analysis templates requested at Deadline 4 be representative of the cable route as a whole. Should this requirement be met, the Applicant will need to provide the disposal site by way of a shapefile. This should include any area where material is to be disposed of excluding the areas identified in REP4-198 and REP4-188. The area will then be designated with all dredged material disposal only permitted within the site.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.10	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (OSCIP) [REP4-090]	The MMO received the updated sample templates requested at Deadline 4 on 03 March and are currently reviewing the information. in consultation with Cefas, to confirm whether the sample templates are appropriate. We will provide further information at Deadline 6.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.11	Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (OSCIP) [REP4-090]	The MMO will confirm the need for a disposal site at Deadline 6 and liaise with the Applicant over the information required.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.12	Port of London Authority comments on further information/submission received by Deadline 3 [REP4-198]	The MMO has reviewed the above submission from the PLA, in particular the proposed amendments to Schedule 16 (dDML). The MMO notes the inclusion of two new defined terms "Areas of Interest" and "Safeguarded Dredging depths". The MMO requests that Areas of Interest be amended to " <i>Safeguarded depth area</i> " as this is more accurate, the MMO has concerns over the level of	The Applicant confirms that for clarity it will amend the definition within the DCO/DML from 'Areas of Interest' to 'Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth' in line with the Certified Plan. This definition has been refined at Deadline 5 to remove references to depths. Additionally, a Requirement has been included which

		detail within “Safeguarded Dredging Depths” and that the information relating to the dredge depths is not appropriate as part of the definition. The MMO would request that if the DCO is amended to include these definitions, then the information relating to the parameters of the dredge depth be included within any certified plan/document rather than within the text itself.	outlines this detail in addition to the existing plan already submitted into Examination.
1.13	Port of London Authority comments on further information/submission received by Deadline 3 [REP4-198]	The PLA has proposed that Schedule 16, Part 2 Condition 4 (5) is amended to include “(provided that the MMO has consulted with any party that it was required to consult with in relation to a relevant plan, protocol, statement, or details pursuant to this condition 4)”. The MMO does not consider this amendment appropriate and notes Condition 4 has been reworded during examination to include consultees including the MCA, EA and Cefas. The MMO has no issue with the inclusion of the PLA as part of the list of consultees as the MMO consult with the authority on activities that fall under their jurisdiction as standard practice.	This is noted by the Applicant.
1.14	Port of London Authority comments on further information/submission received by Deadline 3 [REP4-198]	The PLA has recommended that Part 2 Condition 4 (6) be amended to state “(6) <i>In undertaking the licensed activities, the undertaker must not reduce water depth by more than 5% unless agreed with the MMO in writing and within the areas of interest navigable depth may not be reduced to any extent</i>”. The MMO’s preference for the interest of clarity would be for this condition to be split, with 4(6) remaining as is, and a new section 4(7) be included stating that: <i>No reduction in navigable depth is permitted within the safeguarded depth area.</i> The MMO requests that this change be replicated within Part 2 Condition 12(3).	The Applicant confirms that a separate Requirement has been included into the DCO at Deadline 5 to fully secure the Port Authorities interests around the three Areas of Safeguarded Water Depth. Therefore, the existing Condition 6 of the DML remains unchanged with regards to the 5% rule and a replication of the Requirement considered not to be needed in this case.
1.15	Port of London Authority comments on further information/submission received by Deadline 3 [REP4-198]	The MMO also notes the proposed request of a new condition from the PLA under the heading of “remediation”. The MMO requests that the Applicant liaises with the MMO regarding the wording of this condition as it will need to be reviewed by the MMO.	The Applicant confirms that it is reviewing the PLA’s text on remediation as part of its Protective Provisions rather than within the dML.
1.16	Deferred responses to Action Points arising from Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [EV6-033]	The MMO deferred a response to AP 71 (Marine Physical Environment) at Deadline 4. The question was: <i>The MMO’s DL2 response [REP2-056] highlighted a number of issues relating to the terminology associated with substances used in the marine environment (e.g. bentonite), emphasising the need for substances to be on the OSPAR pose little or no risk (PLONOR) list. Is there a need for the Deemed Marine Licence (DML) to explicitly secure that only substances from the OSPAR list are used in addition to the current provisions in Part 2, Condition 8 of the DML?</i> Following discussions with our scientific advisors at Cefas, the MMO considers that a condition be included within the DML that the OSPAR PLONOR list should be explicitly included. The MMO is aware that a new dDML will be provided at Deadline 5, however due to the need to review the changes as well as determine	The Applicant confirms that it has received suggested wording from the MMO with regards to Condition 8 of the DML. The Applicant confirms it is reviewing this wording in will include an update in the DCO/DML at Deadline 6.

appropriate wording for the condition, the MMO will provide these together in a subsequent deadline.

60. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Olivia Jeannette Brown

60.1 Introduction

60.1.1 Table 61.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Olivia Jeannette Brown Deadline 5 Response [REP5-182].

Table 60.1 Applicant’s Comments on Olivia Jeannette Brown Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-182]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		NEW NORTHERN ACCESS ROUTE PROPOSAL Ref, Suffolk County Councils proposal for a new northern access route to the SeaLink converter site. I wholeheartedly support this northern route as it would share an existing haul road with Sizewell C and minimize local disruption overall. National Grids preferred western route will gridlock the A12 and the B1121 on a permanent basis and close Benhall railway bridge during its re-construction. This will adversely affect trade, locals going to work, children going to school, emergency services and will completely destroy the Fromus Valley. THE ENERGY SECURITY CLAIM National Grid justifies the need for the SeaLink project on the grounds of energy security but if there ‘was’ an energy supply emergency in Europe, Belgium and Holland would NOT sell electricity to the UK. They would keep it for themselves. (as happened during Covid when the EU refused to honour our contract to buy vaccine supplies from Europe) Interconnectors are only used to sell surplus electricity in the good times. The Sea Link project is there to make money for its overseas shareholders. It is not in our National interest. The Energy Security argument is bogus. EFFECTS OF SITING CONVERTER AT SAXMUNDHAM The Sealink converter is one of 3 or 4 Interconnectors on the same site, each the	The Applicant acknowledges this representation but observes that its points are for the most part high-level concerns about the proposed project, and indeed the wider development in the area, which makes it difficult to provide a granular and focussed response. The Applicant directly responded to SCC’s proposal for the northern route to be used and it relies on its explanation set out in [REP5-125]. Without revisiting the conclusions of that document, the Applicant remains firmly of the view that the northern access route was properly considered at the pre application stage and was objectively assessed to be a materially worse option than the ‘western route’ proposed by the Applicant. As a matter of national policy there is a Critical National Priority for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure, including projects to reinforce the network like the Proposed Project. The National Policy Statements for Energy have been designated by Parliament and provide the appropriate policy tests for assessing the impacts of NSIPs. The Flood Risk Assessment and drainage designs for the Project have applied all relevant and current Environment Agency guidance with regard to climate change allowances (Environment Agency, 2022) in

size of Buckingham Palace and they are all on a HILL! In National Grids Feb 26 response to the DCO examination, they state that there will be minimal effects and no drop in value of Grade 2* listed Hurts Hall and other properties as the trees (they plan to plant) will have grown in 15 years. This is arrant nonsense. Are they assuming most of these owners are in their twenties so they will live to see these trees grow? No! Most of the owners will be dead. They even reported to the DCO that fields containing Christmas trees form part of the screening near Hill Farm. Don't they know that Christmas trees are cut down at Christmas!

NO HYDROLOGY REPORT

Neither have National Grid carried out a full hydrology report into the potential effects of run off from the converter site into the River Fromus both during the construction and post construction periods. The River Fromus already floods yet all National Grid have committed to are surveys every Spring and Autumn for 5 years (post project) to look at the effects of any increased run-off on

INVERTEBRATES WHAT ABOUT THE EFFECTS ON HUMAN BEINGS!

We need a full hydrology report with mitigation action agreed now as necessary.

NO NOISE AND VIBRATION REPORT

National Grid have only done a desk top study and used generic calculations to assess the potential impact of noise and vibration on the local community from their Interconnectors. They have NOT carried out a thorough on site investigation into the specific equipment they plan to use or taken account of local geography. There is an urgent need to look at what plans they have to mitigate noise and vibration. The optimum solution is to build as much as possible underground but they dismissed this at an early stage because it is more expensive (shareholder value again!)

THIS NEEDS TO BE CHALLENGED!

National Grid are happy to greenwash their project any way they can but HUMAN BEINGS MATTER TOO and should matter to the Planning Inspectorate. Offshore has always been best.

terms of rainfall, river flows and sea level rise.

The Applicant has assessed noise and vibration impacts as presented in **Application Document 6.2.2.9 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration [AS-109]** and **Application Document 6.2.3.9 Part 3 Kent Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration [AS-111]**

61. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from National Highways

61.1 Introduction

61.1.1 Table 61.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on National Highways Additional Response [AS-165].

Table 61.1 Applicant’s Comments on the National Highways Additional Submission [AS-165]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
		National Highways’ Deadline 2 submission, dated 28 November 2025, raised concerns regarding the potential impact of construction traffic on the operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) at Seven Hills Roundabout where the A12 and A14 intersect. I can confirm that the Applicant has provided satisfactory evidence to assure National Highways that the additional traffic can be expected to be accommodated without adverse impacts.	The Applicant notes and welcomes this confirmation from National Highways.
		National Highways met with the Applicant on 12 December 2025 to discuss the matter and the Applicant provided detailed evidence during and following the meeting, which provided satisfactory assurance that there are not expected to be adverse impacts on the SRN arising from the Development. This was confirmed in the Applicant’s Deadline 3 response on 9 January 2026 in Document REP3-069, the Applicant’s Response to Written first Questions, specifically in response to Questions 1TT6 and 1TT18.	
		National Highways is therefore content to withdraw its objection to the Development..	

62. Applicant's Comments on the Submission from Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm

62.1 Introduction

62.1.1 Table 62.1 summarises the Applicant’s comments on Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Deadline 4 Response [No document reference provided in Examination Library].

Table 62.1 Applicant’s Comments on the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Deadline 4 Submission [No document reference provided in Examination Library]

Reference	Matter	Point Raised	Applicant’s Comments
1	Safeguarding Provisions	As per the representation made by VEOWFL at Issue Specific Hearing 2, VEOWFL requests the equivalent safeguarding provisions as GridLink for the Sea Link and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm (VE) cable crossing. This is to ensure that the requirement of not reducing navigable depth by greater than 5%, as prescribed in the VE’s Development Consent Order (DCO), is achievable at the crossing location. VEOWFL notes that in Action No. AP94 of <u>REP-088</u> , the Applicant confirms that GridLink’s protection will be secured through the Protective Provisions with PLA and LGPL. VEOWFL request that the same mechanism is used to secure the provisions for the VE cable crossing and that VEOWFL have an opportunity to review the proposed wording of the Protective Provisions.	The Grid Link and Sea Link crossing is located within an Area of Safeguarded Water Depth defined by the ports, with safeguarding provisions secured through Requirement 17 of the draft DCO. The Applicant notes Five Estuaries’ request for equivalent safeguarding provisions. The Applicant will continue to liase with Five Estuaries to agree a suitable mechanism for securing such provisions, to be progressed by Deadline 7.
2	VE Crossing	In addition, VEOWFL request that the same commitments are made for the VE crossing as the GridLink crossing currently provided in the Outline Cable and Installation Plan [<u>REP-090</u> in paragraph 5.2.7], i.e. to agree mitigation to cross within the deeper water where the Sea Link and VEOrder Limits overlap.	

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