

MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS: TRANSMISSION ASSETS

Annex 3.2.15 to Response to RR- Natural England (AS-066)- Appendix G1 – Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation – Additional Submission

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1 Applicants' response to Relevant Representations

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 Following closure of the relevant representation period under Section 56 of the Planning Act 2008 for the Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms: Transmission Assets (referred to as 'the Transmission Assets') (the Applicants), the Applicants have taken the opportunity to review each of the Relevant Representations (RRs) received from stakeholders who registered as Interested Parties in the examination.

1.1.1.2 Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 provide an overview of the Applicants' response to the Relevant Representation of Natural England (AS-066) Appendix G1 – Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation Additional Submission.

2 Responses to Relevant Representations

2.1 Natural England – Appendix G1 – Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation – Additional submission

Table 2.1: AS-066 – Natural England Appendix G1 – Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation – Additional submission

Reference	Relevant Representation Comment	Applicants' response
	<p>Dear Sirs,</p> <p>Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets</p> <p>The information included in this submission constitutes Natural England's additional advice relating to onshore protected species. As outlined in our Relevant Representations/Written Representations Letter [RR-1601] sections 5.5 (submitted 27th January 2025), we advised the ExA that we would submit further advice on onshore protected species, if necessary, at Deadline 1. We noted the Rule 9 letter issued to the Applicant and the deadline scheduled for 21st March 2025. We therefore thought it was an appropriate opportunity to also provide our additional advice on both protected species and air quality prior to the start of Examination to allow all parties adequate time to review, and where appropriate address accordingly.</p> <p>Summary of advice</p> <p>i) Air Quality</p> <p>Our Relevant and Written representation [RR-1601] Appendix G Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation, comments G27 and G41 provided Natural England's advice for assessing air quality impacts on internationally designated sites. Additional comments are provided in Table 1 below.</p> <p>Natural England has identified several gaps in information regarding air quality emissions in relation to designated sites during the construction, operational and decommissioning periods of the project. Until additional information is provided Natural England is unable to provide further advice on the scale and significance of the potential impacts. Therefore, we are unable to advise at present</p>	<p>The Applicants note the summary of advice, and detailed responses have been provided in the respective sections in Table 2.2 below. The Applicants are committed to continued engagement with Natural England on the items raised in their relevant representation.</p>

Reference	Relevant Representation Comment	Applicants' response
	<p>whether the proposed mitigation is sufficient or whether additional measures may be required. In addition, where impacts have been scoped out of the assessment Natural England advises further justification is required. Additionally, we advise 2 that more information and assessment on sources of air pollution from Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) and the associated impacts on designated sites and sensitive receptors is required.</p> <p>ii) Natural England Wildlife Licencing Services (NEWLS) – European Protected Species</p> <p>Comments G52 – G55 in Table 1 provide additional advice for onshore protected species. In addition to the comments provided below, Natural England advise the Applicant to consult Natural England Wildlife Licencing team (NEWLS) as soon as possible to clarify the conclusions made by the Applicant's ecologists, with a particular focus on the noctule bat roost. Natural England notes that the Applicant has stated that the works will result in the abandonment of the roost due to disturbance and habitat loss/ fragmentation, however at the moment it is difficult to know how likely this will be. Therefore, Natural England considers further discussion is necessary to inform any draft licence applications.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Cheshire to Lancashire Area Team</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
	<p>Appendix G1 – Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</p> <p>In formulating these comments, the following documents have been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [APP-075] F3.3 Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation • [APP-083] F3.3.9 Volume 3, Annex 3.9: Water vole survey technical report 	The Applicants note this response.

Reference	Relevant Representation Comment	Applicants' response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [APP-086] F3.3.12 Volume 3, Annex 3.12: Otter survey technical report (confidential) • [APP-087] F3.3.13 Volume 3, Annex 3.13: Badger survey technical report (confidential) • [APP-121] F3.9 Volume 3, Chapter 9: Air quality • [APP-122] F3.9.1 Volume 3, Annex 9.1: Air quality impacts on ecologically designated sites 	

Table 2.2: AS-066 – Natural England’s Detailed Advice and Recommendations – Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (additional advice)

Rel and Written Reps	Ref	Doc Ref	Comment	Recommendation	RAG	Applicant’s response
Onshore Related Matters - Document Used: [APP-075] F3.3 Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation; [APP-087] F3.3.13 Volume 3, Annex 3.13: Badger survey technical report (confidential); [APP-083] F3.3.9 Volume 3, Annex 3.9: Water vole survey technical report; [APP-086] F3.3.12 Volume 3, Annex 3.12: Otter survey technical report (confidential)						
Onshore Protected Species	AS-066 1601.G.52	[APP-075] 3.11.11	<p>Bats</p> <p>Natural England notes that whilst no roosts are to be destroyed/damaged within the Onshore Order limits, the works are in close proximity to two roosts which are outside of the Onshore Order limits.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.11.11.4 states that a noctule bat roost may be lost as a result of the duration of the works and habitat loss adjacent to the roost which the bats may use for important behaviours (foraging/commuting):</p> <p>‘It is considered that noctule bats would be affected by temporary but habitat loss around the existing Penwortham National Grid substation which includes grassland, scrub, trees and woodland. The duration of construction of 66 months and time required for comparable vegetation to establish means that habitat loss is long term while the</p>	<p>Natural England would welcome further discussion with the Applicant to determine the scale of impacts on the noctule hibernation roost and the judgement which their Ecologist has made regarding the possible abandonment of the noctule roost.</p> <p>If a licence is required, Natural England advise that quantitative data would be required on the roost, level of activity and use of the surrounding area, in order to progress.</p>		<p>The Applicants note Natural England’s comment regarding the scale of potential impact on noctule hibernation roost and will engage further with them on this.</p> <p>An Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) has been prepared and submitted with the application. The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT76 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register of the ES (AS-030)) to developing Detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) in line with the Outline Ecological Management Plan – this is secured by Requirement 12 of Schedule 2A and Schedule 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004). For bats, the Detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) will be informed by further pre-construction surveys (including preliminary bat roost inspections, tree climbing inspections and monthly monitoring, where relevant) and will contain details on any European Protected Species Mitigation (EPS) Licences as required based on pre-construction survey results (as secured</p>

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			<p>impacts on bats would be apparent in a shorter period. It is unlikely that they would continue to use the hibernation roost that is located in woodland adjacent to land required for the National Grid connection compound. The magnitude of impact is medium'.</p> <p>Natural England advises that a bat mitigation licence would be required for works that result in the loss of a bat roost. At present Natural England is unable to ascertain whether a licence would be required.</p>			by Requirement 13 within Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft Development Consent Order (AS-004). Any EPS licenses will be agreed with Natural England as the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body.
	AS-066 1601.G.53	[APP-087] General	<p>Badgers</p> <p>Natural England notes that a disused badger sett has been identified.</p> <p>Given the long period of time before the project is set to commence, and the 66- month construction timescale of the project, we advise that updated surveys and/or monitoring should be undertaken to confirm that the sett is still disused closer to the time of works. If the sett starts to display signs of current use by badger, then an A24 badger development licence will need to be applied for to allow for any works that could disturb a badger,</p>	<p>Natural England advises that commitments should be made to ensure that updated badger surveys will be undertaken before works commence to confirm that no new setts have been created, and that the outlier sett remains disused.</p> <p>In areas of the scheme where badger setts and field signs have been identified offsite but within a reasonable distance to the working area, we recommend designing protocols to be included in the landscape and environment management plan so that the site is left safe for badgers at the end of each day's work.</p>		Paragraph 1.5.3.5 of the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) states that only one potential badger sett was identified within the Transmission Assets Order Limits. In addition, paragraph 1.5.3.5 summarises that a suite of pre-construction surveys for badgers will be undertaken for suitable habitats located within the Onshore Order Limits. Due to the mobile nature of badgers, prior to the commencement of works in an area, a check of the Order Limits plus a 30 m buffer, will be undertaken by qualified ecologists in order to confirm whether there have been any changes to the site conditions recorded during the pre application surveys as well as noting any new badger setts that have been excavated. Where an active badger sett is identified

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			<p>damage the sett, or destroy the sett.</p> <p>If the sett continues to be classified as disused and does not show signs of current use by a badger, then a licence will not be required to destroy the holes or undertake works in the vicinity that could be classed as disturbance.</p>			<p>within 30m of the works, and potential impacts are identified a development licence for badgers would be obtained from Natural England.</p> <p>The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT104 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (AS-030)) to undertaking pre-construction surveys for a range of protected species, including badger, to inform detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) in line with the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) and identify any mitigation and long-term monitoring requirements.</p> <p>In addition, the Applicants have also made a commitment (CoT17 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments register (AS-030)) to taking reasonable precautions to avoid the entrapment of animals (including badgers) within construction areas, and to make provision for badger access in relevant construction areas when works are not taking place. This is secured by Requirement 8 (Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)) of Schedules 2A & 2B and Requirement 12 (Ecological Management Plan) of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (AS-004). Detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) and CoCP(s) will be implemented by the Applicants as approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with</p>

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						<p>Natural England, as appropriate. These detailed plans will be prepared in accordance with their respective outline plans- the Outline CoCP (APP-193) and the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212).</p> <p>The Applicants would also refer to RR-1601.G.45, for the Applicants response on badger sett location raised by Natural England.</p>
	AS-066 1601.G.54	[APP-075] 3.11.13	<p>Sand lizard</p> <p>Given the detail contained within Section 3.11.13, the described works would likely require an A46 derogation licence to cover disturbance, damage and possibly destruction of habitat due to the exit pits for the routing of the cable within and beneath known sand lizard habitat.</p> <p>Although the cable is said to be routed > 10m below the surface height of the dunes, dunes are somewhat mobile and the impacts to the sand substrate cannot be fully predicted. There is also the associated works within 100m of known sand lizard habitat that may well form part of their wider territories as stated in 3.11.13.13: 'Sand lizards are potentially vulnerable to pollution at these distances, either through being</p>	<p>Natural England advise that further detail including population size estimates, mitigation and compensation should follow in a draft licence submission.</p> <p>Natural England would welcome further discussion with the Applicant on this issue.</p>		<p>Population</p> <p>As the sand lizard population within the Fylde Dunes is well studied, it is not considered that further surveys would provide any additional information at this stage that would change the outcome of the impact assessment, or the identified mitigation requirements. Further surveys may also result in unnecessary disturbance to the dune habitats and the sand lizard population.</p> <p>The Applicants have implemented the mitigation hierarchy, and therefore to avoid potential impacts to the sand lizards, they have committed to crossing Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI via trenchless techniques of which the exit pit will be situated 100 m seaward of the western boundary of Lytham St Annes SSSI (as set out in CoT44, secured by Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A & 2B, of the draft DCO (AS-004)). The Applicants will prepare detailed CoCP(s) in</p>

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			<p>affected directly or indirectly, through pollution-related changes in characteristics of the habitats that they occupy'.</p> <p>As such mitigation measures will likely need to be assessed via an A46 mitigation licence.</p>			<p>accordance with the Outline CoCp (APP-193) which will be implemented as approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with relevant stakeholders, as appropriate. The 100m buffer was established to also account for accretion rates based on historical site-specific data. This is also secured through Work Nos. 6A and 6B within Part 1 (Authorised Development) of Schedule 1 to the draft DCO (AS-004) and the Works Plans (AS-014 and AS-015). Cables can only be installed in the area shown on the Works Plans (AS-014 and AS-015) for Work Nos. 6A and 6B using trenchless installation under the dunes as set out in the relevant works descriptions in Schedule 1 of the draft DCO (AS-004). Furthermore, the works descriptions for Work Nos. 6A and 6B do not allow for exit pits to be located in that area. The area shown on the Works Plans (AS-014 and AS-015) for Work Nos. 6A and 6B includes the 100m buffer).</p> <p>Mitigation</p> <p>The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT104 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments register (AS-030)) to develop detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) in line with paragraph 1.6.4.26 of the Outline Ecological Management Plan to include measures to maintain and address</p>

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						<p>protected species. For sand lizard specifically this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vibration generating equipment to be situated as far from the sand lizard habitat as is practicable to reduce energy transfer to the sand dunes; the minimum hammer energy necessary to perform the task to be used; and cut-off trenches to be installed between the source of vibration and the habitat. These act in the same way as a noise barrier and interrupt the direct path of vibrations to a receiver. <p>This is secured by Requirement 12 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004). The Applicants will prepare detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) in accordance with the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) which will be implemented by the approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Natural England, as appropriate.</p> <p>Pollution risk</p> <p>The Applicants have made commitments (CoT04 and CoT77 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments register (AS-030)) to develop Detailed Pollution Prevention Plan(s) and Bentonite Breakout Plan(s) in line with the Outline Pollution Prevention Plan</p>

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						<p>(APP-197) and Outline Bentonite Breakout Plan (APP-206) to manage the potential risk from pollution and bentonite breakout within the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI. This is secured by Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004), as set out above.</p> <p>Licencing</p> <p>As identified in section 3.11.13 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075), no significant residual disturbance impacts have been identified on the sand lizard population, and it is not considered that an A46 derogation licence would be required for the construction phase. However, the Applicants have made a commitment (CoT76 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments register (AS-030)) to develop detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) in line with the Outline Ecological Management Plan. This will include a review of species-specific licencing: a licence will be considered if it is subsequently determined to be necessary. This is secured by Requirement 12 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004). Detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) will be implemented by the Applicants as approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Natural England, as appropriate. These detailed</p>

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						plan(s) will be prepared in accordance with the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212).
	AS-066 1601.G.55	[APP-083] 1.4	<p>Water vole</p> <p>At present it is difficult to determine the level of impacts posed to water voles by the development from the information provided. [APP-083] states that direct impacts on watercourses have been avoided.</p> <p>Further clarification/justification is required to support this, as the Order Limits area includes watercourses displaying 'potential' signs of water vole, with some watercourses spanning the entire width of the Transmission Assets Order Limits, making it appear difficult to avoid impacts.</p>	<p>Natural England advises that further information is required on the status of water vole burrows and the works to be undertaken in the water courses with water vole burrows present.</p> <p>Natural England would welcome further discussion with the Applicant on this issue.</p>		<p>Water vole surveys were undertaken between April 2023 and July 2024 on land parcels with habitat that could potentially support water voles. In addition, the Applicants confirm that water vole surveys were undertaken in late August, September and early October 2024 as part of the wider water vole survey programme, but were not submitted as part of the application. The Applicants confirm that Volume 3, Annex 3.9: Water Vole Survey Technical Report (APP-083) will be updated and submitted at Deadline 1 of the DCO Examination to show the location of these surveys. The Applicants also confirm that no new evidence of water vole was identified during the late August to early October surveys to that which was reported in Volume 3, Annex 3.9: Water Vole Survey Technical Report (APP-083).</p> <p>The survey data indicates that there is no confirmed evidence of water vole and that the population of water voles has declined (potentially due to the presence of mink) (as documented in paragraph 3.6.4.12 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology of the ES (APP-075)). However, a precautionary approach was adopted for the assessment which assumed that water voles to the present</p>

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						where potentially suitable habitat had been recorded. Preconstruction surveys for European Protected Species (including water vole) will be undertaken (as secured in Requirement 13 of Schedules 2A & 2B the draft DCO (AS-004)). As set out in the Outline Ecological Management Plan (oEMP) (APP-212) the water vole surveys will be undertaken along all ditches of potential value to water voles that would be affected during construction. The Applicants also confirm that the stage of construction will not commence until after the licence has been granted (as secured in Requirement 13 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004)), where potential unavoidable impacts to water vole are identified. The Applicants will apply the mitigation hierarchy prior to obtaining a displacement licence from Natural England.
	AS-066 1601.G.56	[APP-086] General, 1.3.2.5 – 1.3.2.10; [APP-075] 3.11.14	<p>Otter</p> <p>A number of field signs indicating the presence of otter were recorded just outside of the Onshore Order Limits within the wider survey area, with some of those watercourses continuing into the Order Limits.</p> <p>Further information about the cable installation route, associated impacts and proximity to otter</p>	Natural England advises the Applicant to clarify the location of otter resting places in relation to the watercourses which may be used within the Onshore Order Limits.		As noted in Table 3.14 and section 3.11.4 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075), evidence of otter was identified with the study area but outside of the Onshore Order Limits. The impact assessment considered the potential effects to otter arising from temporary and permanent habitat loss, temporary disturbance, habitat fragmentation and isolation, based on the baseline field evidence of otter (holts, couches, resting

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			<p>resting places would be required to determine the level of impacts posed.</p> <p>Natural England would expect works impacting a natal holt to be avoided.</p> <p>Natural England welcomes the proposed habitat restoration and CoT76, however there is minimal detail on how this will be monitored to know if this is compensating for the loss and degradation of habitat during construction.</p>			<p>places, prints and spraints) recorded during extensive survey effort across habitats within and adjacent to the Order Limits, the results of which are presented in the confidential otter survey annex (APP-086) Paragraphs 3.11.14.2 to 3.11.14.7 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology (APP-075) explains how the Transmission Assets has avoided habitat loss through the use of trenchless techniques. The Applicants note potential habitat loss may occur in specific areas (e.g. Mill Brook) and has identified further mitigation measures within the oEMP (APP-212).</p> <p>The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT76 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments register (AS-030)) to develop detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) in line with the Outline Ecological Management Plan. This includes undertaking pre-construction surveys for a range of protected species, including otter, to inform the updated Detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) and further details on the proposed mitigation area at Lea Marsh. This is secured by Requirement 12 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004). Detailed Ecological Management Plan(s) will be implemented by the Applicants as approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Natural England. These detailed plan(s) will be</p>

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						<p>prepared in accordance with the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212). The Applicants will apply the mitigation hierarchy and will secure the necessary licence with Natural England.</p> <p>As stated in Section 3.11.14 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075), the use of trenchless crossings will avoid impacts to the EA main rivers used by otter (Mill Brook, Savick Brook and the River Ribble), including holts or potential holts identified in close proximity to the Onshore Order Limits on the banks of the River Ribble. If additional holts (including natal holts)/ couches/ resting places are identified during the pre-construction surveys, appropriate licensing/ mitigation/ compensation would be implemented where impacts could not reasonably be avoided.</p> <p>The Applicants will engage further with Natural England on this matter.</p>
Air Quality – Documents Used: [APP-075] F3.3 Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation; [APP-122] F3.9.1 Volume 3; [APP-121] F3.9 Volume 3, Chapter 9: Air quality, [APP-122] Annex 9.1: Air quality impacts on ecologically designated sites						
Air Quality impacts on designated sites	AS-066 1601.G.57	[APP-121] and [APP-122] General	<p>Air quality assessment on statutory designated sites.</p> <p>Natural England notes that there are several gaps in information regarding air quality emissions on designated sites during the construction, operational and decommissioning periods of the</p>	We advise that additional information is provided on air quality impacts, as advised in this RR and our previous RR ([RR-1601] Appendix G Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation).		<p>The Applicants would refer to the responses in RR-1601.G.58 – RR01601.G.61</p> <p>The Applicants are committed to ongoing consultation with Natural England as needed.</p>

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			<p>project. As a result, Natural England is unable to provide full comments on this impact pathway and state whether we agree with the conclusions on impacts on designated sites at present.</p> <p>These sites include:</p> <p>Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI Newton Marsh SSSI Ribble Estuary SSSI Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods (Ancient Woodland & SSSI)</p> <p>In particular, Newton Marsh SSSI has been omitted from the air quality assessment and impacts on internationally designated sites (SPA/ SAC/ Ramsar) have not been considered, as highlighted in our previous [RR-1606].</p> <p>Natural England is unable to provide further comment on this impact pathway or any other additional information required. We are unable to advise at present whether the proposed mitigation is sufficient or whether additional measures may be required.</p>	<p>Natural England advises for the aforementioned designated sites, air pollution impacts as a result of traffic, machinery and dust are considered and justification is provided for where impacts have been scoped out.</p> <p>Natural England would welcome further discussion with the Applicant on this issue.</p>		
	AS-066 1601.G.58	[APP-121] and [APP-122] General	Natural England highlights that the air quality assessment for designated ecological sites does not appear to consider sources of	Natural England advises that information on the use of machinery and equipment (including NRMM) is provided. This should include locations,		Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (Defra, 2022) states that 'experience of assessing the exhaust emissions from on-site plant (NRMM) and site traffic suggests that, with

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			<p>air pollution other than traffic and dust.</p> <p>Plant equipment, generators and Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) can all emit air pollution which have the potential to impact ecological receptors, both alone and in-combination with other sources of pollution. This can include machinery used along the cable route, substation locations and temporary construction compounds within 200m of statutory designated nature conservation sites (SSSI's, SPA's, SAC's, Ramsar, Ancient Woodland).</p>	<p>duration of operations and minimum standard of NRMM and equipment with the potential to release pollutants which may impact designated sites, for both the construction areas and all temporary construction compounds. Air quality impacts for this pathway should include all statutory designated sites within a 200m screening distance from the locations of machinery/ NRMM and construction compounds.</p> <p>This should include, but is not limited to:</p> <p>Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI Newton Marsh SSSI Ribble Estuary SSSI Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods (Ancient Woodland & SSSI)</p> <p>If impacts on these sites can be screened out, please provide justification on this.</p>		<p>suitable controls and site management, they are unlikely to make a significant impact on local air quality. In the vast majority of cases they will not need to be quantitatively assessed ...'</p> <p>The Applicants have also made a commitment (CoT33 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register of the ES (AS-030)) to develop Detailed Dust Management Plan(s) in line with the Outline Dust Management Plan (APP-195). This is secured by Requirement 8 within Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft Development Consent Order (AS-004). Detailed Dust Management Plan(s) will be implemented by the Applicants in accordance with the outline Dust Management Plan (APP-195) as approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with Natural England, as appropriate.</p>
	AS-066 1601.G.59	[APP-121] and [APP-122] General	Newton Marsh SSSI is not included within the assessment of air quality impacts on designated sites, despite the SSSI being within 200m of the proposed works.	We advise that all air quality impacts and sources of pollution (including impacts from traffic, dust and machinery/ equipment) are assessed for the SSSI.		As noted in section 9.4 of Volume 3, Chapter 9: Air Quality (APP-121) the Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22) notes that ecological receptors within 200 m of a road are only included in the assessment where there is an increase in Annual Average

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						<p>Daily Traffic (AADT) of 1000 total vehicles or 200 heavy goods vehicles (Defra, 2022). The amount of construction traffic generated on roads within 200 m of Newton Marsh SSSI are below the threshold criteria and was therefore scoped out of the assessment.</p> <p>With regard to construction dust, Newton Marsh SSSI is considered as an ecological receptor within section 9.11.2 of Volume 3, Chapter 9: Air Quality (APP-121) in line with the IAQM guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (2024) which notes that effects on ecological receptors located with 50 m of onsite construction activities should be considered (see section 9.4 (APP-121). Newton Marsh SSSI is approximately 20 m from the Onshore Order Limits. The Assessment in section 9.11.2 of Volume 3, Chapter 9: Air Quality (APP-121) concludes that there would be a negligible effect upon Newton Marsh SSSI from construction dust which is not significant in EIA terms.</p>
	AS-066 1601.G.60	[APP-075] 3.11.5. 9	<p>Assessment of air quality impacts from additional road traffic on Red Scar Wood: Predicted annual NOx emissions</p> <p>Natural England notes that at Paragraph 3.11.5.9 it is stated that</p>	Natural England requires clarification of the level of NOx emissions at Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods (Ancient Woodland & SSSI).		<p>As noted in Table 1.1 of Volume 3, Annex 9.1: Air quality impacts on ecologically designated sites (APP-122), The daily mean NOx PC as a percentage of CL is 1%. Section 1.3.2 of Volume 3, Annex 9.1: Air quality</p>

Rel and Written Reps	Ref	Doc Ref	Comment	Recommendation	RAG	Applicant's response
			'The maximum annual-mean NOx PC does not exceed 1% of the critical level and the impacts can be screened out as insignificant', whereas Table 1.1 of Volume 3, Annex 9.1: Air quality impacts on ecologically designated sites details that Annual mean NOx PC as % of critical level (CL) is 1%.	If the annual-mean NOx PC is 1% of CL or more, then we advise further assessment of NOx emissions on the SSSI is required and should be secured in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEM).		impacts on ecologically designated sites (APP-122) notes that the maximum annual mean NOx PC does not exceed 100% of the critical level at local sites and does not exceed 1%. Therefore, in line with 'Air emissions risk assessment for your environmental permit' (Environment Agency, 2024), the screening threshold of 1% is not exceeded, and further assessment has been scoped out.
	AS-066 1601.G.61	[APP-075] 3.11.5. 12 – 3.11.5. 17	<p>Assessment of air quality impacts from additional road traffic on Red Scar Wood: NH3, nitrogen deposition and acid deposition</p> <p>Natural England notes that Paragraph 3.11.5.11 – 3.11.5.17 of [APP-075] assesses the impacts of exceedance of critical levels for NH3, nitrogen deposition and acid deposition. Despite critical levels being exceeded, the Applicant rules out impacts due to absence of lower plant communities or already exceeded thresholds.</p> <p>Natural England highlights s that no evidence or surveys have been provided to justify the absence of lower plant species within this area, and therefore we cannot at this stage agree with the ruling out of impacts on this SSSI interest feature.</p>	Natural England advises that evidence is required on the presence/ absence of lower plant species within the area of exceedance of 1% threshold within the SSSI.		Further survey information on the distribution of lower plant species within the affected area of the SSSI would not change the outcome of the assessment. As discussed in section 3.11.5 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075), this is because the baseline CLs for NH3, N and acid deposition are already exceeded, and this is likely as a result of the large volumes of vehicle traffic from the adjacent road network. Within this context, the emissions from construction road traffic associated with the Transmission Assets are not considered to be within an order of magnitude that could affect further change (or damage) to any lower plant communities in the SSSI.

3 **References**

Environment Agency (2024) Air emissions risk assessment for your environmental permit.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) (2022a) Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Technical Guidance (TG22) August 2022.

IAQM (2024) Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction [online].

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) (2022a) Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Technical Guidance (TG22) August 2022.