



F I V E 
ESTUARIES
OFFSHORE WIND FARM

FIVE ESTUARIES
OFFSHORE WIND FARM
STAGE 1 FEEDBACK REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm project (the 'Project') is the proposed extension to the operational Galloper Offshore Wind Farm. The closest point of the Project above sea level is located 37km off the coast of Suffolk.

This report summarises the feedback that was received in response to the first stage of public consultation on the Project that was carried out in the Summer of 2022, as well as how the issues raised in those responses have been initially considered by the Project.

139 responses to the consultation were received, two of which were received shortly after the deadline for responses but were considered alongside the other responses.

For more information about the project and to sign up to receive updates from us, please visit www.fiveestuaries.co.uk.

1.1. STAGE 1 CONSULTATION

The first stage of consultation ran for six weeks from Thursday 30 June 2022 to Friday 12 August 2022. The deadline for receiving responses was midnight on 12 August 2022.

The purpose of the consultation was to introduce the Project, initial design proposals and to collect feedback primarily on the onshore elements of the proposals. Due to the early stage of development, there was limited technical detail available, however information was presented to give an understanding of the Project, and the geographical areas that it could potentially effect.

Due to the stage of development in the design process and the balance of the potential impacts, the consultation was focused on the geographical areas around the proposed onshore infrastructure required for the Project. At the next stage of consultation, engagement will be broadened to areas and communities who may be able to see the new turbines.

The next stage of consultation, which is expected to be in early 2023, will be statutory consultation and fulfil the requirements of Sections 42 through 48 of the Planning Act 2008. At this stage, more detailed designs will be provided along with the initial findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Project.

1.2. PROMOTION

In order to promote the consultation, the following activity was carried out.

A newsletter was sent via Royal Mail to approximately 14,000 residential and business addresses. The boundary for this mailing was 3km from the proposed substation location and 1km from either side of the cable route search area. The zone was extended around the landfall location, to ensure that sections of smaller settlements bisected by the boundary were not excluded. This newsletter was sent via 2nd class post on 28 June 2022.

Advertisements were placed in local newspapers to encourage residents to attend the face-to-face events; the *Harwich and Manningtree Standard* (7 July 2022) and the *Frinton and*

Clacton Gazette (8 July 2022). In addition, a press release was issued to local and regional media at the start of the consultation resulting in coverage in local and regional newspapers. A second round of advertisements were placed in the same papers week commencing 1 August 2022 with the aim of encouraging people to respond to the consultation by the deadline.

Posters were placed in venues near the location of face-to-face events in order to help further promote the consultation.

Emails were also sent to the following groups:

- Subscribers to the Five Estuaries project update mailing list;
- Elected representatives covering the same area of the newsletter boundary (county councillors, district councillors, parish councils and Members of Parliament); and
- Elected representatives on the east coast of Suffolk between Southwold and Felixstowe (county councillors, district councillors, parish councils and Members of Parliament).

1.3. EVENTS AND ONLINE EXHIBITION

Information was available on the Five Estuaries website via our online exhibition. Two in-person events were held during the 6-week consultation. Information at these events was identical to that available online. The material presented online can be found at www.fiveestuaries.co.uk/consultation.

In-person events:

- Wednesday 13 July 2022, 3pm to 8pm, St Mary's Parish Church Hall, Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 9BX – **98 attendees**
- Thursday 14 July 2022, 2pm to 8pm, Ogilvie Hall, Wignall Street, Lawford, CO11 2JG – **106 attendees**. (Door were opened early at around 1.00pm due to early visitors)

1.4. RESPONSE CHANNELS

The following response methods were made available to enable people to provide feedback during the consultation:

- A paper feedback form was printed and made available at the events to enable completion at the event or to take home and complete later;
- A digital version of the form was available to complete online, linked from the online exhibition;
- A freepost address (Freepost FIVE ESTUARIES) was set up so people could send either the printed feedback form or other feedback to the Project; and
- Feedback could be emailed directly to the Project at fiveestuaries@rwe.com.

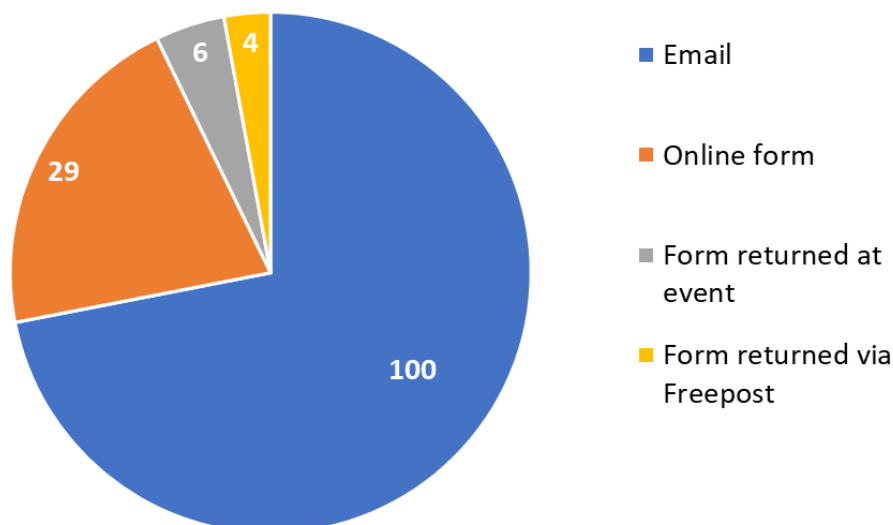
2. FEEDBACK TO STAGE 1

2.1. SUMMARY

In response to the consultation, 139 responses were received. Eight of these responses were from self-identified landowners and the rest from individuals (and one group of three councillors responding together). The following organisations responded to the consultation:

- Ardleigh Parish Council
- Brightlingsea Town Council
- East of England Ambulance Service
- East Suffolk Council
- Essex County Council
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Historic England
- Little Bromley Parish Council
- NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding National Beauty Partnership
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- Tendring District Council
- Tendring Parish Council
- The Leith Group (Bramble Island)
- Woodland Trust

The majority of responses were sent via the Project email address (fiveestuaries@rwe.com). The second most common response channel was the online response form. A small number of paper feedback forms were returned via Freepost or completed and left with the Project team at one of the events.



2.2. KEY FINDINGS

Respondents provided a significant amount of highly detailed feedback to the information presented in the Stage 1 consultation. Most of the comments received fall within three categories; concerns regarding the impact of the Project (the majority of which related to topics within the Environmental Impact Assessment process), requests that the connection to the National Grid electricity network be made offshore (therefore removing the requirement for an onshore substation and underground cabling at the current location), and specific issues raised by landowners or their neighbours.

There was a split between highly detailed responses and short responses, the later which tended to focus on the request for an offshore connection. The top issues from non-organisational response are set out below (also excludes campaign responses, which are covered separately).

Top general issues (number of times they were raised)

1. Request for an offshore grid connection (32)
2. Concern about narrow roads (19)
3. General objection to project (12)
4. Concern regarding loss of farm land (12)
5. Statement of in principle support of renewables (9)

Top specific issues (number of times they were)

1. Request for coordination between the Project, National Grid and North Falls (14)
2. Concern regarding current reliance on well/spring water in Little Bromley (7)
3. Concern about viability of screening the substation (6)
4. Criticism of the scale of maps used (4)
5. Concern about the impact of onshore infrastructure on Little Bromley (4)
6. Concern about the impact of onshore infrastructure on Ardleigh (4)

Of particular note, are the detailed lists of wildlife species observed and reported as part of the consultation. This information is extremely useful in regard to cross checking the work of the team carrying out habitat and species surveys, and the detailed information is highly appreciated.

In addition, a lot of detailed information was provided in relation to specific local roads and their specific experience of traffic at certain times. This useful information will be considered in the development of the Environmental Information Assessment to help understand the sensitivity of these local roads to disruption. It will also be noted for use during preparation for construction, should the Project be consented.

SUBSTATION SEARCH AREAS

In addition to feedback on the cable route search areas, the Project was seeking feedback on the three areas of search the Project is considering for the onshore substation location required to connect the offshore wind farm to the National Grid network.

The options are all located close to National Grid's proposed new East Anglia connection substation, which is a separate development but which the Project's onshore substation needs to be close to. Two areas would give location options which would create a cluster including National Grid's new substation while the third are would give an option of the Project substation separate to the National Grid's substation further away – located nearer to the A120.

There was limited response to this question, with seven respondents preferring a clustered approach and four a distanced option. More information about how we are taking forward the design of the onshore substation can be found in section 5.4.

2.3. CAMPAIGN RESPONSES

Two sets of responses were received with near identical phrasing. Organised campaigns are normal parts of the consultation process. They are reported in section Campaign responses4.3.

In order to give a clearer indication of the number of times each issue was raised by members of the public, campaign responses were not analysed as part of the methodology set out in the following chapter. Instead, each campaign response is considered in full later in report along with the number of times it was received.

3. ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

In order to analyse the feedback received, each item of feedback is read, and the issues contained within it listed separately. As each subsequent piece of feedback is read, the list of issues is added to. Where a similar issue has already been listed it is marked that another person has raised the same issue to produce a count of the number of times it has been raised.

Where appropriate, feedback is sent to the technical specialist(s) within the development team. These issues are then classified either in line with the chapter of the Environment Impact Assessment that they relate to or in other general categories. More detail on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process can be found later in this section.

This process is inherently subjective, and the number of times each issue is captured should be seen as indicative. When considering responses, more weight is applied to the content of an issue than the number of times it has been raised.

The summaries of the issues raised are meant to capture the concerns or issues as expressed in feedback. They are not the position of the Project towards those issues.

3.1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

To ensure data protection of respondents, information that could identify individual respondents has been redacted from the summarised issues. Where possible, localising but not identifying information (such as postcodes) has been used. Some issues have had to be simplified significantly as they relate to only a single piece of land.

3.2. RESPONSES FROM ORGANISATIONS

The process set out above is used for responses by members of the public. Responses from organisations, such as local authorities, statutory bodies (such as Historic England) and parish councils, often include high levels of detail. As such, breaking these issues down is a less appropriate method of considering these responses. Instead, the Project team will review each of these response as a whole as part of the development of the Project. How feedback has influenced the EIA process will be set out in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report published as part of the next consultation.

3.3. THE EIA PROCESS

As part of the development process, the Project is undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This will identify the current environmental baseline and then assess the potential impacts caused by the Project across each of the topics listed below. We will prepare an Environmental Statement as part of our Development Consent Order application, which will report on the findings of the EIA as well as set out how we will avoid, minimise or mitigate impacts wherever possible.

Many of the issues raised in feedback to the consultation relate to topics that will be assessed as part of the EIA process. These issues have been cross checked against the survey and assessment work that is being carried out to ensure they are considered as part

of the process or an explanation is provided where these issues do not form a material part of the assessment.

During the next stage of consultation on the Project, we will be publishing our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) that will set out the initial findings of this process and be an opportunity for everyone to comment on them.

General EIA topics:

- EIA methodology
- Site selection and alternatives
- Project description

Onshore EIA topics:

- Terrestrial ecology and nature conservation
- Archaeology and cultural heritage
- Airborne noise and vibration
- Traffic and transport
- Air quality
- Hydrology, hydrogeology and flood risk
- Geology and ground conditions
- Onshore landscape and visual impact assessment
- Socio-economic, tourism and recreation
- Public health

Offshore EIA topics:

- Physical processes
- Marine water and sediment quality
- Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology
- Fish and shellfish ecology
- Marine mammals
- Offshore ornithology
- Commercial fisheries
- Shipping and navigation
- Military and civil aviation
- Seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment
- Marine archaeology
- Other marine users and activities

4. ISSUES ARISING FROM FEEDBACK

This section of the report lists the issues identified from feedback using the methodology set out in the previous section. Against each issue is an indication of the number of times that issue was mentioned, followed by the Project's initial consideration of the issue.

4.1. GENERAL TOPICS

This section contains the issues raised that did not fit into other more specific topics. These have been grouped into the following categories:

- Consultation
- Co-ordination
- Route
- Substation
- Other general comments

CONSULTATION

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Criticism of the level of detail on maps provided as part of the consultation.	5	<p>This issue was identified by stakeholders early in the consultation and at the information events. In response the Project produced seven maps covering the onshore cable route search area at a larger scale and published them on the project website on 21 July 2022.</p> <p>These maps used the same redline boundary as presented in other consultation materials but at a larger scale and with greater detail on the base mapping. People who had requested these maps were contacted directly via email and an email update regarding the maps was sent to newsletter subscribers.</p>
Positive comments regarding consultation, events and staff.	4	Positive feedback is noted and appreciated.
Claim that the consultation was inadequate because no choice was presented other than connecting near Ardleigh or that it doesn't include option to connect offshore.	3	<p>Given the current regulatory framework, Five Estuaries can only progress towards a connection point as identified in its Grid Connection agreement.</p> <p>With regards to the potential to connect the Project to the national electricity grid via a subsea cable, please see the Project's statement in section 5.1.</p>
Desire to see comparison between onshore and offshore options; including impacts, costs, etc.	1	
Desire to see costs for all options (implication of an offshore option).	1	
Request for more time at the next consultation.	3	The next stage of consultation will be extended to eight weeks.

Request that responses are listened to and taken on board; or concern that they wouldn't be.	2	This report sets out how the Project has considered the responses raised from feedback. This does not necessarily mean that changes are possible or feasible on all specific concerns.
Request that the consultation website is improved for the next stage of consultation.	1	Following a review of the online exhibition tool, the website will be simplified for the next stage of consultation to focus on ensuring people have quick and easy access to the consultation material.
Request for the substation location to be confirmed for the next consultation.	1	The design and location of the onshore substation will be presented in as much detail as possible at the next stage of consultation in order to ensure stakeholders can provide their feedback, however it is likely we will present more than one option.
Claim that address (CO11 2QA) did not receive direct mail.	1	13 addresses in the CO11 2QA postcode area were sent newsletters via Royal Mail 2nd Class post. In addition to direct mailing, other promotional methods were used to ensure there were multiple opportunities for people to be made aware of the consultation. These methods are set out in section 1.2 of this report. How the next stage of consultation will be promoted will be set out in a published Statement of Community Consultation early next year. It is likely that C016 0AB will be included within the mailing zone that will receive directly posted newsletters.
Request for direct mail (CO16 0AB).	1	
Request for illustrative photographs of pylons as part of the consultation. Note - this may be a misunderstanding that the Project is proposing to use onshore pylons.	1	No pylons are proposed as part of the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Project. While we appreciate that the Project connects into National Grid's GREEN project, the Project can only demonstrate and consult on issues within the control of the Project.
Question of why consultation was not carried out before project approval. Note - this may be a misunderstanding of the DCO process.	1	The Project has not yet received development consent, this consultation is part of the pre-application process designed to identify issues and refine our designs.
Question if Five Estuaries is proposing a battery storage facility, and if so, why it was not shown. Note - this may be a misunderstanding linking a separate proposed project in the area to the Five Estuaries project.	1	The Project is aware of proposals for a battery storage facility in the area, however it is not related to the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm.
Request to be kept informed.	1	How we will carry out the next stage of consultation will be published in a Statement of Community Consultation early next year. Promotion will include newsletters, newspaper advertisements and posters. In addition, people can sign-up to receive updates from the Project via the Project website.

COORDINATION BETWEEN PROJECTS

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Request for greater coordination between Five Estuaries and National Grid (primarily) and North Falls (secondarily). This includes request for lobbying of National Grid to offshore the connection.	9	Noted. Please see Section 5.2 for a statement of cross project coordination.
Criticism from landowners/agents at the lack of coordination between Five Estuaries and National Grid and North Falls.	6	<p>Noted. Please see Section 5.3 for a statement on how we're engaging with landowners.</p> <p>The Five Estuaries and North Falls projects are using the same land agents to help improve the coordination of communications to landowners, and we are acting to collect survey data jointly where possible.</p>

ONSHORE CABLE ROUTE

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Suggestion of alternative routing north east of Thorpe Road.	1	This option was considered as part of the early options assessment on the Project, which will be published as part of the DCO application.
Concern regarding landfall and the impact on the residential areas and nature reserve between Frinton and Holland.	1	The potential impact of all parts of the route will be assessed as part of the EIA process, however the Project is likely to propose using horizontal directional drilling at the landfall location. This will significantly reduce perceptible impacts for residents and the nature reserve.
Concern that the red line passes through neighbour's garden (Tendring village).	1	Following a review of technical considerations, environmental issues and feedback to this consultation, the cable route search area that runs close to Tendring village has not been taken forward. More information on this can be found in Section 6.
Suggestion to take the cables through Tendring Lodge Lane instead, which is further away from the local primary school.	1	
Question of why cables for the existing wind farms can't be upgrade and/or whether new cables will have to be dug up after 25 years.	1	<p>The cables for the existing windfarms are already fully utilised in terms of the electrical capacity they can carry. Upgrade of these cables is not practical as additional cross-sectional area would need to be added. The only practical answer is installation of new cables for the new windfarm.</p> <p>Regarding end of life and decommissioning it is provisionally judged that removal of the cables would bring about further environmental impacts. At present it is therefore proposed that the cables will be left in place,</p>

		but this will be reviewed over the design life of the Project.
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ONSHORE SUBSTATION

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Statement that the land identified for the potential substations is excessive.	6	The size of the substation will be determined by the requirements of the necessary equipment and related clearances. The areas shown during the first stage of consultation were large search areas to give flexibility, and the proposed substation design will be smaller than these search areas.
Statement from landowner that the substation would have a detrimental effect on property.	6	The Project notes these concerns. The impact of the proposed substation will be assessed as part of the EIA process. Initial findings will be presented in the PEIR at the next stage of consultation. Mitigation will be proposed if significant detrimental effects are identified.
Concern regarding the substation and its potential impacts.	5	
Concern regarding the impact of Search Areas 1 and 2 on quality of life in Ardleigh.	1	
Concern regarding cumulative impact of multiple substations.	1	
Statement that the substation should only be located on a brownfield site.	4	The effects on land use were considered as part of the site selection process, with modified landscapes being considered as more favourable sites than natural or semi-natural landscapes. Given the need to locate the substation in the vicinity of the proposed new National Grid substation, a suitable brownfield site was not able to be identified for the Project.
Preference for clustered option due to less environmental damage.	2	A statement on the substation location can be found in section 5.4.
Suggestion that spreading them out would reduce impact.	2	
Preference for SSA3 as location is further from residences.	2	
Statement that the substation should not cover good farmland.	2	
Statement that the substation should be located near the existing one.	1	
Statement that sites should be clustered to limit damage to one area.	1	

Concern regarding Grade 2 listed building [specific location removed, between Ardleigh and Lawford] and reference to Horlock Rules regarding the siting of substations near listed buildings.	2	The site is located to the north west of one of the substation search areas. It is unlikely to be directly impacted by the proposals, however visual impact and impact to heritage setting will be assessed as part of the EIA. The Horlock Rules have been considered in the development of proposals to date.
Statement that the substation should be located away from residences.	1	There is a minimum buffer of 250m between residential properties and a new substation. The potential impact of the proposed substation locations will be assessed in depth
Statement that Substation Search Area 3 is too close to the A120.	1	The proximity of this search area to the A120 offers a number of benefits for both construction and operation. A statement on the substation location can be found in section 5.4.
Mitigation suggestion to improve the hedgerows between Briar Road (CO7 7XB) and the proposed site. This would improve screening and the environment.	1	The suggestion will be considered in the development of the mitigation proposals, the principles of which will be presented as part of the next consultation.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Statement that offshore connection is the most sensible or only acceptable option. Implicit or explicit objection to the Project given because of this issue. Reasons cited include cost, impact, health, ecology, coordination, speed, profits and the lack of consent for National Grid's proposed substation. Linked request for the Project to lobby National Grid to progress this as an option.	32	The Project is aware of the strength of feeling with regards to an offshore connection. In Section 5.1 of this report, there is a full statement on how the Project is involved with the Offshore Transmission Network Review process.
General statement of opposition to the Project or a statement that could be reasonably interpreted as opposition.	13	Noted. The Project is in line with the Government's National Policy Statement. There will be an opportunity to raise written representations to the Planning Inspectorate as

		part of the formal examination process that takes place after an application is submitted.
Statement of general support of offshore energy, however not implicit of support for the Project.	9	Noted.
Support for the Project.	3	Noted.
Supportive of the use of underground cables.	2	Noted.
Statement that energy projects should impact areas with higher energy needs.	2	The Project is responding to the Government's 2030 offshore wind ambition and the National Policy Statement on Energy.
Question whether these projects are needed at all, example given that solar panels should be placed on all houses in the UK.	1	
Concern that the cumulative impact of Five Estuaries, National Grid GREEN and North Falls is not being considered together.	1	Cumulative impact will be considered in detail as part of the EIA process for these projects and others in the vicinity.

4.2. ISSUES RELATED TO EIA TOPICS

The following topics relate directly to chapters that will be part of the PEIR and ES, which report on the findings of the EIA process. More information about the EIA process can be found in section 3.3. The topics of the EIA that are relevant to feedback received are:

- Archaeology
- Ecology and nature conservation
- Geology and ground conditions (including land use)
- Hydrology, hydrogeology and flood risk
- Landscape and visual impact
- Noise and vibration
- Offshore
- Public health
- Socioeconomic and tourism
- Traffic and transport
- Other general EIA related comments

ARCHAEOLOGY

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Note that there was a large bronze age urn field found close to Bromley Road.	2	The Project is aware of these archaeological sites and they will form part of the environmental baseline for assessment.
Note that there is a bronze age settlement in Ardleigh.	1	

ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Little Bromley Road - reported species include: foxes, hares, rabbits, deer, badgers, sky larks, buzzards, barn owls, little owls, tawny owls, mistle thrush, song thrush, long-eared owls, pole cats, various species of bats, pied and green woodpeckers, yellowhammers, spotted flycatchers, and pyramidal orchid.	3	Detailed habitat and species' specific surveys are being undertaken to understand the baseline environment in accordance with advice from relevant stakeholders and guidance. The Project is undertaking detailed habitat and species' specific surveys, which will be checked against this information. Natural England, along with a number of other stakeholders were consulted on the methodology.
Request that we are aware of and concern regarding the impact on Great Holland Pits.	2	The Project is aware of Great Holland Pits. With the removal of part of the cable search area (see section 6) it is no longer in our assessment area.

General point that a project cannot be environmentally positive if it is putting lots of steel and concrete in the countryside.	2	The Project is part of the Government's push to increase renewable energy as part of creating an environmentally sustainable energy mix.
Note Essex Wildlife Woods in the Beaumont Trust.	1	It is difficult to be certain what specific woods the comment refers to. The Project is aware of and seeking to avoid the Great Holland Pits Nature reserve managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. If the comment refers to Beaumont Hall Wood, then this is to the north of (and avoided by) the proposed route.
Highlighted specific properties being impacted which are part of a flagship higher stewardship scheme and have significant diversity in wildlife. Large amounts of detailed information about the land in question, its activities and species identified on it.	1	The Project is aware of the land in question and related issues. We are considering how best to minimise any potential impacts as we refine and develop the route corridor and will work directly with the landowner where possible. Key species noted will be subject to detailed habitat and species' specific surveys. Natural England were consulted on the methodology and the scope of these surveys.
Ardleigh Road, CO11 2QA. Reports of nesting kestrels. Other species present nearby and on property: barn owls, turtle doves, deer, hedgehogs and hares.	1	Key species noted will be subject to detailed habitat and species' specific surveys. Natural England were consulted on the methodology and the scope of these surveys.
Species of concern near The Street, Tendring: badgers, badger sets, foxes, fox dens, various species of bats, native and migrating bird grounds, grass snake, adder snakes, nesting barn owls, tawny owls, little owls, buzzards, peregrine falcons, hare, deer, newts and voles.	1	Key species noted will be subject to detailed habitat and species' specific surveys. Natural England were consulted on the methodology and the scope of these surveys.
Where the two corridors meet (CO7 8SS) there are many established trees. Concern that laying cables underneath could kill or damage them which provide significant habitat support.	1	Trees in this area tend to be in belts along hedgerows. The Project would aim to minimise disturbance by using gaps in vegetation where possible. In addition, we would plan to avoid burying cables close to major tree roots due to integrity issues to cables as well as seeking to avoid potential impacts on the trees.
Concern regarding established trees near Substation Search Area 3.	1	
Report of transient badger set on Mulberry Lane, which joins on Bentley Road, which we believe they use as a stopping point when travelling between sets.	1	Badger surveys form part of the wider ecology survey package. The site referenced does not appear to be close to the proposed cable route search area.
General statement of concern regarding ecology / conservation without further context.	2	The Environmental Impact Assessment process is set out under regulation for assessing the potential impact on a range of topics including ecology and conservation.

		The results of this process will be initially reported in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report as part of the next stage of consultation, and as part of the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the application for Development Consent.
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GEOLGY AND GROUND CONDITIONS

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Concern regarding the impact on or loss of arable land. Includes concerns regarding food security.	13	The impact on land uses is assessed as part of the EIA process. The Project is also working directly with landowners to minimise disruption to farming activities.
Generalised concern by landowners on impact on their farming activities.	7	The Project would generally seek a permanent easement of the swathe of the cables and the easement would generally seek to restrict (i.e. require approval) of activities which would penetrate the ground by more than 0.6m. As such, it is expected that normal agricultural activities would be able to continue. The Project is also working directly with landowners to minimise disruption to farming activities.
Criticism by landowners that the substation search areas are in the middle of fields.	6	Engagement with landowners is ongoing and the site for the substation has not yet been chosen. The actual footprint of the substation will be smaller than the search areas and be situated to cause minimum disruption while balancing engineering concerns.
Concern that despite claims, arable land does not return to full use after cabling / trenching.	3	These concerns are noted and landowner comments will be considered in the Project's land use assessment. The Project proposes to have a soil management plan, which will detail the approach to site restoration.
Concern about subsidence for a house built in the c19th (C016).	1	Initial assessment indicates that the property is a good distance (approximately 500m+) from the proposed cable route and would not be affected. A typical excavation depth for cable trenches would be up to 2m and these would not be below residential properties. Subsidence risk is part of the assessments carried out by the Project.
Concern regarding prime agriculture land around Little Bromley Road.	1	The impact on land use is assessed as part of the EIA process. The Project is also working directly with landowners to minimise disruption to farming activities.
Landowner concerned that route cuts through the centre of the farm.	1	The cable route search area does not pass-through the identified farm.
Landowner had a bad experience with a utility company. Promises not	1	Appropriate mitigations will be developed as part of the Project's Code of Construction Practice. Engagement with landowners is ongoing.

kept, land not returned or kept in good order.		
Concern about the impact on residential gardens.	1	The Project has no current plans to trench through residential gardens. If Project requirements lead to this, landowners effected would be engaged with directly.

HYDROLOGY, HYDROGEOLOGY AND FLOOD RISK

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Little Bromley (both the village and farms) rely on spring and well water. There is concern that any works nearby could disrupt this and irrigations systems on farms, causing flood and/or disruption to water supply.	7	As part of the EIA process, potential impacts on spring and well water will be considered. This issue has been highlighted to the team carrying out hydrology assessment to ensure the Project is fully aware of it.
Landowner notes a reliable spring on their farm, which may be impacted by the trench for cables. The farm is reliant on this spring.	1	The Project is engaging with landowners on an individual basis to ensure we are aware of these issues and develop the Project in response to them.
Landowner. Deep spring which feeds a well that supplies the farm.	1	
Landowner. Heavily invested in drainage systems on farm, would not want to see impact on this.	1	

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Concern that due to the size and height of the proposed substation, screening / mitigation would take many years to work, if they work at all.	7	Visual and landscape impact is an important consideration in the development of the design for the substation and the EIA process. Information about the approach to mitigation will be presented in the next stage of consultation.
Concern regarding visual impact throughout area.	6	As above.
Concern regarding cabling near to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).	2	There may be some limited visibility of the substation and construction work from the Suffolk AONB. This will be assessed as part of the EIA process. Engagement with the AONB is ongoing. The Dedham Vale AONB will also be assessed by for landscape and visual impacts.
Statement that Little Bromley currently has very little light pollution.	1	Noted.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
General concern regarding noise from electrical infrastructure; primarily in relation to the proposed substation.	8	Airborne noise from electrical infrastructure will be assessed and reported on as part of the EIA process.
Note that there is little noise pollution currently in Little Bromley.	1	
Concern regarding vibration impact on properties near cable route.	2	Vibration is one of the topics assessed as part of the EIA process.
Concern regarding impact to Listed building, particularly regarding where there might be shallow foundations.	1	As above. In addition, Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) is an option for parts of the route and the design will consider potential settlement, and this will be minimised. It is seen as unlikely that any effects would be observed away from the immediate areas of the HDD bores, and it is not proposed to HDD under the residential property at this or other locations.

OFFSHORE

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Question as to why the disused cables shown on plans, which go from near the proposed site towards the Thames Estuary, cannot be used.	1	The cables identified are old telecoms cables and would be unable to transfer the power generated from the turbines to the National Grid network.
Concern regarding 'concrete' coastline created by cumulative impact of turbines.	1	The potential visual impact of the turbines is a key issue that will be assessed as part of the EIA process and reported on in our PEIR chapter on Seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment.
Concern regarding impact (cumulative) on sea life and fish stocks.	1	This will be assessed as part of the EIA and reported on in our PEIR in three chapters; benthic ecology, fish and shellfish ecology, and marine mammals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Concern regarding the health impacts of Electro Magnetic Fields, including concern regarding cancer.	2	The Project will comply with International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines for public exposure and design of electrical infrastructure. More information about EMFs can be found on this National Grid factsheet .

General concern regarding distress and quality of life impacts on residents.	2	<p>We appreciate that the uncertainty caused by proposed development is a concern. Throughout the Project, we will communicate as clearly as possible to give clarity about the process and timescales.</p> <p>As part of the EIA process, potential impacts to public health will be reported on.</p>
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SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TOURISM

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
Concern on the impact on property prices.	9	Conversations are ongoing with individual landowners to agree compensation for direct disruption of business. The EIA will identify, assess and mitigate issues that may affect receptors such as residential properties.
Concern about impact on tourism industry (holiday lets, visitors, etc).	3	The potential impact on the tourism industry will be assessed in the socio-economic, tourism and recreation chapter of the PEIR and ES.
Concern regarding impact near school playing field close to property in Tendring.	1	<p>The cable route search area closest to the playing field is no longer being taken forward. More information about this is included in section 6.</p> <p>Insofar as there may still be indirect impacts, these will be assessed across various chapters of the PEIR and ES including traffic, noise, air quality and public health.</p>
Concern regarding construction works impacting on holiday-let businesses	1	Potential impacts to the area will be assessed across various chapters of the PEIR and ES including socioeconomics, tourism and recreation, traffic, noise, air quality, socio-economic and tourism, and public health.
Concern regarding and the impacts to riding horses, and rescue donkeys; Particularly where bridleways nearby are also affected.	1	<p>The cable route search area closest to Tendring is no longer being taken forward. More information about this is included in section 6.</p> <p>The Project will consider the use of bridleways as part of its assessment on impacts to public rights of way.</p>
Reference to positive experience of job opportunities for locals from Gunfleet Sands. Request to see the same from this project.	1	A Jobs and Skills Strategy will be developed as part of the final DCO application. The Project is aware of the potential for and will seek to capitalise on the potential for a local workforce.
Concern regarding proximity to Tendring Primary school, including construction disruption, noise, dust, traffic and safety.	1	<p>The cable route search area closest to the school is no longer being taken forward. More information about this is included in section 6.</p> <p>Insofar as there may still be impacts, these will be assessed across various chapters of the PEIR and ES including traffic, noise, air quality and public health.</p>
Local farmer keeps sheep and lambs, concern regarding construction interfering with lambing season.	1	Impacts will be considered across various chapters, traffic, noise, air quality, public health. Mitigation will also be in place to manage potential impacts. However, the EIA will not specifically consider impacts to lambs during lambing season.

Concern that cables will affect the guidance system on tractors and request to see evidence they don't.	1	If GPS systems are used, there would be no impact from the cable route. If a non-GPS system is used, discussions about potential impacts should take place as part of direct engagement with the landowner.
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TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Issues	No. of mentions	Consideration
Statements regarding the narrow / single track roads between villages and their unsuitability for HGVs or construction traffic. Linked issue with distance from main roads of some sites.	20	A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared as part of the Development Consent Order application. This is however unlikely to be part of the next stage of consultation, however an assessment of the impacts on traffic and transport will be included in the PEIR.
Little Bromley Road is used by cyclists, horse riders, pony and traps, walkers, and farm vehicles.	4	Impacts on traffic and transport will consider this as well as impacts to wider network of cycle routes and public rights of way as part of the PEIR assessment.
Little Bromley Road is single track with well-established hedgerows.	2	Noted.
General reference to area's use by walkers and cyclists.	2	Public rights of way will be assessed as part of the EIA process.
Footpaths and bridleways throughout the area.	1	
Rally events (including Corbeau Seats) take place annually along this route; also cycling and running events.	2	Specific events are out of the scope of the EIA; however this information is noted for use during the construction phase should the Project be consented.
Noted that Hungerdown Lane is used by a two-day rally event.	1	
Statement that when the A120 is closed, traffic (including HGVs from Harwich) diverts through Thorpe le Soken or down a single-track lane (Golden Lane).	2	The Project will seek to minimise road closures by use of trenchless techniques. Where there would be significant disruption it's unlikely that road closures would be used.
<i>The following issues and observations have been passed to the teams carrying out the traffic and transport assessments as part of the EIA process, which will be reported on in detail in the Traffic and Transport Chapter of the PEIR. Additional consideration is noted below.</i>		
Statement that Thorpe le Soken is highly congested during the school run (8.15-9am and 2-3.30pm).	1	Traffic surveys are carried out at different times during the day to ensure an accurate representation of traffic is captured.
Statement that during bank and school holidays you can queue for hours on the A12 and A133 due to the amount of holiday parks in the area.	1	Traffic surveys are carried out during holiday and non-holiday periods to ensure that the assessment captures this.
Statement that when traffic lights were installed on Landermere Road / High Street in Thorpe le Soken, the whole of	1	Noted.

Tendring was gridlocked back to the A133 / A120 / A12.		
Statement that Landermere Road is very busy.	1	Noted.
Great Holland Common Road and Little Clacton Road are important connecting roads linking Great Holland to Clacton, and very busy as well as narrow and twisty.	1	Noted.
Concern that the level crossing on Post Lane is under consideration for closure, which would create multiple dead ends on the back roads from Thorpe le Soken and Kirkby to Great Holland. The roads are already of poor quality, with poor visibility particularly on the northern side.	1	Noted.
Importance of the bridleway between Thorpe le Soken High Street and Valley Farm in Golden Lane, which is used regularly, highlighted.	1	Noted. Public rights of way are also assessed as part of the process.
Reference to the important lorry route from Harwich to the A12.	1	Noted.
Noted that Hungerdown Lane is a popular cycling route as part of the Tendring Network.	1	Noted. Public rights of way are also assessed as part of the process.
Concern regarding cycling routes around Tendring Showgrounds.	1	Noted. Public rights of way are also assessed as part of the process.

GENERAL EIA RELATED COMMENTS

Issue	No. of mentions	Consideration
General concern regarding potential impact on the parish of Little Bromley.	4	The potential impact on these, and other, areas will be assessed as part of the EIA process and the initial findings reported in the PEIR. The Project understands the elevated level of concern from these communities.
General concern regarding potential impact on Ardleigh.	4	
Concern that the cumulative impact of Five Estuaries, National Grid GREEN and North Falls is not being considered together.	2	The potential cumulative impact of all three projects will be assessed as part of the EIA process and be initially reported on the PEIR.
Question whether these projects are needed at all, example given that solar panels should be placed on all houses.	1	The need for the Project is set out in National Policy. The process to determine whether the Project is consented will consider the proposals against all relevant policy at the time of examination.
Concern regarding proximity of the route of The Street in Tendring village which is a conservation area and contains homes and a c12th church.	1	The Project is aware of both the conservation area and the church referenced in the feedback. Potential impacts will be assessed as part of the EIA process.

4.3. CAMPAIGN RESPONSES

Campaign response 1: “While we understand that National Grid has told you to connect to East Anglia GREEN, there is also an OFGEM expectation that windfarm operators try to cooperate offshore. It is not acceptable to dig up Tendring to connect up to 180km of pylons when there should be a strategic offshore grid which is better for consumers, communities and countryside. We urge you to lobby National Grid for an offshore grid to connect to instead.”

50 copies of this response or subtle variations were received. Issues analysed earlier in this report do not count these issues, but any additional issues added to the campaign response were included.

Consideration: The Project’s position regarding an offshore connection option is set out in section 5.1. We note the level of feeling amongst respondents with regards to this issue and the Project will update its position if the situation changes.

Campaign response 2: “I am very concerned about the negative impact that your proposals would have on the area. I completely support the position of Ardleigh Parish Council and join them, and many others, to call for you to work towards a strategic off-shore solution.”

14 copies of this response or subtle variations were received. Issues analysed earlier in this report do not count these issues, but any additional issues added to the campaign response were included.

Consideration: The detail of Ardleigh Parish Council’s response is being fully considered as part of the EIA process. A significant part of the Parish Council’s response was a detailed argument for an offshore connection and against an onshore connection near the proposed search areas. Included in this response to the consultation, the Parish Council referred to its response to National Grid’s consultation on its East Anglia GREEN project and opposition to that project. The Project’s statement on an offshore connection option can be found in section 5.1.

5. PROJECT POSITIONS ON KEY ISSUES

There were a number of issues that were raised repeatedly by members of the public and organisations. While the Project cannot fully demonstrate how it's considered those issues until the completion of its application for development consent, the statements below set out the current position of the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm project on these topics of key importance to the community.

5.1. OFFSHORE CONNECTION

A common theme amongst feedback was a request for the project to connect to the National Grid network via an offshore connection, which respondents to the consultation claimed would then remove the need for onshore infrastructure in Tendring.

National Grid have provided us a grid connection offer for Five Estuaries to connect into their proposed East Anglia Connection Substation, near Lawford, Essex. This new substation is part of the National Grid wider High Voltage network reinforcement between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury. This is what the Five Estuaries project team is currently developing the Project on the basis of.

Five Estuaries is, however, actively engaged in the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR), a government-led initiative looking at the opportunities to for offshore wind farms to be able to connect to an offshore transmission network.

The trade body Renewable-UK is leading the current phase of work on behalf of the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Five Estuaries will continue to work with and review the outputs of the OTNR.

However, both the Government's recent Energy Security Strategy and Net Zero goals show the importance of bringing new offshore renewable generation of 50GW online by 2030. Therefore, Five Estuaries will continue to develop its plans on the basis of a direct onshore connection for which the regulatory framework exists to ensure no delay in its planned grid connection date and therefore supporting the UK Government's target.

5.2. COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS

We are committed to exploring opportunities to coordinate with other infrastructure projects being developed in the area.

Discussions are ongoing with both National Grid in relation to the siting of their proposed East Anglia Connection substation, which is where Five Estuaries will connect; and the potential for co-ordination on the onshore infrastructure proposed as part of the North Falls Offshore Wind Farm project, including cable corridors and substation locations. Due to the existing regulatory framework, it is currently necessary for each project to consult on their plans separately.

You can find out more about these projects by visiting their websites:

- North Falls Offshore Wind Farm: www.northfallsoffshore.com
- National Grid – East Anglia GREEN: www.nationalgrid.com/east-anglia-green

5.3. ENGAGEMENT WITH LANDOWNERS

There were a number of generalised and specific concerns about the potential impact of the Project on farms and arable land in the area. The Project is committed to working closely with individual landowners to minimise impact to operational farms. There is an ongoing process of dedicated engagement with those that have an interest in land. This will continue through the development cycle and into construction should the Project be granted consent.

People with an interest in land directly affected by the Project can contact our land agents, Dalcour Maclaren on 01869 352725 or by email at ve-nf@dalcourmaclaren.com. The Dalcour Maclaren team are working on behalf of both the Five Estuaries and North Falls projects.

5.4. ONSHORE SUBSTATION LOCATION

Many comments were received regarding the onshore substation proposed as part of the Project and the requirement to connect into the National Grid network. During our first stage of consultation, three search areas for the substation were proposed. Concerns were raised about the potential impact of the substation and there were requests to see more details on the location and design.

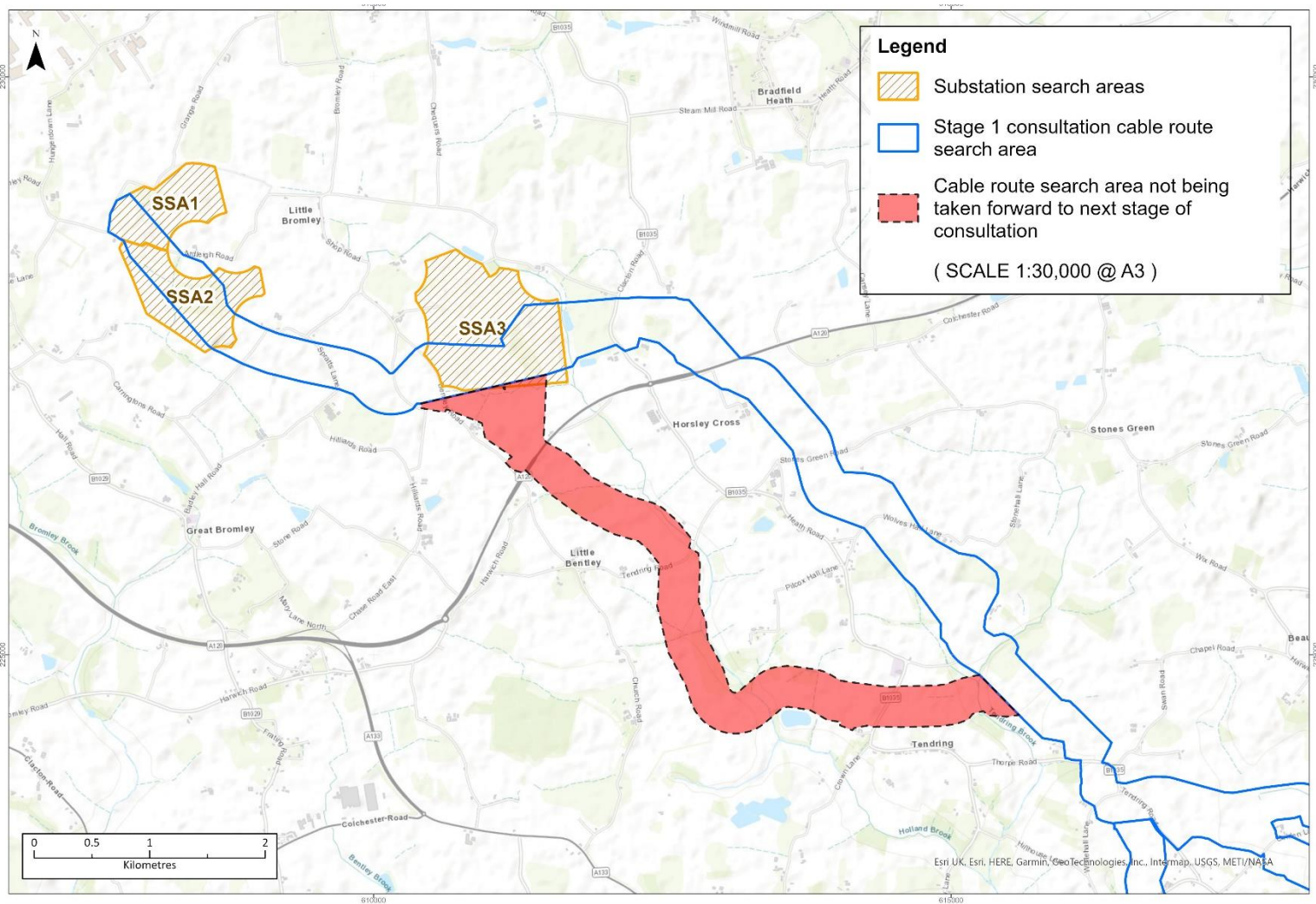
The Project is still in the process of developing the design and location for the substation. It is likely that we will still present search areas and options at the next stage of consultation, but we will include significantly more detail about the proposed design, including potential site locations within the search areas, as well as impact assessments and mitigation proposals.

The final decision on which substation location to take forward as part of our application will depend on a combination of environment assessments, technical considerations and public feedback.

6. MAJOR CHANGES FOLLOWING STAGE 1 CONSULTATION

For the first stage of public consultation several cable route search areas were presented. Following consideration of technical issues, preliminary environmental assessments, and feedback received one of those corridors will no longer be taken forward.

The map below shows an area of cable route search area, highlighted in red, that will no longer form part of the Project. This means that it will not be part of the next stage of consultation or assessed as part of the full EIA process.



6.1. REASONS

Initial assessments of this cable route search area indicated the following key issues:

- More crossings of watercourses and more gradients associated with this made it harder to mitigate environmental impacts and more challenging from an engineering perspective;
- Lower lying land, with greater flood risk during construction;
- More complex land use meant that a cable through this area had the potential to be more disruptive to more individual landowners; and
- The proximity to Tendring, and Tendring Primary School, is significantly reduced with the use of the other cable route search area.

In addition, feedback received in response to Stage 1 consultation raised a number of concerns regarding the proximity to Tendring. While these impacts would primarily be limited to the construction phase, and assessed and mitigated for as part of the EIA process, these concerns helped reinforce the decision to remove the search area.

As a benefit of removing this section from the cable route search area, less land needs to be surveyed as part of the EIA process, which will reduce the number of landowners disrupted as part of this process.

7. NEXT STEPS

Early in 2023, the Project will carry out the next stage of consultation. This consultation will contain more developed design information and more detail about the potential benefits and impacts of the Project. In addition, the consultation will include our Preliminary Environmental Information Report that will set out the initial findings of the EIA process.

Before this consultation is launched, we will publish and publicise a 'Statement of Community Consultation', which will set out the details of how we plan to consult with the local community.

Responses to the statutory stage of consultation next year must be considered by the Project in the development of its application. This process will be set out in detail in a Consultation Report that will be submitted as part of the application for a Development Consent Order. That report will consider responses in more detail than this Interim Feedback Report.

CONTACT US

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