

Sir / Ma'am,

LCJ Mountain Farms (LCJM) supports delivery of the Beacon Fen project in principle.

Today I am **not** asking you to decide compensation. I am asking you to test, for our plots, whether:

1. Permanent compulsory acquisition rights are truly **necessary and proportionate**; and
2. Whether there are **reasonable, less-intrusive alternatives** in terms of both routing and the type of rights taken.

Our clear preference is a **voluntary, least-rights agreement** that avoids recourse to compulsory powers on our land.

I have **three points** and three corresponding **requests** to the Panel.

Point 1 of 3

My first point is about **consistency with the Applicant's own evidence on fragmentation** and the effect on the **highest and best use** of our land.

At Issue-Specific Hearing 1, the record in EV2-006 shows that at 36 minutes 50 seconds to 37 minutes 40 seconds, the Applicant described our landholding as "**non-contiguous**" and said "**developing fragmented land**" is "**difficult.**"

From 37 minutes 59 seconds to 40 minutes 34 seconds, their technical witness went further, explaining that non-continuous sites require "**extra inter-array cabling**", can require "**additional substations**", and that non-continuity "**impacts viability**".

Despite that, the cable corridor now proposed in the Development Consent Order **bisects our rectangular holding west-east along its longest axis for about 3.2 km**. It creates exactly the kind of fragmentation the Applicant themselves said was problematic for "**deliverability**" and "**viability**".

On their own logic, this is not minor disturbance. It **sterilises the highest and best use** within the operational corridor and **severs** the potential of the retained land to host lawful, higher-value projects.

There is clear evidence, recorded at the time, of that prejudice on this exact land.

On 12 May 2025, at 10:48, ib vogt confirmed that we could, in their words, "**move swiftly to completion**" on a **400 MW BESS co-located with 49.9 MW of SOLAR** on the corridor land. Around six hours later, at 16:53, ib vogt withdrew.

We understand the Applicant was engaging with ib vogt around this time. We do not allege improper conduct, and we accept that particular commercial opportunity has now fallen away.

However, the sequence shows two important things:

- First, that this land was capable of supporting a **bankable, highest-and-best-use scheme**; and
- Second, that **uncertainty around the export corridor has already undermined that use**.

The permanent corridor now sought would, over the project life, **foreclose comparable opportunities** on our holding.

From a valuation perspective, that sequence evidences **loss of bankability and opportunity**, plus the **sunk costs we incurred in reliance on a deliverable scheme**. We hold records made at the time—emails, signed heads of terms,

near-final option and lease drafts, and invoices—showing that we have incurred **over £20,000** of professional fees developing that scheme in good faith on this land.

Request 1

To the extent you consider it relevant and within your remit, we respectfully invite the Panel to ask the Applicant to:

1. Confirm when and how they engaged with ib vogt between **9 and 13 May 2025**;
2. Confirm whether that engagement concerned routing across LCJM land; and
3. Explain why **permanent operational rights along our longest axis** are still said to be necessary and proportionate on our land, in light of the bankability impact evidenced by that sequence.

This goes directly to your tests around **necessity, proportionality**, and whether compulsory acquisition on our plots is genuinely a **measure of last resort**.

Point 2 of 3

My second point is that there is a **credible, available, lawful alternative route** across our holding, which we have already tabled, and which has already underpinned a practical cable solution on our farm.

In November 2021, when we offered 516 acres of SOLAR + BESS land, and again in August 2023, when Beacon Fen South fell away and we offered 618 acres of SOLAR + BESS land, both offers were in an extremely low residential-density area on mainly Grade 3a/3b land, all within a very short distance of the point of connection. In each case, we proposed a shorter, north–south, edge-of-field cable alignment across our land.

In summary, it:

A) Shortens the trench length across our block;

B) On our understanding of the Book of Reference, across the LCJM–to–Bicker Fen section, the Applicant’s Option 1 engages with a greater number of private landowners than our north–south, edge-of-field route. By engaging with the existing AGR3 cable-crossing concept and then running down Vicarage Drove, our route would consolidate the corridor onto fewer ownerships in this stretch – in broad terms, replacing five separate interests east of the South Forty Foot, and one to the west of the South Forty Foot (including my parents), with only two additional landowners further west of LCJM. On that understanding, there appears to be a net decrease of around four affected landowners across this section; and

C) Reduces environmental interaction by avoiding around 1.2 kilometres of longitudinal occupation alongside Local Wildlife Site 4722.

It is also important that the Panel is not misled by how “freeholders” are counted. LCJM holds around 1,000 acres in a single Land Registry title, LL55575. If, for purely estate-management reasons, we had divided that same land into five or six titles, nothing on the ground would change – but a “freeholder” count based on title numbers would make it appear that more parties are affected. We do not think it is fair or sensible for one farm business to bear a greater infrastructure burden simply because it has historically chosen to hold its land in a single, coherent title.

Under the Applicant’s current Option 1, on our land:

- The corridor enters LWS 4722;
- Construction Compound 4 sits within that LWS; and
- There is roughly 1.19 kilometres of heavy-goods-vehicle activity within the LWS, longitudinally along it.

By contrast, our north–south edge-of-field route mirrors the geometry of the Applicant’s own Option 3. It runs north–south, then west–east along Little Hale Drove (about 2.4 km) and crosses Local Wildlife Site (LWS) 4490 (the Old Forty Foot) at right angles only, with no longitudinal occupation. For context, LWS 4489 (Mill Drain) lies exactly 274 metres to the south of the Little Hale Drove section on our farm, and LWS 4520 (Willow Farm Drain) lies exactly 177 metres to the north.

Crucially, that edge-of-field cable concept is not hypothetical on our land. In 2021, as part of the AGR3 solar and BESS project, we agreed a cable-crossing carve-out on our farm which the Applicant has seen. That carve-out already demonstrates, in contractual form, how a cable can cross our holding on an edge-of-field, least-rights basis, protecting future SOLAR and BESS layouts while still delivering a connection. We presented that configuration to Low Carbon in 2021 as part of the 516-acre offer and again in August 2023 when Beacon Fen South fell away – with our solar acreage neatly fitting the excess BESS headroom of 200 MW.

It follows that a workable, integrated cable solution on our land has already been designed and documented. The Applicant’s choice not to follow that geometry is therefore a route-selection issue, not a constraint inherent to LCJM.

There is also a cumulative corridor point. LCJM already hosts the Viking Link interconnector through this part of the farm. We are not starting from a blank slate. Option 1 would impose a second, long east–west high-voltage corridor across the same rectangular block, and even the same field on our farm, further fragmenting it and concentrating strategic infrastructure and compulsory rights on a single holding.

Our north–south, edge-of-field alternative would:

- 1 Pull the new corridor off the centre of our block and towards existing field boundaries;
- 2 Reduce the length of route running alongside LWS 4722 and key drains; and
- 3 Moderate the cumulative burden of multiple major energy corridors across the same farm.

In short, there is an alternative route that would:

- Better respect environmental designations;
- Reduce agricultural fragmentation and cumulative corridor impact on our holding; and
- Still deliver the project’s objectives.

Request 2

We respectfully suggest that it would assist the Panel if the Applicant were asked to produce a brief, like-for-like alternatives matrix comparing:

- 1 the adopted cable route (Option 1); and
- 2 LCJM’s north–south, edge-of-field route as offered in 2021 and 2023 and reflected in the AGR3 cable-crossing carve-out.

For each option, the matrix should also **set out the number of separate private landowners** engaged between LCJM and the point of connection, so that the Panel can see clearly whether our route increases or reduces the number of affected parties in this section. In doing so, we ask the Applicant to set out clearly the basis on which they say our route affects “17 or 18” freeholders compared with 12, and whether that count is by title number or by distinct ownership, so that the Panel can test whether that remains accurate in light of current agreements and the AGR3 carve-out.

We suggest that such a matrix could, in a single table, compare:

- 1 total corridor length, and total corridor length across private land;
- 2 percentage edge-of-field routing;
- 3 number of affected landowners from LCJM to the point of connection;
- 4 Local Wildlife Site interaction – length and area affected on our land and elsewhere across the scheme;
- 5 Agricultural Land Classification, including Best and Most Versatile land;
- 6 public rights of way;
- 7 watercourse interactions, distinguishing right-angle from longitudinal crossings;
- 8 construction logistics; and
- 9 the minimum evidenced operational width required over the project life.

This would give you a clear, proportionate basis to test whether the chosen route and the permanent rights sought over our plots truly represent a least-harm, least-rights solution, as policy expects, particularly in light of the existing Viking Link burden on our farm.

Point 3 of 3

My third point concerns the **type and width of rights** proposed over our land, and the potential for **co-existence within any operational corridor**.

We fully accept the need for **Temporary Possession** of sufficient width to construct the cable, with:

- Soils and drainage reinstated to an agreed standard; and
- Crop loss (including any yield tail) compensated in the normal way.

Our concern is with the **permanent twelve-metre operational easement** sought across our plots.

From a **least-rights** perspective, we question why the Applicant needs a full **12-metre permanent corridor** on our land once construction is complete, rather than:

- a) Temporary Possession to build the circuit; followed by
- b) An **operational right confined to the as-built cable alignment plus the evidenced safety stand-off**;
- c) Exercised on **reasonable notice** for maintenance;
- d) **Time-limited** to the life of the project; and
- e) **Falling away on decommissioning**.

That approach would still allow the Applicant to operate and maintain its infrastructure safely, but would significantly reduce **unnecessary long-term sterilisation** of our land, particularly given the existing **Viking Link** infrastructure already constraining parts of our holding.

In parallel, we are grateful that the Applicant has agreed to explore, with **Blake Clough grid consultants**, whether a **parallel private-wire duct** could be installed within the corridor—subject, of course, to all necessary safety clearances, thermal ratings, and manufacturer and Transmission Owner standards.

If technically feasible, that kind of co-existence solution would preserve the ability to integrate **future lawful uses**—such as final-demand or private-wire connections—within the same physical corridor, consistent with the **good design and least-rights principles** in EN-1 and EN-3, without compromising the export cables.

Request 3

We therefore ask the Panel to:

1. Invite the Applicant to explain, **plot by plot**, why permanent 12-metre operational rights are sought on our land after construction, rather than Temporary Possession plus a **narrower, time-limited operational strip** based on the as-built line and evidenced stand-off; and
2. If the Blake Clough work confirms that a parallel private-wire duct can safely co-exist, to **encourage easement wording and as-built plans that expressly safeguard space for that duct** within the permanent corridor.

That would ensure compulsory powers, if granted at all over our plots, are **no more than necessary** and preserve reasonable future integration options.

Our unique position on Heads of Terms

We understand that, as matters stand, **LCJM [about one third of the cable route to the point of connection] is the only land interest on the project where Heads of Terms are labelled “in discussion” BUT Low Carbon have marked our section as “not expected to complete before the close of the Examination.”**

That is **not** because of any reluctance on our part to engage.

Over the last two years we **worked up—and then lost—a co-located SOLAR and BESS scheme** on this corridor land, incurring over **£20,000** in professional costs. We have put forward a **reasonable alternative route** and a **least-rights operational structure**, building on an **AGR3 cable-crossing carve-out** that the Applicant has had sight of since 2021.

We cannot speak for the commercial history of other affected landholdings. However, from the material in the Examination, LCJM is in a different position on the facts. Our holding is:

- 1 **very close** to the Bicker Fen point of connection;
- 2 on extensive **Grade 3a/3b land**; and
- 3 in **large, coherent blocks** that have already been taken by a mainstream developer to near-completion for a **400 MW BESS co-located with 49.9 MW of SOLAR**, with signed heads of terms, near-final option and lease drafts, and significant professional spend.

We are not aware, from the public Examination record, of any other landholding on this project where the proposed cable corridor cuts through a site with that level of **evidenced, near-bankable highest and best use**.

The reason we remain unresolved is that the Applicant still seeks **permanent 12-metre rights** which, on our plots alone, would **bisect and sterilise** land that has already been shown capable of a **materially higher, bankable use**, and would **layer a second major power corridor over a farm already hosting Viking Link**, rather than adopt the edge-of-field alignment and the narrower, time-limited operational rights we have repeatedly offered.

In other words, we are not trying to block the scheme; we are asking that, on our land, it is delivered in a way that is **proportionate, least-rights, and consistent with the Applicant’s own evidence and national policy**.

Settlement status and closing comments

For the record, we remain committed to pursuing a **voluntary, least-rights agreement** so that compulsory powers are **not** required over our plots. A **counter-form voluntary agreement** has been drafted but not yet exchanged; it will follow this hearing and will be influenced by how the outstanding points are addressed. **If it is accepted there should be no need to exercise compulsory acquisition powers over our plots.**

In summary:

- 1 The current corridor unnecessarily fragments and sterilises the highest and best use of our land, **as supported by the Applicant's own evidence on fragmentation**;
- 2 There is a **realistic alternative route**, already reflected in an **AGR3 cable-crossing carve-out**, which reduces environmental, agricultural and cumulative corridor harm; and
- 3 On our plots, the Applicant has **not yet justified** why permanent 12-metre operational rights are needed, rather than Temporary Possession and **narrower, time-limited operational rights**, potentially with co-existence through a private-wire duct.

We therefore ask the Panel to:

1. **Test rigorously** the necessity and proportionality of the permanent rights sought over our plots;
2. Seek the **like-for-like alternatives matrix** I have described; and
3. Encourage a **least-rights, co-existence-friendly structure** for any operational rights over LCJM land.

Thank you.