

It is now clear that a much shorter, cheaper, more speedily available, less damaging alternative could connect to Penwortham via Stanah (an existing Enterprise Zone) using an existing National Grid line. This is already 400KV capable, with cost savings estimated at £903 million at current prices.

This alternative would use a designated brownfield site, create jobs in one of the most deprived areas of Lancashire in future energy production, and yet the Applicants dismiss its feasibility, opting for complex solutions. The Applicants avoid responsibility for landfall and connection decisions via Stanah, deferring to National Grid, and hence they have opted for a conflicted, all new, cross-Greenbelt route.

Concerns arise over site selection, extended construction periods, and lack of benefits to local communities. Consultation efforts are insufficient, leading to stakeholder frustration. Agricultural impacts include prolonged and permanent land loss and enormous disruption. Beach access at St Anne's faces likely closures without mitigation plans. Air safety concerns remain unresolved due to poor engagement with BAE Systems. By extension, national security issues would arise. Emergency access for blue light vehicles during the construction period would create a danger to residents.

Community benefits remain undefined despite available government guidance. The human cost and cumulative impacts of the proposed substations, Transmission Assets and cabling route, lack adequate assessment. Biodiversity concerns persist, with protected bird species inhabiting affected areas. Temporary land use remains unaccounted for in biodiversity net gain (BNG) calculations.

All of these issues are worsened by the refusal of the Applicants

to consider any alignment of their works leading to a potential 10 year period of disruption.

Ultimately, the alternative route offers a more direct, speedier, cost-efficient, and environmentally viable solution that has been ignored by the Applicants. On such grounds, and with the knowledge that it does exist, the alternative route and point of connection via Stanah must surely be considered against the Applicants' current proposal.

Whether or not previous reasons (for the Stanah alternative being ignored) were as a result of Electricity Systems Operator, National Grid, Holistic Network Design, or Applicant decisions, for this to have been omitted in the past is not a reason, now, for the NSIP/Development Consent Order process to continue to ignore it or for the alternative not to be fully and properly considered.