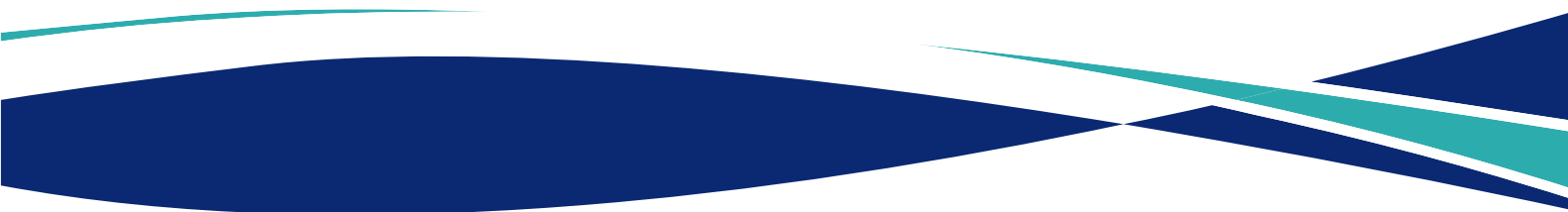




ElecLink



Habitats Regulations Assessment

February 2014

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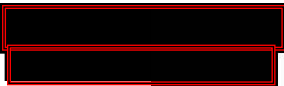
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Executive Summary

Mott MacDonald Ltd is appointed by ElecLink Limited to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the UK end of ElecLink ('the Project'); the development of an electrical interconnector between England and France to allow the bi-directional transmission of power between the French grid and the GB grid.

ElecLink is proposing to install a new cable between the existing Sellindge 400kV substation to Eurotunnel's Main Intake Substation, with the route to largely follow the alignment of either the existing M20 motorway, A20 or rail corridors. A new converter station will be constructed next to Eurotunnel's Main Intake Substation.

At its closest point the new converter station and cable route are located 48m and 35m respectively from a protected area, as adopted by the European Commission and UK government, a "European Site" (Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment Special Area for Conservation). The European Site is designated for 'Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites)'. It is defined as a 'priority' habitat under the Habitats Directive (i.e. "in danger of disappearing").

The European Site is not currently vulnerable to development activities and the Project is located beyond the European Site boundary. The Project is likely to involve activities for which the European Site is sensitive to, i.e. activities that have the potential to increase nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition and activities that could introduce invasive non-native species. The potential for increase nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition will be limited (short-term) to the construction phase of the Project. Proposed mitigation will minimise the risk of the introduction of invasive non-native species.

No likely significant effect on the European Site is reasonably foreseeable. Information pertinent to the location of the cable route temporary compounds and the cable route (including working width of 20meters) is reviewed in this HRA.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Mott MacDonald Ltd is appointed by ElecLink Limited to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the UK end of ElecLink ('the Project'); the development of an electrical interconnector between England and France to allow bi-directional transmission of power between the French grid and the GB grid. A new converter station will be the subject of an application for planning permission under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) whilst a new cable route will be the subject of an application for planning permission by a General Development Order ('Permitted Development') under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended).

1.2 The Purpose of the Habitats Regulations Assessment

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 'Article 6 Assessments' are required where a plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site(s), may give rise to significant effects upon a Natura 2000 site(s). The requirement for Article 6 Assessments has been transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (The 'Habitats Regulations'). Natura 2000 sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), candidate SACs and proposed SPAs, as well as Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) which have been adopted by the EC, but not yet formally designated by the government of Member State. In accordance with The Habitats Regulations, Natura 2000 sites are herein referred to as "European Sites" (as an interchangeable term recognising the status of relevant protected areas) (or European offshore marine site where relevant). In the UK, Ramsar sites are also required to undergo Article 6 Assessment when a plan or project is considered likely to have a significant effect upon a Ramsar site (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2006).

For projects requiring planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) the applicant must provide such information as the competent authority (i.e. local planning authority) may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable them to determine whether an assessment is required. The Article 6 Assessments are commonly referred to as a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' or an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA). 'Appropriate Assessment' is taken to mean an assessment which is "appropriate to its purpose under the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations and is not to be confused with the second of the Article 6 Assessments with the same name (Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2006). For projects carried out under a General Development Order ('Permitted Development') Regulation 74 of The Habitats Regulations requires that an application in writing is made to the 'appropriate nature conservation body' (i.e. Natural England). The application will be such that the appropriate nature conservation body have sufficient information to conclude that the development will, or will not, have a likely significant effect on a European site(s) and that it is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site(s). A copy of any relevant notification by the appropriate nature conservation body must accompany an application to the local planning authority for planning permission granted by a General Development Order.

Before deciding to undertake a plan or project that may give rise to significant effects upon a European site, and that is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, a

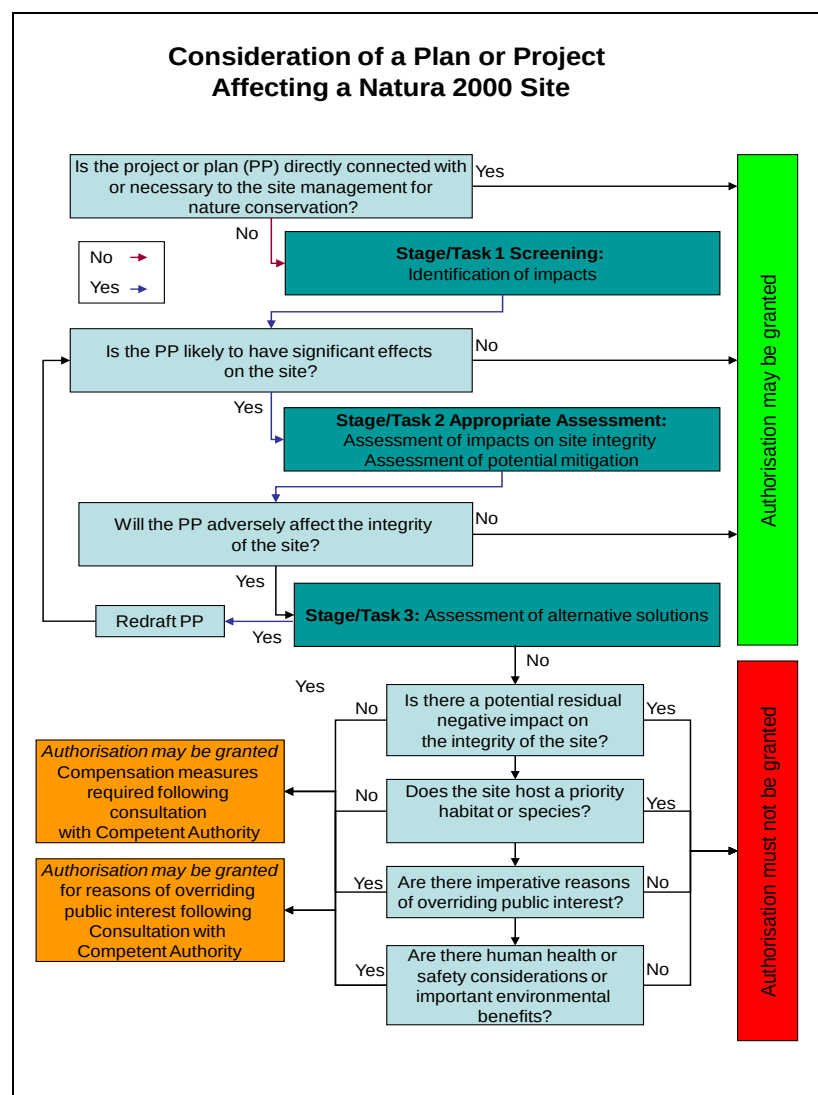
competent authority must make an assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives. The competent authority must also consult with the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body.

The HRA is undertaken in a series of stages in the case of the assessment of projects (DCLG, 2006). These stages correspond with the Article 6 Assessments prescribed by the Habitats Directive (Figure 1.1). Each stage determines whether further stages in the process are required. The first stage identifies likely significant effects by identifying the presence or absence of significance indicators. If the conclusion of Stage 1 is that there will be no significant effects on the European site, there is no requirement to undertake further stages.

Where a project is likely to give rise to significant effects upon a European site, an assessment must be made of the implications on the integrity of that site in view of that site's structure, function and conservation objectives (Stage 2). Furthermore where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of potential mitigations will also be required in Stage 2. If it is concluded that adverse impacts are likely to remain after mitigation, there must be an examination of alternative ways to complete the Project that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the site (Stage 3). Where alternatives exist these should be subjected to Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 assessments. Where no alternatives exist it is necessary under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive to identify if there are or are not imperative reasons for overriding public interest (IROPI). If there are IROPI then compensatory measures must be assessed (Stage 4).

In making this assessment, it is important to recognise that it will be appropriate to the likely scale, importance and impact of the Project.

Figure 1.1: The Article 6 Assessments Process



NB: The term 'Task' is used in reference to an assessment of a plan (DCLG, 2006)

1.3 Structure of this report

The structure of this report includes the following elements:

Chapter 2: Stage 1 Screening

- Step 1: Management of the European site(s);
- Step 2: Description of the Project;
- Step 3: Characteristics of the European site(s); and
- Step 4: Assessment of significance.

Chapter 3: Stage 1 Outcomes

- Screening matrix.

2 Stage 1 Screening

2.1 Introduction

This Stage 1 Screening Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (European Commission, 2001).

Definitions of conservation status, integrity and significance used in this report are defined in accordance with 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC' (European Commission, 2000) (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Standard Definitions

Status	Description
Conservation status – species	The sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its population.
Conservation status – habitats	The sum of the influences acting on a natural habitat and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species.
Integrity of a site	The coherence of the site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, or the habitats, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site is or will be classified.
Significant effect	The deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the conservation objectives of the site.

2.2 Step 1: Management of the European Site(s)

The Project described below, is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site.

2.3 Step 2: Description of the 'Project'

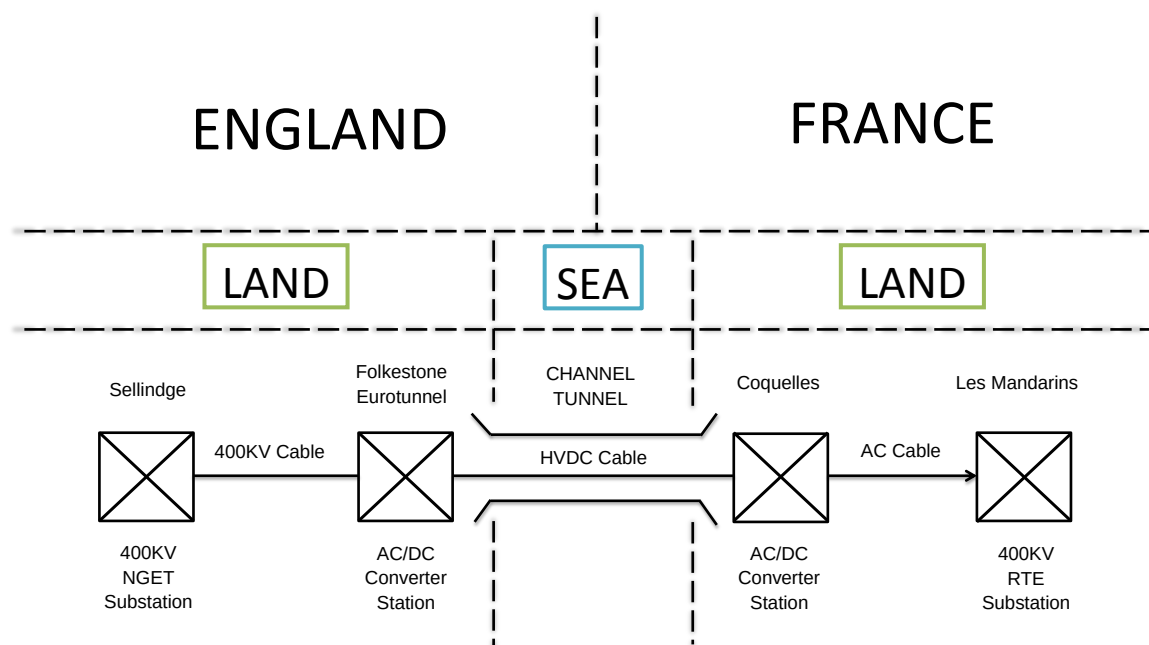
2.3.1 Introduction

The Project involves the construction of a high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission link of 1000MW capacity for the bi-directional transmission of electricity between the National Grid system in the Great Britain and the Réseau de Transport d'Électricité (RTE) system in France. The main components of the Project assessed within the scope of this HRA are (Figure 2.1):

- A new HVDC converter station based on Voltage Source Converter (VSC) technology, located next to Eurotunnel's Main Intake Substation. It will be constructed within Eurotunnel's existing concession land at Folkestone. This development will involve a haul route, temporary construction compounds (LOT1 and LOT2, Figure A.1 in Appendix A), an erection of a building and installation of various plant and machinery located externally;
- New 400kV alternating current (AC) underground cable of approximately 14.5km, which will be installed below ground between NGET's Sellindge 400kV Substation and the AC/DC converter station

- on the Eurotunnel site at Folkestone, this will include a number of temporary construction compounds; and
- New underground 320kV HVDC cables between the converter station and the Channel Tunnel portal of approximately [500] meters.

Figure 2.1: Diagrammatic layout of the proposed development



Source: Mott MacDonald/ElecLink

For the purposes of this screening it is assumed that the trench required for AC cable installation between Folkestone and Sellindge will be approximately 5m wide by 1.5m depth. The width of the surrounding working corridor is 20m.

The proposed route between Sellindge and the Eurotunnel entrance is expected to follow (closely) the existing highways M20 and A20, and follow wayleave near to Stone Street. The proposed route will skirt around agricultural land located along the edge of the M20 motorway and A20 bypass following a field boundary in proximity to Stone Street and Westenhanger .

It is anticipated that phased construction will span over a 30 month period, with works being staged in sections which would last approximately three months in each place. Traffic closures and temporary road diversions will be required during the construction period. It is likely that during the construction period, there could be up to five daily HGV movements associated with the construction of the haul road.

2.3.2 Land west of Eurotunnel Terminal's Main Intake Substation

The land located west of Eurotunnel Terminal's Main Intake substation is identified for the new HVDC converter station, which is located within Shepway District Council (Figure 2.2). The converter station would measure approximately 100m long by 100m wide (for the purposes of screening and planning application and to allow a margin for constraints), with a maximum roof height of typically 16m for the building, with some individual items external equipment and support structures extending up to 21m. The area to the south and east of the new converter station is largely surrounded by the wider Eurotunnel operational site.

Figure 2.2: Aerial Photograph of the Channel Tunnel portal, at the eastern end of the Eurotunnel UK Terminal at Folkestone, facing south east. The photograph also shows the escarpment in the foreground. The proposed converter station (indicated by the yellow triangle below) would be located adjacent to the existing traction power substation, in the lower right-hand side of the photograph.



Source: Groupe Eurotunnel

2.3.3 High Voltage DC Cable Route

The HVDC cable route will run within the Eurotunnel site for a few hundred metres and then enter the Channel Tunnel, where it will continue to the Eurotunnel site in France. For the purposes of this Habitats Regulations Assessment the cable starts at the new converter station and ends at the entrance of the Channel Tunnel.

2.3.4 High Voltage AC Cable Route

The proposed underground cable route will run from west to east from the National Grid 400kV substation at Sellindge to the Eurotunnel Terminal at Folkestone. The cable route will start from the substation at Sellindge where it will cross under the M20 from south to north via Church Lane. It will continue along the north side of M20 until it reaches the A20 where it will cross under the M20 from north to south and follow the East Stour River eastwards until it crosses Hayton Stream and continues east between the M20 and HS1. East of Falmead Farm it diverts south along wayleave, and then within road to cross the East Stour River near Westenhangar where it runs south to the railway line via Stone Lane. The route continues east on the north side of the railway line, crossing the within Ashford Road and continuing within Ashford Road to Newington where it diverts north within grassland to Peene. It will then run along the north side of the main Eurotunnel Terminal (to the south of the Terminal land-holding fenceline – and adjacent to the existing Terminal service/access road) until it reaches the proposed converter station, adjacent to the existing Eurotunnel Main Intake Substation. The underground HVDC cable element of the scheme runs east from the converter station, within made ground, to the Eurotunnel portal.

The majority of the cable route will be located within the Shepway District Council area with a short section within of the Ashford District Council area.

2.3.5 Sellindge

Sellindge 400kV Substation is located within Ashford Borough Council, immediately south of the M20 approximately halfway between Junction 10 and 11.

2.3.6 Temporary Compound Locations

There is likely to be a small number of construction site compounds to facilitate the works. Likely locations include:

- Folkestone converter station on Eurotunnel property (LOT1 and LOT2);
- Sellindge substation; and
- Two or three locations along the cable route, to be agreed with local landowners.

The majority of the temporary compound areas will be located within the administrative boundaries of Ashford and Shepway Councils.

2.3.7 'The Project'

For the purposes of this HRA 'the Project' is taken to mean:

- The new HVDC converter station located next to Eurotunnel's Main Intake Substation as described above;
- The new HVDC underground cable between the HVDC converter station and the entrance to the Channel Tunnel;

- The new 400kV AC underground cable of approximately 14.5km, which will be installed below ground between Sellindge 400kV Substation and the HVDC converter station, as described above; and
- All temporary construction compounds.

2.3.8 The Zone of Influence

Projects have the potential to impact on European sites beyond the confines of the individual sites themselves. Guidance on Ecological Impact Assessment (Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2006) states that potential effects should be investigated which occur within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) that arises during the whole lifespan of the proposed project or plan. The potential Zone of Influence is defined as:

- Areas directly within the land take for the proposed development;
- Areas which will be temporarily affected;
- Areas likely to be impacted by hydrological disruption; and
- Areas where there is a risk of pollution and disturbance (e.g. noise).

The Zoi therefore includes:

- The footprint of the Project; and
- A geographic area within 200m of the Project site where there is a potential risk of pollution and disturbance; and
- A geographic area within two kilometres of the Project site where there is a potential risk of in combination effects.

2.3.9 European Sites

Distances between the Project infrastructure footprint and European sites up to a two kilometre threshold are given in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: European Sites within Two Kilometres of the Project

Site Name	Designated	Project Component	Approximate Minimum Distance (km)	European Site extent (ha) within 200m (% of total extent)
Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment	SAC	New HVDC Cable Route	0.075	<3.2 (1.7)
Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment	SAC	New Converter Station	0.048	5.8 (3.1)
Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment	SAC	New 400kV AC Cable Route	0.035	<15.6 (8.3)

2.4 Step 3: Characteristics of the European Site(s)

The relevant Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms and conservation objectives can be found in Appendix B.

2.4.1 Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC

The Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC is designated for:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites). It is defined as a 'priority' habitats under the Habitats Directive (i.e. "in danger of disappearing") and the site is considered to be of 'good value'*;
- Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is not a primary reason for the selection of this site (non-significant presence).

* Global assessment of the value of the site for conservation of the habitats and species concerned on a scale in descending order of 'excellent value' – 'good value' – 'significant value' (European Commission, 1999).

With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated the conservation objectives are to avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features;

- Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:
- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Intensification of livestock grazing by improving the grassland is threatening the condition of the European Site (Appendix B). The condition assessments for the units of the component Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 200m of the Project are given in Table 2.3. SSSI units in Unfavourable condition (as defined in Natural England, 2014) are more likely to be vulnerable to any potential effects from the Project.

Table 2.3: Condition Assessment of Component SSSI Units within Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC and ZOI

SSSI Unit	Condition Assessment*	SSSI unit extent (ha) within 200m of HVDC cable route (% of total extent)	SSSI unit extent (ha) within 200m of converter station (% of total extent)	SSSI unit extent (ha) within 200m of 400kV AC cable route (% of total extent)
5	Favourable	0.8 (5)	5.7 (36)	9.7 (61)
6	Unfavourable Recovering	1.8 (23.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
7	Favourable	6.4 (18)	0 (0)	0 (0)
10	Unfavourable No Change	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.9 (37)
11	Favourable	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.2 (5)
12	Unfavourable Recovering	0 (0)	0.1 (1)	3.8 (51)

*As defined in Natural England, 2014.

Within the ZOI the HVDC cable route will be located within the existing Eurotunnel site and the 400kV AC cable route will be located within an area of existing made-ground over previously graduating escarpment related to the Eurotunnel construction starting in 1989. Made ground comprised sands and topsoil, planted with native scrub, trees and hydrosprayed with grasses that have been regularly maintained as such since establishment. This establishes a buffer zone between the Eurotunnel built environment, the Project and the European site. The 400kV AC cable route will be located primarily within the regularly maintained grassland area. The working width for the 400kV AC cable route is likely to be 20m and therefore works are likely to take place within 15m of the European site (at the closest point (to the north of the converter station)).

2.4.2 Identification of potential effects

2.4.2.1 Potential Effects

Potential effects, alone or in combination, upon the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC have been considered for construction and operational phases of the Project. Decommissioning has not been considered as there is sufficient uncertainty with regards to whether the Project infrastructure would be decommissioned at any time in the future. Such a plan would be subjected to a Habitats Regulations Assessment, taking into account the baseline conditions at such a time in the future that may differ markedly from the current baseline condition.

A review of the ecological requirements of the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC qualifying features was undertaken using pertinent literature (Calaciura & Spinelli, 2008). The Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC qualifying features are sensitive to:

- Unregulated grazing;
- Abandonment and succession to woodland;
- Weed invasion;
- Agricultural improvement;
- Land use change;
- Airborne nitrogen deposition;
- Development resulting in loss of extent, fragmentation, isolation, soil erosion and compaction;
- Recreational pressure and inappropriate recreational use;
- Invasive non-native plants;
- Fire; and
- Climate change.

The Project is located outside of the European site boundary and downstream of surface water flow from hydrological features connecting the Project with the European Site. Therefore development activities resulting in loss of extent, fragmentation, isolation, soil erosion and compaction are not reasonably foreseeable. It is assumed that all temporary construction areas will be located outside of the European

Site. Potential effects relevant to the Project are summarised in Table 2.4 and pathways identified below in Section 2.4.2.2.

Table 2.4: Potential Effects of Construction and Operation on Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC

Potential Effect	HVDC Cable Route & HVDC Converter Station		400kv AC Cable Route	
	Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
Invasive non-native plants	X	N/A	X	N/A
Airborne nitrogen deposition	X	N/A	X	N/A

2.4.2.2 Potential Impact Pathways

Construction of the Project will require soil excavation and vehicle/generator use that are likely to generate short-term airborne emissions likely to contain nitrogen, e.g. dust, in close proximity to the European site resulting in nitrogen deposition within the European site.

Biological material likely to give rise to the colonisation of invasive non-native plant species may be accidentally imported to the Project site on contaminated vehicles/plant, temporary structures or materials. There are three previous species records for species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), within one kilometre. These include Himalayan Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster simonsii* (near/on Castle Hill), Indian Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* at Newington and Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* near to Crete Road West, above Folkestone Water Treatment Works (WTW). No invasive non-native species are known to exist within or immediately adjacent to the Project footprint.

2.4.2.3 Plans and projects which might act in combination

Current and proposed plans or projects which might act in combination with the Project have been identified:

- On the basis that “planning permission (or any other relevant regulatory consent) has been applied for or granted but not yet implemented or completed” (Defra, 2013) and;
- Where there is credible evidence that there is a real risk rather than a hypothetical risk of a potential effect (Peter Charles Boggis and Easton Bavants Conservation v Natural England and Waveney District Council, High Court of Justice Court of Appeal case C1/2009/0041/QBACF Citation No [2009] EWCA Civ. 1061 20th October 2009).

No planning permissions within the last five years are considered likely to act in combination with the Project (Ashford Borough Council, 2014; Shepway District Council, 2014).

The Shepway Core Strategy is unlikely to lead to significant effects on Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC and the nitrogen deposition critical load for calcareous grassland is likely to be below the 2011 baseline (URS/Scott Wilson, 2012).

The following plans have also been considered:

- Kent Minerals & Waste Development Framework;
- Dover District Council Core Strategy;
- Kent Local Transport Plan (LTP3) - to promote sustainable transport initiatives and safety/congestion reduction initiatives; and
- The Expansion of the Port of Dover plans.

In combination effects are not reasonably foreseeable from the above plans because there is no current evidence that any of the plans are likely to result in an increase in nitrogen deposition alone or in combination that approach the critical threshold for calcareous grasslands.

2.4.3 Step 4: Assessment of Significance

Increased nitrogen availability caused by atmospheric deposition is considered to have a major effect on European calcareous grasslands (Calaciura & Spinelli, 2008). The construction of the Project is likely to involve activities that have the potential to increase nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition. The construction phase of the Project will be conducted over a relatively short period of time between 2014 and 2016 and is therefore not reasonably foreseeable to result in a likely significant effect on the European site alone or in combination. The emissions from construction are in relative terms likely to be small compared to the long term emissions from existing Eurotunnel operations. Construction will be undertaken using national construction best practice and a dust management plan detailing a timetable of dust generating activities and relevant dust control measures e.g. use of portable generation to be minimised.

Measures will be in place to minimise the risk of introducing invasive non-native species during construction including:

- All vehicles, plant, temporary buildings/welfare units, track and fencing brought on site will be cleaned prior to arrival on site to ensure they are free from soil, plant material, general rubbish;
- Temporary fencing and signage delineating the construction site from the European site or the area between the construction site and the European site;
- Materials, for example topsoil, will be removed, stored and reused in order to minimise the importation of materials on to site. If stored during the summer this should be for a maximum period of three weeks in order to preserve the seed bank and minimise any post construction habitat reinstatement works; and
- If materials are imported on to the Project site such as aggregates these must be certified by the supplier as sterile.

Monitoring of the cable route within 200m of the European site will be undertaken 1, 3, and 5 years after construction to ensure it is free from invasive non-native plant species. If invasive non-native plant species are recorded then Natural England will be informed and a remediation action plan will be produced and actioned. With the above measures in place, likely significant effect on the European site from the introduction of invasive non-native plant species is not reasonably foreseeable.

Great crested newt is present within the European site but in non-significant numbers, therefore likely significant effects are not possible.

It should be noted that this assessment has been undertaken at an early stage in the construction programme development and therefore some aspects such as the location of cable route temporary compounds have not been defined. It is recommended that the cable route temporary compound areas are located as far away from the European site as is practicably possible. The cable route working corridor should be constrained within the first 500m of the route at the eastern end (and at a small section at c.870m) as this is where the route passes within 100m of the European site. This HRA should be reviewed when the location of cable route temporary compounds and the extent of the working corridor are known.

3 Stage 1 Outcomes

3.1 Screening Matrix

Table 3.1: Screening Matrix

Site name	Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment
Designation	SAC
Qualifying features	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies... (important orchid sites).
Conservation objectives	Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features. Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore: The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely; The populations of qualifying species; and The distribution of qualifying species within the site.
Condition assessment	Unfavourable No change to Favourable
Site vulnerability	Intensification of livestock grazing by improving the grassland is a threat which is currently managed by entering into management agreements with the owner.
Potential effects:	
HDVC cable route	No likely significant effect: The European site is not currently vulnerable to development activities and the Project is located beyond the European site boundary. The Project is likely to involve activities for which the European site is sensitive, i.e. activities that have the potential to increase nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition and activities that could introduce invasive non-native species. The potential for increased nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition will be limited (short-term) to the construction phase of the Project. Proposed mitigation will include the implementation of a dust management plan and measures to minimise the risk of the introduction of invasive non-native species.
HDVC converter station	No likely significant effect: The European site is not currently vulnerable to development activities and the Project is located beyond the European site boundary. The Project is likely to involve activities for which the European site is sensitive to, i.e. activities that have the potential to increase nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition and activities that could introduce invasive non-native species. The potential for increased nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition will be limited (short-term) to the construction phase of the Project. Proposed mitigation will include the implementation of a dust management plan and measures to minimise the risk of the introduction of invasive non-native species.
400kV AC cable route	No likely significant effect: The European site is not currently vulnerable to development activities and the Project is located beyond the European site boundary. The Project is likely to involve activities for which the European site is sensitive to, i.e. activities that have the potential to increase nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition and activities that could introduce invasive non-native species. The potential for increased nitrogen availability by atmospheric deposition will be limited (short-term) to the construction phase of the Project. Proposed mitigation will include the implementation of a dust management plan and measures to minimise the risk of the introduction of invasive non-native species.

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Appendix A. Drawings

A.1 Proposed Scheme and Location of European Sites

Appendix B. Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms

NATURA 2000

STANDARD DATA FORM

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)
FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)
AND
FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

1. Site identification:

1.1 Type 1.2 Site code

1.3 Compilation date 1.4 Update

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	199601
date confirmed as SCI	200412
date site classified as SPA	
date site designated as SAC	200504

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
01 07 06 E	51 06 22 N

2.2 Site area (ha) 2.3 Site length (km)

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK57	Kent	100.00%

2.6 Biogeographic region

☐
Alpine

☒
Atlantic

☐
Boreal

☐
Continental

☐
Macaronesia

☐
Mediterranean

3. Ecological information:

3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)	66	B	C	A	B

3.2 Annex II species

Species name	Population				Site assessment			
	Resident	Migratory			Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Present	Breed	Winter	Stage	D			
		-	-	-				

4. Site description

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	10.0
Dry grassland. Steppes	70.0
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	10.0
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	10.0
Coniferous woodland	
Evergreen woodland	
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Scree. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	
Total habitat cover	100%

4.1 Other site characteristics

Soil & geology:

Basic, Clay

Geomorphology & landscape:

Escarpment, Lowland, Slope

4.2 Quality and importance

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*)

- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.
- which is considered to be the priority sub-type: "important orchid sites".

4.3 Vulnerability

Intensification of livestock grazing by improving the grassland is a threat which is currently managed by entering into management agreements with the owner. Both English Nature and Countryside Stewardship agreements exist on the site.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	100.0

European Site Conservation Objectives for Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment Special Area of Conservation Site code: UK0012835

With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)*

* denotes a priority natural habitat or species (supporting explanatory text on following page)

*** Priority natural habitats or species**

Some of the natural habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and for which SACs have been selected are considered to be particular priorities for conservation at a European scale and are subject to special provisions in the Directive and the Habitats Regulations. These priority natural habitats and species are denoted by an asterisk (*) in Annex I and II of the Directive. The term 'priority' is also used in other contexts, for example with reference to particular habitats or species that are prioritised in UK Biodiversity Action Plans. It is important to note however that these are not necessarily the priority natural habitats or species within the meaning of the Habitats Directive or the Habitats Regulations.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each habitat or species of a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for those features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.