

I raised a number of concerns on behalf of myself and Squires Gate Residents Group including those below. There are some additional points that have arisen following the last hearing here too.

1. Firstly I'd like to comment on this consultation itself. My first point is that given that M&M seemed to be able to afford to bring 45 or more people along to some of the hearings and hire expensive legal consultants and venues we're sure they can do better than just sharing bird's eye view maps covered in red squiggles with us to demonstrate what will be happening to our coastline here along the Fylde. At one of the earlier hearings we witnessed someone from the M&M team saying, under their breath, 'it's only a cable'! If this is the case then might M&M be able to construct a cheap true to size mock up of part of this cable and bring it down to the beach at Squires Gate to demonstrate to the community just how inoffensive and unobtrusive it will actually be when it's shoved under our precious sand dunes? This will help us to properly appreciate that it is in fact, 'only a cable'. Thanks in advance.
 2. There is also much concern about the lack of realistic and focused communication with all our blue light services including the ambulance service, fire service and sea rescue. Responding to queries about this with, 'an email has been circulated', is woefully inadequate and we would like to see a focused meeting convened at the earliest opportunity, rather than implying that the lack of response to the M&M email constitutes some kind of passive agreement that this work would not impact on these services. There needs to be a much more proactive approach to this and a public meeting convened of all the emergency services who will be impacted in addition to these hearings.
 3. Similarly - the information that was shared about the increased potential for bird strikes around Blackpool airport and the impossibility of mitigating these gave rise to concern within the community with its very glib and dismissive tone. We need more information about this increased risk and details of how this has impacted elsewhere in the country when projects of this nature have included activity around the sites of airports.
 4. This proposed cable route is giving rise to multiple and increasing issues here on the Fylde for both young families and the older population in particular. This is not a hugely prosperous area and people rely on the local environment particularly Squires Gate (Starr Gate) beach, for leisure and health activities. Venturing further afield for walks, exercise, nature, dog walks and suchlike is not an option for those with young children, limited incomes and time and no independent transport, just as it isn't for elderly and disabled residents. Public transport along the cable route will undoubtedly be diverted, slowed by the increased congestion and at times withdrawn.
 5. There are many retired people living here, people here who've paid their dues to society and done their bit, these include retired care workers, nurses, teachers, retail workers, paramedics, builders etc ... ie. people who've contributed meaningfully to the enhancement of others lives and wider society. The harsh truth is that some of these people won't actually last for another 11 years and so the request being made of them is that they spend their few remaining years living on a filthy, noisy, dangerous building site, surrounded by health hazards and congestion and with no means of escape. How is such a situation acceptable to anyone?
 6. What has also become increasingly apparent to many of us as we've watched this unfold and attended the hearings etc, is, that this is a profit, not, 'green', led initiative. The legal representative for M&M has repeatedly mentioned that the key reason the project has now been extended to 11 years is due to the distinct requirements of the two groups of shareholders involved in the two lead partnership companies and that having two distinct companies leading a huge infrastructure project of this nature is unprecedented. So not only are we to be subjected to 11 years of filth and chaos but we are also to be guinea pigs in an experiment involving two groups of shareholders.
 7. In addition, anyone with half a brain can see the inevitability of such an unprecedented, controversial and unwieldy project being diverted and stopped at some point within those 11 years. It isn't viable and is a classic case of putting BP profits before people, rather than anything even vaguely green. 'Green' has become nothing more than a smokescreen codeword for 'profit'.
 8. Our belief is that information from M&M is not being shared in a clear or transparent way and this belief is based on our experience of many important details, some already outlined here, being repeatedly and consistently withheld and obscured, and questions going and remaining continually unanswered. The only explanation for such poor communication is that this is a thinly veiled attempt to mislead the public about the real life consequences of these proposals. Maps covered in red lines tell us nothing and lengthy online documents are as unimaginative as they are inaccessible. If open consultation with the community were a genuine goal we would be witnessing much more varied and creative attempts at information dissemination from the large groups of presumably salaried people showing up to contribute to these hearings on behalf of M&M. What we are experiencing is dry, vague and at times shambolic.
 9. Both FACTS and the local council have proposed an alternative route and this is repeatedly met with the response that it's the National Grid who decide which route will be used. This is a ridiculous cop out and sounds highly unlikely, not least, as part of the National Grid was bought back into public ownership last year, (or the year before?), so it is paid for by us, the taxpayer. Why are representatives of the National Grid therefore not at these hearings? Why are they not being interrogated about their unwavering insistence on this particularly destructive cable route? We need a much, much better explanation, not just repeated glib dismissive comments which do nothing but shut down both questions and discussion.
 10. We are to be subjected to 11 years of disruption, noise and misery, and then those we do manage to survive and stagger out the other side will be left with what? In an already impoverished area we'll see our tourist industry decimated, livelihoods wrecked, farmland and sand-dunes torn apart and ruined forever, a hugely increased risk of imminent repeated high level flooding, survival chances for local wildlife reduced to nothing, our nature reserve and sacred burial ground ploughed through and destroyed and two huge ugly buzzing concrete monstrosities on our doorstep. A human rights issue if ever there was one ... and for what? Nothing more than Ed Millband's profit led vanity project, being pursued on the back of an unevidenced and unachievable, 'Net Zero' ideology and leading to ugly and inhumane outcomes that will undoubtedly cost some local people their lives. This is utter madness. We are already seeing evidence of serious diminishing mental and physical health within our communities and local groups as a consequence of these proposals and these are increasing due to the shady and shoddy manner in which these proposals are being shared with us.
 11. Myself and my community urge you to listen to these points and to reconsider this dreadful project, a project which can never reach its unrealistic targets and goals. We further urge you to immediately involve the National Grid in these hearings and discussions and give due and measured consideration to the alternative route being proposed.
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