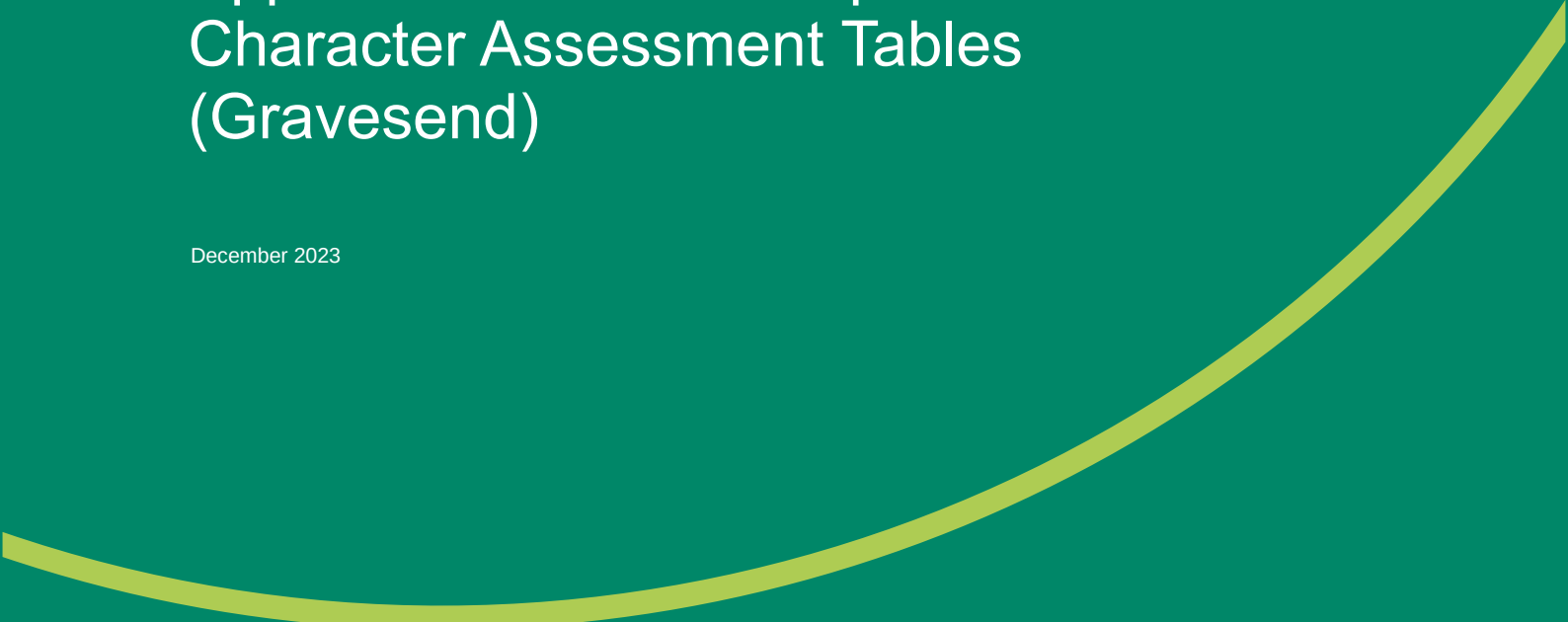


National Grid
Cable Tunnel Replacement
Project

Environmental Statement
Volume VI

Appendix 16.1 Landscape
Character Assessment Tables
(Gravesend)

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Quality information

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1 Landscape Character Assessment Tables - Gravesend

- 1.1.1 This Appendix provides details of the assessment of effects on landscape character within the study area during construction and at operation. The following tables should be read in conjunction with Figure 16.4: County and Local Landscape Character Areas - Gravesend and Figure 16.7 which contains baseline photography from a range of locations throughout the study area which aids an understanding of the baseline landscape.

Table 1: Eastern Thames Marshes: County Level Landscape Character Assessment - baseline and assessment of effects

Eastern Thames Marshes LCA			
Baseline description	This LCA covers the majority of the study area. The landform within the LCA is low-lying and is generally no higher than 10m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) within the area of the marshes. Landcover is a mixture of traditional grazing marshland, and non-agricultural land uses. The field pattern is predicated on the topography and network of traditional ditches that provide a strong and coherent ecological network whilst also providing an important functional role. The ecological significance of the marshes is recognised by ecological designations. Shorne Marshes located within the study area is one of the most valuable areas of marshland in the LCA and is managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The non-agricultural land uses include the rifle range at Eastcourt Marshes adjacent to the Site. The limited access within this area also offers some sense of wilderness. Other human made elements such as the Thames and Medway Canal also contribute to the cultural distinctiveness of the LCA. Due to the flat, open landscape the LCA is sensitive to the presence of tall structures and larger scale development which can often appear as detracting elements. These are limited within the LCA, however, urban, industrial, and infrastructure elements are prevalent located at the edges of the LCA and tend to inform the background context for the area. This includes the industrial context of the River Thames including tall cranes around Tilbury Docks and overhead lines (OHLs) that converge around the Gravesend substations are prominent. Other infrastructure is equally notable including the Gravesend Industrial Hinterland, and the Metropolitan Police Specialist Training Centre. These elements, along with the proximity of the residential areas at Gravesend and Chalk, strongly influence the landscape character. The industrial backdrop continues with longer distance views of detracting elements including shipping vessels on the River Thames and beyond to the industrial coastline at Thurrock. There are limited recreational opportunities within the LCA due to the lack of access crossing the marshes however there are promoted routes along the coastline and a National Cycle Network route that passes to the south of the study area alongside the disused Thames and Medway Canal. The proximity of the River Thames does mean that the LCA does offer functional value for water management.		
Sensitivity	Description of change	Magnitude of effect	Significance of effect
Value: Medium Susceptibility: Medium	Construction The Proposed Development and associated construction activity would occur entirely within this LCA resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct effects during construction would include some ground vegetation clearance although this would be highly localised and limited in geographical extent. The presence of construction	Small	Minor adverse

Eastern Thames Marshes LCA			
This is a largely rural landscape although with some context of development, including a network of minor roads, and is tolerant of a degree of change. Sensitivity: Medium	activity including storage of materials and Site facilities would lead to some direct land loss. This would be localised, temporary and reversible. The proximity of the Proposed Development to the existing Site, and the industrial backdrop of the River Thames, Tilbury Docks and the Gravesend Industrial Hinterland would lessen the contrast of the construction activity and represent a negligible alteration to the character. Indirect effects from the movement of plant would result in a minor alteration to the character at peripheral parts of the LCA.		
	Operation Year 1 (winter) At operation, the Proposed Development would locally extend the influence of the electrical infrastructure related development into an area of the landscape along the edge of the LCA. The location and proximity to other infrastructure would result in a negligible adverse direct affect and the scale of the landscape would be unaffected. The removal of the existing OHL would result in no net change in the aesthetic perceptual aspects upon the character. The proposed mitigation planting would start to strengthen the landcover typology of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat by extending the field ditches and creeks to the Site.	Negligible	Negligible adverse
	Operation Year 15 (summer) Proposed mitigation planting, including areas of scrub and marshland would mitigate some of the direct effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape. The design would facilitate, connect, and strengthen green links to the existing marshes using the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat.	Negligible	Negligible adverse
Hoo Peninsula LCA			
The Hoo Peninsula LCA represents a very small and peripheral part of the study area. This small part of the Hoo Peninsula LCA shares similar characteristics and landscape features with the adjacent Eastern Thames Marshes LCA , rather than the characteristics which are more representative of the wider Hoo Peninsula. Consequently this LCA has not been assessed any further.			

- 1.1.2 In addition to the county level LCA, the following assessment of effects are recorded for the Gravesham Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) for the associated Shorne and Higham Marshes LLCA and the Gravesend Townscape Urban Character Areas.

Table 2: Shorne and Higham Marshes: Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment - baseline and assessment of effects

Shorne and Higham Marshes LLCA			
Baseline description	This LLCA covers the majority of the study area. The LLCA overlaps extensively with the county level Eastern Thames Marshes LCA and therefore the key characteristics are broadly the same with some additional specific detail that is applicable to the study area. The meandering network of ditches and waterways are noted. These divide the marshes into irregular parcels of land. There is a perceptual sense of remoteness due to the lack of roads, limited enclosing vegetation and flat landform. This offers extensive views across the River Thames and to the higher ground of Kent although the flood defence mound does provide some limited screening. The cultural heritage of the LLCA is limited to the remnants of the defences put in place during the Napoleonic period to guard the entrance to the Thames from seaborne attack. Heritage elements like Shornemead Fort are unassuming structures and in semi-derelict condition. They are unexpected in the landscape and appear isolated mirroring the perceptual sense of wilderness found away from the edges of the LLCA. The entire marshland is SSSI and designated as a RAMSAR site and this does inform landscape value.		
Sensitivity	Description of change	Magnitude of effect	Significance of effect
Value: Medium Susceptibility: Medium This is a largely rural landscape although with some context of development, including a network of minor roads, and is tolerant of a degree of change.	Construction The Proposed Development and associated construction activity would occur entirely within this LCA resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct effects during construction would include some ground vegetation clearance although this would be highly localised and limited in geographical extent. The presence of construction activity including storage of materials and Site facilities would lead to some direct land loss. This would be localised, temporary and reversible. The proximity of the Proposed Development to the existing Site, and the industrial backdrop of the River Thames, Tilbury Docks and the Gravesend Industrial Hinterland would lessen the contrast of the construction activity and represent a negligible alteration to the character. Indirect effects from the movement of plant would result in a minor alteration to the character at peripheral parts of the LCA.	Small	Minor Adverse
	Operation Year 1 (winter) At operation, the Proposed Development would locally extend the influence of the electrical infrastructure related development into an area of the landscape along the edge of the LCA. The location and proximity to other infrastructure would result in a negligible direct affect and the scale of the landscape would be unaffected. The removal of the existing OHL would result in no net change in the aesthetic perceptual aspects upon the character, although the Proposed Development would appear set further back from the sea defence mound reducing the impact upon the extensive views across the River Thames which is a characteristic of this LCA. The proposed mitigation planting would start to strengthen the landcover typology of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat by extending the field ditches and creeks to the Site.	Negligible	Negligible Adverse

Shorne and Higham Marshes LLCA			
	Operation Year 15 (summer) Proposed mitigation planting, including areas of scrub and marshland would mitigate some of the direct effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape. The design would facilitate, connect, and strengthen green links to the existing marshes using the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat.	Negligible	Negligible Adverse
Higham Arable Farmland LLCA			
The Higham Arable Farmland LLCA is largely superimposed over the Hoo Peninsula LCA within the study area and therefore this appraisal at the local level for the Higham Arable Farmland LLCA is considered equivalent to the above statement at the county level. The appraisal of the Higham Arable Farmland LLCA has not been further analysed in this assessment.			

Table 3: Gravesend Townscape Urban Character Areas: Local Townscape Character Assessment – baseline and assessment of effects

Gravesend Townscape Urban Character Areas (UCAs) (Inter/Post War Suburbs UCA, the Victorian/Edwardian Suburbs UCA, the Modern Suburbia UCA, and the Industrial Hinterland UCA)			
Baseline description	The Proposed Development is located within the Industrial Hinterland UCA. Industrial land use dominates this UCA and all landscape elements are of negligible quality or value. Whilst the area has a distinctive character, it is due to the industrial and commercial elements present along the skyline. There would be no loss or change to landscape elements or characteristics within the remaining UCAs within the study area as the Proposed Development is not located within these. Whilst some of these UCAs have extensive views which is an aspect of their character, the Industrial Hinterland UCA is a constant and noticeable backdrop. As a result, potential effects on the setting and perceptual qualities of these UCAs would be limited.		
Sensitivity	Description of change	Magnitude of effect	Significance of effect
Value: Low Susceptibility: Low These areas comprise the urban townscape and industrial edge to Gravesend that is set against the industrial and commercial background of the River Thames and Tilbury Docks. Changing infrastructure along the skyline is constant making these UCAs tolerant of a large degree of the type of change proposed. Sensitivity: Low	Construction There would be no loss or change to landscape elements within these UCAs. There would be a small but localised indirect change to the setting and perceptual aspects of the character through the introduction of taller elements such as cranes, but these would be highly localised and as they are already part of the key characteristics of these areas, there would be a barely perceptual change.	Negligible	Neutral
	Operation Year 1 (winter) At operation, the Proposed Development would not change or alter the perceptual and aesthetic characteristics of these UCAs due to distance and the existing baseline characteristics.	Negligible	Neutral
	Operation Year 15 (summer) As operation year 1.	Negligible	Neutral

