The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Project overview document

October 2023

nationalgrid

This Project overview document (2023) sets out our proposals to reinforce the electricity transmission network between Suffolk and Kent, adding much needed capability. This project is known as Sea Link.

This statutory public consultation aims to provide details of the proposed Project, along with supporting environmental information, and to update you on how our proposals have developed since our last consultation in 2022.

Importantly, this is the opportunity for you to give your views and feedback on our proposals. We are seeking your feedback on where the new infrastructure could be built, and what you would like to see us consider when further developing our proposals. We are committed to listening to your views and will consider these alongside planning policy, technical assessments and environmental surveys as we develop more detailed proposals.

This Project overview document has been prepared to support the statutory consultation which runs from Tuesday 24 October 2023 to Monday 18 December 2023.

Contents

1. Executive summary

The way we generate electricity in the UK is changing rapidly, and we are transitioning to more secure, cheaper, and cleaner forms of energy like new offshore windfarms.

The UK Government has set out a commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. This means achieving a balance between the greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere and those taken out. The energy industry plays a key part in this transition, from developing renewable energy generation, to upgrading the existing electricity transmission network to allow communities across the country to benefit from this clean energy.

We are presenting some plans in your local area to help that transition and make sure the grid is ready. These proposals are part of The Great Grid Upgrade, the largest overhaul of the grid in generations.

Decarbonising the energy system and delivering cheaper and more secure energy supplies is one of the biggest challenges facing our world. At National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) we have a critical role to play in the acceleration towards a cleaner future.

The UK is in the middle of a transformation, with the energy we use increasingly coming from cleaner, greener sources. In 2019, for the first time since the industrial revolution, most of our electricity came from low-carbon sources. NGET is at the heart of that energy transformation – investing around £1.3 bn each year to adapt and develop our transmission network to connect new sources of low-carbon and green energy to our homes and businesses.

While it is vital that more of the energy we use comes from low-carbon and renewable sources, both NGET and the Government recognise it is also important to keep the impact as low as possible on bills, people, communities and our natural environment. NGET is committed to finding the right balance between these factors to ensure our projects have a sustainable, positive impact.

The UK already has 13.6 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind energy in operation.[1] The Government's recent **British Energy Security Strategy**[2] outlines the ambition to increase energy from offshore wind to 50 GW by 2030 – more than enough to power every home in the UK. In **Powering up Britain**,[3] the Government explains that the grid needs to be expanded at an unprecedented scale and pace to deliver more clean power and increase our energy security.

Delivering the infrastructure needed to achieve this ambition will boost local economies, provide jobs and opportunities to learn new skills and bring vital investment to towns right across the country.

1. Wind Energy Statistics, Renewable UK https://renewableuk.com/general/custom.asp?page=UKwedhome
2. Policy paper – British energy security strategy, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Prime Minister's Office, April 2022 https://gov.uk/government/publications/british-energy-security-strategy/britishenergysecurity-strategy
3. Powering up Britain, HM Government, March 2023 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1147340/powering-up-britain-joint-overview.pdf

Sea Link would play an important part in allowing the UK to decarbonise its energy system in a meaningful way that will not only support net zero energy targets, but perhaps more urgently, deliver a more secure and resilient energy system.

Sea Link is needed as the existing electricity transmission network does not have enough capacity to securely and reliably transport all the new energy we expect to connect to the network over the next ten years and beyond.

To deliver Sea Link, we would need to install a new 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) cable link between Suffolk and Kent, approximately 145 kilometres (km) long and predominantly offshore.

To bring power from cables from the sea to the electricity network, we would need to build new infrastructure including converter stations, substations and new underground and overhead electricity lines, as well as upgrading existing overhead electricity lines.

We are consulting on our plans to deliver the proposed Sea Link reinforcement. Our consultation runs from 24 October until 18 December 2023.

As part of this consultation, we will be seeking views about:

- proposed Friston substation
- proposed route of the high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable between the proposed Friston substation and the Saxmundham converter station
- proposed onshore route of the high voltage direct current (HVDC) underground cable, from converter station to landfall
- proposed landfall location in Suffolk
- proposed offshore route of the HVDC cable, from landfall to landfall
- proposed landfall location in Kent
- proposed route of the HVDC underground cable, from landfall to converter station
- proposed Minster converter station and substation
- proposed HVAC overhead line between the Minster converter station and substation, and the Canterbury to Richborough 400 kV overhead line
- construction methodology
- likely environmental effects arising from the proposed Project
- opportunities for biodiversity net gain and mitigation of potential environmental impacts.

All documents published as part of this consultation, can be found at nationalgrid.com/sealink. Documents are also available on request by contacting the project team at contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com or by calling **0808 134 9569**.

* Please note that technical documents and large plans may be subject to a maximum printing charge of up to £300.

2. About National Grid

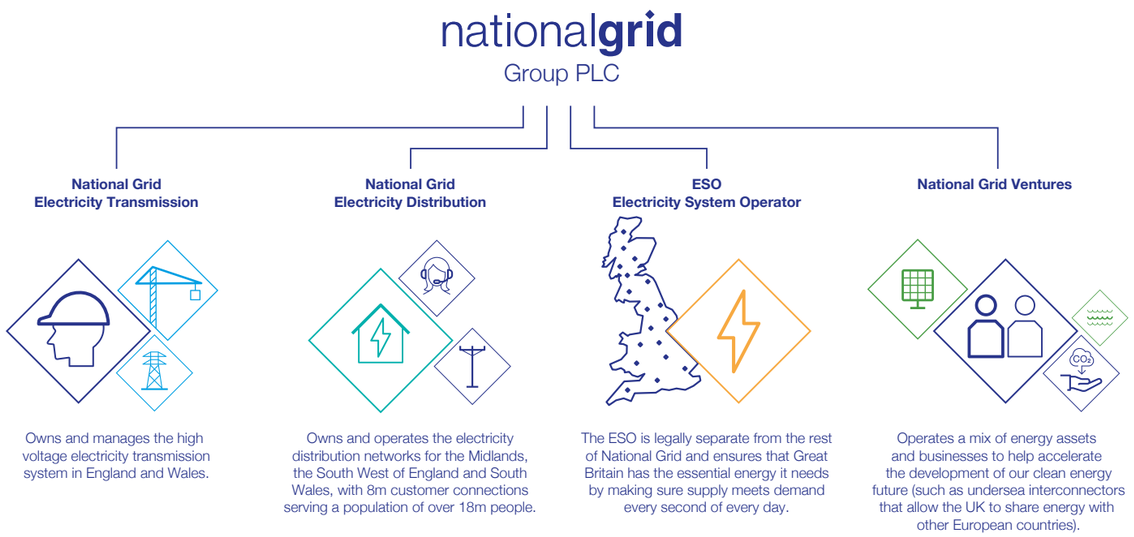
National Grid sits at the heart of Britain's energy system, connecting millions of people and businesses to the energy they use every day.

We bring energy to life – in the heat, light and power we bring to our customers' homes and businesses; in the way that we support our communities and help them to grow; and in the way we show up in the world. It is our vision to be at the heart of a clean, fair and affordable energy future.

National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) owns, builds and maintains the network in England and Wales. It is NGET that is developing plans for Sea Link.

Within the National Grid Group there are distinctly separate legal entities, each with their individual responsibilities and roles.

Each of the different entities within the National Grid Group is working to build a cleaner, fairer and cheaper energy system that serves everyone – powering the future of our homes, transport and industry.



Our General Duties

Under the Electricity Act 1989, the Electricity System Operator and National Grid Electricity Transmission must develop transmission network proposals in an efficient, coordinated and economical way, and in a way which considers people and places. Options to deliver additional network capability and the options we take forward are evaluated against these statutory duties.

How we will meet our amenity responsibilities and involve stakeholders and communities is outlined in **commitments when undertaking works in the UK**.[4]

1. **Establishing need**
   We only seek to build new electricity infrastructure where existing infrastructure cannot be upgraded; forecasted increases in demand cannot be met by other means; customer connections are required; or existing infrastructure has been identified for replacement.

2. **Involving stakeholders and communities**
   We promote genuine and meaningful engagement, meeting and, where appropriate, exceeding the requirements for consultation or engagement.

3. **Routeing networks and selecting sites**
   If we need to build new infrastructure, where possible, we seek to avoid areas which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, wildlife or cultural significance.

4. **Minimising the effects of new infrastructure**
   When we are developing new infrastructure, we seek to reduce the effect of our work on communities by having regard to safety, noise and construction traffic.

5. **Mitigating effects of works**
   We carry out relevant environmental investigations and report on these when we apply for consent for new works. Additionally, we use best practice environmental impact assessment techniques to assess possible effects of our works and identify opportunities for mitigation measures.

6. **Offsetting where mitigation is not practicable**
   When we cannot mitigate the impacts of our proposals, we offset these impacts in practical and sustainable ways that are developed through engagement with local stakeholders.

7. **Enhancing the environment around our works**
   When undertaking works, we consider what practicable measures can be taken to enhance nearby and surrounding areas for the benefit of local communities and the natural and historic environment.

8. **Monitoring and learning for the future**
   We monitor, evaluate and review our engagement processes to learn from previous experiences to improve our working practices.

9. **Reviewing our commitments**
   We review these commitments at least every five years and make additional revisions in response to new legislation, policy and guidance.

10. **Working with others**
    We require other organisations working on our behalf to demonstrate these same commitments and continue to create an environment where we can share and deliver best practice.

4. National Grid's commitments when undertaking works in the UK: Our stakeholder, community and amenity policy, National Grid, December 2016 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/81026/download

Many other organisations also have a key role to play in delivering a cleaner energy future.

Planning Inspectorate

The Planning Inspectorate is the government agency responsible for examining proposals for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). In energy terms, these include offshore windfarms, new nuclear power stations and new overhead lines greater than 2 km in length.

ofgem

Ofgem (the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets) is the government regulator for gas and electricity markets in Great Britain. Ofgem is a non-ministerial government department and an independent national regulatory authority, whose role is to protect consumers as a greener, fairer energy system is delivered. Ofgem works with government, industry and consumer groups to help deliver net zero from an energy perspective at the lowest possible cost to consumers.

ESO

The Electricity System Operator (ESO) is the electricity system operator for the whole of Great Britain. The ESO ensures electricity is always available where it is needed and the network remains stable and secure in its operation.

Generators apply to the ESO when they wish to connect to the network and the ESO leads the work to consider how the network may need to evolve to deliver a cleaner, greener future.

In April 2019, the ESO became a legally separate business within the National Grid Group and is regulated independently by Ofgem.

Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) is the ministerial department with primary responsibility for energy.

In November 2020, the Government set out a **Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution**.[5] This was followed by a white paper, which set out the Government's proposals for future legislation. The Energy White Paper, entitled 'Powering our Net Zero Future', set out how, as a country, we will transform the way we produce and use energy to tackle climate change, meet net zero emissions by 2050 and build back greener.

The white paper focuses on the Government's ambitions to increase energy generation from offshore wind and increase interconnector capacity. It also covers hydrogen, carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS), heat and transport decarbonisation. Building on the white paper, the Government published the **British Energy Security Strategy**[6] in April 2022, increasing the 2030 ambition for offshore wind from 40 GW to 50 GW, and **Powering Up Britain**[7] in March 2023.

DESNZ, working with input from the ESO, is also conducting a review of how offshore wind is connected, with the aim of removing barriers to achieving Government ambitions for offshore wind.[8] The Secretary of State for DESNZ is also the ultimate decision-maker for new electricity transmission network proposals under **The Planning Act 2008**.[9]

5. The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, HM Government, November 2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POINT_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf
6. British Energy Security Strategy, HM Government, April 2022 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-energy-security-strategy/british-energy-security-strategy
7. Powering Up Britain, HM Government, March 2023 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1147340/powering-up-britain-joint-overview.pdf
8. Offshore Transmission Network Review terms of reference, HM Government, August 2020 https://gov.uk/government/publications/offshore-transmission-network-review
9. The Planning Act, HM Government, 2008 https//www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents

3. Moving towards net zero

The world we live in is changing, and the UK is at a turning point as we embrace the enormous opportunities a cleaner, greener future brings.

The Government has made it clear that its net zero targets are an important milestone in creating a cleaner, greener future.

The UK has set a world-leading target for tackling climate change, which is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Put simply, this means that we will remove the same amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere as we produce.

As a country, we are already making progress. The UK has the largest offshore wind capacity in the world, with some 13.6 gigawatt (GW) in operation and a further 8 GW under construction.

Recent years have been record-breaking for renewables on our electricity transmission network. Summer 2020 saw the longest run since the industrial revolution without burning coal, stretching almost 68 days. Solar power has set new records too, with 10.1 GW being produced in April 2023. Finally, the first three months of 2023 saw wind rank as the biggest single source of electricity in the UK for the first time ever.[10]

The way we generate electricity in the UK is therefore changing rapidly. We are transitioning to cleaner technologies like new offshore windfarms. That means we need to make changes to the grid so the whole country has access to the clean electricity from these new renewable sources.

Decarbonising the energy system means replacing – as far as it is possible to do so – fossil fuels with clean and low-carbon energy technologies such as wind turbines and nuclear power for electricity production.

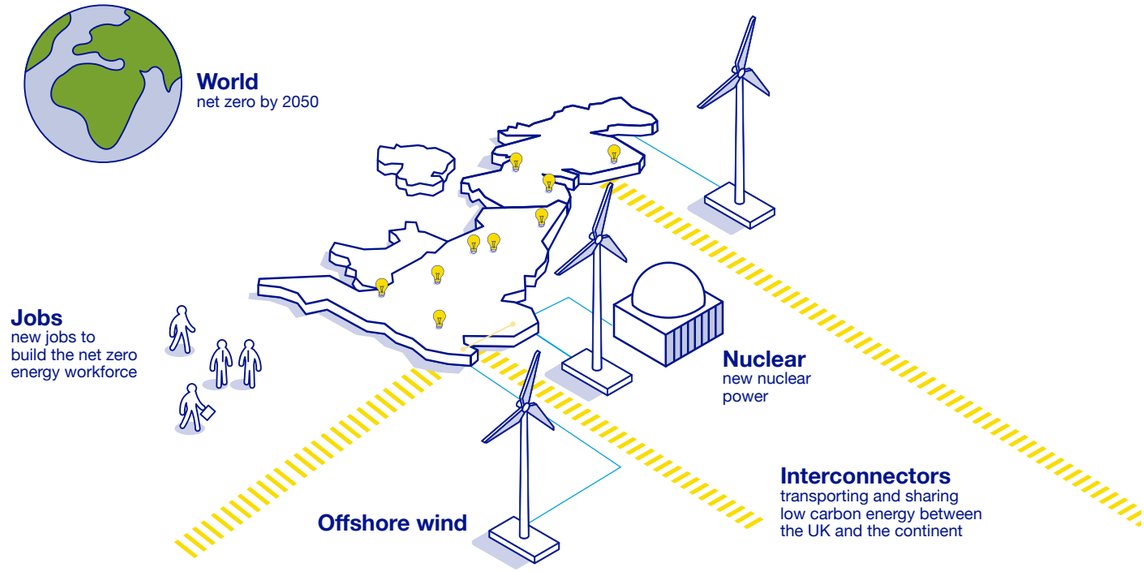
Growth in energy generated from offshore wind is a key part of achieving net zero. The Government's **British Energy Security Strategy**[11] outlines the ambition to increase energy from offshore wind to 50 GW by 2030 – more than enough to power every home in the UK.

Whilst the way we generate electricity is changing, demand is set to significantly increase. The Committee on Climate Change anticipates that electricity demand will at least double by 2050 as we shift to clean energy to drive electric vehicles, heat our homes and power our industry.

In **Powering up Britain**[12], the Government explains that the grid needs to be expanded at an unprecedented scale and pace to deliver more clean power and increase our energy security.

The energy revolution brings with it huge opportunities to boost skills and jobs. It is expected that up to 60,000 jobs will be created in the offshore wind sector alone this decade. Up to 250,000 jobs are also expected to be created by 2030 as set out in the Government's **Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution**.[13]

What is net zero?
nationalgrid.com/stories/energy-explained/what-is-net-zero



The Committee's **Sixth Carbon Budget**[14], published in December 2020, recommends the deployment of renewables at scale and sustaining that build momentum to support up to 140 GW of offshore wind by 2050, raising further opportunity for growth and job creation. By 2050, our own analysis[15] indicates that the energy sector needs to fill around 400,000 jobs to build the net zero energy workforce.

Our mission at National Grid Electricity Transmission is to support these aims. We believe that by acting now, the UK can become the world's first major clean economy, with net zero carbon emissions by 2050, creating growth and jobs for communities across Britain.

As part of The Great Grid Upgrade, Sea Link would help the transition to clean energy, making sure the grid is ready.

10. Electric Insights Quarterly, Drax/Imperial College London, May 2023 https://reports.electricinsights.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230523_Drax_23Q1_00481.pdf
11. British Energy Security Strategy, HM Government, April 2022 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069969/british-energy-security-strategy-web-accessible.pdf
12. Powering Up Britain, HM Government, March 2023 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1147340/powering-up-britain-joint-overview.pdf
13. The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, HM Government, November 2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POINT_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf
14. The Sixth Carbon Budget – The UK's path to net zero, Committee on Climate Change, December 2020 https://theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/
15. Building the Net Zero energy workforce, National Grid, January 2020 https://nationalgrid.com/document/126256/download

4. How the need for network reinforcement is identified

Every year the Electricity System Operator (ESO) looks at how much energy needs to be carried on the network in the future and where network capability needs to be improved to accommodate that.

1. This process starts with the ESO identifying a range of **Future Energy Scenarios**[16] which are discussed with stakeholders and published each summer. Future Energy Scenarios represent different credible scenarios for how quickly we might make the transition to a cleaner, greener energy future as we strive towards net zero by 2050.

2. The Future Energy Scenarios inform the analysis in the **Electricity Ten Year Statement** [17] which is published each November, setting out the ESO's view of future transmission requirements and where the capability of the transmission network might need to be addressed over the next decade.

3. Transmission Owners, which for England and Wales is National Grid Electricity Transmission, then respond with solutions to address the requirements identified in the Electricity Ten Year Statement. We work with energy consumers in mind, making sure we focus on transmission system proposals that offer the best value and can be delivered in an efficient and coordinated way. The ESO assesses and publishes its recommendations as to which proposals should proceed in a **Network Options Assessment report (NOA)**[18] each year. Last year, a refreshed NOA was published in summer alongside ESO's **Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND)**[19], setting out a blueprint for the connection of the offshore wind needed to meet the Government's 2030 targets.

   In planning and operating the network, transmission licence holders – onshore and offshore – are required by their licence to comply with the National Electricity Transmission **Security and Quality of Supply Standard**.[20] These set out criteria and methodologies for planning and operating the network in Great Britain – in essence, minimum requirements designed to ensure secure and stable electricity supplies.

Sea Link (known as SCD1 in the NOA) is an essential network reinforcement which has been recommended to 'proceed' every year since 2019/2020 in the NOA.

What is the Network Options Assessment (NOA) and what does it mean for this project?

The NOA 2021/22 Refresh was published in July 2022 and outlined recommendations for which network reinforcement projects need to be taken forward and when. The report also recommends the most economically suitable investment strategy for these reinforcements, along with the pathway to 2030 and beyond.

Sea Link, along with other projects, is a priority because the east and south of England and the Midlands – which covers areas spanning from the Humber in the north to East Anglia and the Thames Estuary in the south – have been identified as areas in need of network reinforcement to enable the connection of more offshore wind along the east coast.

The ESO has identified this and other reinforcements in the NOA as 'Holistic Network Design (HND) essential' to deliver the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design – connecting offshore wind needed to meet the Government's 50 GW by 2030 target. The ESO also advises in the NOA that the reinforcement needs to be accelerated to help meet this target.

Sea Link therefore forms an important part of our plans for this region – reinforcing the network between Suffolk and Kent to cater for increasing power flows from new energy generation.

16. Future Energy Scenarios, Electricity System Operator, July 2022 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/263951/download
17. Electricity Ten Year Statement, Electricity System Operator, November 2022 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/275611/download
18. Network Options Assessment 2021/22 Refresh, Electricity System Operator, July 2022 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/262981/download
19. The Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design, Electricity System Operator, July 2022 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/pathway-2030-holistic-network-design
20. Security and Quality of Supply Standard, Electricity System Operator, September 2022 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/industry-information/codes/security-and-quality-supply-standard-sqss/sqss-code-documents

5. The need for network reinforcement in East Anglia and the south-east

The network in and between East Anglia and the south-east of England needs reinforcing for four main reasons:

1. the existing transmission network was not designed to transport electricity from where we increasingly now generate it (largely offshore)
2. the growth in offshore wind, interconnectors and nuclear power means that more electricity will be generated in the years ahead than the current network is able to securely and reliably transport
3. as a country, electricity demand is forecasted to at least double by 2050, increasing the amount of energy we need to transport to homes and businesses
4. upgrading the existing network as it is today (such as through replacing cables to carry more power) will not be enough to carry the amount of future power whilst operating to required standards.

Sea Link is just one of several electricity network reinforcements that are needed to ensure the electricity transmission network is fit for the future.

The security and quality of supply standard

The electricity transmission network is planned and operated under a set of standards designed to ensure there are no widespread electricity supply interruptions, even if two circuits are out of service.

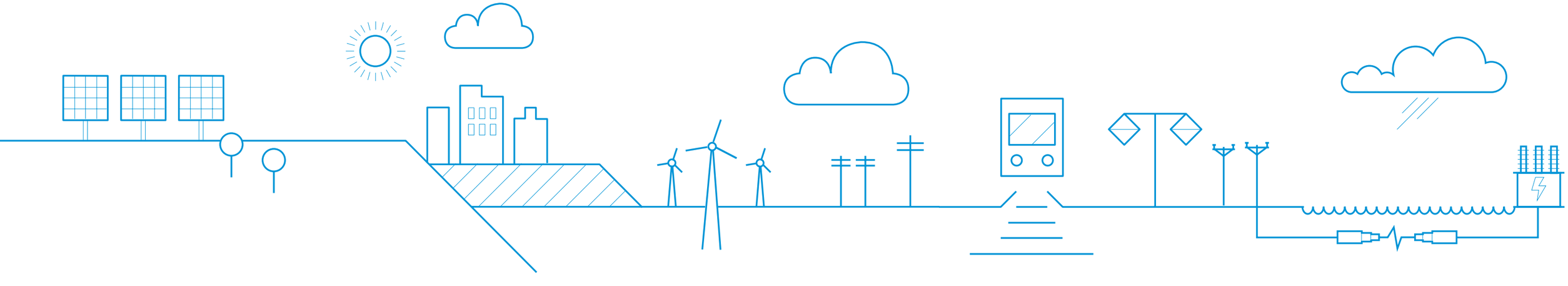
These standards ensure that, for given operational and fault scenarios:

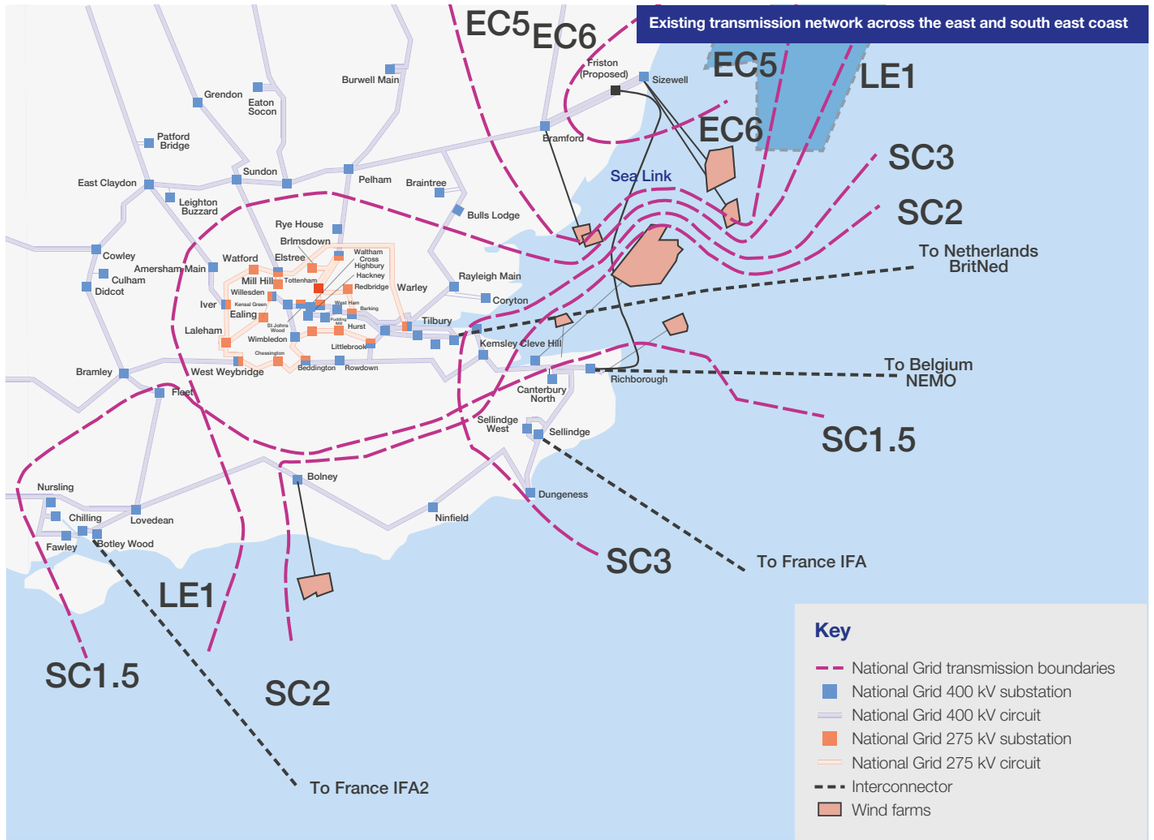
- the electricity system frequency is maintained within statutory limits
- no part of the network is overloaded beyond its capability
- voltage performance stays within acceptable statutory limits, and the system remains electrically stable.

How we identify which parts of the electricity network need reinforcement

To understand current and future demands on the electricity network, we use the concept of network boundaries. A boundary splits the system into sections and shows where there are high-power flows between parts of the network. When flows across a network boundary are forecast to be above the capability of the network and the security and quality of supply standards, there are two options to manage this:

1. pay electricity generators on one side of the boundary to reduce the energy they produce (and in turn pay generators on the other side of the boundary to compensate for the shortfall). This then reduces the flows of electricity across the boundary. When the Electricity System Operator pays generators to do this, these are called ‘constraint payments’
2. increase the capability of the network to allow more electricity to flow.



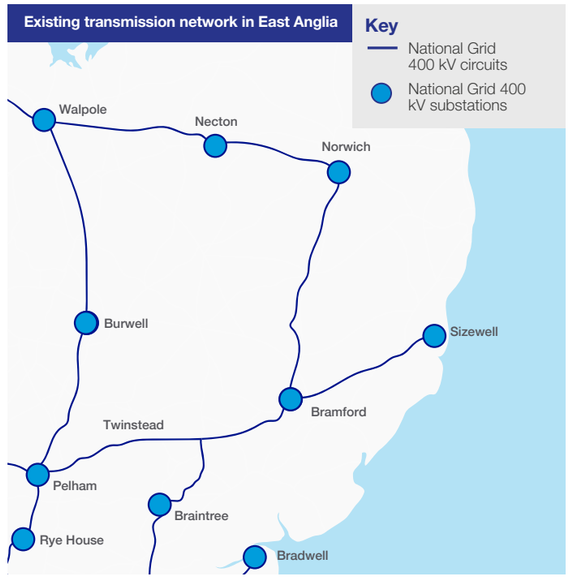


The network today

The existing transmission network infrastructure in East Anglia and the south-east was built in the 1960s, and was not designed to accommodate the large volumes of generation capacity that is planned to connect here. It was built to supply regional demand, centred around Norwich and Ipswich. A large loop runs from Walpole in the north of the region to Pelham and Rayleigh/Tilbury in the south, via Norwich and Bramford.

While the network in East Anglia can accommodate the level of generation and demand that there is today, this situation will change with the growth in offshore wind, new interconnectors and nuclear power stations. This means that the amount of power connecting behind the network boundary (referred to as EC5) is far greater than the ability of the network to transport power out of the region. By the end of this decade, if everything contracted to connect in the region does connect, there will be significantly more generation than the current network is capable of accommodating. This means the existing high voltage electricity network in East Anglia does not have the capability needed to reliably and securely transport all the energy that will be connected, while meeting the security and quality of supply standard.

In the south-east there are multiple network boundaries (LE1, SC1, SC1.5, SC2 and SC3). The LE1 boundary almost exclusively imports power from the north and west of England into the south-east. As more energy is pulled across London and into Kent, power flows across LE1 are set to increase. Demand for electricity is also set to grow here, and interconnectors will exchange more energy with European countries to help balance intermittent sources of power.



The network therefore requires reinforcement in both East Anglia and the south-east. Before we consider building new parts of the network, we first look at how we can upgrade existing network infrastructure. This can involve building new substations and improving the transmission circuits using thicker conductors/wires on existing overhead lines, and adding smart power control devices to control the flow of electricity on parts of the network where power is needed. Over the next decade, this is what we will be doing. However, these upgrades do not adequately address the shortfall in network capacity and several new network reinforcement projects are required, of which Sea Link is one.

Sea Link helps to reinforce the network in multiple ways:

1. by connecting new planned generation behind the network boundary allowing power to be transferred
2. by connecting into the proposed Friston substation, Sea Link reinforces the Bramford-Sizewell radial circuits transferring power between transmission boundaries EC5 and the Sizewell Generation Group (shown in the diagram on p.16 as EC6).
3. by connecting into the Kent coast, it increases the amount of power that can be transported to and from the south-east, helping to meet domestic demand as well as imports and exports to Europe via interconnectors.

The total power carrying capability of the Sea Link reinforcement will be 2 gigawatts (GW).

The strategic proposal

The network reinforcement needs identified in both East Anglia and the south-east were reviewed together. A single solution which simultaneously dealt with both constraints was selected.

The identified reinforcement that will help achieve this is an offshore 2 GW high voltage direct current link between Suffolk and Kent.

If you would like to view the full detailed needs case for Sea Link, you can find this in the Strategic options report[21] on our website.

21. Strategic Options Report, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

6. Reviewing and improving the delivery of new electricity transmission infrastructure

Whilst we have been developing our proposals for Sea Link, the Government, the Electricity System Operator (ESO) and Ofgem have all been undertaking work to consider how the development of offshore electricity transmission infrastructure and general network reinforcements can be better coordinated, recognising the vital role these projects will play in meeting the UK's net zero targets.

Offshore Transmission Network Review

In 2020, the Government launched the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR), to look at how the offshore electricity transmission network can be designed and delivered in a more coordinated way on the path to delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

We have fully supported this work and continue to work closely with the Government, stakeholders and local communities to ensure we play our part in delivering the infrastructure needed to achieve net zero in a way that reduces impacts on communities.

In meeting that challenge there are two key considerations. The first is how a growing number of connections from offshore windfarms and interconnectors could be coordinated as cables come ashore.

The second is the network reinforcements required further inland to accommodate the increased demand on the network to ensure we can effectively transport the power to where it is needed across Great Britain.

As explained in the **Energy White Paper**[22], the Government is looking to bring more coordination and mitigate environmental, social and economic costs for the 2030s and beyond.

Developers are being encouraged, where early opportunities for coordination exist, to consider becoming pathfinder projects. In the Network Options Assessment (NOA) Refresh 2021/22, the ESO explains that onshore reinforcement is still needed alongside the recommended offshore design, in order to connect 50 GW of offshore wind by 2030. In addition, page 32 of the NOA Refresh identifies Sea Link as among those reinforcements that are 'essential' to deliver on offshore wind generation targets.

The Network Options Assessment is an annual report published by the Electricity System Operator which outlines its recommendations for network reinforcement projects to take forward during the coming year to ensure the network can keep up with demand.

22. Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future, HM Government, December 2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945899/201216_BEIS_EWP_Command_Paper_Accessible.pdf

The OTNR concluded in July 2023 with a series of recommendations and suggested policy changes[23], focussing on delivering more coordination around offshore wind connection and transmission around the UK. In tandem with delivering greater coordination and reducing impacts on host communities, the Government has restated its commitment to delivering on net zero and supplying clean energy to the grid as part of the national effort to decarbonise, reduce the cost of household bills and boost energy security.

Holistic Network Design (HND)

In summer 2022, the ESO published the **Holistic Network Design (HND) report**.[24]

The HND report provided a recommended offshore and onshore design for a 2030 electricity network to help facilitate the Government's ambition for 50 GW of offshore wind by 2030.

The recommended design in the HND has equally considered four different objectives to make sure the most appropriate approach is taken forwards, comprising:

- cost to consumer
- deliverability and operability
- impact on the environment
- impact on local communities.

We worked in consultation with the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments, other transmission owners, offshore wind developers and environmental stakeholders to facilitate the production of the HND.

The HND primarily includes offshore wind projects that secured seabed leases through The Crown Estate's Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 and The Crown Estate Scotland's ScotWind Leasing Round. It also assumes 1 GW of floating wind from the upcoming Celtic Sea leasing round and some additional projects that are due to connect at a similar place and time to others in scope. Further reinforcements in electricity transmission network infrastructure, beyond those set out in the HND, will be required to achieve net zero. These include the additional onshore and offshore infrastructure required to unlock ScotWind's full potential. In June 2023, the ESO published an update on its offshore coordination work, setting out that it will publish details of a second Transitional Centralised Network Plan, taking into account a follow-up exercise to the HND and a new NOA, by the end of 2023.[25]

Offshore Coordination Support Scheme

In April 2022, the Government announced the **Offshore Coordination Support Scheme** (OCSS).[26] The OCSS will provide grant payments to enable the development of coordinated options for offshore transmission infrastructure for eligible projects within scope of the scheme. For more information and updates on the OCSS, please visit the OCSS web pages.

National Grid Electricity Transmission has engaged in the OCSS. Applications to the OCSS closed on 28 February 2023 and are currently being assessed by Government.

ESO review

The ESO has committed to carrying out an independent study to take a fresh look at the drivers for the network reinforcements in East Anglia, alongside the various considerations that need to be accounted for.

When the ESO review concludes, we will carefully consider its findings and backcheck our proposals against any recommendations.

Regardless of how offshore coordination is developed, major onshore development and electricity network reinforcement is likely to still be necessary. To put this into perspective, successfully delivering the Government's 50 GW of offshore wind ambition will require significant new onshore and new offshore electricity transmission network being consented and delivered within this decade across the east side of the country.

23. Offshore Transmission Network Review: Future Framework, HM Government, July 2023 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1173547/otnr-future-framework-consultation-response-and-recommendations.pdf
24. Holistic Network Design (HND) Report, Electricity System Operator, July 2022 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/262681/download
25. ESO offshore coordination update, Electricity System Operator, June 2023 https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/281131/download
26. The Offshore Coordination Support Scheme, HM Government, December 2022 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/offshore-coordination-support-scheme

Ofgem Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) framework

Ofgem (the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets) is the Government regulator for gas and electricity markets in Great Britain, whose role is to protect consumers now and in the future by working to deliver a greener, fairer energy system.

In 2022 Ofgem held a consultation on how it could support the accelerated delivery of the strategic electricity transmission network upgrades needed to meet the Government's 2030 renewable electricity generation ambitions.

As part of the **Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) framework**, Sea Link has been targeted with an optimal delivery date of 2030.[27] We've been given an ambitious target because this grid upgrade is needed urgently to support a fairer, greener and cleaner energy system and to contribute to more affordable energy bills.

In ASTI and the NOA, Sea Link is referred to as SCD1.

27. Decision on accelerating onshore electricity transmission investment, Ofgem, December 2022 https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/decision-accelerating-onshore-electricity-transmission-investment

7. Coordination with other projects in the area

Alongside National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)'s proposals for Sea Link, there are two other electricity link projects being proposed in the Suffolk area – these are National Grid Ventures' (NGV) LionLink[28] and Nautilus projects[* 29].

There is also EDF Energy's Sizewell C nuclear power station, and proposed windfarm connections by Scottish Power Renewables (SPR).

Our proposals in Suffolk have been developed for Sea Link as a standalone project, but are also viable for co-location of up to two further projects. We have considered the potential for co-locating with other projects in the following areas:

- the converter station site at Saxmundham
- the high voltage direct current and high voltage alternating current cable corridors
- the landfall location.

We are showing sufficient space within the Order Limits and Limits of Deviation at the proposed converter station site near Saxmundham to allow us to construct our converter station and associated landscaping in any one of a number of positions. Flexibility on the final position of our converter station would allow us to choose the most suitable site for our converter station, even if up to two other converter stations have already been built on the site by other projects. While we are showing illustrative examples of how the converter station layout near Saxmundham might look (see Chapter 11), our proposals would allow us to construct our converter station in any one of a number of positions within the site area.

Draft Order Limits form the current anticipated boundary of the entire area within which Sea Link could take place.

Limits of Deviation lie within the Draft Order Limits, they give us flexibility when constructing the project in case of unforeseen circumstances (such as unexpected environmental constraints), they allow us to move infrastructure within the Draft Order Limits. We would not need all of the land within the draft order limits but permanent infrastructure could be installed within the Limits of Deviation.

Our draft Order Limits and Limits of Deviation similarly include the option of constructing additional ducts within the cable corridor to accommodate cables for other projects, if required. The proposed landfall point between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness can also accommodate up to two further projects, should this location be chosen by National Grid Ventures' projects.

Our Preliminary environmental information report (PEIR)[30] considers the proposed Project in isolation, and also considers options where the proposed Project is delivered with various forms of co-location with National Grid Ventures' projects.

28. LionLink, National Grid Ventures, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/future-developments/lionlink
29. Nautilus, National Grid Ventures, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/interconnectors-connecting-cleaner-future/nautilus-interconnector
30. Preliminary Environmental Information Report, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

* Note that National Grid Ventures is also investigating the possibility of connecting into the Isle of Grain in Kent

Other projects and development consent

One of the questions we received following non-statutory consultation asked why the applications for Sea Link, LionLink and Nautilus cannot be brought forward together, under a single application for development consent.

There are several reasons for this. The first is around the need for the proposed Project. Sea Link forms part of The Great Grid Upgrade and is an essential network reinforcement to allow energy generated from offshore wind, nuclear power, and interconnectors to be securely and reliably transported to homes and businesses.

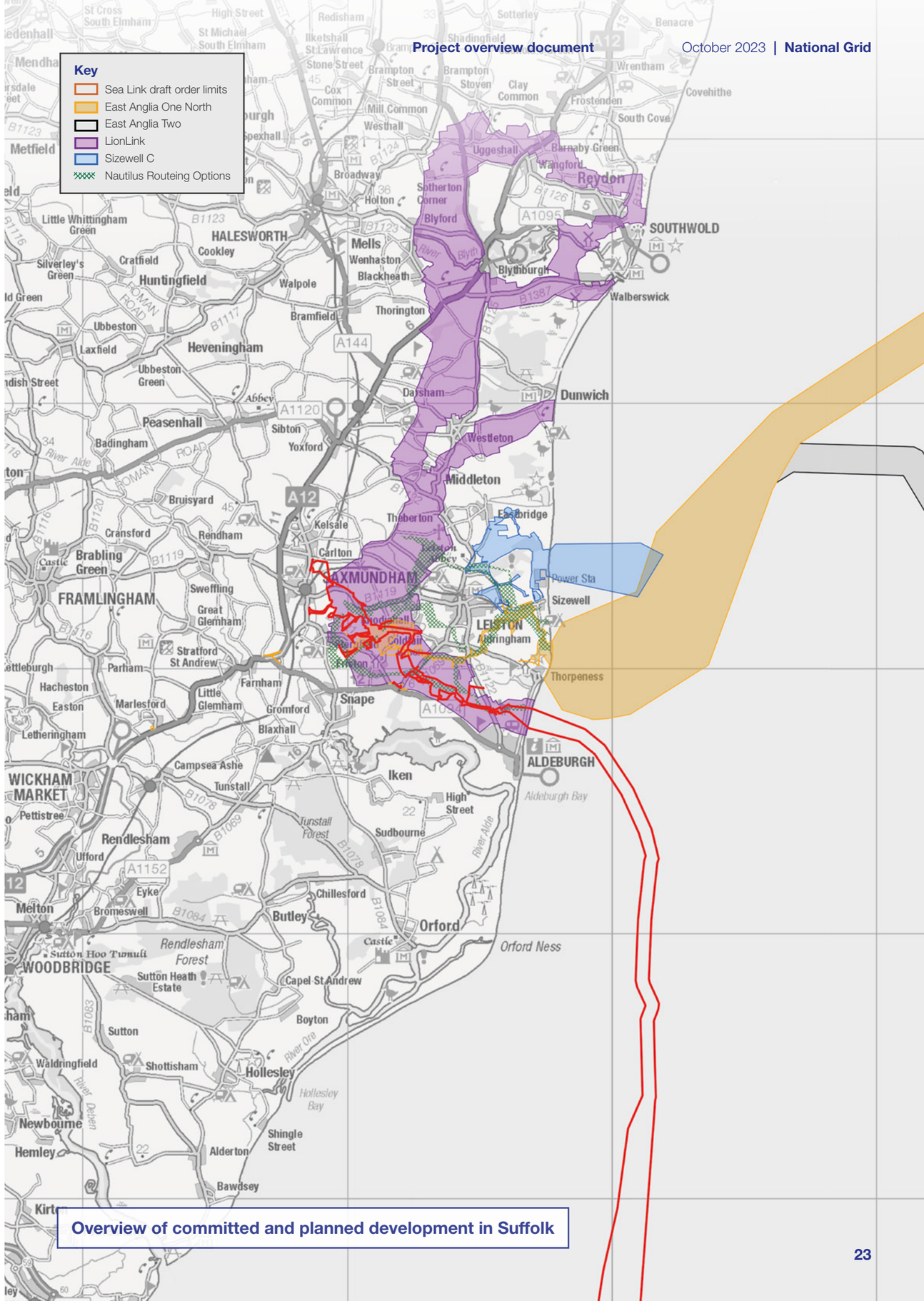
Secondly, the projects are being promoted by separate companies and are working to separate timescales through different projects teams. They are subject to different connection agreements and are at different stages in project design. Coordinating three projects at significantly different stages into a singular Development Consent Order (DCO) or DCO examination has the potential to cause delays to one or more of the projects, which could impact deliverability.

Finally, although NGET and NGV are part of National Grid Group, they are separate legal entities with individual responsibilities, and each have different roles within different regulatory and statutory environments. It is important to keep National Grid Electricity Transmission, which is the transmission licence holder regulated by Ofgem, separate from National Grid Ventures (NGV), which runs a portfolio of businesses and is subject to a different regulatory framework.

We are committed to seeking improved coordination between major infrastructure projects, and we have explored options to co-locate Sea Link infrastructure with NGV's LionLink and Nautilus projects.

We are also exploring the potential for offshore coordination as part of the Offshore Transmission Network Review 'Early Opportunities' workstream which are outlined in Chapter 6.

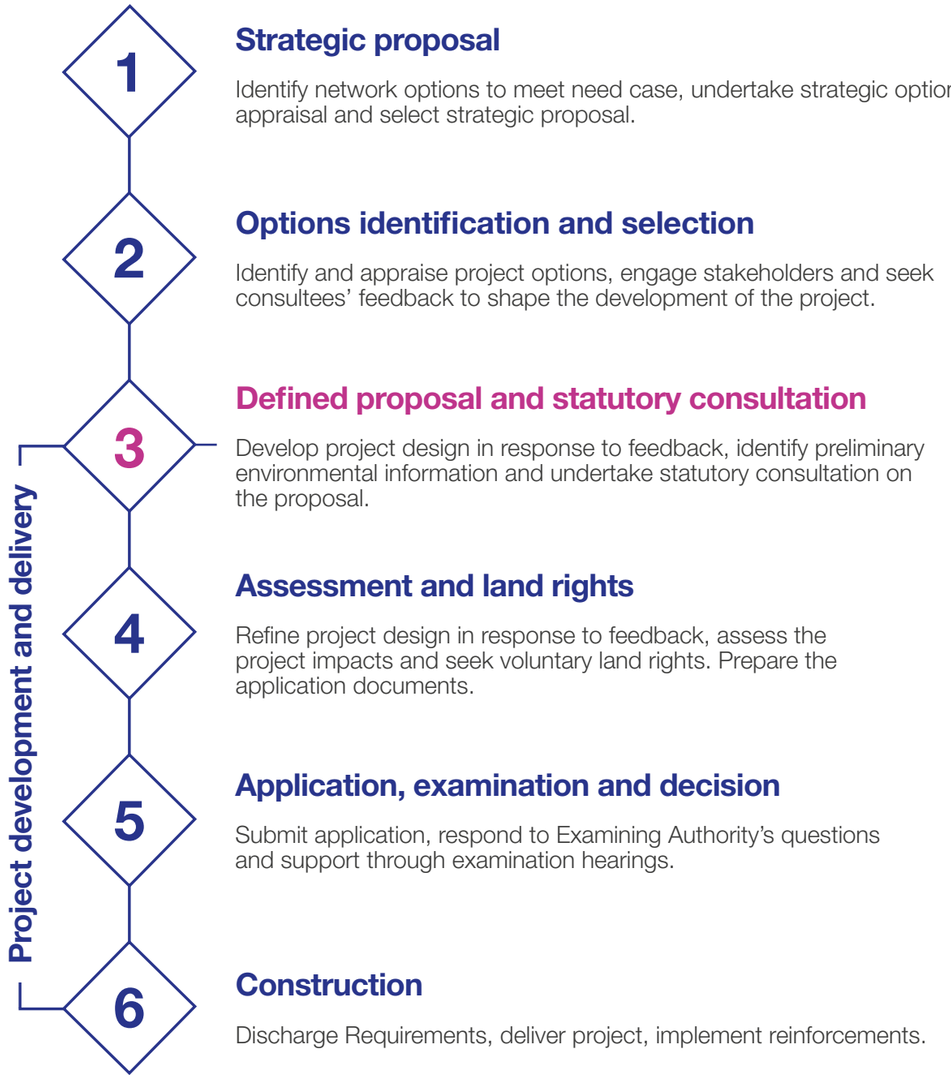
As noted above, our PEIR considers the cumulative impacts of not just our projects, but those around us, appropriate to the stage of development that these other projects have reached. When we submit our application for development consent, we will update this work on cumulative impacts based on the information available on other developments at the time. This will form part of the Environmental statement included within our application.



Overview of committed and planned development in Suffolk

8. How we develop proposals

As set out in Chapter 5, which looks at the need for Sea Link, the project was developed as a solution to the shortfalls in network capacity across Suffolk and Kent. Our approach to developing new electricity transmission proposals includes the following key stages:



As part of **Stage 1**, we started by exploring several options for each element of the project. In Suffolk, we considered:

- **three** network connection points
- **five** landfall areas
- **nine** converter station areas
- **fifteen** cable corridors between landfall areas and converter station options.

In Kent, we considered:

- **one** network connection point
- **six** landfall areas
- **two** converter station areas
- **seven** cable corridors between landfall areas and converter station options.

These options were narrowed down during our **Preliminary routeing and siting study**,[31] and we presented to you our refined proposals during our non-statutory consultation, which formed part of **Stage 2**. In Suffolk, these proposals included:

- **one** network connection point
- **two** landfall areas
- **two** converter station areas
- **five** cable corridors between landfall areas and converter station options.

Offshore, our plans included:

- **two** cable corridors.

In Kent, our plans included:

- **one** network connection point
- **one** landfall area
- **one** converter station area
- **one** cable corridor between the landfall area and the converter station option.

More information on our non-statutory consultation, including how our proposals have evolved following this consultation, can be found in Chapter 9, and in our Non-statutory consultation report.[32]

Following our non-statutory consultation, we have considered all feedback received and developed detailed plans for Sea Link. We are therefore now in **Stage 3**, meaning that we have a defined, detailed proposal for Sea Link and are undertaking a statutory public consultation on our plans. More information on what we are consulting on can be found in Chapters 10-14. You can read more about the broader process in **Our Approach to Consenting**.[33]

31. Sea Link Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2022 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/146256/download
32. Non-statutory consultation Report, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library
33. Our Approach to Consenting, National Grid Electricity Transmission, April 2022 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/142336/download

9. What has changed since our non-statutory consultation

Between 24 October 2022 and 18 December 2022, we held a non-statutory consultation.

The objectives of this were to:

- introduce the proposed Project to the public and provide an overview
- set out the options that have been considered and how decisions have been made
- present our proposed cable corridors and graduated swathes (search zones)
- present our proposed marine route and cable landing locations
- present our preferred sites for associated infrastructure, such as converter stations and substations
- explain why we need to build the reinforcement
- give stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on our work to date; and outline next steps.

Key statistics

Deposit points
Kent: **12** Suffolk: **8**
20 deposit points in total

Community invites issued
Kent: **6,624** Suffolk: **11,061**
17,685 issued in total

In-person events
Kent: **3** Suffolk: **3**
6 events in total

Stakeholder briefings
Kent: **2** Suffolk: **7**
9 briefings in total

Website visitors
11,360 visitors in total

Webinars
6 webinars in total

Enquiries to the freephone
19 enquiries in total

Contact inbox traffic
262 emails in total

Newspaper adverts
Kent: **2** Suffolk: **3**
5 newspaper ads in total

Social media adverts
Kent: **1** Suffolk: **3**
4 social adverts in total

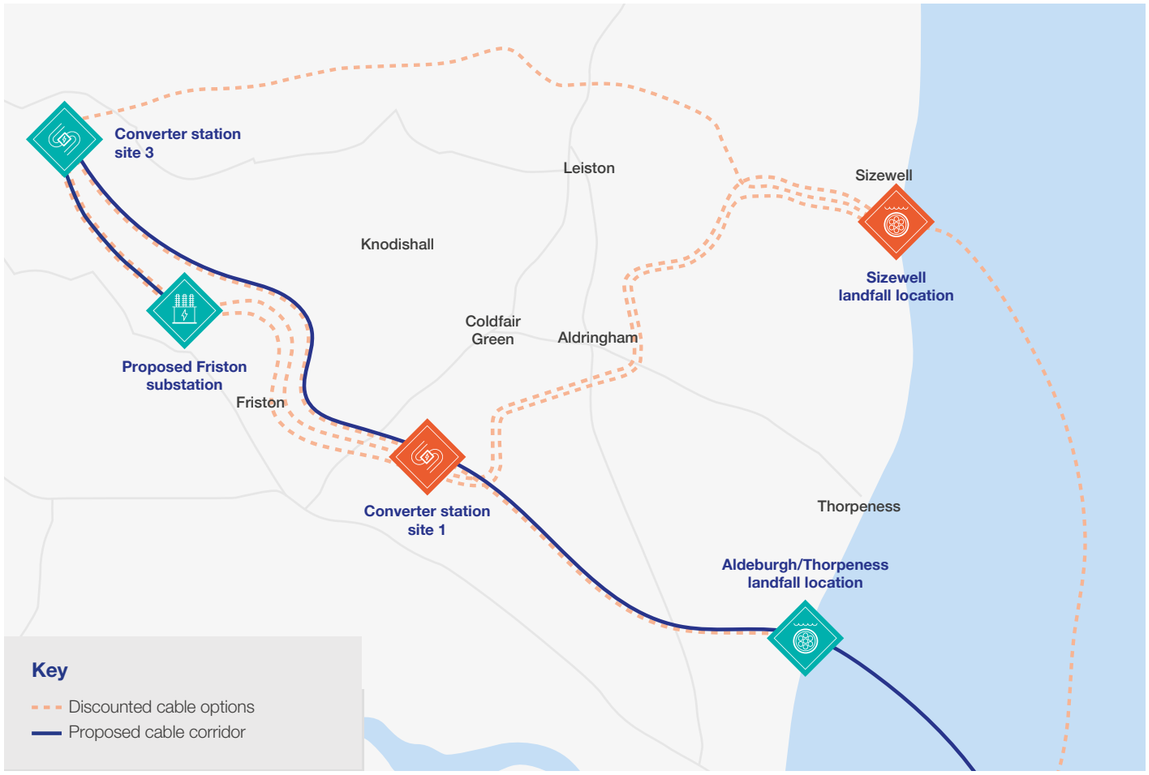
Feedback forms by area

Suffolk
340 feedback forms

Kent
120 feedback forms

The following graphics set out the changes we have made to our plans following our non-statutory consultation in 2022:

In Suffolk



What's the difference between gas insulated and air insulated switchgear?

Substations house electrical equipment which allows the system operator to control electricity flows across the grid. Every substation is unique in terms of size and layout depending on the need.

There are two main substation types, Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) and Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS). GIS uses a gas to insulate the live electrical parts allowing them to be more compact. GIS substations need a smaller footprint and the equipment is typically housed in a building. AIS is out in the open and uses the air around it as insulation resulting in equipment needing to be spaced out further apart. AIS substations require a larger footprint and are mostly outdoors.

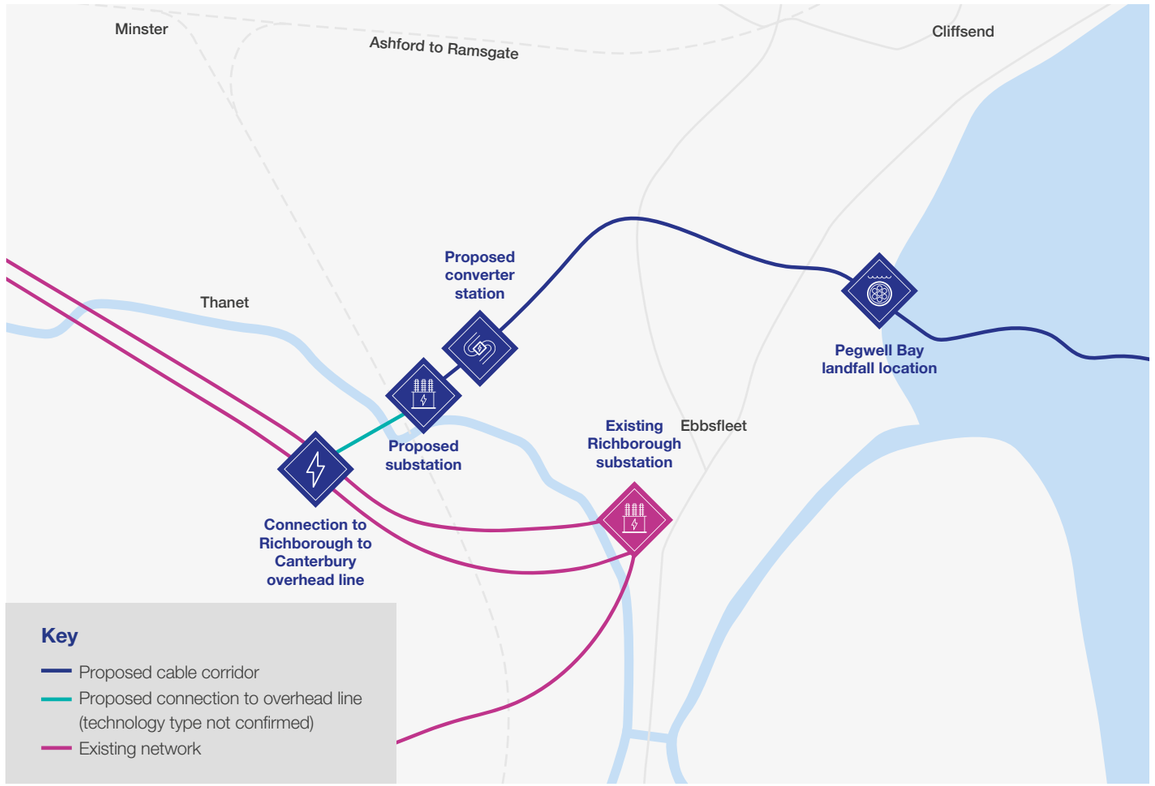
Based on feedback, further assessments and surveys we have refined our plans and are consulting on:

- a converter station location near Saxmundham, known as site 3. This location has, on balance, been identified as our preferred option to progress, rather than site 1 south of Coldfair Green. There are fewer technical challenges associated with constructing a converter station and associated underground cables at site 3 than site 1. Converter station site 3 is also further away from the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Although both sites could accommodate co-location with up to two converter stations associated with potential future National Grid Ventures' projects, site 3 was considered to offer the greatest flexibility for co-location
- a landfall between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, rather than a landfall at Sizewell. The potential landfall at Sizewell is more constrained by existing telecommunications cables, export cables for offshore windfarms, and infrastructure associated with the existing Sizewell B nuclear power station and the planned Sizewell C nuclear power station and Scottish Power Renewables offshore windfarms. The potential landfall at Sizewell is also more constrained by the sensitive bedrock reef features of the Coralline Crag. The Coralline Crag is a rocky seabed formed of shelly sands in an area of shallow water off the coast of Thorpeness, which helps provide stability to areas of the coast and to offshore sediment banks. Additionally, the landfall between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness allows for the potential co-location of up to two other cable corridors associated with potential future National Grid Ventures' projects
- including the proposed Friston substation in our proposals, to give us a comprehensive consenting position. We do however expect the proposed Friston substation to be built under the existing Scottish Power Renewables consents. We are proposing a gas insulated switchgear substation, which has a smaller footprint than the alternative air insulated version. This aligns with what we expect Scottish Power Renewables to deliver. We are also no longer proposing up to 50 metres of additional substation footprint.

Offshore

We are consulting on a single marine corridor which connects to the proposed landfall between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness in Suffolk, removing the alternative northern option which connected to the discounted landfall at Sizewell.

In Kent



We are consulting on an overhead line connection from the proposed Minster substation into the existing high voltage electricity transmission network. This is because there are technical constraints to building an underground cable in this area, including ground conditions. Building an overhead line also avoids the need to bury cables through trenchless crossings beneath a railway line and the River Stour. It also avoids the need to build a cable sealing end compound (which would be needed to transfer power from underground cables to overhead lines) in a flood zone area.

More information on the feedback received at our autumn 2022 consultation is available in our Non-statutory consultation report[34], available from our project website.

As well as the key changes we have shown in this chapter, we are also presenting detailed draft Order Limits. The draft Order Limits form the anticipated boundary of the entire area within which Sea Link could take place, including temporary and permanent works and construction accesses, along with works to existing infrastructure.

34. Non-statutory consultation Report, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

10. The proposed Project

As we prepare to apply for a Development Consent Order (which would give us permission to build, operate and maintain the proposed Project), we must undertake a 'statutory' consultation on our proposals. The following chapters set out the proposals we are consulting on at our statutory consultation.

National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) is proposing to reinforce the network between Suffolk and Kent via a new, primarily offshore, 2 gigawatt (GW) high voltage direct current (HVDC) link.

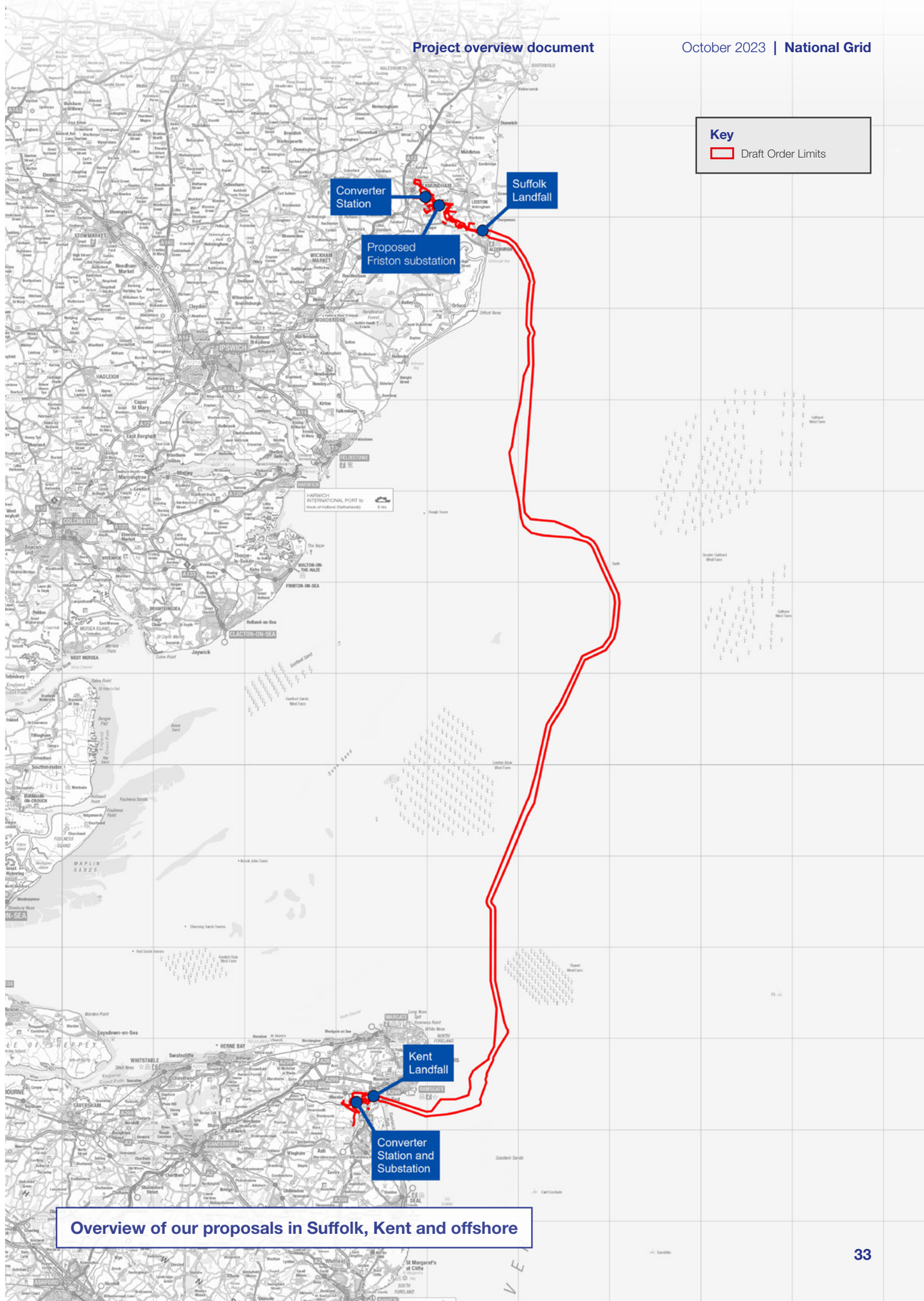
Sea Link has been designed to increase the capability of the network to carry low-carbon and renewable energy from where it is generated to homes and businesses across the country.

The proposed Project is split into three elements, which are outlined as follows:

The Suffolk onshore scheme

- a connection from the existing transmission network via the proposed Friston substation, including the National Grid part of the substation itself. The proposed Friston substation already has development consent as part of other third-party projects. If the proposed Friston substation has already been constructed under another consent, only a connection into the substation would be constructed by Sea Link
- a high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable of approximately 1.7 km in length between the proposed Friston substation and a proposed converter station (see next bullet)
- a 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station up to 26 metres high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection and railings for walkways) near Saxmundham
- a HVDC underground cable connection of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed converter station near Saxmundham, and a transition joint bay approximately 900 metres inshore from a landfall point (below) where the cable transitions from onshore to offshore technology
- a landfall on the Suffolk coast (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness).

Our proposals in Suffolk have been developed for Sea Link as a standalone project, but also include opportunities to co-locate infrastructure for up to two other projects at the converter station location, along the cable corridors and at the landfall location.



Overview of our proposals in Suffolk, Kent and offshore

The offshore scheme

- approximately 130 km of subsea HVDC cable, running between the Suffolk landfall location (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness), and the Kent landfall location at Pegwell Bay.

What is the difference between high voltage alternating current (HVAC) and high voltage direct current (HVDC)?

Power is generated and largely transmitted across our electrical system as HVAC. Alternating current power is efficient for distributing energy across the country, and into homes and businesses.

HVDC is more efficient when transporting electricity over longer distances, as direct current cables have greater capacity for high-power transmission.

What is a transition joint bay?

Transition joint bays are used to connect an onshore cable to an offshore cable. These are generally around 10 to 15 metres in length, 5 metres in width (dependant on design requirements) and are located near the coast.

The Kent onshore scheme

- a landfall point on the Kent coast at Pegwell Bay
- a transition joint bay approximately 800 metres inshore to transition from offshore HVDC cable to onshore HVDC cable, before continuing underground for approximately 2 km to a proposed new converter station (below)
- a 2 GW HVDC converter station, up to 26 metres high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection and railings for walkways), near Minster. A new substation would be located immediately adjacent
- removal of up to 1 km of existing HVAC overhead line, and installation of approximately 2.25 km of new HVAC overhead line from the converter station and substation near Minster and the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line.

Other works required

The proposed Project also includes modifications to sections of existing overhead lines in Suffolk and Kent, diversions of third-party assets, and land drainage from the construction and operational areas. It also includes opportunities for environmental mitigation, compensation and enhancement (such as hedgerow creation, native tree planting or funding local wildlife groups).

The construction phase will involve various temporary construction activities including working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, storage, accesses, bellmouths, and haul roads, as well as watercourse crossings and the diversion of public rights of way.

35. Sea Link Preliminary environmental information report, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library
36. General arrangement plans, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library
37. Guide to interacting with our consultation plans, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

Where can I find more information?

The following chapters provide a detailed summary of our plans. There are also a number of technical documents which will provide a greater level of detail. For a full description of the proposed Project please see the Preliminary environmental information report (PEIR)[35].

For plans of the proposed Project, please see the plans and drawings we have prepared. These can be found in the appendices of this document or on our project website, **nationalgrid.com/sealink**. These plans are titled 'General arrangement plan'[36] and 'Typical design drawings'. To help you interact with these plans, please see our Guide to interacting with our consultation plans.[37]

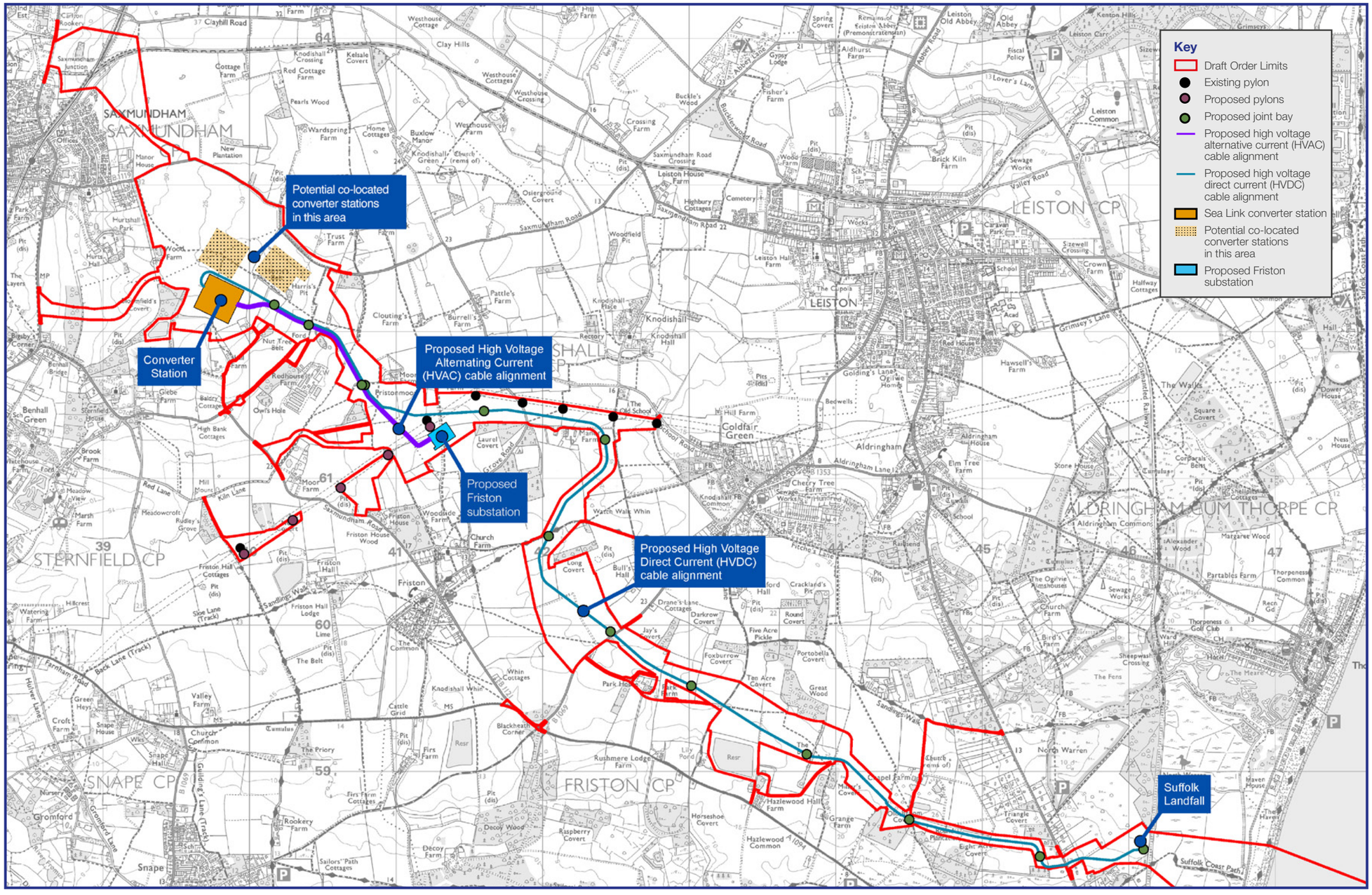
Draft Order Limits

The consultation plans show the infrastructure proposed within Sea Link's draft Order Limits. These limits form the current anticipated boundary of the entire area within which Sea Link could take place, including temporary and permanent works, as well as the works to the existing infrastructure.

Limits of Deviation

The Limits of Deviation (LoD) lie within the draft Order Limits. LoD are a common feature of linear infrastructure projects. They can provide the necessary flexibility when constructing the authorised development, reducing the risk that the proposed Project as approved cannot later be implemented for unforeseen engineering or environmental reasons. For example, previously unidentified poor ground conditions may require us to place infrastructure in a different location than originally anticipated within the LoD. Our Limits of Deviation allow for the co-location of infrastructure with other projects if necessary.

11. Our plans in Suffolk

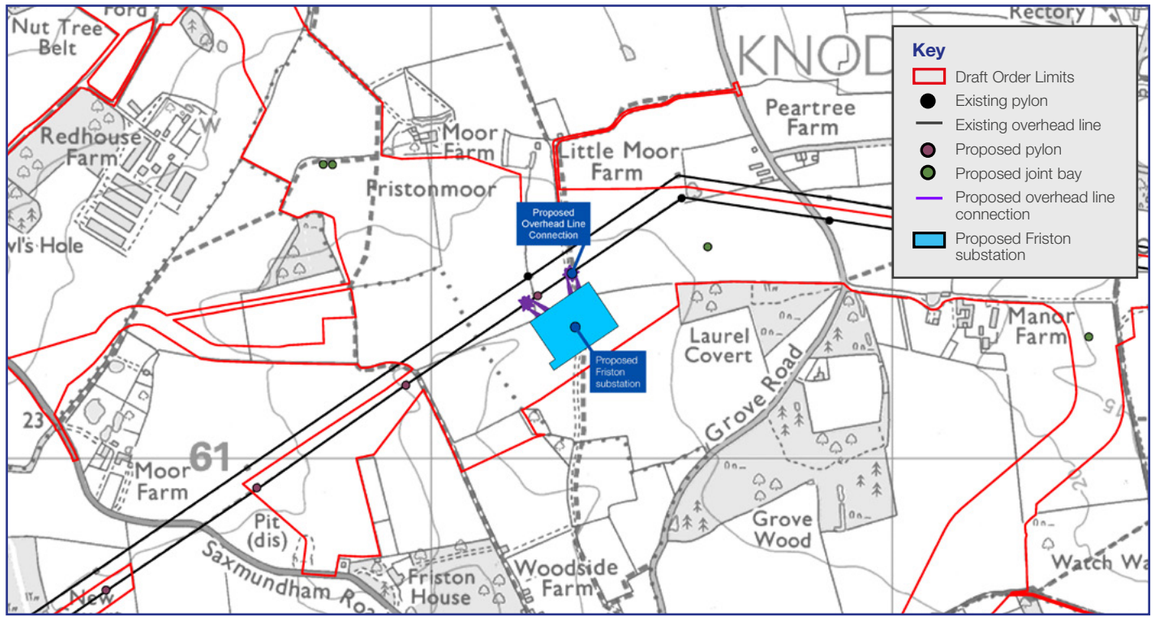


In Suffolk, our proposals include:

- a connection from the existing transmission network via the proposed Friston substation, including the substation itself. The proposed Friston substation already has development consent as part of other third-party projects. If the proposed Friston substation has already been constructed under another consent, only a connection into the substation would be constructed by Sea Link
- a high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable of approximately 1.7 km in length between the proposed Friston substation and a proposed converter station
- a 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station up to 26 metres high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection and railings for walkways) near Saxmundham
- a HVDC underground cable connection of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed converter station near Saxmundham, and a transition joint bay approximately 900 metres inshore from a landfall point where the cable transitions from onshore to offshore technology
- a landfall on the Suffolk coast (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness).

Our proposals in Suffolk have been developed for Sea Link as a standalone project, but also include opportunities to co-locate infrastructure for up to two further projects at the converter station, along the cable corridors and at the landfall location.

Proposed Friston substation



The proposed Friston substation would be located immediately to the north of the village of Friston, adjacent to and to the south of the two existing 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead lines, which run parallel from Sizewell (approximately 6 km to the east) and Bramford substation (approximately 35 km to the south west).

Scottish Power Renewables already has consent for the proposed Friston substation as part of its East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two offshore wind farm projects.

We are however including the entire National Grid Electricity Transmission substation in our proposals for Sea Link, to give us a comprehensive consenting position. We do however still expect the proposed Friston substation to be built under the existing Scottish Power Renewables consents.

The proposed Friston substation will be constructed using gas insulated switchgear technology, with a footprint of up to 16,800 square meters.

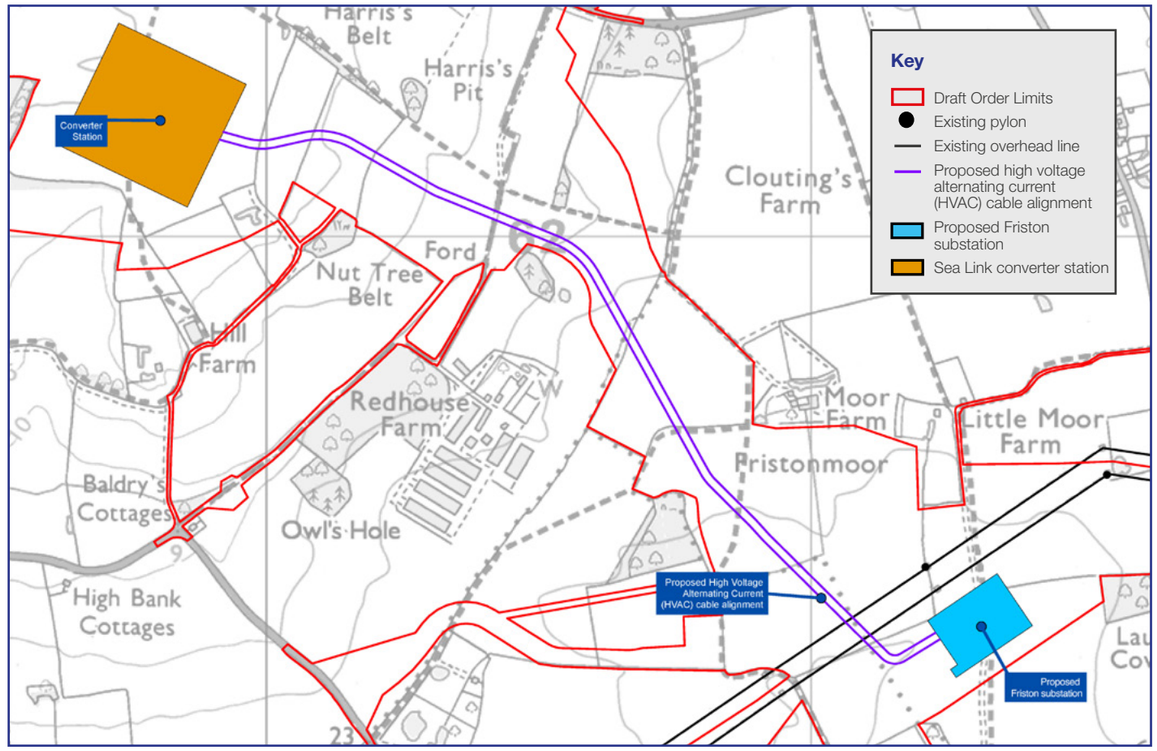
The construction of the substation would also require modification works to the adjacent existing 400 kV overhead line.

What is a substation?

Substations house electrical equipment which enables the system operator to control the flow of electricity. These substations come in many sizes and configurations depending on the need.

Substations are used to transport power securely from where it is generated to where it is needed. Substations are also key in helping to isolate and fix faults and allow maintenance to be undertaken safely on the electricity network.

High voltage alternating current cables



From the proposed substation, there would be a stretch of high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable running northwest, south of the B1119 and north of the B1121, towards proposed converter station. The HVAC cable stretch would be approximately 1.7 km in length.

The HVAC cable stretch in this section would include the eight cable ducts required for Sea Link. Our proposals also currently include an option to construct an additional 16 cable ducts to accommodate the HVAC cables of up to two potential future National Grid Ventures' projects. This could avoid the need for these projects to undertake this construction work themselves. The works to install the cables themselves in the additional ducts would need to be subject to separate project consents obtained by National Grid Ventures.

Once completed and operational, the only above ground infrastructure associated with the cable ducts would be occasional cable joint bay kiosks.

What is a cable joint bay?

Cable joint bay kiosks are needed at intervals of approximately 500 metres to 1,000 metres when constructing underground cables, to allow for individual sections of cable to be joined together. In areas where a cable joint bay kiosks is needed, a wider cable corridor may be required.

What is a cable duct?

Cable ducts are sections of tubing where electricity cables are placed.

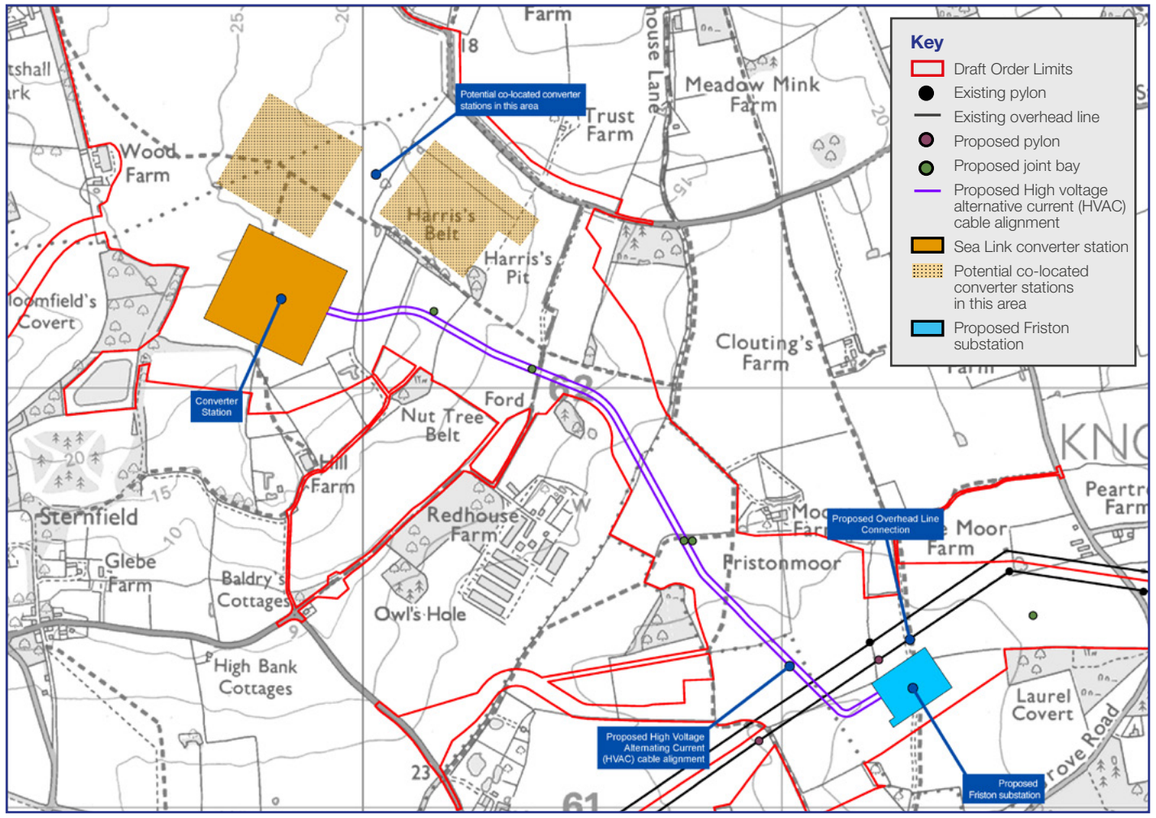
What is a converter station?

Converter stations convert alternating current into direct current and vice versa.

What is a link box?

A link box is a sealed enclosure for connecting cable joints that helps to minimise the loss of current along an underground cable.

Converter station



The alternating current cables would run into the proposed converter station site located to the east of Saxmundham, and to the south of the B1119. A single converter station would be required for Sea Link.

The indicative location of the converter station has been identified to utilise the existing screening of Bloomfield's Covert and the tree belt to the south of the site, reducing the potential for landscape and visual effects from the settlement of Saxmundham, B1119 and individual properties to the south, west and north of the site. Siting the converter station in this location also utilises the existing screening to reduce the potential for setting effects on a number of Grade II Listed properties to the west and south of the site.

We are currently including sufficient space within the converter station site to allow us to construct our converter station and associated landscaping in any one of a number of positions. This flexibility would allow us to coordinate the location of our converter station with up to two additional converter stations associated with potential future National Grid Ventures projects (LionLink and Nautilus), and in response to unforeseen circumstances such as the discovery of archaeology of national or international value or unforeseen ground conditions.

Although the location of the converter station within the site area is not fixed, we are showing illustrative examples of how the Sea Link converter station layout may look at a location to the south of the wider site.

We are also illustratively showing where up to three converter stations could be located within the wider site. In this way, while only a single converter station is required for Sea Link, we are showing how up to three projects could potentially co-locate with each other and co-locate within the same site. We are seeking your views on this approach, along with the design principles that may inform the appearance of the proposed converter station.

The National Grid Electricity Transmission converter station itself would be up to 26 metres high, plus roof mounted equipment, which may include lightning protection, aerials, and walkways. The total land needed within the perimeter fence for the converter station would be approximately 6.5 hectares. This includes the various buildings that form the converter station and the internal roadway, but does not include landscaping or mitigation such as planting or attenuation ponds, or land required for construction.

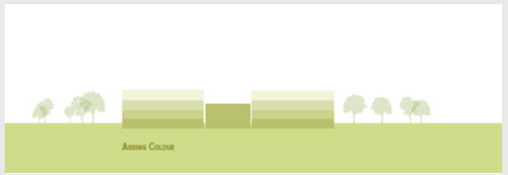
The individual buildings that form the converter station can be designed in various ways. These configurations are subject to further design, and there may be opportunities to incorporate architectural approaches into the design of the converter station buildings included within our application for development consent.

We are seeking feedback on the design approaches that we could explore once we enter the more detailed design stages. The following illustrations show some possible design principles that may work at the Saxmundham converter station site, based on an initial architectural review. More information can be found in the Converter station design[38] - background to potential architectural approaches document.

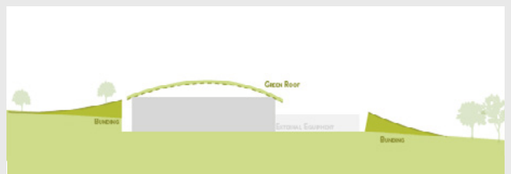
38. Converter station design - background to potential architectural approaches, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

Enhanced elevations

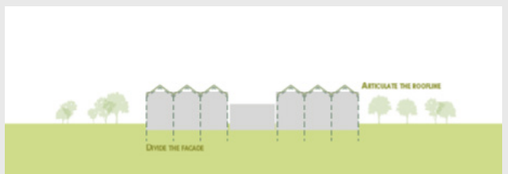
Colour



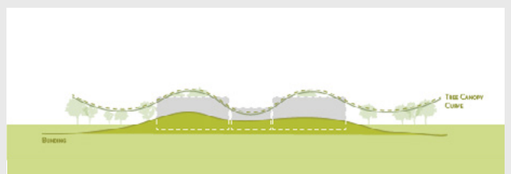
Green roof



Agricultural barns



Colour and curve



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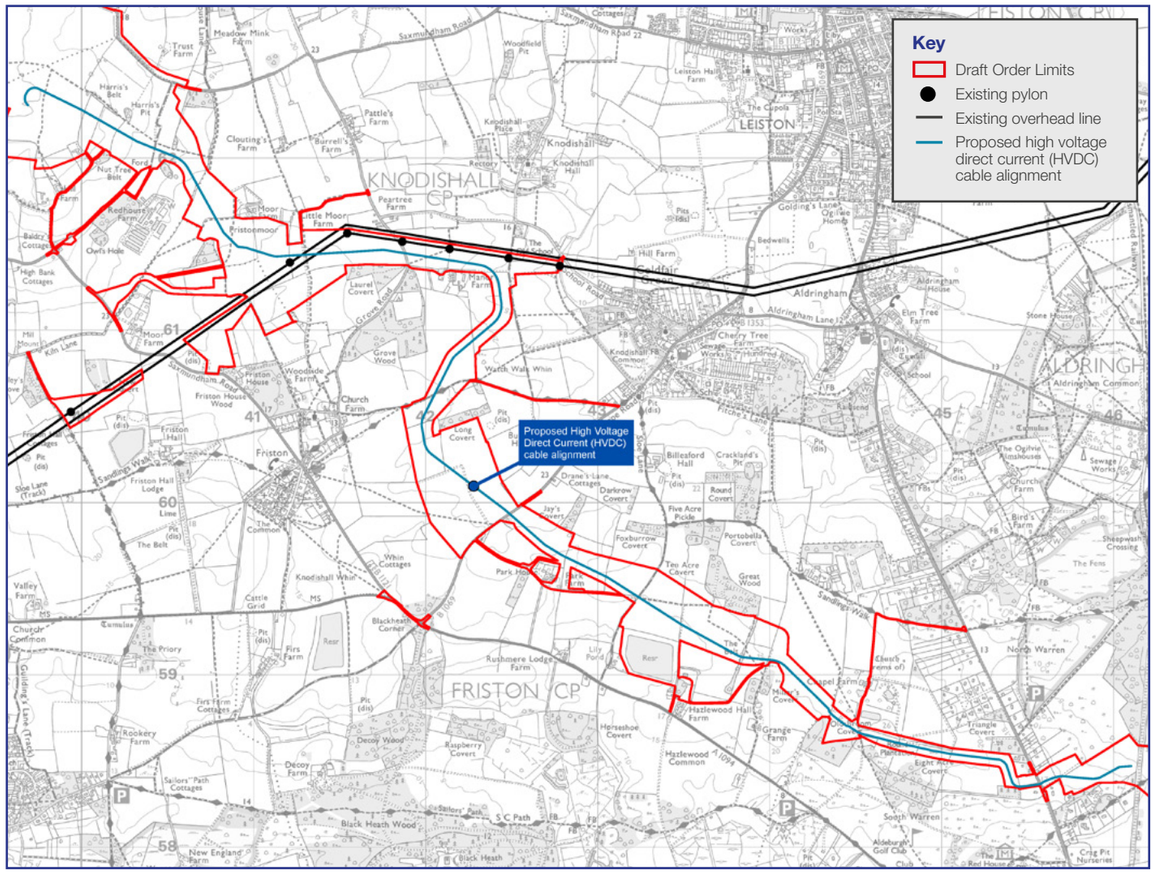
High voltage direct current cables

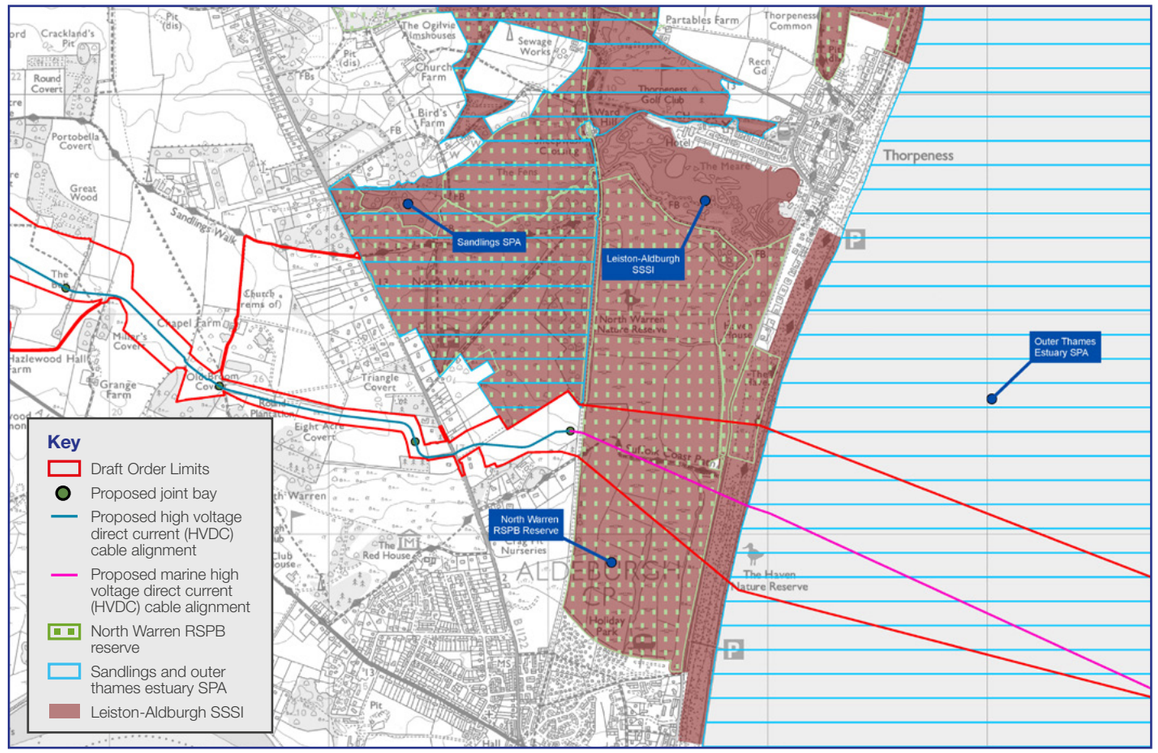


The high voltage direct current (HVDC) underground cable would leave the proposed converter station site and run in an easterly direction to the north of the proposed Friston substation, before crossing Grove Road and continuing to the south of School Road. The HVDC cable would then turn and run in a southerly direction to the east of Friston until it crosses the B1069/Snape Road. The route would continue in an easterly direction, south of Great Wood and north of the A1094, and on to the north of Old Broom Covert and Eight Acre Covert, crossing the B1122/ Leiston Road and continuing to the transition joint bay. The HVDC cable stretch would be approximately 10 km in length.

The HVDC cable stretch in this location would include the three cable ducts required by Sea Link.

Our proposals also include an option to construct an additional eight cable ducts, to accommodate HVDC cables associated with potential future National Grid Ventures' projects. The works to install the cables themselves in the additional ducts would need to be subject to separate project consents obtained by National Grid Ventures.

Landfall



The transition joint bay (TJB) would be located to the north of Warren Hill Land and south of the Sandlings Special Protection Area. The TJB would be approximately 900 metres inshore from the landfall point. At the TJB, the high voltage direct current cable would transition from onshore to offshore technology.

The cable would run east out from the TJB for approximately another 900 m, beneath Leiston-Aldeburgh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and North Warren RSPB Reserve, Thorpe Road, and then out to sea. The landfall itself would be located north of the settlement of Aldeburgh and south of the settlement of Thorpeness.

To reduce the impact on ecology, we would utilise trenchless crossing techniques for installing cables beneath the SSSI and RSPB Reserve designated sites.

The landfall would include the four cable ducts required by Sea Link. Our proposals also include an option to construct an additional six cable ducts, associated with potential future National Grid Ventures' projects. The works to install the cables themselves in the additional ducts would need to be subject to separate project consents obtained by National Grid Ventures.

What is a transition joint bay?

Transition joint bays are used to connect an onshore cable to an offshore cable. These are generally around 10 to 15 metres in length, 5 metres in width (dependent on design requirements) and are located near the coast.

What is a trenchless crossing?

We intend to use an underground (trenchless) construction method to install the cable.

Trenchless crossing techniques allow us to install our cable whilst minimising interaction with the land surface, which reduces the impact on wildlife, traffic, and local communities.

12. Our marine proposals

Our marine proposals include:

- approximately 130 km of subsea high voltage direct current cable (HVDC), running between the Suffolk landfall location (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness), and the Kent landfall location at Pegwell Bay.

National Grid Electricity Transmission has considered and assessed a number of options for the marine route corridor. These options have been narrowed down to a single marine route corridor, approximately 130 km of subsea HVDC cable, running between the Suffolk landfall location (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness), and the Kent landfall location at Pegwell Bay.

The marine HVDC cables would be routed south from the Suffolk landfall through a section of the Outer Thames Estuary Special Protection Area and to the west of the existing Greater Gabbard and Galloper offshore wind farms. They would head east through the Sunk Traffic Separation Scheme, turning south to route around Margate and Long Sands Special Areas of Conservation and between a number of mineral aggregate sites. The marine HVDC cables would then continue south to the east of the London Array offshore wind farm and west of the Thanet offshore wind farm before turning west to make landfall in Pegwell Bay.

The subsea cable and associated infrastructure would be installed along our proposed marine corridor, with the exact alignment of the cables informed by further marine surveys and statutory consultation feedback.

Our corridors have been developed through consultation with marine stakeholders and technical and ecological surveys.

Other factors that have influenced the marine corridor include:

- reducing interactions with ecologically sensitive areas, anchorages and areas of archaeological importance
- avoiding offshore infrastructure
- minimising crossings of other cables and pipelines
- minimising interaction with other marine users, such as shipping and navigation and fishing activities.

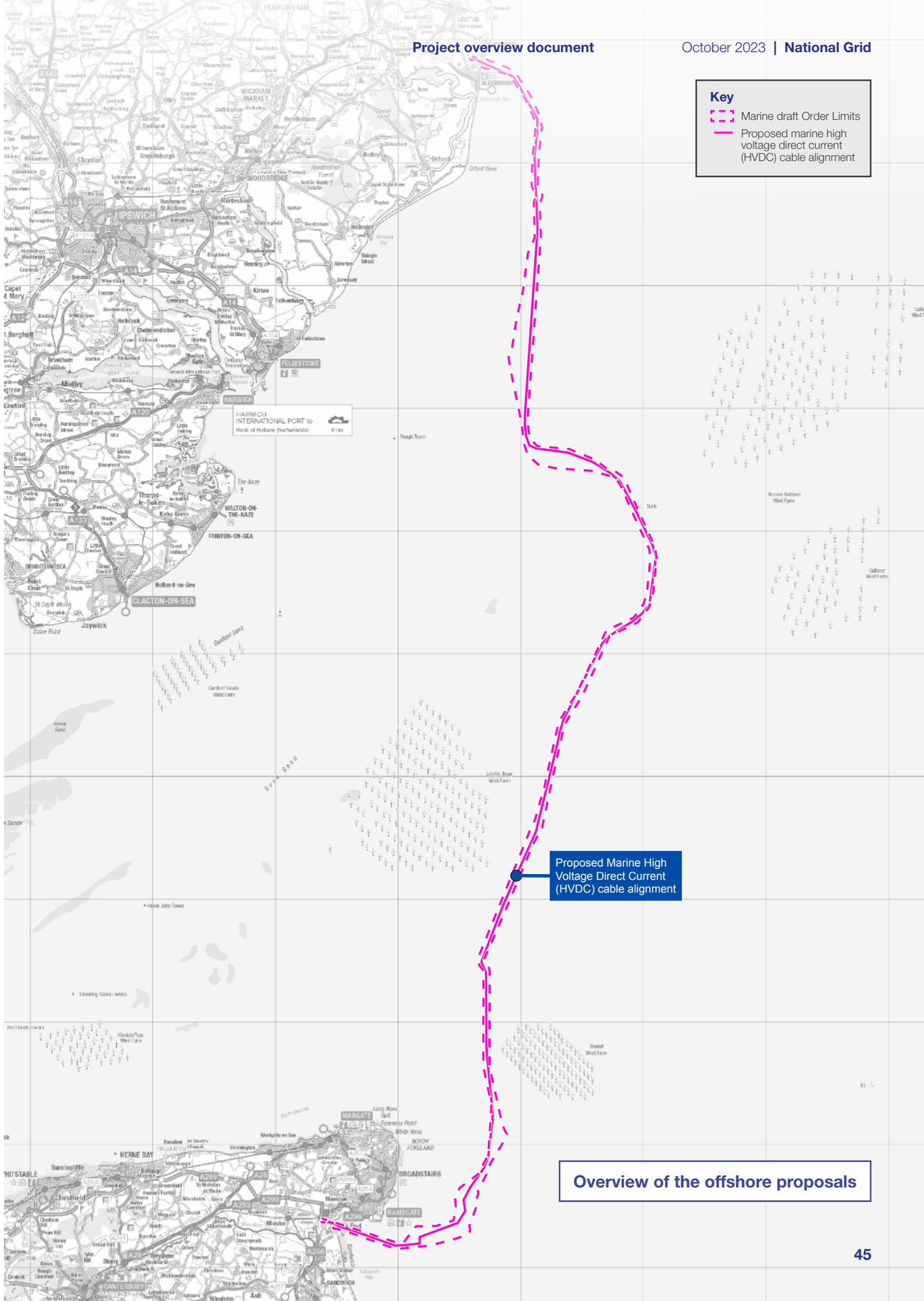
How are subsea cables installed?

Before we install any subsea cables, we undertake surveys of the installation corridor to refine the route. These surveys aim to identify and confirm the location of anything that could impact our ability to lay the cables, such as unexploded ordnance. Following these surveys, the installation route is then cleared, removing items such as boulders and out of service cables.

There are two methods that can be used to install a marine cable. Both methods use a specialist cable installation vessel. The first method is called pre-lay trenching; a plough is used to create a trench or trenches into which the cables are laid prior to the trench(es) being backfilled. The second method is called post lay trenching; here the cable is laid on the seabed and a trenching tool follows the cable lowering it into the seabed.

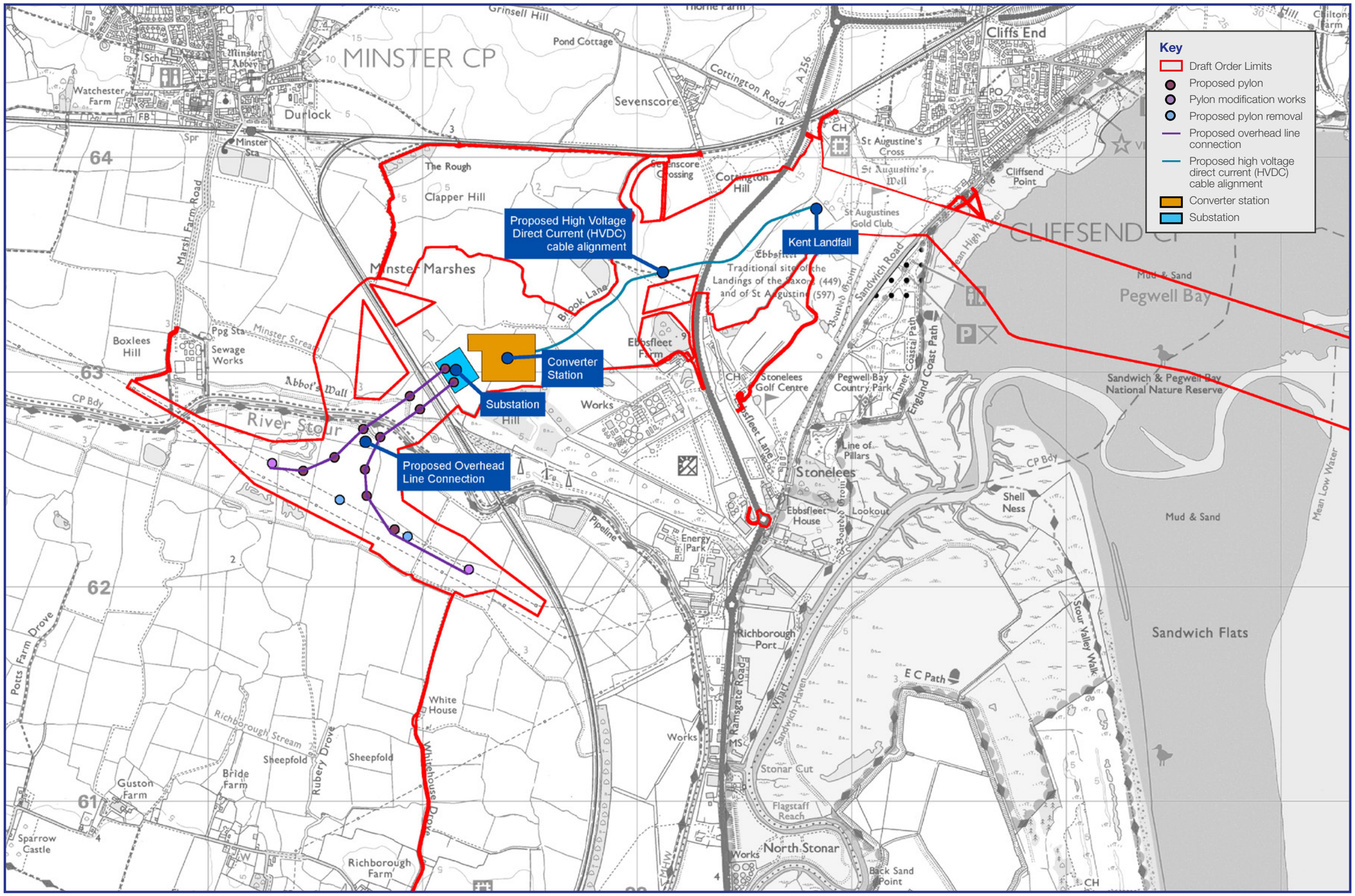
In some areas where the seabed is unsuitable for burial, e.g., bedrock or where the cable is required to cross existing infrastructure, the cable may be protected using rock placement or other external protection systems.

More information about the subsea cable installation process can be found on the Construction page of our website.



Overview of the offshore proposals

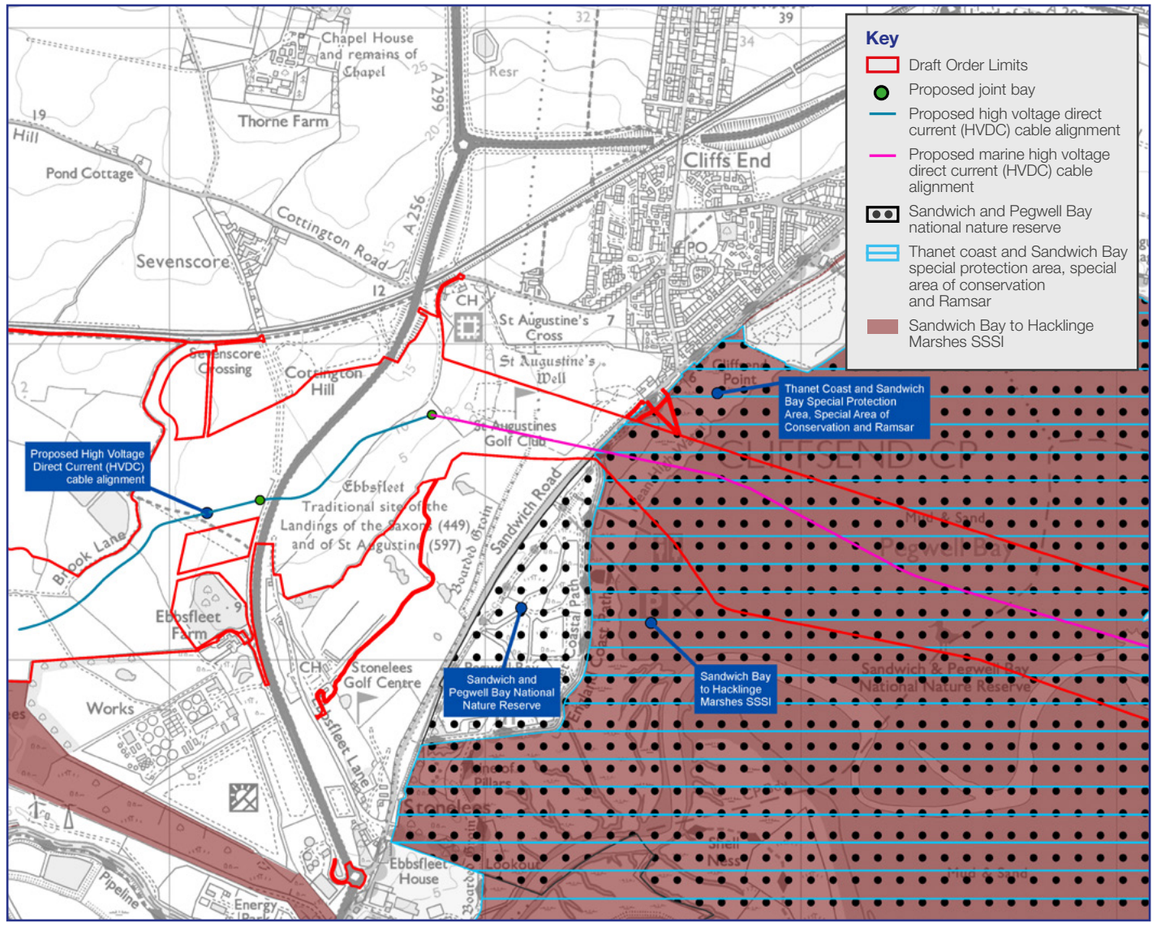
13. Our proposals in Kent



In Kent, our proposals include:

- a landfall point on the Kent coast at Pegwell Bay
- a transition joint bay approximately 800 metres inshore to transition from offshore high voltage direct current (HVDC) cable to onshore HVDC cable, before continuing underground for approximately 2 km to a proposed new converter station (see next bullet)
- a 2 GW HVDC converter station, up to 26 metres high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection & railings for walkways), near Minster. A new substation would be located immediately adjacent
- removal of up to 1 km of existing high voltage alternating current (HVAC) overhead line, and installation of approximately 2.25 km of new HVAC overhead line from the converter station and substation near Minster and the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line.

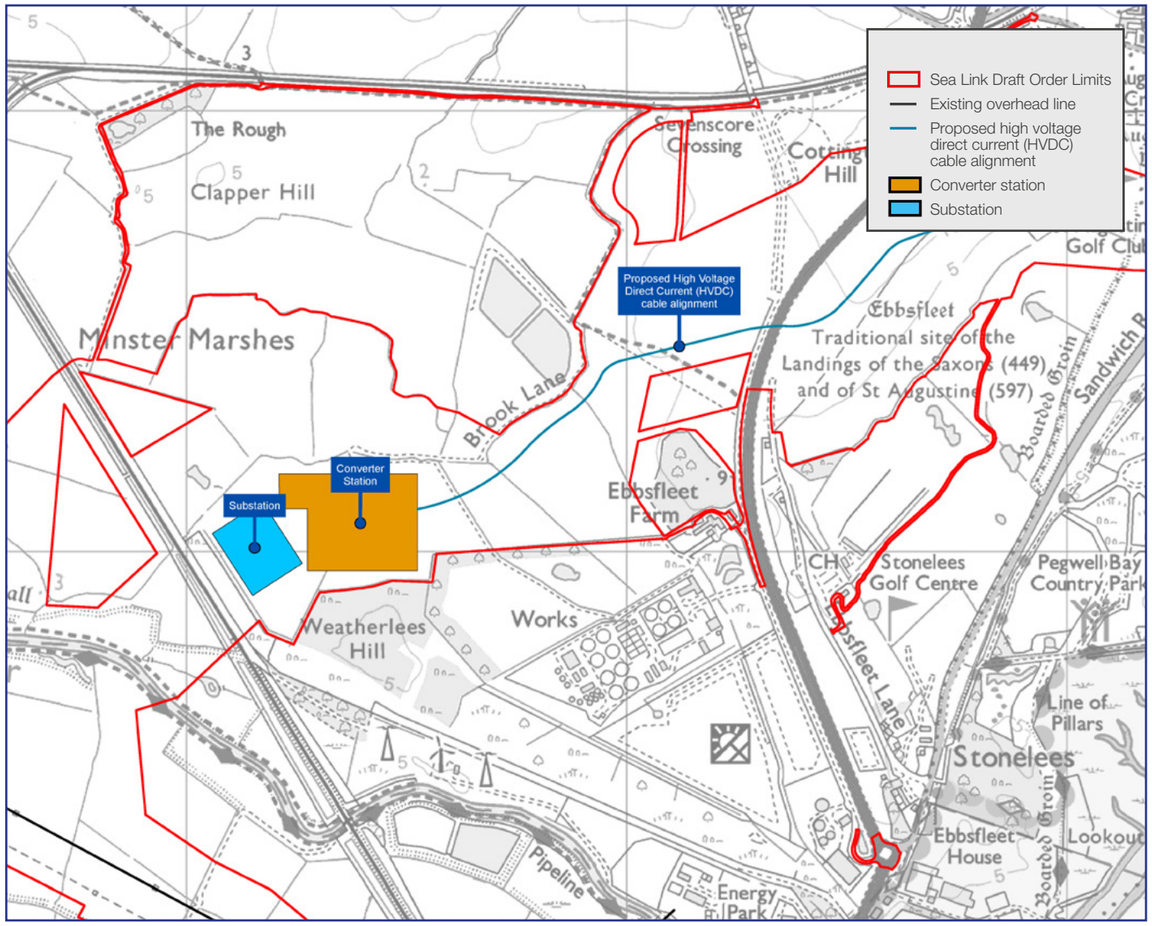
Landfall



The proposed landfall is located within Pegwell Bay, to the south of the settlement of Cliffsend. The high voltage direct current (HVDC) cables would cross under Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve, Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area and Ramsar, Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation, Sandwich Road, St Augustine's Golf Club and Stonelees Golf Course.

To reduce the impact on ecology, we would utilise trenchless crossing techniques for installing cable beneath the saltmarsh habitat within the Pegwell Bay designated sites listed in the previous paragraph. The HVDC cable would continue using trenchless technology to a transition joint bay (TJB) located to the west of St Augustine's Golf Course and Stonelees Golf Centre, approximately 800 metres inland. At the TJB, the HVDC cable would transition from offshore to onshore technology.

High voltage direct current (HVDC) cables



From the transition joint bay, the approximately 2 km HVDC cable would pass under the A256/Richborough Way and continue west towards the proposed substation (outlined on p.50).

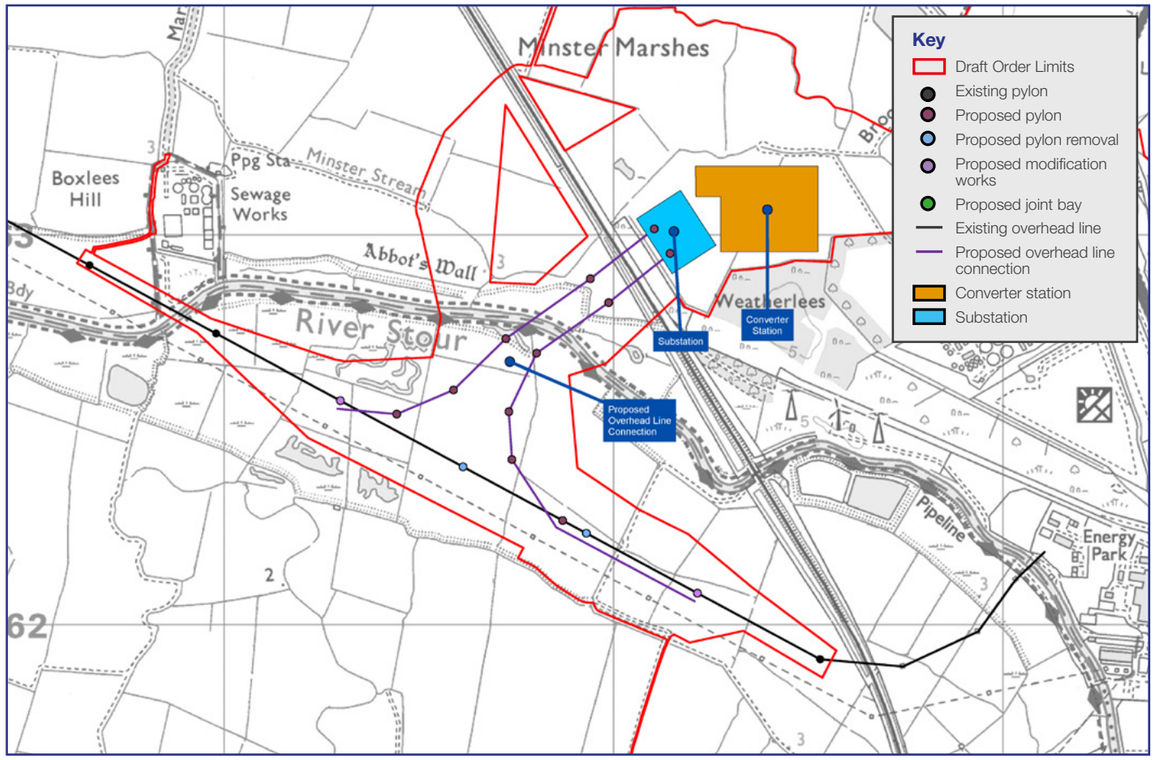
What is a transition joint bay?

Transition joint bays are used to connect an onshore cable to an offshore cable. These are generally around 10 to 15 metres in length, 5 metres in width (dependant on design) requirements, and are located near the coast.

What is a trenchless crossing?

Trenchless crossing techniques allow us to install our cable whilst minimising interaction with the land surface, which reduces the impact on wildlife, traffic, and local communities.

Substation and converter station



The proposed Minster 400 kilovolt substation and proposed Minster converter station would be located to the north of Richborough Energy Park and a section of Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest, and to the west of the A256.

The converter station itself would be up to 26 metres high, plus roof mounted equipment, which may include lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials and similar small scale operational equipment. The total area within the perimeter fence for the converter station, plus the adjacent substation, will be approximately 9 hectares. This includes the various buildings that form the converter station and substation, and the internal roadway, but does not include landscaping or mitigation such as planting or attenuation ponds, or land required for construction.

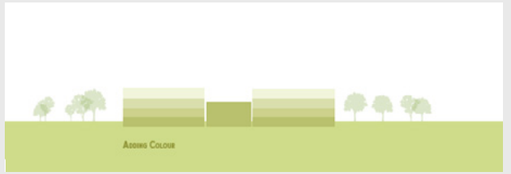
The individual buildings that form the converter station and substation can be designed in various ways. These configurations are subject to further design, and there may be opportunities to incorporate architectural approaches into the design of the converter station and substation buildings included within our application for development consent. We are seeking feedback on the design approaches that we could explore once we enter the more detailed design stages.

The following illustrations show some possible design principles that may work at the converter station and substation site, based on an initial architectural review. More information can be found in the Converter station design[39] - background to potential architectural approaches document.

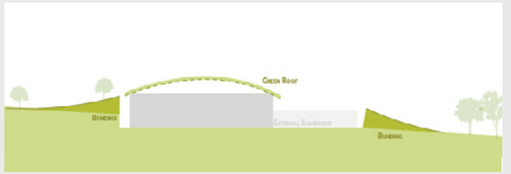
39. Converter station design - background to potential architectural approaches, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

Enhanced elevations

Colour

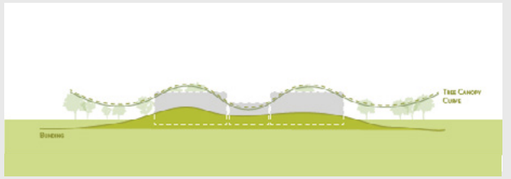


Green roof



Agricultural barns

Colour and curve



Kinetic

What is a substation?

Substations house electrical equipment which enables the system operator to control the flow of electricity. These substations come in many sizes and configurations depending on the need.

Substations are used to transport power securely from where it is generated to where it is needed. Substations are also key in helping to isolate and fix faults and allow maintenance to be undertaken safely on the electricity network.

What is a converter station?

Converter stations convert alternating current into direct current and vice versa.

Overhead line connection

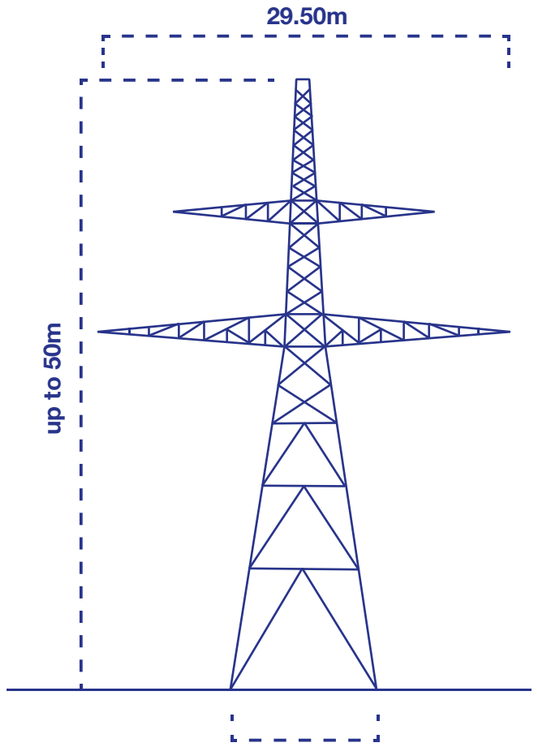
The high voltage alternating current (HVAC) connection from the proposed 400 kilovolt (kV) substation at Minster into the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400 kV overhead line would be made via approximately 2.25 km of new overhead line.

The proposed new section of overhead line would be routed to the southwest of the proposed converter station and substation site, crossing the River Stour and a section of railway, and connecting into the existing overhead line. The construction of the new connection would also require modification works to the adjacent existing 400 kV overhead line.

What would a new overhead line look like?

Overhead electricity transmission lines typically involve building new steel lattice pylons to support the wires (conductors). The size, height, and spacing of pylons are determined by safety, topographical, operational, and environmental considerations.

A typical 400 kV pylon is around 50 metres tall. When modifying existing overhead line connections, we may also remove existing pylons.



Indicative pylon dimensions

14. Construction

To facilitate Sea Link, we would need a range of temporary and permanent facilities and accesses.

Our proposals therefore include works associated with preparing the land for construction activity, such as diversions of third-party assets (such as utilities and services) and drainage works needed to ensure that land is not impacted by flooding or other damage throughout the construction and operation of the proposed Project.

The construction phase would involve a range of temporary construction activities, including working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, storage, accesses, bellmouths, and haul roads, as well as creating crossing points across local watercourses and the diversion of public rights of way.

It also includes opportunities for environmental mitigation, compensation and enhancement. This means we would reduce and avoid impacting the local environment as far as possible. Where this is not possible, we would look to offset the impact of (compensate for) our activities by planting or enhancing the environment in a different location. We are committed to leaving behind an enhanced local environment and delivering on biodiversity net gain.

Our Preliminary environmental information report considers the likely significant effects of our proposals on the environment, along with the measures we are proposing to mitigate these impacts. The report, along with a non-technical summary of its findings, is available from our project website, **nationalgrid.com/sealink**.

Construction compounds

To facilitate construction, we are proposing a number of areas that would store materials, construction vehicles, staff welfare facilities etc. These would be temporary during the construction period and the indicative locations are shown on the General arrangement plans, available on the project website.

Construction haul roads

We are also proposing several haul roads for construction vehicles which would keep more construction traffic within the site, and off the local road network. Temporary construction haul roads would be built towards the start of construction, and may be made of stone or tarmac as appropriate for the type of vehicle and ground conditions. Access would be managed to ensure no unauthorised use. The haul road would be removed once construction is complete, with the land reinstated to its original condition.

Installing underground cables

For the installation of underground cables, a large construction area is required. Additional working areas would be required beyond the construction corridor for site compounds, storage of construction materials and so on.

Use of trenchless crossing

We intend to use an underground (trenchless) construction method in some areas to install the cable.

Trenchless crossing techniques allow us to install our cable whilst minimising interaction with the land surface, which reduces the impact on wildlife, traffic, and local communities.

Installing subsea cables

Before we install any subsea cables, we undertake surveys of the installation corridor to refine the route. There are two methods that can be used to install a marine cable. Both methods use a specialist cable installation vessel.

15. Information for landowners

Before we can submit our application, we need to understand who has a legal interest in the land in and around the areas being considered as part of the proposed reinforcement.

In the development consent order planning process, anyone with a legal interest in land is known as a Person with an Interest in Land (PIL). If you are identified as a PIL, we will contact you directly.

Whilst much of the information we need to confirm a legal interest is available on public registers, we have appointed land referencing firm TerraQuest to contact individual landowners to verify the publicly available information and to ensure we have made diligent enquiry. This is to ensure that the information is up-to-date and to ascertain the current occupation of the land. We have also appointed land agency firm Dalcour Maclaren to assist with contacting landowners and occupiers and arranging access for non-intrusive and intrusive surveys to be carried out.

We will be holding dedicated bookable drop-in sessions for landowners during the consultation period, and we will write to all PILs with details on how to book a slot.

More detailed information for landowners, along with contact information can be found on the Landowner page of our project website.

Detailed plans and guides

As part of our statutory consultation materials, we have produced a set of detailed plans which show the infrastructure proposed within the draft Order Limits. These limits form the current anticipated boundary of the entire area within which Sea Link could be constructed, including temporary and permanent works, and works to existing infrastructure.

You can view detailed plans by viewing the General arrangement plans[40] available on our website, **nationalgrid.com/sealink**.

Best practice guides

We have produced 'Best Practice' guides which show how National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) construct overhead lines and underground cables. You can view these guides on the project website. Whilst NGET would adopt the best practice as set out in these documents wherever it is possible and reasonably practical, there will be some instances where we cannot do this. You can find more information about how Sea Link would be constructed in the Preliminary environmental information report[41], which is available on our project website.

If you are a landowner and want to talk to our lands team, please email: **sealink@dalcourmaclaren.com**.

40. General arrangement plans, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library
41. Preliminary environmental information report, National Grid Electricity Transmission, October 2023 https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink/document-library

16. How to find out more

The aim of our statutory consultation is to:

- update you on our developed proposals for Sea Link
- provide you with more detailed information on various topics, such as the specific route alignment
- explain how we have considered feedback from our last round of consultation
- hear your views on our current proposals.

Our consultation is running until 18 December 2023. We want to hear the views of local people, so please submit your feedback by this date.

You can take part in the consultation and provide feedback in a range of ways. Full details of all our consultation events and where to find more information will be published on the project website, **nationalgrid.com/sealink**. You can sign-up to receive project updates directly to your inbox on the project website.

We have made the following documents available on our project website. If you would like a paper copy of any of our consultation documents or technical documents, then please do get in touch. Please note that technical documents may be subject to a printing charge of up to £300.

Consultation documents

- Community newsletter
- Project overview document
- Project overview document – 10-minute read
- Options selection and design evolution report
- Strategic options report
- Converter station design - background to potential architectural approaches
- Non-statutory consultation feedback report
- Feedback form
- Consultation banners
- Consultation banners – audio version
- Guide to interacting with our consultation plans
- General arrangement plans
- Design drawings
- Non-technical summary of the preliminary environmental information report
- Preliminary environmental information report
- Statement of community consultation

Public information exhibitions

Throughout the consultation we are holding a series of face-to-face events. Our public information events are being held across the local area. Information about our proposals will be on display and copies of maps and technical documents will be available to view. Members of the project team will be available to talk through our proposals and answer any questions.

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday 8 November	12:30pm–5:30pm	Old Generator Station, King's Field, Aldeburgh, IP15 5HY
Thursday 9 November	11am–4:30pm	Old Generator Station, King's Field, Aldeburgh, IP15 5HY
Wednesday 15 November	2:30pm–7:30pm	Cliffsend Village Hall, 55 Foads Lane, Cliffsend, Ramsgate, CT12 5JH
Thursday 16 November	12pm–5:30pm	Minster Village Hall, 1 High Street, Minster, CT12 4BU
Friday 17 November	10am–3pm	Guildhall, Cattle Market, Sandwich, CT13 9AH
Friday 24 November	1pm–6pm	Market Hall, High St, Saxmundham, IP17 1AF
Saturday 25 November	11am–4pm	Market Hall, High St, Saxmundham, IP17 1AF
Wednesday 29 November	2pm–7pm	Cliffsend Village Hall, 55 Foads Lane, Cliffsend, Ramsgate, CT12 5JH
Saturday 2 December	11am–3pm	Royal Harbour Academy, Marlowe Way, Newington, Ramsgate, CT12 6FA

Ask the experts

We will hold a series of appointment-only 'ask the experts' sessions during the consultation period, allowing you to speak directly to us and ask your questions to our project team. These sessions will be made available in-person, via telephone and video call.

Appointments are bookable via the project website (**nationalgrid.com/sealink**), email (**contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com**) or freephone information line (**0808 134 9569**) throughout the week.

Once you have contacted us and booked a slot for your appointment, you will have the opportunity to discuss the proposals and ask any questions directly to our expert team.

Appointments are available on the following dates/times:

Date	Time	Location
Week 1 of consultation	Morning/ afternoon	Online/telephone
Week 2 of consultation	Afternoon/ evening	Online/telephone
Week 3 of consultation	Morning/ afternoon	Online/telephone
Thursday 23 November	3pm– 7:30pm	Friston Village Hall, Church Rd, Friston, Saxmundham, IP17 1PU
Friday 1 December	2pm–6pm	Radford House, 18-20 Effingham St, Ramsgate, CT11 9AT
Week 7 of consultation	Afternoon/ evening	Online/telephone

Join our webinars

A pre-recorded webinar is available on our project website, **nationalgrid.com/sealink**. It covers each element of the proposed Project - Suffolk, Kent and our proposals at sea. The webinar includes a British Sign Language interpreter and the option for English subtitles.

In addition to this, the project team will be presenting proposals and taking your questions during the consultation period through a series of live online webinars.

A total of four live webinars will be held. Two will focus on a summary of the proposals in Suffolk, whilst the other two will summarise the proposals in Kent. All sessions will include details of our marine proposals.

To watch the pre-recorded webinar or sign-up for any of our other webinars, please visit our website. The dates, times and topics of the live webinars are listed adjacent:

Date	Time	Topic
Wednesday 25 October	6pm–7pm	Onshore proposals in Suffolk and marine proposals
Thursday 26 October	6pm–7pm	Onshore proposals in Kent and marine proposals
Tuesday 31 October	2pm–3pm	Onshore proposals in Suffolk and marine proposals
Wednesday 1 November	2pm–3pm	Onshore proposals in Kent and marine proposals

Deposit points

Paper copies of this document, along with the Options selection and design evolution report, Non-statutory consultation report, Statement of community consultation, Non-technical summary of the preliminary environmental information report, Newsletter, Feedback form and freepost envelopes are available to inspect at the below locations throughout the consultation period. Venue opening hours are subject to change.

Location	Opening hours
Saxmundham Library (Block B, Street Farm Rd, Saxmundham IP17 1AL)	Mon: Closed Tues: 9:30am–5:30pm Weds: 9:30am–5:30pm Thurs: Closed Fri: 9:30am–5:30pm Sat: 10am–1pm Sun: 10am–3pm
Leiston Library (Main St, Leiston IP16 4ER)	Mon: Closed Tues: 9:30am–7:30pm Weds: Closed Thur: 9:30pm–5:30pm Fri: 9:30am–1pm and 2pm–5pm Sat: 9:30am–1pm and 2pm–5pm Sun: 10am–3pm
Aldeburgh Library (Victoria Rd, Aldeburgh IP15 5EG)	Mon: 9am–1pm Tues: 9am–1pm Weds: 9am–6pm Thurs: 9am–1pm Fri: 9am–1pm Sat: 10am–3pm Sun: 10am–1pm
Snape Village Hall (5 Garrett Cl, Snape, Saxmundham IP17 1RN)	Mon: 7am–7pm Tues: 7am–7pm Weds: 7am–7pm Thurs: 7am–7pm Fri: 7am–7pm Sat: 7am–7pm Sun: Closed

Location	Opening hours
Friston Village Hall (Church Rd, Friston, Saxmundham IP17 1PU)	Opening hours vary. Please contact the venue directly for opening hours via email (**fristonvillagehall@gmail.com**) or by phone (**01728 687914**)
Ash Library (11 Queen's Rd, Ash, Canterbury CT3 2BG)	Mon: 11:30am–1pm and 2pm–3pm Tues: 9:30am–1pm Weds: 9:30am–2pm Thurs: Closed Fri: 11:30am–5pm Sat: 9am–2pm Sun: Closed
Minster Library (4a Monkton Rd, Minster, Ramsgate CT12 4EA)	Mon: 1pm–5pm Tues: 9:30am–1:30pm Weds: Closed Thurs: 12pm–5pm Fri: 10am–4pm Sat: 9:30am–1:30pm Sun: Closed
Sandwich Library (13 Market St, Sandwich CT13 9DA)	Mon: Closed Tues: 9:30am–5pm Weds: Closed Thurs: 9:30am–5pm Fri: 9:30am–5pm Sat: 9:30am–3pm Sun: Closed

Location	Opening hours
Ramsgate Library (Guildford Lawn, Ramsgate CT11 9AY)	Mon: Closed Tues: 9:30am–5:30pm Weds: 9:30am–5:30pm Thurs: 9:30am–4:30pm Fri: 9:30am–5:30pm Sat: 9:30am–3:30pm Sun: Closed
Newington Library (Royal Harbour Academy, Stirling Way, Ramsgate CT12 6FA)	Mon: 9am–1pm and 2pm–5:30pm Tues: 9am–1pm Weds: Closed Thurs: 9am–1pm and 2pm–5:30pm Fri: Closed Sat: 9am–1pm Sun: Closed

Location	Opening hours
Thanet District Council (Cecil Street, Margate CT9 1AY)	Mon: 8:45am–5pm Tues: 8:45am–5pm Weds: 8:45am–5pm Thurs: 8:45am–5pm Fri: 8:45am–5pm Sat: Closed Sun: Closed
Margate Library (Cecil Street, Margate, CT9 1RE)	Mon: 10am–5:30pm Tues: 10am–5pm Weds: 10am–5pm Thurs: 10am–5:30pm Fri: 10am–5:30pm Sat: 10am–3:30pm Sun: Closed

17. Have your say

How to give feedback

Our statutory public consultation runs from Tuesday 24 October to Monday 18 December 2023. We want to hear the views of local people, so please submit your feedback by this date. All feedback we receive as part of this consultation will be carefully considered as we finalise our proposals and prepare our application for development consent.

Online feedback form

You can give your feedback by completing our online feedback form, available at **nationalgrid.com/sealink**.

Email us

If you prefer to send us your comments via email, you can send them to us at **contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com**.

Call us

If for any reason you are unable to provide written feedback, then we may be able to accept your comments by telephone. You can call us on **0808 134 9569** to discuss.

Paper feedback form

You can download and print a paper copy of our feedback form from our website and post it back to us at **Freepost SEA LINK**. You can also pick up a paper feedback form from any of the public information events or deposit points listed in Chapter 16. Alternatively, you can request a consultation pack (newsletter, feedback form and freepost envelope) to be sent to you in the post.

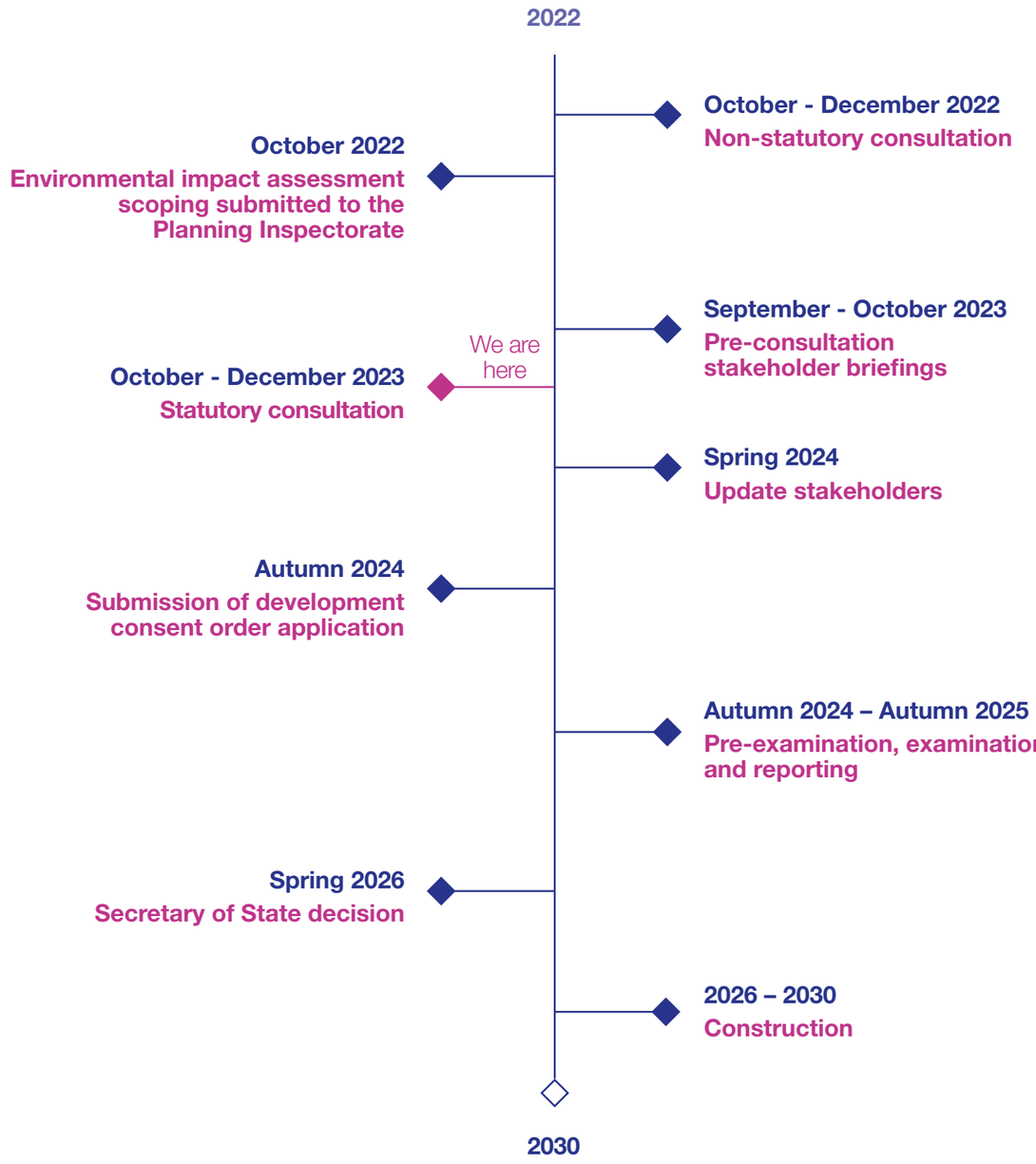
18. Next steps

All feedback we receive as part of this consultation will be carefully considered as we finalise our proposals and prepare our application for development consent.

During this time, we will continue to carry out environmental impact assessment work and undertake surveys along the proposed route, to help us prepare our submission. We will continue our ongoing engagement with local authorities and other stakeholders during this time.

Once we have prepared our application for development consent, we will apply to the Planning Inspectorate, seeking development consent for the proposed Project. The Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will decide whether the application meets the standards required to be formally accepted for examination. If the application is accepted, the Examining Authority, a group of independently appointed inspectors, will have six months to examine the proposal, listening to the views of Interested Parties and other relevant stakeholders through submission of evidence and through public hearings.

The Examining Authority will then submit a report on the application to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, including a recommendation, within three months of examination closing. The Secretary of State then has a further three months to decide whether to grant or refuse development consent.



Further details on the development consent process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at **infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk.**

Contact us

Please get in touch if you have any questions about our proposals for Sea Link

Call our community helpline: **0808 134 9569**
(lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am-5:30pm)
Email us: **contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com**
Write to us: **Freepost SEA LINK**

Who to contact if you are a landowner or person with interest in land

If you are a landowner and want to talk to our lands team, please email: **sealink@dalcourmaclaren.com**
Alternatively, you can find out more information about land interests by visiting **nationalgrid.com/sealink**.

Who to contact for a media enquiry

If you are a journalist and would like to speak with a member of the National Grid Electricity Transmission media team, please call **01926 656 536**.

Who to contact if you would like information or documents in an alternative format

We are committed to making project information accessible to all users. If you or someone you know needs any information or documents in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio tape, get in touch using the above contact details.

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