



Morocco-UK Power Project Statement of Community Consultation

16 May 2024 to 27 June 2024

Morocco-UK Power Project

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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Introduction

OVERVIEW

Xlinks 1 Ltd ('Xlinks') is inviting feedback from the local community on the elements of the Morocco-UK Power Project (the 'Project') which are in the UK (the 'Proposed Development') and which will connect into the National Grid at Alverdiscott substation in Devon, as part of a public consultation from 16 May 2024 to 27 June 2024.

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), sets out how we plan to consult with the local community. It includes details on:

- The Proposed Development and developer information
- The planning process
- Our approach to community consultation
- What we will be consulting on
- Who we will be consulting
- How we will consult the local community
- How we will publicise the consultation
- The consultation arrangements
- What we will do with feedback from the consultation

WHY ARE WE PUBLISHING THIS DOCUMENT?

The elements of the Project in the UK (the 'Proposed Development') require development consent from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (the 'Secretary of State') via a Development Consent Order (DCO). We have therefore published this document, in line with the requirements of section 47 of that Act and regulation 12 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, to help people understand how we will seek their views on the Proposed Development. We very much want feedback from the local community on our proposals and this document sets out the different ways you can find out more and respond.

The Applicant

ABOUT US

Xlinks is the company behind the Morocco-UK Power Project. We are a private business, headquartered in the UK and made up of team of power industry leaders driven by an ambition to change the way we think about low carbon energy. Our team includes the technical and project leads who delivered the North Sea Link, currently the longest subsea interconnector in the world.

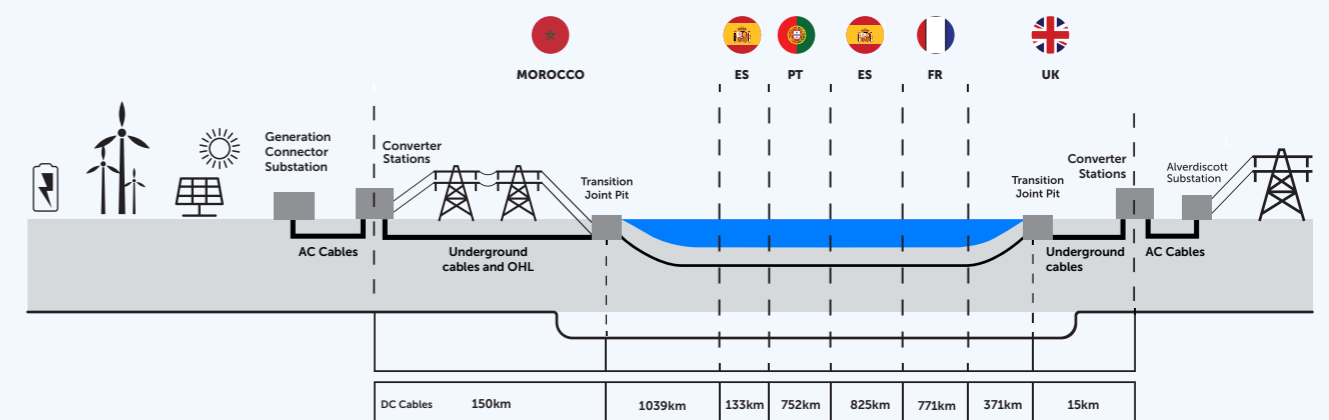
Once complete, the project will be capable of supplying around 8% of Great Britain's electricity needs.

ABOUT THE MOROCCO-UK POWER PROJECT

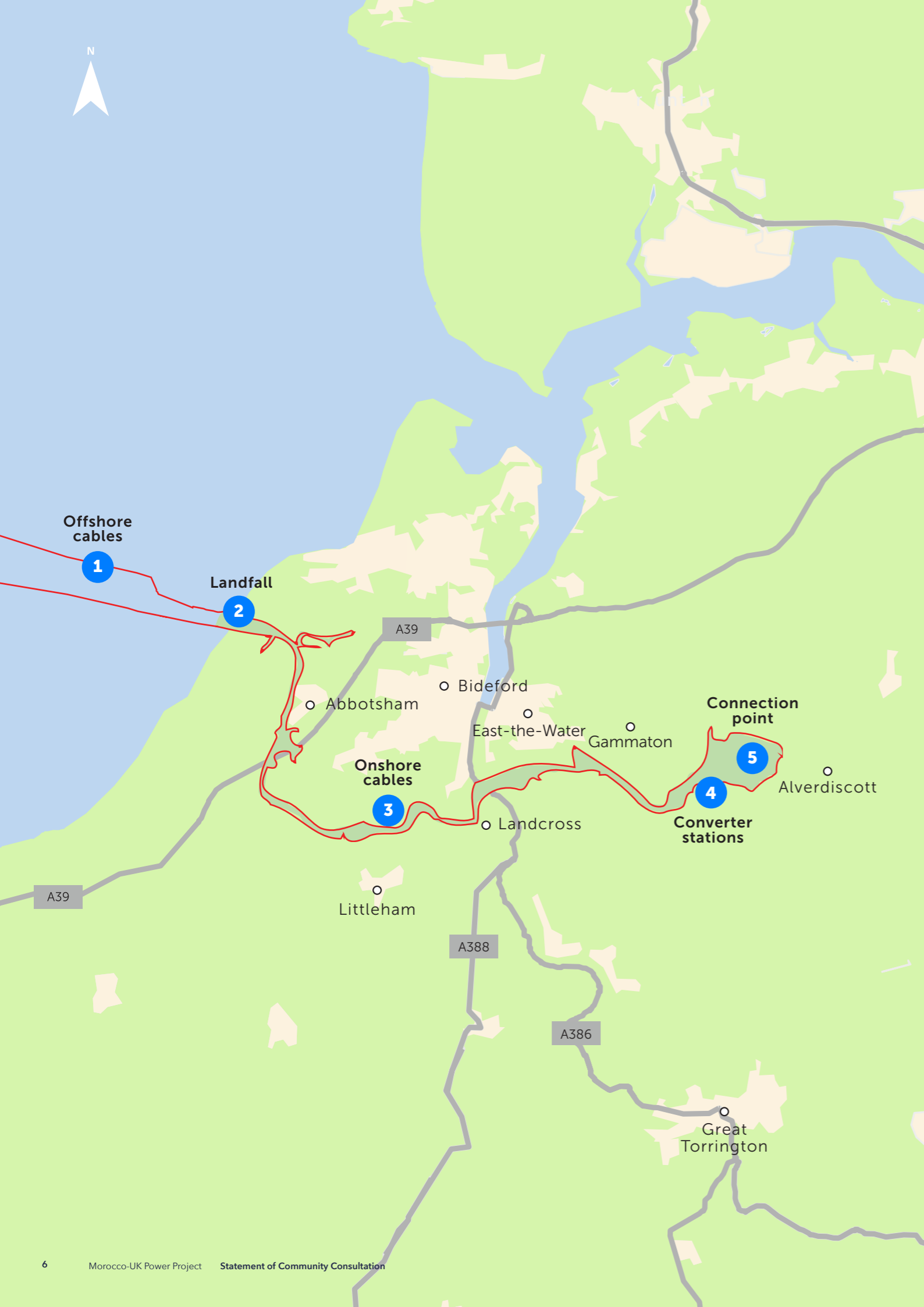
The Project proposes a new electricity generation facility entirely powered by solar and wind energy combined with a battery storage facility. Located in Morocco's renewable energy rich region of Guelmim-Oued Noun, it intends to be connected exclusively to Great Britain via approximately 4000km (2485 miles) of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) sub-sea cables.

This Project would deliver 3.6 gigawatts (GW) of reliable wind and solar energy to Great Britain for 19+ hours a day on average. This is enough to provide affordable, clean power to the equivalent of over 7 million British homes and once complete, the Project would be capable of supplying 8% of Great Britain's electricity needs.

This would complement the energy we already generate from the sun and wind in the UK. When domestic renewable energy generation in the United Kingdom drops due to low winds and short periods of sun, the Project can provide access to the benefits of long hours of sun and consistent winds in Morocco to provide a firm but flexible source of zero-carbon electricity. The inclusion of a 22.5GWh/5GW battery facility in Morocco means this energy would be reliably available when it's needed in Great Britain.



Overview of the Morocco-UK Power Project



Within the UK, the Proposed Development comprises:

- 1 Offshore cables**
Electricity would move between Morocco and the UK along four cables buried under the seabed. This would use proven HVDC technology which is already used to transport electricity between the UK and other parts of Europe. The approximate length of the cable corridor in UK waters is 370km.
- 2 Landfall**
The cables are proposed to come ashore at Cornborough Range, about 2.5km south of Westward Ho! and 4km west of Bideford. The offshore cables would join a set of onshore cables here. This would take place underground in a safe and secure casing called a 'joint bay'.
- 3 Onshore cables**
Four cables are proposed to run between the landfall at Cornborough Range and the converter stations. These would all be buried underground in pairs. We have carefully considered feedback from previous consultations, as well as potential environmental impacts, in proposing the route for the cables. For example, the planned cable route now avoids Abbotsham Village.
- 4 Converter stations**
We need to convert electricity from the HVDC used to transport it efficiently from Morocco to High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) before it can be used in this country's electricity system and our homes.
- 5 Connection point**
The Project would connect into the National Grid via a new substation adjacent to the existing Alverdiscott Substation. This would allow for the onward transmission of 3.6GW of electricity to where it's needed in the country. 12 HVAC cables would link the converter stations to the substation.

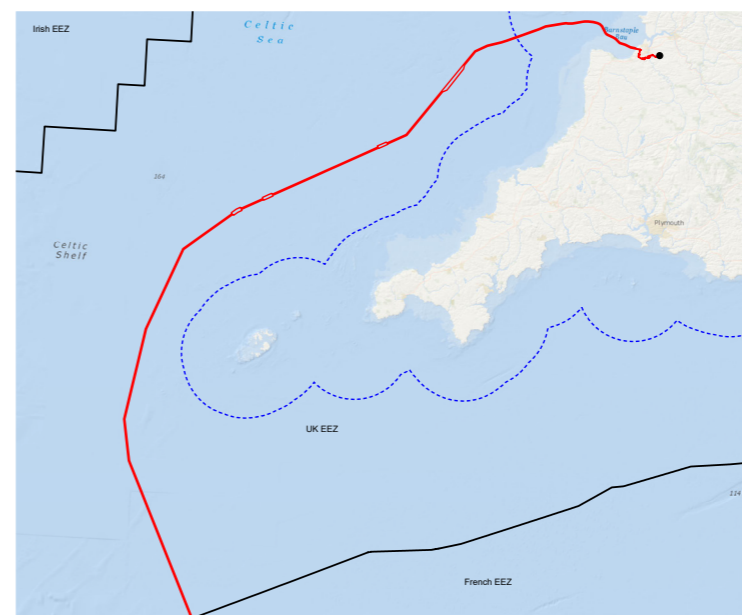


Figure 2: The UK elements of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development presented through this consultation has been informed by two previous rounds of public consultation, in November 2022 and April-May 2023. Changes made in response to feedback from the community included moving the proposed converter station site to the Old Webbery Showground and diverting the cable route to the west of Abbotsham.



The planning process

WHY DOES THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT REQUIRE A DCO?

The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (the 'Secretary of State') recognised in September 2023 that the Proposed Development is Nationally Significant and therefore is development requiring development consent under the Planning Act 2008. This was because:

- The 3.6 gigawatts (GW) of low carbon electricity it would deliver to the UK's grid could improve the security and diversity of the UK's electricity supply.
- It could play an important role in enabling an energy system that meets the UK's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and the Government's objectives to create a secure, reliable and affordable energy supply for consumers.
- Progressing the development as an NSIP would provide the certainty of a single, unified consenting process and fixed timescales.

Unlike planning applications, which are considered by local authorities, DCO applications are made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). This independent body administers the application process on behalf of the relevant Secretary of State – who makes the final decision on the application.

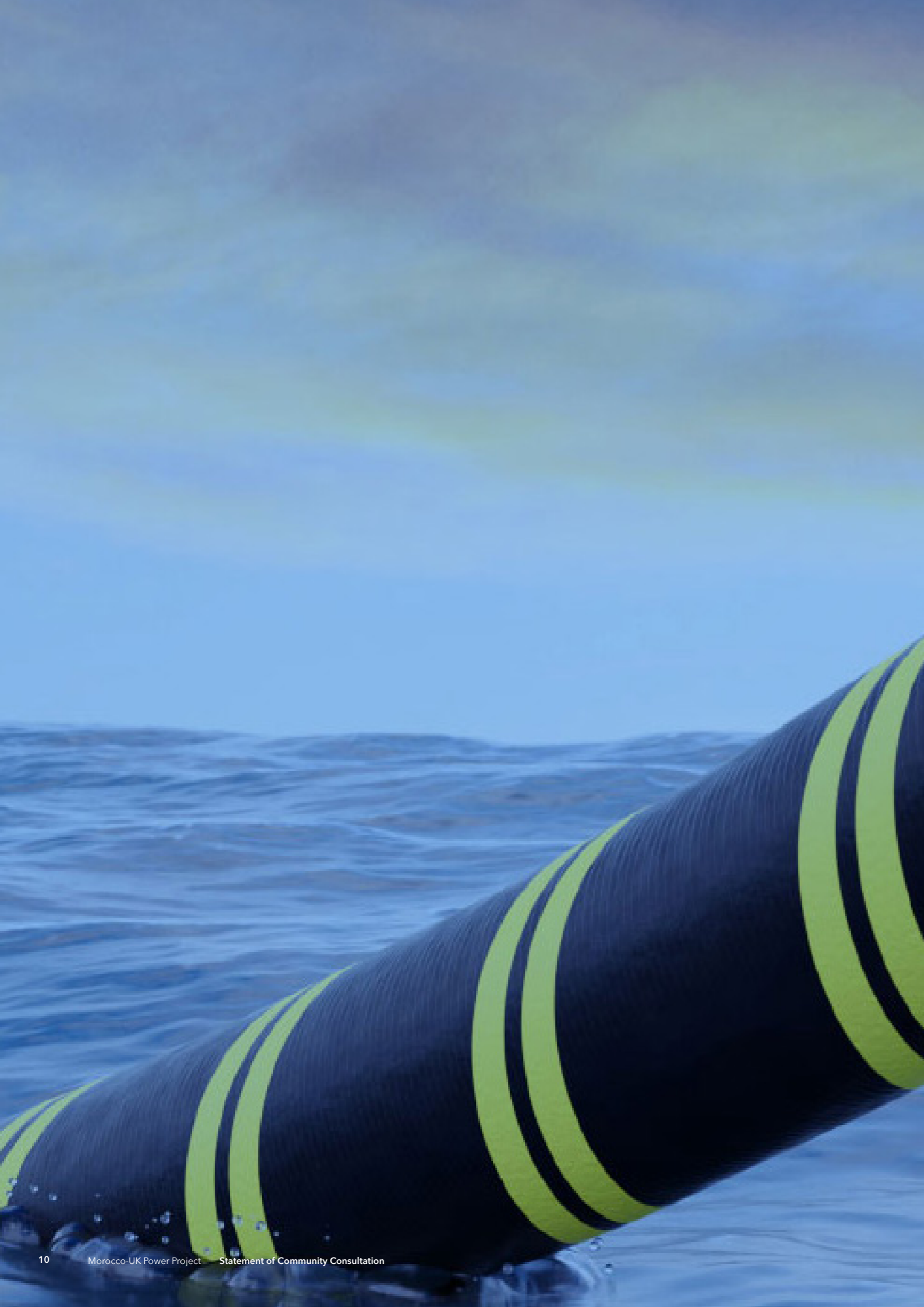
For the Proposed Development, the decision will be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

PINS has produced a guide to the application process for members of the public. This is available on its website: <https://infrastructure.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8.0.pdf>

Figure 3 shows each stage of the planning process for NSIPs.

Figure 3: The planning process for NSIPs





The Planning Act 2008 and consultation

DCO applications are governed by a fixed, statutory process, which requires us to:

- Consult with persons with specified interests in the land to which the Proposed Development relates, and certain bodies as prescribed under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.
- Consult the local community under section 47 of the Planning Act 2008.
- Publicise the proposals locally and nationally under section 48 of the Planning Act 2008.

This means we are following a well-established and clear process to develop our proposals. This provides a fixed role for local authorities, including reviewing and commenting on this SoCC and responding to our proposals as a statutory consultee.

We will meet these requirements for consultation by holding what is known as a statutory consultation. We are publishing this document before the statutory consultation to help local people understand how they can find out more and share their views. We will use the feedback that we receive during the statutory consultation to help us develop our final proposals for the Proposed Development, before submitting our DCO application.

As part of our DCO application, we will submit a Consultation Report detailing our approach to consultation, the feedback that we received during the statutory consultation, and how we have had regard to it. This means we will explain how we have considered feedback – either to update our proposals or to explain where this has not been appropriate.

When considering our DCO application, the Secretary of State will consider whether the consultation that we have undertaken has been adequate, including whether we have had due regard to consultation feedback.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

The Proposed Development counts as EIA development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and so we are also carrying out an EIA in line with these. This involves assessing any likely significant environmental effects from our proposals and, where appropriate, proposing mitigation. We have already sought advice from PINS and stakeholders on how we should assess potential environmental impacts from the Proposed Development. PINS has set out the results of this process in a document called a Scoping Opinion. This is available online at the following location:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010164/EN010164-000008-EN010164-Scoping%20Opinion.pdf>

As part of the statutory consultation, we will share preliminary findings of our EIA and our initial proposals for mitigation through a document called a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The PEIR will be publicised and consulted upon during the statutory consultation in the same way described in this document for the other consultation materials included in that consultation.

Following the consultation, we will finalise our assessments and report on them in a document called an Environmental Statement (ES). This will form part of our DCO application.

FIND OUT MORE

You can find more information about the Planning Act 2008, PINS and its role and how to participate in the DCO process on the PINS National Infrastructure Planning website: www.infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ or by calling PINS on **0303 444 5000**

Consulting the community

OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

We are inviting the community living in the vicinity of the Proposed Development to take part in the statutory consultation and provide feedback on our proposals. Through consultation, we want to:

- Ensure that those potentially affected by our proposals have ample opportunity to understand them and provide their views.
- Gain useful feedback on the Proposed Development which will help improve our design and EIA process.
- Comply with the requirements set by the Planning Act 2008 for development of this type.

In this period of statutory public consultation, we will make information about our plans available, including details of our advanced design proposals. This will be an opportunity for members of the community to influence the Proposed Development by submitting feedback.

We are inviting the community living in the vicinity of the Proposed Development to take part in the statutory consultation and provide feedback on our proposals.

DEVELOPING OUR APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

We have already consulted extensively with the community on our proposals for the Proposed Development. This has included two rounds of consultation already, in November 2022 and March-April 2023.

These have informed the approach to consultation set out in this document, by:

- Highlighting key local stakeholders, including residents.
- Establishing the most appropriate locations to hold public consultation events.
- Identifying the issues of most concern to residents and interested parties.

In addition, we have consulted with Torridge District Council and Devon County Council as host authorities as defined by section 43(1) of the Planning Act 2008 on the development of this SoCC. We have also sought views from North Devon Council given the proximity of parts of the Proposed Development to its administrative area.

Table 1 on page 13 summarises comments received from these authorities through the consultation and how we have had regard to them in developing the SoCC.

Table 1: Regard had to local authority comments on the draft SoCC

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK	REGARD HAD
The use of diagrams, maps etc in the SoCC and future consultation documents to establish the context of the proposal and the NSIP process is encouraged.	Diagrams are included at figures 1, 2 and 3 in this document to explain the planning process and the proposals. Further use will be made throughout consultation materials.
It is recommended that Table 3 is edited to show Zone 2 as receivers on newsletters.	Table 3 has been updated to reflect this comment.
Events should be planned to be held at different dates and times to cater for everyone and that this is set out in writing within the SoCC itself. This should include more than one webinar.	Events are planned for a variety of times and dates, including more than one webinar. These are set out in Table 4.
Direct engagement is offered to community and voluntary organisations, should parish councils within Zones 1 & 2 also be offered direct engagement?	Yes. Table 3 has been updated to reflect this comment.
The SoCC should be clearer about the purpose of deposit points.	These are places in and around consultation zones 1 and 2 where consultation documents will be made available to view. The language in the section on consultation materials and around the list of deposit points has been updated to make this clear.comment.
The use of social media should be considered to publicise and attract engagement with the project – at present, the statement only looks to utilise social media platforms of other organisations	Table 3 has been updated to make it clear that the consultation will be publicised through social media advertising.
Consultation could inform legacy points for the Proposed Development.	Additional detail has been provided in the section above on the Planning Act 2008 and consultation.
Please could you clarify within the SoCC what the difference will be between a public exhibition event and a public consultation event.	Public consultation event refers to all events taking place during the consultation, including exhibitions and webinars. Public exhibitions refers to in-person, drop-in information events.
The SoCC should make clear how the event regarding the Proposed Development offshore will reach all relevant audiences.	We will promote this event directly to marine users by email and post, as well as publicising it in the Fishing News and Lloyds List.
Some proposed document deposit points have closed or are not available.	We have updated the list of document deposit points reflecting venue availability.

WHAT WILL WE BE CONSULTING ON?

During the statutory consultation, we will be asking for views on:

- The Proposed Development.
- The short-term and long-term effects of the Proposed Development including:
 - Construction impacts.
 - Environmental impacts.
 - Operational impacts.

The Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

WHO WILL WE CONSULT?

We will consult widely in accordance with this SoCC and encourage participation in the consultation from any person or group who is interested in the Proposed Development within the geographic areas set out in Table 2.

We have defined a series of ‘zones of consultation’ for publicising the consultation directly to the local community for the purposes of section 47 of the Planning Act 2008. This recognises that the levels of potential impact and interest are likely to vary with geography. We will use different consultation techniques within each zone.

These zones are set out in Table 2 alongside a map of the zone 1 and 2 consultation area in Figure 4.

We will also continue our engagement and consult with a range of statutory consultees as set out by section 42 and section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations.

Zone 1	People living and working within an area of 1.5 miles from the converter station site.
Zone 2	People living and working within an area of 0.5 miles from the onshore cable route from the converter stations to landfall.
Zone 3	People living and working in the administrative areas of Torrridge District Council, Devon County Council and North Devon Council outside of zones 1 and 2.
Zone 4	People with an interest in the offshore parts of the Proposed Development.

Table 2: Zones of consultation

Figure 4: Property counts in consultation zones 1 and 2

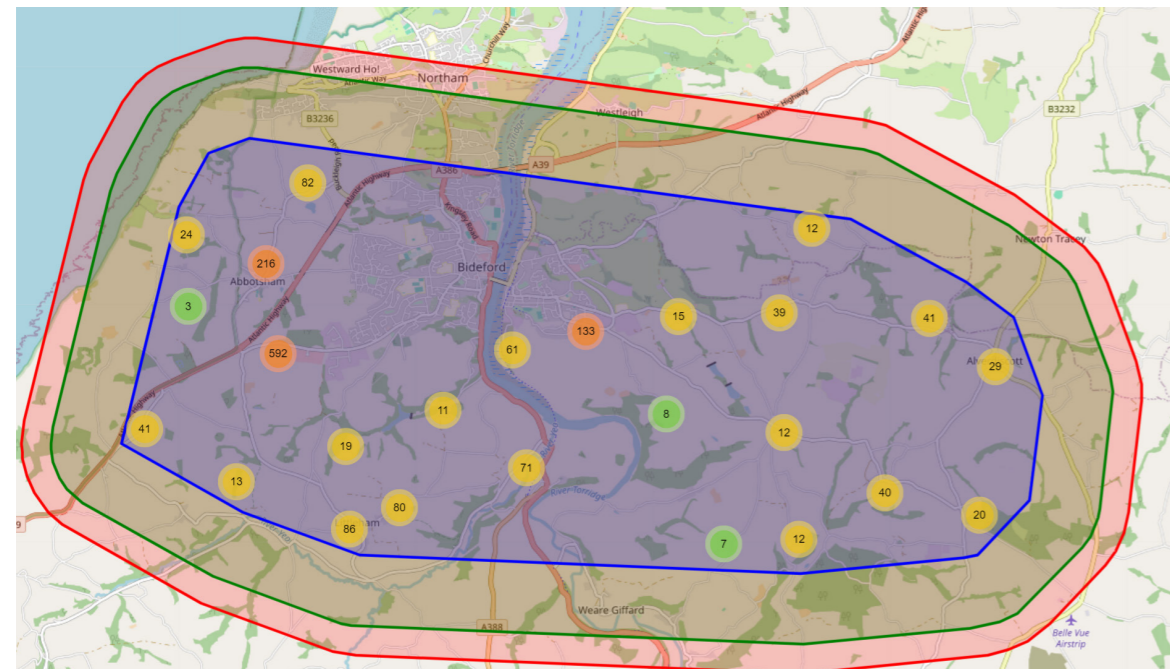


Table 3: Zones of consultation

How we will publicise the consultation	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Writing to all addresses within the zone	✓	✓		
Writing to elected representatives, parish and town councils and community groups within the zone with details of the consultation	✓	✓		
Sharing a poster with consultation details with parish councils and community groups within the zone	✓	✓		
Writing to the Leader and Chief Executive of local authorities within the zone	✓	✓	✓	
Publicising the consultation in the North Devon Gazette, Devon Live and Fishing News	✓	✓	✓	✓
Publicising the consultation via regional and local broadcasters including BBC Radio Devon	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advertising the consultation online and through social media advertising	✓	✓	✓	✓
How we consult				
Sending a newsletter summarising the Proposed Development and how to take part in the consultation	✓	✓		
Holding public exhibitions at the venues listed in Table 4 in or close to the zone	✓	✓		
Providing copies of consultation materials for review at the locations ('deposit points') listed in Table 5 and online via a dedicated page on the Proposed Development website	✓	✓		
Contacting parish and town councils, community and voluntary organisations within the zone to offer direct engagement	✓	✓		
Inviting elected representatives to take part in briefings	✓	✓	✓	
Publication of consultation information online at a dedicated page on the Proposed Development website	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inviting enquiries and responses online through the consultation website, by freephone, freepost or email	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hosting webinars with a presentation about the proposals and a Q&A session online during the consultation period	✓	✓	✓	✓

CHANGES TO CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

It may be necessary to publicise changes to specific consultation arrangements during the consultation period – for example, should we need to provide updated information about the timing or venue for a consultation event. If this is the case, we will publicise the change in arrangements using the methods set out for the relevant consultation zone in Table 3.

CONSULTATION MATERIALS

We will produce a range of materials providing information as part of the consultation:

- A consultation newsletter.
- A consultation booklet.
- A consultation questionnaire.
- Information boards (for public exhibitions).
- A presentation to be delivered online as part of the webinar.
- Plans and maps showing the Proposed Development.
- A Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

Copies of consultation information will be made available for review free of charge online at the consultation page on the Proposed Development website and at publicly accessible locations in consultation zones 1 and 2 ('deposit points'), as well as on a USB key on request. Hard copies of the newsletter and consultation booklet will also be made available on request using the contact details in this document.

COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK

To capture participants' feedback, we will produce a consultation questionnaire inviting comments on the different elements of the Proposed Development. It will be available online through the consultation page on the Proposed Development website, at public exhibitions and at deposit points. Consultees will be able to respond during the consultation period by completing a questionnaire online or returning a completed questionnaire using the contact details set out in this document. Pre-addressed Freepost envelopes will also be made available on request.

SELDOM HEARD AUDIENCES

It is important to ensure that consultation is inclusive and enables participation from a wide range of audiences, including those who are seldom heard in public consultation such as young people, people with disabilities and those for whom English is not a first language. We will do this by:

- Making provision for people who do not have access to the internet through the consultation programme. This includes the public exhibitions.
- Choosing accessible venues for public information points and the public exhibitions.
- Producing our consultation materials in accessible formats on request.
- Contacting the community and voluntary organisations set out in Appendix 1, to offer direct engagement and sharing a consultation information pack designed to support them in promoting consultation through their own existing communication channels such as social media feeds.
- Providing a variety of communication channels including a Freephone number, email address and Freepost address for those seeking information.

Consultation arrangements

HOW TO TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION

The statutory public consultation on the Proposed Development will take place between 16 May 2024 and 27 June 2024.

CONSULTEES CAN FIND OUT MORE BY:

- Contacting us on hello@xlinks.co or **0800 038 3486**
- Attending a public exhibition at the following dates and times:

Table 4: Exhibition venues

Venue	Date and time
Abbotsham Village Hall, Abbotsham, Bideford EX39 5AP	Monday, 20 May 2024, 4pm - 8pm
Alverdiscott Village Hall, Stoney Cross, Bideford EX39 4PZ	Tuesday, 21 May 2024, 4pm - 8pm
Pollyfield Community Centre, Avon Rd, Bideford EX39 4BL	Thursday, 30 May 2024, 1pm - 5pm
Huntshaw Parish Hall, Huntshaw, Torrington EX38 7HH	Friday, 31 May 2024, 11am - 3pm

- Attending webinars at the following dates and times: 6pm - 7.30pm on 29 May 2024 and 5 June 2024
- Attending an event regarding the offshore elements of the Proposed Development from 12.30pm - 4.30pm on 22 May 2024 at the Caddsdwn Business Centre, Caddsdwn Industrial Park, Clovelly Rd, Bideford EX39 3BE
- Reading a newsletter summarising our proposals. We will send a copy of the newsletter to all addresses in consultation zones 1 and 2. The newsletter will also be available from a dedicated website page on the Proposed Development and on request.
- Reading a consultation booklet summarising our proposals, the PEIR and other consultation documents by going to the dedicated consultation page on the Proposed Development website xlinks.co/devon and the following deposit points in the local area:

Table 5: Document deposit points*

Northam Library Fore St, Northam, Bideford EX39 1AW	Pollyfield Community Centre Avon Rd, Bideford EX39 4BL
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Details of opening hours when documents will be able to view at locations in the local area will be available on our website and in the consultation newsletter. Should document deposit points be unavailable through circumstances beyond our control, we will consider making alternative arrangements.

Copies of consultation documents on USBs, as well as hard copies of the consultation booklet, consultation questionnaire and consultation newsletter, will be made available free of charge on request.

Given the size of the document, requests for hard copies of the PEIR will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. To cover printing costs a reasonable charge may apply, to be paid by the recipient, up to a maximum of £750 for the whole suite.

Responding to the consultation

We welcome feedback on our proposals for the Proposed Development. Anyone can share their views by:

- Completing a consultation questionnaire online at our website.
- Returning a questionnaire to Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project consultation, **FREEPOST SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL** or **hello@xlinks.co**
- Submitting their comments by email to **hello@xlinks.co** or in writing to the above Freepost address.

Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 23:59 on 27 June 2024.

HOW WE WILL CONSIDER THE RESPONSES

Following the statutory consultation, we will consider all the views that we receive and continue to develop our design for the Proposed Development ahead of submitting our DCO application to the Secretary of State. Our DCO application will include a Consultation Report setting out how we have had regard to all responses received.

Any comments received will be collected and processed by Xlinks and its appointed agents in accordance with its privacy policy: <https://xlinks.co/privacy-policy/> and the relevant data protection legislation. However, please be aware that responses will be used in connection with the application and that copies may be made available in due course to the Secretary of State, PINS and made public. PINS has also published details of how it manages comments received in a Privacy Notice available on its website:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879604/Privacy_Notice_Final_15042020.pdf

FURTHER CONSULTATION (IF APPLICABLE)

If, following the statutory consultation, we consider it to be necessary to undertake further targeted statutory consultation, this would be undertaken, so far as relevant and proportionate, in accordance with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Phone: **0800 038 3486**

Email: **hello@xlinks.co**

Website: **xlinks.co/devon**

Post: **Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project consultation, FREEPOST SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL**

Appendix 1

LIST OF SELDOM HEARD CONSULTEES FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Gateway groups

Barnstaple Library
Bideford Library
Citizens Advice - Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon (formerly CAB)
Devon Advocacy Consortium
Devon Communities Together
North Devon Homes (NDH)
Pollyfield Community Centre
Rotary Club of Bideford
Torridge Community and Voluntary Sector

Age

Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon
Alverdiscott Young Farmers Club
Bideford Youth Centre
Bright Futures
Torridge Help at Home
Young Devon

Disability

Clarity
Devon Disability Network
Devon In Sight
Devon Link Up
Devon Mind
Devon People First
Headway Devon
North Devon and Torridge Disability Access

Forum

North Devon Forum for Autistic Spectrum Conditions and ADHD
RNIB
RNID

Homelessness

Encompass South West
Pregnancy and maternity
North Devon Children's Centre

Race

Devon Grapevine and Olive Tree
Sunrise Diversity

Religion or belief

Abbotsham Baptist Chapel
CoE Deanery of Barnstaple
Littleham Methodist Church
North Devon Islamic Culture Centre

Sexuality

Intercom Trust
Sunrise Diversity

Schools, FE and HE institutions

Atlantic Academy
Bideford College
Great Torrington School
Holsworthy Community College
Petroc College

Local authority

Torridge District Council economic development team
Devon County Council economic development team
North Devon Council economic development team
Devon County Council Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Service
Devon County Council Library Service



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