

I attended the Issue Specific Hearings 2 and 3 and the Compulsory Acquisition Hearing held on 29th, 30th, 31st July and 1st August, either in person or online.

The following are my comments in respect of these:-

1. The applicants have proposed some changes to the projects in relation to Blackpool Airport, Leach Lane and the Blackpool Road North Playing Fields. Yet again the applicants' provided plans were of poor quality with no road names which made it difficult for local residents to understand how these changes would affect them. This is another example of the applicants' disregard for providing clear information that can be understood by members of the public who may be affected by the project. It was pleasing to note that the inspectors pressed the applicants on the reasons for the change and have since requested further information from the applicants and asked them to provide more detailed information to interested parties.
2. In relation to the proposed substations between Newton and Freckleton, the applicants have again stated that they are unable to provide renderings of the substations, stating that these will only be available at the design stage (once the projects have been approved). The images shown at the Hearings were inadequate and I felt did not give a true representation of what can be expected. We still have no idea of the visual impact.
3. There is a lack of agreement between BaE Systems and M & M with regard to bird movements / bird strikes. Being a resident of Freckleton and living very close to the runway this is of particular concern, especially as the village has already experienced one air disaster which still resonates within the village community.
4. During the Compulsory Acquisition Hearing the farmers and their agents made very strong cases in respect of the lack of engagement by the applicants, together with lack of detail on construction, especially regarding the placement of link boxes. I attended the Accompanied Site Inspection on 26th June and was shocked at the sizes of the proposed substations as pegged out and the effect this would have on the farms and land between Newton and Freckleton.
5. Another concern is the possible separation of the two projects, where the applicants made reference to 2 cable corridors adjacent to each other, and also the impacts on the time frame with a possible 7 year gap between the two projects. It seems clear that these are now two distinctly separate projects and should be treated as such.
6. We now also have the possibility of a further project Mooir Vannin with yet more disruption across the Fylde for an additional number of years.
7. Given my above concerns, I remain strongly opposed to the project, particularly in relation to the fact that the applicant has failed to explore the alternative option at The Hillhouse Technology Local Enterprise Zone.
8. Yet again the Hearings highlighted the general lack of engagement by the applicants with local residents and stakeholders. The information provided was unclear from the outset at the public consultations and does not appear to have improved since.

I look forward to the next Open Floor Hearings where I envisage many more members of the public will register to have their say.