

## Beacon Fen Energy Park – Development Consent Order

Application reference: EN010151

Submitted by: LCJ Mountain Farms Ltd (Interested Party Ref: [REDACTED])

On behalf of: LCJ Mountain Farms Ltd and, if permitted, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Document: Deadline 6 – Response to Low Carbon’s Technical Note prepared in response to CAH1

Deadline: Deadline 6 (D6) –12.01.2026

Author: [REDACTED], Director, LCJ Mountain Farms Ltd

Email: [REDACTED]

---

### Executive summary (LCJM D6 response to Applicant’s Appendix 1 / CAH1 Action No. 2)

**Purpose and core point.** This D6 submission responds to the Applicant’s Technical Note (Appendix 1) filed as the “comparative analysis” requested by the Examining Authority at CAH1 Action No. 2. The issue is not whether a particular *quantum* of alternatives analysis is legally required; it is whether the analysis the Applicant chose to provide is factually accurate, transparent in its assumptions, and capable of audit.

**Context: limited engagement + why iterative refinement is reasonable.** LCJM’s Hybrid corridor is not an arbitrary examination-stage line: it is the mapped, deliverable expression of LCJM’s August 2023 offer of 618 acres of PV+BESS land, deliberately drawn to collect that land into a coherent, contiguous development block close to the Bicker Fen point of connection. Given limited early route engagement, iterative refinement during examination is a foreseeable consequence of the Applicant not working the option up collaboratively.

**Primary methodological defect: not “like-for-like” (haul roads/compounds).** Appendix 1 excludes compounds and haul roads from “quantitative comparisons” (corridor-only), then attempts to deal with them qualitatively using Applicant-selected assumptions. That is not neutral: construction access/haulage is the mechanism by which the most direct effects occur (traffic, noise, dust, residential amenity, and environmental corridor interaction). The result is systematic undercounting of the impacts that matter most in practice.

#### Key factual errors that reverse outcomes.

- Row 1 length is wrong and reverses the direction of difference. Using the same endpoints shown by the Applicant, LCJM’s measurement evidence indicates the LCJM Hybrid is shorter (6,786m) than the Beacon Fen route (6,818m), i.e. shorter by 32m, not longer as Table 1 implies.
- Because route length is then used downstream (e.g., climate and “km in ALC bands”), any conclusion that depends on the Applicant’s length input is unsafe unless corrected and auditable.

**Ecology/LWS interaction is materially understated by the scope choice.** The Applicant’s own construction logistics assumptions show sustained longitudinal interaction with LWS 4722 (Great Hale Eau) and LCJM’s evidence identifies double occupation north and south totalling 1,647m—a corridor-only method does not capture this properly and the qualitative narrative is not auditable.

**Landowner/deliverability is presented in a way that is not even-handed.** The Applicant’s Row 3 “distinct freeholder” count is internally inconsistent and appears to inflate the LCJM side via double-counting, inclusion of non-route titles, and counting LCJM-controlled land as though it were an adverse third-party constraint. LCJM reframes the correct principle: count **distinct negotiation counterparties**, then demonstrates the LCJM Hybrid likely introduces only a small number of incremental counterparties while avoiding a larger set affected by the Applicant’s corridor.

**Receptor counts (residential/amenity) are not auditable as applied.** Appendix 1 relies on proximity counts (e.g., 300m and 250m) without providing a receptor schedule or measurement rule-set, and LCJM’s initial checking indicates misclassification of non-residential farm sites as dwellings and application in a way that conveniently

excludes key Beacon Fen receptors. Without a dwelling schedule and consistent GIS rules, the counts cannot be tested and should carry limited weight.

**Soils/BMV comparisons are desk-top “worst case” labels that ignore available farm evidence.** Appendix 1 collapses known local distinctions into “both are BMV anyway”, despite (i) LCJM’s evidence of Grade 3 land context and (ii) obvious on-the-ground indicators of higher sensitivity (potato rotations, irrigation infrastructure, drainage vulnerability) on the Beacon Fen corridor. The appropriate response is targeted verification where the decision is sensitive—not flattening everything into an assumption.

**Cumulative impacts are being masked.** A corridor-only comparison implicitly treats baseline conditions as unaffected by recent major linear works; in reality, the same receptors/corridors have already experienced major construction activity (including Viking Link locally), so the comparative question is the realistic risk of repeated disturbance on the same constrained network.

### **Relief sought (practical and proportionate)**

LCJM invites the ExA to attach limited weight to Appendix 1’s overall “summary” conclusions insofar as they depend on corridor-only quantitative metrics and assumption-led qualitative treatment of construction logistics. LCJM further invites the ExA to direct the Applicant to provide a short, auditable addendum (no more than a few pages) which, for both options and using the same rule-set, discloses:

1. Route length basis: the measured corridor/centreline length for each option and the methodology used (including the underlying GIS polyline/layer used for the measurement);
2. Residential receptor schedule: a numbered list of residential receptors used for Rows 5/8/9 (or equivalent), with address/identifier and a clear statement of measurement rules (corridor edge vs centreline; straight-line method; curtilage treatment; and filters excluding non-residential farm buildings/sites); and
3. Construction logistics sensitivity screen: a like-for-like quantified screen for the assumed construction access/haul routes and compounds (as assumed by the Applicant), showing at minimum (i) traffic–receptor proximity and (ii) interaction length/proximity with sensitive features such as LWS and key watercourse corridors.

Absent that reconciliation, the comparative “counts” are not capable of verification and should not be treated as determinative.

**LCJM corrected comparator table (audit).**

For ease of audit, LCJM includes a corrected like-for-like comparator table (Table ES-1 below) using the same depicted endpoints and a consistent rule-set. On LCJM’s measurement evidence, the corrected position reverses several of the Applicant’s headline outcomes: the LCJM Hybrid is shorter (6,786m vs 6,818m), the landowner/counterparty impact reduces (11 to 6), and the Applicant’s own construction-logistics assumptions indicate sustained longitudinal interaction with LWS 4722 of c.1,650m (whereas the LCJM Hybrid can avoid this interaction).

**Table ES-1**

Row	Aspect	BEACON FEN INDICATIVE CABLE ROUTE	LCJMF’S AMENDED ALTERNATIVE	Comments
1	Total Corridor Length	<b>6,818 metres</b>	<b>6,786 metres</b>	The LCJM Hybrid route can be even shorter by going across John Cope’s field LL431295 (which we farm). Low Carbon already have an agreement in place with John Cope for a more northerly crossing.
2	East-West Field Crossing	All fields across LCJM land in Great Hale Fen in the west to east pathway will cross north / south land drains every 21 yards	No LCJM fields will have land drainage cut due to north south passage alongside north south drainage (parallel existence)	
3	Number of affected landowners	11	6	
	Notes		3 new landowners introduced by LCJM Hybrid and 10 Beacon Fen landowners dropped	Net reduction of 7 landowners affected
4	Ecology - Local Wildlife Site occupation	1,650 metres of LWS 4722 - both the north and south side (and already affected in 2023 by Viking Link - i.e. cumulative impact)	0 metres	
5	Landscape & Visual - residential properties < 350 metres	10	5	
6	Cultural Heritage - Historic Environment Farm Environment Record crossing	0	0	
7	Traffic & Access	<b>Four highway crossings:</b> Great Hale Drove crossed North Drove crossed Vicarage Drove crossed	Little Hale Drove crossed only	
8	Noise & Vibration < 350 metres	10	5	
9	Air Quality < 250 metres including construction access	7	5	
10	Water Resources & Flood Risk	17 water crossings	16 water crossings	No appreciation of Anglian Water South Lincs Reservoir flood modelling (an NSIP that took away Beacon fen South)
11	Soils & Agricultural land	Passes through majority Grade 2 potato land	Grade 3 a and b - as evidenced by AGR3 ALC land classification in 2021 AND 3 generations of farming by LCJM	ALC consultant to be appointed

The Applicant’s Table 1 / Appendix 1 data is then analysed in the row-by-row critique in Section 6, including errors in (i) residential “dwelling” counts (farm buildings treated as dwellings and key Beacon Fen dwellings excluded by corridor-only screening), (ii) watercourse crossings, (iii) highway crossings, and (iv) the deliberate choice to longitudinally occupy LWS 4490 (Old Forty Foot) where a perpendicular farm track can be used to avoid this interaction altogether (Ex D6.24).

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This submission responds to the Applicant's Technical Note at Document Ref. 9.18, Appendix 1 ("Appendix 1"). The Applicant states Appendix 1 was prepared in response to CAH1 Action No. 2 and "constitutes that analysis."

1.2 Appendix 1 opens with a "Background" section which appears intended to suggest that route-comparison issues are closed because the Applicant previously set out law/policy on alternatives and now asserts its alternatives exercise is "entirely complete and sufficient."

That is not the issue addressed here.

1.3 The issue is the Examining Authority's specific request at CAH1 Action No. 2: what further comparative analysis could be undertaken between the Applicant's cable route corridor and LCJMF's proposed alternative route, and whether the analysis the Applicant has now filed (Appendix 1) is factually accurate, transparent in its assumptions, and capable of audit.

1.4 The Applicant states at Appendix 1, §1.2.4 that "no law or policy requires" the extent of analysis provided.

That assertion is irrelevant to the question of whether the analysis the Applicant has chosen to provide is correct. A policy recital is not a substitute for evidence, and it does not cure factual inaccuracies or assumption-led scoring within Appendix 1.

---

## 2. Engagement context and why iterative refinement of the LCJMF Hybrid corridor is reasonable

2.1 LCJMF notes that meaningful, technical engagement by the Applicant on routing and alternatives has been limited. Since LCJMF raised alternative solutions and routing concerns (including the LCJMF Nov 2023 offer of 618 acres for PV and BESS), direct engagement has consisted of only three short online meetings (each under c.30 minutes).

Of those, only two meetings related to route selection/alternatives in substance; the most recent November 2025 meeting was focused narrowly on the Applicant's proposed duct within the 12 metre permanent easement, rather than on the comparative merits of alternative alignments.

2.2 In parallel, the Applicant has repeatedly directed LCJMF to the PEIR / examination document suite rather than answering route-specific technical questions in a manner that would enable collaborative resolution. LCJMF has also previously had to correct an inaccurate characterisation of LCJMF's own time-recording log as "65 hours talking to LCJMF"; in fact, that log records 65 hours 16 minutes of LCJMF time burden, including significant time spent attempting (unsuccessfully) to obtain meetings and information at formative stages [Ex D6.1 and Ex D4.1].

2.3 In the context, it is neither fair nor proportionate for the Applicant to criticise LCJMF's Hybrid comparator as "vague or immature" (or to suggest the evidential burden on LCJMF is a reason to discount it), when the Hybrid option has not been subject to an equivalent, iterative design process with the Applicant.

2.4 The Applicant acknowledges it first received the LCJMF Hybrid comparator at Deadline 2 yet has nonetheless produced Appendix 1 and presented it as the comparative analysis requested by the ExA at CAH1 Action No. 2.

LCJMF accordingly submits that iterative refinement of the LCJMF Hybrid corridor through the examination is a reasonable and foreseeable consequence of limited early engagement [Ex D6.1], and the ExA should give limited weight to any "immaturity" criticisms where they arise from lack of Applicant-landowner iteration rather than from any inability of the LCJMF Hybrid to be designed and assessed on an equivalent basis.

2.4 The LCJMF Hybrid corridor is not an arbitrary line. As stated previously in hearings, it is the mapped, deliverable expression of LCJMF's August 2023 offer of land for solar generation and co-located BESS infrastructure [Ex D6.2]. The corridor was drawn deliberately to (i) run wholly within LCJMF's land blocks, (ii) "directly collect the 618 PV and BESS acres" offered when Beacon Fen South fell away, and (iii) leave only a short residual 800 metre distance at the eastern end capable of being bridged by a single row of PV panels so that the offered land functions as a single, continuous development area within LCJMF's wider holding—directly answering the Applicant's earlier concerns at ISH1 about non-contiguous land being "harder to develop". An even shorter route could have been developed across [REDACTED] land [green dotted line in Ex D6.3 and solid green line in Ex D6.4] on which LCJM is the tenant which is relevant when Low Carbon say they would not consider our 618 acres for PV and BESS. The applicant already has a land agreement in place with [REDACTED] further north on the cable route.

2.5 In other words, the LCJM Hybrid alignment was a land-use and deliverability solution (collecting the offered PV acres into one coherent block), not a late-stage "alternative" invented for examination purposes. The Applicant should therefore assess it on an equivalent footing to Option 1, using transparent, auditable metrics, rather than discounting it by assertion.

2.6 Further, the Hybrid captures the August 2023 618-acre offer in a way that aligns quantitatively with the Applicant's own scheme logic: using the Applicant's stated assumption of 0.32 MW per acre, 618 acres equates to 198 MW—almost exactly the 200 MW headroom discussed for "other uses".

---

### **3. Scope and approach: the Applicant's haul road / compound treatment is not "like-for-like" and is materially biased**

**3.1** Appendix 1 states that, for "quantitative comparisons", the Applicant has considered "only the indicative cable corridors" because details of construction compounds and haul roads have not been provided for the LCJM amended alternative, and that a numerical comparison which includes compounds/haul roads for one route but not the other "would clearly be misleading". Appendix 1 then asserts that compounds and haul roads are "nonetheless fully addressed" through qualitative discussion in Section 3.2.

**3.2** LCJM agrees with the narrow proposition that it would be misleading to present a single numerical metric that includes compounds/haul roads for only one option. However, the Applicant's chosen approach creates a different and more serious defect: it removes compounds and haul roads from quantitative comparison entirely [see Ex D6.5 which shows the separation of haul road from cable route by as much as 400 metres) and then seeks to "address" them qualitatively using assumptions selected by the Applicant. This is not a like-for-like comparative exercise because it excludes the principal pathway by which construction effects actually arise in practice (construction traffic routing, haul movements, compound locations and access geometry).

**3.3** The Applicant's position also fails on proportionality and fairness. LCJM is a family farming business facing the burden of a c. 3.2 km cable corridor across its holding. LCJM is not a promoter, consultant or design house and should not be expected to generate construction compound designs, haul road engineering, detailed corridor widths, traffic management layouts, or trenchless method statements in order to have its reasonable alternative considered. **Those matters are core components of the Applicant's scheme design and assessment responsibilities.**

**3.4** This is a DCO application in which the Applicant is seeking compulsory powers. The burden is on the promoter to evidence the case for the Scheme as proposed, including the proportionality of land take and the consideration of reasonable alternatives. It is not for a private landowner to undertake quasi-design work to "earn" having an alternative treated even-handedly.

**3.5** If the Applicant considers that compound or haul/access assumptions are necessary to compare routes (LCJM agrees that they are), the correct response is to undertake a transparent reasonable-worst-case appraisal for both options (or to seek the information it says it needs), rather than to (i) exclude construction logistics from quantitative comparison, and then (ii) re-introduce them qualitatively **only through scenarios that suit the Applicant's preferred route.**

**3.6** This asymmetry is particularly stark given that LCJM has repeatedly sought to engage constructively with the Applicant on routing, access and deliverability (see **Ex D6.1** and **Ex D4.1 – page 34 D6 Exhibits**). LCJM also has active, time-sensitive renewable development interests in the locality (including a near-finalised ib vogt PV+BESS option/lease position, with Heads of Terms agreed long in advance and drafting substantially progressed), and LCJM's evidence is that the Applicant's direct approach to third parties in this context contributed to LCJM losing momentum/viability on that scheme in May 2025. Against that background, it is not proportionate or fair for the Applicant to suggest LCJM must provide construction compound layouts, haul road engineering and detailed corridor designs in order to have an alternative treated even-handedly. Furthermore, LCJM made a Without Prejudice / Subject to Contract voluntary settlement offer dated 11.11.25 intended to avoid reliance on compulsory powers, **yet as at 9 January 2026 the Applicant has provided no substantive response after 59 days.** In those circumstances, it is not credible for the Applicant to rely on "lack of detail from LCJM" as a basis to discount the LCJM alternative, while simultaneously maintaining reliance on compulsory acquisition powers as its fall-back position and declining to engage to narrow issues and obtain information through negotiation.

**3.7** LCJM therefore submits that Appendix 1's scope and approach is materially biased: it removes the most consequential construction impact pathways from quantitative comparison and then uses Applicant-selected qualitative assumptions to reach an "overall" conclusion that the LCJM alternative is not preferable. This is explained throughout this document. The ExA is invited to attach limited weight to the resulting comparative conclusions unless and until the Applicant's compound/haul/access assumptions are transparently stated, consistently applied to both options, and supported by evidence rather than convenience.

**3.8 Residential amenity and traffic effects are suppressed by the chosen scope.** Construction logistics are not peripheral: haul routes and compound access determine where heavy movements would pass close to Mastins House, White House, Mountain Cottage and White House Farm, and near other farm dwellings/receptors. LCJM's plan evidence (**Ex D6.5**) illustrates that these impacts are driven by access/haul routing choices rather than the cable corridor centreline alone. Excluding construction logistics from quantitative receptor assessment and then addressing them only qualitatively is not neutral; **it structurally undercounts residential amenity effects.**

**3.9 Sensitive corridors are also suppressed by the chosen scope.** LCJM's concern is not merely "number of crossings", but prolonged longitudinal interaction driven by construction logistics. The Applicant's assumed construction access for Construction Compound 4 runs for approximately 1.18 km longitudinally along Local Wildlife Site (LWS) 4722, i.e. directly on top of the LWS rather than merely intersecting it. Further, LCJM's evidence indicates occupation north and south of LWS 4722 with a total interaction length of 1,647 metres (**Ex D6.6** and **Ex D6.7**). A corridor-only quantitative method does not capture these construction-driven interactions, while the qualitative narrative is not presented in a manner capable of audit or replication.

**3.10 Cumulative impacts make this scope choice particularly unreliable.** A corridor-only method implicitly treats the local baseline as unaffected by recent strategic linear infrastructure. In reality, these receptors and corridors have already experienced major construction movements and reinstatement impacts in recent years (**including Viking Link in this locality, as recent as 2023**). The relevant issue for comparison is therefore not abstract "corridor length", but the realistic risk of repeated disturbance (traffic, noise/dust, severance, drainage/soil disruption – **Ex D4.11, Ex D4.12 and Ex D4.13**) on the **same constrained network and sensitive corridors over successive projects**. A method that excludes construction logistics from quantitative comparison is likely to understate cumulative impacts precisely where they are most foreseeable.

**3.11 Relief sought.** LCJM invites the ExA to give limited weight to any Appendix 1 “summary” conclusion that depends on corridor-only quantitative metrics while leaving haul roads/compounds to qualitative narrative. If the Applicant continues to rely on Appendix 1 as the CAH1 Action No. 2 comparative analysis, LCJM requests that the Applicant be directed to provide a short, auditable addendum which, for both options: (a) identifies the assumed compounds/haul/access arrangements; (b) states the rules used to assess residential receptors (including how curtilage is treated and how non-residential buildings are filtered); and (c) quantifies, at minimum, (i) traffic–receptor proximity and (ii) haul-road interaction with sensitive environmental features, using the same rule-set for both routes.

---

#### **4. Little Hale Drove / verge feasibility: AGR3 crossing mechanism undermines the Applicant’s “not possible” assertions**

4.1 The Applicant asserts that its minimum 5m buffer to watercourses means it is “not possible to install the cable within the road, or road verges” at Little Hale Drove (because watercourses lie north and south with limited separation).

The Applicant also suggests it would be unreasonable to rely on LCJM “local knowledge” without supporting technical information.

4.2 However, the examination record already contains site-specific evidence that roadside/edge routing and shared corridor planning is realistic in this location: **ExD4.16** summarises a clause within the AGR Solar 3 Ltd lease **requiring the tenant to use reasonable endeavours to position cable infrastructure within or alongside Little Hale Drove to enable additional infrastructure to be installed by the Landlord in future, including via crossing agreements.**

4.3 In light of this, the Applicant’s dismissal of a Little Hale Drove / verge-based alignment as infeasible or insufficiently evidenced is not well-founded. If the Applicant maintains its position, it should be required to provide an auditable, cross-section based explanation demonstrating (i) measured bank-top locations for the relevant watercourses, (ii) how buffers have been applied, and (iii) why a combination of verge/field-edge positioning, localised crossings and micro-siting cannot achieve compliance.

---

#### **5. Critique of Appendix 1 §2.3 matrix methodology: parameter choices and why they bias the outcome**

**5.1 Appendix 1** presents a comparative matrix in §2.3 supported by Table 1, but the “headline” scoring is driven by a small number of methodological choices that are not transparent, are not auditable, and (in several instances) suppress the real pathways by which effects occur (particularly construction access/haulage). This section sets out the key parameter choices that must be corrected or disclosed before the ExA can place weight on the matrix conclusions.

##### **5.2 Corridor width: why a 60m envelope is being used for comparison (and how it relates to rights/working width)**

5.2.1 Appendix 1 applies a 60m corridor to both indicative routes to reflect a 30m construction working width plus “micro-siting” flexibility post-consent.

5.2.2 LCJM does not dispute that temporary working width and some micro-siting flexibility may be required in principle. The issue is that the Applicant uses a 60m envelope to generate comparative outputs (including receptor counts and constraints) **without explaining how that 60m relates to the rights actually sought (permanent easement, temporary possession, working width and any additional rights)**. Without that linkage, the 60m parameter risks functioning as an advocacy device rather than an auditable basis for comparison.

### **5.3 Residential proximity counts: 300m (noise/vibration) and 250m (air quality) are not auditable as applied**

5.3.1 Appendix 1 uses 300m for noise/vibration receptor counts and 250m for air quality.

5.3.2 The problem is not the distances alone; it is how they are applied. Appendix 1 does not disclose whether it is counting:

- dwellings vs “properties”; **please note the applicant has counted three isolated farm yard sites as three residential dwellings in Table 1** in the LCJM column; Rows 5 (Landscape & Visual- 300 metres), 8 (Noise & Vibration – 300 metres) and 9 (Air Quality – 250 metres) – **Ex D6.9, Ex D6.10 a - c, Ex D6.11 a - b and Ex D6.12 a - d.**
- building footprint vs curtilage; or
- borderline receptors consistently.

5.3.3 LCJM’s preliminary check indicates the 300m threshold has been applied in a way that conveniently excludes White House and especially Mountain Cottage on the Beacon Fen route (and dwellings near North Drive / Bicker Fen), while inflating the LCJM count. That cannot be tested without a receptor schedule and a stated measurement rule-set.

### **5.4 Excluding construction haul roads and compounds from the quantitative comparison is not neutral (and distorts climate/air/noise outcomes)**

5.4.1 The Applicant excludes construction compounds and haul routes from quantitative comparison because LCJM has not provided those details, addressing them only qualitatively.

5.4.2 That is not a neutral methodological choice. Construction access and haul traffic are the mechanism by which noise, air quality and construction-phase emissions (climate) occur in practice. Excluding haul routes therefore suppresses the impacts that matter most to local residents—particularly where (as here) the Applicant’s construction access materially departs from the cable corridor (**Ex D6.5**) and would pass close to multiple homes and sensitive corridors (including LWS 4722).

### **5.5 Climate change: the §2.3.17 conclusion fails if Row 1 length is wrong**

5.5.1 Appendix 1 states that the shorter route is preferable for climate change and concludes that the Applicant’s route is preferable.

5.5.2 That conclusion fails if the route length input is wrong – **Ex D6.8**. LCJM’s measured length evidence indicates the LCJM Hybrid is shorter, so the Applicant’s §2.3.17 conclusion should be given limited weight unless Row 1 is corrected and the length methodology disclosed. Furthermore, if not “collecting” all LCJM’s Aug 2023 618 PV and BESS acres via the LCJM Hybrid route, then this north / south route could be even shorter by going across ██████████ ██████████ fields on which LCJM is the tenant – **Ex D6.4 [green line]**.

**5.6 Soils / agricultural land:** “reasonable worst-case both are BMV” is not a substitute for comparison (and reflects a significant lack of engagement)

5.6.1 Appendix 1 relies on Natural England’s provisional ALC mapping as “the only source of data available” for both corridors and concludes it is a “reasonable worst-case assumption that both routes are entirely on BMV land.”

5.6.2 LCJM does not dispute proportionality, but the Applicant’s approach collapses known, evidenced local distinctions [Ex D6.13] into a generic “both are BMV anyway” statement. Appendix 1 itself records that LCJM’s case is founded on (i) a site-specific ALC survey **dated November 2021** on c.200 acres (75 pits) recording ~96% Grade 3a, and (ii) 30 years of cropping records used to place the LCJM Hybrid deliberately onto Grade 3 land.

5.6.3 The Applicant’s rebuttal is essentially that these surveys do not overlap the indicative corridor so they will not be relied upon; and that if assumptions are made for the LCJM Hybrid, similar assumptions could be made for the Applicant’s route so “neither benefits.” That is not a logical basis to dismiss the evidence. If the Applicant says corridor-end soils evidence is too localised to be used, the proportionate response is **not** to flatten everything to “reasonable worst-case”; it is to require targeted verification where the decision is sensitive.

5.6.4 LCJM also notes that the Applicant’s “both are BMV” framing is inconsistent with obvious on-the-ground indicators of higher-quality land and sensitivity—particularly long-established potato rotations and irrigation infrastructure present on the Beacon Fen corridor but not on the LCJM Hybrid. Those indicators are **directly relevant** to reinstatement risk and the magnitude/duration of agricultural effects, and LCJM would have provided cropping histories and field evidence earlier had the Applicant engaged meaningfully.

#### **5.6.5 Targeted ALC verification (LCJM evidence step)**

In order to resolve this issue proportionately, **LCJM has instructed a targeted, corridor-specific Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey focused on the disputed route section(s) relevant to the comparative exercise.** This is necessary because the Applicant has elected to rely on the Natural England provisional dataset and a “reasonable worst-case” assumption that both routes are entirely BMV land, while declining to engage substantively with readily available local evidence (including published AGR3 soil work in November 2021 and long-term cropping/irrigation indicators – **Ex D6.13** and LCJM spreadsheet of denied approaches to Low Carbon – **Ex D4.1** and **Ex D6.1**). Pending that targeted verification, LCJM submits that the ExA should give **limited weight** to Table 1’s ALC/BMV comparisons and to any conclusions that depend on them.

#### **5.7 What LCJM asks the ExA to require before placing weight on Table 1**

5.7.1 Before Table 1 is relied upon as the CAH1 Action No. 2 comparative analysis, LCJM asks that the Applicant be directed to provide a short auditable addendum consisting of:

**(a)** the measurement basis for corridor length (endpoints and GIS/polyline);

**(b)** Residential receptor schedule and measurement rules (Rows 5 and 6)

(i) a numbered schedule of every dwelling/property counted for each route;

(ii) the exact measurement basis used (“from corridor edge” vs “from corridor centreline”; and whether the corridor is treated as a 60m polygon);

(iii) whether curtilage is included and how borderline cases are handled; and

(iv) confirmation that non-residential agricultural buildings have been excluded (and the filter rule applied). **More on this later.**

**(c)** a construction access sensitivity showing receptor proximity and environmental interactions for the assumed haul routes/compounds for each option.

---

## 6. Row-by-row critique of the Applicant's Table 1 (with LCJM corrected comparator at Table ES-1)

LCJM corrected comparator (Table ES-1). For ease of audit, LCJM first provides Table ES-1 (LCJM corrected like-for-like comparator) which restates the Applicant's Table 1 rows using LCJM's checked measurements and consistent counting rules (supported by the exhibits cited). Section 6 then provides a row-by-row critique of the Applicant's Table 1 and explains where and why the Applicant's inputs, scope choices and assumptions are not auditable or are factually incorrect.

### 6.1 Row 1 – Total corridor length: Table 1 is inaccurate and reverses the direction of difference

6.1 In Table 1, Row 1 ("Total Corridor Length"), the Applicant reports 6.87 km for the Beacon Fen indicative cable route and 6.93 km for "LCJMF's Amended Alternative." This is materially inaccurate. The corrected Row 1 figures are shown in Table ES-1 and evidenced at Ex D6.8

6.2 Using the same start/end points shown on the Applicant's Figure and measuring the two indicative polylines in Google Earth (Edit Path → Measurements), LCJM obtains the following lengths (see Ex D6.8):

- Beacon Fen route: 6,818 metres (6.818 km)
- LCJM Hybrid: 6,786 metres (6.786 km)

6.3 On this measured basis, the LCJM Hybrid is shorter by 32 metres, not "longer by 60 metres" as implied by the Applicant's Table 1. The Applicant's figures therefore do not merely contain rounding variance; they reverse the comparative result. It would be even shorter if the route included [REDACTED] fields (that LCJM farms) as discussed earlier [Ex D6.4].

6.4 The Applicant's corridor-length metric is only meaningful if it is auditable and measured consistently (i.e., the same endpoints, same definition of "length", and the same treatment of shared sections, offsets and any spurs). If the Applicant has used a different basis (e.g., corridor edge length rather than route centreline, different endpoints, or additional segments), it must disclose that basis and provide the underlying GIS/polyline and calculation method.

6.5 LCJM requests that the ExA gives limited weight to Table 1 (and any downstream "summary" scoring that relies on it) unless and until the Applicant:

- (a) corrects Row 1 using a clearly stated methodology; and
- (b) provides an auditable route length schedule (coordinates/polyline) demonstrating how each length has been derived.

### 6.2 Row 2 – East–West field crossing: the metric must be interpreted through Great Hale Fen drainage reality (and specialist potato infrastructure)

6.6 LCJM accepts Row 2 as a relevant comparator in principle, because in Great Hale Fen the principal agricultural sensitivity is the interaction between any east–west linear corridor and the holding's north–south drainage layout across large rectangular fields.

6.7 However, Row 2 risks being read as a generic proxy ("more east–west length / more fields crossed = worse") without the holding-specific reality that makes east–west alignment particularly harmful here. The Beacon Fen corridor through Great Hale Fen traverses large rectangular fields where the principal drains and laterals run north–south approximately every 21 yards. In that context, an east–west alignment is the alignment most likely to intercept

and sever multiple north–south drains in Great Hale Fen, increasing reinstatement complexity and long-term agricultural risk.

6.8 This is a practical operational constraint, not a theoretical point. Drain maintenance practicability matters: LCJM’s drain-jetting capability is limited to approximately 300 metres, meaning severance across long north–south drain runs materially increases the likelihood that sections become impractical to jet and maintain from existing access points. Row 2 therefore needs to be interpreted as a drainage interaction / maintainability issue rather than a purely geometric descriptor.

6.9 Row 2 also fails to capture the key land-use sensitivity on LCJM’s holding: the Beacon Fen corridor section across LCJM comprises approximately 3,199 metres across potato-capable land, and it interacts with specialist agricultural infrastructure including a strategic irrigation main. These constraints materially change the agricultural risk profile (including reinstatement complexity and outage risk) in a way a simple “fields crossed” count does not capture.

6.10 It is notable that the Applicant has not sought basic factual verification from LCJM regarding the existence/alignment of the irrigation main, despite producing a comparative agricultural commentary. That lack of elementary constraint-checking further reduces the reliability of Row 2 as a proxy for agricultural effects.

6.11 Weight to be placed on Row 2: In the absence of disclosed constraint verification (including irrigation main interaction and drainage maintainability) and given the Applicant’s decision to exclude construction access/haul impacts from quantitative comparison, LCJM submits that Row 2 should be treated as partial context only and should not be relied upon as evidence of comparative agricultural effects.

### **6.3 Row 3 – Number of affected landowners: the “distinct freeholder” count is applied inconsistently and inflates the LCJM side**

6.12 In Table 1, Row 3 (“Number of affected landowners”), the Applicant reports 13 distinct registered freeholders (+3 unregistered) for the Beacon Fen indicative route, and 19 distinct registered freeholders (+ minimum 2 unregistered) for the LCJM alternative. On its face, this is presented as evidence that the LCJM alternative is inherently more complex or less deliverable.

6.13 LCJM submits that Row 3 is not reliable because the Applicant’s counting approach is not applied consistently and Appendix C appears to: (i) double-count certain parties/titles on the LCJM family side, (ii) include titles that are not on the LCJM Hybrid alignment, and (iii) compress multiple distinct Beacon Fen interests within large title blocks such that the Beacon Fen side is understated.

6.14 Counting principle (why this matters): If Row 3 is intended to measure “affected landowners”, it should count distinct legal freeholders / negotiation counterparties, not the number of titles or repeated entries of the same freeholder under different titles. Where one counterparty holds multiple titles (or multiple entries refer to the same freeholder), that should not inflate the “affected landowners” figure.

#### **LCJM Hybrid: apparent inflation by double-counting, non-route titles and non-adverse LCJM-controlled land**

6.15 Based on Appendix C as presented:

(a) LCJM-controlled land is counted as if it were an adverse third-party constraint. Title LL165588 is the Mountain SSAS (LCJM family-controlled) and is deliberately part of the LCJM Hybrid routing concept. Presenting LCJM-controlled land as an “affected landowner” in the same sense as a third party is misleading in a deliverability comparison.

(b) Double-counting of the same freeholder/titles inflates “distinct freeholders”. Appendix C appears to list LL165588 more than once on the LCJM side. LL355899 (Percy Needham Trust) also appears multiple times. Repetition of the same freeholder/titles inflates the headline number.

(c) Optional/avoidance parcels are treated as fixed “affected landowners”. Title LL431295 ( [REDACTED] ) is included even though the LCJM Hybrid can avoid unnecessary third-party involvement at that end (and, in any event, it is not comparable to an imposed third-party constraint on the Applicant’s route) (see **Ex D6.14**).

(d) Failure to aggregate where the same controlling person/counterparty is counted multiple times. LL239812 ( [REDACTED] ) is listed separately from REN Farming Limited (LL326101 and LL402760) even though LCJM understands [REDACTED] is also a director of REN Farming Limited (see **Ex D6.15**). If Row 3 is intended to measure negotiation counterparties / complexity, those entries should not be treated as unrelated “affected landowners” without explanation.

(e) Inclusion of titles not on the LCJM Hybrid route and/or duplication. LL97571 appears to have been included (and included three times – **Ex D6.16b**) on the LCJM side, notwithstanding LCJM’s understanding that it is not on the LCJM Hybrid alignment (see **Ex D6.16a**). This materially affects the headline count.

6.16 LCJM’s counterparty-based count (LCJM Hybrid): Applying the above “distinct counterparty” principle, LCJM’s current assessment of genuinely **new** affected counterparties on the LCJM Hybrid is three (see **Ex D6.17**), being:

1. [REDACTED] (LL239812, LL326101, LL402760)
2. DE Nickols & Sons Ltd (LL378058)
3. ~~Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (LL226134) [already affected]~~
4. ~~Environment Agency (LL320495) [already affected]~~
5. LL395174 ( [REDACTED] ) – **Ex D6.18**
6. LL241762 ( [REDACTED] ) and ( [REDACTED] ) – **Ex D6.18** – [already affected]

LCJM notes that certain interests (e.g., LL226134 – Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board) are extremely limited in area, and the Applicant’s approach gives them disproportionate weight by counting them as “distinct freeholders” without any materiality threshold.

6.17 Net effect (why the Applicant’s “19 vs 13” ledger is misleading): LCJM has prepared a simplified map drawn from the Applicant’s own unredacted published material, showing the actual incremental counterparties created by the LCJM Hybrid compared with the Applicant route (see **Ex D6.17**).

On LCJM’s assessment, the LCJM Hybrid introduces a maximum of approximately three “new” counterparties in practice (depending on how the “TBC” titles resolve), while at the same time it removes or avoids a larger group of counterparties impacted by the Applicant’s corridor resulting in a net reduction of at least 7 affected landowners (**Ex D6.17**), **whilst also registering a shorter cable route.**

6.18 Specifically, LCJM’s Hybrid avoids/relieves the following counterparties compared with the Applicant’s corridor (as shown on the Applicant’s own Land Tracking mapping - **Ex D6.17**):

- 1) [REDACTED] - LL431295
- 2) LCJM west to east - LL57121, LL331998 and LL55575
- 3) [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] [Mountain SSAS] LL165588
- 4) Environment Agency - LL320274
- 5) [REDACTED] - LL135546
- 6) [REDACTED] - [see Applicant’s Land Tracker map below]
- 7) Bicker United Charity - [see Applicant’s Land Tracker map below]

- 8) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] - [see Applicant's Land Tracker map below]
- 9) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] - [see Applicant's Land Tracker map below]
- 10) The Vicarage Drove Project - [see Applicant's Land Tracker map below]
- 11) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] LL165569

On that basis, LCJM submits that **the LCJM Hybrid produces a significant net reduction in affected negotiation counterparties**, rather than the opposite.

6.19 Weight to be placed on Row 3: In light of the above, LCJM submits that Row 3 should be given limited weight as a deliverability / comparative complexity indicator. As presented, it reads less like a consistent "distinct landowner" count and more like a schedule-led comparison that (i) inflates the LCJM side by double-counting, over-disaggregation ([REDACTED] and inclusion of non-route / non-adverse entries (LL 97571), while (ii) compressing multiple Beacon Fen interests within fewer headline entries.

#### **6.4 Row 4 – Ecology (continued): Section 3.2 / Table 2 haul-road assumptions are not robust, not like-for-like, and materially understate Beacon Fen's longitudinal LWS interaction**

6.26 The Applicant seeks to address ecology beyond "LWS crossed" by introducing assumed construction compounds and haul routes in Section 3.2 and Table 2 (and Figure 8). LCJM submits that this component of the comparative analysis is not robust and not like-for-like, for two reasons: (i) the Applicant's own Beacon Fen haul-route assumptions show extensive longitudinal interaction with the Great Hale Eau LWS (LWS 4722) on both its north and south sides, and (ii) the Applicant's assumed "LCJM Access Option 1" is an **unoffered and unagreed internal private haul road** which cannot properly be treated as a basis for attributing effects to the LCJM Hybrid.

#### **(A) Beacon Fen: the Applicant's own assumptions show extensive longitudinal interaction with the Great Hale Eau LWS (LWS 4722) on both the north and south sides**

6.27 The Applicant's Table 2 records that the Beacon Fen indicative route has c. 1,650m of access/haul route within 50m of an LWS, with the longest continuous parallel section stated to be 670m. The Applicant further explains that this total comprises c. 920m on the northern edge of the Great Hale Eau LWS plus c. 730m on the southern side of that same LWS corridor.

6.28 On any fair reading, that is not a marginal or incidental interaction: it is sustained longitudinal proximity to the Great Hale Eau LWS (LWS 4722) created by the Applicant's own assumed construction traffic logistics. If Table 2 is being relied upon to inform the ExA's understanding of ecology interactions, it must be acknowledged that Beacon Fen's construction access assumptions materially engage both sides of LWS 4722 for significant lengths and following impacts from Viking Link two years earlier.

#### **(B) LCJM: the Applicant's "Access Option 1" is not offered (and therefore cannot be used to load LWS impacts onto the LCJM Hybrid)**

6.29 In contrast, for the LCJM Hybrid the Applicant introduces "LCJM Access Option 1" in Figure 8 which runs internally along / adjacent to the Great Hale Eau and through LCJM land and then uses that invented access scenario to narrate ecological interaction (including long continuous parallel lengths) – **Ex D6.23**. LCJM has not offered that internal access route and has not agreed it is available for haulage or construction traffic.

6.30 The result is that Table 2 is not a genuine comparison of the two corridors; it is a comparison between:

- Beacon Fen, using the Applicant’s assumed (and self-serving) construction logistics; and
- LCJM, using a hypothetical internal private road which has not been offered, **and which would require LCJM to grant additional rights beyond the corridor itself.**

6.31 It is not acceptable in an ExA-requested comparator exercise to treat an unoffered access route as if it were a valid “assumed” LCJM construction arrangement and then use it to infer ecological impact. If the Applicant wished to explore hypothetical access scenarios, it should have labelled them clearly as not proposed by LCJM and not agreed, and it should not have relied on them to “score” or weight the LCJM option adversely.

**(B)(i) The Applicant has selectively assumed an internal haul route along the Great Hale Eau LWS when less-intrusive construction access alignments are plainly available**

6.31A Even on the Applicant’s own “assumptions” approach, there is no justification for selecting an internal haul road that runs longitudinally along / adjacent to the Great Hale Eau LWS (**Ex D6.23**) as the LCJM construction baseline. A straightforward alternative would be to assume a haul road aligned to the east of the north–south section of the LCJM Hybrid route, across LCJM land, so that construction movements remain associated with the corridor itself and avoid sustained parallel occupation of the Great Hale Eau LWS corridor.

6.31B The Applicant has not assessed (or transparently disclosed) such alternative construction logistics. **Instead, it has chosen an internal alignment (“Access Option 1”) that maximises “parallel within 50m of an LWS” lengths and then deploys those inflated figures to load ecological interaction onto the LCJM Hybrid – [Ex D6.23]. That is a selective and self-serving evidential assumption, and it further undermines the reliability and weight of Table 2 as a comparator.**

Beyond the indicative LCJM Amended Alternative Access Option 2 [purple line on Little Hale Drove], why would the applicant not use the black dashed line [red arrows] to avoid longitudinal interaction with the Great Hale Eau LWS? **[Ex D6.24].**

**(B)(ii) Paragraph 3.2.22 is a generic “mitigation blanket” and does not cure the flawed haul-road assumptions or the avoidance test**

6.31C The Applicant’s paragraph 3.2.22 attempts to neutralise the significance of sustained haul-road proximity to an LWS by stating that haul roads within 50m “do not necessarily” lead to likely significant effects and that (by reference to ES Chapter 7 and the OLEMP / OCEMP suite) “no residual significant effects are identified”. That is not a robust response in an ExA-requested comparative exercise, for three reasons.

6.31D First, it sidesteps the real issue: route choice. The question here is not whether an LWS can sometimes be managed if a haul road sits within 50m; it is whether the Applicant has chosen (and then presented as “LCJM’s baseline”) an internal haul route that unnecessarily maximises longitudinal occupation alongside the Great Hale Eau LWS, when a less intrusive construction access alignment is plainly available (i.e. east of the north–south section of the LCJM Hybrid across LCJM land or as shown in **Ex D6.24**). Paragraph 3.2.22 does not engage with avoidance at all.

6.31E Second, the plans relied upon are expressly outline and are not a substitute for evidence at this stage. The Ecology ES itself treats LWS receptors as hydrologically connected and relies on “embedded buffers and measures” in the OCEMP suite to reach a “not significant” conclusion for waterborne contaminants—on assumptions about *short-duration ditch crossings* (works “expecting to take no longer than a week”). That logic does not address the distinct risk profile of *sustained longitudinal haul traffic* running alongside an LWS/drain corridor and especially one that suffers cumulative impact after Viking Link.

6.31F The OCEMP confirms that key controls are to be developed later at detailed stage (e.g. “a detailed Construction Noise Monitoring Scheme will be developed in the detailed CEMP(s)”). It also expressly recognises hydro-ecological sensitivity and identifies Local Wildlife Sites downstream of the Site with hydro-ecological significance.

In other words, paragraph 3.2.22 relies on future-detail control documents to dismiss effects now, while simultaneously using today's assumed haul-road geometry to "score" LCJM adversely.

6.31G Third, "within 50m" is not the test and does not address the key impact pathways. The relevant effects from a high-intensity haul road along a drain/LWS corridor are typically driven by construction traffic intensity and duration, pollution/silt incident risk, vibration/noise, lighting, bank/ditch integrity and hydrological connectivity. The Ecology ES recognises the importance of these watercourse corridors for protected/priority species (e.g. water vole signs concentrated around Great Hale Eau / Great Hale Fen and recorded throughout access/cable corridors).

Those are precisely the effects that should be avoided where practicable, not normalised and waved away by generic assurances that mitigation exists "somewhere else".

6.31H Accordingly, paragraph 3.2.22 cannot be used to rescue the Applicant's Table 2 narrative. The flaw is upstream: the Applicant has (i) normalised extensive longitudinal interaction with the Great Hale Eau LWS on Beacon Fen's own assumed logistics, while (ii) inventing and adopting an unoffered internal access route to load comparable (or worse) interaction onto LCJM.

That is not like-for-like and should be given limited weight.

### **(C) A corrected, exam-safe restatement of Table 2 (what it actually shows)**

6.32 Read correctly, Table 2 does not demonstrate that the LCJM Hybrid is inherently worse on LWS interaction. At most, it shows:

Beacon Fen (Applicant's assumed construction access):

- c. 1,650m of haul/access within 50m of an LWS;
- comprised of c. 920m north of Great Hale Eau LWS and c. 730m south of Great Hale Eau LWS (i.e. both sides of LWS 4722);
- longest continuous parallel section stated as 670m.

LCJM Hybrid (Applicant's assumed construction access):

- the adverse "continuous parallel" figure arises predominantly from the Applicant's invented "Access Option 1" along the Great Hale Eau / through LCJM land;
- that "Access Option 1" is **not offered by LCJM and cannot be treated as the LCJM Hybrid's construction baseline.**

6.33 Accordingly, any inference drawn from Table 2 that the LCJM Hybrid is environmentally inferior is not auditable and not fair, because it depends on attributing LCJM impacts to an access arrangement that **LCJM has not put forward and has not agreed**. In those circumstances, LCJM submits that Table 2 (and any Row 4 scoring that relies on it) should be afforded limited weight.

### **(D) Unacceptable presentation**

6.34 LCJM also notes that the presentation of Section 3.2 / Table 2 is liable to mislead: it appears to present "Access Option 1" as if it were an LCJM-proposed solution when it is not. In an examination context—where the ExA requested comparative analysis—the Applicant is required to be transparent and even-handed in its assumptions. This is neither. The Applicant has effectively created an LCJM access case that increases LWS interaction and then treated that case as a basis for comparative conclusions. That is not an acceptable approach to evidence.

### **(E) Cumulative impacts: LWS 4722 (Great Hale Eau) and adjacent receptors have recently experienced major linear-infrastructure construction impacts (Viking Link), which Table 2 ignores**

6.35 Table 2 is also deficient because it treats proximity to the Great Hale Eau LWS (LWS 4722) as an abstract metric, without acknowledging the baseline sensitivity created by recent major infrastructure works in the same locality.

6.36 In that context, sustained longitudinal construction traffic and repeated working in close proximity to the Great Hale Eau LWS should not be treated as a neutral “parallel length” statistic. It is precisely the kind of effect that can become unacceptable when viewed **cumulatively: repeated disturbance to the same corridor, repeated pressure on the same local network, and repeated disruption to land management, drainage operations and ecological function (Ex D4.11, 4.12 and 4.13).**

6.37 The Applicant’s own assumptions for Beacon Fen acknowledge extensive longitudinal interaction on both the north and south sides of the Great Hale Eau LWS (LWS 4722) for construction access purposes. That matters because it increases the likelihood of cumulative adverse effects (and public/residential amenity impacts) along a corridor that has already absorbed significant recent disturbance. The Applicant’s Table 2 does not grapple with this at all; it presents a proximity metric **without recognising cumulative context.**

6.38 LCJM submits that, when the ExA considers Row 4 and Section 3.2, it should treat the Great Hale Eau LWS corridor as a high-sensitivity receptor in cumulative terms, and should be cautious about any comparative narrative that:

- (a) normalises extensive construction traffic occupation along both sides of the LWS for Beacon Fen; while
- (b) simultaneously relies on an unoffered, hypothetical internal access arrangement to attribute similar (or worse) effects to the LCJM Hybrid.

#### **6.5 Row 5 – Landscape & Visual: the “residential properties within 300m” count is factually unreliable and the approach wrongly excludes the dwellings most affected by construction traffic**

6.39 In Table 1, Row 5 (“Landscape & Visual”), the Applicant reports **6 residential properties within 300m** of the Beacon Fen indicative corridor and **10 residential properties within 300m** of the LCJM amended alternative. LCJM submits that this Row 5 comparison is not reliable because (i) **the Applicant has incorrectly treated farm buildings as “residential properties” on the LCJM side [Ex D6.9, 6.10 a - c, 6.11 a - b and 6.12 a - d]**, and (ii) the metric is constructed in a way that **excludes** the very residential receptors most affected by construction logistics, by counting only proximity to the *cable corridor* and not proximity to the *construction access/haul route* that the Applicant itself relies upon elsewhere.

#### **(A) Misclassification: farm buildings are not “residential properties”**

6.40 The Applicant’s Row 5 figure for the LCJM option is inflated by the apparent inclusion of **agricultural/farm buildings (sheds/huts)** as if they were residential dwellings [**Ex D6.9, 6.10 a - c, 6.11 a - b and 6.12 a - d**]. **Counting non-residential farm structures as “residential properties” is a straightforward factual error and materially undermines the integrity of the Row 5 comparison.**

6.41 LCJM also notes that the Applicant’s Row 5 tally does not reflect the actual number of dwellings at certain holdings (e.g. where two dwellings exist but three are implied at Willow Farm – Nickols residence – **Ex D6.9**). This again indicates that the Applicant’s dwelling schedule is not an auditable dwelling list and has not been verified on the ground.

#### **(B) The 300m metric is applied in a way that conveniently excludes key Beacon Fen receptors (including borderline cases)**

6.42 Row 5 uses a **300m cut-off** as a hard threshold. That is not necessarily a wrong choice in itself, but it must be applied transparently and consistently, with a clear dwelling schedule, and with appropriate treatment of borderline cases where curtilage/receptor use and closeness to the corridor means effects can still arise. Here, the selection and application of the 300m threshold produces a distorted result because it excludes dwellings that are very clearly within the zone of influence yet fall marginally outside the corridor-distance cut-off.

6.43 For example, **Mountain Cottage is approximately 313m from the 60m corridor** (i.e. only marginally outside the threshold) but will experience construction-related effects if construction access/haul routes are taken into account. A rigid “corridor-only” 300m measure is therefore not a reliable proxy for real landscape/amenity effect.

**(C) Row 5 is incomplete because it excludes construction access/haul routes, even though those routes drive residential amenity effects**

6.44 The central defect in Row 5 is that it counts only dwellings within 300m of the *cable route corridor* and **does not** count dwellings affected by the *construction access/haul route*—despite the Applicant’s own reliance on construction logistics (compounds/haul roads) elsewhere in its comparative narrative.

6.45 In practice, residential amenity and landscape/visual experience during construction is driven heavily by construction movements, access routing, and proximity of haul roads and compounds—not simply the buried cable corridor. On the Beacon Fen option, the assumed construction traffic routing brings heavy construction movements directly past key residential receptors including **White House, Mastins House, Mountain Cottage and White House Farm [Ex D6.5]**. Yet Row 5 does not capture this, because it is not measuring proximity to construction access at all.

6.46 The result is a systematically biased comparison: the Applicant uses a corridor-only dwelling count to suggest the LCJM option is worse on residential proximity, while the Beacon Fen option’s most sensitive residential receptors are materially affected by construction traffic but are either (i) excluded from the count entirely (because they are just outside 300m from the corridor), or (ii) not captured because the metric ignores the construction route altogether.

**(D) Consequence: limited weight should be placed on Row 5 as currently presented**

6.47 For these reasons, LCJM submits that Row 5 should be afforded **limited weight** in any comparative conclusion. At minimum, the Row 5 dwelling count requires correction to remove non-residential buildings and to present an auditable dwelling schedule. More importantly, if Row 5 is being used as a proxy for residential amenity/landscape experience, it must address construction access/haul routing, because that is where the dominant construction-phase effects arise.

**(E) PRoW receptor weighting: crossing counts are not a proxy for amenity effect without evidence of actual use**

6.48 LCJMF local evidence on PRoW use: While these PRoWs exist on the Definitive Map, LCJM’s long-standing on-site experience is that GtHa/2/1, GtHa/1/2, LHa/4/1 and LHa/5/1 are very lightly used in practice. Over several decades of daily farm presence, LCJM has only very rarely observed members of the public using these routes, **and to LCJM’s knowledge there is no regular or routine use of GtHa/1/2, LHa/4/1 and LHa/5/1**. This indicates that these PRoWs function primarily as low-use field-edge links rather than meaningful, frequently used recreational corridors. Accordingly, a PRoW “crossing count” is a weak proxy for likely magnitude of landscape/amenity effects unless supported by usage/footfall evidence. The Applicant has provided no such evidence to justify treating each PRoW crossing as an equivalent receptor impact.

6.49 LCJMF invites the Applicant to disclose the basis for its PRoW receptor assumptions (e.g. any PRoW user counts, parish records, site surveys or consultation evidence). In the absence of such evidence, PRoW crossing counts should be treated with caution and afforded limited weight.

**6.6 Row 6 – Cultural Heritage: the “12 non-designated heritage assets within 100m” claim is not auditable and appears to conflate Historic Environmental Record [HER] entries with Non-Designated Heritage Assets [NDHAs]**

6.49 In Table 1, Row 6 (“Cultural Heritage”), the Applicant states that the Beacon Fen indicative route has 2 non-designated heritage assets within 100m, whereas the LCJM amended alternative has 12 non-designated heritage

assets within 100m. **LCJM cannot reconcile the LCJM figure of 12 from Figure 3 as presented, and the Applicant has not provided an auditable list of the assets relied upon.**

6.50 The Applicant should therefore be required to provide a verified schedule of the alleged “12” assets, identifying for each:

- (a) the HER reference / ID;
- (b) description / asset type;
- (c) geometry type (point / line / polygon) and whether any entries are duplicates of the same feature recorded in multiple forms;
- (d) the measured distance to the 100m buffer (and separately to the 60m corridor); and
- (e) the basis on which the Applicant has classified the record as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), as opposed to a generic Historic Environment Record (HER) entry.

6.51 Figure 3 is labelled as Historic Environment Record (HER) data. HER records are not automatically “non-designated heritage assets”: they include a wide range of recorded features and findspots, many of which do not meet NDHA criteria without further professional assessment. The Applicant’s Row 6 metric therefore appears to risk misclassification by treating all HER entries within 100m as NDHAs.

6.52 LCJM also notes that its Defra Sustainable Farming Incentive mapping for SBI 107629756 includes a “Map of Historic and Archaeological Features” (generated 11/11/2023) and shows **no historic or archaeological features on LCJM’s holding on that layer [Ex D6.19, 6.20, 6.21 and 6.22]**. While LCJM recognises that SFI mapping is not a substitute for the County HER, this further underscores the need for the Applicant to disclose the list, methodology and classification basis for the claimed “12”.

6.53 Pending disclosure of the schedule and a consistent counting methodology applied to both options, the “2 vs 12” comparison is not capable of verification and should be afforded limited weight in any comparative conclusion.

### **6.7 Row 7 – Traffic & Access: the asserted need to cross Great Hale Drove is not demonstrated, and alternative alignments avoid the crossing**

6.54 In Table 1, Row 7 (“Traffic & Access”), the Applicant states that the Beacon Fen indicative route requires four highway crossings (Great Hale Drove, North Drove, Bicker Drove and Vicarage Drove) and that there are no longitudinal highway sections, whereas the LCJM amended alternative requires one highway crossing (Great Hale Drove) and includes c. 4.38 km of cable route running longitudinally along highways (Little Hale Drove, Bicker Drove and Vicarage Drove). LCJM submits that the Row 7 framing is incomplete because it treats the Great Hale Drove crossing as an unavoidable attribute of the LCJM alignment when it is not. [see dotted yellow line - **Ex D6.4**]

6.55 The Applicant has not demonstrated why any LCJM-aligned alternative must cross Great Hale Drove at all, particularly given the project’s stated purpose of connecting to the Bicker Fen substation, and the availability of substantial PV/BESS land identified/offered in the locality (including LCJM’s November 2021 offer of 516 acres and LCJM’s August 2023 offer of 618 acres following the loss of “Beacon Fen South” to the Applicant). The point here being that those areas include land as close as c. 2.8 km from Bicker Fen on Grade 3 land, with very limited residential receptors in Great Hale Fen and Little Hale Fen as already evidenced in Row 5. In that context, a Great Hale Drove crossing is a route choice, not an inherent constraint.

6.56 A practicable alternative exists that avoids crossing Great Hale Drove by routing across [REDACTED] land (farmed by LCJM) under title LL431295 – **Ex D6.4 (green solid line)**. The Applicant has not assessed or disclosed this option within its Row 7 analysis, nor explained why it has been rejected. In the absence of that appraisal, the Applicant’s presentation of the LCJM option as “requiring” a Great Hale Drove crossing is not even-handed.

6.57 More fundamentally, Row 7 risks presenting “highway crossings” as the sole proxy for traffic/access effect. The relevant question for the ExA is the overall construction traffic consequence of each option (including the location

and intensity of construction movements, receptor sensitivity, and whether traffic routing can avoid residential clusters). On that basis, an alignment that avoids an unnecessary Great Hale Drove crossing and remains associated with low-receptor areas close to Bicker Fen should not be scored adversely by reference to a crossing that is not required.

6.58 LCJM therefore requests that the Applicant:

- (a) confirm the basis on which it asserts that a Great Hale Drove crossing is necessary for any LCJM-aligned alternative;
- (b) appraise and disclose the route option across LL431295 ( [REDACTED] land) as a means of avoiding that crossing; and
- (c) update Row 7 so that the comparison clearly distinguishes avoidable versus unavoidable traffic/access impacts, rather than presenting avoidable highway crossings as fixed attributes of the LCJM option.

6.59 Absent that appraisal and disclosure, Row 7 is best understood as a presentation choice rather than a robust comparative conclusion.

### **6.8 Rows 8–9 – Noise & Vibration / Air Quality: the “properties within X metres” counts are not auditable, misclassify non-residential buildings, and mask the true comparative receptor context**

6.60 In Table 1, Row 8 (“Noise & Vibration”), the Applicant states that the Beacon Fen indicative route has 6 residential properties within 300m whereas the LCJM amended alternative has 10. In Row 9 (“Air Quality”), the Applicant states that the Beacon Fen indicative route has 4 residential properties within 250m whereas the LCJM amended alternative has 10.

LCJM submits that these comparative counts are not reliable because they: (i) misclassify non-residential farm building sites as “residential properties” [Ex D6.9, 6.10 a - c, 6.11 a - b and 6.12 a - d]; (ii) contain obvious dwelling-count errors (including at Willow Farm (Nickols [Ex D6.9]) (iii) apply the stated distance thresholds inconsistently [Ex D6.27]; and (iv) exclude construction access/haul routes and construction logistics which are central drivers of noise and dust effects and which would bring additional Beacon Fen receptors into scope.

(A) Misclassification and counting errors: “residential properties” has not been ground-true

6.61 LCJM has identified at least three farm building sites that have been treated by the Applicant as “residential properties” within the Row 8 / Row 9 counting exercise. Those are not residential dwellings. LCJM will rely on Ex D6.9, 6.10 a - c, 6.11 a - b and 6.12 a - d to demonstrate the misclassification. Counting non-residential agricultural structures as dwellings is a straightforward factual error which inflates the LCJM totals and undermines the integrity of the comparison.

6.62 The Applicant has also recorded Willow Farm (Nickols) as three residential properties, when it is two. This is a further clear ground-truthing failure and indicates that the Applicant’s “residential properties” list is not a verified dwelling schedule.

#### **(B) Threshold inconsistency: Row 9 applies a 250m rule but includes a receptor beyond it**

6.63 Row 9 (Air Quality) purports to count “residential properties within 250m” of each route. However, LCJM notes that a residence in Little Hale Fen (postcode NG34 9BG) is approximately 273m from the route yet has been included in the Applicant’s “within 250m” tally – Ex D6.27. This internal inconsistency calls into question how distances have been measured (e.g. corridor edge vs centreline; straight-line vs route length; which geometry is being measured) and further undermines the auditability of the “4 vs 10” comparison.

**(C) The key defect: the Applicant splits off construction access/haul routes and thereby excludes Beacon Fen’s most affected dwellings**

6.64 Rows 8–9 present “properties within X metres of the cable route” as if that were a reliable proxy for construction-phase noise and air quality effect. It is not. Noise and air quality effects during construction are driven heavily by construction traffic routing, compound locations, and sustained haul movements — not simply the buried cable corridor.

6.65 The Applicant’s comparative approach artificially “splits off” haul road/access impacts and then discounts them on the Beacon Fen side by relying on a corridor-only distance screen. That approach enables Beacon Fen to exclude key residential receptors whose amenity would be materially affected by construction logistics even where they lie beyond the corridor-only threshold. In particular, this presentation permits the Applicant to exclude White House and Mountain Cottage on the Beacon Fen route because the analysis does not treat proximity to the construction access/haul route as part of the residential receptor count.

6.66 The outcome is a systematically biased comparison: LCJM is scored adversely using an inflated and error-ridden “dwelling count” (including misclassified farm structures), while Beacon Fen’s most sensitive construction-phase residential receptors are excluded by a corridor-only screening rule that does not reflect how noise and dust exposures arise in practice.

**(D) Comparative receptor context: Rows 8–9 obscure the low-density receptor environment around LCJM’s offer areas and the village context near Beacon Fen**

6.67 The above errors and omissions do more than undermine the arithmetic: they mask the real receptor context relevant to significance. The land areas that formed the basis of LCJM’s November 2021 and August 2023 PV+BESS offers (the latter made after the “Beacon Fen South” area fell away) sit within a very low-density fenland receptor environment (Great Hale Fen / Little Hale Fen), with sparse residential presence. Once the Applicant’s misclassified buildings and counting errors are removed, the reality is that this locality contains very few residential receptors capable of experiencing sustained construction noise or dust effects at a community scale.

6.68 By contrast, the Beacon Fen scheme is located in materially closer proximity to established villages, including Ewerby (c. 500 population and stated to be c. 963m from the Beacon Fen site) and South Kyme (c. 400 population). This village context is relevant to the likely scale of community exposure. It is also relevant cumulatively, because South Kyme is already within the zone of influence of other consented strategic energy infrastructure, including Ecotricity’s consented Heckington Fen NSIP. In that wider context, the Applicant’s attempt to present corridor-only “dwellings within X metres” tallies as determinative (and to treat the LCJM side as the more sensitive) is not a balanced or informative basis for comparison.

**(E) Consequence and requested correction**

6.69 LCJM therefore submits that the Row 8 / Row 9 “residential properties within X metres” metrics should be afforded limited weight as currently presented. At minimum, the Applicant should:

- (a) provide an auditable dwelling schedule for both routes, with unique addresses/identifiers and a clear definition of “residential property”;
- (b) correct misclassifications (including the three farm building sites) and correct Willow Farm (Nickols) to two dwellings;
- (c) explain precisely how distances have been measured (corridor edge vs centreline; the GIS layers used; straight-line method);
- (d) correct the Row 9 internal inconsistency where a receptor at 273m has been included in a “within 250m” count; and
- (e) if Rows 8–9 are intended to proxy construction effects, provide a parallel receptor screen based on construction access/haul routes, compounds and logistics, not solely the cable corridor.

**6.70** Cumulative construction context (Great Hale Fen receptors): *This is particularly important given the Applicant's approach in Rows 8–9 excludes these receptors from the counting exercise.* LCJM also reminds the ExA that the key Great Hale Fen residential receptors — White House, Mastins House, Mountain Cottage and White House Farm — have **already experienced significant construction disturbance associated with the Viking Link works** in recent years. This is directly relevant to significance, because the acceptability of further sustained construction traffic, noise, dust and disruption must be assessed in cumulative terms against an already-impacted baseline. The Applicant's corridor-only screening in Rows 8–9 (and its separation of haul road impacts from receptor counts) does not grapple with this cumulative sensitivity.

**6.9 Row 10 – Water Resources & Flood Risk: the Applicant's watercourse crossing comparison is not like-for-like; Beacon Fen crossings are omitted while crossings are "loaded" onto the LCJM Hybrid route, and trenchless precedent (Viking Link) is ignored**

6.71 In Table 1, Row 10 ("Water Resources & Flood Risk"), the Applicant states that the Beacon Fen indicative route includes 15 watercourse crossings, whereas the LCJM amended alternative includes 21 watercourse crossings. LCJM submits that this comparison is unreliable because the Applicant has (i) missed watercourse crossings on its own Beacon Fen route, and (ii) attributed watercourse crossings to portions of the LCJM Hybrid route where those crossings are not required or indeed correct. This is illustrated clearly on **Ex D6.25** and **Ex D6.26**, read together with **Ex D6.4**.

6.72 **Ex D6.25** identifies two missing watercourse crossings on the Applicant's Beacon Fen alignment (labelled "Missing 2 water crossings"), which means the Applicant's Beacon Fen tally is undercounted. At the same time, **Ex D6.25** shows instances where watercourse crossings are counted against the LCJM Hybrid route even though, as LCJM has already explained under the LCJM Hybrid route logic, two of those crossings are not required (labelled "2 crossings not needed as per **Ex D6.4**").

**Ex D6.25** also highlights that the Applicant's presentation treats certain field boundaries as if they create watercourse crossings, when in practice they are water-free (labelled "This is a water free shallow field boundary"). In short: Row 10's headline "15 vs 21" is not a sound comparator because it is based on a selective and incorrect crossing count rather than a like-for-like appraisal.

6.73 LCJM therefore invites the ExA to give limited weight to Row 10 unless and until the Applicant corrects its crossing count and mapping so that:

- (a) the two omitted Beacon Fen crossings identified in **Ex D6.25** are included in the Beacon Fen total; and
- (b) crossings are not "loaded" onto parts of the LCJM Hybrid route where they are not required (as shown on **Ex D6.25, Ex D6.26 / Ex D6.4**), and water-free boundaries are not misrepresented as watercourse crossings.

6.74 Finally, Row 10 should also be read alongside the local construction precedent: Viking Link successfully used directional drilling beneath the LWS 4722 corridor. LCJM therefore asks why the Applicant has not adopted a similar trenchless approach (HDD) at sensitive corridors—rather than relying on open-cut interactions and then seeking to neutralise the impact through generic mitigation.

**6.10 Row 11 – Soils & Agricultural Land: the Applicant's BMV/ALC comparison is based on desk-top assumptions and ignores readily available farm evidence on Grade 2 potato land, irrigation infrastructure and rotation patterns**

6.75 In Table 1, Row 11 ("Soils & Agricultural Land"), the Applicant states that the Beacon Fen indicative route comprises c. 2.21km of route on Grade 1 land and c. 4.66km on Grade 2 land, and that the route is "wholly on BMV land".

For the LCJM amended alternative, the Applicant states c. **6.93km of route on Grade 2 land** and that the route is also “wholly on BMV land”. LCJM submits that Row 11 is materially incomplete and misleading because the Applicant has made no meaningful effort to understand how agricultural quality and “best and most versatile” land function on this holding in practice and has not taken basic steps to avoid the highest sensitivity areas within BMV land.

6.76 First, the Applicant has made no attempt to collect or consider crop rotation evidence (which would show where high-value irrigated cropping and potato rotations are concentrated) and has made no attempt to map the LCJM irrigation main and associated hydrants. Those two datasets are readily available from LCJM and would immediately identify the fields where disruption, compaction and drainage disturbance would have the greatest agronomic and financial consequence. In the absence of this information, Row 11 reduces the issue to a desk-top ALC label and ignores how land quality and crop value are actually realised on the farm.

6.77 Second, the Applicant has ignored site-specific agricultural evidence already provided. LCJM has repeatedly explained—at meetings chaired by Ed Blundy (Brown & Co) (at the time paid for by LCJM in 2021)—that substantial parts of Great Hale Fen comprise Grade 2 potato land within established irrigated rotations and Little Hale Fen being Grade 3 (and possible non BMV Grade 3b). The Applicant has also failed to engage with the agricultural land classification implications of AGR3 which was publicly available in November 2021, despite this being raised directly and repeatedly with the Applicant. This is not a lack of available evidence; it is a failure to incorporate it into the route comparison.

6.78 Third, LCJM specifically identified lower-quality land parcels to the Applicant to facilitate avoidance of the highest quality land. This was done in LCJM’s November 2021 offer (c. 516 acres for PV+BESS) and again in August 2023 (c. 618 acres for PV+BESS) when the “Beacon Fen South” area fell away. Those offers were made to enable the Applicant to locate infrastructure on less sensitive land and avoid sterilising the most productive irrigated potato areas. Row 11 does not acknowledge that this information was provided or explain why it has not been used to minimise agricultural impacts.

6.79 LCJM therefore submits that Row 11 should be afforded limited weight as presently drafted. A meaningful comparison must go beyond “BMV vs non-BMV” labels and must reflect the practical agronomic sensitivity of the land (rotation, irrigation infrastructure, potato ground, compaction and drainage vulnerability). LCJM invites the ExA to require the Applicant to revisit Row 11 using the farm evidence already available and previously provided, and to explain why avoidable impacts on irrigated Grade 2 potato land have not been minimised through route selection.

6.80 LCJM also notes that the Applicant’s stated route lengths in Row 11 are not reliable. The Applicant’s figures imply that the LCJM Hybrid alignment is longer than it is in practice. LCJM’s position remains that the LCJM Hybrid is a shorter alignment overall [Ex D6.8] (and is specifically intended to reduce unnecessary corridor length and land take across the holding). If the underlying route length is wrong, then the Applicant’s derived “kilometres on Grade 1 / Grade 2” breakdown is necessarily wrong as well.

6.81 LCJM therefore requests that the Applicant corrects Row 11 by re-checking and disclosing the route-length calculation basis for both options (centreline vs corridor edge; which GIS layer; and the measured length within each ALC band). Pending that correction, the Row 11 “km on Grade 1 / Grade 2” figures should be afforded limited weight, because they are presented as precise metrics but are not currently capable of verification and appear to overstate the LCJM Hybrid length. Furthermore, LCJM knows the LCJM Hybrid crosses majority Grade 3 land as shown by **Ex D6.13**.

---

#### 4. LCJM summary (corrected position on the “comparative analysis”)

4.1.1 The Applicant's comparative matrix should be afforded limited weight because several headline metrics are not auditable, and the appraisal is not like-for-like. The Applicant states that compounds/abnormal loads/highway interfaces have not been quantified for the LCJM option on the basis that LCJM has "provided no information".

LCJM submits that this is not a neutral "fairness" position: construction logistics (haul routes, access routes and compound locations) are major drivers of effects and deliverability, **and the Applicant cannot rely on the absence of its own assessment work to score the LCJM option negatively or to screen out the very impacts that differentiate the options.**

4.1.2 Landowner impact / deliverability has not been presented even-handedly. The Applicant relies on a headline count of registered/unregistered freeholders and asserts that any higher proportion of route length on LCJM-controlled land is "only a benefit to LCJM", and that the LCJM alternative "merely transfers the impact onto others".

LCJM submits this is not the correct deliverability test. The relevant question is the number of distinct negotiation counterparties and construction interfaces created by each option (and therefore the programme and compulsory acquisition risk), not the number of titles that can be listed. Reducing land interfaces is not "only a benefit to LCJM": it is a public-interest deliverability and proportionality benefit because it reduces the extent of interference with third-party rights, reduces the need for compulsory powers, and reduces construction interface risk.

4.1.3 LCJM notes the Applicant's position that a fuller interests comparison would require extended land referencing and is not proportionate for an alternative outside the Order limits.

LCJM's point is straightforward: in those circumstances, the ExA should attach limited weight to any headline "freeholder count" being used as a determinative comparative conclusion against LCJM, particularly where the schedule risks over-disaggregating related interests and/or double-counting on the LCJM side. The Ex D6.18 translates this well which is the introduction of Needham, Nickols, LL395174 [TBC] and LL241762 [TBC] whilst taking away 1) [REDACTED] 2) LCJM west to east, 3) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [Mountain SSAS], 4) the Environment Agency, 5) [REDACTED] 6) [REDACTED] 7) Bicker United Charity, 8) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], 9) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], 10) The Vicarage Drove Project, 11) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

4.1.4 Ecology / LWS: "crossing counts" are not effects, and the comparison is distorted by assumed access. The Applicant asserts there is "no reason" to focus on LWS 4722 and excludes LCJM haul/access from the table on the basis that LCJM has not provided that information.

LCJM submits LWS 4722 is a legitimate focus because it is a sensitive corridor the Applicant has sought to rely on for access/haul assumptions, and because cumulative baseline disturbance (including Viking Link works) is directly relevant to receptor sensitivity and to the proportionality of further intrusion. The absence of a quantified LCJM haul plan does not justify the Applicant assuming and "loading" an internal Great Hale Eau haul solution into the comparison where LCJM has not offered it.

4.1.5 The Applicant's reliance on generic mitigation statements to dismiss likely significant effects (including assertions that haul roads within 50m of an LWS do not necessarily result in significant effects) does not answer the route-choice issue. LCJM's position is that avoidance-first alignment choices and trenchless methods must be properly appraised at sensitive corridors, particularly given the local precedent that Viking Link was directionally drilled beneath LWS 4722.

4.1.6 PRoW, residential, noise/air: receptor "counts" are being used as a proxy for effect magnitude without auditable evidence. The Applicant's use of "properties within X metres" and "PRoW crossings" is not a reliable proxy for amenity, noise, dust or socio-economic effects unless it is grounded in: (i) correct receptor identification (actual dwellings, not farm building sites), (ii) correct dwelling counts, (iii) consistent distance rules, and (iv) inclusion of construction haul/access routes (because that is where noise/dust exposure is driven in practice). On PRoW specifically, crossing counts are a weak proxy for impact without any evidence of actual use/footfall.

4.1.7 Traffic & access: the comparison treats contested assumptions as fixed attributes. The Applicant’s “design stage” caveat (including reliance on a 30m working width and 5m buffers) is used to suggest that meaningful siting commitments cannot be made for the LCJM alternative, while simultaneously presenting the Applicant’s own corridor assumptions as the comparator baseline.

At this stage, the ExA requires a fair comparative appraisal using transparent reasonable worst-case assumptions, not an assertion that route-specific commitments are impossible for LCJM but assumed for the Applicant. LCJM has also identified practicable options to avoid unnecessary highway crossings (including via LL431295, [REDACTED] land farmed by LCJM) which the Applicant has not transparently appraised because there has never been a conversation since 2023.

4.1.8 Water resources: the “watercourse crossings” comparison is unreliable and method-blind. The crossing comparison appears to omit crossings on the Applicant’s own alignment while loading crossings onto portions of the LCJM Hybrid that are not required (per the LCJM Hybrid geometry). Further, even where crossings are required, the effect is method-dependent. Given the local precedent of trenchless construction at sensitive corridors (Viking Link directional drilling beneath LWS 4722), the Applicant should be expected to explain why comparable avoidance-first trenchless methods (e.g. HDD) are not being adopted where appropriate, rather than treating open-cut interaction as inevitable.

4.1.9 Soils / ALC / BMV: “both are BMV anyway” is not a sufficient comparative answer. The Applicant relies on Natural England’s provisional ALC dataset and asserts that, even if more detailed surveys were considered, it is a “reasonable worst case” that both routes are entirely on BMV land.

LCJM submits this misses the point: the comparative issue is not merely “BMV vs non-BMV”, but where the highest-sensitivity BMV land sits in practice (irrigated potato rotations, irrigation mains/hydrants, drainage vulnerability and reinstatement risk), which the Applicant has not attempted to map or incorporate despite repeated engagement and offers of steering information.

4.1.10 Overall conclusion (LCJM): it is not open to the Applicant to conclude that “nothing suggests” the LCJM amended alternative is preferable overall when (i) key metrics are not verifiable, (ii) multiple factual errors and selective screens have been identified, (iii) construction logistics are carved out of the very receptor counts relied upon, and (iv) the deliverability/land interface picture is reduced to a headline title count despite the Applicant’s own position that fuller referencing is not proportionate.

**On a fair appraisal, the LCJM Hybrid is at least credibly preferable on deliverability and can be designed to reduce ecological and amenity effects through alignment choices and trenchless methods—whereas the Applicant’s current presentation reads as advocacy rather than a balanced comparative assessment.**