

Farleaze Farm Flooding, Railway Drainage and Fosse Way Runoff

My name is Jonathan Seymour-Williams. I am the owner of [REDACTED] Pig Lane.

I attended Tuesday's hearing but had to leave before the discussion concerning the flood plain at [REDACTED]. I have since reviewed the transcript and wish to make this short written submission.

[REDACTED] is not affected by one drainage issue in isolation. It lies at the practical meeting point of three contributing systems: the railway drainage, the Fosse Way scarp and watershed, and runoff from the surrounding fields into the lower-lying flood plain around [REDACTED].

The Applicant accepted at the hearing that the existing flood mapping corresponds with a local low flood point at Farleaze and that the Environment Agency mapping closely reflects the flooding experienced on the ground. The Applicant also described this as an existing drainage and conveyance issue involving local culverts and railway infrastructure.

That is precisely why the position requires a joined-up and up-to-date assessment.

The railway infrastructure runs broadly east-west, while the relevant culvert conveys water across that system. The Fosse Way occupies the higher scarp and watershed. Water falling from this higher ground drains back towards Farleaze, with flows then dividing broadly north-east towards the Norton Brook system and south-east towards the railway and Gauze Brook catchment.

Farleaze therefore sits at the receiving point of natural topography, road drainage, field runoff and railway drainage. These systems interact. They cannot sensibly be assessed separately.

My concern with the Applicant's response at the hearing is that the railway drainage issue appears to have been treated principally as a pre-existing problem and therefore as something outside the effects of Lime Down.

That does not answer the relevant question.

The question is whether Lime Down, acting across a substantial upstream area, could alter the **volume, rate, timing or concentration** of water arriving at an already constrained low point and ultimately at the railway drainage system.

If the existing culvert and railway infrastructure are already the controlling mechanism for flooding at Farleaze, that makes it more important—not less important—to understand what happens if the hydrological behaviour of the upstream land changes.

Additional or accelerated runoff from panel areas, tracks, construction compounds, cable works, temporary soil disturbance or new drainage arrangements could interact with an existing constraint. A pre-existing drainage problem does not remove the potential effect of the Scheme; it makes Farleaze a particularly sensitive receptor.

The Applicant stated at the hearing that runoff would not increase because the solar fields would remain predominantly permeable and vegetated, existing levels and drainage pathways would be retained, and buried cable areas would be reinstated after construction.

I ask that this conclusion be demonstrated specifically for the Farleaze catchment and flood plain rather than asserted at scheme-wide level.

Of particular concern is the relationship with Network Rail.

The hearing was told that the Applicant has engaged with Network Rail concerning the wider Scheme, interfaces and protective provisions, and that the works currently being undertaken by Network Rail are understood to concern piling and strengthening of the embankment rather than drainage.

That is only part of the issue.

The important question is not simply whether the current Network Rail works are labelled as “drainage works”. It is whether the Applicant has a current and sufficiently detailed understanding of:

- the railway drainage system affecting Farleaze;
- the relevant culverts, inlets and outlets and their capacities;
- how those assets are presently maintained and managed;
- how Network Rail's present and future asset-management proposals may affect water movement;
- the interaction between those arrangements and runoff from the Fosse Way and surrounding land; and
- how Lime Down's proposed drainage and construction arrangements interact with that complete system.

The Applicant should therefore make clear to the Examining Authority that its hydrological assessment is **up to date** and based upon the actual present-day operation and management of the railway drainage system, rather than assumptions derived from mapping or historic conditions.

If Network Rail controls an important part of the drainage mechanism at Farleaze, the Applicant cannot properly demonstrate that Lime Down will have no adverse effect without understanding what Network Rail is doing, what it proposes to do, and how the two systems interact.

I therefore ask the Applicant to address specifically:

1. What hydrological assessment has been undertaken for the Farleaze low point and flood plain?
2. Has the combined behaviour of runoff from the Fosse Way scarp, surrounding fields, proposed Lime Down areas and railway drainage been modelled as one system?
3. What current information has been obtained from Network Rail concerning the culverts, drainage assets, capacities, maintenance and management arrangements affecting Farleaze?

4. Has the Applicant confirmed that its hydrological modelling reflects Network Rail's **current scheme of management and current works**, rather than relying upon earlier assumptions?
5. What allowance has been made for the possibility that the volume, speed or timing of runoff arriving at the railway may change during construction and operation of Lime Down?
6. How will the Applicant monitor and verify that Lime Down does not increase ponding, flood depth, flood duration or the frequency of flooding at Farleaze?
7. Given that Farleaze is already an acknowledged low-lying receptor with known flooding, why should it not be specifically included within the hydrological monitoring and verification framework?

The Applicant's present position appears to be that Lime Down will not increase surface-water runoff and therefore will not worsen the flooding already experienced at Farleaze.

That conclusion depends upon the accuracy of the hydrological baseline.

The Examining Authority should therefore be satisfied that the Applicant understands the whole system as it operates **now**: the Fosse Way watershed, the Farleaze flood plain, the railway culverts and drainage, the Norton Brook and Gauze Brook catchments, and Network Rail's current management of its infrastructure.

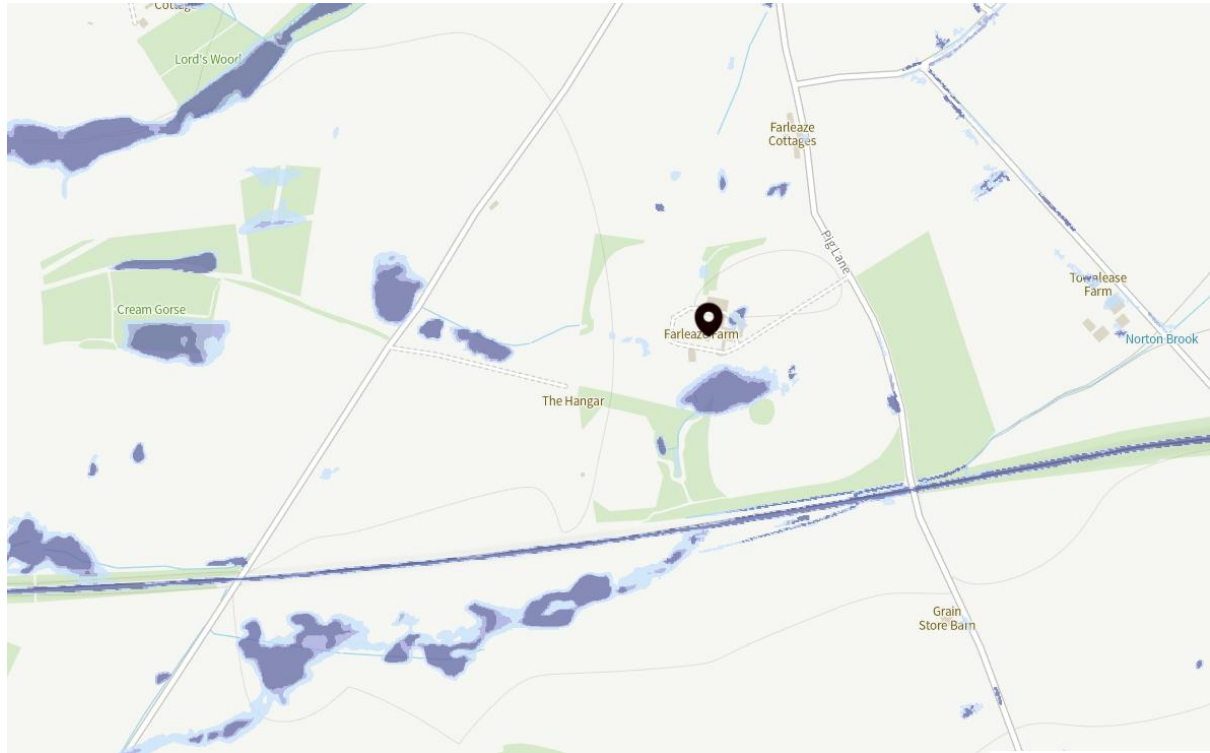
I respectfully ask the Examining Authority to require the Applicant to confirm this expressly and, if necessary, provide a specific Farleaze drainage note or addendum demonstrating the interaction between:

- the Fosse Way scarp and road drainage;
- the surrounding field catchments;
- the Farleaze flood plain;
- the railway culverts and drainage infrastructure;
- Network Rail's current drainage and asset-management arrangements;
- the Norton Brook and Gauze Brook systems;
- the proposed Lime Down development and construction works; and
- the hydrological monitoring and verification framework.

This needs to be established before consent, not left to subsequent management plans.

Farleaze is already the low point at which these systems meet. Before the Scheme is permitted to introduce another major influence into that catchment, the Examining Authority should be satisfied that the Applicant understands the existing system in full and is working from current information supplied by Network Rail.

Appendix Extract from Flood Risk Assessment



Attached Photographs from 2017 Flood and 2026 Railway bank rebuild.













