

Although I am in favour of renewable energy, I oppose the plans proposed for the M&M windfarms cable route and location of the two substations at Newton With Scales for the following reasons:

1. The site selected for the substations will utilise designated green belt, high quality farmland that is an area of separation between the villages/towns of Newton With Scales/Freckleton/Kirkham. Little consideration has been given to these communities, including myself, in terms of prolonged construction periods (which could extend upto 10 years), increased HGV traffic, disruption to travel, agricultural impacts including permanent land loss and disruption, effect on the environment and wildlife, with the final result being permanently visually and audibly disruptive to residents and the neighbouring schools. No benefits to residents from this construction have been identified and the ability of emergency services to respond in the area during construction could be seriously compromised.
2. Consultation with residents has been limited and incomplete. Right at the start of the consultation period we asked for diagrams of what the substations would look like. I live on [REDACTED] Kirkham and the substations would be visible from my house. The M&M consultants were unable to give indication of how the substations would affect us visually. To date, the design of one of the substations has still not been finalised so how can plans be reviewed until all details have been presented. Manor Drive is included in the site locations to be visited by the Planning Inspectorate's Examining Authority in June 2025 but please bear in mind that the hedges and trees are in leaf and may obscure views of the proposed substation sites that would be far more visually intrusive during Autumn, Winter and early Spring.
3. The proposed cable route would affect protected habitat areas such as the beach at St Annes, Newton March, Lytham Moss, Freckleton Marsh and Lea Marsh, adversely altering ecosystems and biodiversity over prolonged periods and therefore potentially permanently.
4. Lack of consideration by M&M for any alternative route that would be less environmentally damaging, that being to connect to Penwortham via Stanah, using an existing National Grid line, already 400KV capable, with cost savings estimated at £903m at current prices. The alternative would use a designated brownfield site, and create jobs in one of the most deprived areas of Lancashire in future energy intensive, green hydrogen production, yet M&M dismiss its feasibility, opting for complex solutions across rural Fylde. The applicants avoid responsibility for landfall decisions, deferring to National Grid and hence they have opted for a conflicted, all new, cross-Greenbelt route. Hopefully the Inspector will also tell the applicants to take a look at the alternative route to Stanah, precedents have been set I believe by Stonehenge and Langley Park School judgements.