



## Chapter 4: Consultations

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## 4 Consultations

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an outline of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultation process undertaken in relation to the development proposals. NorthConnect has engaged with key stakeholders from an early stage and throughout the EIA process, in order to inform this EIA Report (EIAR) and ensure that the development proposed is acceptable in terms of design and environmental effects.

As discussed in Chapter 1, pre-application consultation is required in support of the planning application and the marine licensing in Scottish Territorial Waters (STW). NorthConnect has undertaken consultation in line with both the marine and terrestrial requirements, details of which are provided in the HVDC Cable Installation Pre-Application Consultation Report (NorthConnect, 2018).

This chapter, therefore, concentrates on consultations with statutory and non-statutory consultees with specific regard to EIAR topics.

### 4.2 EIA Scoping Consultation

In April 2016, an EIA Scoping Report (NorthConnect, 2016) was submitted to Aberdeenshire Council (AC) and Marine Scotland Licensing Operating Team (MS-LOT), with a request for a formal Scoping Opinion under the EIA Regulations. The following organisations were requested to offer a scoping opinion, with those in bold being the ones who submitted responses:

- Association of District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFB)
- Buchan Community Council (BCC)
- Chamber of Shipping (CoS)
- Crown Estate (CE)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- **Historic Environment Scotland (HES)**
- Inshore Fisheries Group (IFG)
- **Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)**
- Fisheries Office Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
- **Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)**
- Marine Safety Forum (MSF)
- Marine Scotland Planning and Policy (MSPP)
- **Marine Scotland Science (MSS)**
- Ministry of Defence (MOD)
- **Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB)**
- **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**
- **Royal Yachting Association Scotland (RYA Scotland)**
- Scottish Creelers and Divers Association (SCDA)
- **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)**
- **Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)**
- Scottish Fishermen's Organisation (SFO)
- **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)**
- Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
- **Scottish Water (SW)**
- Transport Scotland (TS)
- Visit Scotland (VS)
- **Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board (UDSFB)**
- **Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)**
- Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board (YDSFB)

A Scoping Opinion was received from Aberdeenshire Council on the 23rd May 2016 and from MS-LOT on the 21st July 2016. It is acknowledged that the scope and extent of the scoping report is generally acceptable and covers the main issues. Specific comments to address and incorporate into the EIA process were provided and these have been reproduced in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 also details how NorthConnect have addressed these comments during the EIA process.

Table 4.1 EIA Scoping Opinion Comments and Responses.

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
1	MS-LOT	Effects upon fish and fisheries (including consideration of diadromous fish monitoring strategy)	Effects upon fish and shellfish ecology is assessed within Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish. Given the predicted impacts upon diadromous fish species, there is no requirement for implementation of any additional mitigation or monitoring for these species.	Chapter 15: Fish & Shellfish Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	
2	MS-LOT	Cumulative impacts must consider both environmental and socio economic impacts.	Cumulative socio economic effects are included in the Local Community and Economics Chapter 21. Cumulative environmental impacts are detailed in relevant topic specific chapters, as outlined in Chapter 6: Cumulative Effects.	Chapter 6: Cumulative Effects Chapter 21: Local Community and Economics	
3	MS-LOT	A report to inform the appropriate assessment. Where HRA is required, in combination effects must be considered.	An HRA Pre-Screening Report has been provided as a stand-alone document. The pre-screening report summarises the detailed information provided in the ecology topic specific EIAR Chapters. Cumulative/in-combination effects are identified and assessed.	Chapters 13 - 17	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK HRA Pre-Screening Report.
4	MS-LOT	Effects on compass deviation and navigation.	EMF has been assessed in Chapter 18: EMF and Sediment Heating. Effects on compass deviation has been considered and is included in Chapter 19, Navigation and Shipping. No significant impacts were identified.	Chapter 18: EMF and Sediment Heating Chapter 19: Shipping and Navigation, Section 19.5.4.	
5	MS-LOT	Commercial Fisheries should be included as a stand-alone section rather than as part of the 'Local Community and Economy' section.	Commercial fisheries is a stand alone chapter within the EIAR. Please see Chapter 20.	Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	
6	MS-LOT	Section 13.4 states that underwater noise associated with cable installation is scoped out as it is not likely to have significant environmental impacts, yet table 18.1 indicates it will be included in the assessment. MS-LOT support the position that underwater noise should be scoped in for cable installation (including additional protection requirements).	Underwater noise has been retained as a stand alone chapter. Noise emissions from installation and protection operations have been assessed, and potential impacts on fish and marine mammals identified in relevant chapters.	Chapter 23: Noise (Underwater) Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish Chapter 16: Marine Mammals	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
7	MS-LOT	MS-LOT also notes that decommissioning has been largely scoped out based on the assumption that the cable will be left <i>in-situ</i> at the end of its operational life. If there is a requirement to remove the cable for any reason, this will be subject to separate assessment.	As detailed in Chapter 2, it is now considered likely that the cables will be removed when the project is decommissioned. It is anticipated that impacts associated with removal of the cables will be broadly similar to those resulting from installation. However, due to NorthConnect's design life, it is likely that the environmental baseline will change significantly over the lifecycle of the project and, hence, it is not possible to accurately assess the impacts at this time. As such, decommissioning will be subject to a separate assessment.	Chapter 2: Project Description Section 2.6.3	
8	AC	In terms of mitigation of any potential adverse effects associated with this proposed development, Aberdeenshire Council would suggest that following known industry best practice in terms of laying the cable at sea, would be appropriate.	Details of the HVDC cable infrastructure design and installation methods are provided in the Construction Method Statement and Chapter 2. As detailed in these documents, the project design and proposed installation methods are in line with current industry best practice guidance, and contract tenders are being issued for the works specifying said guidance and standards.	Chapter 2: Project Description	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
9	AC	A Design Statement, including cable trench reinstatement statement, and a development decommissioning plan would be beneficial in terms of identifying how any predicted adverse effects would be minimised and/or negated at all stages of the project.	Details of the HVDC cable infrastructure design and installation methods (including onshore trench reinstatement) are provided in the Construction Method Statement, and Chapter 2. Chapter 25 provides a schedule of mitigation which summarises the measures taken to minimise and negate predicted adverse effects. Decommissioning is discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.3, however, due to NorthConnect's design life, it is likely that both available technology, and the environmental baseline, will change significantly over the lifecycle of the project and, hence, it is not possible to accurately assess the impacts at this time. As such, a decommissioning plan would be largely hypothetical and will, therefore, be subject to a separate assessment. This aligns with MS-LOT's feedback in row 7 of this table.	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 25: Schedule of Mitigation	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
10	AC	The environmental statement (ES) accompanying any application should fully assess any impacts of the works on the interests of all the protected areas. This should include, but not be limited to, potential impacts on habitats as a result of any pollution event and disturbance to relevant species as a result of noise, vibration and other construction activities.	Designated sites have been considered within each of the relevant chapters and the appropriate potential effects on them have been assessed.	Chapters 7-17.	
11	MSS	The scoping report correctly includes the River Dee SAC as needing consideration. In addition, adult salmon returning to the South Esk SAC, Tay SAC, Teith SAC and Tweed SAC and salmon smolts leaving these rivers will also be likely to cross the proposed cable and these SACs should be considered too.	These designated sites are considered within Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish. No significant impacts were identified.	Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish	
12	RSPB	To include a summary of the approach, considerations and findings of those studies, and explain the reasons for selecting the route. This would be consistent with Part 6 of Schedule 3 of The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007, which require the ES to include an outline of the main alternatives considered (including alternative routes) and the main reasons for the applicant's choice.	Details of consideration of alternative landfall locations and cable routes, together with the rationale for selecting the final options are provided in Chapter 2.	Chapter 2: Project Description, Section 2.4.	
13	RSPB	Consideration should be given to the potential impact on birds associated with SPAs that use areas beyond the boundary of the designated site and within the proposed corridor areas. The potential impact of proposed routes that pass through areas that have been identified (by Scottish Natural Heritage, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Marine Scotland) for further investigation as Marine Protection Areas (MPAs) should be assessed. These include the Southern Trench proposed MPA.	SPAs within and beyond the boundary of the HVDC cable corridor were laid out and considered in the baseline and relevant ones taken forward for assessment. Designated features of the Southern Trench pMPA are assessed in Chapters 7, 14 and 16.	Chapter 17: Ornithology, Section 17.4.1 and within Section 17.6. Chapter 7: Seabed Quality Chapter 14: Benthic Ecology Chapter 16: Marine Mammals.	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
14	SFF	The SFF is concerned that the statement that there will be sufficient slack in the laid cable to allow for raising to the surface does not give much expectation of the as laid route being accurate enough or even buried to avoid interference with fishing operations.	NorthConnect is committed to ensuring the cables are overtrawlable throughout STW and UK EEZ. Cable protection will predominantly be through trenching. Where trenching is not possible, trawl friendly rock berms will be installed. The cables will be laid accurately and post installation surveys conducted. As built survey data will be provide to the UKHO for inclusion on Admiralty charts and Kingfisher Cable Awareness Charts.	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
15	SFF	The report in part 7.3.9 FISH regarding herring does not take into account the current ICES advice spawning , which is “.... that activities that have a negative impact on the spawning habitat of Herring should not occur, unless the effects of these activities have been assessed and shown not to be detrimental.”	Potential impacts on herring spawning grounds are assessed in Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish. Considering the extent of suitable spawning habitat for herring present along the consenting corridor, and the short term and highly localised nature of the potential habitat loss or effects upon spawning individuals, no significant detrimental impacts are anticipated in the context of the wider spawning grounds and stock unit.	Chapter 15: Fish & Shellfish, Section 15.5.3 and 15.3.4.	
16	SFF	In parts 7.4.2 and 11.3.2 there is no consideration of any alternative to concrete mattresses, which may be more appropriate for mitigation to fisheries in certain areas. These are also unsubstantiated claims about reef and community growth.	No permanent concrete mattresses will be utilised in the UK EEZ. External protection will be provided where necessary through rock berms. As detailed in the Construction Method Statement, and Chapter 2, rock berms will be designed to be overtrawlable. Mattresses may be used to provide temporary protection of the HDD exit point during the installation works, however, this is in within 300m of the coast, in waters unsuitable for demersal trawling.  Both beneficial and adverse ecological effects of rock placement are identified in Chapters 14: benthic Ecology and 15: Fish and Shellfish. However no effects were assessed as being significant.	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 14: Benthic Ecology Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
17	SNH	An appropriate assessment is required when a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site (rather than potentially affecting such a site as suggested in the Scoping Report). If installation of the NorthConnect development occurs during the breeding season of the qualifying seabirds of the Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) a significant effect is likely. We therefore agree with the Scoping Report's conclusion that an appropriate assessment is required.	The competent authority will need to carry out an HRA for the Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA. We have provided information within this EIAR to inform their HRA, and provided an HRA pre-screening report to inform assessment of other designated sites.	Chapter 17: Ornithology.	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK HRA Pre-Screening Report.
18	SNH	This MPA [Southern Trench] has been proposed for its minke whale feature, (as well as burrowed mud, fronts, shelf deeps and geodiversity features). Although MPA proposals do not have the full policy protection given to possible MPAs, we understand that MS requires them to be taken into account in licensing decisions and so impacts on the MPA proposal should be assessed in the EA.	Southern Trench pMPA and its qualifying features are assessed in all relevant topic specific chapters. No significant adverse effects were identified.	Chapter 7: Seabed Quality Chapter 14: Benthic Ecology Chapter 16: Marine Mammals.	
19	SNH	We recommend that the effect of construction noise on marine mammals is scoped in and that an assessment of the effects of underwater noise on marine mammals is included in the EA and this should inform any relevant mitigation measures. A noise assessment would inform a decision on whether EPS licensing is necessary. A noise assessment would also inform our advice on whether construction is capable of affecting, other than insignificantly, the minke whale proposed protected feature of the Southern Trench MPA proposal.	Underwater noise has been retained as a stand alone chapter. Noise emissions from installation and protection operations have been assessed and potential impacts on fish and marine mammals identified in relevant chapters. It was identified that an EPS licence is likely to be required for the use of sub-bottom profilers during survey operations. The minke whale feature of the Southern Trench pMPA is specifically considered and no significant effects on the minke whale feature are expected.	Chapter 23: Noise (Underwater) Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish Chapter 16: Marine Mammals	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
20	SNH	The Scoping Report indicates that the benthic ecology survey will be undertaken in accordance with SNH advice provided to NorthConnect’s consultant . We can therefore confirm our view that the proposed benthic ecology survey methodology is appropriate. As indicated in our advice of 8 March, it will be particularly important that the survey provides sufficient information to assess impact on PMFs.	The results of the survey gave sufficient information on PMFs to assess potential impacts. Section 14.4 provides a review of the survey results and Section 14.5 assesses the potential impacts to PMFs. No significant impacts were identified.	Chapter 14: Benthic Ecology, Sections 14.4 and 14.5.	Benthic Survey Report_102273-NOC-SUR-REP-ENUKNSNF
21	UDSFB	We would like our concerns about the effects of this project on Migrating Salmon and Sea Trout, in both the construction phase and in the ongoing operating stage. Please take note of our objection to the project until our fears have been addressed.	Effects upon migrating Atlantic salmon and anadromous brown trout (sea trout) are assessed within Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish, for both the installation and operational phases. No further information is provided within the consultation response to give clarity to UDSFB’s concerns and allow them to be specifically addressed. However, no significant effects on migrating salmon or sea trout have been identified during the construction or operational phases of the project.	Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish, Sections 15.5.2 and 15.5.3.	
22	SNH	Potential impacts on habitats as a result of any pollution event and disturbance to relevant bird species as a result of noise, vibration and other construction activities.	Pollution events, noise and disturbance were all considered within the impact assessment. No significant results are expected due to the proposed development.	Chapter 17: Ornithology, Section 17.6	
23	SNH	We support the inclusion of a schedule of mitigation forming part of the ES as this will be a key document to ensure that impacts on ecological interests are minimised and legal obligations to protected species are met.	A Schedule of Mitigation has been included in Chapter 25 of this EIAR. It details all Primary, Secondary and Tertiary mitigation detailed within the topic specific chapters.	Chapter 25: Schedule of Mitigation	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
24	SNH	We note that the scoping report acknowledges potential impacts on recreational users of the area, for example with respect to noise and landscape and visual impacts. While these will be temporary, it may be appropriate for the ES to include an assessment of these impacts along with mitigation measures to reduce any impacts.	An assessment of the effects on recreational users has been included within Chapter 21 of the EIAR. This includes consideration of effects on the value of amenity during construction works. Amenity value covers a range of issues including: changes to the soundscape, landscape and visual effects. Chapter 22 of the EIAR specifically considers noise effects on the Coastal Footpath and Local Climbing Routes.	Chapter 21: Local Community and Economy, Section 21.6.1.5 Chapter 22: Noise (In-air), Section 22.6.1.2 and 22.6.1.3	
25	SNH	We advise that the ES should explore fully any impacts arising from in-combination and cumulative effects and agree with the list of other projects given in the scoping report.	Chapter 6 provides a list of projects which will be assessed for cumulative and in-combination effects. These aspects are considered in all relevant topic specific chapters.	Chapter 6: Cumulative Effects	
26	AC	Examples of the types of issues that should be addressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Local Economic Effect</li> <li>• Landscape Resource</li> <li>• Soils and geology</li> <li>• Visual Amenity</li> <li>• Ornithology</li> <li>• Ecology</li> <li>• Nature Conservation</li> <li>• European Protected Species</li> <li>• Hydrology and Water Supplies</li> <li>• Forestry and Tree Felling</li> <li>• Transport and Traffic including road safety issues and impact on local road network during and after construction work</li> <li>• Noise</li> <li>• Cultural Heritage and archaeology</li> <li>• Land Use</li> <li>• Land Ownership</li> <li>• Tourism and Recreation, including footpaths</li> <li>• Proposed mitigation measures</li> </ul>	These issues are addressed in relevant topic specific chapters within the EIAR.	All	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
27	AC	A Construction Environmental Management Document is a key management tool to implement the Schedule of Mitigation. We recommend that the principles of this document are set out in the ES outlining how the draft Schedule of Mitigation will be implemented. This document should form the basis of more detailed site specific Construction Environmental Management Plans which, along with detailed method statements, may be required by planning condition or, in certain cases, through environmental regulation.	As detailed in Chapter 3, an overarching CEMP will be provided for the NorthConnect construction operations and this will be informed by the Schedule of Mitigation in Chapter 25. The Schedule of mitigation will also inform the construction contracts, so the principal contractor is contractually obliged to implement the identified mitigation measures. However, due to the complex nature of the project, the CEMP will require significant input from the principal contractors detailed design and planning, so it is not possible to provide a draft at this time.	Chapter 3: Methodology Chapter 25: Schedule of Mitigation	
28	AC	For areas where avoidance is impossible, details of how impacts upon wetlands including peatlands are minimised and mitigated should be provided within the ES or planning submission.	There are no wetlands within the cable corridor, as identified by the NVC survey carried out.	Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology, Section 13.4.4.2	
29	AC	Landscaping with surplus peat (or soil) may not be of ecological benefit and consequently a waste management exemption may not apply. In addition we consider disposal of significant depth of peat as being landfilled waste, and this again may not be consentable under our regulatory regimes. Full details of how waste will be minimised at the construction stage should be provided.	As detailed in Chapter 2, no reuse of spoil for landscaping is proposed. No peat has been identified within the consenting corridor. Chapter 24 details how wastes will be minimised during construction.	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 24: Resource and Waste	
30	SNH	The environmental statement (ES) accompanying any application should fully assess any impacts of the onshore works on the interests of all the protected areas above [Buchan Ness to Collieston SPA, Buchan Ness to Collieston SAC, and Bullers of Buchan SSSI]. This should include, but not be limited to, potential impacts on habitats as a result of any pollution event and disturbance to relevant bird species as a result of noise, vibration and other construction activities.	Protected areas were assessed within this topic specific Chapters. Pollution events, noise and disturbance were all considered within the impact assessment. No significant results are expected due to the proposed development.	Chapter 8: Land Quality Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology Chapter 17: Ornithology	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
31	RSPB	It is important that the ES set out measures to ensure that breeding peregrines are not disturbed during the construction and operational phases.	A peregrine falcon survey has taken place and identified the nest is beyond 500m from the HVDC onshore cable corridor. Pre-construction surveys will also take place by suitably qualified and licensed surveyor. If the peregrine nest has moved to be within the corridor, measures will be set out to ensure it is not disturbed.	Chapter 17: 17.7.1.1.1	
32	RSPB	We consider it would be appropriate for the environmental statement to include a summary of the approach, considerations and findings of this study, and explain the reasons for selecting the landing point. This would be consistent with Part II of Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 which require the ES to include an outline of the main alternatives considered (including alternative routes) and the main reasons for the applicant's choice.	Details of consideration of alternative landfall locations and cable routes, together with the rationale for selecting the final options are provided in Chapter 2.	Chapter 2: Project Description, Section 2.4.	
33	SEPA	Maps giving detailed information on the site layout, including details of all onshore components such as access tracks, buildings, cabling, jointing pits, drilling rig pad, rock dumps or any other shoreline works	Final site layouts cannot be confirmed until the principal contractor has been appointed and completed design, as this will depend to some extent on the nature of the equipment which is selected. However, indicative layouts have been provided by the Construction Method Statement and are also referenced in Chapter 2.	Chapter 2: Project Description	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: Construction Method Statement
34	SEPA	Information to demonstrate the on shore components of the development have been designed wherever possible to avoid engineering activities in the water environment and if there are any opportunities to provide improvements to the water environment.	As detailed in Chapter 2, NorthConnect considered numerous options for onshore cable routing and the final route corridor was selected as being the most suitable based on numerous criteria. However, it was not possible to avoid all watercourse crossings. Where watercourses are to be crossed, construction techniques will be in line with industry best practice, including the GPPs. Impacts resulting from crossing of watercourses were assessed in Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore), with no significant effects identified.	Chapter 2: Project Description Section 2.4 Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore).	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
35	SEPA	Details of any existing groundwater abstractions within the vicinity of the onshore aspects of the development and if the proposal will include water abstraction.	Private water supplies are discussed in Chapter 8 of the EIAR. Groundwater abstraction, if required, would be in the form of dewatering of excavations only.	Chapter 8: Geology and Hydrogeology, Section 8.3.6	
36	SEPA	Identification of all aspects of site work that might impact upon the environment, potential pollution risks associated with the proposals and identify the principles of preventative measures and mitigation.	Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore) assessed the potential impacts arising from the site work upon the onshore water environment and identified preventive and mitigation measures. Overall no significant effects were identified. Chapter 11: Water Quality (Marine Environment) assessed potential environmental impacts from site work upon the marine water environment and identified preventive and mitigation measures. Overall no significant effects were identified.	Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore) Sections 10.4 and 10.5 Chapter 11: Water Quality (Marine Environment) Sections 11.5 and 11.6	
37	SEPA	Details of how waste will be minimised at the construction stage.	Waste management is considered withing Chapter 24 of the EIAR.	Chapter 24: Resource Usage and Waste	
38	SEPA	Information on surface water drainage during construction.	Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore) provides detail of site surface water drainage and assessed the potential impacts on water quality during construction.	Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore).	
39	SEPA	We advise that the applicant should, through the EIA process or planning submission, systematically identify all aspects of site work that might impact upon the environment, potential pollution risks associated with the proposals and identify the principles of preventative measures and mitigation. This will establish a robust environmental management process for the development. A draft Schedule of Mitigation should be produced as part of this process. This should cover all the environmental sensitivities, pollution prevention and mitigation measures identified to avoid or minimise environmental effects.	A Schedule of Mitigation has been included in Chapter 25 of this EIAR. It details all Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary mitigation detailed within the topic specific chapters.	Chapter 25: Schedule of Mitigation	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
40	SEPA	A Construction Environmental Management Document is a key management tool to implement the Schedule of Mitigation. We recommend that the principles of this document are set out in the ES outlining how the draft Schedule of Mitigation will be implemented. This document should form the basis of more detailed site specific Construction Environmental Management Plans which, along with detailed method statements, may be required by planning condition or, in certain cases, through environmental regulation. This approach provides a useful link between the principles of development which need to be outlined at the early stages of the project and the method statements which are usually produced following award of contract (just before development commences).	As detailed in Chapter 3, an overarching CEMP will be provided for the NorthConnect construction operations, and this will be informed by the Schedule of Mitigation in Chapter 25. The Schedule of mitigation will also inform the construction contracts, so the principal contractor is contractually obliged to implement the identified mitigation measures. However, due to the complex nature of the project, the CEMP will require significant input from the principal contractor’s detailed design and planning, so it is not possible to provide a draft at this time.	Chapter 3: Methodology Chapter 25: Schedule of Mitigation	
41	SEPA	We note “During the construction process, the majority of the site offices, staff welfare facilities, parking storage and laydown areas will be provided at the Fourfields Converter Station Construction site, and have already been incorporated into the planning consent for that element of the project.” It should be made clear in the ES where aspects are part of the existing consent(s) and therefore not considered further and where they are not covered by an existing consent.	Where aspects are incorporated in the existing consent, this is detailed in all relevant topic specific chapters.	All	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
42	SEPA	We welcome that “An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the onshore HVDC cable route search area (Drawing 3149) has been completed” although this wasn’t included in Appendix A of the report provided to SEPA. If there are wetlands or peatland systems present, the ES or planning submission should demonstrate how the layout and design of the proposal, including any associated hard standing and roads, avoid impact on such areas.	There are no wetlands or peatland systems within the cable corridor, as identified by the NVC survey carried out.	Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology, Section 13.4.4.2 Appendix D.4 and D.5	
43	SEPA	National Vegetation Classification should be completed for any wetlands identified. Results of these findings should be submitted, including a map with all the proposed infrastructure overlain on the vegetation maps to clearly show which areas will be impacted and avoided.	An NVC Survey was commissioned and carried out. Results are provided and a map was produced of the vegetation types overlaid with the HVDC cable corridor red line boundary.	Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology, Section 13.4.4.2 Appendix D.4 and D.5	
44	SEPA	For areas where avoidance is impossible, details of how impacts upon wetlands including peatlands are minimised and mitigated should be provided within the ES or planning submission. In particular impacts that should be considered include those from drainage, pollution and waste management. This should include preventative/mitigation measures to avoid significant drying or oxidation of peat through, for example, the construction of access tracks, dewatering, excavations, drainage channels, cable trenches, or the storage and re-use of excavated peat. Detailed information on waste management is required as detailed below. Any mitigation proposals should also be detailed within the Construction Environmental Management Document as detailed below.	There are no wetlands or peatland systems within the cable corridor, as identified by the NVC survey carried out.	Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology, Section 13.4.4.2 Appendix D.4 and D.5 Appendix D.4 and D.5	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
45	SEPA	It is therefore essential that if relevant the scope for minimising the extraction of peat is explored and alternative options identified that minimise risk in terms of carbon release, human health and environmental impact. Early discussion of proposals with us is essential, and an overall approach of minimisation of peatland disruption should be adopted. If it is proposed to use some excavated peat within borrow pits or bunding then details of the proposals, including depth of peat and how the hydrology of the peat will be maintained, should be outlined in the ES or planning submission.	No peatland systems or peat extraction will need to take place as part of this project.	Chapter 8: Land Quality Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology	
46	SEPA	In order to meet the objectives of the water framework directive of preventing any deterioration and improving the water environment, developments should be designed to avoid engineering activities in the water environment wherever possible. The water environment includes burns, rivers, lochs, wetlands, groundwater and reservoirs. Where a watercourse crossing cannot be avoided, bridging solutions or bottomless or arched culverts which do not affect the bed and banks of the watercourse should be used.	As detailed in Chapter 2, NorthConnect considered numerous options for onshore cable routing, and the final route corridor was selected as being the most suitable based on numerous criteria. However, it was not possible to avoid all watercourse crossings. Where watercourses are to be crossed, construction techniques will be in line with industry best practice, including the GPPs. Impacts resulting from crossing of watercourses were assessed in Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore), with no significant effects identified.	Chapter 2: Project Description Section 2.4 Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore).	
47	SEPA	If the engineering works proposed are likely to result in increased flood risk to people or property then a flood risk assessment should be submitted in support of the planning application and we should be consulted	Flooding is considered in Chapter 10, with no increase in flood risk expected due to the HVDC Cable installation works.	Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore), Section 10.4.2	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
48	SEPA	<p>Where water abstraction is proposed we request that the ES, or planning submission, details if a public or private source will be used. If a private source is to be used the information below should be included. Whilst we regulate water abstractions under The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended), we require the following information to determine if the abstraction is feasible in this location;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source e.g. ground water or surface water;</li> <li>• Location e.g. grid ref and description of site;</li> <li>• Volume e.g. quantity of water to be extracted;</li> <li>• Timing of abstraction e.g. will there be a continuous abstraction;</li> <li>• Nature of abstraction e.g. sump or impoundment;</li> <li>• Proposed operating regime e.g. details of abstraction limits and hands off flow;</li> <li>• Survey of existing water environment including any existing water features;</li> <li>• Impacts of the proposed abstraction upon the surrounding water environment.</li> </ul>	<p>Water required for onshore construction works associated with the HVDC Cable will be from a connection to the Scottish Water mains. Groundwater abstraction if required would be in the form of dewatering of excavations only, and compliance with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) will be ensured.</p>	<p>Chapter 24: Resource Usage and Waste, Section 24.4.1.1</p>	
49	SEPA	<p>We welcome the consideration of decommissioning and note “For the onshore element this would be a reversal of the installation works.” SEPA is currently considering the waste regulatory position of material such as rubble, foundations and cabling which may be reused or abandoned on site during decommissioning or repowering. Any proposal to discard materials that are likely to be classed as waste would be unacceptable under current waste management licensing and under waste management licensing at time of decommissioning if a similar regulatory framework exists at that time.</p>	<p>As detailed in Chapter 2, it is now considered likely that the cables will be removed when the project is decommissioned. It is anticipated that impacts associated with removal of the cables will be broadly similar to those resulting from installation. However, due to NorthConnect's design life, it is likely that the environmental baseline will change significantly over the lifecycle of the project and, hence, it is not possible to accurately assess the impacts at this time. As such, decommissioning will be subject to a separate assessment.</p>	<p>Chapter 2: Project Description Section 2.6.3</p>	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
50	MS-LOT	The Communication Strategy must document clearly defined procedures for the distribution of information relating to all cable installation, protection and survey activities to the fishing industry and other legitimate users of the sea.	These procedures are provided in the Communication Strategy and Fisheries Liaison Mitigation Action Plan.	N/A	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Communications Strategy HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Fisheries Liaison Mitigation Action Plan.
51	MS-LOT	The protection plan should clearly describe the cable route and identify areas where the cable will be buried and the estimated depth of burial. It should also identify areas where additional cable protection is likely to be required either because the cable cannot be buried, or the depth of burial is insufficient to remove the requirement for additional protection.	This information is provided in Chapter 2: Project Description. Further information is provided in the Construction Method Statement. The CMS is informed by the marine survey operations, and the associated Cable Burial Risk Assessment and Cable Protection Analysis Report.	Chapter 2: Project Description	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
52	MS-LOT	Construction method statement This document must include as a minimum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· details of the staging of the works</li> <li>· proposed techniques for construction and plant used, etc.</li> <li>· Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) strategy</li> </ul>	These details are provided in the Construction Method Statement.	N/A	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
53	MS-LOT	Post installation survey plan The document must include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· the immediate post lay survey and longer term survey and inspection programme</li> <li>· the proposed timescales and frequency of inspections</li> <li>· the survey type</li> <li>· the proposed mitigation if spans or movement or other dangers to legitimate use of the sea are identified.</li> </ul>	The immediate post lay survey is considered to be part of the installation works and details are included in the Construction Method Statement. All other details are provided in the Post Installation Survey Plan.	N/A	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement. HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Post Installation Survey Plan

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
54	MS-LOT	A navigational risk assessment must be undertaken and your attention is drawn to the advice provided by the MCA to inform this process.	The Navigation and Shipping chapter and supporting baseline appendix represent the Navigational Risk Assessment for the cable. Impacts have been assessed using a risk matrix approach.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping Appendix G.1 - Shipping and Navigation Baseline Conditions	
55	MS-LOT	<p>MS-LOT is aware of the following works or proposed works that should be included in your assessment of cumulative effects in the ES (please note that this list is not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aberdeen Harbour Expansion Project (Aberdeen)</li> <li>• Beatrice STW Offshore Wind Farm (Outer Moray Firth)</li> <li>• European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (Aberdeen)</li> <li>• Forthwind (Methil) Offshore Wind Demonstrator (Firth of Forth)</li> <li>• Hywind Scotland Pilot Park Offshore Wind Farm (Offshore Peterhead)</li> <li>• Inch Cape STW Wind Farm (Outer Firth of Forth)</li> <li>• Kincardine offshore Wind Farm (Aberdeen)</li> <li>• Moray Firth Eastern Development Area (Outer Moray Firth)</li> <li>• Moray Firth Western Development Area (Outer Moray Firth)</li> <li>• Neart na Gaoithe STW Wind Farm (Outer Firth of Forth)</li> <li>• Peterhead Carbon Capture and Storage Project (Peterhead to Goldeneye Field)</li> <li>• Peterhead Harbour Masterplan (Peterhead)</li> <li>• Port of Ardersier (Inner Moray Firth)</li> <li>• Seagreen Alpha Round 3 Wind Farm (Outer Firth of Forth)</li> <li>• Seagreen Bravo Round 3 wind Farm ~ (Outer Firth of Forth)</li> <li>• SSE HVDC cable, Noss Head to Portgordon (Moray Firth)</li> <li>• North Sea Network Link Interconnector cable (NE England – Norway)</li> </ul>	The cumulative project list was agreed through discussions with MS-LOT. Cumulative impacts are assessed in all assessment chapters.	Chapter 6: Cumulative Effects	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
56	MS-LOT	European Protected Species Licensing -It needs to be categorically established which species are present on and near the site, and where, before the application is considered for consent. The presence of protected species must be included and considered as part of the application process, not as an issue which can be considered at a later stage.	EPS species presence and potential impacts are assessed in the Terrestrial Ecology and Marine Mammal Ecology Chapters. An EPS licence is likely to be required for disturbance of cetaceans through the use of sub-bottom profilers during survey operations. An EPS licence may be required for otters, dependant on the findings of the preconstruction otter surveys at the UK landfall.	Chapter 13: Terrestrial Ecology Chapter 16: Marine Mammals	
57	MCA	A Navigation Risk Assessment (NRA) should be undertaken to supply detail on the possible impact on navigational issues for both Commercial and Recreational craft. The NRA should address issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collision Risk</li> <li>• Navigational Safety</li> <li>• Visual intrusion and noise</li> <li>• Risk Management and Emergency response</li> <li>• Marking and lighting of site and information to mariners</li> <li>• Effect on small craft navigational and communication equipment</li> </ul>	The Navigation and Shipping chapter and supporting baseline appendix represent the Navigational Risk Assessment for the cable. Impacts have been assessed using a risk matrix approach.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping Appendix G.1 - Shipping and Navigation Baseline Conditions	
58	MCA	Electromagnetic deviation on ships' compasses. The MCA would be willing to accept a three degree deviation for 95% of the cable route. For the remaining 5% of the cable route no more than five degrees will be attained. The MCA would however expect a deviation survey post the cable being laid; this will confirm conformity with the consent condition. The developer should then provide this data to UKHO via a hydrographic note (H102), as they may want a precautionary notation on the appropriate Admiralty Charts.	Compass deviation effects will be minimised by keeping cable separation distance as short as practicable. No significant impacts were identified.  Further consultation with the MCA is planned if compass deviations are expected to exceed five degrees in the final cable design.	Chapter 18: EMF and Sediment Heating Chapter 19: Shipping and Navigation, Section 19.5.4.	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
59	MCA	The developer must ensure that 'the works' do not encroach on any recognised anchorage, either charted or noted in nautical publications, within the proposed consent area.	The cable does not encroach on any designated (or charted) anchorage areas. AIS data identified that five vessels over a one-year period anchored over the consenting cable corridor. Vessels were also seen to anchor off the coast to the north and south of the corridor. Therefore, alternative areas of sea bed with good holding ground are available for these vessels to increase their distance from the cable once installed.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping, Section 19.4. Appendix G.1 - Shipping and Navigation Baseline Conditions	
60	MCA	Particular attention should be paid to cabling routes and burial depth for which a Burial Protection Index study should be completed and, subject to the traffic volumes, an anchor penetration study may be necessary.	A Cable Protection Analysis Report (CPAR) has been produced for the subsea cable survey corridor of the NorthConnect project. This has drawn upon many of the findings from the separate CBRA (Cable Burial Risk Assessment) report which included an assessment of hazards from ship anchors and fishing gear. It also incorporates information gathered from the final geophysical and geotechnical reports. As summary of the findings, and resulting installation design, is provided in the Construction Method Statement, and Chapter 2 of EIAR.	Chapter 2: Project Description	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
61	MCA	Any consented cable protection works must ensure existing and future safe navigation is not compromised, accepting a maximum of 5% reduction in surrounding depth referenced to Chart Datum.	The risk of a vessel grounding due to reduced under keel clearance associated with cable crossing points and protection methods has been assessed. The minimum water depth along the HVDC offshore cabling is at the HDD exit point where depths are 26.5m. In line with MCA guidance, it is not planned to reduce the existing water depth by more than 5% along any section of the cabling, which would correspond to approximately 1.3m at the HDD exit point. The cable protection level put in place directly at the HDD exit point will not be more than 1.3m and, thereafter, is expected to be 0.8-1m within the first 12NM. The water depth increases to over 40m within 1NM of the shore. The small fishing and recreational vessels which were generally seen in the AIS survey data to be transiting this close to shore would be at no risk of grounding (less than 5m draught).	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
62	MCA	Reference should be made to any Marine Conservation Zones established or planned within the development area and adjacent coastline.	Impacts on MCZs and other designated sites are assessed in the topic specific ecological chapters.	Chapters: 14,15,16, and 17	
63	MSS	Insufficient information was provided and a full scoping review regarding commercial fisheries was not possible. Additional information are required around scoped cable interactions with the fishing industry, data sources to be used as part of the desk based review, construction programme with an emphasis on the duration of spatial restriction to fisheries, a cable burial plan, areas of additional protection measures, any post-lay surveys and a fisheries liaison and mitigation plan listing past and future consultation with the fishing industry. As part of cumulative assessment, Table 4.3 refers to a series of offshore wind projects to be considered at the time of writing the ES. These projects should be explicit mentioned to allow early identification of omissions.	A detailed baseline and impact assessment for commercial fisheries in the vicinity of the consenting corridor has been undertaken in Chapter 20. This considers duration of exclusions, potential impacts from cable protection and also details on past and future fisheries liaison. A cumulative impact assessment has also been undertaken for commercial fisheries and considers a number of offshore wind options as well as other developments. This assessment takes into account details provided in Chapter 2, the Construction Method Statement, and Fisheries Liaison Mitigation Action Plan.	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Fisheries Liaison Mitigation Action Plan. HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement
64	MSS	The Scoping report mentions water quality and a seabed survey. Further investigations need to include all aspects of the physical environment though. When commenting on the physical environment, it is necessary that the following will therefore be discussed as well: hydrodynamics (for example changes to tides and currents), and coastal processes. Impacts are expected to be minor and can eventually be scoped out but they will need to be discussed first.	The nature of the marine HVDC cable infrastructure means that elevations from the existing seabed are minimal. The worst case in UK waters is at the HDD exit point where the height of the external protection may reach approximately 1.3m above the existing seabed. This is however in 26m of water depth, so results in an extremely localised depth reduction of only 5%, which will not result in any significant changes to the local hydrodynamic regime or coastal processes. Since this is the worst case, no significant changes are expected in the rest of the UK consenting corridor, hence this aspect is scoped out of the assessment.	Chapter 7: Seabed Quality, Section 7.1.	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
65	MSS	It is expected that during the construction activities oceanographic and seabed conditions will get affected. Any impact on the water environment and possible mitigation measures need to be assessed. Also cumulative impacts will need to be discussed.	These aspects are assessed in the Chapter 7 and 11 of the EIAR. Cumulative impacts are also assessed. No significant impacts were identified.	Chapter 7: Seabed Quality Chapter 11: Water Quality (Marine Environment)	
66	MSS	All aspects of the water environment need to be taken into account and assessed to evaluate if they need to be scoped in or can be scoped out.	The water environment was scoped in and divided into onshore and marine water quality, titled Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore) and Chapter 11: Water Quality (Marine Environment) respectively.	Chapter 3: Methodology Section 3.3, Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore) and Chapter 11: Water Quality (Marine Environment)	
67	MSS	This is a very large project and there will be uncertainties related to diadromous fish in the risk assessment. What monitoring is required will require consideration. MSS understanding is that those installing large interconnector cables will contribute to diadromous fish research and monitoring mainly if not entirely through the National Research and Monitoring Strategy for Diadromous Fish.	Effects upon fish and shellfish ecology is assessed within Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish. No significant impacts were identified on diadromous fish species. As such, there is no requirement for implementation of any additional mitigation or monitoring for these species.	Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish	
68	NLB	We note that the connection to the UK National Grid shall be made at a convertor facility onshore and that the HVDC cable route shall be passed through Horizontally Drilled Directional ducts, breaking through to the seabed approximately 800-1000mtrs east of the MLWS mark on the coast at Boddam. We would therefore require that the UKHO is informed of the break through point and the cable route in order that all relevant charts are updated accordingly.	As detailed in the Communication Strategy and Chapter 19, the NorthConnect HVDC offshore cabling will be clearly marked on nautical charts in line with UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) standards, with associated note / warning. As part of this, the final HDD exit point coordinates will be provided to the UKHO.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Communications Strategy

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
69	NLB	With regards to any works being carried out in the marine environment, Northern Lighthouse Board would require that Notice(s) to Mariners, Radio Navigation Warning(s) must be promulgated prior to the commencement of any works, and also the publication in appropriate bulletins stating the nature and timescale of any marine works relating to this project.	As detailed in the Communication Strategy and Chapter 19, circulation of information via Notices to Mariners, Radio Navigational Warnings, NAVTEX, and/or broadcast warnings will be conducted in advance of, and during, the offshore works. The notices will include a description of the work being carried out.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Communications Strategy
70	RSPB	In order to minimise the possibility of negative impacts on seabirds, any aggregations of seabirds identified through the data search or surveys should be avoided, by route selection or by timing of the operations.	The landfall site was informed in part, due to an initial survey of the cliffs which identified two quieter areas of the cliffs for seabirds. One of these quieter areas was then taken forward as the landfall site. The activity with the greatest potential for noise disturbance, the Landfall HDD drilling, has been specifically scheduled to be between September-March, to avoid the bird breeding season. The cable pull activity has also been specifically scheduled to be either at the beginning of at the end of the bird breeding season (April or August) to avoid the peak breeding period (May-July) as identified from the seabird survey data.	Chapter 17 Ornithology: Sections 17.5.1 and 17.7.1.3.1	
71	RYA Scotland	The route crosses a very important route for recreational sailors from the south to the Caledonian Canal and the Northern Islands and vice versa. This route is seasonal with few recreational vessels passing from October to April. This should be dealt with in the shipping chapter but it needs to be borne in mind that probably only about 20% of recreational craft transmit an AIS signal. Nevertheless I see no need for the project to collect new data on recreational boat movements.	Twelve months of AIS data from 2017 were used to ensure seasonal variations were fully taken into account. This confirmed the main period of activity was summer (May to August). It was also recognised that AIS represents a minority of recreational vessels (estimated at 20%). Other sources of data were reviewed where available, such as Sailing Directions.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping Appendix G.1 - Shipping and Navigation Baseline Conditions	
72	RYA Scotland	There are several developments proposed for these water, which are in any case close to the busy port of Aberdeen, and it will be important to consider the cumulative effect on recreational sailors on passage up this coast.	Impacts on recreational vessels assessed in Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping. No cumulative effects are predicted.	Chapter 19: Navigation and Shipping	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
73	SFF	The Scottish Fishermen's Federation would expect that going forward there would be more clarity on the cable, to confirm 1 trench or 2 and the surveys should be able to divert from problematic lines to find the best line of burial.	This information is provided in Chapter 2: Project Description. Further information is provided in the Construction Method Statement. During the marine survey operations, additional survey coverage was conducted as necessary in order to identify possible routes around challenges to cable installation. Final route design is the responsibility of the principal contractor.	Chapter 2: Project Description.	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
74	SFF	On part 7.4.5 we would expect early consultation with the developers on the interaction with fishing as the cable will pass through many different fishing grounds between landfall and the median line.	As detailed in the Pre-Application Consultation report, and Chapter 20 of the EIAR, extensive consultation has occurred with local fishermen and relevant fishing organisations including SFF, SWFPA, and Buchan Inshore Fisheries Association. This process is ongoing as detailed in the FLMAP, and Communications Strategy, and will continue as the Project develops.	Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries Table 20.1.	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Pre-Application Consultation Report. HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Fisheries Liaison Mitigation Action Plan. HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Communication Strategy
75	SFF	In 15.2 Baseline we would recommend early engagement with SFF to avoid any misunderstanding about fishing activity which may occur if the developer is to rely solely on AIS, especially as AIS is not mandatory for the whole fleet.	In order to inform the baseline, consultation has occurred with local fishermen and relevant fishing organisations including SFF, SWFPA, and Buchan Inshore Fisheries Association. In addition, the baseline assessment was informed by a wide range of data sources, and not solely reliant on AIS.	Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Pre-Application Consultation Report.
76	SFF	The SFF considers it insufficient to address the fishing interest on the route as part of the local community and economics study, fishing is a distinct activity and a community, separate in its activity from any other.	Commercial fisheries is a stand alone chapter within the EIAR. Please see Chapter 20.	Chapter 20: Commercial Fisheries	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
77	SW	It is recommended that the developer confirms the location of all Scottish Water assets through obtaining detailed plans from Asset Plan Providers.	NCKS have obtained SW GIS information and, in addition, are taking trial pits to confirm the precise depth and position of the main within the verge of the A90, where the HDD access road will cross the asset. In addition, NCKS have spoken with the Strategic Planner and CSD Team Leader in relation to the development.	N/A	
78	SW	All Scottish Water assets potentially affected by the development should be identified, with particular consideration being given access to roads and pipe crossings. If necessary local Scottish Water personnel may be able to visit the site to offer advice.	The crossing point for the HDD under the A90 and access road have been identified. In addition NorthConnect are taking trial pits to confirm the precise depth and position of the main within the verge of the A90. A meeting will be take place with a SW NSO on site to discuss some specifics of the project.	N/A	
79	SW	As Scottish Water assets are located within the onshore site boundary early contact should be made with the Scottish Water Asset Impact Team (AIT) to discuss this further. The AIT can be contacted by email on <a href="mailto:service.relocation@scottishwater.co.uk">service.relocation@scottishwater.co.uk</a> . All detailed design proposals relating to the protection of Scottish Water's assets should be submitted for review and written acceptance. Works should not take place on site without prior acceptance by Scottish Water.	The NCKS Design Team are WIRS Accredited and have significant experience in working with the SW Development Operations and Asset impact Team. Following completion of the trial pits, contact will be made to agree necessary measures (where required) for protection or diversion of infrastructure.	N/A	
80	SW	It should be noted that the development will be required to comply with sewers for Scotland and Water for Scotland 3 <sup>rd</sup> Editions 2015, including provision of appropriate clearance distances from Scottish Water assets.	The NCKS Design Team are WIRS Accredited and highly experienced in working for Scottish Water and in progressing developer related works including compliance with the SW Standards and Specification (including Wfs3) and complying with the Asset Policy Standard - Water Mains Protection Distance.	N/A	
81	SNH	We recommend that the assessment of impacts on fish should consider impacts on species which have been listed as Priority Marine Features (PMFs) <a href="http://www.snh.gov.uk/protectingscotlands-nature/priority-marine-features/">http://www.snh.gov.uk/protectingscotlands-nature/priority-marine-features/</a> .	Effects upon relevant Priority Marine Features are assessed within ecological topic specific chapters.	Chapter 14: Benthic Ecology Chapter 15: Fish and Shellfish Chapter 16: Marine Mammals.	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
82	WDC	<p>The section is not up to date with the most relevant information, I understand the white beaked dolphin pMPA has been removed by SNH due to the lack of information on this species in Scottish waters. Ideally, it would be better of the cable route could avoid the pMPA for minke whales.</p>	<p>White beaked dolphins were not assessed as a qualifying feature for the pMPA. Impacts on marine mammal, benthic ecology and geological features of the Southern Trench pMPA have been assessed, and no significant impacts are anticipated. Therefore a major route alteration to avoid the site is not appropriate.</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Seabed Quality Chapter 14: Benthic Ecology Chapter 16: Marine Mammals</p>	
83	SNH	<p>We note that an extended phase 1 habitat survey has been undertaken. We advise that in addition to this, detailed surveying (to NVC standard) should be carried out of any areas where habitats and/or species of natural heritage interest are identified. Any rare or nationally scarce higher and/or lower plant species within the survey area should be identified and any necessary mitigation described. Similarly, the presence of invasive non-native species (INNS) should be noted and any necessary mitigation described.</p>	<p>An NVC was commissioned and carried out, and species of conservation concern and INNS were identified. No rare nationally scarce higher or lower plant species within the survey area were present in the survey.</p>	<p>Chapter 13 Terrestrial Ecology: Section 13.4.4</p>	
84	AC	<p>There are several core paths and rights of way on or adjacent to this site as well as paths developed by the local community. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 also provides a right of non-motorised public access to most land and inland water and this site is subject to this. The developer should consider the impact of this proposal on the recreational interests in the area and identify any mitigation that may be necessary, including the diversion of paths, if required.</p>	<p>An assessment of the effects on recreational users has been included within Chapter 21 of the EIAR. Works have been programmed in such away so as to ensure that there is always a path available for recreational user.</p>	<p>Chapter 21: Local Community and Economy, Section: 21.6.1.5</p>	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
85	AC	It is the opinion of this Service that the proposed development may generate excessive noise levels, dust emissions and ground vibration during the construction phase of the development. It is therefore recommend that the applicant is required to prepare and implement a schedule of mitigation in the form of a construction environmental management plan (CEMP), which will require approval by the Service prior to the commencement of development on the site.	Dust and noise emissions assessed in topic specific chapters. As detailed in Chapter 3, an overarching CEMP will be provided for the NorthConnect construction operations and this will be informed by the Schedule of Mitigation in Chapter 25. The Schedule of mitigation will also inform the construction contracts, so the principal contractor is contractually obliged to implement the identified mitigation measures. However, due to the complex nature of the project, the CEMP will require significant input from the principal contractor's detailed design and planning, so it is not possible to provide a draft at this time.	Chapter 3: Methodology Chapter 9: Air Quality Chapter 22: Noise (In-Air) Chapter 25: Schedule of Mitigation	
86	AC	Environmental issues are of obvious key importance such as those aspects of the environment that would be likely to be significantly affected. Detailed survey work would be required to inform the ES. Following analysis of the aspects of the environment which would be likely to be significantly affected, a detailed assessment of the effects themselves would be required along with mitigation measures proposed.	Numerous detailed survey operations were undertaken to inform various topic specific chapters of the EAIR where desktop studies revealed gaps in the publicly available data.	Various	
87	AC	Regarding a utility building for the fibre optic cable, and any other permanent ground surface cable infrastructure, these should be designed to assimilate into the positive local landscape character and fit with design guidance principles such as that produced for the Energetica Corridor. Design details and finishes of the utility building and any other surface infrastructure/installations should be included in a project Design Statement.	There will not be any fibre optic utility building required.	Chapter 2: Project Description	
88	AC	Historic Environment Scotland should also be consulted due to the proximity of the northern section to a Scheduled Monument.	No Scheduled Monuments were identified within the Study Area. HES have been informed about the project.	Chapter 12: Section 12.5.1.	

No.	Consultee	Scoping Opinion for Consideration in EIAR	NorthConnect Response to Scoping Opinion	EIAR Chapter/Section	Relevant Reports
89	AC	We note that the site boundary has numerous field drains within this. Should any of the cables or infrastructure cross these field drains then we would require further information on this. We also require further details of the fibre optic utility building once this is designed and located. We would require surface water drainage details for this building.	Details of watercourse crossings are provided in the CMS and Chapters 2 and 10 of the EIAR. The Fibre optic utility building is no longer required.	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 10: Water Quality (Onshore)	HVDC Cable Infrastructure: UK Construction Method Statement.
90	SEPA	If groundwater abstractions are identified within the 100 m radius of roads, tracks and trenches or 250 m radius from borrow pits and foundations, then either the applicant should ensure that the route or location of engineering operations avoid this buffer area or further information and investigations will be required to show that impacts on abstractions are acceptable.	There are no groundwater abstractions within the 100m of radius of roads, tracks and trenches. There are no borrow pits or foundations associated with the HVDC Cable.	Chapter 8: Geology and Hydrogeology, Section 8.3.6	
91	SEPA	The EIA process should take this waste regulatory position, and the need to demonstrate waste minimisation, into account from the outset in designing the layout and in developing the general principles for the site of decommissioning or repowering.	These aspects are addressed in Chapter 24 of the EIAR.	Chapter 24: Resource Usage and Waste	

### 4.1 Ongoing Consultation

Throughout the EIA process there have been discussions with Aberdeenshire Council departments, Marine Scotland and both statutory, and non-statutory, consultees. Consultation methods have included email, phone calls and face to face meetings. A communications manager and a Fisheries Liaison Officer were employed by NorthConnect to facilitate discussions with, respectively, the local community and the fishing community (both commercial and recreational).

The UK Marine Communications Strategy (NorthConnect, 2018c) and the Fisheries Liaison and Mitigation Action Plan (NorthConnect, 2018b) provide details as to how communications and consultation will continue as the project develops.

### 4.2 Non-Statutory Consultees

The full list of non-statutory consultees and discussions held is included with the Pre-Application Consultation report, which is being submitted with this EIA (NorthConnect, 2018). Results from the consultations related to the EIA process are also discussed in Chapters 19, 20 and 21 of this EIA.

### 4.3 Summary

NorthConnect have engaged with statutory and non-statutory consultees through the development of the project to date, and will continue to do so to build upon the good relationship the project has established with stakeholders achieved so far.

The stakeholder views and guidance has been taken into account, both in the design process and in the production of the EIA. NorthConnect have also developed and implemented a public consultation strategy and produced a PAC report to support the Planning and Marine Licence applications.

### 4.4 References

- NorthConnect. (2016). *HVDC Cable Route Scoping Report*.
- NorthConnect. (2018). HVDC Cable Infrastructure - Pre-Application Consultation Report. In Fiona Milligan (Ed.).
- NorthConnect. (2018b). HVDC Cable Infrastructure - UK Fisheries Liaison Mitigation Action Plan.
- NorthConnect. (2018c). HVDC Cable Infrastructure - UK Marine Communication Strategy.