



Overview - Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State	
Project name:	Richborough Connection Project
Address/Location:	Between Canterbury and Richborough, Kent
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN020017
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 03/11/14 following the applicant’s request for a scoping opinion Second screening – 15/03/16 following submission of the application documents
EEA States identified for notification:	First screening: None identified Second screening: None identified Note: see notes in screening decision box below

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	Richborough Connection Project Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (July 2014) ('the Scoping Report') Documents on the Nemo Link website www.nemo-link.com supporting the UK Marine and Onshore applications and supporting the French and Belgian Marine applications.
Date	03 November 2014
Screening Criteria:	Secretary of State Comments:
Characteristics of the Development	<p>The proposals comprise a 400kV overhead line between an existing substation at Canterbury and a proposed and permitted new substation at Richborough.</p> <p>The elements included in the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a 400kV line approximately 19.6km in length (precise route is yet to be determined), • Removal of an existing 132kV overhead line between UK Power Networks Canterbury South and Richborough substation, • Localised diversions of an existing 132kV line where the new 400kV crosses, • Associated works including access roads, construction compounds, protective scaffolds, highway works, work sites and ancillary works. <p>The proposals are to be split into four sections for the purpose of EIA; Stour Valley, Sarre Penn Valley, Chislet Marshes, and Ash Level.</p> <p>The overhead line is anticipated to be supported by suspension pylons of either steel lattice or T-pylons design, or a combination of both. Tension pylons and terminal pylons will be constructed where the line changes direction and where the line connects to the substations. The Scoping Report indicates that the standard height for the suspension pylons is 46.5m (lattice) and 34.5 (T-pylon), with a base footprint of approximately 7.5x7.5m for the lattice and 2m diameter for the T-pylon design. The approximate span length between pylons is given</p>

	<p>as 360m in the Scoping Report.</p> <p>The draft route for the overhead line is described in the Scoping Report and shown on a series of figures. The route makes a number of crossings of the River Stour as well as railway lines and local roads. Much of the draft route follows the route of the existing 132kV line which is proposed to be removed.</p> <p>The current proposal anticipates that construction works would commence shortly after the DCO is granted, which is anticipated to be Spring 2017. Construction is expected to be 18 months in duration. The line will be maintained and refurbished during its lifespan, expected to be approximately 80 years, after which decommissioning will follow.</p> <p>The proposals will use construction materials, in particular concrete, steel and timber. Environmental effects are likely to arise on the surrounding landscape, hydrological and ecological features, as well on cultural heritage, surrounding transport routes and local communities.</p> <p>The Richborough Connection will be linked to a high voltage interconnector proposed to make landfall at Richborough linking the UK and Belgium, known as the Nemo Link. A converter station and substation are consented at Richborough to connect the interconnector to the UK network. These works do not form part of the Richborough Connection.</p>
<p>Geographical area</p>	<p>The proposals will not extend into any area of another EEA State. The Scoping Report describes how the required substation and converter station at Richborough, which would connect to the Nemo Link, are not part of the Richborough Connection Project.</p>
<p>Location of Development (including existing use)</p>	<p>The proposals are located within the county of Kent. Figures provided with the Scoping Report show the draft route and the anticipated development area.</p> <p>Leaving the built area of Canterbury, the Stour Valley section of the development area contains steep valley sides along the River Stour surrounded by marshy land and includes some areas of woodland and the settlements of Broad Oak and Sturry. The Sarre Penn Valley section is gradually sloping or flat arable land with some hedgerows, shelterbelts and woodland areas associated with the Sarre Penn and other smaller watercourses. The Chislet Marshes section is typified by open hill slopes with small regular arable fields separated by a network of drainage ditches, dykes and flood control banks. The Ash Levels section comprises reclaimed marshlands with a flat landscape used largely for arable production.</p> <p>The development area is not within any internationally designated areas. A number of European Sites lie near to the development area: Stodmarsh Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar 0.4km to the</p>

	<p>south (at the closest point); Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA/SAC/Ramsar 0.4km to the east; The Swale SPA and Ramsar site 7km to the north. These sites are designated for the bird populations and habitats they support, and are wetlands of international importance.</p> <p>Canterbury World Heritage Site lies approximately 1km west of the western end of the proposals. The connection of the proposals at Richborough is approximately 1.25km from the Kent coast at Pegwell Bay leading out to the Strait of Dover.</p>
<p>Cumulative impacts</p>	<p>The Scoping Report identifies other major projects within the vicinity and how cumulative effects will be investigated in section 4.3. A scope for the cumulative assessment is described to include projects under construction, consented, submitted applications, and other planned schemes which are reasonably foreseeable (more detail is provided in the Scoping Report). A list of known projects at the time of writing is provided in section 4.3.7. From the projects listed, these are located at either end of the overhead line in the Canterbury area and in the Richborough/ Sandwich areas.</p> <p>The Scoping Report does not list the Nemo Link interconnector, or works at the Richborough Power Station site to provide a converter station and a National Grid substation (which it states have been granted outline planning consent in chapter 2.1.2) as projects to be considered as part of the assessment of cumulative effects.</p> <p>In the opinion of the Secretary of State it is likely that the works at the Power Station site could result in cumulative impacts with the Richborough Connection. In terms of transboundary effects which result from cumulative impacts these have not been identified in the Scoping Report. The documents supporting the Nemo Link conclude no significant effects on the marine European sites assessed, and the Belgian assessment provides a brief assessment which eliminates transboundary effects. The Secretary of State considers that it is not likely that the main impacts of the Nemo Link and the Richborough Connection could combine, given the fundamental difference in the nature of these projects (one a marine cable, the other a terrestrial overhead line) and therefore in their impacts and likely receptors.</p>
<p>Carrier</p>	<p>Given the location of the project the most likely carrier of transboundary effects is via impacts to bird populations associated with the European Sites near to the development area, should those bird populations be also associated with designated sites belonging to other EEA states.</p>
<p>Environmental Importance</p>	<p>The environment within or near the proposed development site is described above. Aside from the European sites identified above, the Scoping Report does not identify any others belonging to other EEA states. The Scoping Report identifies potential disturbance and/or displacement effects to</p>

	<p>overwintering birds within the proposals alignment during construction. Collision risk and displacement (due to barrier effects) have been identified as potential impacts during operation. Bird species noted in the Scoping Report as potentially affected are golden plover, hen harrier, gadwall, and bittern. No direct impacts to the European sites are identified. The Scoping Report does not provide a consideration of whether these impacts could lead to transboundary effects.</p> <p>Canterbury WHS is of international cultural heritage importance and may be affected by the proposals in terms of its setting and views. Again, transboundary effects are not considered in the Scoping Report. The Secretary of State is of the opinion that no evidence exists to suggest likely significant transboundary effects at this stage.</p>
Extent	<p>The applicant has considered the 'zone of influence' with respect to internationally designated sites to be up to 10km from the route corridor study for the proposals (Scoping Report section 7.3.1). The evidence available at this stage suggests that effects will be limited to the UK European sites identified, given the zone of influence applied. It is not clearly stated in the Scoping Report why this distance was chosen, for example if based on expected bird travelling distances.</p> <p>Bird surveys have been carried out between 2012 and 2014 to inform the Scoping Report; including wintering bird walkover surveys, winter flight line surveys, vantage point surveys and nocturnal wintering bird walkover survey. The surveys have focussed on bird presence and bird movements around and between Stodmarsh and the Ash Levels (inland from Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA).</p>
Magnitude	<p>The Scoping Report gives peak counts for some bird species noted as designating interests of the European sites but does not go into detailed interpretation of the survey findings. Lapwing are noted as the most common wader species recorded during surveys, with peak counts of several hundred during the flight line surveys and concentrations of up to 1,000 birds across the study area during the walkover surveys. Golden plover are also noted with peak counts of 1,600 birds approximately 1.5km to the north of the alignment and 20 birds flying to and from roost sites between Stodmarsh SPA and West Stourmouth. Marsh harrier is stated as the most abundant bird of prey recorded, with a peak count of 15 within the study area. Small flocks of golden plover were recorded in the Ash Level by the surveys. The Scoping Report does not provide detailed survey results, and does not make an assessment of the numbers of birds affected in the context of the European sites.</p>
Probability	<p>The Scoping report does not make an assessment of the probability of impacts occurring. At this stage no impacts which would be likely to affect another EEA state have been identified.</p>

<p>Duration</p>	<p>Detailed construction phasing is not provided in the Scoping Report, however, the Secretary of State recognises that disturbance and/or displacement effects to overwintering birds during construction would be temporary and likely to be relatively short-term. The Scoping Report does not provide detail on project phasing, but indicates that some areas may be reinstated before the end of construction.</p> <p>Collision risk and displacement (due to barrier effects) would be permanent during the operational life of the overhead line.</p> <p>None of the potential impacts described in the Scoping Report have been identified as likely to affect another EEA State.</p>
<p>Frequency</p>	<p>The Scoping Report states that some specific activities are likely to be intermittent (for example piling or excavation of pylon foundations). Given the information available at this stage however, it is reasonable to anticipate continuous general construction activity and therefore potentially continuous disturbance/displacement effects. Once constructed, collision risk effects and displacement from barrier effects would be continuous.</p> <p>At this stage these impacts have not been identified as likely to affect another EEA State.</p>
<p>Reversibility</p>	<p>Displacement resulting from barrier effects of the line being in place will be reversible on decommissioning, as would effects from collision risk, however they would remain in place over a relatively long period of time (80 years, the lifespan of the proposals).</p> <p>Niether of these impacts have been identified as likely to affect another EEA State.</p>

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Secretary of State is of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

Action:

No further action required at this stage. The project will connect with the proposed Nemo Link interconnector between the UK and Belgium. While the Richborough Connection Project on its own has been screened at this stage as not being likely to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State, it is recognised that the interconnector is subject to a separate consenting process and that the assessment of cumulative effects will need to be undertaken in this regard.

Date: 03/11/2014

Note: The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

SECOND TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Documents used for transboundary Screening:	Environmental Statement (January 2016) No Significant Effects Report (Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening) (January 2016)
Date	Re-screened on 15 March 2016, following receipt of the application documents

Transboundary re-screening undertaken by the Secretary of State

Following **submission of the DCO application which included the Environmental Statement and the applicant's No Significant Effects report** the Secretary of State has reconsidered the transboundary screening decision undertaken on **3 November 2014**.

The Secretary of State considers that no new matters, outside of those identified in the previous transboundary screening decision, have been identified and therefore the Secretary of State has reached the same conclusion as in the previous screening decision dated **3 November 2014**.

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the applicant, there is not a change to the previous conclusion, and the Secretary of State remains of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the applicant.

Action:

No further action required at this stage

Date: 15 March 2016

Note: The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process

Note:

1. The Secretary of State's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in Annex 4 to the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12, available on our website at <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>