



Planning
Inspectorate



Linear Infrastructure Projects: Best Practice in NSIP Applications

A Planning Inspectorate Webinar, 6 March 2025

Presented by Annie Coombs and Richard Allen



Section 1

Key messages and background

Section 2

Engage early

Section 3

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Section 4

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Section 5

Questions

Submit your questions via the “Q&A” panel in Teams.
Use the “Upvote ↑” button to vote for questions you want answered.



Section 1: Key messages and background





Key messages for pre-application on linear NSIPs

This advice is for all: applicants, consultees, interested parties and persons with rights over land



Engage early, constructively

Long, complex geography means many landscapes, environmental features, people and communities, persons with rights over land including Statutory Undertakers

There are no advantages to holding back in engagement



Contextual understanding

Understanding of what is proposed, where it is, how it links with wider systems and overlaps with nearby NSIPs, what construction will mean locally and project-wide



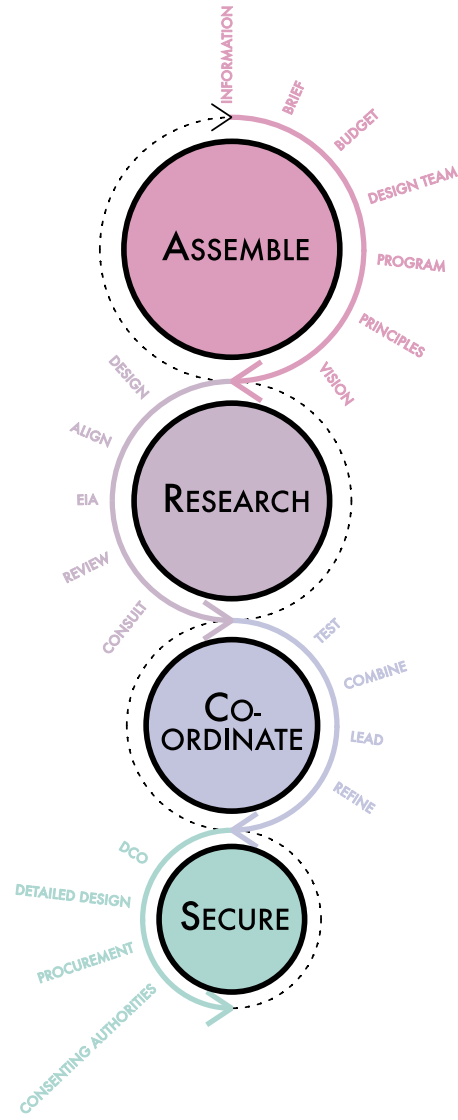
Flexibility and what is secured

What has been assessed, alternatives, options, flexibility that is still needed and why, limits of deviation, Order limits, landowner agreements, Statutory Undertakers' assets and land and Protective Provisions



- Aim of the Advice Note is to help all parties recognise what information and engagement processes during the pre-application stage will facilitate the smooth running of examination, reporting and decision stages
 - Applicants
 - Interested Parties (IP)
 - Affected Persons (AP) – persons with an interest in land
- Parties should aim to reach agreement – if not then set out clearly why differences remain
- Engage with the Inspectorate – 2024 Pre-planning Prospectus gives more detail on levels of support available
- To be read in conjunction with the Planning Act, relevant National Policy Statement(s), regulations and other Inspectorate advice





NSIP good design process diagram

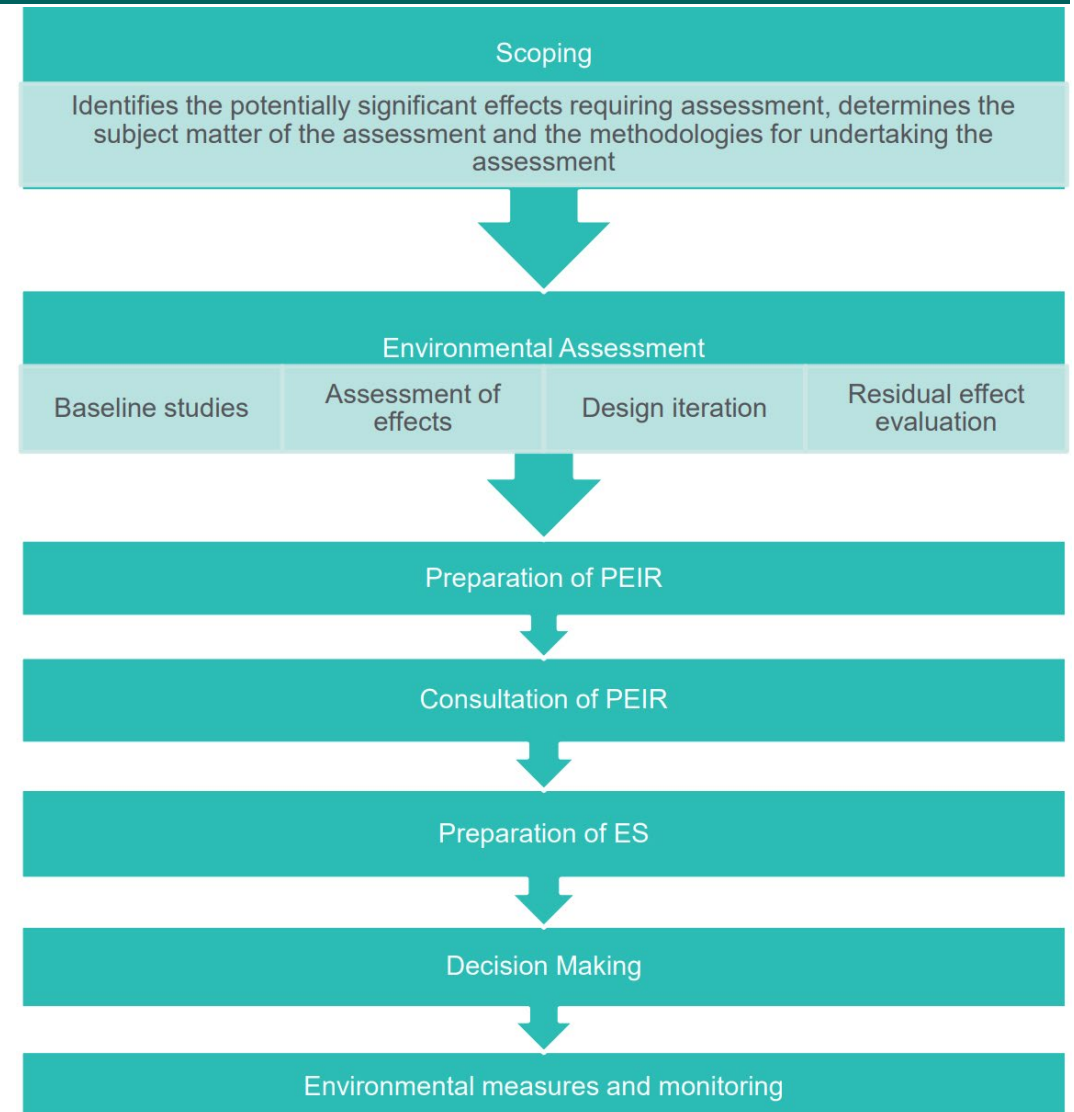
- **Assemble:** a brief, a budget, a proposed timeline, a multi-disciplinary team, baseline information, alternatives and eventual site selection
- **Research:** iterative, constraints and opportunities, design evolution, mitigate adverse effects, positive outcomes, engagement (statutory parties, affected persons, local communities, independent design panels)
- **Co-ordinate:** further iteration, decisions using strong design leadership, vision, meet design principles, define process for future post-consent decision-making
- **Secure:** how the project's good design is secured and will be delivered

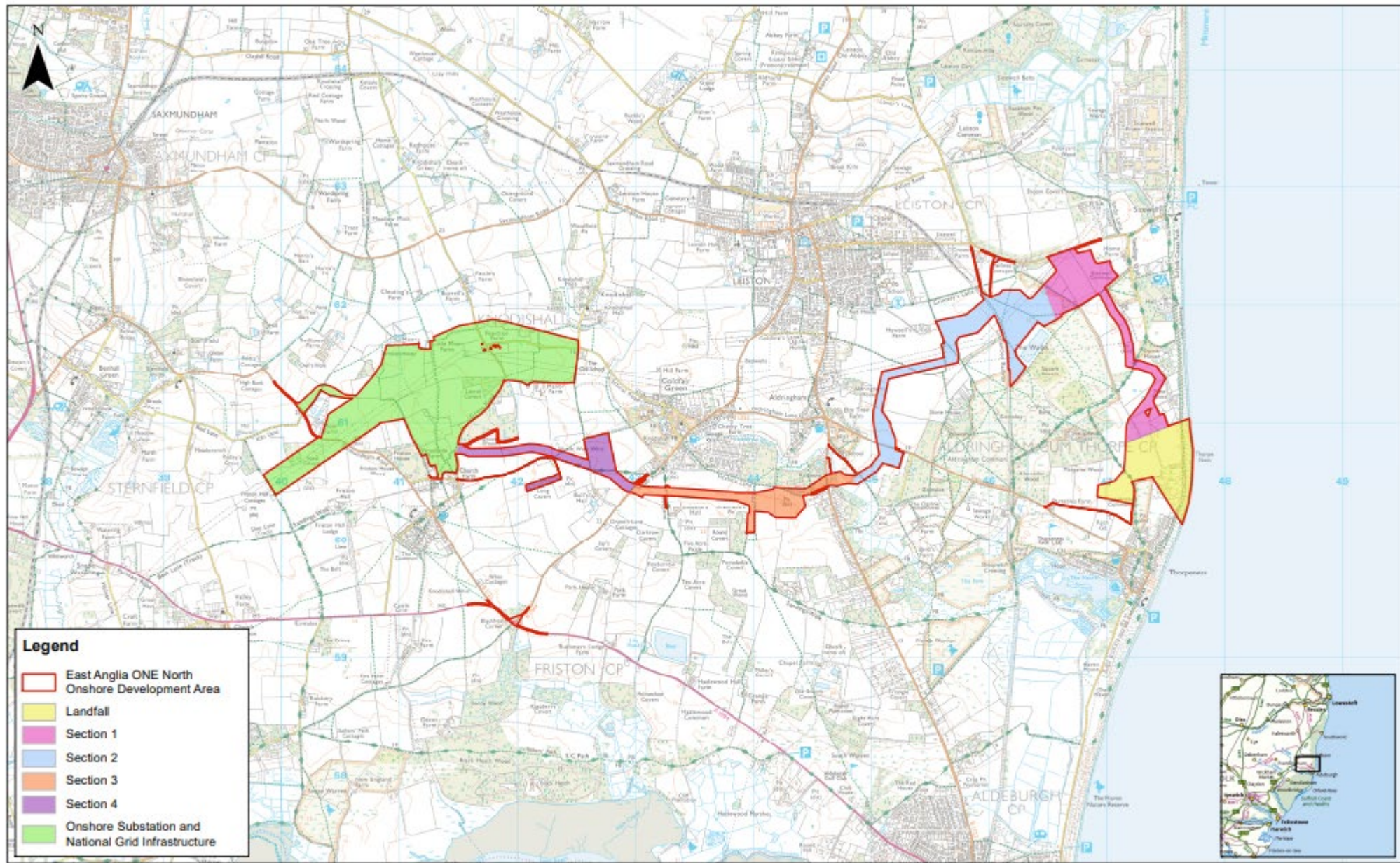


EIA and the design process

Linear projects

- EIA should inform the design process
- Integrate design team with EIA team and technical experts
- Collaborate to inform main design decisions and secure beneficial environmental outcomes
- Be clear if dividing the route into sections about rationale for sections and section divides
- Also need a route-wide assessment





Legend

- East Anglia ONE North Onshore Development Area
- Landfall
- Section 1
- Section 2
- Section 3
- Section 4
- Onshore Substation and National Grid Infrastructure



1	23/09/2019	FC	First Issue.	Prepared: FC	Checked: PW	Approved: AH
Rev	Date	By	Comment	Prepared:	Checked:	Approved:

Scale @ A3 1:30,000
 0 0.5 1 Km

East Anglia ONE North
 East Anglia ONE North (and East Anglia TWO)
 Onshore Development Area

Drg No	EA1N-OSV-DRG-48R-00091003
Rev	1
Date	23/09/19
Figure	1
Coordinate System:	BNG
Datum:	OSGB36



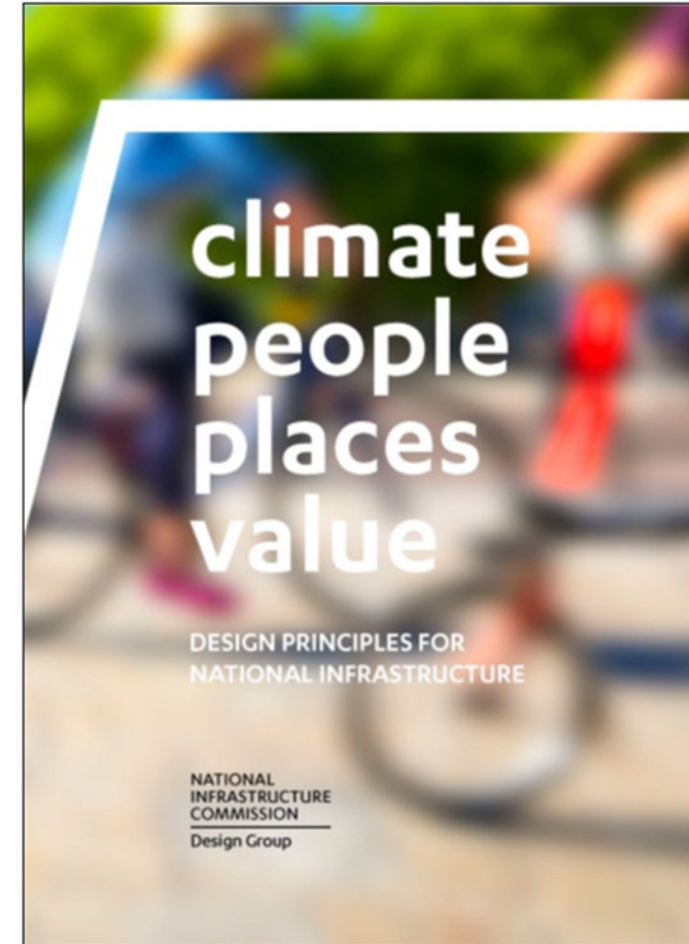
Section 2: Engage early





People

“While it won’t always be possible to please everyone, engagement should be diverse, open and sincere, addressing inevitable tensions in good faith and finding the right balance.”



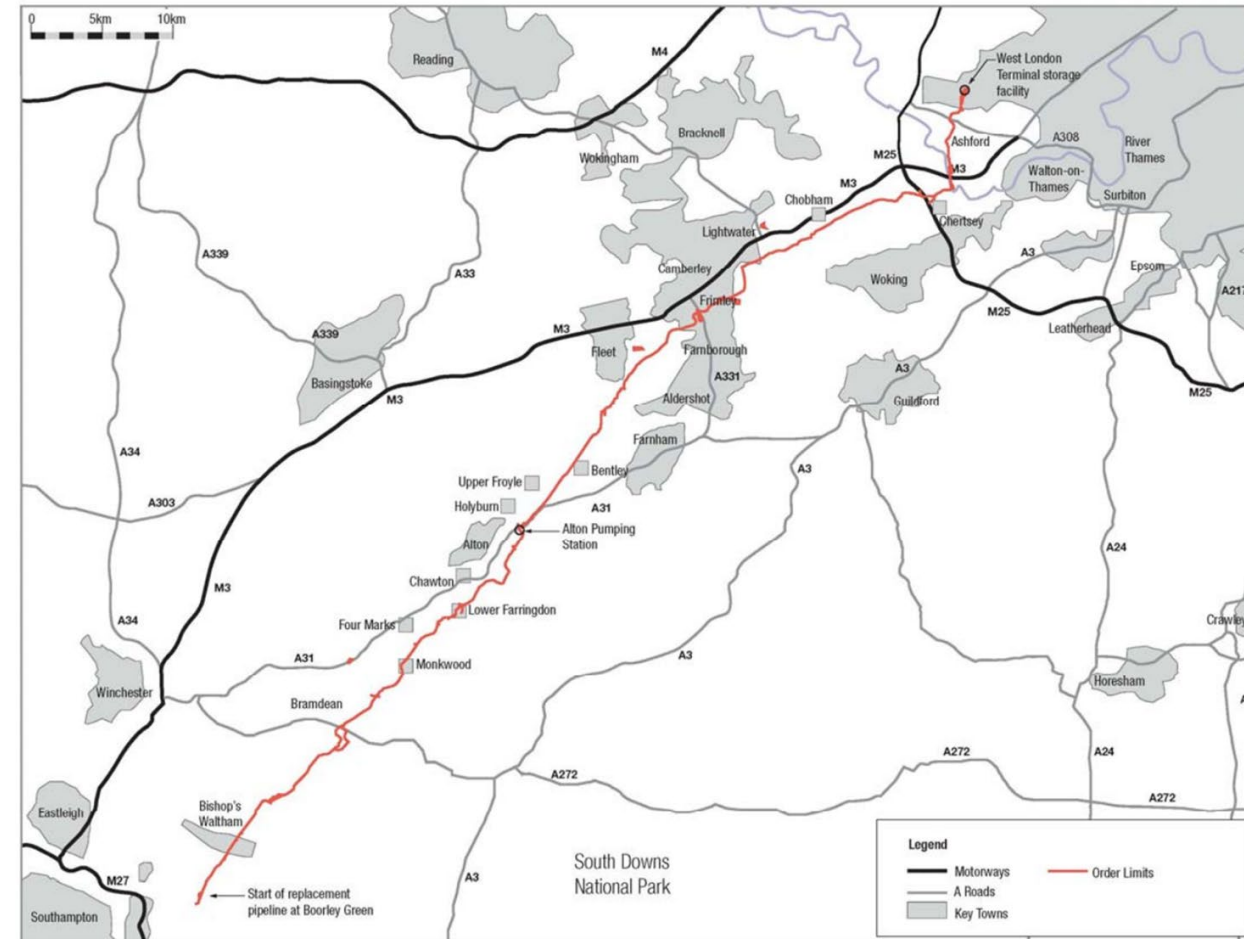


Early consultation and engagement

Especially important for linear projects because of the number of parties

Important that....

- IPs share information, concerns, disagreements at as early a stage as possible
- Applicants engage with all IPs and APs early to:
 - explain the reasoning behind decisions taken
 - allow time for parties to appreciate what is proposed and how they can influence
 - resolve concerns as far as possible
- There is clarity on why differences remain, if they do
- There is demonstration of serious and meaningful attempts to acquire land voluntarily – necessary if Compulsory Acquisition powers are to be granted





Importance of positive, inclusive engagement

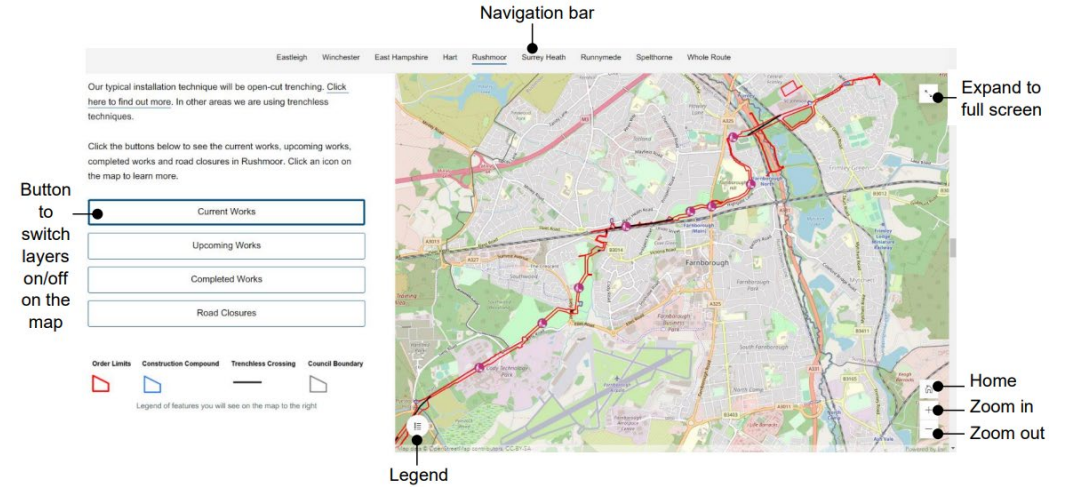
- Flythroughs
- Physical models
- Events – in person
- Site inspections – in person eg with landowners
- On-line events
- On-line consultation portals
- Timely meetings with stakeholders and their agents
- Design review






Importance of engaging website

- Easy to use websites to explain the proposed development – often a link is provided on the Inspectorate’s website
- Consider the use of Interactive maps, videos and fly-throughs – providing they are a fair representation



Search tool

There is an option to explore the whole route and search which area is closest to your location or an address. To search for a location, either:

- Enter an address or postcode in the search box ;
- Click the 'find my location'  button to search for your current location, if location services are enabled on your device; or
- Click the pin  button and click on a location on the map.

The result will zoom to the closest area of the route and name the council area. If your search is too far from the route, click and hold the button on the slider to move and increase the search distance.





A change responding to landowner feedback

Section F
(Bisley and
Pirbright
Ranges to
M25)



Windle Brook
Crossing

An alternative alignment to cross Windle Brook crossing in order to reduce impacts on landowners in the area. This proposal included crossing the brook using trenchless techniques.



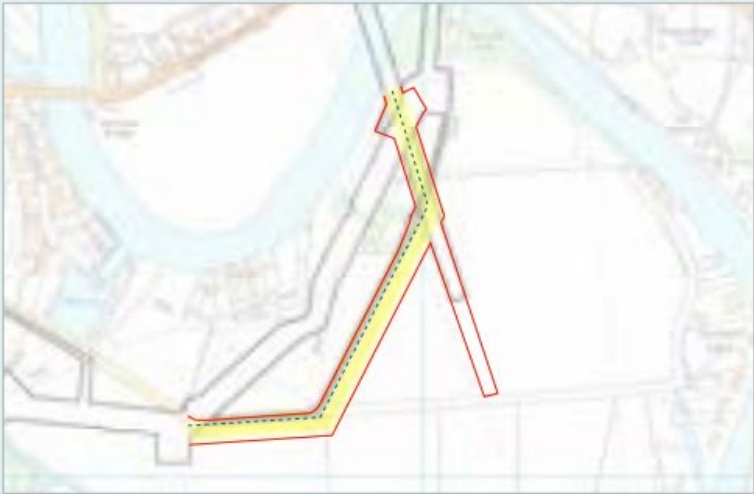


Changes for environmental reasons

<p>Section C (South of Alton to Crondall)</p>	<p>Water Lane</p>	<p>Order Limits revised both sides of Water Lane to avoid sensitive environmental features and an area of Ancient Woodland.</p>	
<p>Section C (South of Alton to Crondall)</p>	<p>Froyle Park (Great crested newt mitigation area)</p>	<p>Extended Order Limits close to Froyle Park to include a nearby pond for great crested newt relocation.</p>	

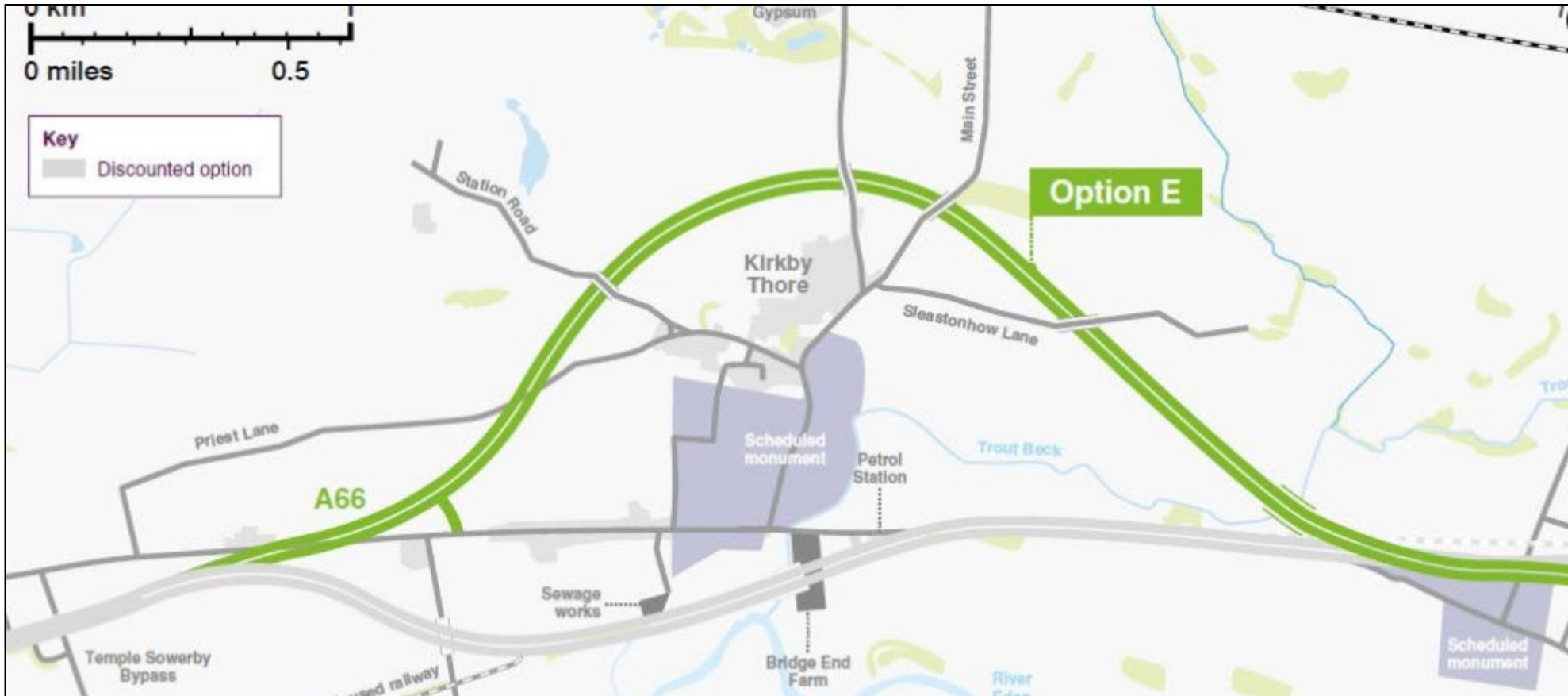


Changes responding to local planning authority comments on biodiversity

<p>Section G (M25 -M3)</p>	<p>Chertsey Meads</p>	<p>To cross the River Thames, Esso amended the Order Limits at Chertsey Meads to accommodate feedback from Runnymede Borough Council regarding floral biodiversity within Chertsey Meads.</p>	
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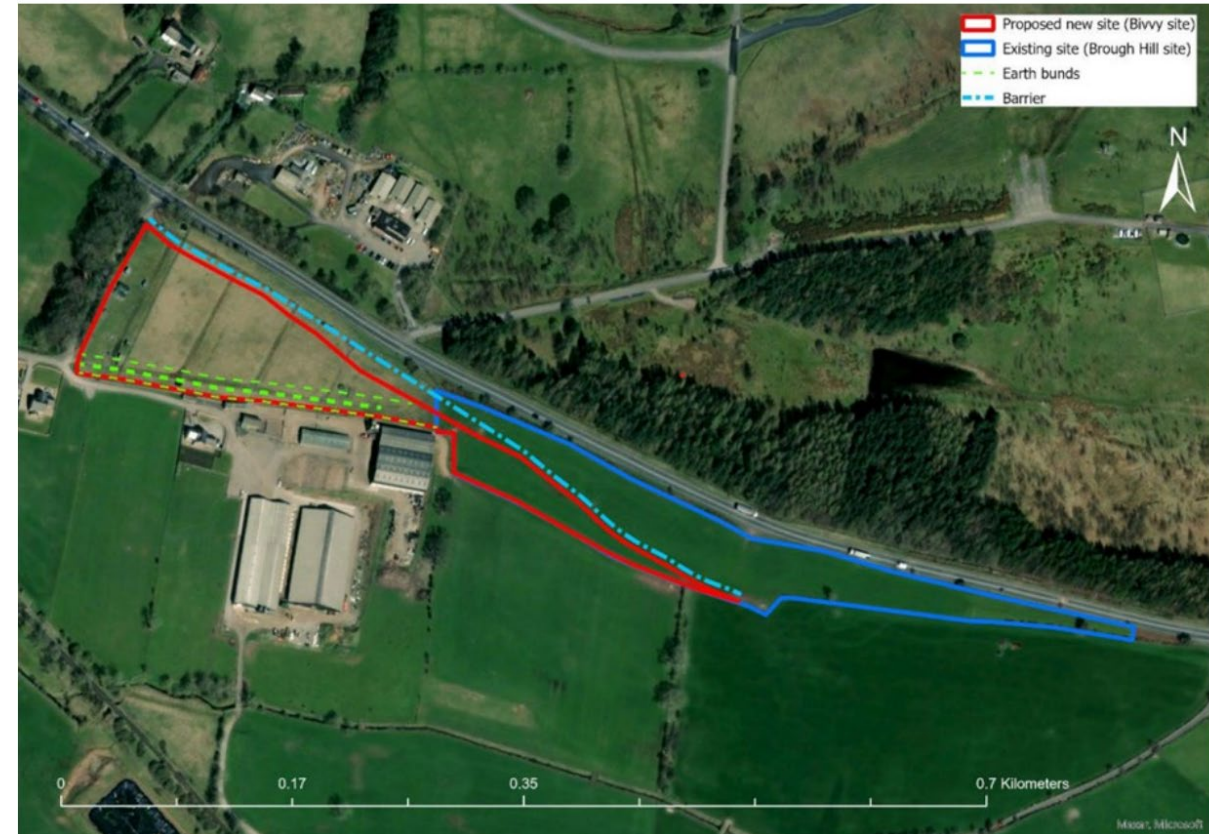
Changes responding to the local community





The Equality Act 2010

- The Equality Act 2010 lists nine characteristics that are protected from discrimination: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Potential for interface with some persons or groups with protected characteristics because of length of projects
- Helpful if non-public sector applicants can assist with engagement with these groups
- Essential that groups such as travellers are treated the same, given the same opportunities
- Important not to miss individual persons e.g older persons

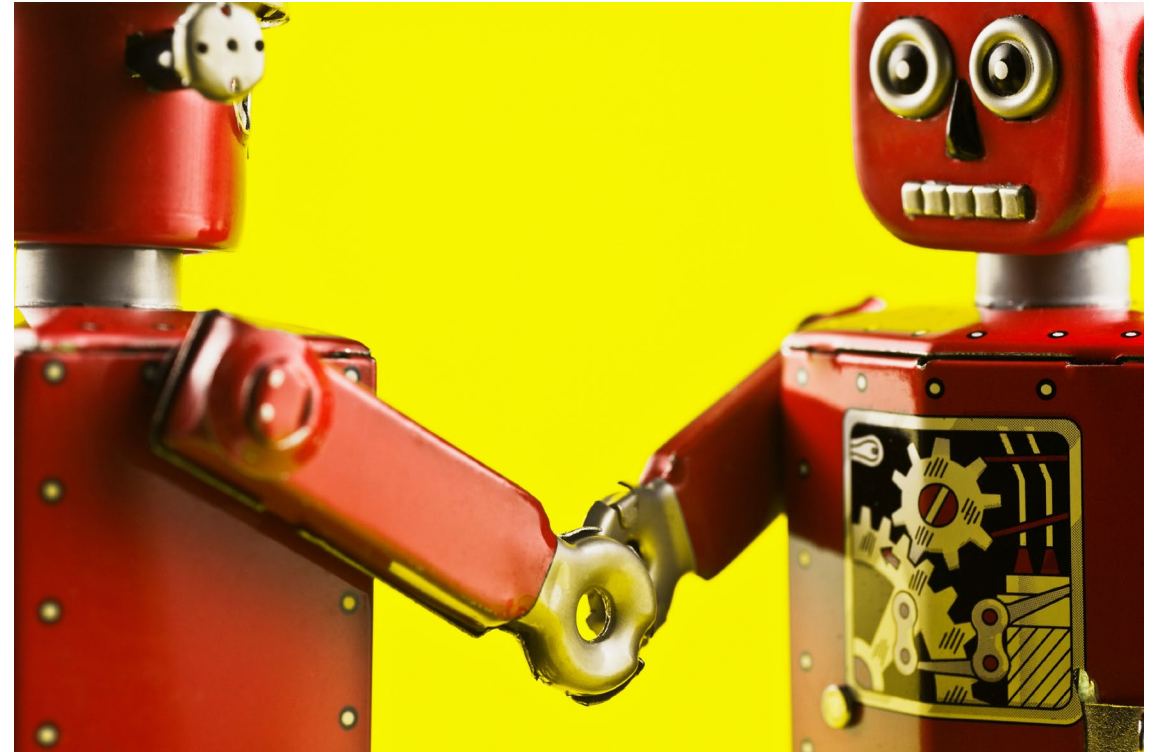




Clarity and fairness when engaging

A compliment after a long day's ASI

*“you’re more
human than I
thought you’d
be”*





Closing statement from a Parish Council

“For many small councils this has become a David and Goliath contest, when it could, and should, have been an opportunity to cooperate to secure a better solution for our County, our communities and the Applicant.

There are no clear winners in this confrontational process.

If the application is approved XXX still need to construct their XXX and to do that will rely on the forbearance and cooperation of village communities who they have spent the last two years antagonising.”





Clarity on what local people can influence

Hinkley Point C Connection Project

Colour

- Parish Councils commented on T pylon colour during examination





Crossing boundaries

It's helpful to have clarity on where joint working will take place.

- Local planning authorities
- Parish councils
- Internal drainage boards
- Other statutory consultees
- APs with similar concerns represented by an agent or organisation (eg the NFU)
- Statutory Undertakers





Column titles from a recent land rights tracker

- Large numbers of plots
- Using a land rights tracker
- Status of negotiations
- Likelihood of resolution

Tracking						
(a) Unique Reference Number			(b) Name of Land Interest		(c) Agent/ Representative	
Agreements				Status Update		
(d) Heads of Terms (HoT) Status	(e) Land Agreement Status	(f) Protective Provision (PP) Status /Side Agreement (SA) Status	(g) Status of Objection	(h) Comments on status of Protective Provisions/Side Agreements	(i) Summary comments on status of objection / land negotiation	(j) Last Updated
Details of the Land						
(k) Book of Reference (BoR) Plot Number(s)	(l) Interest	(m) Type of Acquisition relating to specified plot(s)	(n) Works Number(s) and Reason for acquisition of rights	(o) Land Subject to Special Consideration (Crown, Allotment, NT etc)	(p) Land Subject to Special Consideration BoR Plots/Type	(q) Is the relevant body a Statutory Undertaker (SU) and is the land operational?
Examination References						
(r) IP/AP Ref No.	(s) Relevant Rep Ref No.	(t) Written Rep Ref No.	(u) Ref No. for any other docs submitted by IP/AP.	(v) Ref No. for Applicant's Response		



Land rights: access to a corridor

Earlier resolution saves examination time and recommendation time

Could this have been resolved earlier?

- Proposed access to a construction corridor using HGV traffic through a cattle yard close to working farm buildings, taking three right angle bends
- Land agent's Relevant Representation on behalf of the farmer objected and proposed a voluntary agreement for an alternative route avoiding the cattle yard, but outside the Order limits
- Applicant worked on the alternative – likely resolution – but could this have been the access included in the draft Order if earlier engagement/ negotiations had taken place?





Access alternatives

- Access to long section of haul route
- Proximity to a farmhouse on one side and farmyard and buildings on other became apparent during examination
- ExA needed to consider the degree of interference with their human rights
- Bespoke Traffic Management Plan to be submitted, approved and implemented prior to the commencement of that stage of the Proposed Development



Source: Bing maps



Engage early/ establish interactions

- The geography of a linear route means it's likely there will be multiple interactions with Statutory Undertakers' (SU) assets
- Applicants need to establish early on who the SUs are and where there will be crossing points or affected apparatus
- SUs must engage (negotiate) early with applicants
- SUs should clarify if they will represent themselves jointly or individually if regional boundaries occur





Getting to an agreed position early

- We expect applications to include agree, or near agreed Protective Provisions
- Be very clear about the nature of the interaction
- Made Orders provide parties with SoS agreed provisions for an enormous number of combinations of undertakings
- If project-specific PPs are required, the reasoning should be explained
- PPs must be resolved by the close of the examination
- If not, the ExA will make a recommendation on what the wording should be
- Do not expect the Secretary of State to undertake further consultation if not agreed



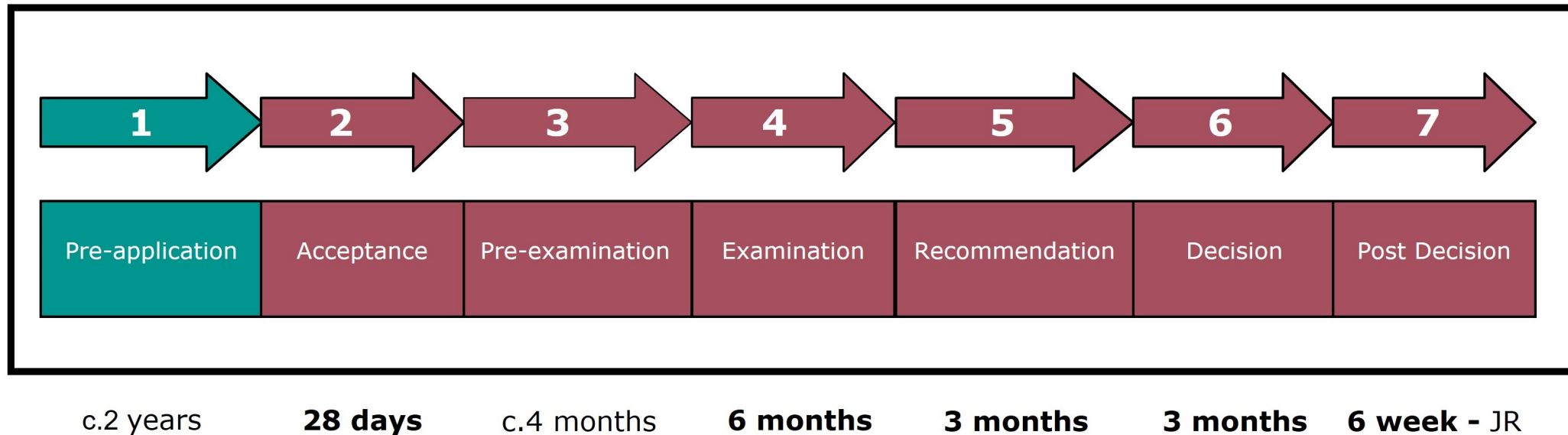


Section 3: Contextual understanding





The Planning Act 2008 stages



Times in **bold** are statutory



Context: Pre-examination site inspections

The longer the project the more time and resource needed for familiarisation

What's happening in pre-examination?

- ExA familiarising itself with the project and site
- Likely to undertake unaccompanied site inspections

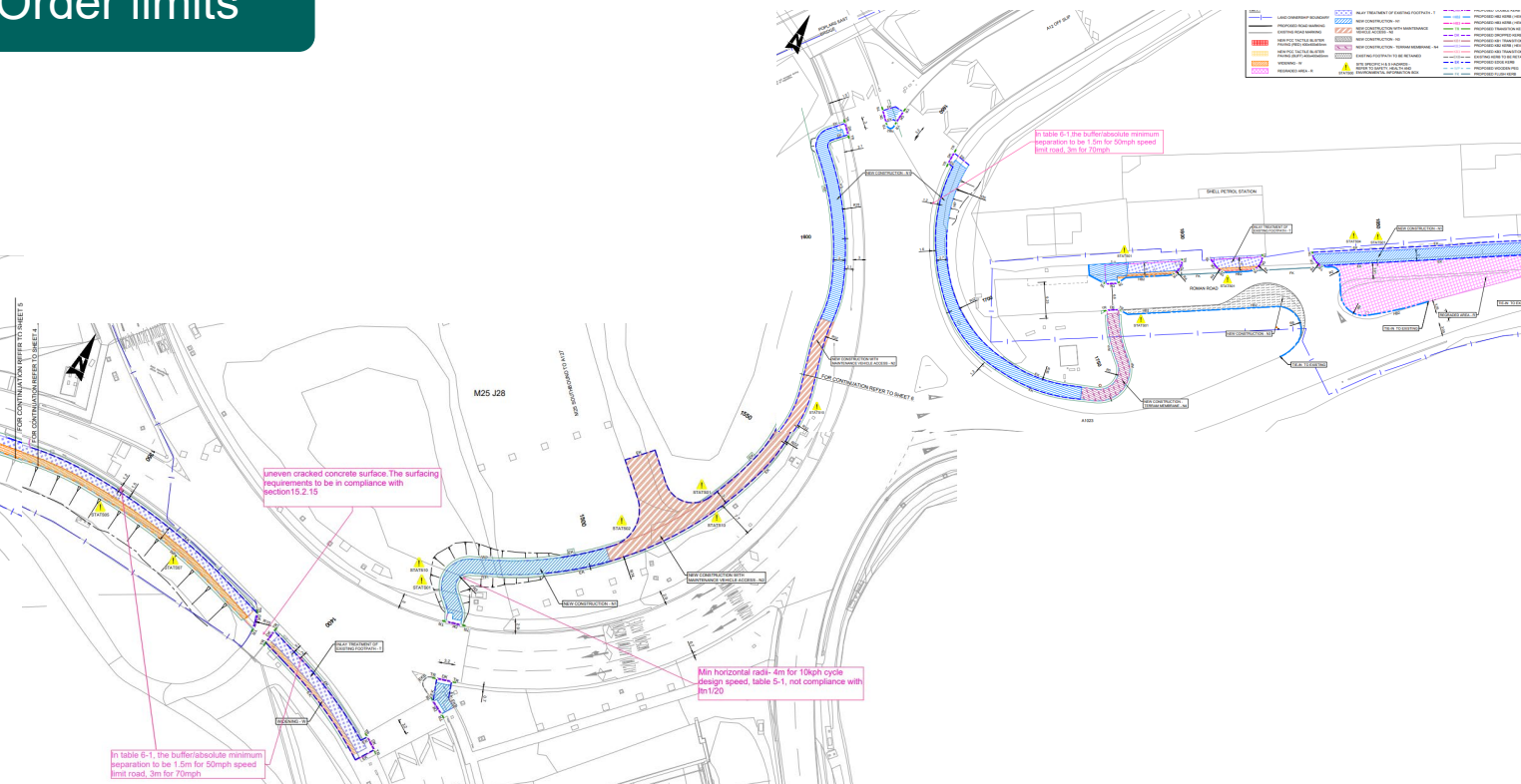
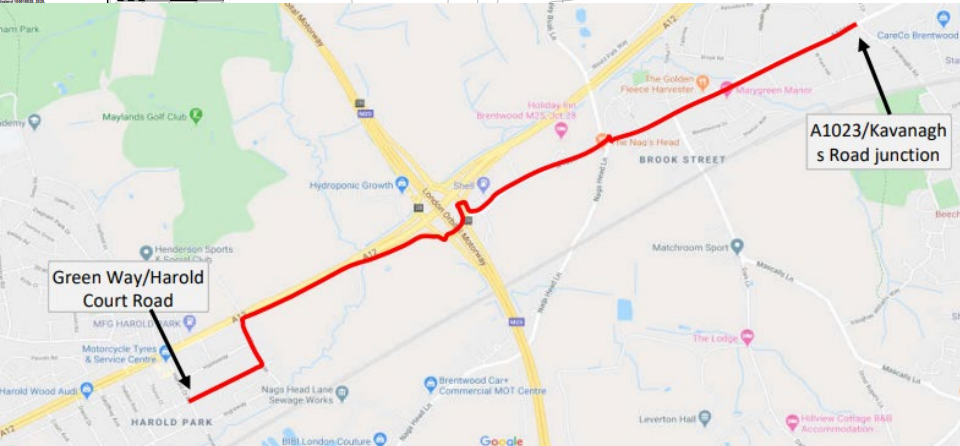
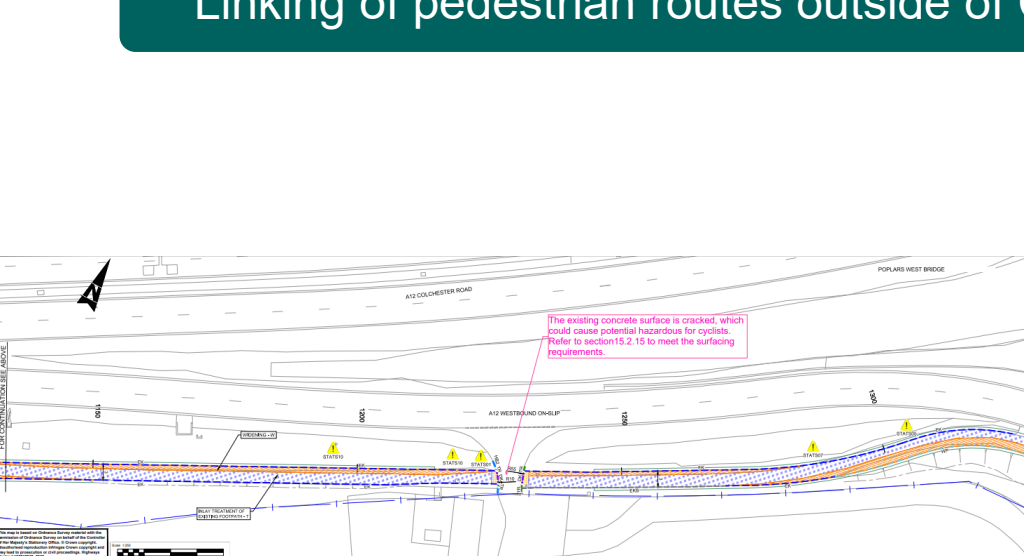
Ways to assist

- Applications identify publicly accessible places of interest along the route – even suggest a route
- Relevant Representations identify locations that it is considered the ExA should visit





Linking of pedestrian routes outside of Order limits



KEY:	
	LAND OWNERSHIP BOUNDARY
	PROPOSED ROAD MARKING
	EXISTING ROAD MARKING
	NEW PCC TACTILE BLISTER PAVING (RED) 400x400x65mm
	NEW PCC TACTILE BLISTER PAVING (BUFF) 400x400x65mm
	INLAY TREATMENT OF EXISTING FOOTPATH - T
	NEW CONSTRUCTION - N1
	NEW CONSTRUCTION WITH MAINTENANCE VEHICLE ACCESS - N2
	NEW CONSTRUCTION - N3
	NEW CONSTRUCTION - TERRAM MEMBRANE - N4
	EXISTING FOOTPATH TO BE RETAINED
	PROPOSED DOUBLE KERB (HEIGHT - 250mm)
	PROPOSED HB2 KERB (HEIGHT - 125mm)
	PROPOSED HB3 KERB (HEIGHT - 100mm)
	PROPOSED TRANSITION KERB
	PROPOSED DROPPED KERB (HEIGHT - 20mm)
	PROPOSED KB1 TRANSITION KERB
	PROPOSED KB2 KERB (HEIGHT - 140mm)
	PROPOSED KB3 TRANSITION KERB
	EXISTING KERB TO BE RETAINED



Understanding the wider context

Hynet Carbon Dioxide Pipeline

Diagram of connections

- Regional connections
- Existing, proposed and future pipelines
- Locations of relevant infrastructure apparatus
- Towns and cities

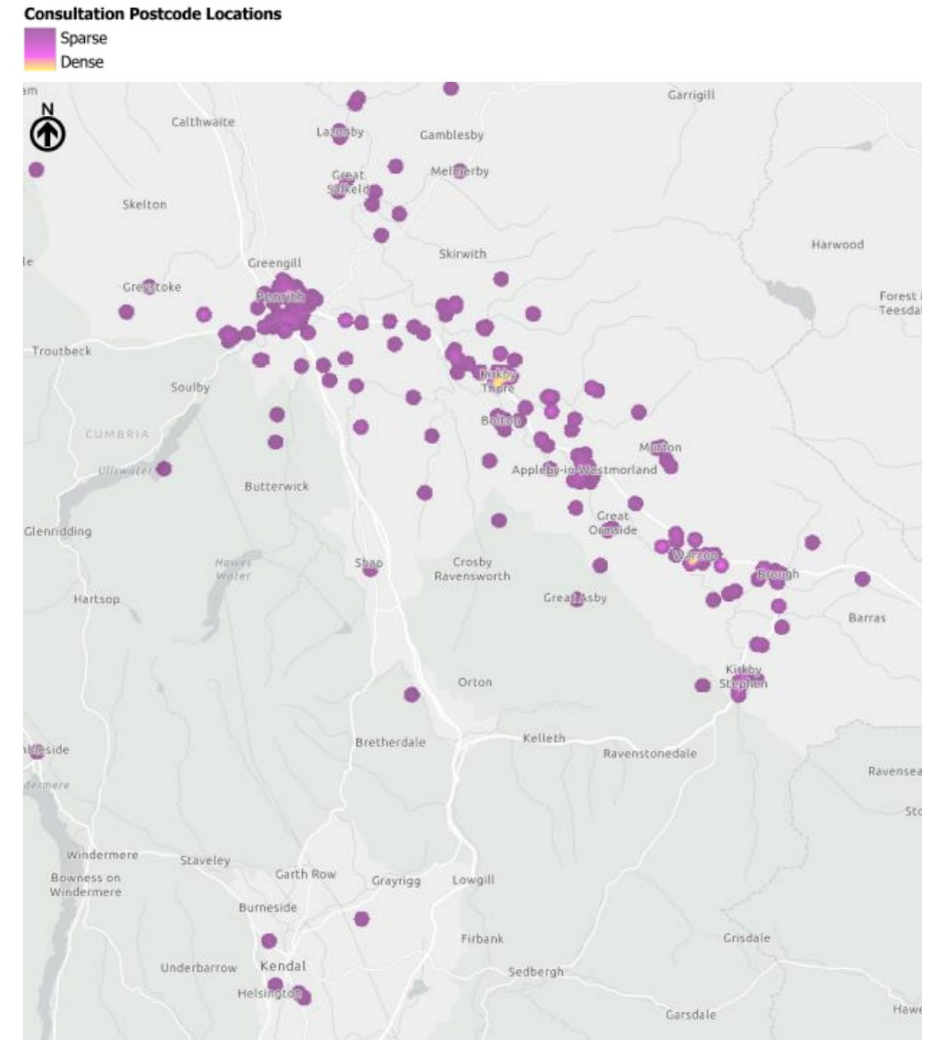




Areas of Hotspots

- Helpful to produce a map of where the relevant representations have come from
- Assists in consideration of where to hold events and site inspections

Figure 6.2 Geographical distribution of responses across the west of the Project area





Understanding context – useful diagrams and visuals

Relevant to construction effects and land required

Good use of diagrams to assist understanding

- Diagrammatic cross sections of construction activities help a wide understanding of what different construction techniques entail - such as open cut trenching versus trenchless or horizontal direct drilling (HDD)
- These can illustrate how the works would be undertaken and the land required
- Useful to include these in applications as well as for engagement

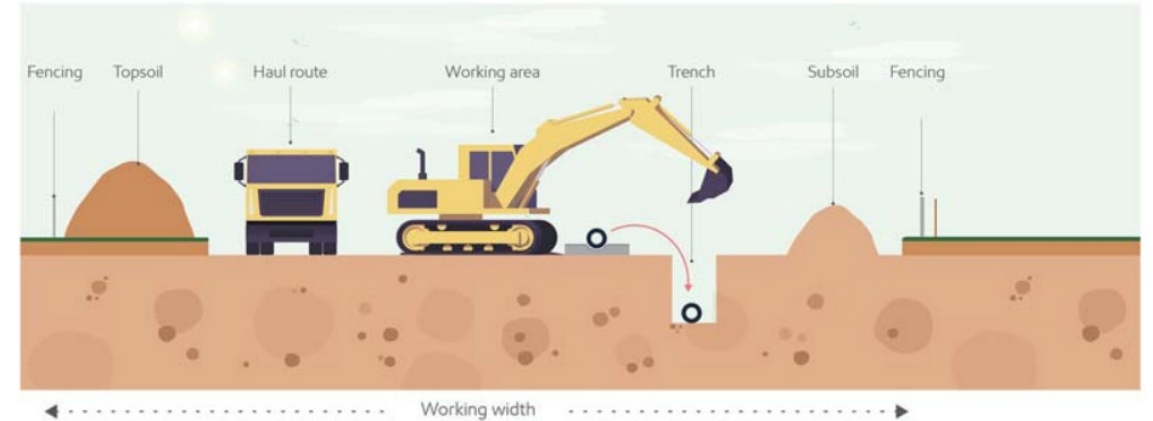


Illustration 2.1. Open Cut Trenching Installation Technique (not to scale)

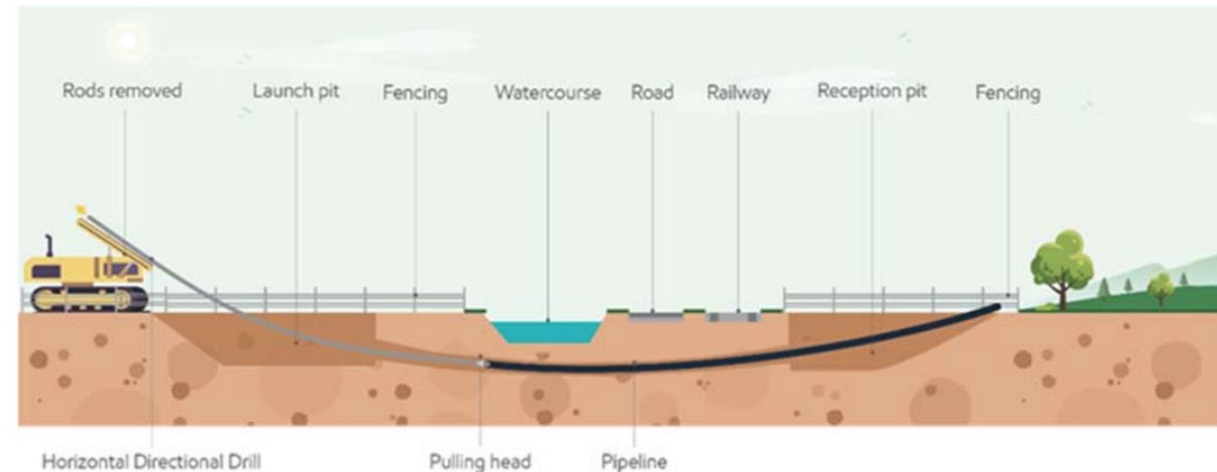


Illustration 5.1 Schematic Illustration of a Trenchless Crossing



Understanding context – diagrams to assist justification for temporary possession for construction

Indicative cable trenching to explain land take

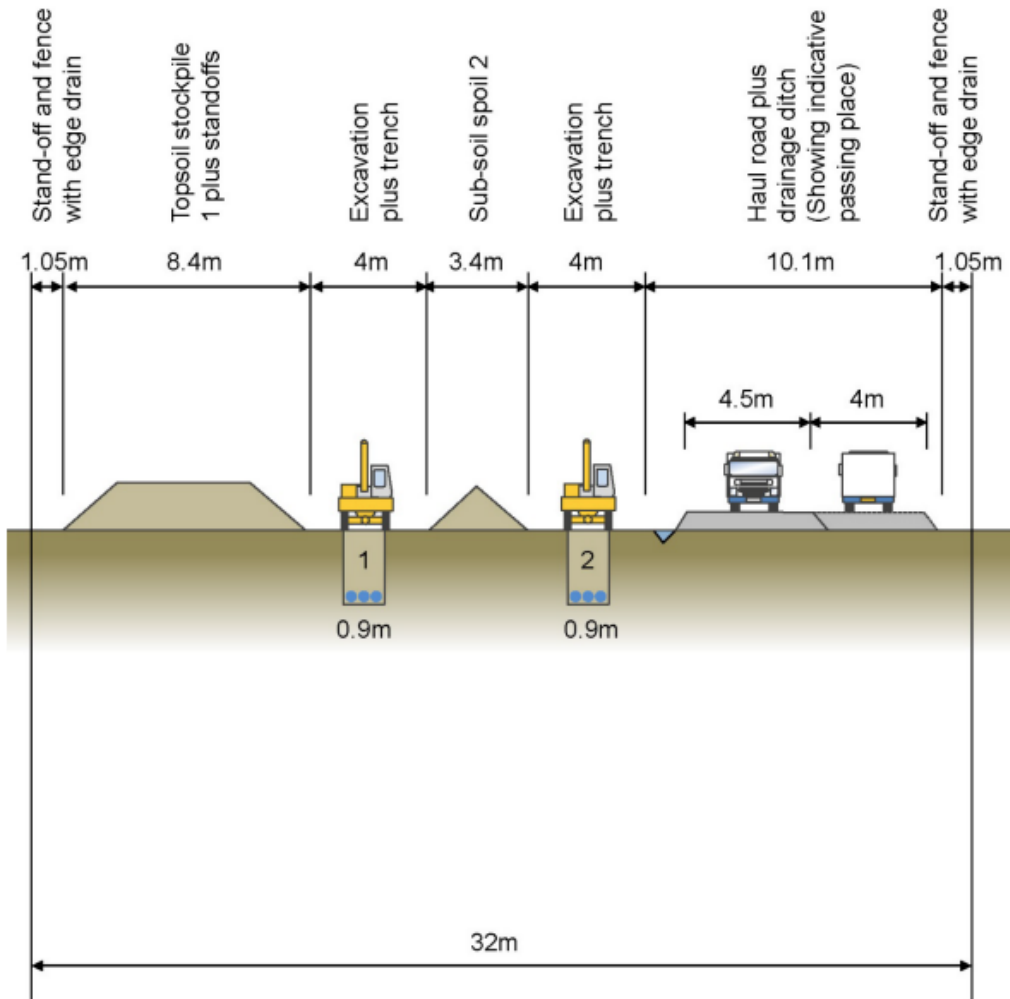


Plate 2.8 Indicative Cable Trenching Arrangement and Working Area

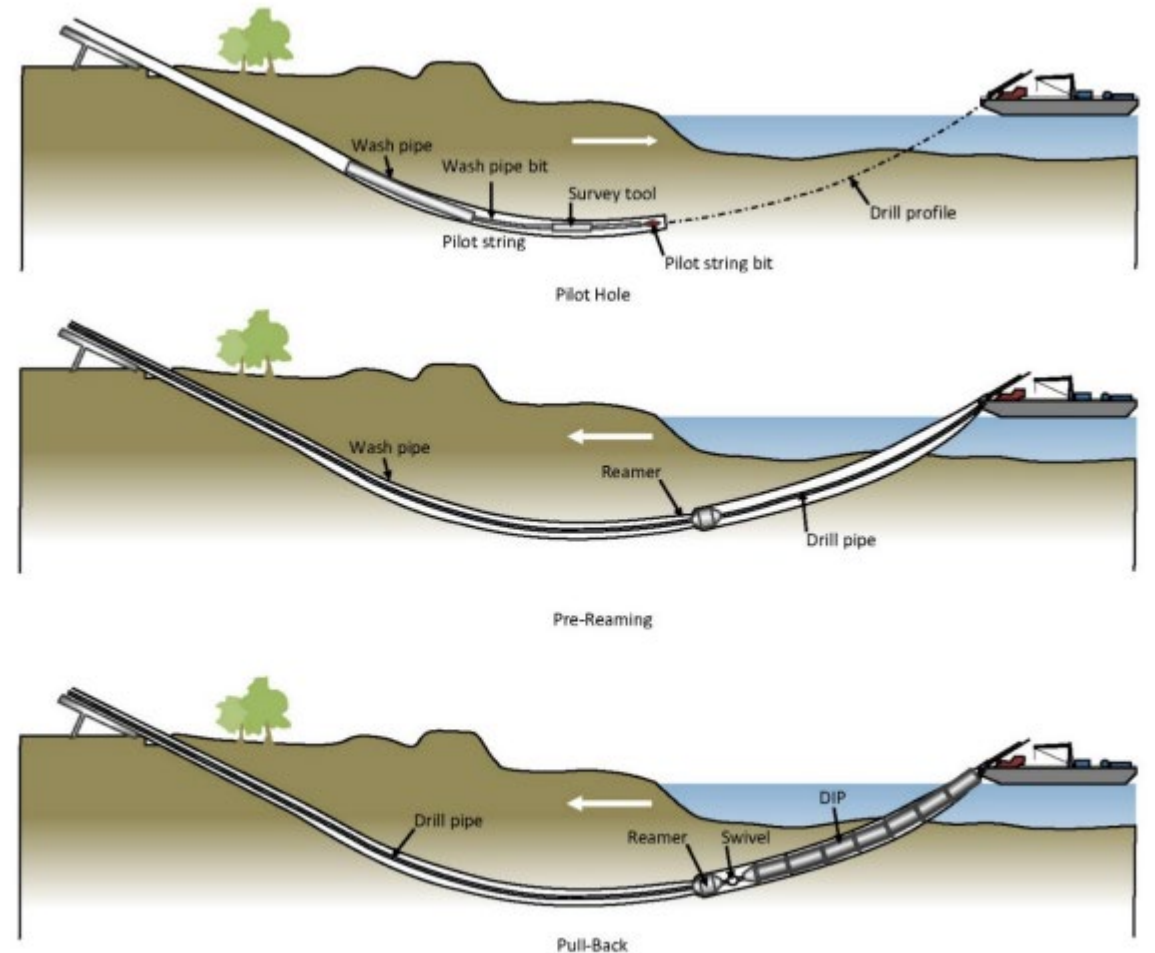


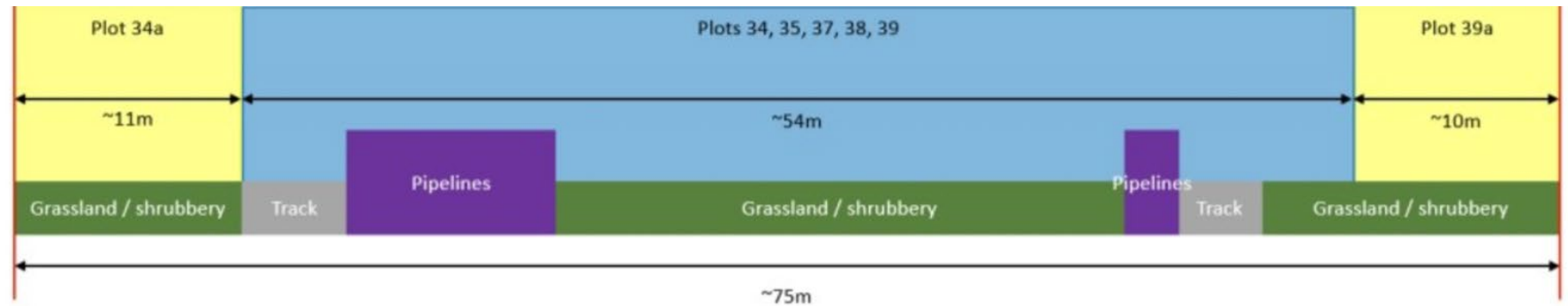
Plate 2.7 HDD Working Method at Landfall



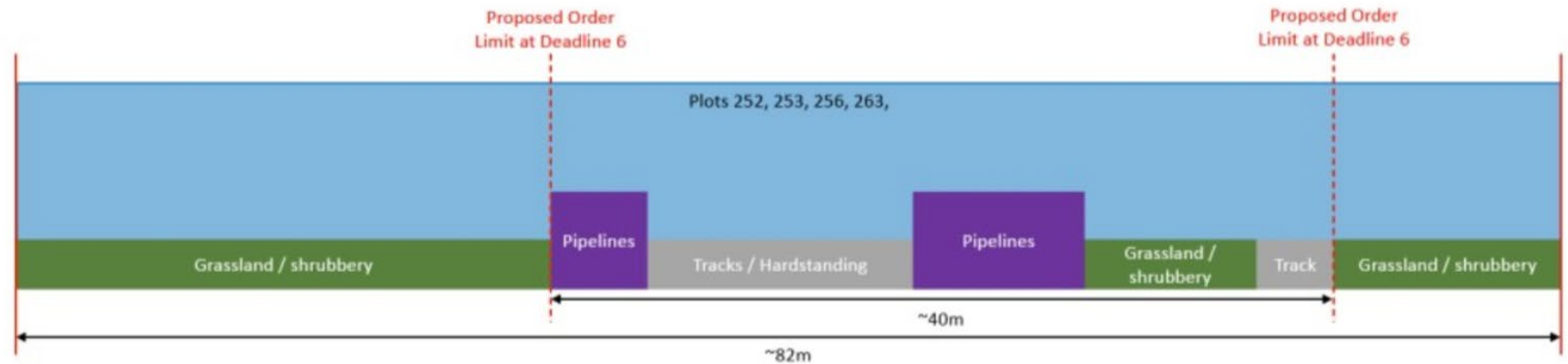
Understanding context – useful cross sections

Net Zero Teesside Project: Justification of Pipeline Widths

- Justification of the proposed Order limits and corridor widths accompanying the Land Plan with plot numbers marked



Cross Section of existing land and infrastructure



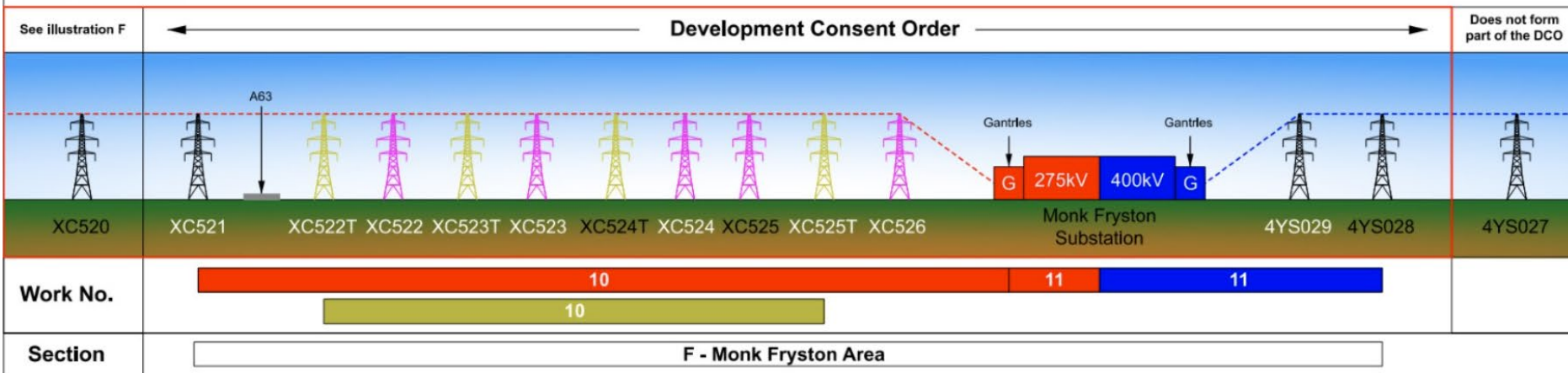
Cross Section of existing land and infrastructure



Illustrative linear sections

Yorkshire GREEN

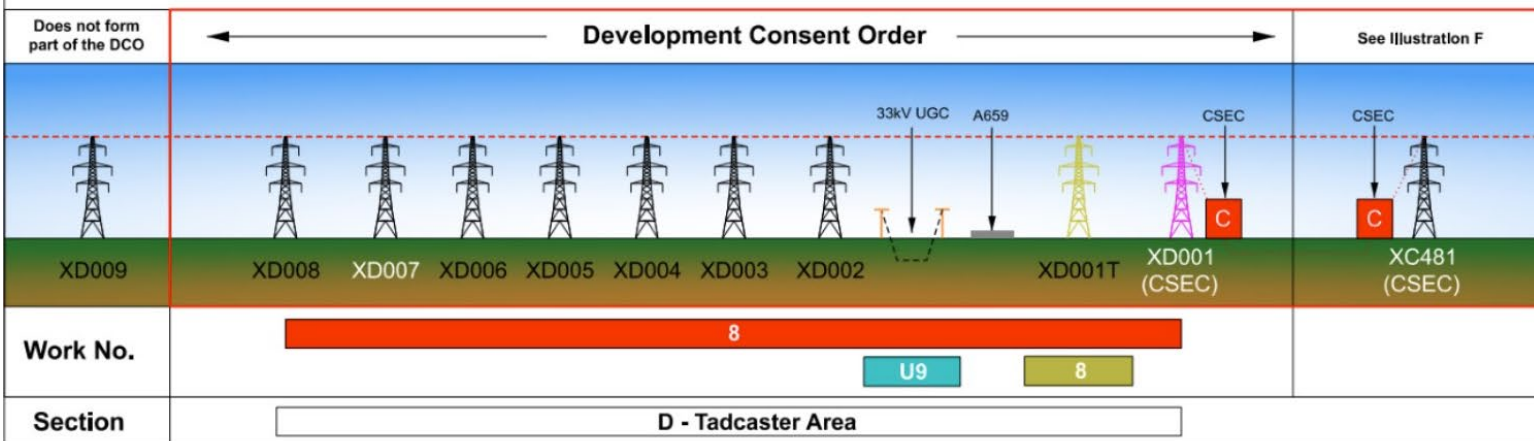
**Illustration G - National Grid Electricity Transmission 275kV/400kV New Build & Dismantling Overhead Line
XC & 4YS Route**



Legend

- 400kV Work Number
- 275kV Work Number
- Dismantling & Removal Work Number
- Utility Work Number
- Extract of DCO
- 400kV Overhead Line
- 400kV Underground Cable
- 275kV Overhead Line
- 275kV Underground Cable
- Proposed Pylon
- Existing Pylon
- Existing Pylon to be Dismantled
- Third-Party Asset to be Undergrounded

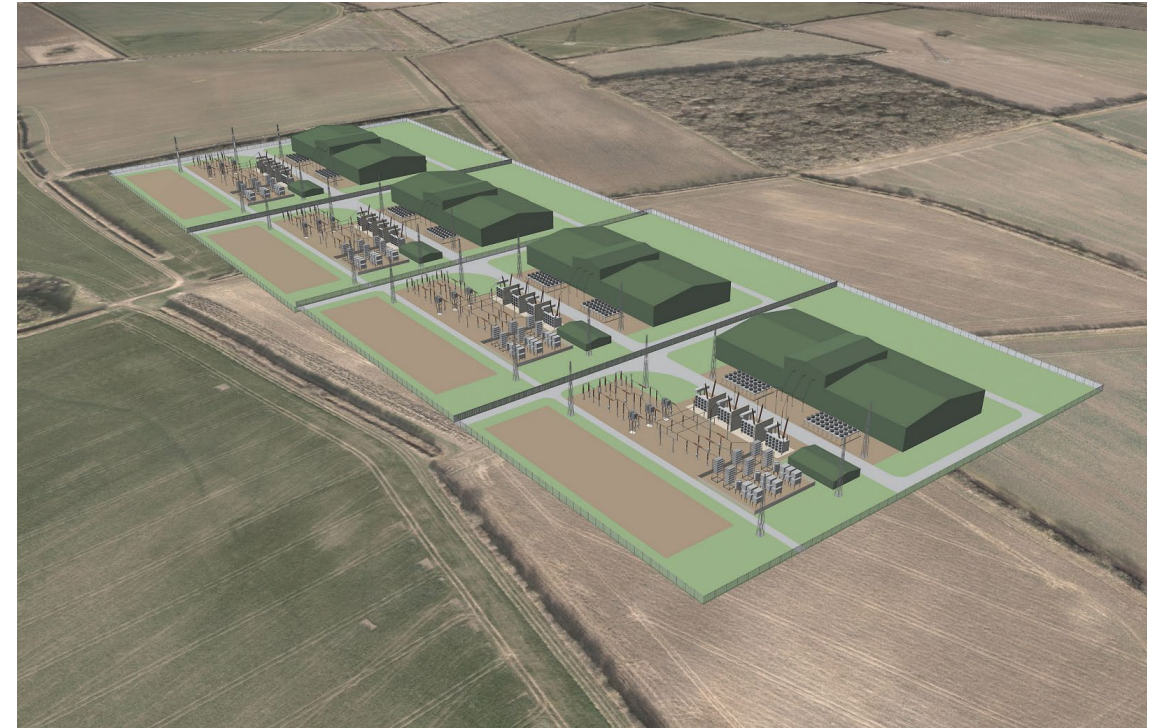
**Illustration H - National Grid Electricity Transmission 275kV Modified Overhead Line
XD Route**





Co-location of substations

- Longer projects have more likelihood of interaction with others
- Substation co-location is a particular feature of some linear project types
- In the scenario where Norfolk Boreas and Norfolk Vanguard offshore wind farms both progressed, converter stations would be co-located
- The Secretary of State amended the Norfolk Boreas DCO to include an Onshore Project Substation Masterplan, which would be informed by a strategic approach to mitigating cumulative impacts arising from the two substations



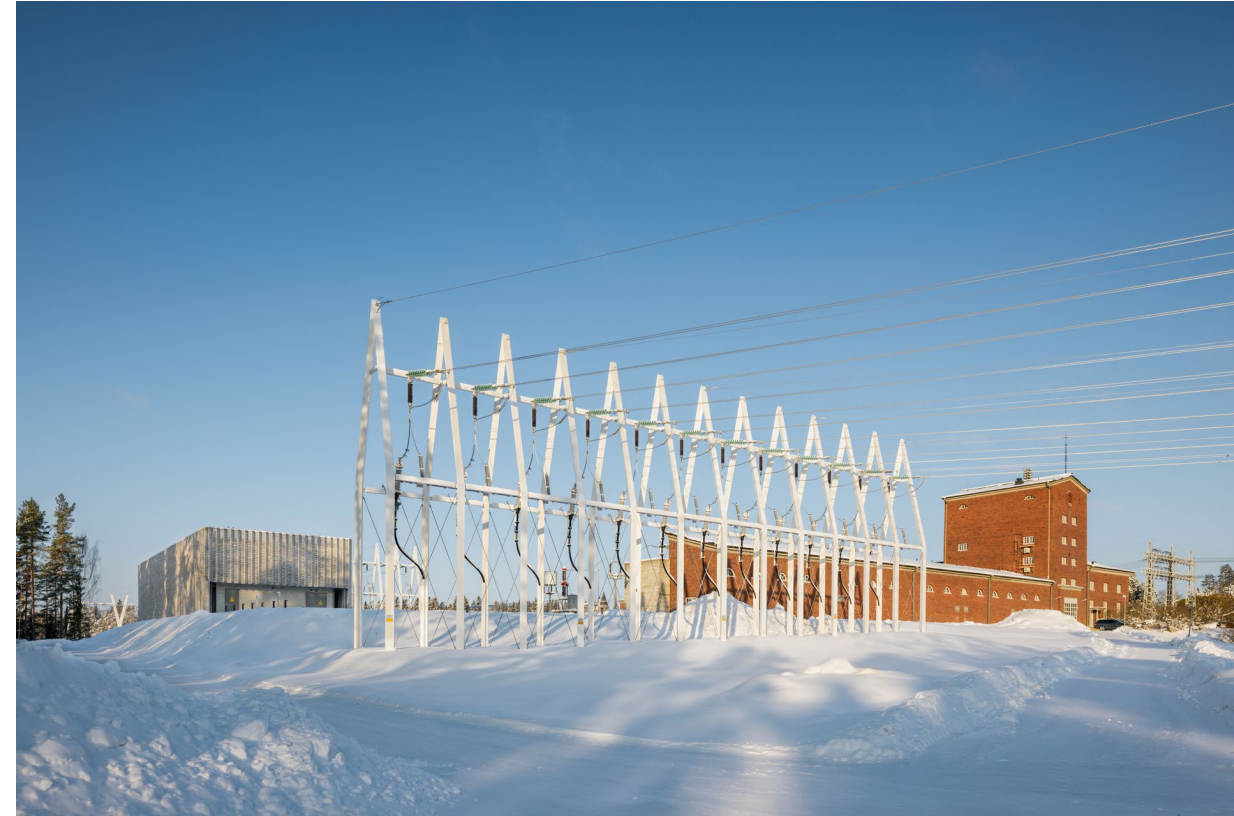


NPPF December 2024, paragraph 131

“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”



Project: Imatra Electricity Substation, Imatra, Finland
Architect: Kivinen Rusanen Architects
Client: Fingrid
Photography: Tuomas Kivinen



Project: Imatra Electricity Substation, Imatra, Finland
Architect: Kivinen Rusanen Architects
Client: Fingrid
Photography: Tuomas Kivinen





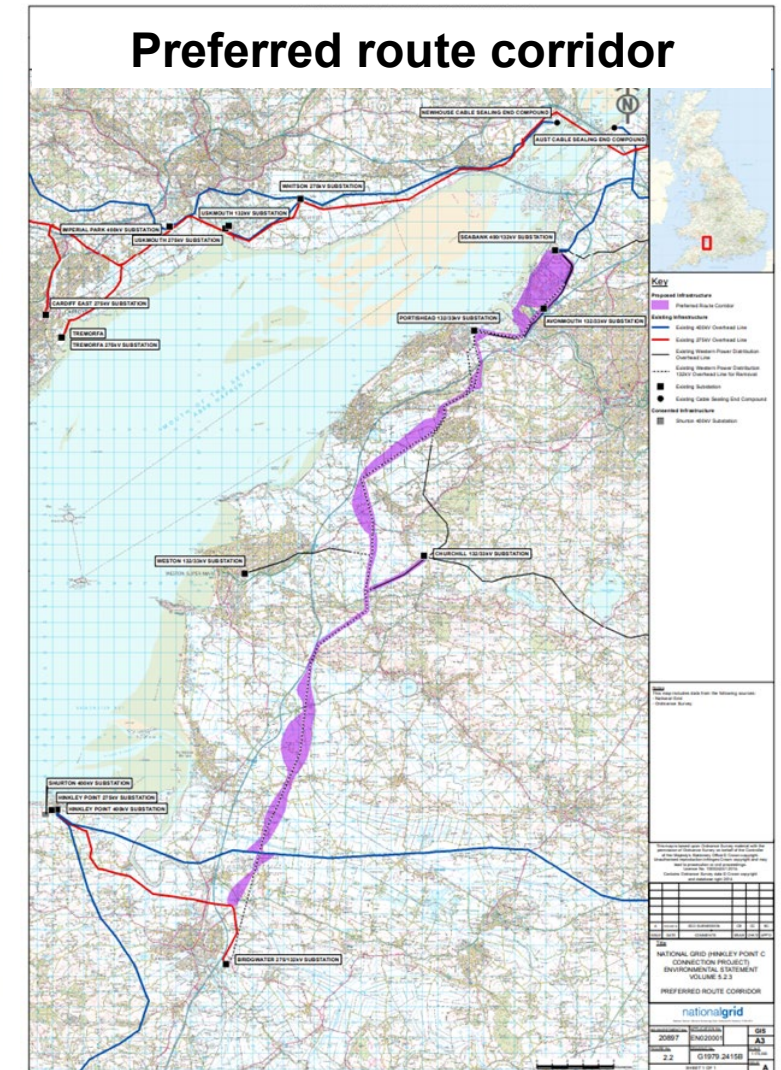
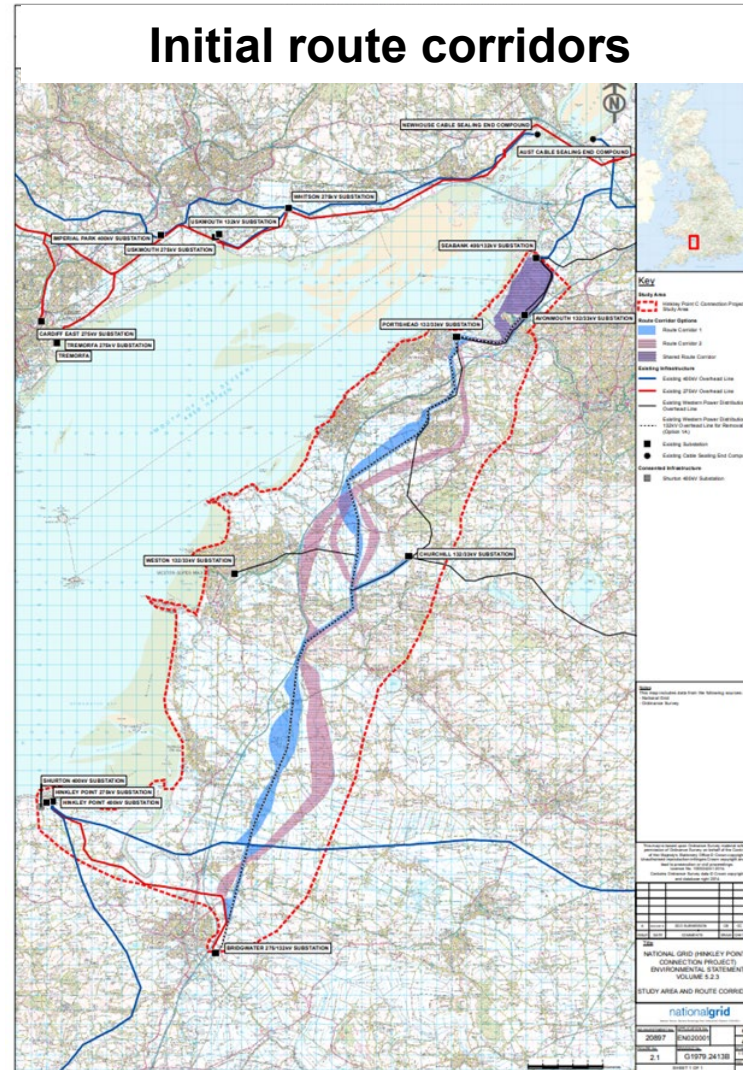
Section 4: Flexibility and what is secured





Alternatives hierarchy

- Early strategic project optioneering:
 - Technologies
 - Connections
 - Corridors
 - Routeing
- Mini-routeing alternatives
- Locations of eg landfall, substations, construction access, works areas
- Post-consultation alternatives
- Examination alternatives
- Micro-siting and LoD (construction stage flexibility)





Construction compounds/ works areas

Examination stage changes to limit flexibility

Norfolk Boreas

Changes were made to the dDCO and Code of Construction Practice to give more certainty for mobilisation areas and construction compounds:

- the layout plan would be designed to minimise effects on sensitive receptors
- site-specific control measures identified when further details of the construction activities were available would be subject to LPA approvals
- commitment to the reinstatement of all temporary construction areas
- changes to the dDCO to ensure the control measures and approvals processes were secured
- changes to the dDCO to set out maximum footprint parameters for the mobilisation areas



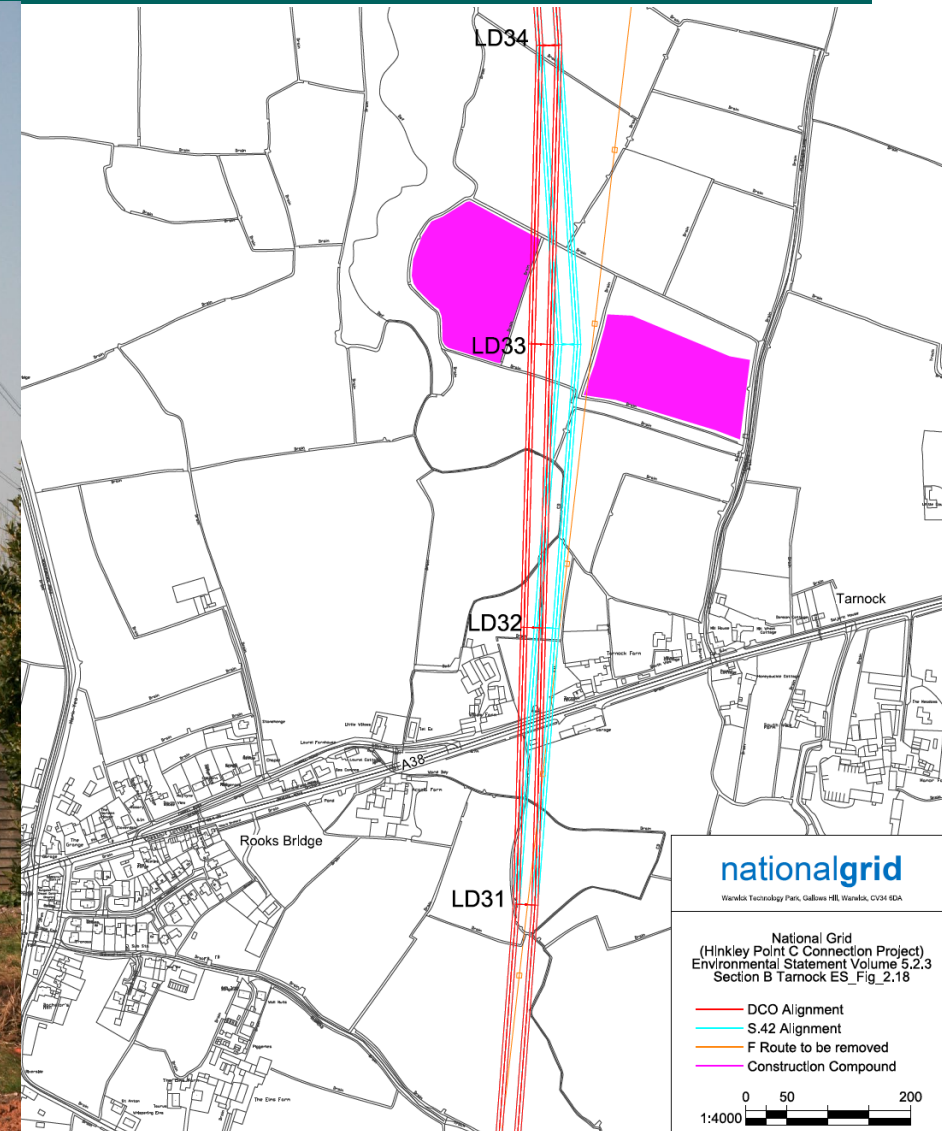
Cable sealing end compound works area for HPCC from Crook Peak



Limits of deviation and micro-siting

Hinkley Point C Connection: Pylon LD32

- Applicant provided information on effects of moving Pylon LD32 various distances
- The ExA said that the view of Pylon LD32 would exercise an overbearing presence in its proposed position that would detract from the reasonable enjoyment of the land
- In its rDCO, the ExA raised the heights of LD31 and LD32 which would allow LD32 to move 40m northwards
- rDCO wording did not refer to flexibility and LoD in relation to that 40m movement





<i>Where the correction is to be made</i>	<i>How the correction is to be made</i>	<i>Text to be substituted, inserted or omitted</i>
Article 2(1), definition of “Port Authority”	For “harbour master”, substitute	“haven master”
Article 5(2)	For “(2) Pylon LD32 must be constructed, 40 metres northwards from the position shown on the Works Plans within the limits of deviation relating to that Work as shown on those plans together with a corresponding increase in height of pylon LD32 to 36.5m and of pylon LD31 to 40 metres comprised in Work No. 1D shown in the sections (Drawing No 13/NG/0271 – 01_13205_84 revision C, Sheet 4)”, substitute	“(2) Pylon LD32 must be constructed 40 metres northwards (plus or minus 5 metres northwards or southwards to allow local ground conditions to be taken into account) from the position shown on the Works Plans within the limits of deviation relating to that Work as shown on those plans, together with a corresponding decrease or increase in height of pylon LD32 and of pylon LD31 as appropriate comprised in Work No. 1D shown in the sections (Drawing No 13/NG/0271 – 01_13205_84 revision B, Sheet 4).”



- Options:
 - routeing
 - electrical current, high voltage alternating current (HVAC) or high voltage direct current (HVDC) - influences the need for converter stations
 - substation type – gas insulated switchgear (GIS) or air insulated switchgear (AIS)
- Options take more examination time
- Why wait?
- Clarity needed on who decides, when and on what basis





Flexibility and what it's based on

Clarity on what the end product can be

- Design approach document/ design principles
- Parameter plans
- Masterplan
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Assessment on worst case scenario, but what will be built?





Flexibility vs Certainty

Where should an applicant provide more certainty

Recognition of Sensitive Areas

- Recognise the need for applicants to want as much flexibility as possible
- Applicants need to recognise where this appropriate and where it is not





Flexibility vs Certainty

Site Specific Plans

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 7
Site Specific Plan - QEP (clean)
Application Document: 8.57
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 3.0
April 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - St James' School (clean)
Application Document: 8.62
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - St Catherine's SANG (tracked change)
Application Document: 8.61
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - Turf Hill (tracked change)
Application Document: 8.58
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - Ashford Town Centre (tracked change)
Application Document: 8.78
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - Ashford Road (tracked change)
Application Document: 8.63
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - Fordbridge Park (clean)
Application Document: 8.59
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

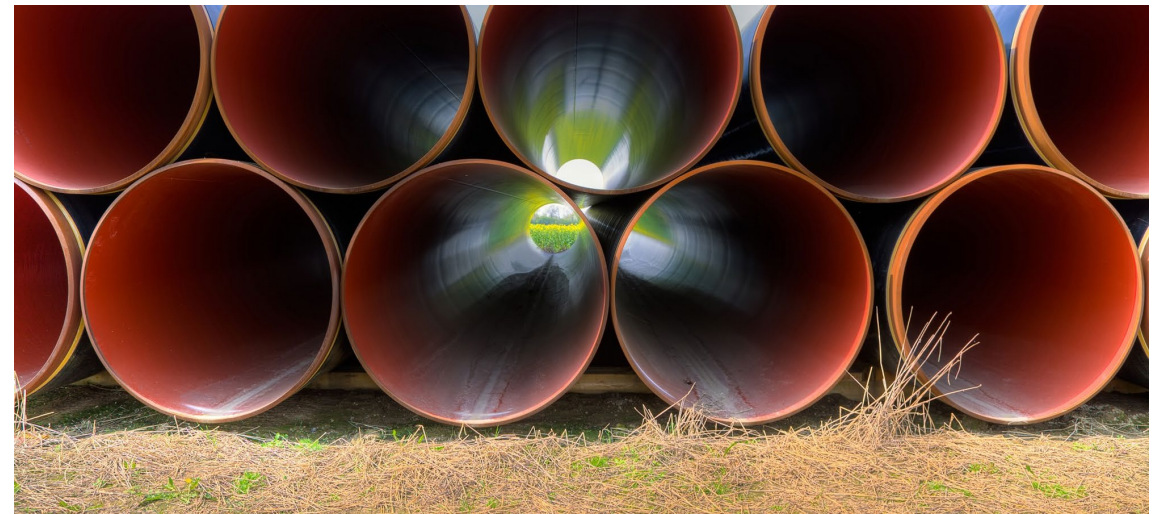
Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - Southwood Country Park (tracked change)
Application Document: 8.60
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020

Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Deadline 6
Site Specific Plan - St Catherine's SANG (clean)
Application Document: 8.61
Planning Inspectorate Reference Number: EN070005
Revision No. 2.0
March 2020



Thank you for listening





Section 5: QUESTIONS





Thank you for attending!



Please complete the webinar
evaluation form

Further learning:

- New advice page on preparing applications for linear projects – available at www.gov.uk/pins

Forthcoming webinar:

