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GridLink Interconnector

Planning, Design and Access Statement

GridLink Interconnector Limited

October 2020

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
0	04-05-20	Draft	SH	Steve Harding	Associate
1	19-06-20	For client issue	SH	Steve Harding	Associate
2	30-06-20	For issue (draft submission)	SH	Steve Harding	Associate
3	26-10-20	For issue (final submission)	SH	Steve Harding	Associate

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 GridLink Interconnector Limited (the Applicant) is seeking outline planning permission for the construction, operation and maintenance of a converter station, maintenance building, car parking, landscaping, HVDC cables from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs and associated infrastructure works (the Proposed Development) on the former Kingsnorth Power Station, Eschol Road, on the Hoo Peninsula. The application site (the Site) is located entirely within the administrative area of Medway Council.

1.1.2 The Proposed Development forms part of the GridLink Interconnector Project (hereafter referred to as 'GridLink'). GridLink is a 1.4 Gigawatt (GW) electricity interconnector between the UK and France. In the UK, GridLink will comprise 108 kilometres (km) of submarine High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cable, less than 100 metres (m) of underground HVDC cable, a converter station and 1.5 km of underground High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cable from the converter station to the existing National Grid Kingsnorth substation.

1.1.3 The Proposed Development comprises the converter station building(s), outdoor equipment, internal roads, car parking and associated landscaping, and underground HVDC cable from the converter station to Mean High Water Springs (installed by Horizontal Directional Drilling). The submarine HVDC cable below Mean High Water Springs is subject to a Marine Licence granted by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), therefore it is not included in the Proposed Development. In addition, the underground HVAC cable that will link the converter station to the National Grid Kingsnorth substation is considered to be permitted development and, therefore, it does not form part of the Proposed Development.

1.1.4 The interconnector will enable the UK and France to share electricity, so that any surpluses in power generation can be exported to each other and unexpected interruptions to the national grids can be mitigated to ensure security of supply. This is particularly important as the amount of renewable energy supply to the networks increases, because it is more variable and unpredictable due to weather conditions. To encourage renewable energy, GridLink provides a way to fully utilise high production from renewable sources of electricity and also a means of compensating for periods of low production. The efficient use of renewable energy and security of supply means that both the UK and France will realise environmental and economic benefits from the interconnector.

1.1.5 The European Commission has awarded GridLink the status of Project of Common Interest (PCI). This recognises the project's key contribution to realising Europe-wide goals related to energy policy and climate change. As a PCI, GridLink has been successful in securing a development funding grant of up to €15.2 million from the Connecting Europe Facility, a European funding initiative developed to direct investment into strategic infrastructure projects.

1.1.6 In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the Union list of projects of common interest (known as the 'TEN-E Regulation'), each country connected by GridLink has nominated a National Competent Authority (NCA) responsible for overseeing the implementation of PCIs. The UK NCA for GridLink is delegated by Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

1.2 The Planning Application

1.2.1 Outline planning permission is sought for the Proposed Development within the parameters set out in this Planning Design and Access Statement (PDAS) and supporting plans. The matters set out below are proposed to be reserved for consideration as part of subsequent reserved matter applications to Medway Council:

- Access – access arrangements to the site for construction and operation (if any changes from the outline planning application).
- Appearance – elevations, building materials, scheme for external lighting and visual representations of the Proposed Development.
- Landscaping – landscaping plan for the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the Site and surrounding area.
- Layout – floor plans of the components of the Proposed Development within the Site.
- Scale – final dimensions of buildings within the Site.

1.2.2 The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Decision Notice from Medway Council (Ref MC/20/0031) has confirmed that under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations), the Proposed Development is not subject to further Environmental Impact Assessment. The Proposed Development is not determined to be 'EIA development' under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, on the basis of it being unlikely to result in significant impacts on the environment and the impacts that may arise can be identified and addressed by the submission of appropriate supporting documents.

1.2.3 The following environmental reports that have been identified as being required following a review of Medway Council's validation checklist are included within this outline planning application:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Transport Statement;
- Ecology Report:
  i. Volume 1 - Ecological Impact Assessment;
  ii. Volume 2 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment;
  iii. Volume 3 - Wintering Bird Report;
  iv. Volume 4 - Breeding Bird Report;
- Surface Water Drainage Strategy;
- Noise Assessment;
- Air Quality Impact Assessment;
- Heritage Statement; and
- Preliminary Geo-Environmental and Geotechnical Risk Assessment.

1.2.4 The following application plans are included within this outline planning application:

- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0001 – Site Location Plan (A3 and A1);
- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0002 – Outline Layout (A3);
- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0003 – Parameter Plan (A3 and A0);

- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0004 – Outline Layout – Proposed AC Cable Route (A3);
- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-BD-0001 – 3D Block Diagram (facing north without parameters shown) (A3);
- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-BD-0002 – 3D Block Diagram (facing north with parameters shown) (A3);
- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-BD-0003 – 3D Block Diagram (facing south without parameters shown) (A3); and
- Drawing 60557465-ZZ-BD-0004 – 3D Block Diagram (facing south with parameters shown) (A3).

1.2.5 The Applicant is a licence holder under Section 6(1)(e) of the Electricity Act 1989, therefore certain permitted development rights are granted as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO). While the converter station is subject to planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the associated underground High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cables linking the Proposed Development to the National Grid 400 kV substation at the former Kingsnorth Power station are considered permitted development under the GPDO. These HVAC cables are illustrated in Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0004 – Outline Layout – Proposed AC Cable Route. The route of the underground HVAC cables is wholly within the former Kingsnorth Power Station site which is the property of Uniper UK Ltd. No permitted development rights are being sought in relation to other private property.

1.2.6 An explanation of the Applicant's permitted development rights is provided in Appendix C.

1.3 Purpose and Structure of this PDAS

1.3.1 This Planning Design and Access Statement (PDAS) has been prepared in support of the outline planning application described in this section, putting forward justification as to why the Proposed Development should be granted planning consent in line with the Development Plan and other material considerations. This document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a high-level description of the Site and its surroundings;
- Section 3 outlines the Proposed Development, its design principles and the access to the Site;
- Section 4 sets out the need for the scheme and justification for selection of the Site;
- Section 5 presents an outline of the Development Plan and other material considerations; and
- Section 6 delivers an appraisal of the policy identified in Section 5, under a number of policy themes.

1.3.2 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015[1] (GDPO 2015) and Medway Council's validation checklist, a Design and Access Statement (DAS) is required for major development as defined in article 2 of GPDO 2015. The requirements of a Design and Access Statement are stipulated within The Town and Country Planning (Development

[1] UK Government (2015) The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Available from: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made (Accessed March 2020).

Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015[2], article 9(3) (Applications), which states:

"(3) A design and access statement must—

(a) Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;

(b) Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

(c) Explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;

(d) State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and

(e) Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed."

1.3.3 This PDAS meets the above requirements within Section 3 – the Proposed Development.

[2] UK Government (2015) The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Available from: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made (Accessed March 2020).

2. Site Context

2.1 Location and Characteristics

2.1.1 The Site is located within the former Kingsnorth Power Station on the Hoo Peninsula, ME3 9NQ. The Ordnance Survey grid reference for the Site is TQ 81711 72312. The Site area is 6.2 hectares (ha). Figure 2.1 illustrates the location of the converter station Site within the wider Hoo Peninsula.

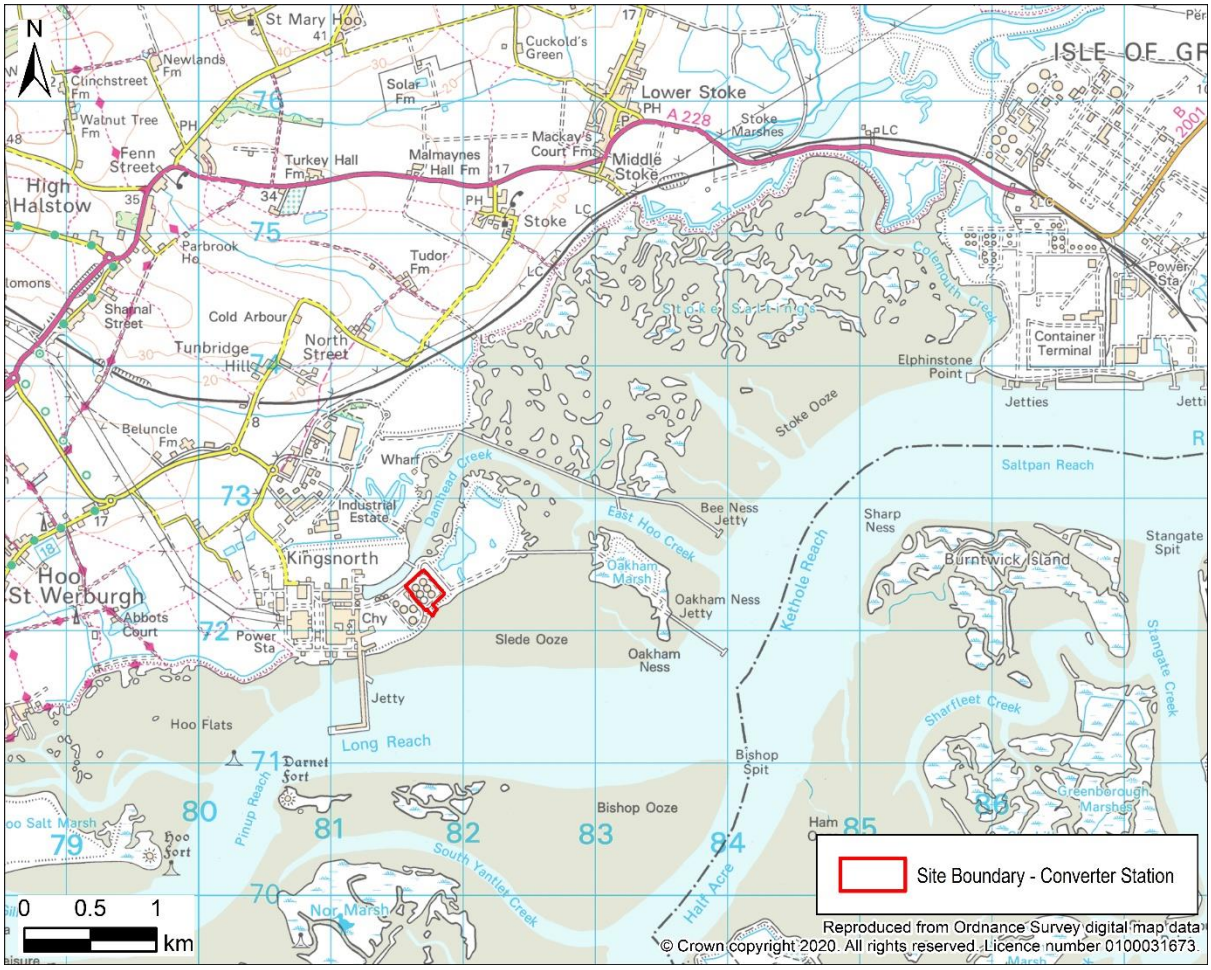

Figure 2-1 Converter station site within the Hoo Peninsula

2.1.2 The Site comprises the main site in which the converter station and associated works are situated. Access roads to the main site are also included within the Site, in order to highlight that access is possible through these roads. The Site boundary extends to the Mean High Water Springs to allow for the route of the HVDC cables. The Mean High Water Springs represents the point at which the cable route leaves the jurisdiction of Medway Council. The Site Location Plan is provided in Figure 2.2.

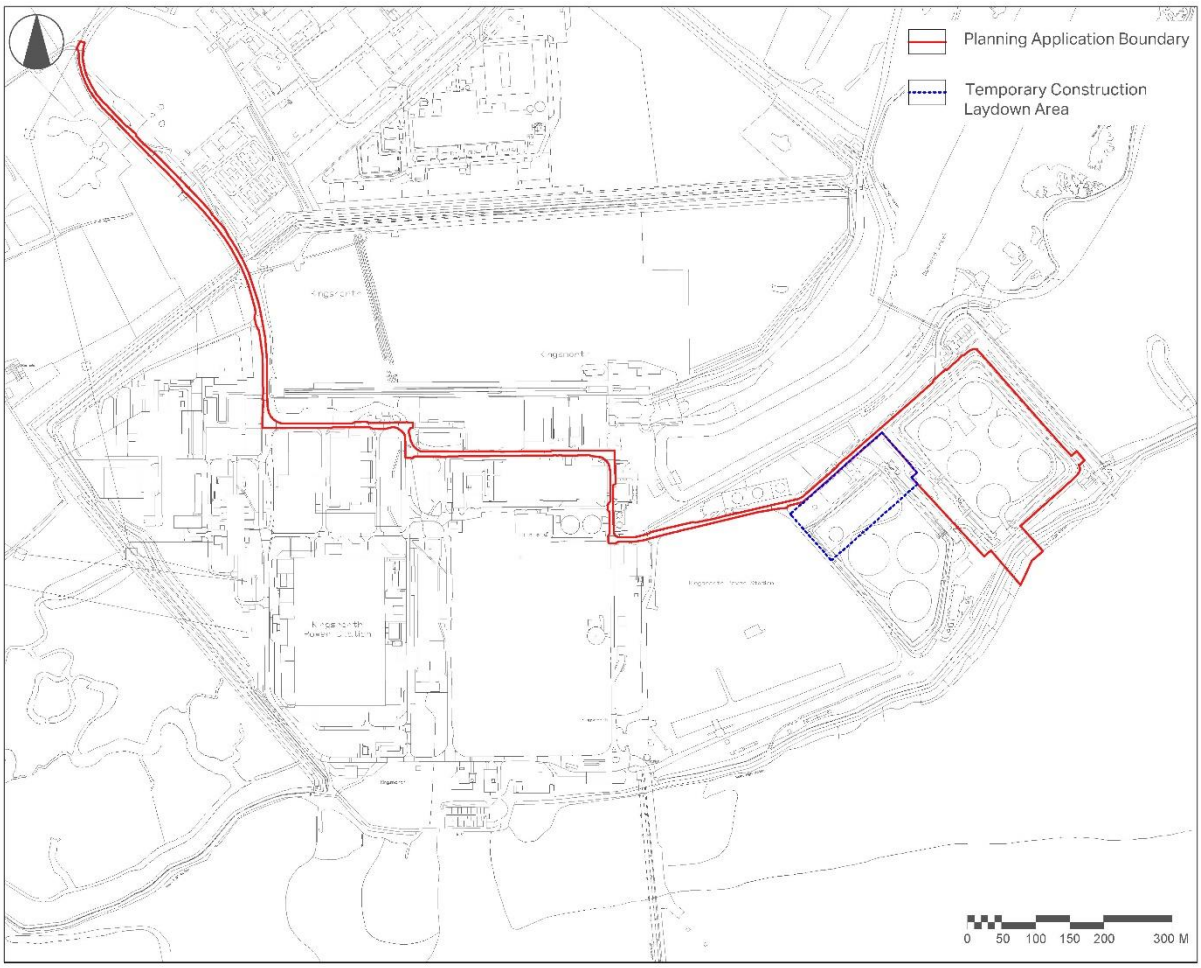

Figure 2-2 Site Boundary

2.1.3 Photographs 2.1 and 2.2 show the Site in February 2020 and give an overview of the context of the Site, the proposed cable route, and the proposed access.

Photograph 2-1 View of the proposed converter station site (north facing)

Photograph 2-2 View of the access road within the former Kingsnorth Power Station included in the Site (east facing)

2.1.4 The Site is located on a peninsular with Damhead Creek located 50 m to the north and the Medway Estuary to the south. Land and road infrastructure associated with the former Kingsnorth Power Station is located to the west. Damhead Creek natural gas-fired power station is located approximately 300 m to the north of the Site.

2.1.5 The closest residential areas are approximately 2.9 km to the west of the Site at Hoo St Werburgh, together with the town of Gillingham located approximately 4 km to the south. A small number of individual residential properties are present on the edge of the Kingsnorth industrial area, with the nearest property at 1.2 km to the north of the Site.

2.1.6 The Site, and surrounding area, comprises land which was reclaimed from the tidal mudflats of the Medway Estuary using dredged sediments and has a significant history of previous industrial uses.

2.1.7 Photograph 2.3 shows an overhead view of the Site and surrounding areas taken in March 2020.

Photograph 2-3 The demolished Kingsnorth Power Station and surrounding areas, with flood defence seawall and mudflats of the River Medway (west facing)

2.2 Uniper MedwayOne Masterplan

2.2.1 The Site forms part of a masterplan currently in development by the landowner, Uniper, known as the Uniper MedwayOne Masterplan (MedwayOne). This covers approximately 233 ha and comprises previously developed land having been formerly occupied by a coal fired power station that ceased operating in 2013, coal and oil storage facilities and ash lagoons.

2.2.2 The former power station has been decommissioned and demolition works were completed at end of 2018. Uniper is now looking to secure the long-term future of its masterplan site with the submission of a separate flexible outline planning application for its comprehensive redevelopment, comprising a mixture of E(g)(iii), B2, B8 floorspace (including data centre uses), potential waste management and processing uses, including a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), and energy uses. The wider proposals constitute EIA development and the application by Uniper will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES). The outline application is anticipated to be submitted to Medway Council in Winter 2020.

2.2.3 The outline application will comprise a series of parameter plans (informed by the ES) providing flexibility on the overall quantum and distribution of uses across MedwayOne so the proposals are best placed to respond to market demand and need. The accompanying masterplan will demonstrate how those parameters can be interpreted to deliver a high-quality development.

2.2.4 This planning application for the Proposed Development is being progressed entirely separately to any future outline planning application for MedwayOne. However, the Proposed Development and the MedwayOne masterplan have been designed in full cognizance of each other to ensure that the wider proposals do not prejudice GridLink and vice versa. Should GridLink not proceed, MedwayOne will

progress alternative uses for the GridLink site in accordance with the outline planning permission granted to Uniper.

2.2.5 MedwayOne comprises a strategic brownfield site that is uniquely positioned within an already industrialised landscape, with good access to the local and strategic highway network. The wider proposals are compatible with the wider environment, existing and emerging planning policy and provide an excellent opportunity to support planned sustainable growth in Medway and at Hoo St Werburgh, which is also planned to deliver approximately 12,000 new homes.

2.2.6 The principle aims of the MedwayOne masterplan are to:

- Secure the comprehensive redevelopment of a strategic brownfield site;
- Provide flexibility for a range of uses to respond to market demand and need;
- Meet an identified need for industrial, distribution and energy uses;
- Deliver local employment opportunities, supporting sustainable growth in Medway;
- Deliver development that is compatible with its surrounding environment and is sensitive to adjacent ecological designations;
- Incorporate measures that enhances the ecological value of the Site;
- Provide an attractive environment to work; and
- Deliver a high quality and sustainable development location in close proximity to proposed residential expansion.

2.3 Relevant Planning History

2.3.1 One relevant planning application within the Site and surrounding areas was found. This was planning application reference MC/13/2796, for '*Prior Notification of proposed demolition and removal of the main power station buildings including the chimney, four boiler houses and four turbine halls, demolition and removal of the coal processing plant, demolition and removal of the tank farm structures, removal of the structures from Long Reach and Oakham Ness jetties, removal of the plant in the cooling water intake area and demolition and removal of other small ancillary buildings and structures within the sit'*. This application was received in October 2013 and approved in December 2013. The power station was decommissioned, and demolition works were completed at the end of 2018.

2.3.2 Further to the original permission there was an application for discharge of conditions, application reference MC/18/1355, for the installation of visual screening (Heras fence) around the cooling water intake area. This was approved and the screening will be dismantled when no longer required.

3. The Proposed Development

3.1 The Proposed Development

3.1.1 The Proposed Development includes the construction of a converter station, associated balance of plant, maintenance building(s), car parking, landscaping, HVDC cables from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs and associated infrastructure works.

3.1.2 The converter station will convert electricity from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC) and vice versa, depending on the direction of operation of the interconnector. This will be determined by the supply and demand of the electricity networks of the UK and France.

3.1.3 The Proposed Development will not generate any electricity on site.

3.1.4 Two HVDC interconnector cables will be installed underground by horizontal directional drilling (HDD) up to 10 m below ground level. The route of these cables will run from the converter station below the coastal flood defence wall to the Mean High Water Springs, at which point it leaves the boundary of Medway Council.

3.2 Design Principles

3.2.1 The design of the Proposed Development has been informed by the context of its immediate and surrounding environment. It has also been informed by Medway Council's design standards and relevant local and national planning policy.

3.2.2 The matters of the layout, scale and appearance of the Proposed Development are subject to the detailed designs of the Engineering, Procurement and Construction Contractor (EPC Contractor). Provisional details regarding these elements of the design are provided for information (not approval) below.

Layout

3.2.3 Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0002 – Outline Layout illustrates the likely layout of the Proposed Development, including the converter station buildings, underground cables and associated landscaping.

3.2.4 Within the Site, the building massing is expected to be in the centre and north in order to enable a tract of hard and soft landscaping around the western and southern parts of the Site. This would provide the opportunity to soften and screen the building massing with native new planting in relation to the River Medway and the more sensitive landscape and views to the south of the Site, as opposed to the more industrial nature of the land to the north of the Site. Detailed landscaping plans will be submitted as a reserved matter following outline planning permission.

Scale

3.2.5 Maximum heights of the Proposed Development are stipulated on Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0003 – Parameter Plan. This plan shows the maximum scale of the Proposed Development. The converter station as illustrated on this plan has a maximum height of 25 metres and a continuous roof profile, although in reality, it is likely the height of the building and its roof profile would be varied in order to reduce massing of the development. The detail on the exact building height and form will be submitted as a reserved matter following outline planning permission.

3.2.6 An indicative illustration of the converter station is presented in Figure 3.1. Drawing 60557467-ZZ-BD-0001, Drawing 60557467-ZZ-BD-0002, Drawing 60557467-ZZ-

BD-0003 and Drawing 60557467-ZZ-BD-0004 also provide indicative 3D visualisations of the building massing.

Figure 3-1 Indicative 3D Visualisation of the Proposed Converter Station Buildings (extract taken from Drawing 60557465-ZZ-BD-0001)

3.2.7 Table 3.1 describes the different components of the Proposed Development.

Building Form and Appearance

3.2.8 The design of the converter station will ensure that it is consistent with other developments in the area, in keeping with the local character.

3.2.9 The Proposed Development will consist of a range of electrical equipment as described in Table 3.1; these would mostly be enclosed within the main converter station building, thereby screening the equipment. The industrial nature of the surrounding areas means there are already large-scale buildings surrounding the Site.

3.2.10 The design and finish of the converter station will ensure that the Proposed Development appears simplistic and coherent without unduly drawing attention to the architectural form. The façade design will be consistent with the wider context and read cohesively as part of one development. The detailed designs of all buildings will be submitted as a reserved matter following outline planning permission.

3.2.11 Ongoing liaison with the landowners of the Site, Uniper, with regards to emerging design principles within the Uniper MedwayOne Masterplan will inform how the detailed design of the Proposed Development incorporates the wider site context.

Table 3-1 Components of the Proposed Development

Component	Description
Converter Station Building	A building that contains the main electrical equipment, which will be subdivided into the following areas: ▪ **DC Hall** Contains the termination of the underground HVDC cables, and HVDC switchgear used to connect these to the power electronics. ▪ **Valve Hall** Contains high voltage power electronics equipment that converts electricity from DC to AC and vice-versa. It also contains specialist equipment to control the environmental conditions within the building. ▪ **Reactor Hall** Contains three air cored reactors that are cylindrical in appearance and are placed on steel structures.
Interface Transformers	An interface point between the Reactor Hall and AC Yard, located outdoors. The transformers change the voltage level to/from 525 kV used for the transmission of electricity through the submarine cable and 400 kV which is used by National Grid. There will be three single phase transformers in use at any one time with a spare transformer located on site in reserve. Each transformer will be positioned within a reinforced concrete secondary containment bund connected to an underground tank of sufficient capacity in case of any release of transformer oil.
AC Yard	An outdoor area containing the electrical equipment required to protect the converter station in the event of a fault and to enable switching, isolation and earthing for maintenance.
Cooling fans	External fans located outside of the valve hall, used to disperse heat from the valve cooling system.
Control Building	A building that contains the control room, AC and DC electrical plant, DC converter module cooling plant, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (‘HVA/C’), batteries, auxiliary power supplies, communication systems and an interface with National Grid, as well as designated rooms for offices, meeting room, kitchen, shower room and toilets. The control room will contain all the computers, servers and electronics required to operate, monitor, control and protect the converter station and overall interconnector system.
Maintenance Building	A building that contains spare parts, materials and equipment, and provides workspaces for minor maintenance and equipment repair.
Backup Generator	A packaged backup diesel generator to enable the safe start-up or shutdown of the converter station and running of critical systems if mains electricity supply is not available. A bunded fuel storage tank sized for 72 hours of continuous operation will be provided for the backup diesel generator.
Horizontal Direct Drilling (HDD) Entry/Exit Pit	A parcel of land reserved for the termination of the Horizontal Direct Drilling (HDD) under the shoreline, from where underground HVDC cables within the converter station site feed into the DC Hall.
Domestic Wastewater Treatment	A facility to treat sewage and wastewater on site.
Car parking	10 surfaced car parking spaces.

3.3 Operation

3.3.1 The proposed converter station will be operated for 24 hours per day, seven days per week on a rotating shift basis. Typically, eight personnel will carry out routine operations and maintenance at the converter station, including six daytime operatives and two full-time equivalent (FTE) persons providing general site and facilities maintenance services. A further 12 personnel will provide technical management and operate the control room, who may be located at the converter station site or at an off-site location depending on the final design of the converter station and operations philosophy. Therefore, during normal operation, there will be a total of up to 20 workers employed by the Proposed Development.

3.3.2 Routine day-to-day maintenance and repairs will be carried out by the operations personnel, and minor repairs may be carried out whilst the converter station remains in-service. However, planned major maintenance works and inspections will be undertaken every one or two years for a period of 10-15 days. This will generally include the following activities:

- Detailed inspections and cleaning;
- Preventative maintenance;
- Replacement of parts on planned rotation;
- Repair and/or replacement of worn, damaged or broken components;
- Replacement of consumables, such as oil changes, etc;
- IT system upgrades;
- Testing and calibration of equipment and systems; and
- General repairs to facilities, buildings and balance of plant.

3.3.3 Approximately 35 workers will be required during planned major maintenance.

3.3.4 Unplanned (emergency) outages may occur if there is a fault in the cable system or converter station sites for whatsoever reason. In general, such outages are resolved by the operations personnel and the converter station is returned to service. As a worse case, an additional major maintenance outage may be required to facilitate repairs. Such unplanned events are very rare, and an additional unplanned major outage is anticipated one or two times during the 25-year lifetime of the converter station.

3.4 Construction

3.4.1 Subject to outline planning permission being granted and reserved matters applications approved, the construction of the Proposed Development is planned to begin in early 2022 and it is anticipated to last approximately three years.

3.4.2 It is estimated that up to 150-200 construction personnel will be required during the peak construction period, including:

- Construction Management and Engineers (including GridLink Interconnector Limited and appointed Contractors);
- Construction workers; and
- Visitors (project managers, advisors, authorities, independent engineers, others)

3.4.3 Normal construction working hours are scheduled to be:

- 07:00-19:00 Monday-Friday;

- 07:00-13:00 Saturday;
- No work Sundays and public holidays, unless approved in advance by Medway Council; and
- If required, night-working for low noise and specialist activities only, for example delivery of special loads, 24-hour commissioning and testing runs, HDD cable pull-ins, etc.

3.4.4 The appointed Contractor will utilise suitably qualified and competent local sub-contractors and workforce wherever reasonably practicable and economic.

3.4.5 In addition, GridLink Interconnector Limited intends to organise three internships within the project management team for the duration of construction. The internships will be organised in association with a suitable local technical college.

3.5 Access

Access to the Site

3.5.1 Access to the Site from the A2/M2 will be achieved via the A289, the A228 Four Elms Hill/Peninsula Way, Ropers Lane, Stoke Road and Eshcol Road. Transformers will be moved between the London Thamesport and the site via the A228 Grain Road/Ratcliffe Highway, Ropers Lane, Stoke Road and Eshcol Road. These roads are already frequently used by construction and operational traffic, including heavy goods vehicles and personal cars, associated with the new and existing industrial activities in the Kingsnorth industrial area.

3.5.2 From Eschol Road, access will be through MedwayOne using the former Kingsnorth Power Station internal site roads. The access road will approach to the north of the converter station building where the main gate to the Proposed Development will be located, as shown on Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0001 – Site Location Plan. This route will be used for construction and operational trips.

3.5.3 After pre-application consultation with Medway Council's Case Officer, the use of an adjacent jetty at the former Kingsnorth Power Station site was considered as a method of transport during the construction phase. However, it was concluded that this is not a feasible access strategy during construction because the jetty is not owned by the Applicant and it is not appropriately designed for the movement of construction materials and equipment.

3.5.4 Alternative water-based movement of bulk materials and abnormal loads via London Thamesport, Port of Sheerness or other local ports to minimise road transport requirements will be considered as part of the construction logistics planning.

Car Parking

3.5.5 Provision for on-site car parking is included within the area defined in Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0002 – Outline Layout. There will be provision of 10 car parking spaces within the Site, for use of operations and/or maintenance staff.

3.5.6 The current adopted parking standard is the Medway Council Parking Standards, adopted in 2001. The standards state that the minimum size for a car parking space is 2.4 m x 4.8 m. The on-site car parking provided for at the Proposed Development accords with this size.

3.6 Consultations

Consultation with Medway Council

3.6.1 GridLink Interconnector Limited entered into a Planning Performance Agreement with Medway Council on 23rd October 2018.

3.6.2 A pre-application meeting was held between AECOM, the Applicant and Medway Council's case officer on 17th December 2019 in order to discuss the scope of the planning application and the possibility of submitting an outline planning application with all matters reserved.

3.6.3 A further pre-application meeting was held between AECOM, the Applicant and the Medway Council case officer on 19th February 2020 to discuss the relevant documents that would be required for the planning application.

3.6.4 These meetings were supplemented by Members Briefings to elected members of Medway Council on Tuesday 26th February 2019 and Monday 28th October 2019.

Public Consultation

3.6.5 Medway Council has advised two key recommendations regarding public consultation during the pre-application meetings:

- Comply with the Medway Statement of Community Involvement (September 2014), published by Medway Council; and
- Carry out Members Briefing(s) to inform elected Council members regarding the plans for the GridLink project.

3.6.6 In the Medway Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Medway Council states that its objective is to seek community involvement in development of its plans (plan-making) and decisions on planning applications by project promoters. In terms of developments such as GridLink, the relevant elements of the SCI are:

- Early engagement;
- Engagement in a positive and proactive manner;
- Present development proposals to Councillors at an early stage of the planning process (before submitting an application); and
- Encouragement of the use of models and materials to help communication, for example at exhibitions.

3.6.7 In addition, as a Project of Common Interest, the Applicant must carry out public consultations in accordance with the TEN-E Regulation stipulated by Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

3.6.8 GridLink has carried out a wide range of stakeholder engagement and public consultation in order to inform elected members, interested parties and the general public about the Proposed Development prior to the submission of the planning application to Medway Council.

3.6.9 The current ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the UK Government's subsequent restrictions has meant that a face-to-face public meeting and exhibitions were unable to be held. Therefore, a programme of virtual consultations has been implemented, comprising:

- Public information has been continuously available in the form of the GridLink website[3];

[3] www.gridlinkinterconnector.com

- Information points were established at Dockside Outlet Shopping Centre at St Mary's Island and Riverside Country Park in Rainham to provide free copies of flyers, information leaflets and non-technical summaries about the Proposed Development;
- An online virtual exhibition via the GridLink web-site was launched on 28th August;
- A live chat session was held on Friday 4th September; and
- An online public meeting was held on Friday 11th September.

3.6.10 Local residents were informed about the online public consultation events by newspaper and social media advertisements, press release and mail drop to 4,800 residential addresses in the Hoo St Werburgh Parish.

3.6.11 Further details of the stakeholder engagement carried out by GridLink, including the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that provides details of the public consultation activities, are provided in the separate standalone Stakeholder Consultation Summary Report that has been submitted as part of this planning application.

4. Need for the Development and Site Selection

4.1 Need for the Proposed Development

Context

4.1.1 There has been a change in the UK's energy mix and energy policy in recent years. Whilst demand for electricity is set to increase following the electrification of transport, heating and industry, many fossil fuel burning and nuclear power stations are at the decommissioning stage. In addition, the Government has signed up to targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

4.1.2 Electricity interconnectors are seen as playing a key role in the future energy system of the UK to ensure optimal use of renewable energy and security of supply, with an associated reduction in carbon emissions and economic benefits to consumers.

4.1.3 Recent independent studies of the need for new interconnectors have included:

- The National Grid's Network Options Assessment for Interconnectors 2020 concluded that the optimal level of interconnection on the GB-FR border is 5.8 GW to 8.8 GW by 2030.
- The European Commission's Ten Year Network Development Plan 2020 (TYNDP 2020) identified a need for of 5.4 GW by 2030 and 6.8 GW by 2040 at the GB-FR border.

4.1.4 The current level of GB-FR interconnector capacity is 4 GW, taking into account those projects in operation or construction. Therefore, there is a strong and urgent need for new interconnectors from the UK to France.

4.1.5 Due to its unique location, modern design and short cable length, the Proposed Development will be the lowest cost interconnector to any European country on a £/MW basis.

4.1.6 This section outlines the relevant European and UK Government policy, and documents that support and encourage the transition to a more sustainable energy mix.

Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council [4]

4.1.7 This EU Regulation identifies a number of infrastructure priority corridors, of which the corridor between Great Britain and France is included. The European Parliament aims to target these infrastructure priority corridors by nominating Project of Common Interest (PCIs), in order to give them political visibility and funding. GridLink was identified as a PCI as part of the third amendment to the list of PCIs released by the European Commission in 2017.

4.1.8 By promoting trans-European interconnector projects using the PCI framework, the Parliament hopes to bring benefits to the wider European area, ensuring *"the functioning of the internal energy market and security of supply within Europe, promoting energy efficiency and energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy, and promoting the interconnection of energy networks".*

[4] European Parliament (2013) Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R0347&from=EN (Accessed April 2020)

4.1.9 By pursuing these objectives, this EU Regulation contributes to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and brings benefits to both Great Britain and Europe in terms of competitiveness and economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Department of Energy and Climate Change, December 2013: 'More interconnection: improving energy security and lowering bills'

4.1.10 The Government's 2013 report, 'More interconnection: improving energy security and lowering bills'[5], outlines its support for using interconnectors as a key driver for achieving its strategy of transforming the electricity generation system in the UK.

4.1.11 The report describes some of the key benefits of interconnectors in the UK energy system and sets out the potential of interconnection to contribute to the Government's energy security, affordability and decarbonisation objectives.

National Infrastructure Commission, March 2016: 'Smart Power'

4.1.12 In the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) 'Smart Power'[6] report, published in 2016, states that greater interconnector capacity for Great Britain would bring a number of benefits to the UK, including more efficient use and less wastage of renewable energy generated in Great Britain and Europe. It quotes analysis conducted by the National Grid, which identifies the expected net benefits of 8-9 GW of interconnection to be equivalent to nearly £3 million every day, as a result of a reduction in the wholesale price of electricity.

Infrastructure and Projects Authority, March 2016: 'National Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2016 – 2021'

4.1.13 The Infrastructure and Project Authority's 'National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021'[7], published in 2016, states that Great Britain currently has 4 GW of capacity via interconnectors with other countries, and the Government recognises the important role they play to support energy security, affordability and decarbonisation objectives

4.1.14 The document references the 'Smart Power' report published by the NIC, and details the steps the Government will take implement the recommendations from this report:

> *"… the Government has increased its ambition for greater electricity interconnection, now supporting market delivery of at least 9 GW of additional capacity".*

Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

4.1.15 The Climate Change Act 2008 was enacted to target an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This was changed by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, which set the target to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and established this in law.

National and Local Planning Policy

4.1.16 The planning system is designed to support the Government's strategies through a combination of national policy, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Local Policy, such as Development Plans.

[5] Department of Energy and Climate Change (2013) More interconnection: improving energy security and lowering bills. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266460/More_interconnection_-_improving_energy_security_and_lowering_bills.pdf (Accessed March 2020)

[6] National Infrastructure Commission (2016) Smart Power. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/505218/IC_Energy_Report_web.pdf (Accessed March 2020)

[7] Infrastructure and Projects Authority (2013) National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/520086/2904569_nidp_deliveryplan.pdf (Accessed March 2020)

4.1.17 The key relevant policies are summarised in Appendix A – Key Development Plan Policies and Appendix B – Relevant Paragraphs from National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 Site Selection

4.2.1 GridLink Interconnector Limited studied a number of opportunities when considering site location. Initially the possibility of connecting to the 400 kV network along the south coast of England was explored, however preliminary feasibility studies indicated that the electricity generated by the new interconnector could not be transported to/from anywhere on the network along the south coast due to the limited capacity of existing electricity transmission systems and current and future electricity production. Based on this analysis, the preferred area with the fewest constraints for connection to the UK national grid was deemed to be located along the Thames Estuary near London.

4.2.2 GridLink Interconnector Limited commissioned a grid study by National Grid for the Thames Estuary, including north Kent and Essex, which identified seven potential connection points at existing 400 kV sub-stations: Cleve Hill, Coryton, Grain, Kemsley, Kingsnorth, Northfleet East and Rayleigh Main. Further assessment of the potential grid connection works that would be required concluded that four connection points were not viable; the remaining feasible options were Grain, Kemsley and Kingsnorth. The three shortlisted connection sites deemed feasible were evaluated with respect to the required works by National Grid, land availability, accessibility by submarine cable and environmental constraints. Based on the evaluation, Kingsnorth was selected as the optimal connection site.

4.2.3 Subsequently, a grid connection agreement concerning the connection at Kingsnorth sub-station was signed in October 2016 by National Grid and GridLink Interconnector Limited.

4.2.4 Figure 4.1 shows the various points considered during the grid study, which concluded that Kingsnorth was the preferred connection site. Connection sites denoted by a white circle with red strikethrough represent sites that were identified by the study but the grid capacity is technically constrained; sites denoted in orange represent sites that were deemed feasible and subject to detailed local studies; Kingsnorth is denoted by the yellow circle.

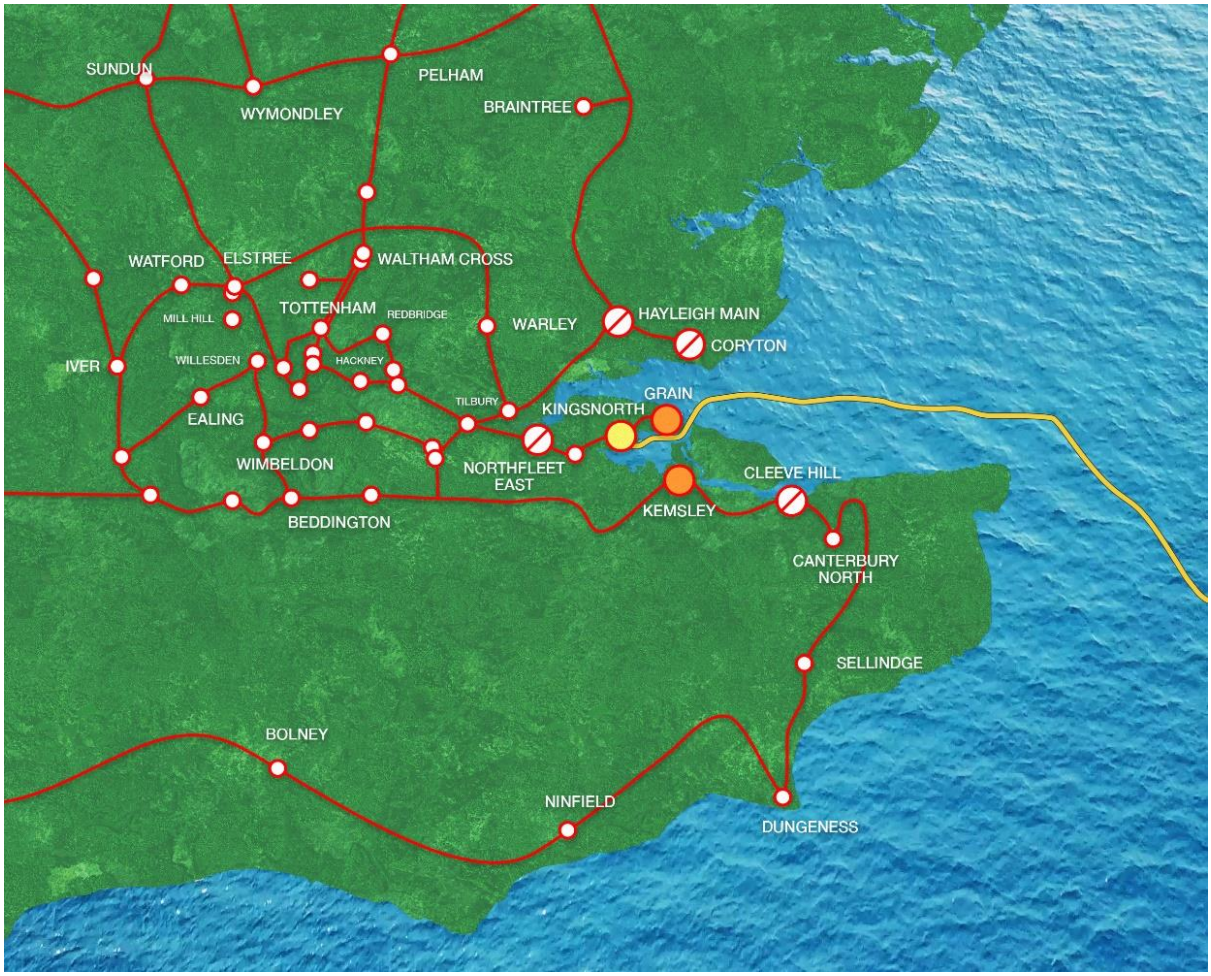

Figure 4-1 Alternative connection points to the National Grid

4.2.5 After the Kingsnorth connection site had been chosen, landownership, technical and planning and environmental studies were carried out in order to determine the location of the converter station and cable routes. The objective was to identify sites for the converter station fulfilling the criteria below:

- Sufficient size (4 ha);
- Accessible for incoming subsea HVDC cable from the Medway Estuary;
- Accessible for underground HVAC cable to Kingsnorth sub-station;
- Commercially available;
- Compatible with industrial use; and
- No significant environmental sensitivities or expected impacts.

4.2.6 Within the Kingsnorth area, there are three main industrial zones: the Kingsnorth Industrial Estate (including Damhead Creek Power Station), London Medway Commercial Park and former E.ON Kingsnorth Power Station (now demolished and under development by Uniper as MedwayOne).

4.2.7 The Kingsnorth Industrial Estate has no vacant plots of sufficient size to accommodate the converter station. Alternative sites were considered at the London Medway Commercial Park and former Kingsnorth Power Station in consultation with the landowners. The best available sites which fulfilled the site selection criteria, and the associated cable routes, are shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4-2 Alternative converter station sites at Kingsnorth with underground cable routes

4.2.8 The site in the London Medway Commercial Park (denoted in yellow) is undeveloped land that has been subject to soil remediation and preliminary land-raising in preparation for future development.

4.2.9 The site in the former Kingsnorth Power Station (denoted in white) was previously used for a Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) tank farm and comprised six 25,000 m^3 HFO tanks and associated pumping infrastructure. The HFO was used a back-up fuel for the 2,000 MW coal-fired power station built in the 1970s and decommissioned in 2013.

4.2.10 Based on a technical and environmental comparison of the alternative sites, the site at the former Kingsnorth Power Station was selected for the converter station. The reasons for the selection of this site are:

- The former Kingsnorth Power Station was previously an electricity generation site, therefore the converter station use is a compatible development with the site history;
- The converter station site has previous heavy industrial use as an HFO tank farm, so it provides brownfield development that will include clean-up of previous soil contamination;
- The subsea HVDC cable shore crossing, converter station site and underground HVAC cable route are all within the landownership of Uniper – there are no third-party landowners;
- Subsea HVDC cable installation is not restricted by the tidal range and narrow channel of Damhead Creek;
- Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) for the shore crossing by the subsea HVDC cable will be simpler as it is not constrained by the dimensions of Damhead Creek and does not cross below the nature compensation land of Damhead Creek power station;
- The converter station site is at a greater distance from the nearest residential receptor (1.2 km compared to 700 m);

- The underground HVAC cable route to Kingsnorth sub-station is shorter (1.5 km compared to 3 km); and
- There are no public roads or utilities along the underground HVAC cable route.

5. Planning Policy Summary

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Medway Council is required to determine the planning application in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.1.2 This section gives an overview of planning policy relevant to the Proposed Development, including relevant policies of the Development Plan and relevant national policy documents.

5.2 The Development Plan

5.2.1 The Development Plan includes the following policy documents:

- Saved Policies of the Medway Local Plan, adopted 20038 (MLP); and
- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030, adopted 20169 (KMWLP).

5.2.2 As the KMWLP does not contain any policies that are relevant to the Proposed Development, this is given no further consideration.

5.2.3 It is worth noting that although relevant policies in the MLP remain statutory as part of the Development Plan, it is acknowledged that due to the age of the MLP the interpretation of policies could be affected by changes to the local context, local evidence bases and new national policy. The Secretary of State's saving direction in 2007 states:

"Following 27 September 2007, the extended policies should be read in context. Where policies were adopted some time ago, it is likely that material considerations, in particular the emergence of new national and regional policy and also new evidence, will be afforded considerable weight in decisions."

5.2.4 Development Plan policies that are specific to the site and which are identified on the proposals map are outlined below. On the proposals map, the Site lies within the area covered by the following policies:

- **Policy S12 - Kingsnorth**, which states that within this area, development for General Industrial (Class B2), Storage and Distribution (Class B8) and Light Industry Appropriate in a Residential Area (Class B1(c)) will be permitted.
- **Policy ED7 – Special Industrial Uses**, which states that development of special industrial uses will be permitted at Kingsnorth.
- **Policy ED8 – Industrial Uses Not in a Use Class**, which states that industrial uses not in a use class will be permitted in the area.
- **Policy ED1 – Existing Employment Areas**, which permits development for Business (Class B1), General Industrial (Class B2) and Storage and Distribution (Class B8).
- **Policy CF13 – Tidal Flood Risk Areas**, which states that development will not be permitted if it harms the integrity of the flood defences or fails to provide for a means of escape for people in the event of a flood.

[8] Medway Council (2003) Medway Local Plan 2003. Available from: https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2400/medway_local_plan_2003 (Accessed April 2020)
[9] Kent County Council (2016) Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016-2030. Available from: https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy#tab-1 (Accessed (April 2020)

5.2.5 Other relevant policies are listed below:

- **Policy S1** – Development Strategy;
- **Policy S2** – Strategic Principles;
- **Policy S4** – Landscape and Urban Design;
- **Policy S6** – Planning Obligations;
- **Policy BNE1** – General Principles for Built Development;
- **Policy BNE2** – Amenity Protection;
- **Policy BNE3** – Noise Standards;
- **Policy BNE4** – Energy Efficiency;
- **Policy BNE5** – Lighting;
- **Policy BNE6** – Landscape Design;
- **Policy BNE8** – Security and Personal Safety;
- **Policy BNE18** – Setting of Listed Buildings;
- **Policy BNE20** – Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- **Policy BNE21** – Archaeological Sites;
- **Policy BNE23** – Contaminated Land;
- **Policy BNE24** – Air Quality;
- **Policy BNE35** – International and National Nature Conservation Sites;
- **Policy BNE36** – Strategic and Local Nature Conservation Sites;
- **Policy BNE37** – Wildlife Habitats;
- **Policy BNE39** – Protected Species;
- **Policy T1** – Impact of Development;
- **Policy T2** – Access to the Highway;
- **Policy T13** – Vehicle Parking Standards; and
- **Policy CF11** – Renewable Energy.

5.2.6 These policies are discussed in detail in Appendix A – Key Development Plan Policies.

5.2.7 Key planning themes related to the Proposed Development can be found in Section 6 of this document.

5.3 Material Considerations

Emerging Development Plan

5.3.1 The emerging Development Plan for the Site currently comprises the emerging Medway Local Plan (2019 to 2037) (EMLP). The draft plan is due to be published in 2021. Three stages of consultation have been completed at the time of writing:

- Issues and Options, in early 2016;
- Development Options, from January to May 2017; and
- 'Regulation 18' consultation on the Development Strategy Draft, from 16 March to 25 June 2018.

5.3.2 Although it has not yet been tested at examination, the EMLP has undergone three stages of consultation, as detailed above. It can therefore be considered that some weight will be afforded to the EMLP as a material consideration in determination of the planning application.

Medway Local Plan (2019 to 2037), Development Strategy Draft

5.3.3 The Development Strategy Draft of the EMLP[10] sets out a vision for future development in Medway, with a view to including a number of policies and proposals that seek to ensure the needs of the area are met through the plan period.

5.3.4 The introduction to the EMLP includes a section on Energy and Renewables, which states the nationally significant role that Medway plays to the UK's energy supply and distribution, stating at **Paragraph 12.30** that "Medway is of national significance for power generation, electricity and aviation fuel distribution and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) importation". The EMLP goes further to make Medway's contribution to national energy supply and security a strategic priority for the new Local Plan, and states that it will encourage new opportunities for power generation and energy storage through its policies. **Paragraph 12.35** states:

"Medway's contribution to national energy supply and security will represent a strategic priority in the new Local Plan. The proposed policies will encourage future opportunities for new power generation and energy storage."

5.3.5 Policies in the Emerging Development Plan that are relevant to the Proposed Development are considered within Appendix A – Key Development Plan Policies. These are listed below:

- **Policy DS1** – Sustainable Development;
- **Policy DS2** – Spatial Development Strategy;
- **Policy NE1** – Sites of International Importance for Nature Conservation;
- **Policy NE2** – Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment;
- **Policy NE4** – Landscape;
- **Policy NE5** – Securing strong Green Infrastructure;
- **Policy NE7** – Flood and Water Management;
- **Policy N**E8 – Air Quality;
- **Policy BE1** – Promoting High Quality Design;
- **Policy BE2** – Sustainable Design;
- **Policy BE5** – Historic Environment;
- **Policy BE6** – Managing Development in the Historic Environment;
- **Policy I1** – Infrastructure Planning and Delivery;
- **Policy I5** – Utilities;
- **Policy T9** – Connectivity and Permeability;
- **Policy T10** – Vehicle Parking;
- **Policy T12** – Managing the Transport Impact of Development;
- **Policy MWE11** – Energy and Renewables; and
- **Policy MWE12** – Low Carbon Development.

[10] Medway Council (2018) Medway Council Local Plan Development Strategy Regulation 18 Consultation Report. Available from: https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/download/289/development_strategy (Accessed April 2020)

Hoo St Werburgh Neighbourhood Plan

5.3.6 The Site falls within the boundary of the proposed Hoo St Werburgh Neighbourhood Plan. The designation of this neighbourhood area was confirmed by Medway Council in December 2018[11].

5.3.7 At the time of writing, Hoo Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are in the process of holding informal consultation days, with no formal consultation held or draft planning policy produced. As the Plan is still in its early stages, therefore, it is not considered to be relevant to this application at this time.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

5.3.8 The National Planning Policy Framework[12] (NPPF) was published in February 2019 (updated June 2019). The NPPF provides a framework for the Government's planning policies and sets out how these should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account when preparing the Development Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF (2019) has been published with minor changes from the revised NPPF (2018). The revised NPPF (2018) replaced the original NPPF published in March 2012.

5.3.9 Importantly, Paragraph 6 of the NPPF sets out that statements of government policy represent material considerations in planning decisions:

"Other statements of government policy may be material when preparing plans or deciding applications, such as relevant Written Ministerial Statements and endorsed recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission."

5.3.10 The NPPF is divided into a series of topics relating to delivering sustainable development. NPPF topics that are directly relevant to the Proposed Development are listed below:

- Achieving sustainable development;
- Strategic policies;
- Decision-making;
- Building a strong, competitive economy;
- Promoting sustainable transport;
- Achieving well-designed places;
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

5.3.11 Full citation and details of these relevant sections of the NPPF are provided in Appendix B – Relevant Paragraphs from National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

5.3.12 The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)[13] (NPS EN-1), published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in 2011, sets out

[11] Hoo Parish Council – Neighbourhood Plan. Available from: http://www.hoosaintwerburgh-pc.gov.uk/community/hoo-parish-council-13487/neighbourhood-plan/ (Accessed April 2020)
[12] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf (Accessed April 2020)
[13] Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1). Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/47854/1938-overarching-nps-for-energy-en1.pdf (Accessed April 2020)

national policy for energy infrastructure developments that meet the Planning Act 2008 definition of 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' (NSIPs).

5.3.13 Although the Proposed Development does not meet this definition, as the NSIP regime does not automatically cover interconnectors, Paragraph 5 of the NPPF states that *"National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications".* NPS EN-1 is, therefore, considered to be relevant to the Proposed Development and should be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application.

5.3.14 **Paragraph 3.2.3** states that without significant amounts of new large-scale energy infrastructure, the objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008 cannot be fulfilled. It therefore considers the need for such infrastructure to often be urgent.

5.3.15 **Paragraph 3.3.12** identifies interconnection as a potential technology used to compensate for the intermittency of renewable energy generation.

5.3.16 **Paragraph 3.3.29** states that the Government would like to see decentralised and community energy systems make a much greater contribution towards the reduction of reducing carbon emissions and increasing energy security. Interconnection is identified as a tool which offers a number of economic and other benefits such as more efficient bulk transfer of power and enabling surplus generation capacity in one area to be used to cover shortfalls elsewhere.

5.3.17 **Paragraph 3.3.31** states that the Government expects more intelligent use of electricity, including by interconnection, to play an important role in a low carbon electricity system.

Planning Practice Guidance

5.3.18 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Planning Practice Guidance for Flood Risk and Coastal Change[14] was published in 2014. It provides guidance on how to take account of and address the risks associated with flooding in the planning process.

5.3.19 This includes flood risk vulnerability classifications. In Table 2, it categorises *'Essential utility infrastructure which has to be located in a flood risk area for operational reasons, including electricity generating power stations and grid and primary substations'* as 'Essential Infrastructure'. Table 3 shows the compatibility of flood risk vulnerability categories and flood zones. This states that Essential Infrastructure is appropriate in Flood Zones 1 and 2 and is appropriate in Flood Zone 3 subject to the exception test described in the NPPF being passed.

[14] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2014) Planning Practice Guidance for Flood Risk and Coastal Change. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change (Accessed April 2020)

6. Planning Appraisal

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A number of policy themes have been formulated following an analysis of the Development Plan, the Emerging Development Plan and other material considerations. The following themes have been identified:

- Theme 1: Energy Resilience and Low-Carbon Electricity Generation;
- Theme 2: Flood Risk;
- Theme 3: Landscape and Design;
- Theme 4: Local Amenity;
- Theme 5: Employment Land;
- Theme 6: Transport and Access; and
- Theme 7: Ecological Effects.

6.1.2 This section presents an appraisal of the Proposed Development in accordance with the above policy themes. Reference is made to the planning policy set out in Section 5 – Planning Policy Summary.

6.2 Theme 1: Energy Resilience and Low-Carbon Electricity Generation

6.2.1 Interconnectors are crucial for the future of the energy supply in Great Britain. The National Infrastructure Delivery Plan specifies a target of at least 9 GW interconnector capacity. The Proposed Development will make a 1.4 GW contribution towards this target, representing infrastructure that is significant on a national scale. Paragraphs 3.3.31 and 3.3.32 of NPS-EN1 illustrate the importance of interconnectors in enabling the intelligent use of electricity.

6.2.2 The Proposed Development therefore supports the transition to a low carbon future, helping to achieve the legally binding target of a net zero carbon emissions set out in the Government's Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019. The NPPF also supports infrastructure of this nature, stating in Paragraph 154 that applications for renewable and low carbon development should be approved if the impacts can be made acceptable.

6.2.3 NPS EN-1 acknowledges at Paragraph 3.2.3 that some residual adverse effects are inevitable if the new large-scale energy infrastructure that we urgently need is to be delivered. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF also explains that planning decisions should give significant weight to the need to support economic growth and address the challenges of the future (to which a reliable energy supply is critical, as established by wider Government policy).

6.2.4 Local policy also supports the implementation of the Proposed Development. Paragraph 12.35 of the EMLP makes Medway's contribution to national energy supply and security a strategic priority over the period of the plan, cementing Medway's national significance for power generation. EMLP Policy MWE11 promotes the principle of energy development in Medway, subject to the avoidance of adverse impacts on statutory designations, landscape, agricultural land, community, economy, biodiversity, or historic interests. The Proposed Development accords with these criteria, as demonstrated within this appraisal and in Appendix A – Key Development Plan Policies.

6.2.5 As a converter station for an electricity interconnector, the Proposed Development acts as a distributor for renewable energy. This is supported in local policy; namely MLP Policy CF11, which supports schemes that are for the generation and consumption of renewable energy, stating that these will be permitted provided where they are not detrimental to nature conservation, landscape or amenity concerns. By enabling the best use of existing generation capacity before other forms of generation are needed, the Proposed Development will help achieve the same objectives as the energy hierarchy set out by EMLP Policy MWE12, which states that renewable energy should be achieved before other forms of energy generation.

6.2.6 Furthermore, Policy I1 of the EMLP promotes the timely and effective delivery of infrastructure, through working with government agencies, infrastructure bodies, developers and partner organisations. The Proposed Development is a collaborative EU project which represents an important form of infrastructure for the UK. This is demonstrated by its status as a Project of Common Interest.

6.2.7 It has therefore been demonstrated that the nationally significant contribution that the Proposed Development would make to securing a long-term, low-carbon source of electricity receives substantial support from both local and national planning policy. These benefits should be given substantial weight in determining this planning application.

6.3 Theme 2: Flood Risk

6.3.1 The Proposed Development is located in Environment Agency Flood Zone 3. The site is currently approximately 2.5 to 3 m above sea level, and protected by tidal flood defences. In accordance with Paragraph 163 of the NPPF, a Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared. This sets out that the Site is at low risk of tidal flooding due to the presence of tidal flood defences.

6.3.2 The Proposed Development is categorised as ‘Essential Infrastructure’ by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s Planning Practice Guidance for Flood Risk and Coastal Change, as it is “*essential utility infrastructure which has to be in a flood risk area for operational reasons, including electricity generating power stations and grid and primary substations”*. The Planning Practice Guidance states that Essential Infrastructure would be appropriate in Flood Zone 3 subject to the sequential test and exception test being passed.

6.3.3 The sequential test has been applied as part of the Flood Risk Assessment. This states that the Proposed Development passes the sequential test, as the Site has already been allocated in the MLP as an industrial site including a gas-fired power station which is classified as Essential Infrastructure in accordance with PPG Table 2. The proposals for the site under this application are also for Essential Infrastructure. The Proposed Development therefore accords with Planning Practice Guidance and NPPF Paragraphs 158 and 163.

6.3.4 The exception test has also been applied as part of the Flood Risk Assessment. As per Planning Practice Guidance and NPPF Paragraph 160, this requires the Proposed Development to show that:

a) the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and

b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

6.3.5 The Flood Risk Assessment has demonstrated that the Proposed Development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere and reduces flood risk overall. This PDAS has demonstrated that the wider sustainability benefits offered by the Proposed Development outweighs the flood risk. This is demonstrated in Theme 1, and Section 4 – Need for the Development and Site Selection. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development passes the exception test, in line with Planning Practice Guidance and NPPF Paragraphs 160 and 163.

6.3.6 During construction, the existing coastal flood defences will be avoided by using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) construction methods (as opposed to trenching or cut and cover techniques) to pass underneath the defences. The depth of the flood defences and appropriate standoff distances will be agreed in consultation with the Environment Agency prior to works being undertaken. The Proposed Development is therefore in line with MLP Policy CF13 and EMLP Policy NE7, which state that development will not be permitted within a tidal flood risk area if it harms the integrity of the flood defences or their maintenance.

6.3.7 In line with MLP Policy CF13 and NPPF Paragraph 163, which state that emergency provision should be made for a means of escape for people in the event of a flood, a Flood Warning and Response Plan will be prepared detailing the planned response in the event of receiving a flood warning, and in the event of a breach or overtopping of the flood defences. This is will comprise part of a wider business continuity and health and safety planning prepared by GridLink for the Proposed Development.

6.3.8 A Surface Water Drainage Strategy has also been prepared that details the proposed Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) that will be implemented as part of the Proposed Development. The proposed surface water management strategy is that surface water will be collected in an attenuation facility and then released to Medway Estuary.

It is currently intended to discharge surface water to the existing land drain on the eastern boundary of the east of the Site and then via an existing outfall to the Medway Estuary. The Proposed Development is therefore In line with EMLP Policy NE7, which states that surface water runoff should be decreased via SuDS.

6.3.9 As referenced in the Flood Risk Assessment, the proposed mitigation measures implemented during construction and the proposed surface water management strategy means that the Site would have a low risk of tidal and surface water flooding, and there would not be an increase in flood risk elsewhere as a result of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development also passes the sequential test and the exception test, in line with Planning Practice Guidance and NPPF policy on flood risk. Flood Warning and Response Plan will also be prepared by GridLink as part of wider business continuity and health and safety planning. The Proposed Development is thus in line with local and national policy regarding flood risk, namely NPPF Paragraph 155, MLP Policy CF13 and EMLP Policy NE7.

6.4 Theme 3: Landscape and Design

6.4.1 In accordance with Medway Council's validation checklist, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared. This concludes that the Proposed Development can be successfully integrated into the landscape, seascape and visual context of the Site and study area, as it would reflect the character of the surroundings and local context of large-scale massing.

6.4.2 Overall, the landscape, seascape and visual effects are predicted to range between minor adverse and neutral across the construction and operation phases; however, the detailed design of the proposed massing is considered to be able to reduce the

level of adverse effects further through the use of tonal colours in the façade of the building. It is therefore considered that the principle of development is acceptable in landscape and visual terms in any event.

6.4.3 A landscaping scheme will be prepared to ensure that the requirements of MLP Policy BNE6 are met, as well as integrating with the Uniper MedwayOne Masterplan landscape scheme. The details of the landscaping scheme will be submitted as a reserved matter following outline planning permission Therefore, the Proposed Development accords with MLP Policy BNE6.

6.4.4 The design of the Proposed Development will be similar to other developments in the area. The detailed design of the Proposed Development, including its height and façade treatments, will be submitted as a reserved matter following outline planning permission. The height of buildings within the converter station will be varied and lower than the maximum extents specified on Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0003 – Parameter Plan. Façade treatments including tonal colours will enable increased integration within the landscape, seascape and visual context, as per other buildings in the wider context of the Site. The Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with MLP Policy S4 and EMLP Policy BE1.

6.4.5 It has therefore been demonstrated that the Proposed Development accords with national and local policy regarding Landscape and Design.

6.5 Theme 4: Local Amenity

6.5.1 In accordance with Medway Council's Validation Checklist, a Noise Assessment has been carried out. This has considered the potential impacts of the Proposed Development during the construction and operation phases.

6.5.2 The operational noise assessment measures potential impacts of the Proposed Development during operation of the converter station, in terms of the building plant noise, on identified residential noise-sensitive receptors. This concludes that the noise impacts of the Proposed Development are likely to be below the Lowest Observable Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) and therefore unlikely to cause a significant adverse impact on nearby sensitive receptors.

6.5.3 The construction noise assessment measures potential impacts of the Proposed Development during construction. This also concludes that construction noise is likely to be below the Lowest Observable Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) and therefore unlikely to be perceptible at receptors within the nearest residential area of Hoo St Werburgh.

6.5.4 The Proposed Development is therefore in line with MLP Policy BNE3, which states that noise-generating development should not have a significant adverse noise impact on any noise sensitive uses such as housing, offices, hospitals and schools.

6.5.5 Regarding air quality, although there are no residential receptors located within 1.2 km of the Proposed Development, there is an internationally designated biodiversity site, Medway Estuary and Marshes (SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site), within 50 m of the Proposed Development. As a result, an Air Quality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

6.5.6 There is no proposal for any on-site energy production within the Proposed Development, and therefore there would be no combustion related emissions (although there would be an emergency diesel standby generator for providing power in the event of an emergency / grid failure). The operation of the diesel backup generator will be minimised to the extent reasonably possible, allowing for testing and maintenance only.

6.5.7 The Air Quality Impact Assessment concludes that the impact of any potential fugitive dust emissions arising as a result of construction, earthworks and other activities is considered to be not significant, and the impact from potential operation traffic and point sources of emissions on air quality are also considered to be negligible.

6.5.8 The Proposed Development thus accords with national and local policy surrounding air quality, namely MLP Policy BNE24, EMLP Policy NE8, and NPPF Paragraph 181, which state that development must not produce unacceptable effects on air pollution in the surrounding area.

6.5.9 In terms of lighting, there are no residential receptors located within 1.2 km of the Proposed Development, therefore the effects of any lighting during construction or operations is negligible. The Ecology Report concludes that lighting would have a negligible effect (not significant) on bats (foraging and commuting), a minor adverse effect (not significant) on wintering birds and breeding birds, a negligible effect (not significant) on water voles and a negligible effect (not significant) on badgers.

6.5.10 The Proposed Development therefore accords with MLP Policy BNE5, which states that development should seek to minimise the loss of amenity from light glare and spillage, especially when affecting areas of nature conservation interest.

6.6 Theme 5: Employment Land

6.6.1 Policy S1 of the MLP sets strategic priorities for Medway, including that the redevelopment of under-used and derelict land is a priority, and that Kingsnorth is one of the areas identified for strategic economic development provision. Policy S12 of the MLP states that use classes B1(c), B2 and B8 will be permitted within the Kingsnorth area on the proposals map, in which the Proposed Development is located.

6.6.2 The Proposed Development lies on the former Kingsnorth Power Station site (now demolished). The Site has remained disused since the Kingsnorth Power Station was decommissioned in 2013 and demolished between 2014 and 2018. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the strategic priority of the redevelopment of under-used and derelict land.

6.6.3 MLP Policy ED8 permits the development of industrial uses not in a use class in the Kingsnorth area as defined on the proposals map, subject to the provisions of MLP Policy BNE2, namely the development having regard to protecting amenity including light, noise, air quality and traffic generation.

6.6.4 The Proposed Development falls within the definition of development not in a use class and complies with the provisions set out in MLP Policy BNE2, as set out earlier in this appraisal. The Proposed Development is therefore in line with MLP Policy ED8.

6.6.5 Furthermore, there will be approximately 20 employees during the operation phase and up to approximately 200 employees during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. The appointed Contractor will, where reasonably practical, utilise local labour in construction, and GridLink Interconnector Limited intends to provide internship opportunities in association with suitable local colleges.

6.6.6 It is acknowledged that the Proposed Development does not accord fully with MLP Policy S1 and S12, as the Site does not specifically provide the land uses specified for economic development provision. However, this should be considered in the context of the proposed redevelopment of derelict land at the former Kingsnorth Power Station. This includes remediation of existing soil contamination, which is in line with part of Policy S1; and other material considerations, including national

policies that identify energy resilience as a priority along with the emerging Development Plan, which supports wider energy development in Medway.

6.6.7 As outlined in Theme 1 of this Appraisal, currently less than half of the Government's 9 GW target for interconnector capacity in Great Britain has been delivered so far. GridLink will make a substantial 1.4 GW contribution towards meeting this Government target; therefore, the Proposed Development is considered to be a significant opportunity for developing this form of infrastructure. NPS EN-1, which has been demonstrated to be relevant to the Proposed Development in Section 5.3 of this PDAS, states that there is an urgent national need for new large-scale energy infrastructure; and that the Government expects more intelligent use of electricity, including by interconnection, to play an important role in a low carbon electricity system in order to help meet the objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008.

6.6.8 EMLP Policy MWE11 supports energy development in Medway, but it does not propose any land use allocations for delivery of this infrastructure. The approach under that policy would therefore be to determine applications in accordance with criteria set out, alongside other policy considerations, which may include alternative land use allocations and objectives of the plan. The Proposed Development accords with the EMLP Policy MWE11 criteria of avoiding impact that would compromise statutory designations, not resulting in unacceptable impacts on landscape or the built environment, or not having adverse impacts on community, biodiversity or historic interests that cannot be mitigated.

6.6.9 The location for the Proposed Development, as detailed in Section 4.2 of this PDAS, is justified by its requirement to be of a sufficient size (4 ha); accessible for incoming subsea HVDC cable from the Medway Estuary; accessible for underground HVAC cable to Kingsnorth sub-station; commercially available; compatible with industrial use; and with no significant environmental sensitivities or expected impacts.

6.6.10 It is therefore considered that material considerations outweigh the fact that the Proposed Development does not fully accord with MLP Policy S1 and S12; namely the contribution the Proposed Development would make to securing access to reliable and clean electricity, thereby meeting the local strategic objective (as outlined in EMLP Policy MWE11) and national policy (as stipulated throughout NPS-EN1); and the justification for the location of the Proposed Development, stipulated in Section 4.2 of this PDAS, in the context of the strategic national objective for greater interconnector capacity.

6.7 Theme 6: Transport and Access

6.7.1 In accordance with Medway Council's Validation Checklist and EMLP Policy T12, a Transport Statement has been prepared for the Proposed Development. This concludes that there are no particular highway safety issues which would need to be addressed and the level of total vehicle activity is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact on the operation of the wider highway network. The level of hourly HGV activity is also not considered to be materially significant.

6.7.2 Access to the site from the A2/M2 will be achieved via the A289, the A228 Four Elms Hill/Peninsula Way, Ropers Lane, Stoke Road and Eshcol Road. Transformers will be moved between the London Thamesport and the site via the A228 Grain Road/Ratcliffe Highway, Ropers Lane, Stoke Road and Eshcol Road. These roads are already frequently used by construction and operational traffic, including heavy goods vehicles and personal cars, associated with the new and existing industrial activities in the Kingsnorth industrial area.

6.7.3 The route to reach the converter station through the former Kingsnorth Power Station site is represented in Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0001 – Site Location Plan. This route will be used for all construction and operational traffic.

6.7.4 The Proposed Development therefore accords with MLP Policies T1 and T2, which state that proposals will be permitted if the highway network has adequate capacity to cater for traffic generated by the development, and that new or altered accesses to the highway should not have any detrimental impact on safety, as well as NPPF Paragraph 109, which outlines that applications should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

6.7.5 The use of the jetty at the former Kingsnorth Power Station site has been considered as a method of transport during the construction phase. However, this is not a feasible access strategy during construction at this time because it is not owned by the applicant, not currently designed for such a use, and its future return to service is not defined. Nonetheless, its possible use and alternative water-based movement of bulk construction materials and abnormal loads via other local ports, such as London Thamesport or Port of Sheerness, will be considered in the detailed planning of the construction logistics.

6.7.6 The car parking arrangements for the Proposed Development will accord with the latest adopted Medway Council Parking Standards. The current adopted parking standard is the Medway Council Parking Standards, adopted in 2001. The standards state that the minimum size for a car parking space is 2.4 m x 4.8 m. The on-site car parking for the Proposed Development accords with this size.

6.7.7 The Proposed Development therefore accords with MLP Policy T13 and EMLP Policy T10, which require formal car parking spaces to accord with the adopted Medway Council Parking Standards.

6.8 Theme 7: Ecological Effects

6.8.1 An Ecological Impact Assessment has been carried out of the Proposed Development. This concludes that there will be no significant effects on designated sites as a result of the Proposed Development. Although the Site does not fall within an area with an environmental designation, the underground HVDC cable does cross the Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA, Ramsar site and SSSI. However, the use of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) techniques during construction will allow the cable to be drilled underneath these habitats without disturbance to sensitive features at the surface.

6.8.2 The assessment identifies 0.01 ha of standing water on the Site, which is classed as a priority habitat through the confirmation of the presence of a small water vole population. The Proposed Development will result in the permanent loss of this habitat through the clearance and remediation of the Site in the construction phase, as the habitat is within the Site.

6.8.3 As avoidance cannot be achieved, compensation for the removal of the habitat and the small population of water vole will be provided, and the voles will be captured unharmed and relocated. The storm water drainage facility on Site will not be constructed until the end of the construction period whilst the waterbody will be cleared prior to construction. Therefore, it cannot be used as a receptor site for the water vole population, so the water voles will be taken into a captive breeding programme, such as that run by the Kent-based Wildwood charity, until a suitable waterbody has been created within the Site or nearby.

6.8.4 The assessment also identifies two potential effects on birds that require mitigation measures. Breeding birds can be disturbed, injured or killed during site clearance

activity, therefore the timing of any site clearance of suitable nesting habitat will be outside the breeding season. Additionally, construction noise impacts may disturb birds on the nearby Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, so a range of mitigation measures, including the choice of piling techniques, the selection, design, use and maintenance of construction machinery and equipment, the use of acoustic enclosures and screening, and appropriate monitoring of noise levels will be implemented to ensure that the effects are not significant. The mitigation measures will be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be implemented during the construction activities.

6.8.5 The potential impacts on reptiles are considered negligible but, as reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (W&CA 1981), it is a legal requirement to prevent an offence under the W&CA 1981. Therefore, clearance of any suitable reptile habitat within the Site will be subject to a pre-survey to find any reptiles that may be present and enable their relocation prior to works commencing.

6.8.6 Similarly, it is an offence under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 to injure or kill badgers. Therefore, as construction activities such as trenching and excavating can potentially trap, injure and kill badgers, measures will be implemented to prevent badgers from entering working areas and falling into excavations, and for their safe release if required.

6.8.7 Hence, the Proposed Development has no significant effects on ecological features or protected species, in accordance with MLP Policies BNE37 and BNE39. The Proposed Development also accords with national and local policy that requires the protection of international, nationally and locally designated sites, namely MLP Policy BNE35, EMLP Policies NE1 and NE2, and NPPF Paragraphs 175 and 177.

6.9 Theme 8: Archaeology and Heritage

6.9.1 A Heritage Statement has been prepared regarding the significance of known and potential heritage assets affected by the Proposed Development, including any contribution made to their significance by their setting.

6.9.2 The assessment has identified two designated assets, the protected crash site of Messerschmitt Bf109E-4 (1129) of Squadron 8/JG53, and the scheduled remains of Darnet Fort (SM1019642). The Proposed Development has been assessed as having no impact on these designated assets.

6.9.3 The assessment also identified the presence of one non-designated archaeological asset (Kingsnorth Power Station) as well as the potential for further unknown non-designated palaeo-environmental and archaeological assets.

6.9.4 Construction works associated with the Proposed Development have been assessed as having a low impact on the value of potential palaeo-environmental remains. Therefore, the impact on potential palaeo-environmental remains has been assessed as low.

6.9.5 The historic landscapes in which the Proposed Development will be constructed are considered to be of negligible sensitivity, and the Proposed Development will not result in any impact on their significance.

6.9.6 The Proposed Development has therefore met the requirements of Paragraph 189 of the NPPF, which states that applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The Proposed Development is also in line with MLP Policies BNE18, BNE 20 and BNE21, which protect the setting of listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and potentially important archaeological sites respectively from harm; as well as

EMLP Policies BE5 and BE6, which prevent the demolition and loss of heritage assets, or adverse impacts to their setting, as a result of new development.

7. Summary and Conclusion

7.1.1 GridLink Interconnector Limited is seeking outline planning permission for the construction of a converter station, car parking, landscaping, underground HVDC cables from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs, underground HVAC cables from the converter station to the National Grid Kingsnorth sub-station (as permitted development) and associated infrastructure works.

7.1.2 The Proposed Development would form part of the GridLink interconnector project, an electricity interconnector connecting the National Grids of the UK and France. GridLink would transport enough electricity to supply 2.2 million households in the UK and France, enhancing the distribution of renewable energy and providing security in case of any interruptions to electricity supply caused by weather conditions, difficulties at electricity producers or faults on the network.

7.1.3 The Government's support of interconnector projects such as GridLink is underpinned by Government policy and research that suggests that interconnectors will play a key role as we transition to a low carbon electricity system. GridLink will make a substantial 1.4 GW contribution towards meeting the Government's target for interconnection capacity.

7.1.4 In addition, the Proposed Development provides a means to encourage the exploitation of renewable energy at a time when a low-carbon energy future is crucial. This is supported by Government policy, national and local planning policy. Medway has a long history of national significance for power generation, and the Emerging Medway Local Plan (EMLP) sets out that the continuation of this will be a strategic priority for Medway Council in the future.

7.1.5 The site has been selected following careful consideration of technical, geographical and environmental constraints and opportunities, including previous use of the land, distance from nearest residential receptors, and the use of brownfield land for development.

7.1.6 Although the Proposed Development is located in Flood Zone 3, the fact that the Government's Planning Practice Guidance defines the Proposed Development as 'Essential Infrastructure', combined with the fact that the sequential test and the exception test have been passed, means that the Proposed Development is an appropriate form of development in this location. The site is currently approximately 2.5 to 3 m above sea level, and a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out to inform the design of the Proposed Development. The results of the assessment have been taken into account in the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The SuDS that are outlined in the Surface Water Drainage Strategy accord with national and local policy on surface water drainage.

7.1.7 The local amenity will be protected during both the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development. The impacts on landscape, noise, heritage assets, transport, air quality, ecology and ground conditions have been found to be not significant by the Environmental Reports included within this planning application.

7.1.8 The Site is within land identified for strategic economic development, and the Proposed Development is consistent with the strategic priority of the redevelopment of under-used and derelict land. The Proposed Development will contribute to meeting the local strategic objective, and national policy, of securing access to reliable and clean electricity.

7.1.9 The Proposed Development will be accessed using roads which are already frequently used by construction and operational traffic, including heavy goods

vehicles and personal cars, associated with the new and existing industrial activities in the Kingsnorth industrial area. No detrimental impacts on safety have been identified by the Transport Statement included within this planning application.

7.1.10 Mitigation during the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development mean that there will be no significant effects on ecological features or protected species, and nationally and locally designated sites will be protected; this includes the nationally-designated site of Medway Estuary and Marshes (SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site), which is immediately adjacent to the Site and crossed by the underground HVDC cable in its route from the converter station to Mean High Water Springs. Therefore, the Proposed Development complies with national and local policy on this issue.

7.1.11 In conclusion, the Proposed Development responds to an urgent national need that has been defined on a national and local level in the Government's energy and climate change strategy and in planning policy. Interconnector projects such as GridLink have been actively encouraged to address the national shortage in interconnector capacity. The Proposed Development has been shown to accord with Medway Council's Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as well as national policy documents that should be given weight in the determination of the application.

Appendix A : Key Development Plan Policies

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
Saved Policies from Medway Local Plan 2003		
Policy S1 - Development Strategy	The policy text details the strategic priorities for the plan area. This includes setting the redevelopment of under-used and derelict land as a priority, and support for strategic economic development in Kingsnorth (amongst other identified areas). The Policy also seeks to secure the long-term protection of designated nature conservation areas, landscapes, and the historic built environment.	The Proposed Development lies on the former Kingsnorth Power Station, a demolished former power station site that is currently disused. The Proposed Development represents redevelopment of this land that would constitute not only significant infrastructure, but it would also help Medway achieve the strategic priority identified in the EMLP of cementing Medway's national significance for power generation. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment determined that considered that the principle of development is acceptable in landscape and visual terms. A detailed landscaping scheme for the Proposed Development will be submitted as part of a reserved matters application. It has been also been established that the Proposed Development would have no adverse effects on designated nature conservation areas or the historic built environment.
Policy S2 - Strategic Principles	This policy outlines how Policy S1 will be implemented, focusing on maintaining and improving environmental quality and design standards.	The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment indicates that the Proposed Development will reflect the character of the surroundings and local context of large scale massing, in keeping with local surroundings.
Policy S4 - Landscape and Urban Design	The policy text outlines that a high quality of built environment that reflects local character and responds appropriately to its context will be sought.	Façade treatments including tonal colours will enable increased integration within the landscape, seascape and visual context, as per other buildings in the wider context of the Site. The detailed design of the Proposed Development, including its height and façade treatments, will be submitted as part of a reserved matters application.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
		Hard and soft landscaping will be provided on site in the areas outlined in Drawing 60557465-ZZ-DWG-0003 – Parameter Plan. A detailed landscaping scheme will be submitted as part of a reserved matters application.
Policy S6 – Planning Obligations	This policy sets out that the council will set conditions on planning permissions or seek to enter into a legal agreement with developers to provide for new physical infrastructure, social, recreational and community facilities (including education facilities) and environmental mitigation or compensation measures where mitigation is impossible or inadequate on its own, where the need for these arises directly from the development concerned.	The requirements for, and the nature of, any planning obligations will be determined based on the residual environmental impacts of the Proposed Development (after appropriate mitigation measures have been employed).
Policy S12 - Kingsnorth	The policy text states that within the area defined on the proposals map, development for General Industrial (Class B2), Storage and Distribution (Class B8) and Light Industry Appropriate in a Residential Area (Class B1(c)) will be permitted.	Although the Proposed Development is an industrial use that is not in a use class, this is in line with Policy ED8 of the MLP. The Proposed Development will contribute to meeting the local strategic objective, and national policy, of securing access to reliable and clean electricity.
Policy BNE1 – General Principles for Built Development	The policy states that the design of development should be appropriate to its location by: i) Being satisfactory in terms of use, scale, mass, proportion, details, layout and siting; ii) Respecting the scale, appearance and location of buildings, spaces and the visual amenity of the surrounding area.	The Proposed Development would be designed to respond to the industrial nature of the local environment as the Site surroundings are characterised by industrial development. The Proposed Development would fit into these surroundings through its scale, appearance, proportion and siting. The Applicant is working with Uniper to ensure that the design of the Proposed Development accords with the Uniper MedwayOne Masterplan for the Site and surrounding area.
Policy BNE2 – Amenity Protection	The policy text sets out that the design of development should have regard to protecting amenity, including: i) Privacy, daylight, and sunlight; ii) Noise, vibration, light, heat, smell and airborne emissions consisting of fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust and grit iii) Activity levels and traffic generation	The Noise Assessment concludes that the operation of the Proposed Development is in line with the noise requirements set out in Medway policy and will not generate any significant noise impacts on nearby sensitive receptors. The Air Quality Impact Assessment concludes that the impact of any potential fugitive dust emissions arising as a result of construction, earthworks and trackout of material is considered to be not significant, and the impact from potential operation

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
		traffic and point sources of emissions on air quality are considered to be negligible. As a converter station, the Proposed Development will not produce any emissions directly, as it does not generate electricity. The Ecology Report concludes that lighting would have a negligible effect (not significant) on bats (foraging and commuting), a minor adverse effect (not significant) on wintering birds and breeding birds, a negligible effect (not significant) on water voles and a negligible effect (not significant) on badgers. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concludes that the Proposed Development can be successfully integrated into the landscape, seascape and visual context of the Site and study area, as it would reflect the character of the surroundings and local context of large scale massing, in keeping with local surroundings. The Transport Statement concludes that traffic generation as a result of the Proposed Development is not expected to be significant.
Policy BNE3 – Noise Standards	The policy text states that noise-generating development should be located and designed so as not to have a significant adverse noise impact on any noise sensitive uses such as housing, offices, hospitals and schools.	The potential noise impacts of the Proposed Development on the surrounding area have been assessed by the Noise Assessment, which concluded that the operation of the Proposed Development complies with the noise requirements set out in Medway policy and will not generate any significant noise impacts on nearby sensitive receptors.
Policy BNE4 – Energy Efficiency	This policy outlines that energy efficiency measures will be sought within development proposals, providing there is no detrimental impact on amenity. These include appropriate siting, form, orientation and layout of the buildings; appropriate use and siting of soft landscaping to act as shading or shelterbelts; the use of building materials of the lowest possible embodied energy.	The Proposed Development is designed to efficiently use land and the building layout, scale and form takes energy efficient into account. The technology selected for the Proposed Development achieves optimal energy efficiency in the converter station processes (converting HVDC to HVAC electricity), and all equipment is selected to minimise energy consumption.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
Policy BNE5 – Lighting	The policy text states that external lighting schemes should demonstrate that they are the minimum necessary for security, safety or working purposes; and development should seek to minimise the loss of amenity from light glare and spillage, especially when affecting areas of nature conservation interest.	The Ecology Report has assessed the potential impact of artificial lighting from the Proposed Development on nearby amenity, in particular the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. No significant effects on bats, wintering birds and breeding birds, water voles or badgers as a result of the Proposed Development were identified.
Policy BNE6 – Landscape Design	Major developments should include a structural landscaping scheme to enhance the character of the locality, to be submitted before development commences. This should have regard to: i) provide a structured, robust, attractive, long term, easily maintainable environment ii) include planting of a size, scale and form appropriate to the location and landform iii) include details of the design, materials and quality detailing of hard works elements such as gates, fences, walls, paving, signage and street furniture iv) retain important existing landscape features, including trees and hedgerows, and be well related to open space features in the locality v) support wildlife by the creation or enhancement of semi-natural habitats and the use of indigenous plant material where appropriate vi) include an existing site survey, maintenance and management regimes and a timetable for implementation	A landscaping scheme will be prepared as a reserved matters application. This will ensure that the Proposed Development will meet the policy requirements and also integrate with the Uniper MedwayOne Masterplan landscape scheme. .
Policy BNE8 – Security and Personal Safety	The policy text states that design and layout of development should seek to maximise personal safety and the security of property.	The proposed development will make use of appropriate gating, fencing and CCTV to ensure the safety of people and property.
Policy BNE18 – Setting of Listed Buildings	This policy seeks to protect the setting of listed buildings from impacts of development that would be harmful to them or their setting.	The Heritage Statement included within this planning application concludes that the Proposed Development would lead to no significant adverse effects on Listed Buildings or their setting.
Policy BNE20 – Scheduled Ancient Monuments	This policy seeks to protect the setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments or other nationally important sites from impacts of	The Heritage Statement included within this planning application concludes that the Proposed Development would

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
	development that would damage or destroy such sites or be harmful to their setting.	lead to no significant adverse effects on the setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments or other nationally important sites.
Policy BNE21 - Archaeological Sites	The policy text sets out that development affecting potentially important archaeological sites should be subject to an appropriate level of evaluation, and arrangements for preservation of important archaeological remains.	The Heritage Statement included within this planning application concludes that the Proposed Development would lead to no significant adverse effects on potentially important archaeological sites.
Policy BNE23 – Contaminated Land	This policy outlines that any development on land known or likely to be contaminated or affected by adjacent or related contamination must be accompanied by the findings of a detailed site examination. Appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate risk must be agreed and implemented before the development is occupied.	The Preliminary Environmental Risk Assessment concludes that the potential contaminant linkages associated with the current Site are generally classified as Low. Remediation of contaminated soil present on the Site will be undertaken prior to the construction of the Proposed Development.
Policy BNE24 – Air Quality	*Development likely to result in airborne emissions should provide a full and detailed assessment of the likely impact of these emissions. Development will not be permitted when it is considered that unacceptable effects will be imposed on the health, amenity or natural environment of the surrounding area, taking into account the cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the vicinity.*	The Air Quality Impact Assessment concludes that the impact from operation traffic and point sources of emissions on air quality are considered to be negligible; and overall the construction and operational air quality impacts of the Proposed Development are not considered to be significant at relevant sensitive receptors.
Policy BNE35 - International and National Nature Conservation Sites	The policy text outlines that International and National Nature Conservation Sites, encompassing SPAs, Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves and SSSIs, will be given long term protection. The text states that: *"Development that would materially harm, directly or indirectly, the scientific or wildlife interest of these sites will not be permitted unless the development is connected with, or necessary to, the management of the site's wildlife interest"*	The Ecology Report concludes that there are no significant adverse effects from the Proposed Development identified on any designated sites. Although the underground HVDC cable route from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs crosses the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) construction method means that there is no disturbance at the surface to harm the protected site.
Policy BNE36 – Strategic and Local Nature Conservation Sites	The policy text provides protection to Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and Local Nature Reserves, stating that: *"Development that would materially harm, directly or indirectly, the scientific or wildlife interest of these sites will not be permitted unless*	The Ecology Report included in this planning application concludes that there are no significant adverse effects from the Proposed Development identified on any Sites of Nature Conservation or Local Nature Reserves.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
	the development is connected with, or necessary to, the management of the site's wildlife interest."	
Policy BNE37 – Wildlife Habitats	The policy text seeks to protect wildlife habitats or features not protected by policies BNE35 and BNE36, particularly ancient woodland, inter-tidal habitats, and calcareous grassland; stating that development that causes a direct or indirect loss to these habitats will not be permitted.	There have been no significant adverse effects identified from the Proposed Development on ancient woodland, inter-tidal habitats or calcareous grassland.
Policy BNE39 – Protected Species	The policy text sets out that development should not be permitted if protected species and/or habitat will be harmed. It states that planning conditions or obligations may be used to ensure protected species and/or their habitats are safeguarded and maintained.	There have been no significant adverse effects identified from the Proposed Development on protected species or habitats.
Policy ED1 – Existing Employment Areas	This policy sets out that in Kingsnorth, as defined on the proposals map, development will be permitted only for Business (Class B1), general industry (Class B2) and storage and distribution (Class B8).	Although the Proposed Development is an industrial use that is not in a use class, this is in line with Policy ED8 of the MLP. The Proposed Development would make a contribution to meeting the local strategic objective, and national policy, of securing access to reliable and clean electricity.
Policy ED5 – Proposed Employment Areas	The policy texts sets out that in Kingsnorth, as defined on the proposals map, development is allocated in line with policy S12, i.e. Business (Class B1), general industry (Class B2) and storage and distribution (Class B8).	Although the Proposed Development is an industrial use that is not in a use class, this is in line with Policy ED8 of the MLP. Any non-compliance is considered to be outweighed by the contribution the Proposed Development would make to meeting the local strategic objective, and national policy, of securing access to reliable and clean electricity.
Policy ED8 – Industrial Uses Not in a Use Class	The policy text sets out that the development of industrial uses not in a use class will be permitted at Kingsnorth, as defined on the proposals map, subject to the provisions of policy BNE2 and there being no adverse environmental impact, especially in terms of residential amenity, nature conservation interests or the character of the surrounding rural area.	The Proposed Development is an industrial use that is not in a use class and accords with the provisions set out in Policy BNE2 of the MLP. Therefore the Proposed Development is in line with this policy.
Policy T1 – Impact of Development	The policy sets out that proposals will be permitted if: *i) the highway network has adequate capacity to cater for the traffic which will be generated by the development,*	Access to the site from the A2/M2 will be achieved via the A289, the A228 Four Elms Hill/Peninsula Way, Ropers Lane, Stoke Road and Eshcol Road. These roads are already frequently used by construction and operational traffic,

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
	taking into account alternative modes to the private car; and *ii) the development will not significantly add to the risk of road traffic accidents; and* *iii) the development will not generate significant H.G.V. movements on residential roads; and* *iv) the development will not result in traffic movements at unsociable hours in residential roads that would be likely to cause loss of residential amenity.*	including heavy goods vehicles and personal cars, associated with the new and existing industrial activities in the Kingsnorth industrial area. The Transport Statement concludes that the Proposed Development will not significantly add to the risk of road traffic accidents, generate significant HGV movements on residential roads, or result in traffic movements at unsociable hours in residential roads.
Policy T2 – Access to the Highway	The policy text states that new or altered accesses to the highway should not have any detrimental impact on safety.	Access to the Site from the public highway will be at the former main gate of the Kingsnorth Power Station on Eshcol Road. This access has already been in use during the operation and demolition of the former power station for many years. Therefore, the continued use of this access to the public highway will not have any detriment on road safety.
Policy T13 – Vehicle Parking Standards	Development proposals will be expected to make vehicle parking provision in accordance with the adopted standard.	The current adopted parking standard is the Medway Council Parking Standards, adopted in 2001. The standards state that the minimum size for a car parking space is 2.4 m x 4.8 m. The on-site car parking for the Proposed Development accords with these standards.
Policy CF11 – Renewable Energy	This policy supports the construction of renewable energy infrastructure, stating: *"Renewable energy schemes for the generation and consumption of electricity will be permitted when the location, scale and design of the apparatus and associated infrastructure are not detrimental to nature conservation or landscape concerns and present no significant loss of residential or countryside amenity."*	Whilst the proposed development is not a renewable energy scheme, it does support renewable energy by providing a means to utilise high levels of renewable energy production and compensate if renewable energy is not available. In serving this function, the Proposed Development will not be detrimental to nature conservation or landscape concerns, nor present a loss of residential or countryside amenity.
Policy CF13 – Tidal Flood Areas	Development will not be permitted within a tidal flood risk area if it harms the integrity of the flood defences, or it fails to provide for a means of escape for people in the event of a flood.	The use of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) techniques to install the subsea HVDC cable underneath the shoreline without disturbing or penetrating the flood defence seawall means that the Proposed Development complies with this policy.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
		In addition, a Flood Warning and Response Plan will be prepared to define the planned response in the event of receiving a flood warning, and in the event of a breach or overtopping of the flood defences.
Emerging Medway Local Plan (2019 to 2037), Development Strategy Draft		
Policy DS1 - Sustainable Development	The policy text sets out that a positive approach will be taken in decision-making, that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.	The Proposed Development will support the overarching aims of the emerging plan with an emphasis on sustainable development. As a converter station, the Proposed Development plays an active role in increasing the deployment of renewable energy on a nationally significant scale, while producing no carbon emissions.
Policy DS2 – Spatial Development Strategy	The policy text states that the council will seek to meet the development needs for homes, employment and retail land, infrastructure and services, as determined by the evidence base set out in the Medway Local Plan, whilst respecting the need to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment. The development strategy for Medway prioritises regeneration, making the best use of underused and previously developed land	The Proposed Development lies on the disused former Kingsnorth Power Station site. The Site has remained disused since the Kingsnorth Power Station was demolished between 2014 and 2018. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the strategic priority of the redevelopment of under-used and derelict land.
Policy NE1 - Sites of International Importance for Nature Conservation	The policy text seeks to protect designated SPAs and Ramsar sites, setting out that no development that may have an adverse effect on the integrity of any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site will be permitted.	The Ecology Report concludes that there are no significant adverse effects from the Proposed Development identified on any designated sites. Although the underground HVDC cable route from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs crosses the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) construction method means that there is no disturbance at the surface to harm the protected site.
Policy NE2 - Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment	The policy text recognises the hierarchy of sites designated for their nature conservation importance, including SSSI, LNR, Local Nature Sites and a Marine Conservation zone, and states the council will restrict development that could result in damage to such sites.	The Ecology Report concludes that there are no significant adverse effects from the Proposed Development identified on any designated sites.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
	The council will also pursue opportunities to strengthen biodiversity networks.	Although the underground HVDC cable route from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs crosses the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) construction method means that there is no disturbance at the surface to harm the protected site. In addition, the Ecology Report concludes that there are no significant adverse effects from the Proposed Development identified on any Sites of Nature Conservation Interest or Local Nature Reserves.
Policy NE4 – Landscape	The policy text sets out that the basis for determining the acceptability of development proposals in terms of impact on the landscape will be an updated Medway Landscape Character Assessment, and that development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they protect, strengthen and connect features of local landscapes.	The revised Medway Landscape Character Assessment has not yet been published, and therefore the Proposed Development cannot be assessed against its criteria. However, the current (2011) Medway Landscape Character Assessment has been considered as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concludes that the landscape, seascape and visual effects are predicted to range between minor adverse and neutral across the construction and operation phases.
Policy NE5 – Securing strong Green Infrastructure	The policy text sets out that the council will protect the network of green infrastructure in Medway. The highest protection will be given to securing the ecological and landscape interests of sites designated of international importance as a Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and/or Special Area of Conservation. A high level of protection from damaging impacts of development will be given to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Ancient Woodland. The council will consider the need to protect the special features of Regionally Important Geological Sites, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves	The Ecology Report concludes that there are no significant adverse effects from the Proposed Development identified on any designated sites. Although the underground HVDC cable route from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs crosses the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) construction method means that there is no disturbance at the surface to harm the protected site.
Policy NE7 - Flood and Water Management	This policy sets out that development should have no negative impact on flood risk management interests, and development that	The Flood Risk Assessment for the Proposed Development concludes that the Site is at low risk of tidal flooding due to the presence of tidal flood defences.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
	would harm the effectiveness of existing flood defences or prejudice their maintenance will not be permitted. The policy text also states that development should decrease surface water runoff via SuDS.	The use of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) techniques to install the subsea HVDC cable underneath the shoreline without disturbing or penetrating the flood defence seawall means that the Proposed Development complies with this policy. A Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been prepared in accordance with Medway Council's Validation Checklist. The SuDS will include collection of surface water in an attenuation facility and then released to the Medway Estuary.
Policy NE8 - Air Quality	The policy text sets out that the council seeks to reduce exposure to areas of poor air quality, maintain areas of good air quality, and where possible improve air quality through restricting development or requiring acceptable and effective mitigation measures. Development which could impact on air quality should be accompanied by air pollution impact assessments and mitigation measures.	The Air Quality Impact Assessment included in this planning application concludes that the impact from operation traffic and point sources of emissions on air quality are considered to be negligible; and overall the construction and operational air quality effects of the Proposed Development are not considered to be significant at relevant sensitive receptors.
Policy BE1 - Promoting High Quality Design	The policy text sets out that development in Medway will be expected to be of high quality design that responds appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings, including in terms of scale and form, impact on heritage assets, reinforcing and responding to local distinctiveness and character and respecting amenity of neighbouring uses.	The final appearance and layout of the Proposed Development will coordinate with the existing industrial nature of the former Kingsnorth Power Station site, whilst also seeking to set the converter station building within the Uniper MedwayOne masterplan landscaping scheme to limit the perception of scale of the converter station. The Heritage Statement concludes that there will be no impacts on the setting of heritage assets.
Policy BE2 – Sustainable Design	This policy states that all new development should aim for high standards of sustainable design and construction where feasible.	The Proposed Development will incorporate high standards of sustainable design and construction techniques wherever feasible.
Policy BE5 - Historic Environment	This policy seeks to support the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, including heritage assets.	The Heritage Statement included within this planning application concludes that there have been no significant adverse effects identified on the historic environment or heritage assets from the Proposed Development.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
Policy BE6 – Managing Development in the Historic Environment	*Development that impacts a heritage asset, or its setting, should achieve a high quality of design which will preserve or enhance the asset's historic or architectural character, appearance and setting. Where a development impacts upon a heritage asset, or its setting, a proportionate heritage assessment must be submitted that assesses the level of impact.* *The demolition or other loss of a heritage asset will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional and overriding reasons*	The Heritage Statement included within this planning application concludes that there have been no significant adverse effects identified on the historic environment or heritage assets from the Proposed Development.
Policy I1 – Infrastructure Planning and Delivery	The policy text sets out that the timely and effective delivery of infrastructure will be sought by the council, through working with government agencies, infrastructure bodies, developers and partner organisations to secure improvements to infrastructure in Medway.	The Proposed Development represents a nationally important form of electricity transmission infrastructure. Due to the importance recognised by the UK Government and European Commission, GridLink has been granted the status of a Project of Common Interest (PCI).
Policy I5 – Utilities	This policy sets out that any new development will be supported by the requisite utilities infrastructure; this requires early engagement with utility providers.	There are limited utilities connections to the site. Electricity will be provided by UK Power Networks; service water will be provided by Southern Water; and telecommunications will be provided by BT. No other utilities connections will be required for the construction or operation of the Proposed Development.
Policy T9 – Connectivity and Permeability	The policy text states that proposals must demonstrate how the street layout will promote connectivity and permeability; Masterplans and/or Design and Access Statements must demonstrate how the proposed street layout will promote ease of movement along safe routes and integrate with adjacent built-up areas. The external connectivity and internal permeability of new development proposals will require careful consideration.	Access to the Site from the A2/M2 will be achieved via the A289, the A228 Four Elms Hill/Peninsula Way, Ropers Lane, Stoke Road and Eshcol Road. These roads are already frequently used by construction and operational traffic, including heavy goods vehicles and personal cars, associated with the new and existing industrial activities in the Kingsnorth industrial area. The access road included within the Site will be for access/egress within Uniper MedwayOne to the converter station, and it will not provide access to any other residential or built-up areas.

Policy	Relevant policy text	Proposed Development response
Policy T10 – Vehicle Parking	The policy states that planning applications for residential and non-residential development will be determined in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards.	The current adopted parking standard is the Medway Council Parking Standards, adopted in 2001. The standards state that the minimum size for a car parking space is 2.4 m x 4.8 m. The on-site car parking for the Proposed Development accords with these standards.
Policy T12 – Managing the Transport Impact of Development	The policy text states that Transport Assessments should be prepared for proposals that will generate a significant amount of movement.	Although the Proposed Development does not generate a significant amount of traffic, a Transport Statement has been prepared. The main transport impact is temporary traffic during construction. During operation, the generated traffic is very low.
Policy MWE11 - Energy and Renewals	The policy text sets out that new energy development will be supported subject to specified criteria: *"Proposals for energy developments, including any ancillary building or infrastructure, will be supported unless:* *a) the impact would compromise statutory designations where national planning policy restricts development;* *b) their scale, form, design, material and cumulative impacts is unacceptable to the local landscape or built environment, or loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;* *c) any adverse impacts on the local community, economy, biodiversity or historic interests cannot be mitigated…"*	This policy supports the implementation of energy schemes such as the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would not compromise statutory designations, affect the local landscape or built environment, or have any adverse effects
Policy MWE12 - Low Carbon Development	This policy seeks to implement an *"energy hierarchy"* by *"achieving energy efficiency first, before requiring other forms of renewable energy generation…"*	This policy gives strong support to the implementation of the Proposed Development; as a converter station for an electricity interconnector, the Proposed Development acts as a distributor for energy produced renewably.

Appendix B : Relevant Paragraphs from National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

NPPF Section	Content
Achieving Sustainable Development	The NPPF identifies in chapter 2 that a contribution to sustainable development is the purpose of the planning system. The NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that at its heart is a *"presumption in favour of sustainable development".* **Paragraph 11** expands on this, stating: *"…For decision-taking this means:* *c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or* *d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:* *i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or* *ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."* **Paragraph 12** sets out that planning authorities also may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date Development Plan if material considerations indicate that the plan should not be followed.
Strategic Policies	**Paragraph 20** explains that strategic policies of Development Plans should set out an overall strategy that makes sufficient provision for infrastructure, including energy infrastructure.
Decision-making	**Paragraph 38** states that *"planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way"* and *"should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible"*. **Paragraph 39** recommends entering into pre-application discussions with local planning authorities, stating that: *"Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."*

NPPF Section	Content
	Paragraph 48 explains that the weight given in planning decisions to emerging plans should be commensurate with: the age of the plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies of the NPPF.
Building a strong, competitive economy	**Paragraph 80** describes the need to support economic growth, stating that: *"Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future."*
Promoting sustainable transport	**Paragraph 109** describes the approach to be taken when assessing transport effects, stating that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
Achieving well-designed places	**Paragraph 124** describes the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, stating that: *"Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."* **Paragraph 127** sets out that planning decisions should ensure that developments: ▪ function well over the long term; ▪ make use of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping in order to be visually attractive; and ▪ are sympathetic to local character, landscape and history, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	**Paragraph 152** states that *"the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate"*, and *"support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure"*. **Paragraph 154** states that: *"When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:* *a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and* *b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable…"* Regarding flood risk, **Paragraph 155** sets out that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided. It also states that any development in development in flood risk areas should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should be safe for its lifetime.

NPPF Section	Content
	In determining planning applications for development in areas at risk of flooding, **Paragraph 157** states that the sequential test and exception test should be applied to development as appropriate. **Paragraph 158** describes the sequential test, and provides that: *"development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding"*. **Paragraph 160** describes the exception test, stating that: *"For the exception test to be passed it should be demonstrated that:* *a) the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and* *b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall."* **Paragraph 163** sets out that where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment. **Footnote 50** specifies that a flood risk assessment should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. This, combined with the sequential and exception tests as applicable, should demonstrate that: ▪ within the site, the most vulnerable development to flooding is located in the areas of lowest flood risk; ▪ the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient; ▪ sustainable drainage systems are incorporated; ▪ any residual risk can be safely managed; and ▪ safe access and escape routes are available and included in an emergency plan.
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	**Paragraph 170** sets out that planning decisions should: ▪ protect and enhance valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status; ▪ recognise the value of the countryside, including best and most versatile agricultural land, trees and woodland; ▪ maintain the character of undeveloped coast; ▪ minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains, including by establishing ecological networks; ▪ prevent new development from contributing to unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution; and ▪ remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

NPPF Section	Content
	Paragraph 175 sets out that planning authorities should apply the below principles when determining planning applications. ▪ Planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or (as a last resort) compensated for. ▪ Development that would have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) should only normally be permitted if the benefits of the development in the location outweigh its impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest. ▪ Only approve development that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland or veteran trees is there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy. **Paragraph 177** sets out that projects that would be likely to have a significant effect on habitats sites (Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Ramsar sites) should be subject to appropriate assessment. It explains that the presumption in favour of sustainable development would not apply unless that assessment has concluded that the project would not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site. **Paragraph 178** states that decisions should ensure that a site suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination; after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments. **Paragraph 180** sets out that decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. This includes mitigating and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development, and avoiding noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; identifying and protecting tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise; and limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. **Paragraph 181** sets out that opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement.
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	**Paragraph 189** states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage

NPPF Section	Content
	assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. **Paragraph 197** states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Appendix C : Permitted Development Rights

The Applicant is a licence holder under Section 6(1)(e) of the Electricity Act 1989, therefore certain permitted development rights are granted as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO). While the converter station is subject to planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the associated underground High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cables linking the Proposed Development to the National Grid 400 kV substation at the former Kingsnorth Power station are considered permitted development under the GPDO.

Article 3(1) (Permitted development) of **The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015**, 2015 No 596 (GPDO), states that:

> *"3.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Order and regulations 73 to 76 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (general development orders)(b), planning permission is hereby granted for the classes of development described as permitted development in Schedule 2."*

In accordance with Article 3(1), Schedule 2 Part 15 of the GPDO specifies the following types of development that are subject to permitted development rights:

> *"PART 15*
> *Power related development*
> *Class B – electricity undertakings*
> *Permitted development*
>
> *B. Development by statutory undertakers for the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity for the purposes of their undertaking consisting of—*
>
> *(a) the installation or replacement in, on, over or under land of an electric line and the construction of shafts and tunnels and the installation or replacement of feeder or service pillars or transforming or switching stations or chambers reasonably necessary in connection with an electric line;*
>
> *(b) the installation or replacement of any electronic communications line which connects any part of an electric line to any electrical plant or building, and the installation or replacement of any support for any such line;*
>
> *(c) the sinking of boreholes to ascertain the nature of the subsoil and the installation of any plant or machinery reasonably necessary in connection with such boreholes;*
>
> *(d) the extension or alteration of buildings on operational land;*
>
> *(e) the erection on operational land of the undertaking or a building solely for the protection of plant or machinery;*
>
> *(f) any other development carried out in, on, over or under the operational land of the undertaking."*

Class B(a) is applicable to the underground HVAC cable of the Proposed Development, subject to GridLink meeting the requirement to be designated as a 'statutory undertaker'.

The **Town and Country Planning Act 1990**, Part XI, Article 262(6) specifies the meaning of 'statutory undertakers' as:

> *"(6) Any holder of a licence under section 6 of the Electricity Act 1989 shall be deemed to be a statutory undertaker and his undertaking a statutory undertaking—*

(a) for the purposes of the provisions mentioned in subsection (7)(a), if he holds a licence under subsection (1) of that section;

(b) for the purposes of the provisions mentioned in subsection (7)(b), if he is entitled to exercise any power conferred by Schedule 3 to that Act; and

(c) for the purposes of the provisions mentioned in subsection (7)(c), if he is entitled to exercise any power conferred by paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act.

(7) The provisions referred to in subsection (6) are—

(a) sections 55, 108(3), 123, 139 to 141, 143, 148, 236(2)(a), 237, 245, 253, 263(1) and (2), 264, 266 to 283, 288(10)(a), 306, 325(9) and 336(2) and (3), paragraph 18 of Schedule 1 and Schedule 13;

(b) sections 170(12)(b) and 238 to 241; and

(c) sections 247(4) and 257(2) and Schedule 14."

GridLink is a statutory undertaker by virtue of being a licence holder under Section 6(1)(e) of the **Electricity Act 1989**. GridLink was granted an Electricity Interconnector Licence by Ofgem under Section 6(1)(e) of the Electricity Act 1989 on 20th December 2016.

The availability of permitted development rights is also subject to Article 3(10) of the GPDO, which indicates that the permitted development rights are withdrawn if the Proposed Development is classified as an EIA Development under the **Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011** (EIA Regulations):

*"(10) Subject to paragraph (12), Schedule 1 development or Schedule 2 development within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011(**a**) ("the EIA Regulations") is not permitted by this Order unless—*

*(a) the local planning authority has adopted a screening opinion under regulation 5 of those Regulations that the development is not EIA development(**b**);*

(b) the Secretary of State has made a screening direction under regulation 4(7) or 6(4) of those Regulations that the development is not EIA development; or

(c) the Secretary of State has given a direction under regulation 4(4) of those Regulations that the development is exempted from the application of those Regulations."

The Proposed Development is not a Schedule 1 development as it does not fall under the description of Schedule 1 Developments as defined by the EIA Regulations.

With regards to Schedule 2 developments, the Proposed Development is not considered to fall under the definitions provided for Energy Industry. None of the categories listed in Schedule 2 directly reflect the Proposed Development, but the most comparable category is that of an 'Industrial estate development project' (Schedule 2.10(a)). The area threshold for this type of development is 0.5 ha under the EIA Regulations. The Proposed Development (with a total area of 6.2 ha) exceeds this threshold.

Therefore, GridLink requested a screening opinion from Medway Council, where the local planning authority provides a screening of the Proposed Development to determine the need for an EIA taking into account the criteria set down in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. GridLink submitted a request for a screening opinion on 6th January 2020. Medway Council issued its screening opinion by Decision Notice MC/20/0031 dated 28th January 2020. The screening decision by Medway Council was that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary. Therefore, the permitted development rights are not affected by Article 3(10) of the GDPO.

Therefore, the underground HVAC cable of the Proposed Development falls under Schedule 2, Part 15, Class B(a) as permitted development.