

This response refers to the following document:-

*The Applicants' Response to Relevant Representations Part 1-
Introduction and thematic responses*

Document Numbers:

MRCNS-J3303-JVW-19008

MOR001-FLO-CON-CAG-RPT-0013

EXA PDA-005

In the above document the Applicants respond to the 2157 representations made by the General Public. The fact that this number of responses from the public were made is a demonstration of the strength of feeling this Application has generated in the local community.

The Applicant argues that because of the number of responses it is unable to address each one individually and, for their convenience, instead have opted for generic replies.

In paragraph 1.2.1.3 they state “*The Applicants recognise that there are specific matters raised by Statutory Parties (Local Authorities, Agencies, People with Interest in Land etc.) and these have been addressed in The Applicants' Response to Relevant Representations Part 2- Affected parties and statutory consultees' (document reference S_PD_3.2) and its supporting annexes*”

They then go on to describe in paragraphs 1.4.1.1 to 1.4.1.6 that the volume of responses from the General Public have been too great for their resources to deal with individually. Instead they suggest that these responses were analysed, possibly by a third party, “.....*the professional judgement of the communications team advising the Applicants who have reviewed all of the Relevant Representations*”. They go on to say that an AI tool was used to identify generic issues and quantify the number of responses which included these generic points. Having identified 31 generic categories only 25% of the 2157 representations from the General Public were then used by the AI tool to identify the number of representations made in each category. Meanwhile the responses to the Statutory Bodies and other consultees have receive full individual and specific responses to the representations they made.

Resourcing of this project is a matter for the Applicants and their representatives. It should not result in what could be perceived as a discriminatory approach to the representations made by the General Public. Many of these respondents would have spent some considerable time in reviewing the numerous detailed and in some cases highly technical documents the Applicants have produced so far. Where the representations from members of the general public were less detailed, and perhaps amounting to a single paragraph or less, I could understand grouping them collectively for the purposes of identifying generic themes. But members of the public who have spent time and energy constructing detailed arguments at length to support their representations only to find these diluted by generic analysis is both disrespectful and inadequate as a means of addressing their concerns.

I wish to register my objections to the way in which the Applicants have chosen to deal with the 2157 representations from the General Public many of which are completely opposed to or have significant concerns regarding the impact of this very large, complex and highly intrusive civil engineering project.

Where a substantive representation has been made by a member of the General Public this should have received an individual response to the specific points and issues that were made. I would request the Examining Authority consider carefully whether the Applicant's approach has been reasonable especially as the Examination is only just beginning and there will be many more opportunities during the process for the General Public to make further representations.

It is to be hoped that, irrespective of the approach taken by the Applicants in their method of dealing with General Public responses, in respect of these 2157 respondents the Examining Authority will have read each of their submissions and will take these into account when making the final decision and recommendation.