

Application Reference: EN010151

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Document: Response to Applicant Responses to relevant Representations [RR-026]

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## **Table of Contents**

Section	Page
1. Failure to Properly Consider Alternative Cable Routes and Site Selection	
1.1 Overview	2
1.2 Cable Route Appraisal – Ecological Proximity Claims	3
1.2.1 Mischaracterisation of Land Offers and “Connection Date” Claim	3
1.3 “On Top Of” vs “Run Adjacent To”	3
1.4 Non-Contiguity and Land-Interest Claims	4
1.5 Unused Headroom and Strategic Integration Potential	5
1.6 Cumulative Corridor Impacts on LWS 4722 and Viking Link	5
1.7 Conclusion on Alternatives	5
2. Environmental Impacts	
2.1 Overview	6
2.2 Soil Baseline and OSMP Deficiencies	6
2.3 Viking Link Baseline Evidence	6
2.4 Countryside Stewardship (AB1) at CC4	7
2.5 Lack of Comparative Land-Take / Sterilisation Analysis	7
2.6 Strategic PV Sterilisation Considerations	8
2.7 Conclusion and Requested Direction	8
3. Impact on Intended Commercial and Infrastructure Proposals	
3.1 Overview	8
3.2 Data Centre and Glasshouse Power Demand	8
3.3 Strategic Land Use Coordination (EN-1 §§4.5.1–4.5.3)	9
3.4 Credibility of Proposals	9
3.5 Avoidable Conflict Through Routing	9
3.6 Policy Context – EN-1 §5.11.8 and Footnote 252	9
3.7 Conclusion and Requested Direction	9

4. Consultation and Procedural Matters	
4.1 Unaddressed Issues Since 2021	10
4.2 Gaps in Consultation Report	10
4.3 Repeated Engagement Without Resolution	10
4.4 Matters Outstanding for Examination	11
4.5 Need for Rule 17 Directions	11
5. Conclusion	
5.1 Outstanding Deficiencies	11
5.2 Strength of LCJMF Alternatives	11
5.3 Material Gaps Persist	11
5.4 Directions Sought	12
5.5 Ongoing Right to Comment	12

This Deadline 2 submission should be read alongside LCJMF’s *Supplementary Exhibits Volume (ExD2.1 – ExD2.20)*, submitted under separate cover. The exhibits compile the spatial, ecological, hydrological, and technical evidence referenced throughout this document, including cable corridor comparison figures, soils baseline evidence, and ecological proximity plans. Each exhibit is clearly numbered and cross-referenced within the text for ease of navigation.

## 1. Failure to Properly Consider Alternative Cable Routes and Site Selection

### 1.1 Overview

The Applicant’s Deadline 1 response (10 October 2025) to RR-026 relies heavily on assertions that its site-selection and cable-routing appraisal have fully satisfied national policy (EN-1 §§ 4.3–4.4) and the EIA Regulations 2017. It also asserts that LCJMF’s proposed alternative sites and cable route are less suitable. LCJMF does not accept these assertions.

While EN-1 § 4.3.9 confirms there is no general obligation to establish that the proposed project is the “best option” from a policy perspective, this does not displace the statutory requirement under Regulation 14(2)(d) of the EIA Regulations 2017 to describe reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant, or the policy requirement under EN-1 § 4.4.3 for a proportionate, evidence-based comparison. LCJMF’s 2021 and 2023 offers were formally submitted during the design-evolution period and therefore constitute “reasonable alternatives” for the purposes of Regulation 14(2)(d).

LCJMF made two formal land offers providing realistic, BMV-appropriate, policy-aligned alternatives located approximately 2.7 km from the Bicker Fen point of connection:

- LCJMF Nov 2021 Offer – 516 acres of Grade 3a/3b land offered for PV/BESS siting, designed to provide a closer and more efficient grid connection than Beacon Fen South.
- LCJMF Aug 2023 Offer – 618 acres structured to align with the Applicant’s post-BFS 600 MW solar / 600 MW BESS configuration, comprising (ExD2.4 and ExD2.5) –
  - three Great Hale Fen blocks (**78 acres** separated by 180 metres to **150 acres** separated by 800 metres to **190 acres**) all within LCJMF owned land and with LCJMF offering to bridge this gap internally to eliminate any “non-contiguity”.
  - one 200 acre block in Little Hale Fen

These offers were made before and after the withdrawal of Beacon Fen South. The Applicant has not undertaken the proportionate, evidence-based comparison required by EN-1 § 4.4.3 and Reg. 14(2)(d) of the EIA Regulations.

Instead, it relies on selective extracts from its Site Selection Report (APP-277) and Cable Route Corridor Appraisal (APP-079), supported only by generalised statements regarding “non-contiguity” and “LWS proximity” that are not evidenced spatially.

The remainder of this section addresses in turn why the Applicant’s ecological and routing objections to LCJMF’s hybrid alignment are unfounded.

## **1.2 Cable Route Appraisal – Ecological Proximity Claims**

The Applicant asserts (Appendix 3.1 § 5.1.10) that LCJMF’s proposed hybrid cable route would have “greater impact than those for the Applicant’s Cable Route Corridor given the proximity of multiple LWSs.” This mischaracterises the ecological interface. The key distinction is longitudinal versus perpendicular alignment:

- Applicant’s preferred corridor runs longitudinally for approximately 1.19 km directly adjacent to LWS 4722, with Construction Compound 4 located just 70 m away (ExD2.1). LWS 4722 is hydrologically linked to a 7.20 acre woodland block and includes 0.43 ha of AB1 Nectar Flower Mix under LCJMF’s Countryside Stewardship Agreement, forming a continuous ecological corridor (ExD2.2). This corridor would experience sustained longitudinal disturbance during construction and operation due to the 45° alignment of the 30 m trenching corridor and separate haul road.
- LCJMF hybrid route avoids this corridor entirely. It involves a single perpendicular crossing of Old Forty Foot Drain (LWS 4490), maintains a 177 m stand-off from Willow Farm Drain (LWS 4520), and a 262 m stand-off from Mill Drain (LWS 4489).

As shown in ExD2.3, the Applicant’s alignment creates a prolonged ecological interface with LWS 4722, whereas the LCJMF hybrid alignment maintains wide hydrological and ecological buffers and involves only one perpendicular crossing. The Applicant has not produced a like-for-like ecological comparison of these options, contrary to EN-1 § 4.4.3 and Reg. 14(2)(d). Its conclusion that the LCJMF route would have “greater impact” is therefore unsupported.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Applicant’s reliance on EN-1 § 4.3.9 does not negate its duty under Regulation 14(2)(d) and EN-1 § 4.4.3 to compare reasonable alternatives on a like-for-like basis where those alternatives (including LCJMF’s 2021 and 2023 offers) were placed before it during design evolution.

### **1.2.1 Mischaracterisation of Land Offers and Unsupported “Connection Date” Claim**

The Applicant conflates the LCJMF November 2021 Offer (516 acres) with the LCJMF August 2023 Offer (618 acres), mischaracterising both spatial coherence and deliverability.

The August 2023 Offer was made after the withdrawal of Beacon Fen South and was structured specifically to support the post-BFS 600 MW solar / 600 MW BESS configuration. As set out in the overview, it comprised 418 acres in Great Hale Fen and 200 acres in Little Hale Fen. From this base, LCJMF proposed a hybrid cable corridor starting at the Applicant’s own Option 1 location, moving 1,637 m south through 893 m of LCJMF land, and requiring only a short 744 m crossing of one neighbouring holding before joining the Applicant’s Option 3 route (ExD2.11). This remained within the same strategic corridor, was compatible with project objectives, and unlocked the full 618 acres as a scalable alternative platform.

The Applicant asserts that this alternative “would not have achieved the connection date element” of its project objectives but provides no evidence—such as critical path analysis, construction sequencing, or grid programme—to support this claim. LCJMF’s offer and routing were submitted well before the DCO application and aligned with the Applicant’s own BESS headroom, rendering the assertion unsubstantiated.

Requested Direction: LCJMF invites the ExA to issue a targeted Rule 17 request requiring the Applicant to disclose its critical path programme and provide a like-for-like comparison of its preferred configuration with the LCJMF August 2023 Offer and hybrid corridor.

## **1.3 “On Top Of” vs “Run Adjacent To”**

A key ecological mischaracterisation concerns the Applicant’s treatment of LWS 4722. The Applicant attempts to downplay its alignment by contrasting “running on top of” with “running adjacent to” the site — an artificial distinction that ignores the real ecological and hydrological impacts of prolonged longitudinal construction interfaces along sensitive corridors.

The Applicant’s 30 m cable working corridor intersects LWS 4722 at approximately 45° — at the same location as Viking Link — while a separate haul road runs longitudinally for ~1 km along its eastern edge, serving Construction Compound 4 (ExD2.2). Over such distances, longitudinal interfaces can cause equal or greater disturbance than perpendicular crossings. No ecological evidence supports the Applicant’s claim that adjacency (CC4 at 70 m) is less significant than LCJMF’s hybrid stand-offs of 177 m and 274 m from Willow Farm and Mill Drains (ExD2.3).

Feature	Applicant Corridor	LCJMF Hybrid
LWS 4722	1.19 km longitudinal + haul road (70 m offset)	Avoided entirely
Old Forty Foot	Longitudinal	Single perpendicular crossing
Willow Farm	n/a	177 m stand-off
Mill Drain	n/a	262 m stand-off

Moreover, the ecological assessment fails to consider the cumulative effects of the Viking Link works, which intersected LWS 4722 at a 90° angle only a few years ago, causing significant soil disturbance (ExD2.14 and ExD2.15), hydrological change, and habitat fragmentation. Assessing the Applicant’s proposal in isolation produces a materially incomplete baseline, contrary to EN-1 § 4.2.5 and Reg. 14.

Requested Direction:

LCJMF invites the ExA to issue a targeted Rule 17 request requiring the Applicant to provide a cumulative ecological and hydrological appraisal of its cable corridor alongside the Viking Link works, including spatial analysis of overlapping working widths, haul roads, and compound locations.

#### 1.4 Non-Contiguity and Land-Interest Claims

The Applicant repeats its claim that LCJMF’s November 2021 offer involved “non-contiguous” parcels and would affect “a greater number of land interests”. LCJMF notes the following:

- Spatial coherence of the August 2023 Offer: The offer comprises three Great Hale Fen blocks (128 m and 800 m apart) under single ownership, with LCJMF proposing internal bridging to remove any “non-contiguity” (ExD2.4–5).
- Marginal additional landowners offset by ecological benefit: West of the South Forty Foot Drain, the hybrid corridor would involve only two additional landowners compared to the Applicant’s preferred alignment (ExD2.12), offset by avoiding the 1.2 km longitudinal interface with LWS 4722. East of the Drain, routing via Bicker Drove would reduce third-party interactions further, consolidating a greater share of the corridor within LCJMF’s ownership.
- Strategic use of LCJMF land: Approximately 760 m of field-edge routing across LCJMF’s Little Hale Fen land avoids sensitive habitats and is supported by an existing cable crossing agreement with AGR Renewables (ExD2.13).
- Applicant’s route already involves multiple third parties: The Applicant itself requires numerous voluntary or compulsory acquisitions, yet provides no transparent, like-for-like land-interest comparison.
- Potential net reduction in agreements: Siting PV/BESS on LCJMF’s land could have consolidated the generation site, cable route, and access corridors within a single ownership block, simplifying land assembly compared to Beacon Fen North, which spans three ownerships (LL261089, LL319094, LL261005). LCJMF’s August 2023 offer of 618 acres exceeds the combined area of LL261005 (240 acres) and LL319094 (110 acres) (ExD2.9).

The Applicant asserts that LCJMF's hybrid route would affect 17–18 freeholders, compared to 12 for its preferred corridor, but provides no breakdown of this figure, including whether the northern or southern Bicker Drove variant was assumed. LCJMF's own analysis indicates that, on a like-for-like basis (including field-edge routing, existing agreements, and east-side optimisation), the hybrid corridor would involve a comparable or lower number of third-party freeholders than the Applicant's alignment. No plan or tabulation underpinning the Applicant's numbers has been provided.

#### **Requested Direction:**

LCJMF invites the ExA to issue a targeted Rule 17 request requiring the Applicant to provide a like-for-like comparative landownership plan and count, clearly setting out assumptions for both the Applicant's corridor and the LCJMF hybrid route (including both northern and southern Bicker Drove variants), to enable objective comparison.

### **1.5 Unused Headroom and Strategic Integration Potential**

The Applicant's post-BFS design leaves ~200 MW of unused headroom at Bicker Fen. LCJMF's August 2023 Offer (618 acres) equates to ~198 MW of PV capacity — a grid-proximate means of fully utilising this spare capacity.

This headroom could have supported a strategic load such as a hyperscale data centre, via:

- Firm capacity from the existing 600 MW grid connection;
- Behind-the-meter PV/BESS co-located on LCJMF land;
- Private wire supply from adjacent offshore wind (e.g. Triton Knoll);
- Resilience from the Viking Link interconnector immediately adjacent.

FoundDigital DS Ltd has appraised this configuration, confirming its potential to underpin a 360 MVA AI-ready data centre. LCJMF's hybrid corridor could have formed the linear integration spine.

EN-1 §§ 4.5.1–4.5.3 encourage strategic co-location and corridor safeguarding. By failing to engage with the LCJMF August 2023 Offer, the Applicant has foreclosed a nationally significant integration opportunity aligned with DSIT's AI Growth Zone initiative.

This unused headroom is material in strategic planning terms: it represents roughly one-third of the project's grid capacity and could support substantial co-located generation or demand without additional transmission reinforcement.

### **1.6 Cumulative Corridor Impacts on LWS 4722 and Viking Link**

The Applicant's cumulative assessment (APP-277 §§ 6.2.36–6.2.49; APP-069) omits the combined impact of multiple NSIPs on the same corridor. Viking Link (1.4 GW HVDC, 400 kV interface) was constructed through this corridor only a few years ago, intersecting LWS 4722 at 90° with trenching, haul roads, and compounds, already causing significant soil and hydrological change.

The Applicant now proposes a longitudinal corridor and 1 km haul road along LWS 4722's eastern edge, compounding these effects. No cumulative analysis has been provided of overlapping working widths, hydrology, ecology, or operational interfaces between two co-located 400 kV assets, contrary to EN-1 § 4.2.5 and Reg. 14.

#### **Requested Direction:**

LCJMF invites a Rule 17 request requiring the Applicant to provide a cumulative ecological, hydrological, and construction impact assessment for this shared corridor, including both schemes.

The Applicant's position that it need not consider third-party proposals misconstrues EN-1 § 4.3.9 and overlooks Regulation 14(2)(d) and EN-1 § 4.4.3. Given LCJMF's formally submitted alternatives, the Applicant was required to present a proportionate, evidence-based comparison and has not done so.

### **1.7 Conclusion on Alternatives**

The Applicant's Deadline 1 response fails to cure the deficiencies identified in LCJMF's 2 July 2025 representation. It has not undertaken a proportionate or objective assessment of LCJMF's alternative sites or routing, contrary to EN-1 § 4.4.3 and Reg. 14(2)(d). Its claims are contradicted by spatial evidence, particularly concerning LWS 4722 and Viking Link.

Crucially, the Applicant ignores cumulative ecological and hydrological impacts arising from two NSIPs occupying the same corridor within a few years. This omission undermines the credibility of its alternatives assessment and baseline evidence.

These deficiencies in alternatives appraisal and routing selection also underpin the environmental shortcomings on soils and land (Section 2) and the failure to consider strategic co-location and integration opportunities (Section 3).

#### **Requested Directions:**

LCJMF invites the ExA to:

- Attach limited weight to the Applicant's site selection and cable route appraisal;
- Issue Rule 17 directions requiring:
  - A like-for-like ecological, hydrological, and land-interest comparison between the Applicant's corridor and the LCJMF hybrid alternative; and
  - A cumulative impact assessment for the overlapping LWS 4722 corridor, including Viking Link infrastructure.

## **2. Environmental Impacts**

### **2.1 Overview**

The Applicant's Deadline 1 response relies on ES Chapter 14 (Soils and Agricultural Land, APP-065), Requirement 16 of the Draft DCO (AS-008), and Appendix 14.4 (Outline Soil Management Plan, APP-176) to assert that its assessment is "robust and policy-compliant" and that any deficiencies can be remedied through post-consent surveys. LCJMF does not accept this position.

The Applicant has not undertaken field-level soil surveys or any comparative assessment of land take and sterilisation between its preferred cable corridor and the LCJMF hybrid alternative. Instead, it relies on generic, desk-based mapping and defers critical baseline work until after consent. This is inconsistent with EN-1 § 4.4.3, which requires proportionate environmental information at application stage to enable meaningful examination.

### **2.2 Soil Baseline and OSMP Deficiencies**

The Applicant's Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) is a high-level template rather than a corridor-specific management plan. It fails to include:

- Transect-based soil sampling or classification data along the corridor;
- Baseline soil moisture, structure, or drainage data;
- Defined methodologies for avoiding compaction, subsoil mixing, or long-term sterilisation; and
- Evidence of how working widths and haul road construction will be restored to support future PV deployment.

For a 400 kV cable installation of national significance, this absence of baseline evidence is inadequate. Without corridor-specific soil data, no objective evaluation can be made of permanent or long-term soil impacts — which are material for both agricultural reuse and future renewable deployment.

### **2.3 Viking Link Baseline Evidence – Comparable Method, Real Impacts**

The Applicant claims it “cannot comment on the effectiveness of mitigation secured and carried out by another developer on a separate project.” LCJMF strongly contests this.

The Viking Link Interconnector — a 400 kV HVDC cable constructed across LCJMF’s land (2021–2023) — used the same engineering methods proposed by the Applicant: a 30 m working width, 1.2 m trench depth, temporary haul roads, and comparable reinstatement practices.

To assess real impacts, LCJMF commissioned before-and-after soil surveys from SOYL Ltd (Dr Jeremy Hollis PhD). Baseline surveys were taken in October 2021; post-construction surveys in July 2023 (ExD2.9). Key findings:

- Topsoil and subsoil remained broadly in place, but topsoil structure deteriorated significantly.
- In 2021, only the heaviest soil type showed poor structure; by 2023, 5/7 assessment points were rated “poor”, none “good”.
- Heavier, higher-conductivity soils showed the greatest deterioration.

This is direct empirical evidence from the same landholding, the same 1.2 metre deep cable laying construction method and even in the same affected field. It shows that reinstatement does not fully restore soil structure, and impacts persist beyond construction. The Applicant’s failure to reference or assess this precedent undermines its claim of a “robust” assessment and exposes the limitations of relying on post-consent, generic OSMPs.

## **2.4 Countryside Stewardship (AB1) Land-Take at CC4**

The Applicant’s reliance on “adjacency” to LWS 4722 ignores a concrete, verifiable constraint. Construction Compound 4 (CC4) is sited on parcel G65 (TF1941 7485), under a live Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier Agreement (No. 1458243, 01/01/2023–31/12/2027). Within this parcel, 0.43 ha is designated as AB1 (Nectar Flower Mix) (ExD2.2, ExD2.6).

Placing CC4 here would:

- Directly remove or sterilise 0.43 ha of AB1 habitat;
- Interrupt required AB1 management during the agreement term; and
- Create a compliance risk with Natural England / RPA unless formally varied.

None of this is reflected in ES Chapter 7 (Ecology), the Outline CEMP (APP-077), or the Applicant’s Deadline 1 response. In policy terms, AB1 is targeted pollinator habitat; under EN-1’s mitigation hierarchy, avoidance (relocating CC4) is the proportionate first step.

### **Requested Direction:**

LCJMF invites the ExA to request:

- (a) A compound / haul-route overlay against all live Countryside Stewardship options;
- (b) Confirmation of engagement with Natural England / RPA and like-for-like AB1 replacement proposals; and
- (c) Updated ES/EcIA tables quantifying AB1 loss and pollinator impacts in the LWS 4722 interface.

## **2.5 Lack of Comparative Land-Take / Sterilisation Analysis**

The Applicant has not provided a like-for-like comparison between its corridor and LCJMF’s hybrid alignment in terms of:

- Total construction corridor length and area;
- Longitudinal vs perpendicular LWS interfaces;

- Proportion of field-edge vs mid-field trenching;
- Long-term sterilisation of PV-capable parcels.

LCJMF has calculated foregone PV lease income from sterilisation under the Applicant's corridor at £783,796 over 40 years (9.45 ac @ £1,100/ac, 3 % indexation). This is entirely avoidable through routing refinement. The Applicant provides no equivalent analysis. There is also no pro rata calculation of foregone BESS income for the sterilised land, which could be material.

## **2.6 Strategic PV Sterilisation Considerations**

LCJMF's land has been formally offered for renewable development (Nov 2021 & Aug 2023 offers). The Applicant's corridor bisects PV- and BESS-capable parcels, undermining future renewable deployment and creating sterilisation impacts that must either be designed out or properly compensated. No opportunity-cost analysis has been undertaken, contrary to good environmental practice under EN-1.

## **2.7 Conclusion and Requested Direction**

The Applicant has not met the evidential standard required for soil and land impacts at examination. Baseline evidence is insufficient, routing comparison is incomplete, and sterilisation impacts have not been assessed environmentally or economically.

### **Requested Direction:**

LCJMF invites the ExA to require the Applicant to:

- Undertake field-level soil and land-take surveys along the full cable corridor, equivalent to PV and Viking Link standards; and
- Provide a like-for-like sterilisation and land-take comparison between its corridor and the LCJMF hybrid alternative, quantifying affected area, LWS interfaces, and PV/BESS deployment potential.

## **3. Impact on Intended Commercial and Infrastructure Proposals**

### **3.1 Overview**

EN-1 § 4.5.1–4.5.3 require applicants to consider opportunities for the co-location of energy infrastructure, shared corridors, and integration with strategic developments. The Applicant has not done so.

The Applicant downplays LCJMF's intended commercial and infrastructure proposals — including a large-scale AI-ready data centre, 60-acre glasshouse, and associated renewables and grid infrastructure — on the basis that they are at an "early stage" and not material. LCJMF does not accept this.

These proposals are strategically located within 2.7 km of Bicker Fen 400 kV substation, designed to integrate renewable generation, storage, and demand infrastructure. The Applicant's routing cuts directly through these parcels, creating avoidable conflicts that undermine LCJMF's plans and EN-1 §§ 4.4–4.5 objectives.

### **3.2 Data Centre and Glasshouse Power Demand**

LCJMF's data centre is a 1 GW power demand facility, developed in scalable phases. It would draw secure grid power at Bicker Fen and integrate co-located renewables and storage. Waste heat would supply a 60-acre glasshouse 3 km away, following proven precedents (e.g. Fenland Glasshouse Ltd, Ely — 60 MW energy centre with 33 MWth heat pumps and 9 MW CHP).



LCJMF engaged the Applicant in 2023 to explore integration, but the Applicant declined to engage substantively, despite spatial and temporal overlaps (ExD2.7).

### **3.3 Strategic Land Use Coordination (EN-1 §§ 4.5.1–4.5.3)**

EN-1 requires applicants to consider co-location, shared infrastructure, and integration. The Applicant has not:

- Considered LCJMF’s PV-capable parcels offered in Nov 2021 / Aug 2023;
- Safeguarded spur-ready nodes or capacity for major demand assets; or
- Assessed synergies between its infrastructure and LCJMF’s data centre/glasshouse hub.

### **3.4 Credibility of Proposals**

The Applicant implies LCJMF’s projects are speculative. In fact:

- They are backed by FoundDigital DS Ltd and included in the March 2025 DSIT AI Growth Zone EOI, identifying Little Hale Fen as a 500 MW+ sovereign AI and renewables hub.
- The data centre concept integrates behind-the-meter renewables, Triton Knoll’s 800 MW substation, Viking Link, and the 400 kV network — all proximate to the Applicant’s corridor.

These are credible, strategic proposals forming part of the FenResilience Food and Technology Energy Zone.

### **3.5 Avoidable Conflict Through Routing**

The Applicant’s corridor cuts across LCJMF’s PV and BESS capable zones, creating sterilisation and severance that could be avoided by using the LCJMF hybrid corridor:

- The hybrid route starts at the Applicant’s Option 1, travels 1,687 m south, crosses 651 m of LCJMF land, 396 m of John Cope’s (voluntary agreement already in place), and only requires 543 m of new agreements (ExD2.10).
- This alignment allows coexistence with LCJMF’s developments and potential Fidra BESS.
- Routing through PV parcels precludes future renewables and demand assets, contrary to EN-1 § 4.4.3 (alternatives) and § 5.11.8 (protection of proposed land uses).
- No comparative analysis of these conflicts is included in the ES.

### **3.6 Policy Context – EN-1 § 5.11.8 and Footnote 252**

EN-1 § 5.11.8 requires identification and assessment of existing and proposed land uses, including planning applications and credible proposals. LCJMF’s Nov 2021 / Aug 2023 offers and DSIT AI Growth Zone EOI (March 2025) are formal, documented proposals for renewables, BESS, and infrastructure. These were communicated during scheme development.

While planning applications are pending, they clearly fall within the “proposed” category under § 5.11.8. The Applicant has not identified or assessed these uses for conflict or integration.

### **3.7 Conclusion and Requested Direction**

The Applicant’s treatment of LCJMF’s strategic proposals is dismissive and incomplete. It has not engaged with EN-1’s integration duties, assessed the policy-protected status of proposed uses, or considered routing refinements that would enable coordinated development.

### **Requested Direction:**

LCJMF invites the ExA to require the Applicant to:

- Provide a land-use integration appraisal comparing its corridor and LCJMF's hybrid route against strategic infrastructure proposals; and
- Provide a policy compliance statement addressing EN-1 §§ 4.5 and § 5.11.8 in the context of LCJMF's DSIT AI Growth Zone submission.

## **4. Consultation and Procedural Matters**

### **4.1 Unaddressed Issues Since 2021**

The Applicant's Deadline 1 response notes that MF (LCJMF) previously raised points during statutory consultation and invites MF (LCJMF) to set out any remaining concerns at Examination "so that the Applicant can consider them and respond." LCJMF welcomes that invitation and notes that several substantive matters remain unaddressed despite repeated correspondence since 2021.

### **4.2 Gaps in Consultation Report**

The Applicant relies on its Consultation Report (APP-046) to assert that feedback has been addressed. However, the Consultation Report does not evidence proportionate engagement or appraisal in relation to the following issues:

(a) **Alternative Land Offers** — LCJMF's Nov 2021 (516 ac) and Aug 2023 (618 ac) offers have not been subject to the proportionate, evidence-based alternatives appraisal required by EN-1 § 4.4.3 and EIA Reg. 14(2)(d). The Applicant's treatment remains generic and dismissive, relying on unevidenced assertions of "non-contiguity" and "connection date."

(b) **Hybrid Cable Alignment** — LCJMF's hybrid cable route, within the same strategic corridor and avoiding LWS 4722, has not been compared on a like-for-like basis to the Applicant's corridor. No ecological proximity analysis, land-interest comparison, or sterilisation assessment has been undertaken.

(c) **Viking Link Cumulative Effects** — No assessment has been provided of cumulative construction, access, or maintenance interactions with the 1.4 GW Viking Link HVDC infrastructure despite spatial co-location.

(d) **Soils and PV Sterilisation** — No field-level soil survey has been carried out along the cable corridor; no quantification of long-term PV sterilisation has been provided; and no comparative assessment against the LCJMF hybrid alignment has been made.

(e) **Strategic Integration Opportunities** — No structured engagement has taken place with LCJMF's multi-project plan (data centre, glasshouse, transmission-level BESS), contrary to EN-1 §§ 4.5.1–4.5.3.

### **4.3 Repeated Engagement Without Resolution**

LCJMF has consistently raised the routing, soil impact, and alternative corridor issues at every appropriate stage of consultation and engagement, including:

- Statutory consultation (2021–2023) – LCJMF raised routing alternatives, potential north–south alignments, and the option of teeing off from the existing 400 kV overhead line.
- Post-BFS correspondence (August 2023) – LCJMF submitted a hybrid cable route proposal and updated renewable development offer to the Applicant.
- Pre-application engagement – Mishcon de Reya's letters of 21 December 2023 and 12 March 2024 set out detailed

concerns regarding corridor selection, inconsistency between statutory consultation and PEIR plans, ecological and archaeological conflicts, cumulative impact, and the lack of justification for not following existing linear infrastructure.

- Land Interest Questionnaires (August 2024) – LCJMF returned fully completed questionnaires, including title holdings, cropping rotations, irrigation infrastructure, and strategic PV/BESS and glasshouse proposals.
- 2 July 2025 representation – These points were consolidated and placed formally on the Examination record.

In each case, responses from the Applicant have been partial, generic, or have deferred substantive appraisal. No technical responses were provided to queries regarding:

- routing north–south to reduce land and ecological impact;
- teeing off from the 400 kV overhead line to avoid trenching through productive land;
- inconsistencies between consultation and PEIR corridor mapping; or
- cumulative impact and integration with other NSIPs in the Bicker Fen zone.

No evidence has been provided that these submissions were meaningfully considered in site selection, routing, or environmental appraisal. This repeated pattern of engagement without substantive response falls short of the iterative consultation process envisaged by EN-1 §§4.2–4.4, which requires meaningful engagement with affected landowners during scheme development rather than deferring material matters to Examination.

#### **4.4 Matters Outstanding for Examination**

These matters remain outstanding and fall squarely within the scope of the Examination. LCJMF has now set them out in detail in this Deadline 2 submission, supported by exhibits and spatial evidence.

#### **4.5 Need for Rule 17 Directions**

LCJMF invites the Examining Authority to note that the Applicant has had multiple pre-application opportunities to address these matters and has not done so. This reinforces the need for targeted Rule 17 directions to cure evidential and procedural gaps, rather than relying on post-consent mechanisms.

### **5. Conclusion**

#### **5.1 Outstanding Deficiencies in Applicant’s Case**

The Applicant’s Deadline 1 response (10 October 2025) does not cure the evidential and procedural deficiencies identified in LCJMF’s 2 July 2025 representation and expanded in its Written Representation (7 October 2025). Across site selection, cable routing, ecological proximity, soils/land, and cumulative effects, the response relies on generic assertions, selective extracts from Applicant documents, and post-consent deferral — rather than the proportionate, evidence-based appraisal required by EN-1 §§ 4.3–4.5 and EIA Reg. 14(2)(d).

#### **5.2 Strength of LCJMF Alternatives**

LCJMF’s alternative solar/BESS offers (516 ac, Nov 2021; 618 ac, Aug 2023) and the hybrid cable route are realistic, policy-aligned, and spatially coherent options within the same strategic corridor. They would avoid a ~1.2 km longitudinal interface with LWS 4722, reduce sterilisation of PV-capable land, and utilise existing voluntary arrangements within a single-ownership block. No like-for-like comparison has been undertaken on ecological, land-interest, or deliverability grounds.

#### **5.3 Material Gaps Persist**

Material gaps also remain regarding Viking Link cumulative interactions, corridor-specific soils baseline, sterilisation quantification, and strategic integration with LCJMF's wider energy and data infrastructure proposals. These issues have been raised repeatedly since statutory consultation.

#### **5.4 Directions Sought**

LCJMF therefore invites the Examining Authority to:

(a) Attach limited weight to the Applicant's site-selection and cable-route appraisal, given their evidential shortcomings; and

(b) Issue targeted Rule 17 directions requiring the Applicant to provide:

- A like-for-like ecological, land-interest, and sterilisation comparison between its preferred cable corridor and the LCJMF hybrid route;
- Corridor-specific soil survey and sterilisation analysis; and
- A cumulative impact assessment addressing interactions with Viking Link infrastructure.

#### **5.5 Ongoing Right to Comment**

LCJMF reserves the right to comment further on any subsequent material the Applicant submits in response to these matters during the Examination.