



Scotland England Green Link 1 / Eastern Link 1 - Marine Scheme

Environmental Appraisal Report
Volume 2

Chapter 6 - Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

nationalgrid  **SP TRANSMISSION**

National Grid Electricity Transmission and Scottish Power Transmission

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Table of Contents

6. Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement 6-1

6.1 Introduction 6-1

6.2 Summary of Consultation 6-1

6.3 Public Consultations 6-7

6.4 Other Stakeholder Engagement..... 6-14

6.5 Conclusions 6-16

Figures

Figure 6-1: SP Energy Networks The Eastern Link Project Consultation Board example 6-8

Figure 6-2: Example of the Public Consultation Newsletter..... 6-11

Figure 6-3: The P1EE digital exhibition..... 6-13

Tables

Table 6-1: Timeline of engagement with regulatory authorities, statutory agencies, and consultees relevant to the Marine Scheme 6-3

Table 6-2: Phase 1 Public Consultation Feedback and Responses 6-12

Table 6-3: Phase 2 P1EE Feedback and Responses 6-14

6. Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

6.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) presents an overview of the consultation activities and stakeholder engagement carried out as part of the environmental appraisal process for the Marine Scheme. It also summarises the EAR scoping process undertaken to determine the approach and technical content of this EAR.

The purpose of consultation and stakeholder engagement was to ensure that relevant stakeholders were aware of the Project and had the opportunity to comment on issues of relevance to them, to raise any concerns and to influence the Project's development. Since the inception of the Project, consultation with statutory agencies has been carried out jointly between the Transmission Operators (TOs); Scottish Power Transmission (SPT) in Scotland and National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) in England (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant'). Alongside formal consultation, non-statutory stakeholders have also been engaged. A summary of engagement is presented in Table 6-1.

Public consultation is an iterative process that continues throughout the stages of project design, development and environmental appraisal and is characterised by formal, structured activity. Stakeholder engagement has involved technical discussions with regulators, statutory bodies, and a range of fisheries organisations. All consultation has been carried out in a coordinated manner, structured in part by the Applicant jurisdictions, and completed independently, in two phases.

6.2 Summary of Consultation

Consultation with statutory and non-statutory agencies was carried out throughout the pre-application period, with a range of relevant stakeholders, including the Marine Scotland Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Nature Scot, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England.

As part of the route selection process, feedback was sought from stakeholders on the evolution of the preferred route for the Marine Scheme. Alongside this, technical engagement has been carried out at key stages prior to and during desk top studies and seabed surveys. Regular engagement with the licensing bodies for the Marine Scheme (MS-LOT and MMO) has informed the marine licence application process.

6.2.1 Screening Consultation

On the 3 February 2021, MS-LOT confirmed that the Marine Scheme in Scottish waters is not considered to be EIA development (MS-LOT Pers. Comm, 2021). On the 15 March 2021, the MMO confirmed that installation of a cable within the UK Marine Area is not considered to constitute a 'Project' under either Schedule A1 or A2 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 (MMO – Case Reference EIA/2021/00006, 2021).

6.2.2 Scoping Consultation

A non-statutory scoping request was submitted on 31 March 2021 to the MS-LOT April and 1 April 2021 to the MMO. The scoping request identified those aspects of the environment considered likely to be adversely affected by the Marine Scheme and the approach to the identification and appraisal of those effects. It also scoped out those aspects of the environment that were considered unlikely to be significantly affected.

On 09 July 2021 MS-LOT issued consultation responses from the following statutory consultees and specialist advisors:

- Marine Scotland Science;
- East Lothian Council;
- Historic Environment Scotland;

- Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA);
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO);
- NatureScot;
- Northern Lighthouse Board;
- Scottish Water;
- Transport Scotland;
- Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Scotland;
- UK Chamber of Shipping; and
- Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF).

It should be noted that MS-LOT did not provide a formal response based on these consultations.

The MMO provided a Scoping Opinion on 06 August 2021 (MMO Reference: ENQ/2021/00066), based on consultations with statutory consultees and specialist advisors in relation to the key issues. It is unclear who these statutory consultees and specialist advisors comprised as the MMO did not state who had been consulted and this information was not available on the Marine Case Management System (MCMS) or other public registers. During the scoping exercise, both the National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts also made representations to the MMO; these have been considered alongside the feedback above, and supporting technical engagement was carried out.

In each technical chapter the scoping responses are presented alongside an explanation as to how and where the comments have been addressed in the EAR.

6.2.3 Statutory and Non-Statutory Stakeholder engagement

Alongside formal screening and non-statutory scoping, as detailed above, the Applicant held meetings with numerous key stakeholders. Some meetings were also attended by other members of the project team, i.e., consultants working on the EAR. A summary of additional engagement carried out from the project inception to date is presented in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Timeline of engagement with regulatory authorities, statutory agencies, and consultees relevant to the Marine Scheme

Date	Organisation	Project Stage	Issues discussed	Outcomes
07 November 2019	Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England (NE)	Options Appraisal	The MMO / NE requested the project team contact the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) and Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for relevant data, and check Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) data. NE advised that NE datasets might not be reflective of the actual environment.	Issues raised were noted with relevant technical leads within the project team and the relevant data checks undertaken. Meetings were held with NFFO as part of commercial fisheries consultations summarised in Section 6.4.1. MCA was consulted regarding navigation risk, as detailed later in this table. NE advice regarding low validity of NE datasets has been substantiated by observations following the initial surveys – mainly around the extent of reef and the shallow depth of sediment in some areas.
13 November 2019	Marine Scotland- Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (now NatureScot)	Options Appraisal	NatureScot requested Feature Activity Sensitivity Tool (FeAST) habitat data is checked, as well as fishing catch data to determine the most suitable data for constraint analysis, such as landings data.	The data checks requested by NatureScot were made by the project team.
01 June 2020	MS-LOT, SNH, JNCC	Options Appraisal	The main aim of this meeting was to discuss EIA screening of the Marine Scheme.	Issues raised were noted with relevant technical leads within the project team and considered during project design, appraisal and mitigation.
04 June 2020	MMO, NE, JNCC	Options Appraisal	This meeting provided an update to MMO, NE, JNCC on the Marine Scheme and provided an overview of the three phases of options undertaken and an overview of how the route had developed since 2019. The points raised by the statutory consultees were around routeing through the Farnes East Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ), and the expectation of cable burial within the MCZ. The proximity of the Seaham landfall to Durham Coast SSSI was also raised, and that ground conditions and contamination should be considered. It was advised that sampling should be undertaken at crossing locations and within the East Farnes MCZ. It was also requested that the application sets out how the proposed route has been selected.	Chapter 5: Alternatives and Design Development sets out how the proposed route of the marine installation corridor was arrived at. The seabed data collected during the benthic survey (Fugro, 2021) carried out for the Marine Scheme included eight transects within the Farnes East MCZ. EAR Volume 3 Appendix 8.1 MPA / MCZ Assessment provides the necessary information to allow MS-LOT and the MMO to determine whether the Marine Scheme is capable of significantly affecting protected features of an the Farnes East MCZ. This assessment concluded that the Marine Scheme is not considered to have significant effects on the designated features or conservation objectives of the MCZ.
10 June 2020	Durham County Council	Options Appraisal	A meeting was held with Durham County Council as the local planning authority at the English landfall and English Onshore Works. Further information on siting and routeing was requested.	The project team circulated information to seek views from Durham County Council on emerging cable route options and sites for landfall and converter.
11 June 2020	The Crown Estate (TCE)	Options Appraisal	At this meeting, an overview of the Marine Scheme and the preferred route for the marine installation corridor was provided and future interactions with the TCE discussed.	TCE were introduced to the Marine Scheme and initial discussions were held on terms and conditions for the construction licence.
17 June 2020	Crown Estate Scotland	Options Appraisal	At this meeting, an overview of the Marine Scheme and the preferred route for the marine installation corridor was provided and future interactions with the Crown Estate Scotland discussed including leases for construction works.	Crown Estate Scotland were introduced to the Marine Scheme and initial discussions were held on terms and conditions for the construction licence.
17 June 2020	Sunderland City Council	Options Appraisal	Sunderland City Council was consulted as a local planning authority in proximity to the English landfall.	The emerging cable route options and sites for landfall was shared with Sunderland City Council to seek their views.
18 June 2020	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	Options Appraisal	A project overview was presented. SEPA raised a query about potential for radioactive particles in sites in the vicinity of Torness Power Station and whether this would be given consideration in terms of siting / routeing.	Sites (referred to as E1 and E2 in the Torness Options Appraisal Report (RSK, 2021)) in the vicinity of the Torness Power Station were excluded from the shortlisted sites as part of the options appraisal process. The specific issue of radioactive particles did not form part of the appraisal criteria.
23 June 2020	East Lothian Council	Options Appraisal	A meeting was held with East Lothian Council, as the local planning authority at the Scottish landfall. East Lothian Council were keen to get involved in the optional appraisal process as early as possible and were keen that joint discussions with the SSER Berwick Bank (previously Seagreen 2) project were undertaken.	The project team organised an options appraisal workshop with East Lothian Council. A combined meeting with SP Energy Networks and SSE Renewables and ELC was organised to discuss project interactions. Ongoing liaison between SP Energy Networks and SSE Renewables is underway as part of the project. SP Energy Networks and SSE Renewables are sharing relevant project information including potential locations of electrical infrastructure (cable corridors and substation options); this information was considered as part of the engineering component of the options appraisal.
2 July 2020	The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)	Options Appraisal	An introduction to the Marine Scheme was provided, which focused on the required seabed surveys, the current understanding of fishing in the area and the potential impacts to fishing.	A formal response was to be provided to NFFO to address their concerns regarding formal fishing restrictions as well as provide updates on survey timings once known. The NFFO to provide feedback on route after discussions with local representatives.
2 July 2020	The Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Options Appraisal		Survey timings were to be provided to the SFF once known.
23 July 2020	East Lothian Council	Options Appraisal	A second meeting was held with East Lothian Council on the siting and routeing of the Marine Scheme. East Lothian Council expected there to be a high response in terms of the proposals. It was suggested that such developments are sited away from residents, such as Crystal Rig. East	Site options and presentation slides were sent to East Lothian Council. The Applicant provided further details of the Marine Scheme. Project team noted comments.

Date	Organisation	Project Stage	Issues discussed	Outcomes
			Lothian Council requested shape files and slides describing the development. East Lothian Council raised concerns about the scale of the development proposed.	
27 August 2020	East Lothian Council	Options Appraisal	An email exchange following the Options Appraisal Workshop. East Lothian Council commented that a preferred location for landfall would be Skateraw or Thorntonloch – as this would avoid disturbing more sensitive sections of the SSSI coastline north from Skateraw.	The presence of designated coastal SSSI sites was considered as part of the options appraisal. Thorntonloch was identified as the preferred landfall option (located outside of the SSSI designation).
24 November 2020	MMO, MS-LOT	EIA Screening	The purpose of this meeting was to provide the MMO and MS-LOT with an update on the project, discuss the consenting strategy for the Marine Licenses including the provision of a voluntary EIA, providing a programme for scoping, public consultation and the Marine Licence applications.	No specific outcomes.
16 September 2021	National Trust	Preparation of EA	An update on the Marine Scheme was provided, focussed on proposed routes in response to their comments on the NGET Phase 1 – Spring 2021 consultation, where they raised concerns about the protection of the important marine ecosystems in the seas around their coastal property, making specific reference to grey seals, cetaceans, and sea birds.	The National Trust did not provide any specific feedback.
02 November 2021	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) and Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA)	Preparation of EA	An update on the Marine Scheme was provided and discussion held about the consultees' understanding of fishing activity in the vicinity of the cable route, in relation to principal fishing methods, vessels active, location of key grounds, and discuss key concerns of the fishing industry. The SWFPA advised a minimum of 7-8 years of data should be considered to understand scallop cycles and queried whether over-trawl ability surveys were planned. SWFPA requested proof that it is safe to fish. The SFF referenced the National Marine Plan (NMP) which states that fishing should be allowed to continue where possible, and that advising the fishing industry to avoid areas is not a solution.	Engagement with SFF and SWFPA has continued (see later in this table and Section 6.4.1). It is the intention of the Marine Scheme to achieve full burial of the cable. The advice is that fishermen adhere to specific guidance regarding avoiding fishing in the vicinity of buried cables.
04 November 2021	The Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NIFCA)	Preparation of EA	An update on the Marine Scheme was provided and a discussion was held around the consultees' understanding of fishing activity in the vicinity of the cable routes, in relation to principal fishing methods, vessels active, location of key grounds, and discuss key concerns of the fishing industry. The main issues raised included Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) effects on brown crab, project programme, compensation for fisheries affected and how information on rock placement will be disseminated to local fisherman. It was stated that consideration should be given to minimising the Marine Scheme footprint through major Nephrops grounds.	The Marine Scheme aims to achieve a target burial depth of 1.5 m with a minimum of 0.6 m. Where burial is not achieved, the cable will be protected, which will reduce effects of EMF. Cable protection information will be provided to the relevant stakeholders. NEIFCA were contacted but no response received. Where static gear may be required to be removed or relocated during the installation phase, appropriate mitigation will be implemented for affected vessels following an evidence-based approach, in line with FLOWW guidance. An indicative programme was provided. The potential effect of the Marine Scheme on Nephrops fishing grounds has been appraised in the EAR as well as the effects of EMF on fish and shellfish.
09 November 2021	North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (NERFIG)	Preparation of EA	NERFIG recommended attendance at a NERFIG meeting as part of the consultation process and advised that squid fisheries near the cable should be considered as well as Sediment disruption and impacts on spawning on scallop grounds.	Individual meetings with regional/ national stakeholders were held to maintain efficiency and allow stakeholders to get their thoughts and information across in a targeted meeting. NERFIG offered to provide further information including the RFIG Report (fishing grounds and main fisheries across the RFIG area).
11 November 2021	The Wildlife Trusts	Preparation of EA	An update of the Marine Scheme and the proposed routes was provided in response to their comments on the Phase 1 – Spring 2021 consultation.	The Wildlife Trust did not provide any specific feedback.
11 November 2021	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)	Preparation of EA	An update of the progress of the Marine Scheme was provided and discussion was held on the consultees' understanding of fishing activity in the vicinity of the cable routes and discuss key concerns of the fishing industry. The consultee raised the following concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cable burial causing damage to the seabed and damage to trawlers; – Rock placement in the Nephrops grounds causing damage to nets and subsequent catch losses; – Loss of grounds by following the MCA guidelines. The Offshore Transmission Network Review has formed a subgroup on fisheries and cables who are defining terms of reference. NFFO suggested that the Project should engage in these discussions; and – whether there are arrangements for post-installation surveys to confirm cable burial depth. 	The project team reassured the consultees that the intention is to achieve full burial of the cable. The advice is that fishermen adhere to specific guidance regarding avoiding fishing in the vicinity of buried cables. The route refinement process considered fishing intensity (using Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Automatic Identification System (AIS) data coverage) to identify high intensity fishing areas and avoid them where possible. The Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) also considers types and intensity of fishing in identifying required protection levels. The EAR will assess potential disruption of local vessels based on the MCAs guidance. The project team informed NFFO that there will be a post-lay survey based on the information gathered during burial. Any locations where burial depth has not been achieved/external protection is placed will be communicated through to the relevant stakeholders. In addition, there will be routine monitoring, inspection, and monitoring of the cable route.
17 November 2021	Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA), Trinity House, National Lighthouse Board, and UK Chamber of Shipping	Preparation of EA	This meeting focused on the Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA). The main issues discussed included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Diving activity around St Abbs should be considered in the environmental assessment; 	Diving activity has been included in the navigational baseline. The MCA has been consulted and will be further consulted if final design suggests > 5% reductions possible.

Date	Organisation	Project Stage	Issues discussed	Outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developers should specifically consult with the MCA when there are reductions in surrounding depth > 5%. This is likely to apply to HDD location and cable protection measures; – Aids To Navigation (AToN): To avoid any potential interaction/ interference with AToN, temporary relocation may be acceptable but not permanent relocation; – There should be a clean distinction between EIA language and risk language; and – New International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) Recommendation O-139 Recommendation will be published in 2021 and there is a section on cables and pipelines. 	Post-installation survey will be required, and results will need to be made public. The NRA (Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation) uses a dedicated risk matrix that stands apart from the typical EIA approach.
30 November 2021	Port of Tyne, and Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority	Preparation of EA	<p>This meeting was held to discuss the Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA). The main queries discussed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vessel-vessel collision: Unmanned survey vessels are increasingly common and queried whether they are considered in baseline assessment, i.e., those supporting Dogger Bank offshore wind farm; – Disruption/ deviation from established routes: Routeing through the Farne Isles can be problematic for larger vessels; – Whether local boat clubs have been consulted to determine scheduling of any specific events; – Regularly checking in with ports and checking upcoming shipping movements – Interactions between vessel anchors and installation activity: It was raised that some ports have designated jack-up areas (not anchorages) that might need to be considered. It was also raised whether fishing hotspots had been looked at as part of the baseline work; – It was queried howl fishing would be considered; and – Operational phase – Under-Keel Clearance (UKC): It was queried whether squat will be considered. 	<p>These elements have been appraised in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation. The AIS dataset used to inform the baseline included some unmanned survey vessels, as well as VMS data, and aerial surveillance sightings.</p> <p>The RYA/ RYA Scotland and cruising association have been consulted (refer to Section 6.4.3). Jack up areas were considered, referring to charts and AIS data.</p>
17 February 2022	Scottish Surfing Federation (SFF)	Preparation of EA	<p>A meeting was held between Scottish Power and the SSF regarding the recreational use of the area where the marine installation corridor makes landfall in Scotland.</p> <p>SFF queried whether surfing would be impacted. The Transmission Owner confirmed that the landfall cable was outside of the surfing area and surfers utilised the car park and the slip road on the A1 to access Thorntonloch beach.</p>	This information has been included in Chapter 15: Other Sea Users to inform the appraisal. During the meeting, the proposed cable route and construction programme were provided.
8 March 2022	Seaham Town Council	Phase 2 Consultation	The project team presented the proposals to the Environment and Planning committee.	Feedback received via Public Consultation – England, Phase 2.
22 March 2022	NatureScot	Preparation of EA	<p>An update was provided on the Marine Scheme, as well as the progress with the environmental appraisal and Marine Licence preparation.</p> <p>NatureScot highlighted the need to ensure the environmental appraisal considered the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Both the designated bird features and the habitats they depend on; and – Climate change, in particular the impact of storm events. 	NatureScot's comments have been considered in Chapter 7: Physical Environment and Chapter 11: Ornithology.
23 March 2022	East Lothian Council	Preparation of EA	East Lothian Council were updated on the level of detail of the information to be provided in the planning permission in principle application and provided with an update on the consultation undertaken and to set out the timescales for the submission.	All comments raised during this meeting were reviewed and discussed with the engineering team.
24 March 2022	MMO, MS-LOT and CEFAS	Preparation of EA	<p>The responses to the non-statutory scoping exercise on SEGL 1 / EL 1 were reviewed. The key issues raised at scoping were presented and further discussion held where relevant. A summary of the rationale for route selection was presented. Multiple issues were discussed during the meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inclusion of the Moray Firth in marine mammal appraisal; – Post construction monitoring of coastal erosion; – Appraisal of thermal emissions from buried cables; – Scope of assessment of physical processes; – Potential for impacts on coastal morphology; – Electromagnetic deviation on ships' compasses; – Potential impacts of thermal emission on benthic and fish ecology; – Position of TOs regarding over trawling trials; – Consultation regarding cable protection proposed; and – Review of the initial scoping out of EMF from the appraisal. 	<p>Key outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Moray Firth has been scoped into marine mammal appraisal; – Post-construction monitoring of coastal erosion is unlikely to be required; – The appraisal of thermal emissions has been scoped into the benthic ecology appraisal; – Geomorphology, physical processes and metocean will be appraised in the Physical Environment chapter; – The rationale for the scoping out of impacts to coastal morphology should be provided in the appraisal; – Electromagnetic deviation on ships' compasses is predicted to exceed values suggested by MCA in some circumstances. This will be the subject of ongoing engagement post consent and mitigation as required; – Thermal emissions on fish and sand eel grounds have been scoped in; – Over trawling trials are required and are not proposed;

Date	Organisation	Project Stage	Issues discussed	Outcomes
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engagement will be undertaken with fisherman on proposed cable protection types; and – EMF is scoped back into assessments based on request from Marine Science.
7 April 2022	Natural England	Preparation of EA	<p>This meeting provided an update on the Marine Scheme and the key items of interest to Natural England were discussed.</p> <p>Attention was highlighted on the Farnes East MCZ, this has been positively discussed with MMO and updates were provided on coastal erosion, hydrodynamics, EMF and nearshore cable protection. This included a technical discussion related to feedback received and the approach in response to this.</p>	Natural England were positive with the thorough consideration of the Farnes East MCZ and were invited to a pre-application briefing on the 12 May 2022.
18 May 2022	Seaton and Slingley Parish Council	Phase 2 Consultation	The Parish Council were briefed on the Phase 2 Consultation	Feedback received via Public Consultation – England, Phase 2.
12 May 2022	Natural England	Preparation of EA	This meeting provided a pre-submission briefing and technical discussions on the Marine Scheme, including the use of Offshore Wind Farm evidence, why monitoring is not proposed for the Marine Scheme within the EAR and consideration of minor boulder clearance.	Natural England understood the key differences between offshore wind proposals and the Marine Scheme and therefore why offshore wind farm evidence is not always appropriate for the Marine Scheme. Natural England raised an interest in monitoring associated with unplanned events and it was explained that some monitoring may be required from an engineering perspective, but not a commitment from an environmental and consenting perspective. Natural England were clear that boulder movement is a very minor consideration in the context of the Project.
17 May 2022	MMO and MS-LOT	Preparation of EA	This meeting provided an update on the status of the Marine Scheme and the marine licence applications, and provided an advanced briefing on the structure, layout and contents of the Environmental Appraisal Report. It also provided an opportunity for open discussion.	MMO and MS LOT understood the submission timescales and were advised that regular update meetings will continue post submission with participation from Natural England / NatureScot as required.

6.3 Public Consultations

6.3.1 Public Consultation – Scotland

6.3.1.1 Approach to Consultation

The pre-application consultation is an ongoing process and has taken place in two phases, with the first being a public consultation that took place between Monday 24 May and Friday 18 June 2021 which was followed by public information events in early 2022.

In addition to the above events, the Applicant also ‘soft launched’ the Project at the start of 2021, when landowners on the Project were approached by the Project’s lands team to organise surveys. This marked the first direct contact the project had with the local community. At the same time, National Grid proactively introduced the project to the wider community and stakeholders by issuing a newsletter to landowners, issuing letters to stakeholders, opening our 0800 number and project email address, and launching the project website. This ensured that the project effectively communicated the rationale and potential impact of the project from the outset and laid the groundwork for constructive engagement during the consultation.

The Applicant advertised the public consultation extensively and by a variety of methods, including:

- Print advertising in two local newspapers with a combined reach of 44,136 people;
- A press release which was covered by our priority media outlet, The Northern Echo;
- Targeted social media advertising that reached nearly 25,600 people;
- A hardcopy newsletter that was posted to those settlements in close proximity to the project; and
- A letter was also sent to 59 local elected members and hard-to-reach groups informing them of the consultation.

6.3.1.2 Project Website

The Scottish Project website was launched in January 2021 and can be accessed via the link below. This website included detailed information about the Project (including both Onshore and Marine Schemes), online public information exhibitions, and contact information:

https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/eastern_link_introduction.aspx

The Scottish Power Transmission public consultation website received a total of 203 page views and 141 unique page views (unique users) on the material held online.

6.3.1.3 Phase 1 (Summer 2021)

The ‘Torness – Eastern Link’ Statutory Consultation ran for four weeks between 9:00 am Monday 2 August 2021 and 5:00 pm Friday 3 September 2021. This covered all elements of the Project, both onshore in Scotland and the Marine Scheme. SPT consulted with landowners, residents, and stakeholders on the three fundamental components of the project, comprising both onshore and offshore elements of the Project:

- The construction of a new substation at Branxton, East Lothian;
- A new converter station; and
- Underground cables and marine cables

A leaflet was produced and a dedicated area on the Project website was created:

https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/eastern_link_introduction.aspx.

The Eastern Link Project

Marine Cable Route & Installation

In addition to the onshore converter station, the marine cable route and installation is a vital part of the overall Eastern Link project and will allow for the transfer of electricity between each onshore site. The marine cables will be able to provide 2 Giga Watts (GW) of transmission capacity for transmission of electricity between Scotland and England.

The cable route comprises over 176 km of subsea HVDC cable systems, installed within a 500m installation corridor extending from the Scottish landfall site on Thorntonloch Beach, crossing through the Scottish and English territorial seas to the English landfall at Seaham.

Approximately 37.5km of the cable corridor falls within Scottish waters, with the remainder within English waters. The entirety of the project is located within the 12 Nautical Mile (NM) territorial waters.

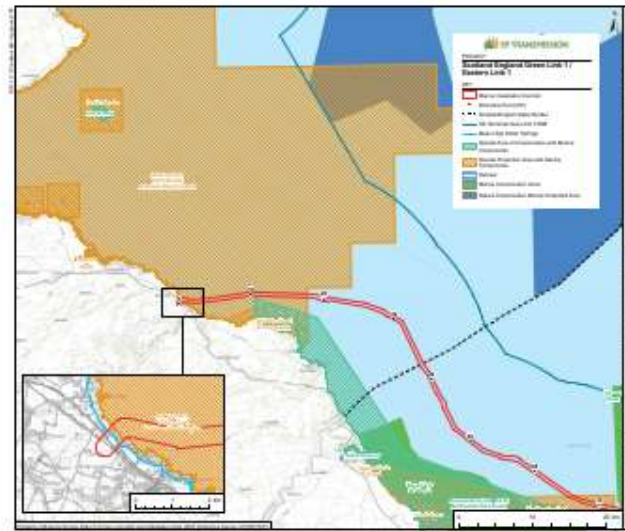


Figure 6-1: SP Energy Networks The Eastern Link Project Consultation Board example

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this consultation was held online via a digital exhibition, as well as live chat and video sessions. Consultees could book half hour sessions in advance for the video drop-in sessions. The live chat feature was held over four four-hour timeslots across four days at different times so to be as accessible to as many people as possible.

The live Question and Answer (Q&A) dates and times were as below:

- Tuesday 10 August 2021 8:00 – 12:00;
- Thursday 12 August 2021 16:00 – 20:00;
- Thursday 19 August 2021 16:00 – 20:00; and
- Friday 20 August 2021 8:00 – 12:00.

The Meet the Team video sessions dates and times were as below:

- Tuesday 24 August 2021 18:00 – 20:00
- Thursday 26 August 2021 8:00 – 10:00

Comments could also be fed back via phone 0800 093 1664, or via email to info@tornesseasternlink.com.

6.3.1.4 Consultation Feedback

The consultation website received views on the exhibition banners and other material held online. Responses were received including video and phone calls and a written form submission. The feedback received was all in relation to the Onshore Scottish Scheme and has been considered and addressed in the onshore Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report and Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report.

6.3.1.5 Phase 2 (Spring 2022)

The Eastern Link Project consultation took place between Monday 31 January 2022 to Monday 28 February 2022. The consultation was a statutory requirement both as a pre-application requirement for the planning submission of the onshore elements of the Project and for the marine licence application which are the two separate applications required for this Project within Scotland.

All information pertaining to the Project was available online as well as a consultation leaflet. Exhibition boards were installed at a number of locations for the duration of the consultation. This consultation covered:

- A new converter station at Dunbar;
- Underground cables between the converter station, the substation and the landfall; and
- Marine cables.

A leaflet was produced and a dedicated area on the Project website:

https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/eastern_link_introduction.aspx

A letter to residents, including a leaflet and feedback form, were sent out prior to the consultation launch. Meetings were held with East Lammermuir, Dunbar and Cockburnspath and Cove community councils. Meetings were also held with East Lothian Council, with one-to-one briefings given to local Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and Councillors. A stand-alone, unmanned exhibition was in place at Innerwick Village Hall for the duration of the consultation and a leaflet handover at Dunbar Asda supermarket on 15 and 23 February 2022. Exhibition material was also in place at MacArthur Stores, Cromwell Harbour, Dunbar and the Fishermen's Mutual Association, Samson Yard, Eyemouth, for the duration of the consultation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this consultation was held online via a digital exhibition, as well as live chat and video sessions. Consultees could book half hour sessions in advance for the video drop-in sessions. The live chat feature was held over four, four-hour timeslots across five days at different times so to be as accessible to as many people as possible.

The pre-application consultation events were as below:

- Thursday 3 February 2022 10.00-14.00;
- Thursday 10 February 2022 10.00-13.00;
- Thursday 10 February 2022 14.00-17.00;
- Tuesday 15 February 2022 10.00-14.00;
- Tuesday 15 February 2022 15.00-19.00;
- Thursday 17 February 2022 16.00-21.00; and
- Thursday 24 February 2022 16.00-21.00.

Comments could also be fed back via phone 0800 093 1664, or via email to info@tornesseasternlink.com.

6.3.1.6 Consultation Feedback

The consultation website received views on the exhibition banners and other material held online. Responses were received including video and phone calls and a written form submission. The feedback received was all in relation to the Onshore Scottish Scheme and has been considered and addressed in the onshore EIA Report and PAC Report.

6.3.2 Public Consultation – England

6.3.2.1 Approach to Consultation

Public consultation in the English part of the Marine Scheme was led by National Grid. The pre-application consultation was split into two phases, with the first being a public consultation event that took place in Summer 2021 and was followed by public information events in early 2022. The consultation primarily focussed on the onshore elements of the Project, but also included information about the Marine Scheme. Chapter 6 of the English Onshore Scheme EAR also presents an overview of the consultation activities.

In addition to the above events, the Applicant also ‘soft launched’ the Project at the start of 2021, when landowners were approached by the Project’s lands team to organise surveys. This marked the first direct contact the Project had with the local community. At the same time, the Applicant proactively introduced the Marine Scheme to the wider community and stakeholders by issuing a newsletter to landowners, issuing letters to stakeholders, opening the 0800 number and project email address, and launching the project website. This ensured that the Project effectively communicated the rationale and potential impact of the project from the outset and laid the groundwork for constructive engagement during the consultation.

The Applicant advertised the public consultation extensively and by a variety of methods, including:

- Print advertising in two local newspapers with a combined reach of 44,136 people;
- A press release which was covered by our priority media outlet, The Northern Echo;
- Targeted social media advertising that reached nearly 25,600 people;
- A hardcopy newsletter (Figure 6-2) that was posted to those settlements in close proximity to the Marine Scheme; and
- A letter was also sent to 59 local elected members and hard-to-reach groups informing them of the consultation.

Project Website

The English project website was launched in January 2021 and can be accessed via the link below. This website included detailed information about the Project (including both Onshore and Marine Schemes), online public information exhibitions, and contact information.

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/seg11/our-proposal>

The National Grid Electricity Transmission public consultation website received 1,559 unique page views (unique users) on the material held online.

6.3.2.2 Phase 1 – Spring 2021

Phase 1 public consultation took place between Monday 24 May and Friday 18 June 2021. This was advertised extensively through local newspapers, a press release, targeted social media advertising and letters to local elected members and hard-to-reach groups.

To ensure complete accessibility for all residents, the Applicant offered support to anyone who was unable to access the digital consultation. Details were included in a newsletter, which was distributed to all landowners who were being liaised with for surveys by the Project’s Lands team and those in villages most impacted by the project (3,452 properties in total).

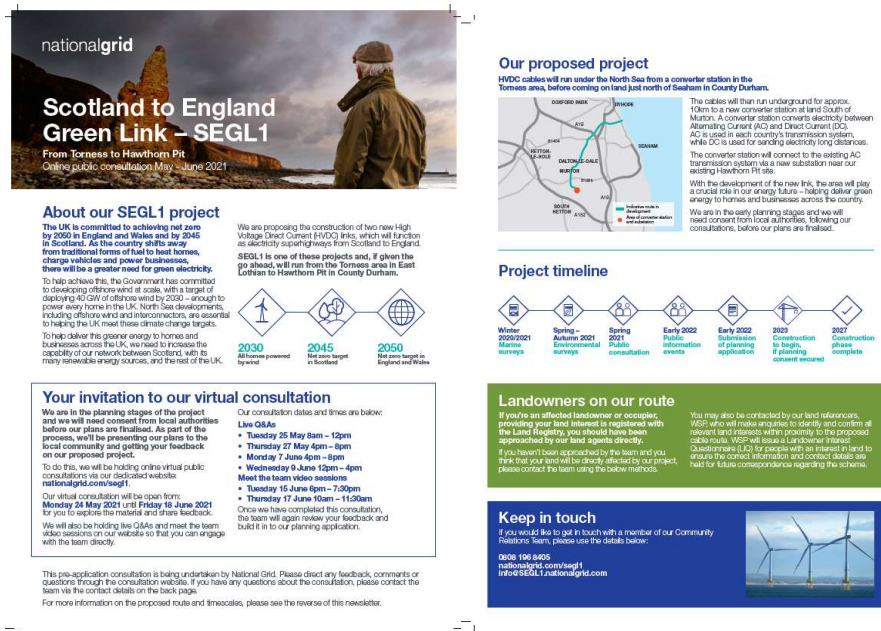


Figure 6-2: Example of the Public Consultation Newsletter

6.3.2.3 Consultation Feedback

Questions and feedback were received on several marine-related topics, including the potential impact of the Project:

- Marine ecology;
- Marine heritage and survey work;
- Marine Protected Areas; and
- Marine mammals.

Details to how each of these points were considered within the development of the Project and the production of this EAR are provided in the next section.

6.3.2.4 Incorporating Feedback into SEGL1/ EL1

The feedback provided during this public consultation provided insight on how NGET could address consultees' concerns on a variety of issues as the project developed, as well as shaping the Phase 2 public information events.

Specific feedback related to the Marine Scheme is provided in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2: Phase 1 Public Consultation Feedback and Responses

Topic	Feedback	Response	Chapter of EAR
Impact on marine environments	Disruption to marine habitats off the coast of Seaham, including marine mammals such as dolphins, which are present in the area.	Potential effects on marine habitats are appraised in Chapter 10: Marine Mammals, Section 10.6.	Chapter 10: Marine Mammals
	The National Trust's concern for the protection of the important marine ecosystems in the seas around their coastal property. Specific reference was made to grey seals, cetaceans, and sea birds.	Potential effects on marine habitats and species are appraised in Chapter 8: Benthic Ecology, Chapter 9: Fish and Shellfish Ecology, and Chapter 10: Marine Mammals.	Chapter 8: Benthic Ecology, Chapter 9: Fish and Shellfish Ecology, and Chapter 10: Marine Mammals
	The interdependencies between bird species and feeding grounds in the marine environment.	Potential effects on bird species and their feeding grounds are appraised in Chapter 11: Ornithology, Section 11.6.	Chapter 11: Ornithology
	The impacts to the Farnes East MCZ, the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC and to the Durham Coast SAC.	Potential effects on designated sites are appraised in Chapter 8: Benthic Ecology, Chapter 9: Fish and Shellfish Ecology, and Chapter 10: Marine Mammals.	Chapter 8: Benthic Ecology, Chapter 9: Fish and Shellfish Ecology, and Chapter 10: Marine Mammals
Impacts upon marine archaeological receptors	Further information on the scope of proposed marine survey work was requested by the National Trust, with particular reference to wrecks that might be directly impacted by the proposals, particularly in the Tyne to Tees Area.	Potential effects on marine archaeology are appraised in Chapter 12: Marine Archaeology.	Chapter 12: Marine Archaeology
Electromagnetic fields	Concerns about the health impacts of the cables electromagnetic field.	All equipment that generates, distributes or uses electricity produces Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs). Exposure limits for EMFs in the UK are set by the Government on advice from Public Health England, and the electricity industry strictly adheres to these limits. The exposure limits for both DC and AC cables originate from the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines, published in 1994 and 1998 respectively and recently updated in March 2020. The Marine Scheme will be designed to comply with the guidelines for exposure to EMFs.	Chapter 2: Project Description

6.3.2.5 Phase 2 – Spring 2022

Phase 2 public consultation took place between Monday 7 February and Sunday 20 February 2022 in the form of Public Information Exhibitions and Events (PIEEs) on the PIEE website. The format closely followed that of Phase 1 and aimed to provide more detailed project plans and answer questions from stakeholders and the community.

To ensure complete accessibility for all residents, those without access to internet were encouraged to call the 0800 line to arrange for questions to be answered, the mailing out of hard copies of project materials or to arrange a one-on-one call with the project team.

Phase 2 included a live chat feature over one four-hour and two six-hour sessions to make this accessible to as many people as possible. The sessions took place on:

- Tuesday 8 February 2022 10:00 – 14:00;
- Thursday 10 February 2022 14:00 – 20:00; and
- Saturday 19 February 2022 11:00 – 17:00.

In addition to the above, the project held a webinar on Wednesday 16 February 2022 18:30 – 19:30 including a presentation and addressing points raised during Phase 1 for the Marine Scheme.

In total, there were 17 hours of engagement sessions open to people interested in the Marine Scheme. The digital exhibition, website and 0800 line remain open for those wishing to know more about the Marine Scheme.



Figure 6-3: The PIEE digital exhibition

6.3.2.6 Consultation Feedback

The project replicated the experience of attending a physical consultation through the hosting of an exhibition, project document library, live chat sessions, as well as a webinar running through the Marine Scheme.

The PIEE website saw 2,350 unique page views during the consultation period and six people attended the scheduled webinar. Three people used the live chat function however 129 people were actively engaging with the digital exhibition materials during the live chat windows. No email or telephone

enquiries were received during the consultation period. The one-to-one sessions with specialists in the project team received no interest from the public or stakeholders.

Questions and feedback were received on a wide variety of topics pertaining to the Marine Scheme including:

- Impact of EMFs on human and animal navigation both onshore and offshore;
- Impact of the project on marine environments and vessels; and
- Commercial opportunities.

6.3.2.7 Incorporating Feedback into SEGL1/ EL1

The feedback provided during this PIEE provided insight on how NGET could address consultees' concerns on a variety of issues as the project developed.

Specific feedback related to the Marine Scheme is provided in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3: Phase 2 PIEE Feedback and Responses

Topic	Feedback	Response	Chapter of EAR
Electromagnetic fields	A member of the public asked whether the buried DC cables would produce magnetic fields and what the impact would be on human and animal navigation onshore and offshore.	All equipment that generates, distributes or uses electricity produces Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs). Exposure limits for EMFs in the UK are set by the Government on advice from Public Health England, and the electricity industry strictly adheres to these limits. The exposure limits for both DC and AC cables originate from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines, published in 1994 and 1998 respectively and more recently updated in March 2020. The Marine Scheme will be designed to comply with the guidelines for exposure to EMFs.	Chapter 2: Project Description
Impact of the project on marine environments and vessels	A member of the public asked if the cable will be present a danger to sea trawlers. Seaham Town Council asked for reassurance on the impact of the project on the marine environment, particularly whether the project would cause noise that will disrupt marine mammals, such as dolphins.	The intention is to bury the cable in the seabed. Where this is not possible, cable protection will be used. The position of the cable will be shown on nautical charts and shared with relevant commercial fisheries and stakeholders. The impact of underwater sound on marine mammals has been appraised in Chapter 10: Marine Mammals. This appraisal concludes that underwater sound disturbance during geophysical activities, installation and operation of the Marine Scheme is Minor which is not significant .	Chapter 2: Project Description Chapter 10: Marine Mammals

6.4 Other Stakeholder Engagement

6.4.1 Fisheries Consultation

Technical engagement was undertaken with fisheries stakeholders by Brown & May Marine Ltd, on behalf of the Marine Scheme, to collect information on fishing activities and identify the key concerns of the fishing industry in respect of the Marine Scheme.

Information on fishing grounds was collected from a total of 67 vessels during consultation through a targeted questionnaire. Several questions were asked including home port and fishing association, vessel and trip details. Results were split into Scotland and England and by principal fishing method (Potter/Creeler or Trawler). 25 Scottish potters/creelers, 18 English potters/creelers, nine Scottish demersal trawlers and 15 English demersal trawlers returned questionnaires. More detail on the content

and results of the targeted questionnaire can be found in Volume 3 Appendix 14.1: Report on Baseline Consultation with Fisheries.

National and regional organisations, as well as local fisheries stakeholders were also consulted comprising:

- Scotland:
 - Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF);
 - Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFRPA);
 - Local fishermen based in Eyemouth, Dunbar, Cove, Burnmouth, St Abbs;
 - Local fishermen based in Dunbar;
 - Local fishermen based in Cove; and
 - Local representatives based in Port Seton, St Andrews, and Pittenweem.
- England:
 - Northumberland Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (NIFCA);
 - National Federation of Fisherman's Organisations (NFFO);
 - North Eastern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (NEIFCA);
 - Local fisherman based in Berwick Upon Tweed, Holy Island, Seahouses, Beadnell, Amble, Blyth, North Shields, Seaham, Hartlepool and Sunderland; and
 - Craster and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea were visited, however no fishermen were in port.

6.4.2 Scottish Surfing Federation

Engagement was undertaken with Scottish Surfing Federation. A meeting was held on 17 February 2022 where the Project, in particular the landfall at Thorntonloch Beach, was explained in detail. The information obtained from this engagement has been used to inform the appraisal in Chapter 15: Other Sea Users.

6.4.3 Maritime Stakeholders

Consultation with key relevant maritime stakeholders has been undertaken to obtain supplementary information to support the appraisal in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, which may not have been available through the typical data sources. Those parties consulted were:

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA);
- Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB);
- Trinity House (TH);
- Chamber of Shipping (CoS);
- The Royal Yachting Association (RYA);
- RYA Scotland;
- Cruising Association; and
- Relevant port and harbour authorities including:
 - Forth Ports;
 - Port of Tyne; and
 - Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority.

Two dedicated consultation sessions were held via Microsoft Teams in November 2021. These provided an introduction to the team and summary of the NRA process, an overview of the Marine Scheme, the navigational baseline and facilitated a preliminary hazards assessment workshop. The first session on 17 November 2021 was attended by MCA, NLB, Th and CoS. The second session on 30 November 2021 was attended by Forth Ports, Port of Tyne, and Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority.

The RYA, RYA Scotland and CA were provided with project information and invited to a consultation session, however the RYA and RYA Scotland opted to provide a written response in lieu of a dedicated meeting. The Cruising Association were informed of this and invited to provide further comment.

The MCA queried the option of bundling cable and raised specific concerns about compass deviation as a result of EMF emissions. MCA advised there should be less than 3 degree deviation over 95% of the route and 5 degree over 3% of the route. MCA and TH together raised queries about landfall details and possible reductions in navigable depth; reductions exceeding 5% will require specific consultation and consideration. Both issues are considered in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, Section 13.6.

TH reiterated their position on AtoN relocation, which is that temporary relocation is acceptable but not on a permanent basis. Relocation is not anticipated based on the assessment presented in Section 13.6. In addition, TH flagged an updated version of IALA guidance, IALA guidance G1162 Edition 1.0, on the marking of man-made structures released in December 2021, this has been considered and referenced in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, Section 13.2.

The CoS highlighted the importance of considering anchor and fishing gear penetration as part of the Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA), this has already been built into the assessment and has been referenced as appropriate to inform the NRA process.

Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority and Port of Tyne raised several issues as part of additional consultation. They highlighted Unmanned Surface Craft (USC) servicing the offshore wind sector may become more prevalent in the future out of Hartlepool and Port of Tyne. There was concern about route deviations because of the Marine Scheme forcing large vessels towards the Inner Farne Isles which is problematic especially in poor weather; both issues have been considered in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, Section 13.6. In addition, it was highlighted that some local ports have designated jack-up areas as well as anchorages which may need to be considered, this has already been considered in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, Section 13.4.

RYA and RYA Scotland raised several issues as part of the additional consultation. This included a request to consider opportunities for recreational gain, recreational use around the Durham landfall and the bay near the Scotland landfall, hazards to recreational vessels, Notices to Mariners (NtMs) and loss of boat access because of construction. No loss of access is anticipated due to construction and engagement will continue with local stakeholders as the Marine Scheme progresses in relation to recreational concerns. The other issues mentioned above have been considered and discussed in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, Sections 13.4 and 13.6. The NLB highlighted the importance of St Abbs for recreational diving. This issue has been described and considered in Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation, Section 13.5.

More detail on the specific additional consultation that has been undertaken for Maritime Stakeholders can be found in Table 13-7 of Chapter 13: Shipping and Navigation as well as the specific sections highlighted in the text above.

6.5 Conclusions

NGET is committed to engaging with all communities within which their works take place and they take great pride in its legacy of thorough public consultations. To ensure that the plans take account of the views of local communities, NGET delivered a comprehensive pre-application consultation to gauge local residents' and stakeholders' views on the Project, with feedback helping to shape the development of SEGL1 / EL1.

SPT intends to keep relationships open with the community, having developed relationships with local residents who have taken an interest in the project. SPT also intends to keep engaging with local residents with a summer engagement event planned in order to show more of the project and give the local community an opportunity to keep feeding into ongoing plans for the EL1 project.

The aim of the public consultations were to inform consultees about the Project at an early stage, understand their views and concerns and collate their feedback. Several different forms of communication methods were used to do so, to reach as many people as possible. During the public consultations a range of feedback was received, from neutral to negative, however, the negative feedback made up a small fraction of the overall feedback.

In addition to public consultation, specific stakeholders including fisheries, maritime and the Scottish Surfing Federation were approached directly as discussed in Section 6.4.

