

Anne Mason, dairy farmer impacted by the proposed cable corridor across two land parcels and the proposed permanent loss of a third family land parcel tenanted by us for the proposed Morgan substation.

The applicant states 'the temporary disruption to the agricultural land holdings would not affect the overall viability of farms ' ref APP 104 Land Use & Recreationp74 6.11.3.3. This is a bold statement considering my FOI request to the applicant resulted in a representative stating in an email dated 10th July 2025

'The assessment of impacts on farm holdings set out in Volume 6 Land Use & Recreation did not include a detailed economic assessment of the viability of individual farms therefore we do not have the information you requested'

I find this response deeply concerning considering the same person (applicant's land agent) assured the Ex A following discussions with FBC/EX A during the ISH 1 Part 1 section 8 at 30 mins (Issue specific Hearing) that she would be able to provide this information by Deadline 1. (I provided this person with the relevant references to assist her response yet she still rang me for clarification).

How would the land agent or the applicant have any concept how their alleged 'critical national infrastructure proposed project impacts our business, our landholding value or the legacy we intended to pass on to the next generation? Have they seen our business accounts? Have they any concept of the real value of BMV (best and most versatile) productive farmland on the Fylde? The information used by the project to estimate the impact on our holding is flawed. Desk Study 6.6.26 Land at Freshfields is not just for grazing livestock or silage, it is also used for crop production.

If the project cannot provide an assessment of the economic damage to our currently viable farming enterprise, how can they calculate their Blight budget accurately? Or indeed the cost of the entire project. Or are they intending to use their CPO?

We are approaching retirement age. We have worked hard to increase the viability of our dairy unit by investing heavily in farmland to add to the portfolio of land purchased by three generations of the Mason family. As custodians of the land for the next generation, we intended to capitalise on our investments as part of our retirement plan over the next 5 years. This looks increasingly unlikely as are options and our children's options are blighted by the proposed project.

The 'temporary construction period of 5 years will seriously impact our ability to farm and we fear that we will be left with a moribund business and less productive farmland to pass on to the next generation who will have limited options.

I am curious if the Blight claims will be time limited? We or future generations may wish to sell assets. The project claims 'nor has any party raised specific concerns that the application has impaired their ability to sell land /property' REP1-012. This is incorrect. We raised specific concerns in our representations dated 23rd January 2025 point 6 of the impact of the proposed project on our diversification projects (housing developments/solar park discussions prior to June 2021 blighted by proposed cable) Objections were also raised a meeting with our land agent and the project's land agents on 11th October 2023 in our farmhouse kitchen (meeting minutes available)). For the avoidance of doubt, I am raising specific concerns that the proposed project has and will impair our ability to sell/rent our dairy farm & land as a direct result of the cable route. This can be evidenced for the applicant.

Anne Mason dairy farmer impacted significantly by the proposed project.

Article 29 temp use of land for carrying out the authorised project

R 16 Restoration of land used temporarily for construction

I wasn't involved with Agriculture before meeting my husband some 42 years ago at University. As a civil servant's daughter I had little understand of the day to day mixed dairy farm in some of the most productive prime grazing land in the country. In fact, I wouldn't be arrogant enough to claim that the so called temporary disruption to agricultural land holdings would not affect the overall viability of farms ' APP104 Land Use and Recreation 6.11.3.3 especially when I know for a fact and can provide written evidence that an assessment of the economic impact of the cable corridor has not been done despite the promise to EX that it would be submitted by Deadline 1.

I'm curious to ascertain if the applicant has any first-hand experience of running a viable dairy farm who has diligently invested in soil management structure to produce the quality of soil that we currently have and which provides us with an abundance of crops with which to feed, bed nourish our dairy cattle 365/24/7 , producing quality products for our every growing nation. Has the applicant ever heard the term food security or are they labouring under the illusion that all food comes from Tesco's?

The applicants have provided a veritable forest of documents few of which actually address any of the issues that this project will cause. Even the presence of ALOs on site will not address day to day issues – interestingly when road gates were left open potentially exposing the public to dangers of wandering livestock and when wires were left in our fields by surveyors, there were ALOS on site throughout! ALOS may have practical experience of daily farming practices but they are not experts on our particular farm any more than we would be on a similar dairy farm 5 miles down the lane.

The applicant may not be aware that farming requires flexibility- we battle against the vagaries of the English weather which affects land conditions, we have to adhere to strict biosecurity measures to protect our livestock and satisfy the ever-increasing demands of government quangos or processors/supermarkets. This is now part of our job but we simply cannot adhere to a timetable imposed upon us by external agencies who claim to work with us and don't. We cannot simply share the access tracks which we have put in to allow 24/7/ 365 access to our farmland.

The applicant will be judged by the quality of the contractors on the ground and all the reassurances in the world that the Outline code of construction will ensure contractors comply with biosecurity risk and this will be monitored by the ALOS and the applicant do not ring true when the applicant has a history of breaches of protocol such as failing to ensure surveyors did not access our land when the project was refused all access on 3rd April 2024 following their poor behaviour and the precipitous issuing of the Section 172.

The claim APP 104 6.11.2.5 'soils and quality of the agricultural land would be restored at the end of the construction period to reduce, as far as possible, any temporary effects on best and most versatile ...' This is total nonsense. A contractor on a digger simply cannot restore the current complex soil structure which has taken thousands of years to create. We can already evidence the projects substandard attempts to 'reinstate' the soil structure from the trenches dug during investigative work.

I do not feel link boxes and the destruction of soil structure nor the creating of irregular shaped land parcels where the cable corridor traverse our beautiful farmlands is temporary at all. Make no mistake, this is permanent damage being described as temporary in order to ensure this project is passed. I thought when you bought land and were registered with the Land registry as the Title owner that it was yours for perpetuity. How naïve was I to invest my hard-earned money into land as part of my retirement pot.

CAH2 01/08/2025

Submission for Anne Mason IP 20052505

Anne Mason, on behalf of the family dairy farm impacted by the proposed cable corridor and the proposed Morgan substation.

In 1995 there were around 35,700 dairy farms in the UK. In 2025 there are an estimated 7000 (ChatGPT Decline in dairy farm numbers in UK in last 30 years). Key drivers include economic pressure, shrinking margins and psychological factors such as the perception of the loss of control/autonomy over operations. Dairy farms are economically vulnerable businesses operating on tight margins. We do not make large income in comparisons with the investments made in infrastructure/land/ ridiculously long working hours. Most other business would find the return on capital laughable. Any slight destabilisation can have catastrophic effects on our economically vulnerable business. This project, if given the green light, will have a massive destabilising effect on our business and I suspect that our business will likely be moribund if it can even survive the construction phases.

Promises made to the Examining Authority that impact statement will be provided by deadline 1 (Ref Recording of ISH 1 part 8 2/5/2025 at around 30 minutes FBC/EX A and applicants/DM) to show the economic impact on each farm holding along the route has not been provided nor I understand completed at all. I have written proof of this.

(from the person who promised to deliver the assessment by deadline 1. DM 10th July 2025 email;

'The assessment of impacts on farm holdings (as set out in Volume , Chapter 6: Land Use and Recreation https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020032/EN020032-000504-F3.6_MMTA_ES_Land_use_and_recreation.pdf) did not include a detailed economic assessment of viability on individual farms')

The applicant claims 'the temporary disruption will not affect the overall viability of farms '6.11.3.9 APP104 Land Use and Recreation. How would they know the impact if they haven't assessed it?

Claims that the applicant affirms their commitment to negotiating with affected parties (REP3-057 Applicant's response to the Ex A written question section 5 1.13) yet their behaviour is not that of a negotiator:

From the very first meeting in our farmhouse kitchen on 11th October, 2023 it was clear the project was comfortable using heavy handed tactics, stating 'We have Compulsory Purchase powers but we don't want to use them' .

Family members in their nineties have been bombarded with paperwork requiring even their deceased wife to complete this to assist the project with landownership.

Negotiations are not improved by the precipitous serving of Section 172 notices on 20 March 2024 by a project (looking to secure proposed intrusive survey licence agreement for ground investigation works) who claimed 'it has not been possible to agree the terms for voluntary access'.

This was at best dishonest as I understand negotiations were still ongoing.

Yet the project is 'committed' to negotiating with us...!

The latest Voluntary Heads of terms dated May 2025 for which were offered a generous £500 to sign included point 16 feels akin to a gagging order (requiring us to 'withdraw any or all prior representations made to the Transmission DCO Application')

I'm curious if the behaviour by the applicant who claims to be 'committed' to the negotiating process would actually instead prefer to use their powers of compulsory purchase? After all, this would be the cheaper option?

Compulsory Acquisition is not a viable option for our land and the project is not a welcome business partner. We have diversification projects underway which have been jeopardised by the project and we therefore refute the project's claims "nor has any party raised specific concerns that the application has impaired their ability to sell land /property' REP1-012 (evidence provided 23rd January 2025 My registration Comments submission pt 6 and 11th October 2023 minutes available. The blight budget is capped REP3-056 Q5 1.9. Is blight time-limited? Our land will be sterilised with the options of ourselves and future generations severely limited.

We invested heavily in additional farmland as part of pension plan. I naively thought owning your own land or property meant it was yours. It seems I was wrong. I could talk for hours about how this uninvited project will negatively impact our business, our beautiful farmland, and has brought additional stress affecting our mental health at a time when we had plenty worries enough. However, I'm only allowed 5 minutes and given that I suspect this may be a 'done deal', I'll stop here for my oral submission other than to state that to me, this seems to be about greenwashing' to boost profits for large corporations at the expense of hard-working farmers when we are beleaguered enough by Inheritance Tax changes, supermarkets/dairies/DEFRA and others. I understand the CEOs of some of these large corporations are paid multimillion pound salaries.

The applicant's land tracker REP1-044 p 10/15 clearly shows how our land holding 22 (coloured light yellow) with the main farm buildings and farmhouse located along with some 40 acres to the South of Hillock Lane. The majority of our holding to the North of Hillock Lane. Whilst land to the South is unaffected by the cable, the main land parcel to is effectively cut in half by the cable route. The cable then cuts up our farmland to the East of the main holding on Kirkham Road. We also face losing 40 acres of prime grazing land to the permanent siting of the Morgan substation. We simply won't be able to 'just' find alternative grazing to replace this as local land will be at a premium if it is even available. Stock needs to be kept close to the main farm holding to allow for the daily welfare checks and milking cows need to be able to be walked from pasture to milking parlours.

The milking herd is milked in buildings situated on the main farm holding to the South of Hillock Lane and crossed several times a day to and from prime grazing pastures using a farm access track which we have put in to access most of the fields within our holding. Youngstock and milking cows are housed during a few Winter months in sheds based on the main farmholding but are out grazing for welfare reasons between March to October, weather and ground conditions permitting. Cattle are moved across all areas of our holdings to ensure routine veterinary regime such as worming, hoof trimming, TB testing /vaccinations are administered. Daily checks on youngstock are conducted to ensure animal welfare concerns are swiftly addressed.

Construction work right across our working farm will have an unquantifiable economic impact upon our business as well as financially damaging the value of our prime grazing land whose soil structure has taken thousands of years in creation and simply cannot be 'reinstated' by some contractor with a digger.

We require 24/7 access to our fields and cross cattle four times a day or more across our holding with regular tractor access required 24/7 365 using the network of farm tracks which we have put in place. The project wishes to use our tracks and again this will have a negative effect on our farming business.

Additionally, we silage three grass silage crops to feed cattle over the Winter months, relying on a series of farm tracks which we have installed to allow us 24/7/ 365 access to all our farmland. Maintenance work such as fertiliser spreading, hedgerow trimming and routine fencing work all require tractors to use these farm tracks. Some of our land is used to grow crops such as Barley, Winter wheat and maize which provide additional food for our cattle and straw for bedding. This requires tractor access to enable ploughing, weed spaying and harvesting machinery and as with all farm work depends on the vagaries of the English weather rather than adhering to a strict time plan. Farming requires a fine balance of planning ahead on a 3year cycle and the flexibility to adapt to weather and ground conditions. Imposing external demands from an unwelcome project in addition will make the difficult task of producing food for our growing nation impossible eg irregular shaped land parcels, damaged soil structure, damaged drains, inability to spread slurry, potential machinery damage from link box inspection covers.