

**The Great Grid Upgrade**

Eastern Green Link 5 (EGL 5)

# Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Volume 2

Part 3

Appendix 17.C Water Framework Directive (WFD)  
Offshore Assessment

Document Reference: EGL5-NGET-CONS-XX-RP-YL-061

May 2026

nationalgrid

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# Eastern Green Link (EGL) 5

## Document control

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### Document Properties

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# 17.C. Water Framework Directive (WFD) Offshore Assessment

## 17.C.1. Introduction

### Project Overview

- 17.C.1.1. This Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment has been prepared in support of an application for development consent by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) (a division of National grid plc) (the ‘Applicant’) to the Planning Inspectorate, for Eastern Green Link (EGL) 5 (the ‘Project’).
- 17.C.1.2. The Project is being jointly developed by NGET and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission). The proposal comprises a 2-gigawatt (GW) high voltage direct current (HVDC) link between Anderby Creek, Lincolnshire in England and Peterhead, Aberdeenshire.
- 17.C.1.3. Within England, the Project is being consented by a Development Consent Order (DCO). For seeking necessary consents, the Project has been split into ‘Schemes’ i.e., English Onshore Scheme, English Offshore Scheme, Scottish Onshore Scheme, and Scottish Offshore Scheme. These schemes are outlined in **Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 1: Introduction** of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). This assessment is written with specific regard to the English Offshore Scheme which will be consented by way of a Deemed Marine Licence (DML) included within the DCO. The Scottish Offshore Scheme and Scottish Onshore Scheme will be consented separately to the DCO for the Project by SSEN Transmission.
- 17.C.1.4. As outlined in **Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 1: Introduction** of the PEIR, the English Offshore Scheme extends from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) at the Anderby Creek Landfall on the Lincolnshire coastline to the border between English and Scottish adjacent waters. It is noted that the boundaries for the English Onshore Scheme and the English Offshore Scheme both overlap in the intertidal zone between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and MHWS. The English Offshore Scheme would comprise the construction of up to 423 km of subsea HVDC cables from the Anderby Creek Landfall to the England – Scotland marine border. The subsea cable system would consist of two bundled HVDC cables and a fibre optic cable for control and monitoring purposes and associated external cable protection where burial of the subsea cable system in the seabed is not fully achieved i.e., due to ground conditions or the presence of existing infrastructure.
- 17.C.1.5. This WFD assessment should be read in conjunction with:
- **Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 4: Description of the Project;**
  - **Volume 1, Part 3, Chapter 17: Coastal and Marine Physical Processes;**
  - **Volume 1, Part 3, Chapter 18: Intertidal and Subtidal Benthic Ecology;**
  - **Volume 1, Part 3, Chapter 19: Fish and Shellfish;**

- **Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2.C: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report;**
- **Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 9.B: Water Framework Directive (WFD) Onshore Assessment;** and
- **Volume 2, Part 3, Appendix 17.A: Fine Sediment Modelling.**

## The Water Framework Directive (WFD)

- 17.C.1.6. The WFD was originally transposed into UK law in 2003, having entered into force in December 2000. The overall objective of the WFD was to achieve good status in all inland, transitional, coastal and ground waters by 2015, unless alternative objectives are set and there are appropriate reasons for time limited derogation (with the UK currently working towards objectives for 2027).
- 17.C.1.7. Following the UK's departure from the European Union (EU), The Water Environment Regulations 2017 (England and Wales) (hereafter the WFD Regulations) came into force and is the current legal framework for the WFD. The WFD Regulations aims to protect all surface waters and groundwater by preventing further deterioration and ensuring they achieve at least good status. These regulations require public bodies to have regard to the relevant River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) when exercising their functions, thereby mandating project assessments that must demonstrate they will not cause deterioration of status or jeopardise the attainment of good status. The WFD covers coastal waters up to 1 Nautical Mile (1 NM) out to sea, and estuarial waters.
- 17.C.1.8. The holistic approach of the WFD addresses a wide range of aspects and aims to protect the water environment. These aspects include:
- Hydromorphological – assesses elements such as water flow, sediment composition and movement, continuity and structure of habitats.
  - Biological – including quality elements such as habitats, the abundance of fish, invertebrates or aquatic flora and by the presence of invasive species.
  - Water quality – including environmental standards for supporting physio-chemical conditions, such as dissolved oxygen, phosphorus and ammonia.
  - Chemical – defined by compliance with environmental standards for chemicals that are ‘priority substances’ and / or ‘priority hazardous substances’.
  - Specific pollutants – assessing compliance with environmental standards for concentrations of pollutants.
  - Protected areas – assessing areas such as bathing waters, shellfish waters, designated habitats, and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).

## Roles and Responsibilities

- 17.C.1.9. The Environment Agency (EA) is the competent authority for WFD implementation in England and therefore must assess schemes to ensure that they are compliant with the requirements of the WFD. The EA also acts as a consultee to other Regulators (e.g., local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate) in relation to their obligations under the WFD. Whilst current guidance, including ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Water Framework Directive’ Guidance (**Ref 17.C.1**) acknowledges that assessing schemes for WFD compliance is best aligned with the steps of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), it is recommended that a separate WFD compliance assessment is undertaken by the Applicant to ensure all aspects of WFD are clearly and overtly considered. This document provides the recommended separate WFD compliance assessment for the English Offshore Scheme.

## Document Purpose

- 17.C.1.10. A WFD assessment is required to accompany an application for development consent to ensure that the proposed activities associated with a project throughout its lifetime are compliant with the WFD objectives and will not cause a deterioration to the status of water bodies and protected areas or jeopardise the water body achieving good status. This document seeks to present the WFD assessment undertaken to support the Project’s application for development consent. This assessment is informed using project-specific information from the technical EIA chapters, while also incorporating the use of publicly available data.
- 17.C.1.11. There are typically three stages to a WFD assessment including:
- Stage 1: Screening;
  - Stage 2: Scoping; and
  - Stage 3: Assessment
- 17.C.1.12. These stages are described further in Section Assessment Process. This document comprises the Stage 1 – Screening and Stage 2 – Scoping only. The Stage 3: Assessment will be submitted with the DCO application once further information on the Project is available for assessment.
- 17.C.1.13. Details of the WFD assessment for the waterbodies and protected areas for the English Onshore Scheme is presented in **Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 9.B: Preliminary Water Environment Design Principles**.

## Document Structure

- 17.C.1.14. This WFD assessment is structured as following:
- Section 17.C.1 - Introduction to this report;
  - Section 17.C.2 - Methodology;
  - Section 17.C.3 - Stage 1: Screening; and
  - Section 17.C.4 - Stage 2: Scoping.

## 17.C.2. Methodology

### Available Guidance

17.C.2.1. This WFD compliance assessment document has been principally guided by the EA Guidance 2023 ‘*Clearing the waters for all*’ (hereafter referred to as the Clearing the Waters Guidance) for assessing the potential deterioration of transitional and coastal water bodies, up to 1 NM out to sea, as recommended by the Planning Inspectorate guidance (**Ref 17.C.2**). This guidance interprets the ‘no deterioration criterion’ as applying to each supporting WFD element as well as the overall status classification of the water body. In addition, the Applicant has applied the ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Water Framework Directive’ Guidance (**Ref 17.C.1**) through the development of this compliance assessment.

### Assessment Process

17.C.2.2. This WFD assessment presented in this report considers the English Offshore Scheme’s capacity to inflict both short-term and long-term impacts on WFD water bodies. As per the Clearing the Waters Guidance, this assessment is comprised of the following stages:

- Stage 1 (Screening) – Identify the extent to which the English Offshore Scheme is likely to affect water bodies and provides clear justification for the ‘screening out’ of activities from further assessment. Excludes any activities that do not need to go through the scoping or impact assessment stages.
- Stage 2 (Scoping) – An assessment to identify the risk of the English Offshore Scheme to receptors such as morphology, habitats, fish, INNS and protected areas. This stage concludes in the identification of those water bodies, receptors and impacts where a more detailed assessment is required at Stage 3.
- Stage 3 (Impact Assessment) - A more detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the activities on receptors identified at Stage 2. This assessment demonstrates whether the activities may cause deterioration or jeopardise the water body achieving good status.

## 17.C.3. Stage 1: Screening

### Project Description

17.C.3.1. **Table 17.C-1** outlines the activities to be undertaken as part of the Project.

Table 17.C-1 Activity description

Your activity	Description, notes or more information
Applicant name	National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)
Name of activity	Eastern Green Link 5
Brief description of activity	EGL 5 will comprise a 2 GW HVDC link between Anderby Creek, Lincolnshire and Peterhead, Aberdeenshire. The English Offshore

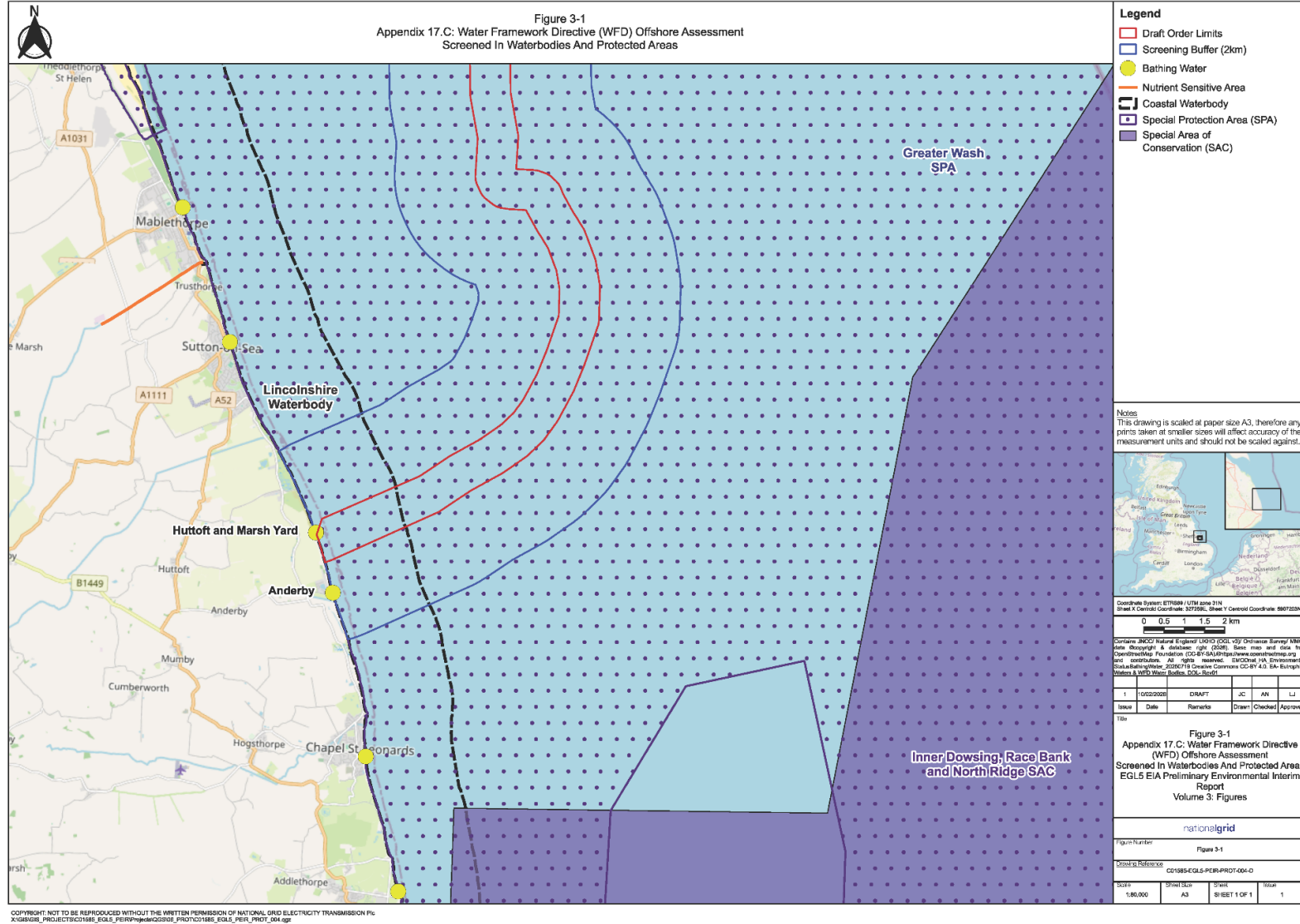
Your activity	Description, notes or more information
Location of activity (central point XY coordinates or national grid reference)	Scheme extends from MHWS at the Anderby Creek Landfall to the border between English and Scottish adjacent waters.
Footprint of activity (ha)	The draft Order Limits for the English Offshore Scheme is illustrated in <b>Plate 17.C-1</b> . The Project crosses the Lincolnshire Water Body for 2.18 km.  The maximum area of the draft Order Limits within the Lincolnshire Water Body is 220 ha (2.2 km <sup>2</sup> ), this is illustrated in <b>Plate 17.C-1</b> . Applying the dredging multiplier (1.5 times the area), as per the EA guidance, results in a maximum area of 330 ha (3.3 km <sup>2</sup> ). This is a precautionary estimate.
Timings of activity (including start and finish dates)	<p>The construction programme for the English Offshore Scheme is expected to commence in 2030. It is anticipated that construction would take approximately five years with the English Offshore Scheme becoming operational in 2035.</p> <p>Works at the Anderby Creek Landfall may commence in 2031 with installation of the ducts ahead of the main construction works.</p> <p>The indicative durations of the overall construction programme for the English Offshore Scheme, comprising of seabed preparation, and cable lay and burial campaigns, are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-installation surveys – 10 months.</li> <li>● Cable route / seabed preparation: 12 – 14 months.</li> <li>● Cable lay and burial: 20 months.</li> <li>● Remedial external cable protection: 8 months.</li> <li>● Post lay survey: 1 – 2 months.</li> </ul> <p>For each activity listed above, a short section of the works will be within the water body. The duration of works within the water body will occur throughout the year and will be in the order of weeks to months, occurring as several discrete, non-consecutive phases.</p> <p>The English Offshore Scheme is expected to have a life span of more than 40 years. If decommissioning requires full or partial removal of the English Offshore Scheme at this point in time, then activities and effects associated with the decommissioning phase are expected to be of a similar level to those during the construction phase, albeit with a lesser duration. The Project could also remain operational for a period after the 40 years or be taken out of service and left within the draft Order Limits after 40 years. Acknowledging the complexities of completing a detailed assessment for decommissioning works up to 40 years in the future, based on the information available, the Project has concluded that impacts from decommissioning would be no greater than those during the construction phase. Furthermore, should decommissioning take place it is expected that an assessment in accordance with the legislation and guidance at the time of decommissioning would be undertaken. In addition, it is expected that the DCO will include a requirement for a written scheme of decommissioning for approval by the relevant consenting authority.</p>

Your activity	Description, notes or more information
Extent of activity (for example size, scale frequency, expected volumes of output or discharge)	<p data-bbox="480 230 1476 409"><b>Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 4: Description of the Project</b> of the PEIR provides a detailed description of the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning works to be undertaken. The maximum design parameters for construction works are outlined in Section WFD Protected Areas.</p> <p data-bbox="480 423 1476 745">The entry point will be located onshore and directed out to sea. The trenchless technique will reach up to 40 m at its maximum depth. For each borehole, a pilot hole will be drilled and then widened to the full diameter required. The primary trenchless construction technique activity that interacts with the offshore environment occurs when the trenchless technique breaks through the sediment (or punches out) onto the seabed. During the trenchless technique punch out, drilling fluid and cuttings may be released from the bore on to the seabed. The trenchless technique works will broadly involve the following activities:</p> <ul data-bbox="480 759 1476 1227" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mobilisation and aligning the trenchless technique rig;</li> <li>● Pilot hole drilling;</li> <li>● Forward reaming;</li> <li>● Excavation of trenchless technique pits;</li> <li>● Punch out;</li> <li>● Installation of ducts;</li> <li>● Installation of temporary rock bags (if required);</li> <li>● Demobilisation;</li> <li>● Re-excavating the trenchless technique pits and removal of rock bags (if required); and</li> <li>● Pulling of cables.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="480 1240 1476 1420">It is expected that up to two permanent cable ducts would be installed at the landfall. The method for drilling cable ducts from the trenchless technique compound to the offshore exit point is described below. There would be up to two High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) ducts installed, exiting in the nearshore (between 3 m and 6 m LAT).</p> <p data-bbox="480 1433 1476 1541">During drilling, if the bore fails, then the hole will be redrilled a short distance (up to 10 m) from the original entry point. The failed bore would not punch out or be ducted.</p> <p data-bbox="480 1554 1476 1733">Preparation activities that would be required for the cable installation are listed below, along with indicative durations. Cable route preparation may be undertaken in one single campaign along the entire length of the cable within the English Offshore Scheme or may be split and undertaken separately.</p> <ul data-bbox="480 1747 1476 2056" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-installation surveys;</li> <li>● Pre-construction Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) survey and identification (clearance excluded from the application for Development Consent but considered in the Environmental Statement (ES) for completeness);</li> <li>● Cable route preparation, Pre-Lay Grapnel Run (PLGR), boulder clearance;</li> <li>● Pre-sweeping; and</li> </ul>

Your activity	Description, notes or more information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Infrastructure crossing preparation (not planned for the Lincolnshire Water Body but within 15 km of the water body).</li> </ul> <p>It has been assumed that the cable installation within the Lincolnshire Water Body will take place over a single campaign. The activities that will comprise the campaigns are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-lay survey;</li> <li>● Cable preparation;</li> <li>● Cable installation; and</li> <li>● Post lay survey.</li> </ul> <p>There are three possible configurations for cable installation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-cut trenching – A pre-cut trenching vessel would tow a plough along the seabed creating a V-shaped trench. A separate Cable Lay Vessel (CLV) would follow, laying the cables directly into the trench. It would generally be followed by another construction support vessel towing a back-fill plough which would push the spoil heaps into the trench, covering the cables. Alternatively, the trench would be left to naturally backfill or be filled using external cable protection.</li> <li>● Simultaneous lay and burial – This technique would simultaneously create a trench excavation and lay the cable into the trench at the same time. The CLV may tow the burial equipment, or it would be deployed by another vessel following close behind, creating effectively a single large spread. The cables would be fed into the burial equipment directly from above and the cables would be buried as the spread progresses along the route.</li> <li>● Post-lay burial – The CLV would lay the cables on the seabed, and a post-lay burial vessel would follow later to bury the cables. As the post-lay burial is a stand-alone operation, the post-lay burial vessel may operate with a longer separation distance from the CLV, so there would be two operations separated physically by distance and in time.</li> </ul> <p>For the English Offshore Scheme, the maximum target burial depth is 3.5 km and the maximum width of trenches is 1.5 m. No permanent external cable protection is proposed within the Lincolnshire Water Body. Up to 20 temporary rock bags could be placed at the trenchless technique exit points, 10 per duct.</p>
Use or release of chemicals (state which ones)	<p>The landfall would be constructed using a trenchless technique (and in this location only, for the purposes of this PEIR, an open cut technique has been ruled out). It is proposed that although only two cable ducts are required for the Project at the Anderby Creek Landfall, allowance will be included within the ES and DCO for an additional trenchless technique bore, should one fail during construction. The drilling fluids that would be used for the trenchless technique are likely to be a modified bentonite, a biodegradable drilling fluid additive, a modified natural cellulosic polymer, soda ash (sodium carbonate) and a natural biodegradable polymer which does not contain synthetic polymers, and a solidification reagent (or similar). All products used would be</p>

Your activity	Description, notes or more information
	<p>certified as being environmentally friendly. Bentonite is classified by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) (scientific advisors to Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)) as posing little or no risk to the marine environment.</p> <p>The volume of drilling fluid and cuttings lost during punch out would be minimised by several factors, including the boreholes having been drilled to their maximum diameter prior to punch out and the continuous removal of drilling fluid and cuttings prior to punch out. Lower drilling fluid pumping rates would also be used during punch out to minimise the loss of drilling fluid. It is estimated that approximately 3,800 m<sup>3</sup> of drilling fluid would be released into the marine environment per duct (7,600 m<sup>3</sup> total).</p> <p>All vessels operating in the marine environment will have chemicals and hydrocarbons (fuel) onboard. Chemical and hydrocarbon use is regulated through standard legislation governing vessels.</p> <p>Environmental protection measures will be in place, secured through a DML, the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (MPCP) and Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) to prevent the release of chemicals and hydrocarbons to the marine environment.</p> <p>Other than drilling mud (bentonite), no chemicals or substances are planned to be released into the marine environment.</p>

# Plate 17.C-1 Screened in Waterbodies and Protected Areas



## Screened in Waterbodies and Protected Areas

- 17.C.3.2. As per the Clearing the Waters Guidance, all waterbodies and protected areas within 2 km of the English Offshore Scheme have been screened into this WFD compliance assessment. As presented in **Plate 17.C-1**, there are no transitional waters, nutrient sensitive areas or shellfish waters within 2 km of the Order Limits. The only coastal water body within 2 km of the draft Order Limits is the Lincolnshire Coastal Water body (**Ref 17.C.3**), see **Plate 17.C-1** and **Table 17.C-2**.

Table 17.C-2 Lincolnshire Water Body description

Water body	Description, notes, or more information
WFD water body name	Lincolnshire
Water body ID	GB640402492000
River basin district name	Anglian
Water body type (estuarine or coastal)	Coastal
Water body total area (ha)	17,047.65
Overall water body status (2015)	Moderate
Ecological status	Moderate (2022)
Chemical status	Fail
Target water body status and deadline	Moderate (2015) <sup>1</sup>
Hydromorphology status of water body	Heavily modified
Heavily modified water body and for what use	Yes, flood protection
Higher sensitivity habitats present	Chalk reef (3,560.41ha) Saltmarsh (560.97ha)
Lower sensitivity habitats present	Cobbles, gravel, and shingle (710.06ha) Intertidal soft sediment (750.13ha) Subtidal soft sediments (13,622.62ha)
Phytoplankton status	Good (2022)
History of harmful algae	Not monitored

<sup>1</sup> As per the WFD water body data available through the Clearing the Waters Guidance.

Water body	Description, notes, or more information
WFD protected areas within 2 km	<p>No nutrient sensitive areas or shellfish waters were identified within 2 km. The only Bathing Waters identified within 2 km of the Project was Huttoft and Marsh Yard Bathing Water and Anderby Bathing Water.</p> <p>The only National Site Network site identified within 2 km was Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA) (UK9020329).</p> <p>More detail on the nature of this site is provided within <b>Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2.C Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report</b> of the PEIR.</p>

## 17.C.4. Stage 2: Scoping

### Hydromorphology

- 17.C.4.1. Hydromorphology concerns the physical characteristics of estuaries and coastlines. Hydromorphology quality elements include the size, shape and structure of the water body, and the flow and quantity of water and sediment. Impacts on hydromorphology include changes to morphological conditions (e.g., variation, the seabed sediment structure) and tidal patterns (e.g., dominant currents and wave exposure). A 'high' hydromorphological status means that a water body has strong natural physical characteristics with minimal anthropogenic influence.
- 17.C.4.2. **Table 17.C-3** provides specific risk information relating to hydromorphology to determine which potential risks should be taken forward to Stage 3 – Impact Assessment, this has been informed by **Volume 1, Part 3, Chapter 17 Coastal and Marine Physical Processes**.

Table 17.C-3 Specific Risk Information - Hydromorphology

Consider if your activity:	Yes	No	Hydromorphology risk issue(s)
Could impact on the hydromorphology (for example morphology or tidal patterns) of a water body at high status	N/A	Impact assessment not required	No – as outlined in <b>Table 17.C-2</b> the hydromorphology status of the water body is heavily modified.
Could significantly impact the hydromorphology of any water body	Impact assessment required	N/A	Yes – Whilst the cables will be buried, excavations at the trenchless technique punch out and the temporary use of rock bags provide a pathway for impact on hydromorphology in the water body.
Is in a water body that is heavily modified for the same use as your activity	N/A	Impact assessment not required	No, the English Offshore Scheme is in a heavy modified water body designated for flood protection use.

## Biology

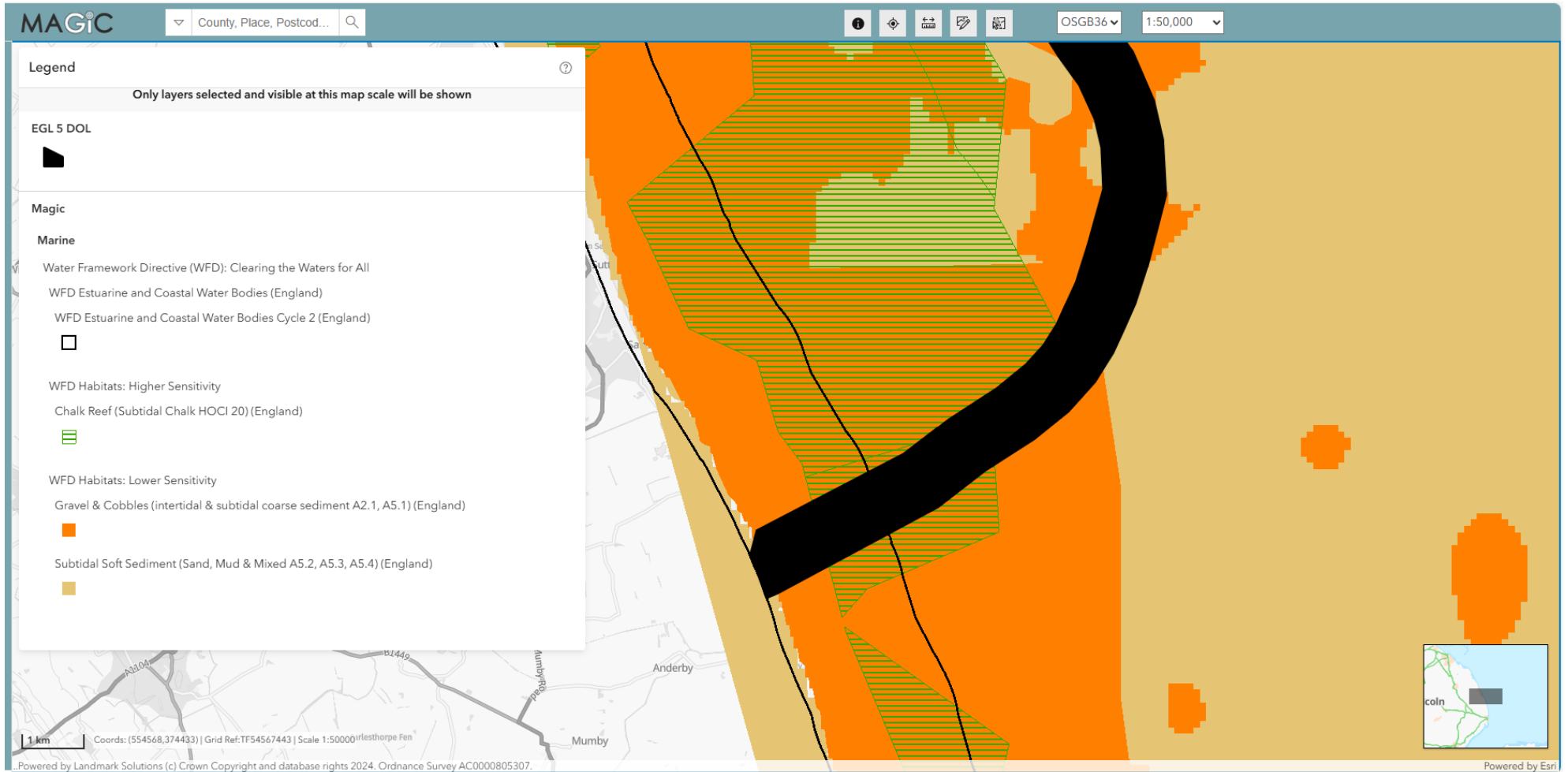
### Habitats

- 17.C.4.3. To establish the risks of the English Offshore Scheme to habitats, the Clearing the Waters Guidance (**Ref 17.C.2**) classifies habitats into higher and lower sensitivity. Higher sensitivity habitats, such as chalk reef, mussel beds, polychaete reef, subtidal kelp or seagrass beds, have a low resistance to human pressures and a lower recovery rate. Lower sensitivity habitats, such as cobbles, gravels and shingle, subtidal boulder and rocky reefs, have a medium to high resistance to human pressure, resulting in a higher recovery rate.
- 17.C.4.4. **Table 17.C-4** provides specific risk information relating to benthic habitats to determine which waterbodies and potential risks should be taken forward to Stage 3: Impact Assessment.

Table 17.C-4 Specific Risk Information - Habitats

Consider if the footprint of your activity is:	Yes	No	Biology habitats risk issue(s)
0.5 km <sup>2</sup> or larger	Requires impact assessment	N/A	Yes, the draft Order Limits overlap with the water body for 220ha (2.2 km <sup>2</sup> ). Applying the dredging multiplier results in an area of 330ha (3.3 km <sup>2</sup> ). Therefore, the maximum footprint has the potential to be over 0.5 km <sup>2</sup> .
1% or more of the water body's area	Requires impact assessment	N/A	Yes - The footprint of the draft Order Limits is 1.29% of the water body. The footprint with the dredging multiplier is 1.94%.
Within 500 m of any higher sensitivity habitat	Requires impact assessment	N/A	Yes, the draft Order Limits overlap with Chalk Reef (see <b>Plate 17.C-2</b> )
1% or more of any lower sensitivity habitat	N/A	Does not require impact assessment	No – Whilst the draft Order Limits overlap with two lower sensitivity habitats (Gravel & Cobbles and Subtidal Soft Sediment) the footprint will not impact more than 1% of this habitat (see <b>Plate 17.C-2</b> ).

Plate 17.C-2 Higher and Lower Sensitivity Habitats (Ref 17.C.5)



## Fish

- 17.C.4.5. To establish risks of the English Offshore Scheme to fish, the EA guidance requires consideration as to whether fish are at risk, but only if the activities are within an estuary or could prevent fish entering an estuary.
- 17.C.4.6. **Table 17.C-5** provides specific risk information relating to fish to determine which waterbodies and potential risks should be taken forward to Stage 3: Impact Assessment.

Table 17.C-5 Specific Risk Information - Fish

Consider if your activity:	Yes	No	Biology fish risk issue(s)
Is in an estuary and could affect fish in the estuary, outside the estuary but could delay or prevent fish entering it or could affect fish migrating through the estuary	N/A	Does not require impact assessment	Works associated with the English Offshore Scheme are not proposed in or near an estuary. No migratory impacts are predicted.
Could impact on normal fish behaviour like movement, migration, or spawning (for example creating a physical barrier, noise, chemical change or a change in depth or flow)	Requires impact assessment	N/A	The proposed activities associated with the English Offshore Scheme include geophysical surveys which will create underwater noise has the potential to impact fish behaviour. There are no physical barriers, chemical changes or hydrodynamic changes are anticipated which could impact fish behaviour.
Could cause entrainment or impingement of fish	N/A	Impact assessment not required	The proposed activities associated with the English Offshore Scheme will not cause entrainment or impingement of fish.

## 17.C.5. Water Quality

- 17.C.5.1. Water quality impacts relate to changes in water clarity, temperature salinity, nutrients, oxygen levels, nutrients and microbial patterns that occur for longer than the duration of a spring neap tidal cycle. Whether the waterbodies in question have a history of harmful algal blooms, or bad, poor or moderate phytoplankton status must also be considered within this section.
- 17.C.5.2. **Table 17.C-6** provides specific risk information relating to water quality to determine which waterbodies and potential risks should be taken forward to Stage 3: Impact Assessment.

Table 17.C-6 Specific Risk Information - Water Quality

Consider if your activity:	Yes	No	Water quality risk issue(s)
Could affect water clarity, temperature, salinity, oxygen levels, nutrients, or microbial patterns continuously for longer than a spring neap tidal cycle (about 14 days)	Requires impact assessment	N/A	Yes – The English Offshore Scheme will disturb the seabed within the water body which will cause a sediment plume. Owing to the multiple phases of proposed works this has been scoped in.
Is in a water body with a phytoplankton status of moderate, poor, or bad	N/A	Impact assessment not required	No – the summary table of the water body indicates that the Lincolnshire Water Body has a phytoplankton status of good ( <b>Table 17.C-2</b> ).
Is in a water body with a history of harmful algae	N/A	Impact assessment not required	No – the summary table of the water body indicates that the harmful algae are not monitored for the Lincolnshire Water Body ( <b>Table 17.C-2</b> ).
<b>If your activity uses or releases chemicals (for example through sediment disturbance or building works) consider if:</b>			
The chemicals are on the Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) list	Requires impact assessment	N/A	No chemicals on the EQSD list are planned to be released. However, sediment will be disturbed and released into the water column so consideration of EQSD chemicals is scoped into the Stage 3 assessment.
It disturbs sediment with contaminants above Cefas Action Level 1	Requires impact assessment	N/A	The Applicant has undertaken site specific sampling. The closest sample to the water body is “ST001”, however chemical analysis was not conducted at that sample location. Therefore, the second closest sample to the water body is “ST002”. Further details of the sampling and results are provided in <b>Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 18.B Environmental Baseline Survey Report</b> of the PEIR. At the sample location “ST002”, arsenic exceeded Cefas Action Level 1 but was below Cefas Action Level 2.

## WFD Protected Areas

- 17.C.5.3. Potential impacts to protected areas relates to any WFD protected areas that are at risk from the activities of the English Offshore Scheme. WFD protected areas include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), SPAs, shellfish waters, bathing waters and nutrient sensitive areas. All protected areas that are identified within the 2 km of the Lincolnshire Water Body that will be taken forward to Stage 3: Impact Assessment are provided in **Table 17.C-7**.

Table 17.C-7 Specific Risk Information – Protected Areas

Consider if your activity is:	Yes	No	Protected areas risk issue(s)
Within 2 km of any WFD protected area	Requires impact assessment	N/A	<p>As per <b>Plate 17.C-2</b> the following protected areas are within 2 km of the Order Limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Wash SPA (UK9020329);</li> <li>• Huttoft and Marsh Yard Bathing Water; and</li> <li>• Anderby Bathing Water.</li> </ul> <p>No special areas of conservation, shellfish water or nutrient sensitive areas are present within 2 km.</p>

## Invasive Non-Native Species

- 17.C.5.4. The accidental introduction of INNS has the potential to cause detrimental changes to habitats by out-competing native species and introducing diseases which could result in mortality.
- 17.C.5.5. **Table 17.C-8** provides specific risk information relating to INNS to determine which waterbodies and potential risks should be taken forward to Stage 3: Impact Assessment.

Table 17.C-8 Specific Risk Information – Invasive Non-Native Species

Consider if your activity could:	Yes	No	INNS risk issue(s)
Introduce or spread INNS	Requires impact assessment	N/A	<p>During construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the English Offshore Scheme, project vessels will follow all relevant guidelines (<b>Ref 17.C.6</b>). This includes using vessel cleaning facilities and the use of anti-fouling paint. Project vessels and contractors will comply with the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast water and Sediments, and all seabed deposits will be inert with no biologically active material. Project vessels</p>

Consider your activity could:	if Yes	No	INNS risk issue(s)
			<p>will complete a biosecurity risk assessment prior to arriving on site which will include factors such as origins of the vessels and ensuring that relevant equipment is cleaned before use. Compliance with Regulations should be sufficient to minimise the risk to the environment. The CEMP and Marine Pollution Contingency Plan will also be in place to minimise the spread of INNS.</p> <p>Temporary rock bags could be deposited at the trenchless technique exit point to weight down the ducts between drilling and cable pull. This could facilitate the spreads of INNS and therefore, the introduction of rock bags will be screened into the Stage 3 assessment.</p>

## Scoping Conclusions

17.C.5.6. The potential risks to receptors that the scoping exercise concluded need to be taken forward for detailed impact assessment for the Lincolnshire Water Body is provided in **Table 17.C-9**.

Table 17.C-9 Potential Risks to be Assessed in Stage 3: Impact Assessment.

Receptor	Potential risk to receptor?	Note the risk issue(s) for impact assessment
Hydromorphology	Yes	The deposit of temporary rock bags within the Lincolnshire Water Body.
Biology: habitats	Yes	Pre-installation and installation works are within the water body. The proposed works overlap Chalk Reefs.
Biology: fish	Yes	The proposed activities associated with the English Offshore Scheme include geophysical surveys which will create underwater noise.
Water quality	Yes	The generation of sediment plumes may reduce water clarity. The potential for introduction of EQSD substances and arsenic into the environment via sediment disturbance.
Protected areas	Yes	The Project is within 2 km of Greater Wash SPA, Huttoft and Marsh Yard Bathing Water and Anderby Bathing Water.
Invasive non-native species	Yes	There is the potential for temporary rock bags to be deposited within the water body and therefore there is a risk of INNS.

## Bibliography

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Ref 17.C.2 Environment Agency (2023). Water Framework Directive Assessment: Estuarine and Coastal Waters. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/water-framework-directive-assessment-estuarine-and-coastalwaters> (Accessed January 2026).

Ref 17.C.3 Environment Agency (2023). Catchment Data Explorer. Available at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/> (Accessed January 2026)

Ref 17.C.4 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2025) *State of the water environment indicator B3: supporting evidence*. GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3-supporting-evidence/state-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3-supporting-evidence> (Accessed January 2026).

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